GudrunLauret

Content strategy, creation & support

How to Structure Your Blog Post

Tips and Template

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How to Write a Blog Post

Introduction
When it comes to writing blogs, people are often worried about how it should look, and how long it needs to be. It can seem daunting to sit down and write a post, especially if you compare your blogs to others.

It's best to keep it short and sweet, because you want to get your message across clearly and succinctly. Your readers are busy people, and may not have time to go through an essay-length post, so give them what they want.

The majority of those who are blogging for their business will produce shorter posts, and it's only people who've been writing blogs for years, or have a big team, who create long posts. Don't forget, for SEO purposes, Google is quite happy with 300 words!

Getting Started
I find it helpful to make notes before you start, and keep them handy for when you begin to write the blog. Jot down ideas and put them to one side for a couple of days, so you come to the writing process fresh and ready to go. You might want to carry a notebook with you, use the Notes facility on your phone or an app such as Evernote.

Come up with a general topic, but decide on the title after you've written the post – something more appropriate often comes to you when you've finished writing. If you spend ages agonising about the title, you'll never produce your post.

What do You Want to Say?
Think about what you want to convey to your readers; what's the important information they need to know? Don't waffle, get straight to the useful bit. And don't overwhelm people with too much detail, particularly if they're not familiar with your subject.

If you find you've got a lot to share (which is the other problem new bloggers have!) that's great, because you've got material for several posts ready to go. Start a list of ideas, group them into themes, and work out potential topics you can write about.

If you work on the principle of needing to write only 300 words, below is a guide that I use with clients who want to write some of their blogs themselves. Allocate a proportion of the total word count to each section and write to that.

You'll probably find you can come up with more words after all, and feel a lot more comfortable with the process. Headings and your title aren't part of the word count! You can go over the word count for any section; the aim is just to get you started.

View your blog as communicating two or three key ideas, with an introduction to outline what you're going to share, and a conclusion to sum up at the end. Use this as a basis for creating your first few blogs, and you'll find after a while that you don't need it, as the writing process becomes more natural. Good luck!

Section	Word count	Notes
Introduction	50 words	What will you be talking about?
Point one	65 words	Most important information
Point two	65 words	More detail
Point three	65 words	Other information
Conclusion	55 words	Sum up the information you've just given them.

I've included this table as a template you can use and reuse for your own posts. Fill it in and keep it handy when you start to write. The notes column should always be the largest. Use bullet points for the key information to include, and reallocate the word count to suit your needs.

Topic: _____

Section	Word count	Notes
Intro.		
Point 1		
Point 2		
Point 3		
Conc.		

Title: _____

Tips for Great Blog Writing

What is a Blog?
A blog is the cornerstone of creating awareness and successful marketing of your business. Regularly updated with original, interesting copy, your blog is an ideal tool for sharing your knowledge and expertise and can be an easy way for potential customers to get to know, like and trust you, and ultimately do business with you.

Each and every blog is the basis for a range of repurposing methods – sharing your content across multiple platforms in different formats, always sending people back to your blog and driving more traffic to your site.

It's about giving your audience valuable information – you want them to feel inspired and excited at the thought of visiting your museum or site. Focus on what's unique or different, and what they'll experience when they arrive.

Many people haven't written anything since they were at school, and unhappy memories of English homework can colour their view on blogging. But blogging is just another process, and with thorough planning and preparation can be far less painful and time-consuming than you might imagine.

Before You Start Writing
Before you even put virtual pen to paper, you need to be completely clear on who you're writing for and what you're going to tell them – why should they read your blog posts?

A buyer persona is a great way to really go into detail about what your ideal customer (sometimes referred to as an avatar) looks like. You'll find this exercise invaluable if you've never done it before. If you do have avatars, now is the ideal time to look at them again and decide if they're still relevant. Use the ideal customer workbook to help you with this.

When writing your persona, look, if possible, at the types of visitors you usually get to create a composite. Ask the customer services and marketing teams (if you have them) about who contacts them or who they target.

This will give you an idea of what questions people have and you can use the answers to these as the basis of some of your blog posts. Ginny Redish, in her book "Letting go of the Words", recommends coming up with key phrases your avatars might use, and keeping these in mind as you write.

Writing for the Web
How does writing for the web differ from more traditional forms of advertising or print publications? Most internet users are there for a particular piece of information and are looking for a quick answer to their question.

As Ginny Redish explains, good web writing: answers people's questions, acts as a conversation, where the copy replaces your side of it, and allows people to "grab and go" – find out what they're looking for and get back to work/the family/leisure time.

So what can you do to encourage people to stay on your blog long enough to read to the end and find your call to action, or decide to visit your venue?

People skim web content, so presenting them with long blocks of text is guaranteed to cause them to lose interest. Writing shorter sentences and paragraphs will help, as will using white space – literally the white "page" gaps between your paragraphs, which encourage the eye to keep moving down.

Put all the most important information "above the fold," near the top of the screen, before they have to scroll down. You can also break information into smaller pieces by using bullet points or numbered lists.

Bear in mind that your readers are unlikely to be experts in your subject – that's why they're visiting your site. In most cases, including specific terms and jargon is best avoided. If you use acronyms, explain them. You can't assume your readers are familiar with them, and there can be more than one meaning for a series of letters.

Try to write naturally – don't use long words that you wouldn't use in everyday life. A blog is a way of showing your authenticity and personality: more formal language in your writing will seem forced and not genuine and there's a risk that you might use the wrong word in the wrong context.

Don't waffle – writing lots doesn't necessarily mean you're getting your message across; you may be giving more detail than is needed. Use lots of headings, photographs, illustrations and anything else that will break up the text and keep your site visitors engaged.