

The little book of...

B2B
blogging



Hello!

So you're interested in blogging?

Firstly, let me congratulate you on an excellent choice for your content strategy. This book is going to provide a whistle-stop tour of B2B blogging, so get your notepad and pen at the ready.

This book covers...

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Enjoy!

The problem with
blogging is...

Perhaps a slightly negative way to start, but an important place I feel. I'm a huge advocate of blogging because it's so broad in its scope. You can mix long form with short form copy, opinion pieces with hard research, client stories with new theories...

The possibilities are endless.

Blogging is the ideal tactic for helping to establish you as a thought leader in your industry, demonstrating your credentials and creating a steady drip feed of leads for your sales funnel.

And yet it's rarely given the importance it deserves.

For example:

Researching for a piece of client work, and I stumbled upon a website. The overall proposition was good, and the content they were publishing – blogs, case studies and white papers – all very interesting.

But there was a problem...

The date of the last blog published was 20 June 2016, and the case studies and white papers were published in 2015!

This company claimed to be '*the market leader*' in their particular technology. But from looking on their website, I wasn't even sure if they were still in business (I checked, they are).

Keeping your blog updated is a common problem

It's an issue I see a lot. Companies that have an incredible proposition, the portfolios and case studies show they're delivering amazing work, and they've obviously got a team of very talented people...

But they've got stuck in business-as-usual, prioritising client delivery over their own marketing. The result is a sad, neglected blog, which isn't delivering the value it should – and worse, it's damaging their brand.

After seeing 'the market leader' doing such an appalling job, I decided to perform my own research and determine how big a problem it really is...

24% of companies haven't updated their blog in the last 12 months

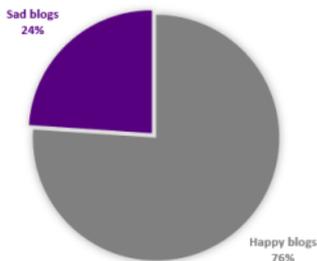
Think about the message that these sad blogs are sending...

That you don't care, or have nothing interesting to say?

Perhaps that you're too busy with client work, so you don't need any new business?

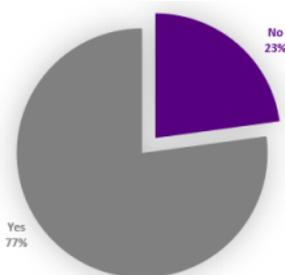
Or maybe that you're out-of-business?

If you're going to commit to having a blog, you need to be updating it regularly, otherwise it's going to cause more damage than do good.



23% of companies haven't posted in the last six weeks

For the remaining 76% who have posted in the last 12 months, yes, on the face of it, it looks good.



But...

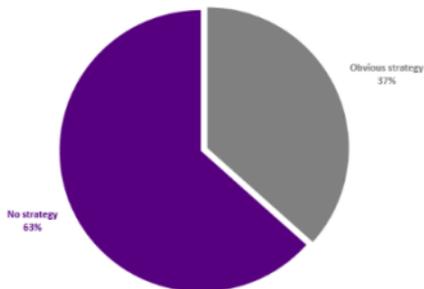
Scratch below that statistic and you see that 23% of them haven't posted in the last few weeks – some managed to post something in the first month but haven't bothered since.

63% of companies are posting without a strategy

You should never create content for content's sake.

Content that's created without a purpose adds no value to your business and wastes your time and efforts.

When I looked at the 76% of companies who had posted on their blog in the last year, an incredible 63% seemed to be doing so without any real thought.



Common problems I saw included:

A dump: everything has the same date, which to me signals that you created a new website and added a blog 'because that's what you do'. And then you returned to 'business-as-usual' and didn't think to put a plan in place to continuously update that blog with new and interesting content.

Bursts of activity: one month there would be 4-5 things published and then nothing for weeks. So what happened? Did you suddenly get inspired? Or perhaps things went so quiet client-wise you had time to focus on your marketing? If so, why are you so quiet? Is the company in trouble?

Everything stopped: some blogs looked amazing, full of great content being posted regularly...and then something happened. Everything stopped and we haven't heard from you since. So what happened? Did your marketing person leave? Were they fired (why)? Were they made redundant?

Weird stuff: I spent five minutes searching one website to find its blog. Why? Because they'd called it '*Angles*' – now '*Insights*', '*Knowledge*', '*Musings*', I get, but '*Angles*'?! Another decided one post was enough. And there were two blogs that asked me to download it, rather than view it on-page – why?

The big blogging
opportunity...

Blogging is a business necessity because it does all the talking for you. And unlike some marketing tactics, like events or emails, it's not a point in time tactic – it sits on your website working hard 24/7.

People today are looking to educate themselves more before engaging with organisations, which means by the time they make contact, they're better qualified, further down the sales cycle and wanting to have a different conversation with you.

The truth is, blogging delivers better results

If you want your business to thrive long-term, you need to invest your efforts into blogging. Research from Hubspot shows that Marketers who prioritise blogging are 13x more likely to enjoy positive return on investment, with B2B marketers that use blogs receiving 67% more leads than those that do not.

Unlike other marketing tactics that are time sensitive, your blog is working hard 24/7, delivering greater value over time. It doesn't matter when people are searching for you because day or night your blogs can be found.

