

# What Is a Blog & Why Should You Create One?

Blogging keeps you in front of your customers and helps you attract prospects. This guide explains it all.



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# The Importance of Blogging

If your business doesn't have a blog, you might want to reconsider — B2B marketers who use blogs receive 67% more leads than those who do not, and blogs have been rated the 5th most trusted source for accurate online information.

At its most basic, blogs can help you develop an online presence, prove yourself an expert in an industry, and attract more quality leads to all pages of your site.

This guide explains blogging and how to get started.

We hope you find this information helpful. If you have any questions, feel free to reach me at 800-834-4910 or at [inbound281.com](mailto:inbound281.com).

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# What Is a Blog and Why Should You Create One?



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Even if you're not sure what a blog is, you've no doubt come across one at some point in time. Perhaps you've stumbled across a blog when you've searched terms in your industry.

If your business doesn't have a blog, you might want to reconsider — B2B marketers who use blogs receive 67% more leads than those who do not, and blogs have been rated the 5th most trusted source for accurate online information.

At its most basic, blogs can help you develop an online presence, prove yourself an expert in an industry, and attract more quality leads to all pages of your site.

If you're contemplating creating a blog for your business, or simply want to know what one is, keep reading.

# What is a blog?

First, let's go over a brief history -- in 1994, Swarthmore College student Justin Hall is credited with the creation of the first blog, Links.net. At the time, however, it wasn't considered a blog ... just a personal homepage.

In 1997, Jorn Barger, blogger for Robot Wisdom, coined the term "weblog", which was meant to describe his process for "logging the web" as he surfed the internet. The term "weblog" was shortened to "blog" in 1999, by programmer Peter Merholz.

In the early stages, a blog was a personal web log or journal in which someone could share information or their opinion on a variety of topics. The information was posted reverse chronologically, so the most recent post would appear first.

Nowadays, a blog is a regularly updated website or web page, and can either be used for personal use or to fulfill a business need.

For instance, HubSpot blogs about various topics concerning marketing, sales, and service because HubSpot sells products related to those three subjects -- so, more than likely, the type of readers HubSpot's blog attracts are going to be similar to HubSpot's core buyer persona.

Alternatively, a woman named Kiki started a personal travel blog, called The Blonde Abroad, to document her travel experiences and provide readers with helpful tips and travel recommendations. Her blog doesn't serve a larger company, but it does help her create a personal brand.

If a personal blog is successful enough, the writer can also make money off of it via sponsorships or advertisements. Take a look at [5 Strategies to Monetize a Blog](#) to learn more.

# What is a blog post?

A blog post is an individual web page on your website that dives into a particular sub-topic of your blog.

For instance, let's say you start a fashion blog on your retail website. One blog post might be titled, "The Best Fall Shoes for 2019". The post ties back to your overall blog topic as a whole (fashion), but it also addresses a very particular sub-topic (fall shoes).

Blog posts allow you to rank on search engines for a variety of keywords. In the above example, your blog post could enable your business to rank on Google for "fall shoes". When someone searches for fall shoes and comes across your blog post, they have access to the rest of your company's website. They might click "Products" after they read your post, and take a look at the clothing items your company sells.

A blog post links back to your overall blog site. For instance, right now, you're on [blog.hubspot.com/marketing/what-is-a-blog](https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/what-is-a-blog). The "what-is-a-blog" section of the URL is tied back to /marketing/, which is the blog as a whole.

## Blog vs. Website

A blog is typically a section of your business's website -- but, unlike the rest of your website, you need to update the blog section frequently by adding new posts. Additionally, your blog is a tool that allows you to engage more with an audience, either by analyzing how many readers share your blog posts on social, or by allowing readers to comment on your individual posts. In this way, a blog is more like a two-way conversation than the rest of your website. However, a blog can also be an entire website, and often is, if the blog is for personal use alone -- for instance, a travel blog.

# What is a blog used for?

1. To help your company rank on search engines.
2. To share information about a given topic and become an expert in an industry.
3. To attract visitors to your site, and turn those visitors into leads.
4. To cultivate an online community and engage with an audience.

## **1. To help your company rank on search engines.**

Typically, a business will use a blog to help the business's website rank on search engines. You can absolutely employ SEO tactics, or use paid ads, to help your company homepage rank on page one of Google -- but a more effective, long-term solution is blogging. To consider how your company can rank on search engines via a blog, we'll start with an example -- let's say you work for a web design start-up with very little online presence.

You decide to spend the first year writing and posting regular blog content that strongly relates to web design. Over time, your traffic increases and other companies link to your site for information regarding web design.

When this happens, Google recognizes your company as a legitimate source for web design information. Eventually (with a lot of trial and error), your blog posts begin ranking on page one of Google for terms like "web design", "website builder", and "e-commerce website".

Then, one day, you search "web design companies in X city" and find your company is now on page one. This is likely due, in large part, to your consistent blogging efforts.

## **2. To share information about a given topic and become an expert in an industry.**

In 2006, Boston-native Matt Kepnes quit his job and began traveling the world. He documented his travels in his now infamous blog, [NomadicMatt.com](http://NomadicMatt.com).

After about a year, thanks to tireless blogging efforts and SEO strategies that enabled him to rank on Google, he began pulling in \$60,000. Matt also created e-books, and used sponsorships and affiliate marketing to make money.

