

FREE BLOGGING GUIDE



How to Write a GREAT Blog Post

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How to Write Attention Grabbing Blog Titles

The most important part of your blog post is your title. If you don't grab your reader's attention with the title and get them to actually read the post, nothing you put inside the post matters. It doesn't matter how great and helpful your content is. It doesn't matter what offers or affiliate links you have in your post and it doesn't matter who sponsored you to write it. If you can't get them to read it, the blog post doesn't do you much good.

And when it comes to getting free search engine traffic, your title is important as well. It is the most important factor when it comes to getting your content to rank. Yes, there are plenty of other factors, but a good title with the right keywords in it will do more good than anything else you do.

How do you go about writing a good, attention grabbing blog post title then? I suggest you start with a working title for your post and craft your content. Then come back and work on the finalized headline, implementing as many of the tips below as you can.

Make it Interesting and Tell The Truth

You want to write an attention grabbing headline. With that comes the temptation to hype it up and stretch the truth just a little bit. While that may get you some extra clicks, there's a trade-off. You'll lose credibility if you're exaggerating or telling little (or big) white lies. You see a lot of those headlines on social media. You click through and end up disappointed because the post doesn't fulfill what the title promised.

Instead, make it interesting without all the hype and stick to the truth. A great way to do that is to think about what's in it for your readers.

Keep It Short and Engaging

Shorter titles tend to do better both with click-throughs on your blog and social media. Keep it short and to the point and think about engagement straight from the title of your post. Ask your readers a question. Make a statement that makes them think. Put numbers in your titles to get them thinking about what's in the content (i.e. My 5 Best Tips To ...)

Keep an eye out for titles that catch your attention. Copy and paste them into a swipe file and see how you can tweak them for your own needs and market.

Work In Your Keywords

Last but not least, don't forget to work your keywords into the title. I tend to do this last. Always write for your readers first and then work in what you need to do to make sure the search engines recognize what your content is about.

Ranking well for something your readers don't want to read or don't want to click on doesn't do you much good. Focus on your audience and then optimize for search as an afterthought and you'll do well.

Implement these tips and get a few blog posts out there. Pay attention to what's working and what isn't. Each market, each blog, and each readership is different. Use these tips as guidelines to help you find your own style that resonates well with your audience and gets you the results you want.

How Long Should Your Blog Posts Be?

Every few months we get some new advice from a blogging guru saying that our blog posts need to be longer, or shorter, or that they should be broken up into 10 pages of bite-sized chunks... it can make you crazy. Let's talk about this. How long should your blog posts really be?

It would be great if there was a magic number that guaranteed best results, wouldn't it? But that's like asking someone to tell you how long your conversations with other people should be. Sometimes it's nothing more than a few words or sentences; sometimes you have a nice long talk. It all depends on how much you have to say to each other, doesn't it?

The same approach works well with your blog posts. Sometimes you're sharing just a quick tip or a recipe for example. In that case something around 200 to 300 words will do just fine. Add a pretty picture and call it good.

Other times you want to go into a little more depth. You want to cover different aspects of a topic, share some examples and give your readers as much information as you can. In those cases make it as long as you need to make it. Long posts are great. They help establish your authority and if the content is great, they are often shared on social media. Plus long posts give the search engines a lot of text to sift through and give you more chances to rank for long-tail keywords.

The best advice is to mix longer and shorter blog posts. It will make your blog seem more natural and organic. Don't force yourself to reach a certain magic word count if you don't have that much to say on a topic. Keep it short and to the point. Your readers will thank you.

If on the other hand you have a lot to share in a different post, go for it. Break the longer content up into small paragraphs and help your readers stay on track with subheadings and bullet points. Make it easy to scan longer posts so your readers can get an idea of what the content is about before they commit to reading it all.

And if you're finding yourself writing a few thousand words, consider breaking it up into a series of blog posts instead. It will help both you and your readers from getting overwhelmed with one long post. Link from one part of the series to the next to make it easy for your blog readers to follow along.

