

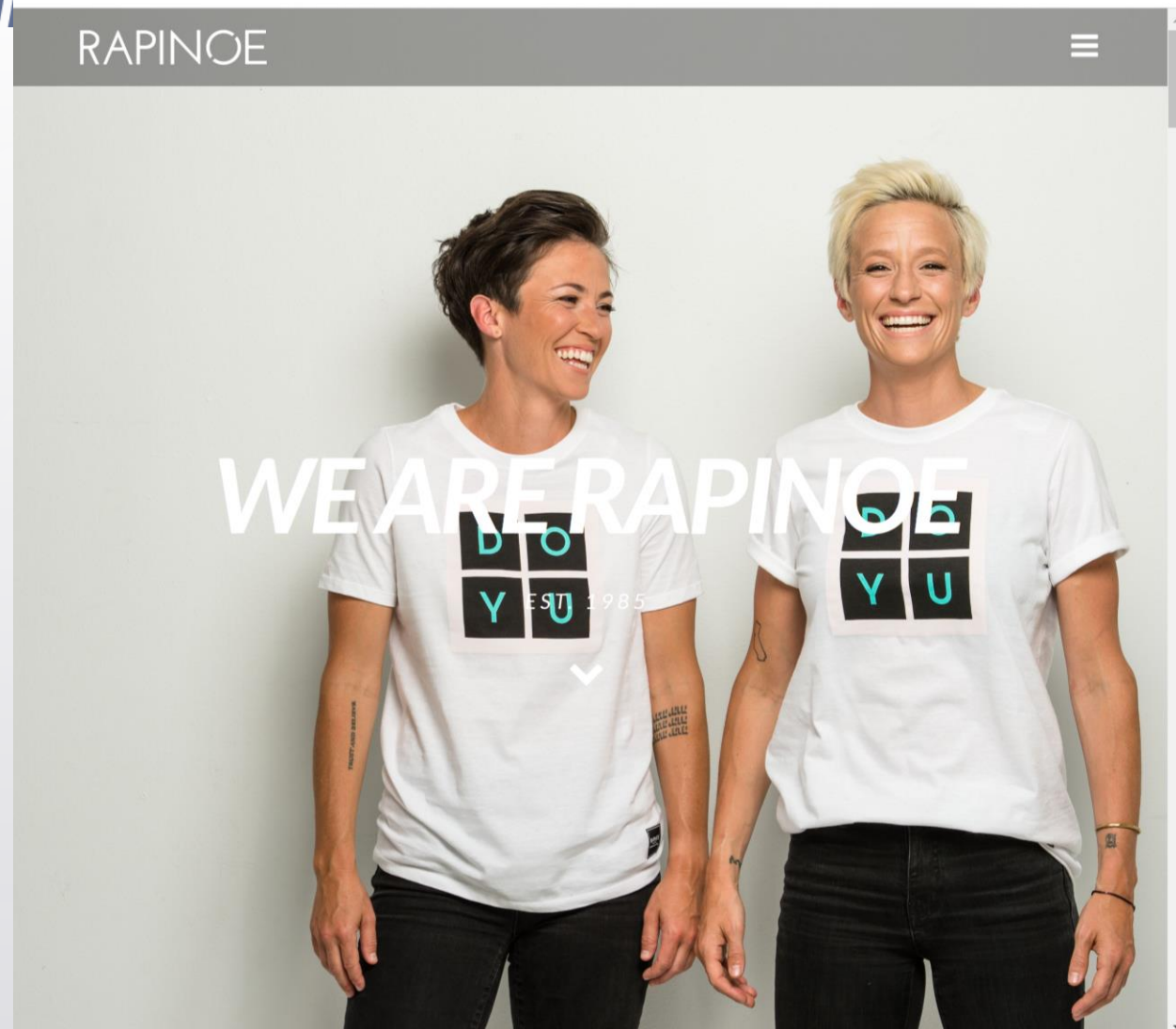


Chapter 12

Blogs

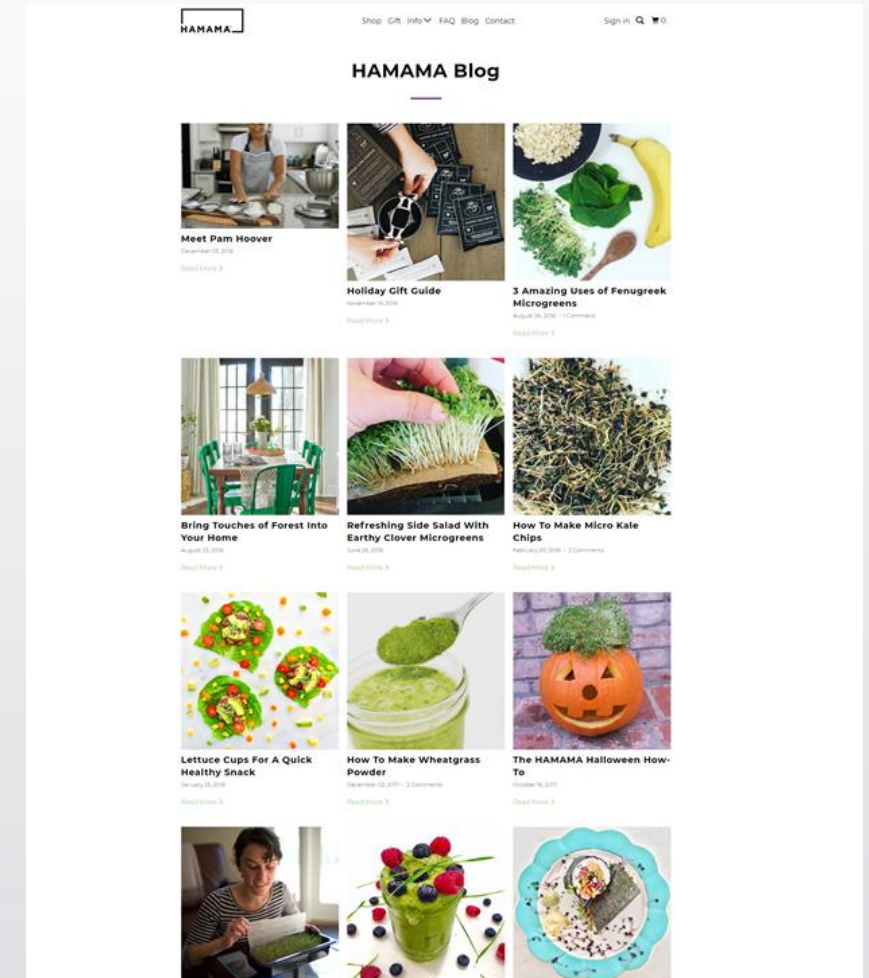
Learning objectives


- After reading this chapter, you should be able to:
- Understand what blogs are
- Learn the steps needed to get started with blogging
- Understand how to write, format and optimize blog posts
- Comprehend the benefits of and how to market with blogs, vlogs, podcasts and webinars
- <http://www.rapinoe.us/blog/>



Introduction to blogs

- Most people who are active online today have either read or written a blog post.
- Dating back to the **1990s**, a **blog** in its early form was an **online diary** where people **shared** thoughts about their daily lives.
- The first blog has been credited to a college student named Justin Hall, who in 1994 created a personal homepage called “Justin’s Links” where he shared everything about his **personal life**, his thoughts and **opinions** and even **photos**.
- Over 25 years later, his website, [Links.net](http://links.net), is still active.





Introduction to Blogs

- The term “**blog**” was coined in 1997 from the words “web **log**,” which was later shortened to just “blog.” A **blog** is defined as “a **regular feature appearing as part of an online publication that typically relates to a particular topic and consists of articles and personal commentary by one or more authors** (Merriam-Webster Dictionary).”
- **Blog posts typically are:**
 - Written in **first** person
 - A collection of **thoughts** or **expertise** on a variety of **topics**
 - Inclusive of **links, pictures, videos**
 - Accessible online for **free** for the public
 - Searchable in **search engines**
 - Updated **frequently**
 - Open for reader engagement through **comments, likes** and **shares**

- Today, blogging has exploded in popularity.
- With a simple online search, it's possible to find blogs and bloggers from nearly every industry and category imaginable: from mommy bloggers to foodies, cooking enthusiasts, fitness experts, fashion bloggers, crafting connoisseurs and more.
- Which blog category do you think is the most popular?
 - Fashion, food, travel, beauty and music all top the list of the most popular blogs.

