

The Blogging Guide Every Start-Up Needs

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Why start a business blog? What elements does your blog need to be effective? How can you capitalize most effectively on the marketing opportunities a blog creates?

We'll answer all of these questions in our relatively brief but comprehensive content marketing and business blogging guide for start-ups below. You'll learn some of the most important markers of quality for an effective blog, how to develop a content marketing strategy that translates blog traffic into real leads, and what factors promote your search ranking (SEO) success.

So, without further ado, let's get started!

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1. Why Bother With a Business Blog for Your Start-Up?



Simply put: a business blog is an effective tool for achieving all of your most important marketing goals. It can:

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- Augment your other marketing efforts
- Warm people up to your brand
- Generate awareness for your startup
- Work people into the start of your marketing funnel
- Help you develop relationships with loyal visitors
- Much more!

Creating a blog differs from traditional advertising techniques in that you expect the leads to come to you. This approach is referred to as “inbound marketing,” and it’s incredibly effective in an era where most of us are straight up burnt out on ads.

According to the Content Marketing Institute, [small businesses that have a blog earn 126% more lead growth](#) compared to businesses without one. A blog can also convince 61% of surveyed U.S. online consumers to make an eventual purchase. On top of that, HubSpot notes that blogs can earn your business 97% more inbound links, effectively multiplying your site’s traffic potential.

Since a start-up needs as much attention, awareness and clicks as possible, content marketing through a business blog seems like a no brainer!

So where should you start when planning your future blog? By planning and forming a strategy with your audience firmly in mind.

2. Conducting Audience Research

Your blog is first and foremost for your audience. If they hate or don’t care about what you’re writing (the second one’s actually worse!), then you won’t accomplish any of your business goals.

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Search engine algorithms have also been refined over the past decade to provide results they think the audience will like. Things that hurt the audience experience, like [writing misleading headlines](#) or ripping off articles verbatim from other websites, therefore also tend to hurt your search engine ranking.

Writing for your audience is therefore essential to get the results you want from your blog.

There are a few research methods that can help you understand your audience better:

1. Common traits within your current prospecting list and lead opportunities (you can even survey them!)
2. Social mentions of your brand through [social listening tools](#)
3. Existing reviews and press coverage of your brand
4. Profiles of your competitors' current client/customer list; these can also help you determine the subtle variations between their audiences and yours!
5. Research of audience traits on forums, popular industry blogs, and trending social topics related to your core business

There are many other ways of conducting market research to define your audience — including hiring a firm to do it for you outright — but your own customers and experience within your industry can often be your best resource.

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3. Developing an Audience-Focused Blog Strategy Through Personas



Once you have a good view of your audience, separate them into a few key segments. Your segments should encompass all the shades within your audience's buying tendencies, especially if different segments buy different products.

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For example, maybe computer repair stores are ideal targets for the regular tier of your workbench and job ticketing software, but enterprise-employed IT heads are targets for your top-tier.

Using your segments, [create buyer personas](#). These distill each of your segments into a single, imaginary person.

Now, write content for your personas! Pay close attention to the things your personas care about most and the type of content they seem to read most voraciously. Helpful topic prompts include questions they may have about your industry and “how to...” articles for alleviating related pain points.

Note that no piece of content will likely cover 100% of your buyer personas, and that’s ok! Just be sure to cover each equally (or in proportion to their priority) and provide a little something to encourage each one to read if they see your latest posts.

4. Have a Sensible, Effective Keyword Strategy Based Around Persona Intent

Your keyword strategy should be an extension of the things that motivate your buyer personas. After all, keywords are intended to serve as signals for search engines related to queries, and they also send signals to human brains that “this is relevant to me and worth clicking.”

A good practice is to use a [keyword generator tool](#) to come up with a list of keywords related to your current website, your competitors’, or a generic subject prompt.

Then, plan how each keyword would relate to your segment.

