

The 15 Minute Manual For Beginner Business Bloggers



MARKETING
RIVAL

By Shannon Winning
Chief Content Officer



AKA How To Write Stuff People Want To Read

And Attract More Customers Doing It



Today you'll learn:

- How people consume blogs
- Why you should bother blogging
- How to target your ideal audience
- Keys to effective blogs
- 3 easy-to-write blog types
- How to turn what you already know into news
- Which kind of content performs best
- The proper length for a blog

Here's what I'm reading and why:



It's not an old book in the middle of a field,
I can tell you that much.

An industry blog, because I trust the source

Where Marketers Go to Grow

Marketing

MARKETING

7 Quick Ways to Free Up More Time in Your Day

SALES

7 Crucial Questions to Ask Prospects Throughout the Buyer's Journey

AGENCY

Battle of the Sexes: What Men and Women Think About Colors [Infographic]

MARKETING / 4 days ago

How We Increased the Conversion Rate on Our Mobile Landing Pages [New Data]

July 3, 2015 // 6:00 AM

How We Increased the Conversion Rate on Our Mobile Landing Pages [New Data]

Written by [Lauren Pedigo](#) | [@LaurenCPedigo](#)

SHARE

699

Tweet

106

A sales blog, because it grabbed me on social (and I once worked with that guy)

The image shows a screenshot of a LinkedIn Pulse feed. At the top, the LinkedIn navigation bar is visible with the search bar and various icons. Below the navigation bar, there is a banner that reads "Is Your Business Listed Correctly Online? Check Now For Free!". The main content area is titled "Pulse" and includes a "Publish a post" button. The feed displays several articles, with the top one being the focus: "How to Avoid Sending 'Just Checking In' Follow Up Emails" by John Sherer. This article is highlighted with a large, dark blue overlay that contains the text "How to Avoid Sending Selfish 'Just Checking In' Follow Up Emails" in white and orange. Below the overlay, the author's profile is shown: John Sherer, Director at Appcues, with a "Following" button.

LinkedIn navigation bar: Home Profile Connections Jobs Interests Business Services Try Premium for free

Search for people, jobs, companies, and more... Advanced

Is Your Business Listed Correctly Online? Check Now For Free!

Pulse Publish a post

How to Avoid Sending "Just Checking In" Follow Up Emails
John Sherer

10 Habits of Ultra-Likeable Leaders
Dr. Travis Bradberry

Exposing The World Of The One Percent
Jason Binn

Fire Faster: 5 Excuses CEOs Give For Not Getting Rid of Low Hunter Walk

5 Myths About Working Mums
Amanda Anderson

The Value of Delaying Judgement
Richard Branson

Mary Barra's Got a Plan for Fixing GM's Culture (and Only Daniel Roth

How to Avoid Sending **Selfish** "Just Checking In" Follow Up Emails

John Sherer
Director at Appcues
Following

Because I had a dilemma, caused by my perpetual DIY home renovation

DEC 23, 2013 @ 11:32 AM

PAINT COLOR IDEAS DESIGN + DECORATE COLOR COLOR PAINT

THE RIGHT WHITE: 11 DESIGNERS ON THEIR PERFECT PAINT COLOR

Designers reveal their go-to white paint



BY AMY PREISER

2.8k
SHARES



MOST READ

/amy-preiser/

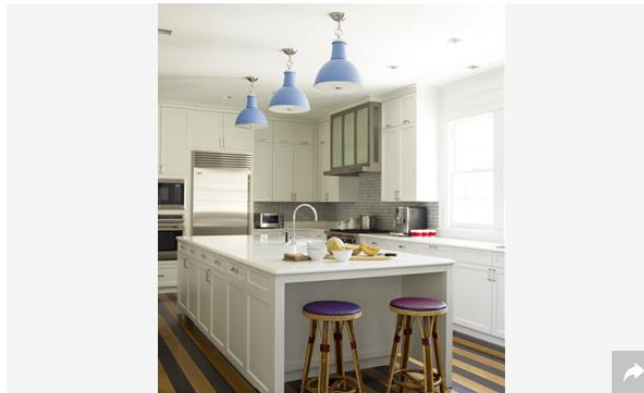


Photo: Courtesy of Katie Ridder

Any skilled designer knows that selecting the perfect white paint is anything but simple. What's a seemingly basic element—the essence of simplicity—proves to be one of the most complex decisions with hundreds of



Because I can relate (and it goes straight to my inbox)

Amy name is Amy

"LIFE IN FITS AND STARTS"

[home](#) | [t is for teenagers](#) | [d is for divorce](#) | [here's the story](#) | [contact amy](#)

when sharks aren't the only scary things at the beach

Posted on July 6th, 2015 by Amy Byrnes

This is what happens when one of your worst fears is realized, which - come to think of it - seems to happen to me a lot. I got down to the beach late Sunday morning to spend the final day of the long holiday weekend with my toes dug in the sand and talking [READ MORE...](#)

share this:

Like 150 people like this. Be the first of your friends.

Posted in [d is for divorce](#), [fortysomething](#), [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [shark](#), [shark attack](#) | 10 Comments |

the price of freedom

all about amy

PHOTO CREDIT: NICOLE MARTIN PHOTOGRAPHY

Amy is an unemployed single mother of four who spends a lot of time hoping more things will go wrong in her life so she can write about them. She's afraid of tunafish, math and teenagers (not necessarily in that order) but hearts zombies. When not making sandwiches or wiping the kitchen counter, Amy listens to public radio and thinks a lot about her hair and writing a book some day.

Your reader's motivation matters

I bet just like me, you read blogs on social, through Google searches and via email. Maybe you don't call them blogs. Maybe they're articles or stories. Same thing.

