

**EBOOK**

# **BLOGGING 101: HOW TO PROMOTE YOUR BUSINESS (FOR FREE)**



**ThriveHive**  
A PROPEL MARKETING COMPANY

# BLOGGING 101:

How to Promote Your Business (for Free)

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# BLOGGING FOR YOUR BUSINESS

If you're serious about your business and are looking for ways to grow, blogging can be an easy way to take your business to the next level. Blogging isn't the most glamorous activity, but it can work wonders for your business. Creating a blog for your business can help you grow your following and gain more customers, all for free! So, what are you waiting for?

This eBook will cover all aspects of business blogging, including a 5 step guide to blogging for your business. You will learn:

- ✓ What goes into a Blog
- ✓ The Benefits of Blogging
- ✓ How to Write a Blog Post
- ✓ How to Get Leads from Blogging
- ✓ How to Promote Your Blog



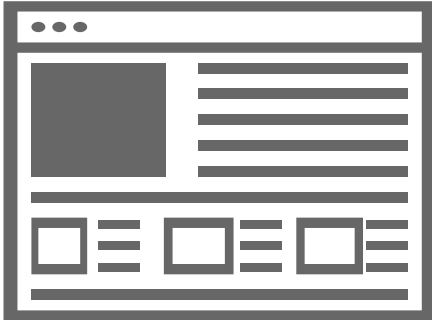
## DID YOU KNOW?

Businesses that blog generate 126% more leads than businesses that do not blog.

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## WHAT IS A BLOG, ANYWAY?



A blog is a page on your website that contains your blog posts in reverse chronological order. It is a section on your website that's a source of information related to your business and industry.

While your blog is a page on your website, clicking on each post on your blog leads to a new page, which means that you can focus on specific keywords for SEO (search engine optimization) for each post.

Your blog will help generate leads for your business, but it does so by slowly building awareness and trust with your audience. The purpose of your blog is to provide information your target audience is looking for, not to pitch your products or services.

Blogging may take some time to bring in traffic to your business, but it's an important piece of a creating a successful marketing plan for your business.

“ The purpose of your blog is to provide information for your target audience.

”

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# WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF BLOGGING?

While many small business owners question the usefulness of a business blog, blogging is proven to help bring in leads to your business. When done effectively, blogging can have a lot of benefits for your small business.



## BENEFITS OF A BUSINESS BLOG

- Brings free traffic to your business website
- Increases content to use on your website and social media accounts
- Helps you establish yourself as a thought leader in your field
- Improves your website's ranking on search engines for keywords related to your business



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# THE 5 FUNDAMENTALS OF BUSINESS BLOGGING

A successful business blog has five fundamental components. Investing your time and effort into each of these areas will ensure that your blog is worth the time you put into it, and that it consistently drives traffic to your business. The five fundamentals of business blogging are:

- 1 CHOOSING A PLATFORM
- 2 GENERATING BLOG CONTENT
- 3 RESEARCHING KEYWORDS
- 4 OPTIMIZING YOUR POST
- 5 PROMOTING YOUR BLOG

Blogging can be a bit overwhelming at times, so also included in this eBook are some tips and tricks to help you create a successful business blog.

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# 1 CHOOSING A PLATFORM

## HOW DO I CHOOSE A PLATFORM?



There are many programs, websites, and services available today that enable you to have a blog. The options for your blog can be overwhelming. To pick the right one for your business, think about the purpose you want your blog to serve and what that will require from a blogging platform. Some factors to consider when starting a business blog are:

### COST

How much are you willing to spend on blogging? While there are many free options to consider, self-hosting will allow you to name your blog whatever you want for a few bucks a month.

With self-hosting, your blog URL can be “www.blogname.com”, instead of “www.blogname.wordpress.com”



A shorter URL is beneficial because it is easier for users both to remember and to access.

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## EASE OF INTEGRATION

Without properly integrating your blog into your website, your blog won't be able to help you generate leads for your business. Your blog and website should be designed similarly in order to avoid confusion for readers, when going from your blog to your website, and vice versa.