The more you blog, the better it gets

Creating a successful blog is reliant on you publishing regular content that's interesting, useful and relevant to your audience. You can't just post sporadically if/when ideas spring to mind, or you hit a quiet patch and have time to knock a few pieces out. To make your blog into an asset that delivers a regular drip-feed of leads, you need to commit to keeping your content fresh.

Research from Orbit Media Studios, who analysed the results from over 1,000 blogs, showed that companies that publish weekly blogs are nearly 2.5x more likely to report 'strong results' than those who publish monthly or less.

And once you hit 400 blogs published, something magical happens...

Your web traffic spikes. Research from Hubspot shows companies that have published 401+ blog posts in total get about twice as much traffic as companies that published 301 - 400 blog posts.

But is publishing weekly blogs that realistic?

Absolutely!

It only takes a few hours every week, and you have all the information and insight already at your fingertips, all that's required is to put pen to paper...

But when I ask companies what's stopping them, the excuses are always the same:

“We're so busy at the moment – absolutely manic.”

You need to make time to promote your business – especially when you're crazy busy. If you're not getting your name out, your brand is losing visibility, so when people do need your product/service they'll go elsewhere.

If you genuinely can't spare the time in-house – outsource. When you engage an agency or freelancer to maintain your blog, you're placing the responsibility on them to dedicate the time that your business needs.

“I’m not sure what to write about, or how much we’d have to say.”

The wonderful thing about blogging is that the scope is so wide that you can write about anything and everything. I find companies in this camp are usually blogging in a reactionary way – every week they sit and think, *“What shall we write about today?”*

Taking the time to properly plan your content, you’ll end up with a list of varied topics that is interesting, useful and relevant. And you have the time to engage others – like subject matter experts – within your business to help contribute to the content.

“I’m not sure blogging weekly would deliver more than a monthly commitment.”

This one really is a ‘no brainer’ because we know that companies that publish weekly blogs are nearly 2.5x more likely to report 'strong results' than those who publish monthly or less.

So really, what’s stopping you?

A process for building
your blog's
content strategy...

If you want your blog to deliver brand awareness and a constant drip feed of leads, you need to give it the time and attention it deserves. Good quality blogging content doesn't just happen, it needs to be created...

And that means taking the time to develop a strategy:

Step 1: define its purpose

Think about the value you want your blog to deliver to your business. Start by going back to your business/marketing plan and identify how blogging could support you in hitting those objectives, whether it's to:

- Raise your brand awareness
- Boost your SEO and online presence
- Convert leads
- Establish trust with prospects

For example:

Within my business, I want to be able to demonstrate that I have 'skin in the game', that I'm not just telling people to blog and blog regularly, but that I actually do it too. I also want to be able show I'm a credible copywriter and that I can actually do what I say I can do to prove my worth.

It might also be that within your business, you're looking to push a particular product, service or offer. In which case, crafting a series of content that focuses on this will help you to promote it.

For example:

Within my business, I want to push top of the funnel content, like blogs, articles, case studies and white papers. So I focus my writing on these areas – again, strengthening my credentials.

Step 2: identify your audience

This genuinely is marketing 101 and yet I've worked with so many companies that fail to get it right. The conversation usually goes like this:

Me: *"So who is your target audience?"*

Client: *"Well, everyone can use our product. It doesn't matter if they're big or small, what sector they work in, or what their role is, anyone can benefit."*

Let's assume for a second that this is right – that doesn't mean that the whole world is your target audience. Your target audience comprises the people you're actively going to invest time and effort going after, perhaps because they're the most profitable, have a more pressing need or it's easier to engage the right person.

For example:

A sole trader may have use for your product, but if it requires you to spend the same level of effort to secure them as a 200-person organisation, which are you better actively targeting?

To identify your target audience, you need to...

Profile them...

The most insightful thing you can do is to profile your existing and past customers. Spend the time to analyse:

- The size of company
- Sector
- Location
- Job role of the person you engaged
- Length of sales cycle
- Cost of sales
- Number and roles of 'influencers' involved in the sales process
- Deal size in terms of revenue and profitability

Once you look at this data set, you'll start to identify your 'sweetspot'. Usually this is your target audience.

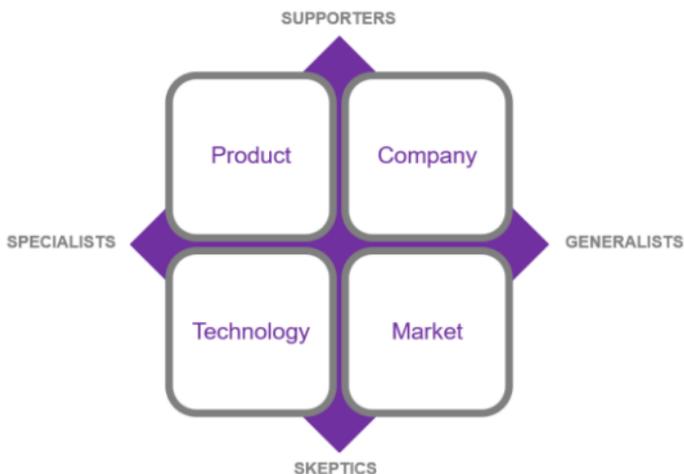
It may be that you still attract 'everyone and anyone', but when you're actively promoting your business, you need to write content that speaks to your sweetspot. When you're speaking to the pain points, challenges and opportunities this audience is facing, you're far more likely to hook them in and engage them, rather than have your blog passed over as another piece of generic copy.