Additionally, he wrote a New York Times best-seller, "How to Travel the World on \$50 a Day."

Now, Matt's blog attracts 1.5 million visitors a month and grosses about \$750,000 a year -- and he's become a well-known expert in the travel space.

If you want to become known as an expert in a topic that interests you, from fashion to blogging to fitness, you can -- and, oftentimes, it starts with a blog.

## **3. To attract visitors to your site, and turn those visitors into leads.**

There's only so much traffic you can get from the homepage or About Us page of your company's website.

Of course, those pages are critical for leads who are already interested in your products -- but they often won't attract traffic from top-of-the-funnel. That's where your blog comes into play. Your blog can be a general resource to help your website visitors even before those visitors are ready to purchase from you.

For instance, let's say you sell products for e-commerce stores. You might attract some e-commerce owners who are already searching online for your products, but in most cases, the e-commerce owner isn't going to be ready to buy right out of the gate.

Alternatively, if you begin blogging about tips to help the retail owner who is just starting out -- like "How to start a retail website", or "Benefits of e-commerce vs. physical store" -- you'll slowly attract an audience who enjoys your content and finds it useful. Then, when those site visitors' e-commerce stores begin growing (thanks, in part, to your blog), they'll already know about your brand and already trust it as a helpful source. That's when they'll check out your product pages.

#### **4. To cultivate an online community and engage with an audience.**

At the very least, you might create a blog to engage with an online community of readers with similar interests. Maybe you start a food blog and ask readers to share their own recipes with you.

Alternatively, perhaps you start a blog that focuses on DIY projects. You post the fun, DIY projects you've completed in your own home, and you ask your readers to share their own DIY tips in exchange.



# How To Blog

## 1. Choose your target audience.

When you're starting your own blog, it's important to think of your target audience. Who are you creating the blog for? And who do you want reading your blog posts? Before you can get started, you have to consider the niche you're writing about and what topics you'll cover and why.

Brainstorming your target audience is similar to creating a buyer persona for your company. Plus, this will give you an idea on what kind of content you want to produce.

## 2. Brainstorm content ideas frequently based on your market segment.

Once you've started a blog, you'll want to churn out high-quality, consistent content on a regular basis. This isn't always easy. Creating content is a time-consuming task. You want to ensure your content is something your readers would be interested in and hopefully can help with your SEO — more on that in a minute.

To begin brainstorming content, consider what your competitors are doing. Look for gaps in their content that you can fulfill. Additionally, you should also do SEO research to verify that users are searching for and interested in the topic you want to write about. Tools like [SEMrush](#), Google Keyword Planner, and Answer The Public can help.

You'll want to brainstorm content frequently so you always have ideas that you can execute.

### **3. Research and review a content management system (CMS).**

In order to host your blog, you'll most likely use a CMS. A CMS is a tool you can use to design, manage, and publish on your website.

Once you've decided to start a blog, figure out if your current CMS has all the capabilities of hosting a blog. If not, you'll want to review CMS options that might integrate with your site or look for an entirely new CMS to migrate your site on. There are several options in the CMS world.

### **4. Create a blog strategy and editorial calendar.**

Just like creating a business, you can't create a blog without a strategy in mind. Your strategy should answer questions like:

- Who are you targeting?
- What type of content will you produce?
- When will you post?
- Where will you promote your content?

Overall, you should have a mission, vision, and goals for your blog.

Then, create an editorial calendar to keep you organized and on track. A calendar will help you track what posts are coming up, ensure writers are meeting deadlines, and assure you have enough content ideas for the foreseeable future.

### **5. Pay attention to article structure.**

When you're writing your blog posts, it's important to consider the article structure. For instance, are you using subheads to break up the post so it's easy to digest? Are you using bullet points and images that make the post easy to scan? These are important factors that will help keep your reader on the page.

Additionally, you'll want to make sure that you're using calls-to-action (CTAs), that will guide the reader on what you want them to do next. This is how you can start making money and generating leads from your blog.

## **6. Become an expert in marketing and promoting your blog.**

Another element of blogging is marketing and promoting your blog posts. It's like the age-old adage -- "When a tree falls in the woods and there is no one there to hear it, does it make a sound?"

Consequently, if you write a blog post but nobody reads it, will it have a positive impact on your company or brand? Probably not. That's why you'll have to market your posts. You can use social media, SEO, your website, or your email newsletter to reach current and potential customers.

## **7. Learn about SEO.**

Like I mentioned above, you want people to read your blog posts. One way to do that is to get organic traffic through SEO. If you want your blog to be successful, learn how to research keywords, how to rank in search engines, and how to build an SEO strategy.

## **8. Use a variety of blog post styles.**

Your blog posts should be interesting to everyone who reads them, and especially for customers who read every single post. For those that are active followers and ambassadors of your blog, you should use a variety of blog post styles so your blog doesn't get stale. Consider using how-to posts, list-based posts, or thought leadership.

## **9. Repurpose old content.**

Producing blog content consistently can be hard. But you don't have to reinvent the wheel every time you write a blog post. You can update old blog posts to keep them accurate and comprehensive. Additionally, you can use other content of yours, perhaps a YouTube video or a podcast, and repurpose the content into a blog post.

## **10. Perform a competitive analysis.**

To understand your audience, run a competitive analysis on your top blog competitors. This will help you identify trends, uncover gaps in the content in your industry, and give you ideas on topics and ways to promote your blog.

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