Above all, enjoy the process of writing and pay attention to what your readers prefer. If your short posts tend to do better, consider keeping your posts short and to the point. If you're getting a lot more engagement and social media shares on longer posts, combine a few of the shorter blog post ideas into a longer one. And whatever you do, don't get hung up on a number of words.

Why Breaking Up Your Content and Making It Easy to Scan is Important

Let me ask you something. How much content is thrown at you on any given day? It's a lot, isn't it? We're bombarded by articles, social media posts, emails, podcasts, videos etc. We come across a lot more content than we could possibly consume any given day. And chances are that a lot of it is good stuff.

As a result, we've all gotten pretty good at scanning and then picking and choosing what we actually want to read, watch, or listen to. And that's why it is important to break up your content and make it easy for your readers to scan through it.

If you can't show them at a glance what the post is about, chances are pretty good that they'll move on to something else. Here are a couple of different things you can do to break up your post and make sure it's easy to scan.

Use Headlines and Sub-Headings

Take a look at this post. Do you see how I'm breaking the different elements of making a post easy to scan down into subheadings? You can do the same with your blog post. Think of the outline of your post. Each point in your outline could be a subheading. Start with those and then fill in the content.

Or if you prefer, start with the content and then go back and add the sub headings. Create the content and work in the subheadings in whichever way works best for you. The only important thing is that they are in there before you hit publish.

Keep Your Paragraphs Short

Reading online is a lot different than reading something on paper. Books, newspapers and magazines can get away with long paragraphs. Online it's a different story. Text is harder to read on digital devices and our attention span keeps shrinking.

One of the most effective things you can do to keep your readers reading is to keep your paragraphs and sentences short. Don't make it much longer than three or four lines.

Use Lists And Bold Important Key Terms

Next you want to go through your content and see if there's anything you can present in the form of a list.

- Use a list instead of several related sentences.
- Use a list to share examples.
- A list is a great way to break things up and grab your reader's attention.
- Lists can be as long or short as you need them to be.

And let's not forget about other formatting options. Bold important key terms, italicize them, or underline them for emphasis. All of these formatting options make it much quicker and easier to scan a piece of text and figure out what it's about without having to read every single word.

Pull Them In With Graphics

Last but not least, let's talk about graphics. A picture is one of the best ways to convey within seconds what your blog post is about and generate interest. Just scroll through your Facebook feed and look at what's getting your attention. Or how about browsing through Pinterest? Images hook you and grab you in. They are also a great way to break up longer sections of text. Make sure you use them to their fullest advantage.

A Picture May Not Be Worth a 1,000 Words, but You Need Them in Your Posts

You've heard the saying "A picture is worth a thousand words". I'm sure there are quite a few pictures out there like that, but when it comes to a blog post, that isn't always the case. Even so, you want to make sure your posts are visually appealing and attention grabbing. Good pictures are a great way to accomplish that.

A Picture Can Draw Readers In

A picture will draw readers in and make them read your blog posts. Don't believe me? Have a look at some of the major news sites, big blogs or even your Facebook feed. It's the pictures that grab your attention in combination with the post title.

Try to find an image that tells the story of your post. The image should tell at a glance (with the help of the post title) what the blog post is all about. Of course you're not limited to just one image. If it fits the topic, grab a few to illustrate what you're talking about or show step-by-step progress.

You Need Pictures For Social Media Shares

We talked about Facebook already and how important images are there to grab your reader's attention. But it doesn't stop there. Think about other social sites your audience participates in. It doesn't matter if it's Pinterest, Instagram or even Twitter. A good image will stand out and draw people in. Without it, your chances to get the click and more importantly the read and interaction on your blog are slim.

But it doesn't stop there. As you get traffic to your post, those readers will be more likely to share your post on social media if it has a good image or two. Of course making it easy to share with social media buttons doesn't hurt either.

But Where Do You Get Those Images?

Now that I have you convinced that you need good images, the next question is, of course, where do you find them? You have a couple of different options when it comes to getting pictures.