## USER EXPERIENCE

Your blog should be easy to read and easy to scroll through for your followers. You should try to make sure there's a support staff for you to reach out to in case of an issue with your blog. You're going to have to update your blog too, which means that you should be comfortable using whatever blogging platform you decide to choose.

## SEO CAPABILITIES

Many blogging platforms, like WordPress, are SEO friendly and allow the integration of plugins for SEO. SEO helps your posts rank on search engines, which should be an important factor to consider when choosing a platform.

“ Your blog and website should be designed similarly in order to avoid confusion for readers. ”

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## TRACKING

In order to monitor your blog's success, you'll need to set up tracking for your blog with an analytics platform such as Google Analytics.



Try to make sure that you can track the results of your blog with an analytics platform that makes sense to you. This will help show you what your best performing posts and topics are.

## WHAT PLATFORM SHOULD I USE?

While there are dozens of strong platforms that you can use for blogging, we recommend WordPress. A WordPress blog can be hosted for free by WordPress or self-hosted (for a small fee), and it allows you to personalize every little thing about your blog from social sharing options to your blog theme.



WordPress is both user-friendly for you and SEO-friendly for search engines, and it can be easily integrated into your business's website. Overall, WordPress is the easiest platform to use with the most options for customization.

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## 2 GENERATING BLOG CONTENT

### HOW DO I COME UP WITH BLOG POST IDEAS?



#### STAY RELEVANT

While your blog posts will cover a variety of topics, you want each topic to be related to your business or industry. This keeps your blog relevant and useful to your visitors. It also ensures that your posts will relate to one another, enabling you to include links in each post to other posts you've written, which keeps visitors on your site longer.

#### CONVEY YOUR MESSAGE

You want to have an overall message. Each post may be different, but their style, tone, and content should convey the same message every time.

This message could be that you're an expert in your field to be trusted, or that you are focused on helping people succeed, not just luring in clients.



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## IDEAS



Here are some blog posts ideas you can use for your business blog:

- Write a bio about one of your employees
- Post a transcript of an interview with a loyal customer
- Provide tips about a tricky topic in your niche
- Educate with “how to’s”
- Give a behind-the-scenes description of a typical day of work
- Share a long list of advice you’ve used to improve your business
- Introduce a new service or product you’re adding to your business
- Talk about a promotion you’re holding on social media
- Announce news about any cool new partnerships with local businesses



## QUICK TIP

Get a lot of frequently asked questions?  
Answer them in a blog post!

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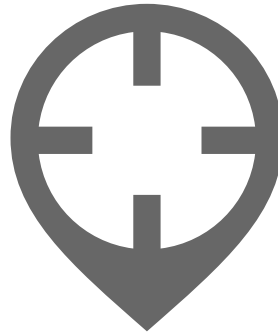


## HOW DO I WRITE A BLOG POST?

Writing a blog post doesn't have to be scary! Here are the 6 steps to follow when creating posts for your blog.

### 1 CHOOSE YOUR FOCUS

The first step of writing a blog post is choosing the focus of your post.



Do you want it to be focused on a current event in your industry, a particular product you offer, or a topic on which you want to educate readers?

### 2 FIND KEYWORDS



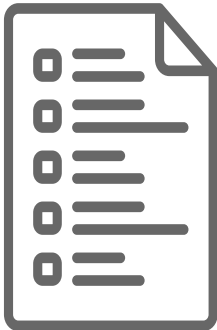
After choosing the focus of your post, search for keywords related to your focus that you can use in your post.

You'll learn more about finding the right keywords for your blog posts in the next section.

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### 3 MAKE AN OUTLINE



Consider outlining your blog post and making note of keywords you can use before you write your post. This way, you can research information and choose the direction your post is going beforehand so you can focus on the content of your post while actually writing it.