Understand them...

Depending on where people sit in your sales cycle will determine the sorts of information they'll be receptive to. In converting them down your pipeline, you need to take them on a journey that transitions them from awareness, to interest, then desire, and eventually action.

Within each stage of that journey, you need to consider their mindset and therefore the messages that person will be receptive to.

There's a beautiful model called the technology message matrix. It considers whether the audience has a technical or business brain, and whether they know your company already or have never heard of you:



For each of these areas, consider:

- What questions might they be asking themselves?
- What barriers exist that they need to overcome?
- What's their personal ambition?
- What common ground exists between you?

Keeping these questions front of mind will ensure that you're hooking into your audiences' challenges/aspirations, and creating a variety of content that's beneficial at all stages of the sales funnel.

And give them what they want

The hard reality is that your customers/prospects really don't care about you – it's all about them.

So with every piece of content you produce for your blog, think about whether it's interesting, relevant and compelling for them.

It's time to put on your creative hat and step into your customer's/prospect's shoes. Ask yourself:

- What information would they find useful?
- What do they need to help them move to the next step in the sales cycle?
- How can you help them get the most from your product/service?
- How can you make their lives easier? Or their job simpler?

Step 3: brainstorm

Before becoming a freelance copywriter, I started my career in the world of B2B marketing. Here, we planned in quarters so you're always thinking about what promotional campaigns needed to be executed over the next 3-month period.

Your content strategy for blogging should be no different.

Decide on a central theme – such as a key message, product/service – and spend some time brainstorming all of the things you could write about around that topic.

For example:

If I want to focus on my blogging service, I could produce content about blogging tips, how to repurpose content, measuring success, SEO for blogs, where to get blogging inspiration from...

Don't limit your thinking.

Make sure you consider all the periphery areas that overlap with your main topic. Being able to write about these areas demonstrates to your audience that you are a specialist in your field because you understand how your product/service fits within the bigger picture.

For example:

If I'm writing about blogging, I should also consider content strategy, marketing strategy, SEO, online marketing, PR...

I read a fabulous book called 'They Ask You Answer' by Marcus Sheridan, which is all about answering the actual questions your prospects/customers ask with quality content. I loved the idea and decided to incorporate it into my business. As well as being a really easy way of identifying the content you should be

writing, it actually works at generating leads – after my first month of adopting the technique, I'd generated 3 good quality enquiries for my business.

And there's nothing wrong with writing content with the primary purpose of giving your search engine optimisation (SEO) a boost.

Every company has specific keywords and phrases they want to be found for when people are searching online. So why not write dedicated content around those search terms? These could be blog posts to help boost your organic SEO. Or a bit more overtly promotional if you're looking to use something like pay-per-click (PPC) advertising.

Step 4: prioritise

By now you should have a lovely list of wonderful ideas. By its very nature, there are no rubbish ideas while you're brainstorming, as any idea could potentially lead to genius.

In this next stage, you need to start prioritising the blog topics that are going to help you achieve your overall purpose. Strip out any ideas that are a bit obscure, think

about whether there are any you can merge, and highlight the ones that are really on point.

Since we're thinking about the next quarter, you're going to need about 12 blogs if you're looking to achieve the ideal of publishing once a week.

Then start to massage those ideas into working titles.

For example:

Blog ideas for highlighting 'market' issues...

- X things you didn't know about [market trend]
- Why [market trend] doesn't work and what to do about it
- X mistakes [audience] make with [market trend]
- X reasons your adoption of [market trend] will fail
- X top blog posts about [market trend]

Blog ideas for 'company' focused content...

- X hacks for [success criteria]
- Our market predictions for [year]
- Have a [X] you can be proud of
- A skill every [audience] should have and why

Blog ideas for the 'technical' win...

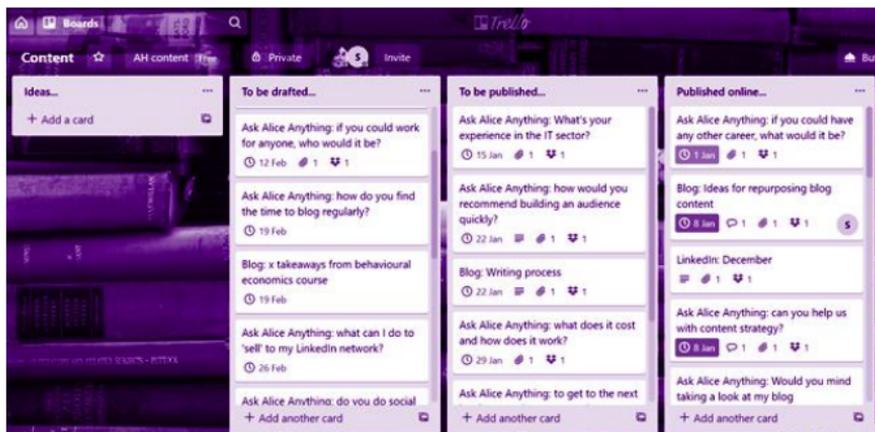
- X questions you need to ask before even thinking about [technology]
- X ways to implement [technology] right/wrong
- X myths about [technology]
- The alternative guide to [technology]
- Why now is the perfect time to jump on [technology]

Blog ideas to promote your 'product'...