1) You Can Take Them Yourself - If you're a decent photographer and can find the subject matter you need, by all means go ahead and take your own images. Photography equipment aside, this is the cheapest and most authentic option. The downside is that it takes time to set up, take the picture, process it after and get it in a format you can use on your blog.

2) You Can Hire Someone Else To Take Them For You - This is where things can get pricey. But you might get lucky and find a couple of college kids with decent cell phone cameras that can get you the shots you need for a little beer money.

3) Get Some Stock Photos - The most time and cost effective method for most of us is to buy stock photography. Sites like IstockPhoto.com and Depositphoto.com will sell you the right to use an image on your blog post for around \$2. And since they are huge sites that connect you to thousands of photographers, you can find images on just about any subject with just a few keystrokes.

How to Encourage Social Sharing of Your Blog Posts

We live in a social world where much of our news comes from sites like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. To grow your readership and make sure your blog posts get the attention they deserve, you need to encourage your current readers to share what you've written on their favorite social media sites. What those sites are will largely depend on the niche you're in. Find out where your audience likes to hang out and then focus on getting them to share on those social media outlets to attract more like-minded readers.

Start With Quality Content

Of course it all starts with quality content that your readers want to read and share. No one is going to spread a crappy post on social media. Start by writing the best blog posts you can and do some research into what your audience wants and needs.

In other words, serve your market well and they will in turn share what you're writing with their friends and acquaintances.

Make It Pretty

Next it's time to pretty up your post. Break up your content into small bite-sized chunks so it's easy to read. Add some subheadings and formatting to make it easy to scan through the content. And don't forget to add a pretty image that captures the essence of your post.

Step away from your desk and then come back and look at it with fresh eyes. Is the blog post visually appealing? Does it grab your attention? If not, go back to the drawing board and see what you can do to improve it.

Make It Easy To Share

When your goal is to get people to share your blog post on social media, you want to make it as easy as possible to share. We talked about what social media sites your audience favors earlier. Make sure you have one-click buttons to share the blog post available for all those sites. If you are running your blog using WordPress you should be able to find a plugin to help you do this.

Ask For The Social Media Share

Buttons are great, but sometimes it takes a little extra push to get your readers to take action. Don't be afraid to ask for the social media share. Close your articles and blog posts with a little sentence or two that asks them to share on Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest etc. if they enjoyed the post. And don't forget to let them know how much you appreciate it when they share the love.

Engage Your Readers and Encourage Interaction

Blogging can feel like a very one-sided conversation sometimes. You're sitting there, typing away, and sharing content with your readers. But you don't hear anything back. They read and respond with silence. The good news is that it doesn't have to be that way.

Blogs were designed to facilitate engagement and communications. There's a reason you can leave comments and all it takes is a little encouragement to get your own readers to do that on your blog. Combine that with a little social media interaction and there's no reason you can't turn this into a fully engaged conversation that will help you grow a loyal base of fans.

Because let's face it, while it's nice for our ego to get lots of comments and interactions, when you're blogging for a living what really counts is making enough money to pay your bills at the end of the month. And for that to happen you need a loyal audience that not only knows, likes, and trusts you but is also comfortable spending money with you or your sponsors. And for that to happen you need an engaged audience.

Interaction helps too because with each email your readers send you, with each comment they post, and each social media post they write you learn a little more about your target audience and how you can best serve them. And that right there is the key to becoming a profitable blogger. Know your market, serve your market, and present them with offers to help them reach their goals or fill their need.

We know it's important, but how do we get the ball rolling and encourage our audience, our readers to interact with us bloggers? We do it by asking them questions, by asking them for feedback and by encouraging them to share their options - right from our blog posts. Let me give you an example. Let's say you're writing a post about getting your baby to sleep through the night. Within the post, ask your readers how old their kids are, or what their own experiences are with their infants. Ask them to share if they are struggling with getting enough sleep right now because baby wakes them up every few hours. Encourage them to share their stories and tell them exactly where and how to do it - by leaving a comment below.

