

## How to Start Blogging for Business!

Would you like to use blog posts or articles for marketing your business, but you don't know where to get started?

Blogs are a great way to set yourself apart and showcase your expertise. You can use blogs to help promote your business and give value to build relationships with future prospects.

The best part is that it's free marketing and if you do it right, you can maximize each blog to reach prospects in multiple places. Here are easy tips to get you started.

*Quick Note: there are slight differences between blogs and articles, for example the length, 1500 or less words vs. 1500 or more words; 1st person vs. 3rd person; and the tone, scholarly vs. relationship. My writings are more of a combination, perhaps a "blarticle," but for the purpose of this message, I will use blog and article synonymously.*

Just like going to the gym, it can be hard to get started blogging, but once you're there, it feels great and provides tremendous value. There are several things to consider when blogging, including writing for your ideal customer, determining your topics, and increasing your readability factor.

**1. Determine your ideal customer.** Many sales people and business owners make the mistake of thinking they should reach everyone. This comes from fear of not wanting leave anyone out or missing an opportunity.

The challenge is that you will end up missing your best target because your message is too broad and people will have a hard time thinking "she's talking to me" or "she knows what I'm facing," and ultimately "I need her product or service."

Identify your different targets and put them through a filtering system to determine what target you are best serving. I use a filtering system that I teach my coaching clients with specific criteria I identify. This helps them get very clear on their best targets that are a right fit.

**2. Create a list of topics of interest to your ideal customer.** When you are crystal clear on who you are writing to, determining what you are writing about is much easier.

*Answer frequently asked questions.* Think about all of the questions posed by your new customers when you first meet. Make a list of as many as you can remember. You've heard these problems before, and you know how to respond to their concerns when speaking with them, now it's time to put your solutions into action in your blogs. This is great content! If you identified three questions, then write one article, name the three challenges, and write your response. If you think of 20 questions, that could be 20 articles with a response to each problem.

*Interview your current customers.* Write 5-10 questions you think your prospects might want answers to, and schedule conversations with 10 current customers to get their opinions. Let

them know they will be featured as an expert on your blog and in your social media. Do not write the blog verbatim from your interview. Deconstruct it and rewrite it for readers.

*Interview your prospects.* Again, 5-10 questions about what you want to know from your prospects. What are they looking for in a business like yours? What ways have they been helped before by someone like you? This serves to generate information for your blogs and starts to build rapport with your targets.

**#Salestip** this method also allows you to hear from your potential customers exactly what they are looking for from you.

*Read articles and watch videos from successful people in your industry.* Watch what the most successful people do and create your own ideas from there. Is there something you totally agree with and can expand on with more information? Do you have a twist on an idea? Perhaps you disagree with someone and have a different viewpoint.

*Read articles and watch videos from influencers who serve the same target, but in a different category.* I was helping a client to determine her topics and she told me about someone on YouTube who she admires. They are in an unrelated industry, but serve a similar target. I watched the video and created 10 new topics from ideas I had from the first five minutes of the video.

*Subscribe to Google Alerts.* Go to Google Alerts, type in your target or product/service, and have Google send you alerts when an article is published about your target or product/service. Read the articles each week and write a summary or review of what you've learned from this week's news.

**3. Increase Your Readability.** When you're writing a blog for social media you want it to be easy for the reader to comprehend so she wants to read the entire article, absorb all your juicy content, and want to come back for more.

60-80% of people consume social media on smartphones, and when they open a blog that has multiple sentences per paragraph, it looks like a novel. People think they'll come back to it later when they have more time. They get busy, just like you, and they never return. You missed your opportunity because you didn't make your article skimmable. Here's how you can get more eye balls on your valuable content:

- Have an enticing headline and sub-header.
- Make your first sentence a bold statement.
- Shorter paragraphs with one, two, or three sentences. (It's ok, you're not turning in a term paper).
- Use bullet point lists.
- Use bold and italics to make content stand out.

- Don't get too wordy. Read your sentences after you've written them and eliminate unnecessary words.
- Keep practicing. The more you write, the better you get.
- Open your blog on your own smartphone... what do you think? Now, go back and fix it.
- Add lots of white space.

Once you start writing, see how smart you are, and the value you bring to your prospects and customers, you'll want to do more! Keep those "blarticles" short and sweet and keep writing.

Take your artwork (writing is definitely art), and repurpose your articles everywhere... your website, your other social media channels, and make them into videos! Once you have enough articles in one topic, you can even make an eBook or publish a book of your articles to use as your business card. How cool is that?! I've built entire training programs from my writing and you can too!

Happy Blogging!

*Jennifer Darling*

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