- Detailed FAQ section on website.
- X reasons you need to be using [product]
- X mistakes [audience] make when implementing [product]
- Considering [product] for your business? 5 questions to think about.
- X ways [product] overcomes [challenge]

Step 5: schedule

Now write your blog titles down on a calendar so you know when they need to be published online. I tend to use Trello to do this to help me keep track of progress, but there are plenty of other online tools, as well as spreadsheets, or good old pen and paper.



I find its common that when it comes to promotional work, it always comes second to client deliverables.

But it can't.

Scheduling your content makes it a priority in your business – if it has a deadline, you need to hit that deadline.

When you're scheduling your work, pay attention to the order - you might want to alternate the content so one week you have a focussed post, and the next demonstrate that you understand the periphery areas. Or you might want to drop a monthly round up article in to prove your worth, or a fun 'behind the scenes' post to help the reader to get to know you on a more personal level.

Step 6: write

I've spoken many times in the past about how copywriting is different to writing. And while this step is all about getting your words down on paper, in order to transform it into engaging copy that delivers value to your business, you need to think about...

Structure

Start with an attention-grabbing title and a killer opening paragraph, so they're hooked from the outset.

Top tip!

Make this the last thing you write – it's a lot easier to think of the words once you've created the main body of the copy.

Then with each blog, think about the story you want to tell your audience. As a rule of thumb, I use the following structure:

- Problem
- Anticipated outcome
- Solution overview
- Evidence
- Call-to-action

Think about adding informative subheadings to guide the reader through. Subheadings are also important because they ensure that if someone is skim-reading the piece, they still gain value from your blog and take away the key messages. Plus, they're an opportunity to boost your natural SEO.

And if you're looking to share large quantities of information, consider using bullet points or lists to make this information easier to consume.

Language

There's a wonderful book called "Made to Stick" by Chip and Dan Heath, which details 'the curse of knowledge' – the idea that once we know something it's hard to imagine what it's like not to know it.

I've fallen in love with this phrase because it perfectly encapsulates the issue a lot of small businesses face, particularly in the IT and tech space...

In the process of creating these innovative, game-changing platforms, they get too close to the detail and suddenly it becomes virtually impossible to imagine how the user might experience their platform for the first time. They don't realise that users won't instinctively know where to click, how to perform certain actions or know how to change settings...

They also talk about their technology in certain ways or develop cute soundbites that don't mean a lot unless you understand the technology that sits behind it.

To overcome the curse of knowledge, the authors advocate transforming your ideas and using some of the principles of storytelling technique to tell the story in a new/different way to create interest and intrigue.

By sprinkling storytelling elements into your blogs, they're going to hit the emotional cues that compel your target audience to take action.

Storytelling

If you feel something you do something.

There's another incredible book called 'Contagious' by Jonah Berger, which details how to you're your content the best chance of going viral based on extensive research. In one of the chapters it talks about emotion. Specifically, if you want people to share your content, you have to induce a 'high-arousal' emotion, such as excitement, awe, amusement, anger, anxiety – anything that gets your blood pumping and gives you butterflies in your tummy.

Therefore, if you're to achieve extensive brand awareness, you must drop the features-led copy, and instead, opt for something more engaging that hooks people in, and compels them to share it with others.

For example:

“At Black Cabs Ltd, we offer a first-class service that gets you from point A to point B.”

Or...

“Take an iconic London black cab and Dave will show you the sights in comfort as you make your way to the West End.”

Be human. Be honest. Just be you.

Jargon

We all know you should never assume anything. And yet, it's so simple to forget when you spend every day in a world where you think everyone is speaking the same language as you.

Surely everyone who works in the modern-day world of tech knows about IoT, BYOD, Big Data, Cloud, Shadow IT and SaaS?

But what if they don't? Or what if their definition/understanding is slightly different to yours – will the benefits of your product/service get lost in translation?

For example:

I worked with one software company that had developed a business process management platform. To support online sign-ups, it was running a series of pay-per-click campaigns. One of the keywords it was sponsoring was “BPM”. It makes sense; in their world, BPM is short for ‘business process management’...

But it also means ‘business process modelling’ – not overly dissimilar, but if the landing page content doesn’t immediately reference ‘modelling’ it’s going to increase the bounce rate.

...and of course, people searching for ‘BPM’ could be interested in ‘beats per minute’. And this means they would end up wasting money, paying for a lot of traffic that was completely irrelevant and therefore, never going to convert.

Jargon can be really important for building trust, because it demonstrates to your audience that you speak their language. It also aids communication because you can distil complex theories or technologies down into a few mutually understood words...