Now the next step is crucial. As soon as you see that first comment or two pop up, reply to them and keep the conversation going. This will do two things for you. Not only will you have a great conversation with the reader that commented (and a chance to form a deeper relationship), seeing you reply also shows other readers that you care and really want to hear from them. And that's what's going to encourage more and more of your loyal readers to comment.

The same goes for social media engagement. When you post a link to your latest blog post, ask your friends and followers to like, share, and comment. Then let them know how much you appreciate it when they do. Of course you can get the conversation going there too by asking a question related to your blog post on Facebook for example. It's a great way to share another link to your blog post and get the conversation going at the same time.

Give these tips a try and see if you can't get your readers to engage and interact with you. It's well worth the effort.

What's the Goal of Your Blog Post?

Before you sit down and write the first word of your next blog post, stop and think about what you want to accomplish with your post. What's your goal? How is this blog post going to help you accomplish something to help you move forward with your business.

Here are some questions you may want to ask yourself:

- Are you writing a post that you hope will get shared across social media and grow your reach?
- Are you writing a post that also invites readers to join your email list so you can get back in touch later?
- Are you writing a post to get the attention of a big brand you'd like to work with?
- Are you writing a blog post to start a conversation with your existing readership?
- Are you writing a blog post with the end goal of selling your readers a product?
- Are you writing a blog post to start a conversation with a fellow blogger in hopes of growing a mutually profitable relationship?

All of the above are valid goals for your blog posts and I'm sure you can add a few more to that list. The important thing is that you are aware of what you're trying to accomplish with your post.

Then start with the end in mind. If your goal is to get the attention of a big brand you'd like to work with for example, think about a post you can write about your experience with one of their products.

If your goal is to grow your list, think of a topic that's complimentary to your opt-in offer freebie. Write the content and then transition into an invitation to join your list and download the free report.

Do you see how much easier it is to craft goal driven blog posts when you know what your goal is before you sit down to write? You can reverse engineer the entire process and make sure everything flows well and leads your reader to whatever action you want them to take at the end.

Being able to do that is pretty powerful stuff. It allows you to craft different posts strategically. Write a post that helps you grow your reach. Then work on one that starts the conversation with our new readers. Next work on getting them on your list and finally make them an offer. Intersperse this with posts that help you get the attention of potential JV partners and Brands and you're all set to not only grow your blog and your audience, but make money blogging as well.

How to Craft a Good Call to Action at the End of Your Post

If there's one thing I see a lot of bloggers do wrong, it's not giving their readers anything to do at the end of the blog post. Put yourself in the shoes of your readers. You read a great article, get to the end and there's no call to action. What do you do? You go back to Facebook or go watch some cat videos on YouTube. Why not give your readers something more. What if they wouldn't mind learning more from you or connecting with you via email or social media or even take you up on a product recommendation? That's what a call to action at the end of your blog posts is all about.

Encourage Them To Comment And Interact With You

One of the easiest ways to craft a call to action is to ask your readers to leave you a comment. Invite them to share their own experiences on the topic, a tip, a recipe etc. In other words, ask them to comment on the post.

Example: What are your favorite ways to end your blog posts? Do you use a particular call to action? Leave me a comment below and let's talk.

Invite Them To Connect Further Via Social Media

If growing your social media reach is a goal, consider adding some calls to action on to "like" the blog post on Facebook, share it on Twitter, pin it on Pinterest etc. Or share one of your social media profiles in the call to action and invite them to join you there.

Example: Got questions about crafting calls to action? Let's talk about it on our Facebook page. (Link to your Facebook page).

Make A Recommendation

Sometimes it makes sense to make a sale and monetize your blog post in your call to action. This is also called pre-selling. You talk about a topic and then at the end make a recommendation for a product that helps your readers learn more or take the next step.

Example: There's a lot more to be said about crafting a strong call to action. Take a look at this guide to learn more.