### 4 START WRITING

After you've finished the planning stage of your post, it's time to get to work and write! If you're having trouble writing or don't think you're a strong writer, don't be discouraged. Once you start writing blog posts, you'll slowly become more and more comfortable with writing until it doesn't seem so bad anymore. Remember, practice makes perfect! You will get better with each post.



### 5 PROOFREAD YOUR POST



Read your final draft over a few times. Make sure there are no typos, grammatical errors, or misspellings. Include a title, headings, pictures, and alt tags in your post so it can be optimized for search engines, which you'll learn more about later on.

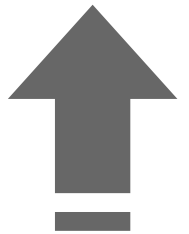
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You may want to take a break and revisit your post with fresh eyes before giving it a final read. If possible, have another person proofread your work, too. The longer you've been working on a piece of content, the more important it is for the piece to be reviewed by fresh eyes and/or more eyes.

## 6 UPLOAD YOUR POST

The final step of writing a blog post is uploading your post. Create a new post in your blogging platform and paste your draft from Microsoft Word or whatever word processor you used into the document.



Before you upload, remember to fill out your SEO description (a brief description of your post where you should include some of the post's keywords), choose the categories your post falls under, and make sure that your content and images were pasted with the correct formatting. Once everything's in order, it's time to publish!



### QUICK TIP

Have a list somewhere in your work space where any employee can write down an idea to blog about. When you run out of ideas, you can always look here for ideas and motivation.

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## WRITING YOUR FIRST POST

Writing your first blog post may seem like a daunting task. Most small business owners weren't English majors in college and may not even know where to begin. Luckily for you, your first blog post doesn't need to be perfect. It just needs to be written.



The biggest fear many people have is actually writing down your first few thoughts. Overcoming writer's block might take a little time and effort, but try and think about all the advantages that come with having an active blog.

“

Done  
is better than  
perfect.

”

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You don't need to tackle the most confusing part of your business on the first post. Tell a story of your business's inception, discuss how you'll be using your blog, or introduce yourself. You can write your first blog about virtually whatever you want. Just make sure to share your thoughts with a casual tone that matches your company's voice.



Although Search Engine Optimization can significantly increase traffic towards your website, try to avoid fixating on it while writing your first post. It's definitely a good choice to add keywords and links here and there, but don't force these elements into your post. This can make your post look choppy and inconsistent.



## QUICK TIP

Run out of original ideas?  
Reuse old content!  
Take posts you have  
previously written and break  
the sections down into standalone  
blog posts.



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## 3 RESEARCHING KEYWORDS

### WHAT ARE KEYWORDS?

Choosing keywords to use for your blog posts isn't the easiest task. However, finding the right keywords for your posts can be the difference between a handful of page views and thousands of page views.



You can write some killer content, but without keywords, nobody who's searching for the topic on Google is going to find your blog post.



When people are seeking a product or service, one of the first things they do is look it up online. You want your content to be discovered by these people, as they are the ones most likely to become customers.



Finding the right keywords for your posts can be the difference between a handful of page views and thousands of page views.

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Use the Google AdWords Keyword Planner in order to maximize the visibility of your blog posts. With Google's Keyword Planner, you can get ideas for keywords to use based on the post's topic.



This platform is connected to Google Analytics, which means that this tool will give you real data for how many people have been searching for words or phrases on Google.

Based off your search query, Google AdWords will provide you with suggested keywords, how many times per month that word or phrase is searched for on Google, and the level of competition you'll be facing. This information can help determine what words and phrases can best enhance your SEO.

## TYPES OF KEYWORDS

There are a few types of keywords that you should use to attract customers to your posts. The three most important types of keywords that can help your blog posts rank on search engines like Google are industry keywords, local keywords, and long tail keywords. These keywords can be used in harmony to enhance the visibility of your business blog.

### INDUSTRY KEYWORDS

Industry keywords are common phrases that people search for when looking for your business. Put yourself in the shoes of potential customers and think about what they're searching for when they want to find a business in your field.