But to make sure they really are mutually understood words, I'd recommend:

- **Spelling out your acronyms:** if you do this the first time you use it in your copy, the reader then knows exactly what you mean throughout the rest of the piece.
- **Boxing out definitions:** this indicates to the reader that they're important, but not essential to the narrative. And again, clarifies what you mean.
- **Reference sources of further reading:** cite/link to interesting articles or research in your content. It will build that trust with the reader and align you with your industry leaders.
- **Ask a non-techie to read and review:** as a non-techie, I always say that if I understand it, anyone can.

- **Forget the speeds and feeds:** yes, they're impressive, but what does 99.99999% reliability mean in terms of business impact? Talking in real terms will always resonate more.

SEO

The following simple, non-techie tips and tricks are things that can help give your content a little bit of a boost online...

- **Pick your focus keyword:** Google's mysterious algorithm looks for 'intent' (words the user is actually searching on). And think about 'long tail keywords' (4+ words to explain what you do).
- **Get the basics in place:** get your keywords in the main title and subtitles, the first sentence and scattered throughout the body copy, as well as the URL and meta description.
- **Get the good stuff in upfront:** research from Nielsen Norman Group shows that people spend 80% of their time 'above the fold', so get to the point quickly, and then elaborate below.

- **Link your content throughout:** make sure you're linking various words or phrases to other related content on your website, as well as external links to credible sources.

Top tip!

A great tip I picked up is to Google your keyword, and then check out the image results as this will suggest alternative searches that are closely related.

Length

The beauty of the blog is that it can be whatever you want it to be. You're not forced to stick to a specific length, so think about mixing some short, sharp pieces (500 words), with longer form copy (1,500+ words).

For example:

Your blog might need to appeal to different audiences. So you could mix some high-level inspirational headlines about cloud computing to hook in members of the C-Suite, with longer deep-dive pieces for a more technical audience who would need to assist with implementing the product/service.

Another benefit of blogging is that you can take a huge topic and break it down into a series of blogs with each exploring a different element of that topic. This way, you could post something new every week, which keeps you in front of that prospect. You could even get them to subscribe to receive the next instalments and identify people with a genuine interest.

And at the end, you can wrap everything up into a comprehensive and very useful ebook (**cough* The Little Book of...B2B blogging *cough**), which you can then promote out again to your audience.

Editing

Arguably the most important part of the blogging process, the following are my 10 top tips for editing content...

- **Just write:** get your first draft down, because if you edit as you go along you'll get lost in the words.

- **Remind yourself about the intended audience:** by keeping your audience's pain points, challenges or opportunities front of mind, you'll create copy that really speaks to them.
- **With each read through check for something different:** for example - have you kept on-topic, have you repeated yourself, have you structured your argument clearly...
- **Read your words aloud:** by reading your copy aloud, you'll hear if you start to waffle and if your point becomes unclear, and you'll pick up on any repetition.
- **Remove uncertainty:** if you've used words like '*possibly*', '*probably*', '*might ...etc*', get rid. It will instantly strengthen what you're saying.
- **Cut it down:** you want to make your copy easy to skim read, so don't present your reader with a wall of text or lengthily paragraphs. Keep it short and sweet.

- **Be smart with punctuation:** becoming a copywriter I finally understood the importance of using punctuation to guide the reader through your copy – use it wisely!
- **Take a break before editing:** ideally sleep on it, otherwise get some distance so you can approach the piece with fresh eyes.
- **Silence:** eliminate any distractions so you can focus purely on the copy you're there to edit.
- **Give yourself time:** editing can't be rushed in a quick 10-minutes before you head out for the school run, so make sure you have enough time before starting.

Beyond the words...

Once you've got the words down, it's time to think about the pictures. Blogs with no images look dull. Add visual interest to your blog through:

- Header images
- Graphics / illustrations
- Word clouds
- Infographics
- 'Box-out' sections

What to do if you've been writing for a while...

It's easy for blogs to get tired, especially if you're writing about the same subject matter. You reach a point where you feel like you've said everything there is to say, explored every angle and now you're starting to repeat yourself.

I've been there.

The best advice I can give is to stop. Close your document and walk away from the laptop.

If you're bored of writing, it's going to come across in your words and your audience will be bored reading it. You want people to feel inspired by your content and compelled to do something as a result of reading it – ideally contact you or share it with their network.

If your blog is feeling tired, and you want to give it a bit of a re-vamp, think about:

Getting a new writer

If your current writer is tired of writing about the same stuff, get someone else to contribute. Their fresh eyes and new take on the situation will give your content an instant boost. This person could sit within your organisation, or they may be external. They could even be the industry 'celebrity' or thought leader that you ask to contribute a guest post.

Changing the media

Nothing (as far as I know!) says that blogs need to be written – even if there is, there's nothing stopping you from mixing it up with some interesting graphics to illustrate your point. And think about dropping in some videos. They don't need to be high budget, Hollywood blockbusters. I've seen some incredibly engaging videos made on a mobile phone. The bonus of using video is that people get a sense for who you are since your personality is there for them to see on the screen.

Writing about something else

You might be trying to sell one product, but that doesn't stop you writing about other things that interest you. In fact, talking about all the periphery areas demonstrates your expertise and knowledge of how your offering sits within the wider business context.

Re-purposing existing content

Repurposing blog content is one of the most valuable marketing tactics at your disposal. As well as being an effective way of generating inbound leads, it gives you the ability to personalise your content and the freedom to write on a multitude of subjects from various angles.