Invite Them To Join Your List

Often the best thing you can do at the end of your blog posts is to invite readers to join your list. Once you have them on your email list, you can invite them to come back and read other posts, comment on them, join you on your favorite social media platforms and of course make offers to your readers.

Getting them on your list should always be your first priority, so use that call to action often.

Example: I have a lot more to share on the topic of blogging, business success and personal development. I would love to regularly email you more tips and strategies. There's a special gift for you as my thank you!

Come subscribe to my newsletter Unlimited Success For Women:

<http://UnlimitedSuccessForWomen.com>

Different Ways to Monetize Your Blog Posts

Let's start with a big assumption. You're writing your blog to make money, to earn a living, not to share fun stories about what's going on with your family or what you're up to with your favorite hobby or activity. If you're putting in the work, doing the research, and growing the audience, chances are you'd like to get paid for your hard work. And for that to happen, you have to monetize your blog posts. Let's look at three different ways to do just that.

Make Product Recommendations Directly On Your Blog

One of the easiest things to get started with is to make recommendations directly in your blog posts. These can be your own products or something you're an affiliate for. If you want something really simple to try, sign up for the Amazon affiliate program and as you blog about things, work in a product here or there.

For example, if you're in the parenting niche and are working on a blog post about a fun park in your area that you went to, you could mention the stroller you used and how well it did or didn't perform in the park. Or if you're a photographer who also blogs, share your latest pictures and mention what camera, filter, flash etc. you used for each picture along with links to those products.

Work With Brands

Working with brands is another great option. Make connections via social media or use one of the large networks that connect bloggers and brands. They will often pay you to write a blog post that mentions one of their products. Don't be surprised to work for free products or low pay in the beginning. That's ok.

It takes time to build a relationship and show the marketing person you're working with that you have the reach and the chops to influence a large group of people. And of course as your audience grows, you can expect to get paid better to be a brand ambassador.

Grow Your List and Make Offers Via Email

The most effective way to make money from your blog is to focus on getting your blog readers on your email list first. This gives you a chance to build a stronger relationship with your audience, get them back to your blog and of course make offers to them directly in your emails.

Keep your email messages entertaining and helpful with some recommendations thrown in, and you'll do well. Keep growing your list as your blog grows and your income will follow right along.

Of course this is by no means an all-inclusive list. There are quite a few other ways to monetize your blog, but these are three relatively simple concepts you can start with.

Get Your Blog Readers on Your List So You Can Get Them Back to Your Blog

How many times do you find yourself browsing the web, hopping from one site to the next and actually finding some pretty cool blogs? It happens to me all the time and I have every intention of going back to some of those blogs to read more. Sometimes I even remember to bookmark them. But the chances of me ever finding my way back there or digging through my list of hundreds of browser bookmarks are slim to none. And the vast majority of people that stumble across your blog are the same way. That's not a very effective way to grow a loyal readership.

That's why it is crucial to get those readers on your email list. Once you do that you can bring them back over and over again. You can send out a quick little email inviting them to read your latest blog post. But it doesn't stop there.

You can also share your social media posts and profiles with your list and grow your reach with nothing more than an email that invites them to interact with you on your Facebook Page for examples.

And with each email you sent, your readers get to know you a little better. Ideally that means they'll also like and most importantly trust you more. Once your readers know, like, and trust you, they'll gladly take you up on product recommendations you make to them.

A lot of bloggers ask about monetizing their posts. Frankly the best answer is to get your readers on your list, build that relationship and then make offers via email. You don't have to be spammy about it or sound like a used car salesman. Instead, share some helpful information, give them some tips and then invite them to learn more or implement it with the product you're recommending.

Let's recap why it's so crucial to your blogging success that you should focus on building an email list first. It allows you to bring readers back to your blog whenever you're publishing a new post. Having a list also allows you to grow your social media reach by inviting readers to connect with you on said social media properties. Last but not least, staying in touch regularly via email gives you a chance to build a relationship with your audience. It's at that point that it makes sense to make offers for products and services and make some money from your blog posts and emails.

