

Writing Effective Blog Posts

Top Tips for Blogging

General Approach:

Writing for the web is very different than writing for email, publications, letters, etc. **The content must be short, to the point and broken into small digestible chunks.** People have a different approach to viewing content online – mostly it is about being short on time and attention. You have to grab them quickly, tell them very clearly what you want them to know and then let them go.

The To-Do List

1. **Great Title:** People will not read further if they don't know what they are getting. Eliminate guesswork with titles that are short and **very** direct.
2. **One Take-Away:** Think before you write. If readers can only take away one item content from the post – what would you want that to be? Focus the blog post on that. Other topics can be covered (and linked) in other posts.
3. **Don't Bury the Topic:** It's important when writing for online audiences to tell the reader quickly what the post is about and why they should keep reading. Tell the reader in the very beginning what they are going to get out of the post.
4. **Write Tight:** When writing for the web use simple declarative sentences. Stick to one idea per sentence. Avoid passive verbs, run-on sentences, mixed metaphors and jargon. Writing in this way makes it easier to understand and holds the reader's attention.
5. **Keep it short:** 800 words are generally enough. If people see that a post scrolls on and on, they will choose to not even start or they will begin reading the post and not finish. The goal of the Clinker

Community is collaboration. That means comments on post – so people need to be able to finish the post in order to comment.

6. **Avoid Jargon:** Your readers may be from anywhere in the world – with vastly different interests. They may not – and will often not – be from your industry. Make sure your content is understandable for anyone.
7. **Link Often:** Build credibility by showing you are an expert in your field. Linking to other relevant content keeps the post short and allows someone who is interested to explore further on their own.
8. **Break it Up:** Use content formatting to break up content. You should be able to read a sentence out loud without having to pause for a breath.
 - a. **Sub-Heading:** Tell people what each sub area of content is about. If they know the information already they can choose to skip it – saving them some time.
 - b. **Bold:** Use it effectively and sparingly. Emphasize the top items you want someone to see right off
 - c. **Numbered Lists** – people want to know what the most important thing to read is. Think about someone only reading 1,2, or 3 things from the post – what would you want those to be? Put them in prioritized order.
9. **Search-ability:** It no one will read it... why bother writing it? Use relevant keywords in the title, sub-headings, and links. When using formatting techniques to break up content, label section with keywords. If you want someone to find the post from a specific search – remember, those words have to actually be in the post, dressed up, multiple times.
10. **Use a Graphic:** People love pictures... they particularly love pictures of other people. If you can find a high quality, relevant photo then use it in the post and more people will read it.
11. **Make a point:** If you present all the sides to an idea or argument, you have covered all the territory and no one needs to comment. What are your thoughts on the topic? Write those and then ask other to share theirs in the comments.

12. **Ask a Question:** If you want people to participate and leave comments you have to give them a reason. Ask them a question and then ask them to answer it. Let readers know you want to know what they think.

13. **Proof, Proof, and then Proof again:** Blogs are written in a lite, more conversational style. They are also often written at a quicker pace. The blog audience will overlook and error or typo here and there... but a pattern will make them question your expertise. Proof before you post and proof again after. Find a typo a few later when you read with fresh eyes? No worries – just fix it.