Giving your existing
copy a new lease
of life...

Whether you're already sat on a library of content, or thinking about 6 months' time when you've been blogging every week, you need to know how to re-spin, re-purpose and re-form your copy to get it working harder for you.

Repurposing blog content is hugely beneficial, and yet industry research shows that only a third of marketers say they have a systematic process in place to reuse or repurpose content.

How to re-spin blog content...

Imagine you've written a blog about the challenge organisation's face when they're reliant on outdated tech or manual processes. It's a wonderfully insightful piece that contains industry research to give context, highlights how your organisation has helped one of its clients to overcome those challenges, boosting performance and team morale. And it's going to sit beautifully on your website where you're going to direct people to go and read it.

Here's how we could re-spin it...

For different sectors

Your content is always going to be more engaging if you speak to people in their language. So think about taking your blog post and how you could tweak the words so it engages a new sector.

For example:

It might be that you keep the key messages, but you tweak certain words or phrases and include a different case study example to make it more relevant to a particular sector. These tailored blog posts can then sit on different sections of your website so when someone hits your site, they really feel that you understand their sector and its challenges, and are therefore best placed to help.

For different channels

Every marketing channel is different, so why would you post the same content on every one? It makes no sense and is definitely not going to give you the return you deserve. But taking that original blog post and adapting it for the audience and type of conversation you're having on each specific channel, you're going to deliver a far more compelling proposition.

For example:

Your company website might be the place you want to push the company voice and demonstrate how your mission, values and culture translate into what you deliver – let's imagine your original blog post does this.

But you're looking to push the Practice Director as a thought leader so he can get up on stage at the upcoming conferences.

Re-spinning the blog to write it in his tone of voice and adding anecdotes from his experience, you can post it on his personal LinkedIn profile to reach a different audience.

How to re-purpose blog content...

For different audiences

While you may end up needing the signature of one person to close a deal, there's likely to be several people involved in the buying process and influencing the decision.

For example:

You might need sign off from the IT manager for a deal to go ahead, but before he signs on that dotted line he might need buy-in from the IT Director or CTO, and assistance from HR to roll it out. Your blog might be enough to pique the IT manager's interest and get then wanting to know more about your offering, but it's not going to provide the level of detail required to get a more technical mind on board, or consider the people impact.

By re-purposing the blog to focus on key themes that speak to different audiences, you're going to help your internal sponsor to 'sell' you to the rest of their organisation.

For thought leadership

Perhaps you have ambitions to be seen as a leader in your industry, a 'celebrity' that people look to for advice and guidance. By repurposing your blog content you get to demonstrate your skills, knowledge and expertise in useful, interesting and relevant ways.

For example:

By taking your original blog post, you can break it down into several themes, and then explore each of these in greater detail through dedicated posts.

Alternatively, if you have an older blog post you could look to update it and show what's changed over the time period and where you feel the industry is moving to now.

How to re-form blog content...

Into something bigger

Blogs are wonderful things because they give you the scope to explore different aspects of a particular topic in lots of detail. But bring these separate blog posts together, and you suddenly have a much larger, richer piece of content that's going to command a commitment from your prospect.

For example:

If you've written a series of blog posts about a particular cloud, data or security technology, you could wrap these up together and edit them into an ebook, white paper or guide. This longer-form content is great for boosting your organic SEO so you're more likely to be found when people are searching online.

As more valuable content, you could gate it, asking people to submit their contact details in exchange for downloading the marketing asset. Or you could even create an entire marketing campaign out of it.

But it's not just blogs you need to consider...

Think about all the valuable content you produce as part of your business-as-usual activities...

The proposals, statement of works, project wrap up sessions, comprehensive sales deck, the random musings you jot down when you're sitting on the train on the way to work in the morning...everything.

All of this wonderful existing content can also be re-spun and re-purposed for your promotional efforts, simply by changing the perspective.

And the beauty of using your internal content is that if you need the input of subject matter experts, who we know are notoriously difficult to pin down because they're in such high demand, a lot of their expertise can be found on the pages of those proposals – which means you'll only need a few minutes of their time to fill in the blanks, rather than a comprehensive briefing.

For example:

Let's think about a proposal...

By breaking it down, you can create a series of blog posts that hook into what's topical in your industry at the moment.

But you can also pull out all the product/service detail, to re-spin it into a 1-pager for your sales collateral, and with the client's permission, you can turn it into a case study.

But now you have a whole new set of content assets. So let's re-spin these...

Write a sales letter and send it with your 1-pager as a direct mail to your prospects...

Create a series of attention-grabbing emails that drive people to your blogs...

Turn that case study into an award submission...

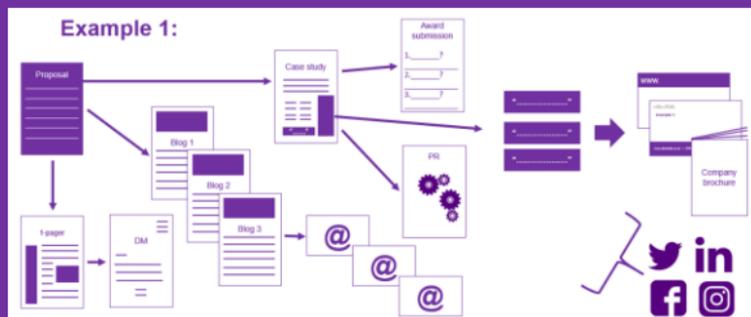
Or plug it into your PR machine to gain media coverage – if there's one thing that's guaranteed to

get you coverage it's a well-written case study, the media are crying out for them.