Guidelines for Guest Blogging on My WomenWhoWantToSuccessfullyWorkForThemselves.com Blog

Here are a few guest blogger guidelines:

1. Write a 200-500 word article (minimum 200 words) you feel will interest the women reading our blog.
2. Write an author resource box (a short bio) of between 70 –100 words. It may contain one “live” link to your own website, author page, etc.
3. You retain the copyright to your article, but are giving us permission to use the article in this blog or future publications as long as we give you full credit and recognition.
4. All articles must be original. By submitting your article for consideration, you are certifying that you own the copyright and all the material is original to you, the author.
5. I won't be spelling checking or proof reading so please make sure your posts are publication ready.
6. You will be given full credit as the guest blogger.

Areas of interest:

Success
Finances
Social Media
How-to's
Marketing
Balancing Time
Health
Fashion
Entrepreneurship

Sharon Michaels - Resources

I'm often asked to share the materials I have available for women in business. Most listed here are free and some can be purchased online.

Website: SharonMichaels.com

<http://SharonMichaels.com>



Newsletter Subscription – Free

<http://UnlimitedSuccessForWomen.com>

Blog Talk Radio Shows – 100's of shows - Free

Women Enjoying Success:

<http://www.blogtalkradio.com/sharon-michaels>

Entrepreneurial Women Radio:

<http://www.blogtalkradio.com/entrepreneurial-women-radio>

YouTube Channel – 100's of videos - Free

<https://www.youtube.com/user/ThePowerToSucceed>

Pinterest Boards – Women Enjoying Success - Free

<https://www.pinterest.com/enjoyingsuccess/>

Facebook Pages and Groups – For Women in Business - Free

Come “like” and connect – new posts daily...

Women Enjoying Success

<https://www.facebook.com/sharonmichaelswomenenjoyingsuccess>

Women Enjoying Success in Network Marketing

<https://www.facebook.com/womenenjoyingnetworkmarketingsuccess>

Women Who Want To Work Successfully For Themselves Group

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/wwwtswift/>

Blog - Free

Women Who Want To Successfully Work For Themselves.com – Blog – Free

New posts every Monday, Thursday and Saturday (*welcoming for guest bloggers*)

<http://womenwhowanttosuccessfullyworkforthemselves.com/>

Twitter – Free

<https://twitter.com/SharonMichaels>

Pinterest Board with a list of my Forbes.com articles – Free

<https://www.pinterest.com/enjoyingsuccess/forbescom-articles/>

Books and Kindles available on Amazon.com

_ Sharon's Author Page listing all books available on Amazon.com

<http://www.amazon.com/Sharon-Michaels/e/B001K7V2K4/>

Some of the Books Available on Amazon.com:

How to Give Yourself the POWER to Succeed – Paperback and Kindle

<http://www.amazon.com/How-Give-Yourself-POWER-Succeed-ebook/dp/B016COTDXM/>

21 Days to Living Your Dreams: A step-by-step approach to achieving your goals and living the life of your dreams – Paperback and Kindle

<http://www.amazon.com/21-Days-Living-Your-Dreams-ebook/dp/B00FUBCLM4/>

31 Days to Growing Your Network Marketing Business - Paperback and Kindle
<http://www.amazon.com/Days-Growing-Network-Marketing-Business/dp/1502818604>

Asking the Right Questions for Sponsoring Success – Kindle only
<http://www.amazon.com/Asking-Questions-Sponsoring-Success-Empowering-ebook/dp/B00GSDR9WA>

How to Plan and Host and Virtual Launch Party on Facebook – Kindle only
<http://www.amazon.com/Virtual-Launch-Party-Facebook-Empowering-ebook/dp/B00CNISC3O/>

How Create the Mindset of Prosperity and Wealth – Kindle only
<https://www.amazon.com/How-Create-Mindset-Prosperity-Wealth-ebook/dp/B005G8C3OW/>