For instance, searching “IT ticket software” on the free tool [keywordtool.io](#) generates many related results, including “trouble ticket software open source.”

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Using our two generalized buyer personas above, let's imagine how two different segments might use this query:

- General Manager of a Small Computer Repair Workshop
 - Searches “trouble ticket software open source” because they want a free tool and likely don't have much of a budget
 - **Motivation:** get a free piece of software
 - **Suggested content suited to intent:** “8 Best Open Source Trouble Ticket Software Products”
 - **Possible CTA:** “...many open source tools are limited in their functions, though. See why going free could actually cost you by downloading our ‘5 Factors That Hurt Computer Repair Store Profitability’ now!”
- Head of IT for a Medium to Large Corporation
 - Searches “trouble ticket software open source” because they are curious what is out there and want to weigh their options
 - **Motivation:** make the best choice for their organization, including both money spent and end results
 - Suggested content suited to intent: “Advantages and Disadvantages of Using Open Source Trouble Ticket Software”
 - Possible CTA: “...but our product offers several advantages over open source, even when considering cost. Watch our brief video to see the advantages XYZ Product offers!”

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From this exercise, you can see that keywords can guide a lot more than just where you stuff things in your content. In fact, don't keyword stuff at all, but instead, use intuitive keyword groups and variations on your focus keyword to get the best results.

18% of top-ranking results for high-volume keywords **don't even have an exact match keyword anywhere in the body text!**

So let keywords be a launching pad for playing into the search intent of keyword use, and segment your content ideas based on what motivates your buyers' personas.

5. Make a Few Important Business Decisions



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Knowing your audiences and the keywords they use as important intent signals are the most important foundational steps to starting your start-up's blog.

After getting oriented, you can make a number of decisions with the end goal of satisfying your audience personas:

- **Will my blog be branded differently than my main site?** Separating your blog with its own brand can help win your audience's trust, but it adds complexity to your strategy. Consider the pros and cons as you research well-branded blogs like [Adobe's CMO](#).
- **How often will I publish?** Your publication schedule is dictated by A) Your bandwidth, and B) The typical amount of news coverage in your industry. Also keep in mind your capacity to do "theme days," such as posting a video every Friday recapping one of your most popular blogs.
- **Who can I network with to promote my content?** Email and social will be effective channels for content promotion, but getting amplified by someone with a lot of traffic/followers is even better! Identify blogs that allow for syndicated content or submissions, and [identify micro-influencers](#) in your niche so you can write content they'd be likely to share. (Hint: it never hurts to quote that person and tag them when you share your blog!)
- **How will my blog lead to the next stage of my marketing funnel?** Every blog concludes with a call to action (CTA). [Strong CTAs](#) command the reader with an action verb to perform a simple task that provides a concrete benefit. Tailor your CTAs to your segment and their approximate buyer stage. As a general rule of thumb:
 - If they are further away from a purchase, invite them to sign up to your mailing list to download premium content pieces.
 - If they are closer, invite them to get a quote, schedule a demo, or take a direct look at your product information.

6. Monitor, Measure, Analyze, and Optimize

Your blog will be an evolving creature that adapts to the signals your audience sends you.

Pay close attention to the data you get from readers, both on your website and with any promotional announcement, such as a social media post. Your data will reveal things like which headlines get the most clicks, which articles get the most shares, which CTAs convert most effectively, and overall which types of content people prefer.

Use this data to revisit your content strategy and tweak it to find better success over time.

Should You Outsource Your Start-Up Business Blog to a Writer or Content Agency?

Performing all of the above steps yourself can help you understand what your content needs to find success. But even then, you may wish for better performance, a more efficient process, or for someone to take the task of writing, publishing and promoting completely off your hands.

If this is the case, working with a content marketing agency could be the answer for you. They can use your research, branding, and guidelines to develop content suited to your unique flavor. Weigh your options, and then decide what will ultimately be best for your business and especially your audience.