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For example, industry keywords to use for a dog groomer are “dog grooming,” “pet grooming,” “grooming for dogs,” “dog haircuts,” and “dog grooming services.”

## LOCAL KEYWORDS



Local keywords are keywords you can use to target specific areas or locations. Search engines favor businesses that are based locally, which means that you should choose keywords describing your geographic location.

Local keywords also enable your business to get discovered by the people who are the most likely to become customers. If you have “Miami pizza delivery” in your blog posts, you can then become discovered by people looking for this and resorted to Google to find it.

**LONG TAIL KEYWORDS** can help you target specific keyword phrases that are made up of more than a few words. Long tail keywords are not searched as much as regular keywords, but the traffic you get from long tail keywords is of a much higher quality than the traffic coming from regular keywords.



Search engines favor businesses that are based locally.



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If you're the owner of a landscaping company in Chicago, think about using long tail keywords in your posts like "Chicago irrigation services," "Chicago lawn mowing and landscaping," and "Chicago lawn care and design." It's very unlikely for you to rank with your posts if you're using more general keywords such as "Landscaping company." Your location, quality, price, and target customer will all contribute to finding the right keywords for your blog posts.

## 4

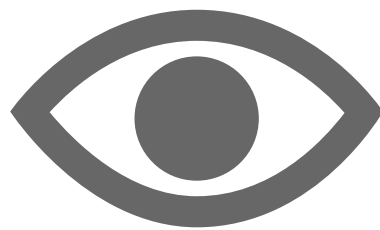
## OPTIMIZING YOUR POST

### HOW DO I OPTIMIZE MY BLOG POST?

Once you do your keyword research and find words to use with your blog post, you'll now be ready to optimize your post.

The purpose of optimizing your blog posts is to increase the visibility of your posts on search engines, which is also known as SEO.

This improves your chances of people searching for related topics to come across your posts and check out your website.



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## AREAS OF OPTIMIZATION

In order for your blog posts to attract the attention that you're looking for, optimize your titles, headings, alt tags, and URLs.

### TITLE TAGS

Title tags are arguably the most important part of SEO for your blog posts. The title of your post and the SEO title should include keywords related to your post/business in order to try and rank on search engines. Make sure your title tags are natural and actually fit into the context of your post. Your title of your post will be in Heading 1, or H1, on your blog.

### HEADINGS

Headings are the bolded text that separate the different sections of your blog posts. They will typically be in Heading 2, or H2, on your blogging platform. Try to use keywords in your blog headings as well for ranking purposes.

Paragraph

Pre

**Heading 1**

**Heading 2**

**Heading 3**

**Heading 4**

**Heading 5**

**Heading 6**

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## ALT TAGS



Alt tags can help search engines understand your images. Search engines can't see pictures, but your alt tag tells search engines the subject matter of your picture or video. Fill in your alt tags with keywords for your blog by writing a brief description under "Alt text" or "Description" when uploading pictures to your posts.

## URLS

URLs are another feature of your blog posts that you can use to your advantage. In your posts, include multiple links to other pages on your website.



These URLs are what search engines and people see, so make sure to use keywords related to their respective pages and format your URLs as readable words, not random characters. If not done automatically, you can change this feature by going under options on your blogging platform and select "Title of Blog Post."

This is pretty easy to do, and it's the difference between linking to [www.google.com/sample-page](http://www.google.com/sample-page) and [www.google.com/p?=1234](http://www.google.com/p?=1234).

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**Remember:** Optimizing every post you create is an important part of ranking on search engines, but don't force any words, phrases, or URLs that don't flow well and seem unnatural.

## USING PICTURES TO OPTIMIZE YOUR BLOG

When checking out your blog posts, most people don't just want to see seemingly endless monotone paragraphs. Headings do a great job dividing up your content, but they aren't enough for your posts to be visually appealing. Pictures can be great additions to your post and, as mentioned above, alt tags with pictures can help improve your SEO.