And then re-spin these content assets...

Pull the testimonials out of the case study to use on your website, sales decks or company brochure...

And finally, create a series of social updates that you can schedule on the platforms that are relevant to your business.



From this single proposal you now have a quarter's worth of valuable content that you can push out to the market, helping you to grow awareness of your brand/company/products/services and start generating leads for your pipeline.

And because everything was formed from a single piece of content:

- The messaging is consistent
- The positioning is consistent
- The purpose is consistent

And it's this consistency that will help you to grow a strong brand in your marketplace.

A simple strategy
for regular blogging...

Firstly, we're not 'finding' the time, we're 'prioritising' the time.

Many years ago, I worked for a PR and marketing communications agency. One of my responsibilities was time tracking, because in order to be profitable we could only afford to spend a certain number of hours on each client.

But...

We also had to spend adequate time on our own work to promote ourselves, and prove that we '*had skin in the game*' and were doing all the things we were recommending our clients did.

There was a magical time split: 85% of our time should be billable, and 15% of our time was to only be spent on our own work – if you didn't hit that percentage, it signalled there would be trouble ahead.

And this 85/15 split was also commonplace in the consultancies where I worked in-house. Here, the developers and engineers were always expected to be 85% billable.

So this idea of 15% of my time being reserved as time to spend on me, is something that's been ingrained in my thinking from the very start.

For example:

Within my business, I know that if I tried to squeeze an article in every week it would never happen – I always have a lot of client work, and will try wherever possible to accommodate those last minute requests, so of course my own work will be the first thing to be cut off the 'to-do' list.

Therefore, I block-out a chunk of time every month, usually 1-2 days.

If I know this time is off-limits well in advance, it's easy to plan client work around it, and allow myself the time to spend on my business.

Also...

It feels like a lovely treat to look forward to every month. Those days are precious where I can write about anything I want to and it's all for me. It feels completely selfish and I love it!

By planning to write your content in big chunks, you start to build up a library of content. Then it doesn't matter how busy you get with client work because you always have something ready to post every single week.

It also means that you know what's coming up well in advance, so you can focus any connected activities, whether wider marketing campaigns, client conversations or operational tweaks, so everything is aligned internally.

Getting published
in the right place...

All that lovely blog content needs a good home. The following is in no way an exhaustive list, but should give you some ideas about where to place your blogs...

Post it on your website

Your website is your most valuable sales tool. Available at all times, it's promoting the amazing work you do 24/7. It shows all your best bits, reassuring visitors that they're in good hands with you, and compelling them to get in touch.

Any new content that you post to your website is going to enrich the visitor's experience, and it's also going to improve your chances of being found online when people are actively searching for your services – and we know that companies that have published 401+ blog posts in total get about twice as much traffic as companies that published 301 - 400 blog posts.

Share it as a LinkedIn article

As the professional social platform, your LinkedIn connections are people that should be the most receptive to hearing what you have to say. Then when they find it interesting or useful, they're more likely to share it with their wider business connections, which gains your blog even greater exposure.

LinkedIn doesn't penalise you for sharing the same content that's posted on your website, so technically you can re-post it word for word. However, think about whether you want/need to tweak the message slightly for this audience. Or whether there's specific types of content that you only want to post to this platform.

For example:

I like to highlight all the things I do for continuous professional development – like reading, attending events, participating in Twitter chats or undertaking training – to demonstrate the value that I personally could add if someone was to choose me as their copywriter. So I wrap this up in a dedicated LinkedIn post every month, which goes out to my network.

Hook people in on Medium

Medium is an online blogging platform that allows you to republish your existing blog posts. Many people search Medium for information that will help them in their job, or to answer questions they may have. And there are individuals that actively invite you to share your content with them, which they then wrap up into themed topics or newsletters that are shared with their contacts.

But as well as being a platform to increase your exposure to a wider audience, it's also good for increasing traffic to your own website. Rather than simply reposting the full article, think about posting some teaser text, or sharing the highlights, and then link to the full article on your website. Now you're hooking people in on Medium and converting them through to your site.

Identify your sector-specific platforms

As a copywriter, my professional body is ProCopywriters. As part of my membership, I can share my content with them, and if they deem it to be interesting, useful and relevant to their audience, they publish it on their blog and then promote it more widely through their social media platforms.

I've experienced a lot of success with ProCopywriters, in helping me to connect with fellow professionals – I've even had two of my articles selected to be published in its upcoming book!

Take some time to identify the platforms that are most relevant in your industry, and then see what opportunities exist to promote your content. Even if they don't have the opportunity to publish your content on their website, they may still share it through their social platforms to help you reach a wider audience.

Don't forget to share as well as publish

Once you've published your blog online, make sure you share it far and wide to ensure it reaches as many people as possible. A wise man once said:

'If you create something of value, that you genuinely believe will help someone, you should never feel ashamed of sharing it again, and again...and again.'