Can you see how these different channels – social media, search and email – might deliver your posts to your prospective clients and customers?

When you know how people consume blogs, it helps you to write for them.

Let's move on to the basics of creating a blog for your business.

Before you pick up your laptop, consider the five intentions of blogging and repeat after me:

I blog to:

- Educate
- Build trust
- Solve problems
- Increase visibility
- Give people something to share

I do not blog to:

- Sell things

3 keys to a great blog

Everything you write should be directed toward your target audience and should use that person's:

- Voice
 - In the language of the searcher
- Perspective
 - From the viewpoint of searcher, their problems, their pains
- Focus
 - On one keyword phrase or issue to be solved. Don't get fancy and talk about too many concepts.

How to choose your focus. Write about what you know to be your target's problems and the solutions he or she needs.

Your industry



Your inside knowledge of problems



Specific solutions that worked for you

For instance..

Supplier to small scale retail



Attracting and maintaining qualified staff



5 Hiring Mistakes Every Small Business Retailer Makes

Get really specific with your target and the problems he or she faces.

Maybe you are a provider of hiring solutions to small business or maybe you're a supplier of pet products. In either case you have the expertise to help solve another business owner's problems.

- If she was Googling a solution to her staffing problem, she found you.
- If she was scrolling through Twitter, she noted you as a trusted source.
- If she got your email, she remembered you as a supplier looking out for her needs.



See how we got REALLY specific in this example? That's how the reader knows you're talking directly to her. It's also how she knows you *get* her.

Know who you're writing for. (Not, for whom you are writing. Nobody talks like that. And blog readers don't want to read that.)

- Who is your target? Who is your audience? Can you be more specific?
- Can you be even more specific to attract a wider audience?
- Keep it simple
 - One keyword phrase with some supporting keywords
 - Focus on one question or problem
- Give clear, actionable solutions.

Let's get down to the nitty gritty. Don't be scared. It's not that bad.



Here are three easy to write blog types:

- The List
- The FAQ
- The Dilemma

And here's how you write them...

The List

- Manageable, digestible.

The headline tells the reader, “You will be able to read and process this in a few minutes. At the end of this article you will have walked away with the six hiring lessons.”

- What are six things you can teach your customers?



Lou Adler [influencer](#)

CEO, best-selling author, created Performance-based Hiring. Recent book: The

[Follow](#)

6 Hiring Lessons from the NBA Lakers' Clumsy Recruiting Efforts

Jul 7, 2015

2,313

234

18



The FAQ

- Simple answers

Tells the reader, “At the end of this article you will have the answer to your burning question.”

- What is that one question clients are always asking you? You can answer it in your sleep, but it’s news to them.



How Many Sick Days Should You Give?

Posted on April 5 by [Stefan Schumacher](#) in [Small Business Tips](#)



According to the [U.S. Department of Labor](#), the average number of paid sick days is 8 for any employee of at least a year and 11 for an employee with 25 years' experience with the company.

SurePayroll recently surveyed small business owners nationwide, asking them how many paid sick days they give employees. Here's what they said:

- Less than 5 days: 80 (30% of respondents)

The dilemma

- Why you should choose this or that

Helps the reader solve a moral dilemma. As the writer it helps you guide and qualify prospects.

- What's the dilemma your prospects face when choosing between you and competitors? Can you spot the two competitors in this article? (*We use them both by the way, so let's all just be friends, k?*)

10 Reasons Why Start-Ups Should Choose WordPress over HubSpot

Posted by Gabriel in Blog | 3 comments

As with any industry, in the world of **online marketing** there are myriad ways to spend your money – some of which are more effective than others. For example, if you're a start-up company and need to get a jump on your new industry, you can immediately start finding companies and causes eager to take the money you haven't yet earned with the promise of returning a greater income as a result. From [cost-per-click advertising](#) to e-books to consultancy to marketing firms and beyond, you can easily find your new company deep underwater before you've even brought in your first customer.



????

What if there is no answer?

What if the answer is, it depends?

Or what if I don't want to answer that question on the web in full view of all my competitors?

Talk about it anyway

“Google doesn’t care if you answer the question,
just that you address it.”

– Marcus Sheridan,
marketing heavyweight

Just because there is no *one* answer to, “How much is my case worth?” doesn’t mean you can’t discuss the question and educate your prospects and also establish yourself as a trusted source. **Our client did two years ago and he’s still getting leads from that blog.**

Which kind of content is best?



You guessed it. **Evergreen.**

6 types of evergreen content in order of greatness:

- How to's
- FAQs
- Guides
- History of
- Industry resources
- Terms and glossary

The evergreen test

“Is this going to be relevant six months to a year from now?”

How to get started

- Use your most FAQ to craft your first blog with:
 - Informal voice and plain language
 - Real life examples (change names, merge characters)
 - Keep it simple
 - Think, what's the one thing my prospect needs to learn in this post.

Last notes

- How long? Loooonger than you imagine.
 - Long enough to answer the question
 - Keep it focused on one keyword phrase
 - Ballpark for beginners 800-1,000 words

If a post is greater than 1,500 words, on average it receives 68.1% more tweets and 22.6% more Facebook likes than a post that is under 1,500 words. (QuickSprout)

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What's left?

You sitting down in front of the blank page.

Take it from me, a professional writer for 19 years. The hardest part is sitting down. Schedule it on your calendar. Set a timer. Promise yourself an latte when you're done. Whatever you need to do to keep your butt in the chair.

Give it a couple months.

If you're blogging regularly, and A) It's just too onerous or B) You don't think it's working, shoot me an [email at Rival](#) and we can talk about setting you up with a legit business writer.

You can still give yourself the latte.

- Shannon



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