Choosing the right image(s) for your post can be a bit tricky. While you may want to repost a cool picture you saw another business use, it's important to make sure that you're actually allowed to use it.

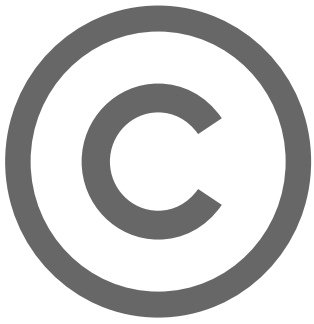


### QUICK TIP

If you want to optimize your blog posts for SEO, aim for around 500-1000 words per post.

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Many pictures on the internet are copyrighted, which means that you're not allowed to use them for your business without giving attribution, or credit to the photographer.

Even then, there are still many images that their owners don't want you to use. It's probably in your best interest to avoid using copyrighted images altogether and either use stock photos or pictures you've taken yourself.

## RESOURCES FOR STOCK PHOTOS

Check out these websites for great stock images you can use for your business:

- Pixabay [www.pixabay.com](http://www.pixabay.com)
- Pexels [www.pexels.com](http://www.pexels.com)
- StockSnap [www.stocksnap.io](http://www.stocksnap.io)
- Creative Commons  
[www.search.creativecommons.org](http://www.search.creativecommons.org)\*
- Morguefile [www.morguefile.com](http://www.morguefile.com)\*



\*Don't forget to make sure that the photos you are using have a note that say "No attribution required" to avoid any potential copyright issues.

Another great resource to use for editing these images for your blog is Canva ([www.canva.com](http://www.canva.com)).

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# 5

## PROMOTING YOUR BLOG

### WHAT DO I DO AFTER I PUBLISH MY POST?

So now that you've finished and successfully published your post, it's time to promote it. Promote your blog posts through your marketing platforms, such as email and social media. The more channels your blog post is on, the more likely that people will see it.

#### EMAIL

Send out emails to your blog subscribers every time you post. This will let your loyal followers know that you released a new post so they can check it out. You can also promote your blog in the email newsletters you send out to customers and let them know about the latest post on your blog.



#### SOCIAL MEDIA



Social sharing is an effective method of free marketing you can use to help bring in leads to your business. Sharing your posts on social media provides another way for people to find your blog and share your posts with their friends.

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## FACEBOOK



Share your latest blog post on your Facebook business account with a brief description of the post, the picture that's in the post, and the post's URL.

This will notify your Facebook followers that you published a new post. You can share this post in any Facebook group you're in that you think the group members will be interested in. You might want to share your post on your personal account as well to maximize the post's reach.

## TWITTER

In 140 characters or less, share news of your blog post with a brief description, a picture, and the post's URL. Consider using one of your keywords in as a hashtag for your tweet.



## QUICK TIP

Check your post on social media and monitor blog comments.

Answer any comments on the post or on social media.

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If any of your Twitter followers tweets at you with a question, you can tweet back with the link to a blog post that might help answer their question.

## PINTEREST

Create a pin with the image you used for your post and write a brief description of what your blog covers. Be sure to include the URL of your blog post in the pin so that your following can easily click the link to get to your post.



## CONCLUSION

Now that you understand the fundamentals of blogging, you have the tools to start a blog for your business. Blogging can help you become a thought leader in your field, improve your SEO, and generate leads for your business! Start blogging today - your business will thank you for it!

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# ThriveHive

A PROPEL MARKETING COMPANY

Have questions or need help  
with your small business?

Call **617-860-3064**  
or go to **ThriveHive.com**

## What is ThriveHive?

ThriveHive is an all-in-one Guided Marketing Platform that provides local businesses with a marketing plan, a professional website, and the tools and expertise to effectively manage all of your marketing, all in one place.

Request a free demo today to see how ThriveHive can help you grow your business!

**REQUEST A DEMO**

(it's free!)