@allgoodcopy

Email it to your database

If you've created a database of people who have subscribed to hear your news, make sure you send them a link. This doesn't have to be a huge, lengthily newsletter that takes hours to craft, it could be a simple teaser email with no more than 100-words and a link to read the blog online.

Leverage Twitter

I'm not going to attempt to hide the fact that I'm a huge Twitter fan, frankly if you're prepared to invest the time engaging the community it's a fabulous place to be. Start by sharing a link to your followers and look to include relevant hashtags that will get your content seen by a wider audience.

Then when you're taking part in Twitter chats, look to share your content when the right opportunity presents itself.

BUT...

Don't try to shoehorn your content in at every opportunity because the community will blank you and you'll lose their trust and respect.

Share it on LinkedIn

As before, you've spent the time building a wonderful network of professional connections on LinkedIn – so talk to them. Publish some teaser text with a link to the blog post to your profile and share it with that audience. And when they start posting comments, make sure you respond and thank them.

Use it to offer support on Facebook

Once upon a time, LinkedIn groups were amazing. I managed to execute a hugely successful PR campaign for one client because of the power of LinkedIn's groups. But over time, they've been spoiled; people saw the power of the group and exploited it, using them as a platform to promote, rather than engage in a conversation. Now they're pretty much full of salespeople shouting at other salespeople.

Facebook groups seem to have replaced LinkedIn groups, offering real value because of the discussion and support that takes place. Taking the time to identify the groups that are relevant to your business and then engaging in the discussion takes time, but it's hugely beneficial. And you'll find that as part of the conversation, you'll naturally find occasions where you can share a link to your content. And because it's framed as being useful, rather than a simple "*Read our latest blog*", it's more likely to be read.

Add a post to Google my Business

This is a wonderful way to naturally boost your SEO, and it's really simple and completely free to do. Once you've set up your profile (mine took about an hour), you can then add links to your new blog posts.

Google loves its products, so the more you engage with them, the higher you're moved up the search rankings. Plus, by adding your profile to Google my Business, you'll now show up in the highlights on the right-hand side, and on the Maps results.

Measuring success...

And now we bring this whole thing full circle by asking...

Why are you blogging in the first place?

Like most marketing tactics, there are endless key performance indicators (KPIs) that you can track, but they're all meaningless unless you do something with the information.

Knowing your 'why' means that you can determine the best KPIs to measure.

For example:

If your blog's purpose is to raise brand awareness, think about tracking:

- Referral sources
- Number of social shares

If your blog's purpose is to boost your SEO and online presence, think about tracking:

- Web traffic
- Time on site and bounce rate

If your blog's purpose is to convert leads, think about tracking:

- Conversion rate
- Number of people clicking your call-to-action

If your blog's purpose is to establish trust, think about tracking:

- Average length of stay
- Number of comments

How you choose to define success is personal to your company - in the words of Simon Sinek, it has to 'start with why'. Once you know why you're doing something, the rest of it falls easily into place.

Start blogging
today...

If you want agency-grade work at a more affordable price I offer a monthly blogging retainer costing just £666 per month. It includes:

- Quarterly content plan.
- Trello board to manage content.
- Briefing.
- Weekly blogs (4-5 per month) with content delivered together for review.
- 1x round of revisions.
- 1-month's notice required to terminate contract.
- 10% discount (*price before discount applied £740*).

"Always challenging us and looking for new things we could try to optimise our conversion rate."

Process Bliss

Alternatively...

If you already have a blog and you're thinking about how to reinvigorate your content with something a little more inspirational in order to secure a drip feed of leads for your sales team, I offer the following...

A simple review for just £180, which includes:

- Review your current blog, highlighting 'the good, the bad and the ugly'.
- Review specific pieces of content and provide recommendations on tone, style and structure.
- Schedule a 30-minute call so I can better understand the business requirement for your blog.
- Some example blog titles to think about.

At the end of the process you will have a report, which details your current '*as is*' position and the ideal '*to be*' of what you're hoping to achieve. And then a plan for how your blog can help get you there.

Enquire now...

Email hello@alicehollis.co.uk

A bit about me...

IT companies that want to be more than their tech need copy that's more than words

I work with small IT and tech businesses who have achieved a certain level of success organically and are now looking to scale to get 'to the next level', but who don't necessarily have a dedicated marketing person or go-to-market strategy in place yet.

I believe that in establishing a schedule of regular, interesting and engaging content to clearly position and differentiate you in the market, we can start to create the tribe that ensures a constant drip feed of leads into the top of your funnel, ready for your sales team to qualify.

Services

Top of the funnel content:

- Blogging
- Thought leadership, such as white papers, guides, case studies, articles.

Choose me because...

- **IT sector specialism:** with 14 years' sector experience, I am familiar with a lot of the technical jargon, and understand the differences in talking to a CEO, CTO or end user.
- **Weekly content turnaround:** you need to move quickly to take advantage of new opportunities, so I turn projects around within the week, with amends returned within 3 days.
- **Dedicated to learning:** if I'm not writing client copy, I'm reading/learning/studying copy and testing the lessons learned through the content I write for my own business.

Say hello!

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