AVERAGE # MONTHLY SEARCHES BY TYPES OF BLOGS

Type of Blog	Searches
fashion blogs	18,100
food blogs	12,100
travel blogs	9,900
beauty blogs	5,400
music blogs	5,400
fitness blogs	4,400
lifestyle blogs	4,400
mom blogs	4,400
sewing blog	4,400
wedding blogs	4,400
decorating blogs	3,600
photography blogs	3,600
design blogs	2,900

Type of Blog	Searches
makeup blog	2,900
tech blogs	2,900
art blogs	2,400
health blogs	2,400
diy blogs	1,900
home decor blogs	1,900
sports blogs	1,900
mens fashion blogs	1,600
personal finance blogs	1,600
political blogs	1,600
baby blogs	1,300
business blogs	1,300
parenting blogs	1,300

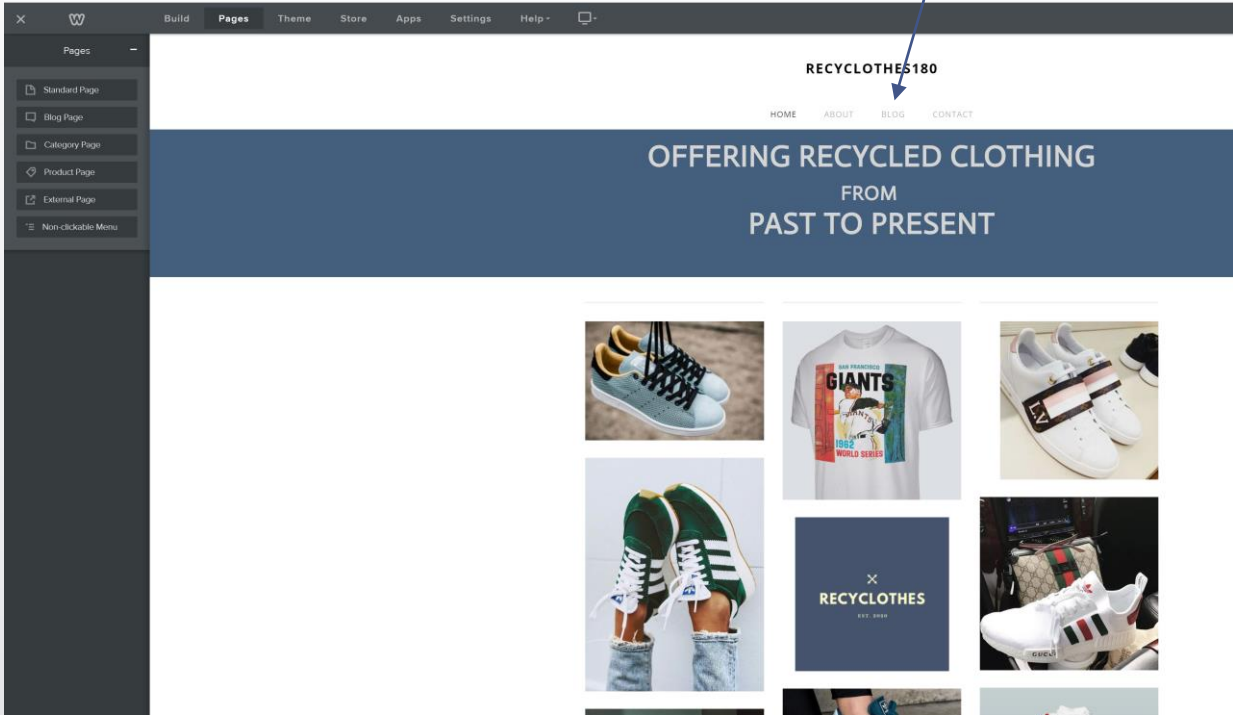
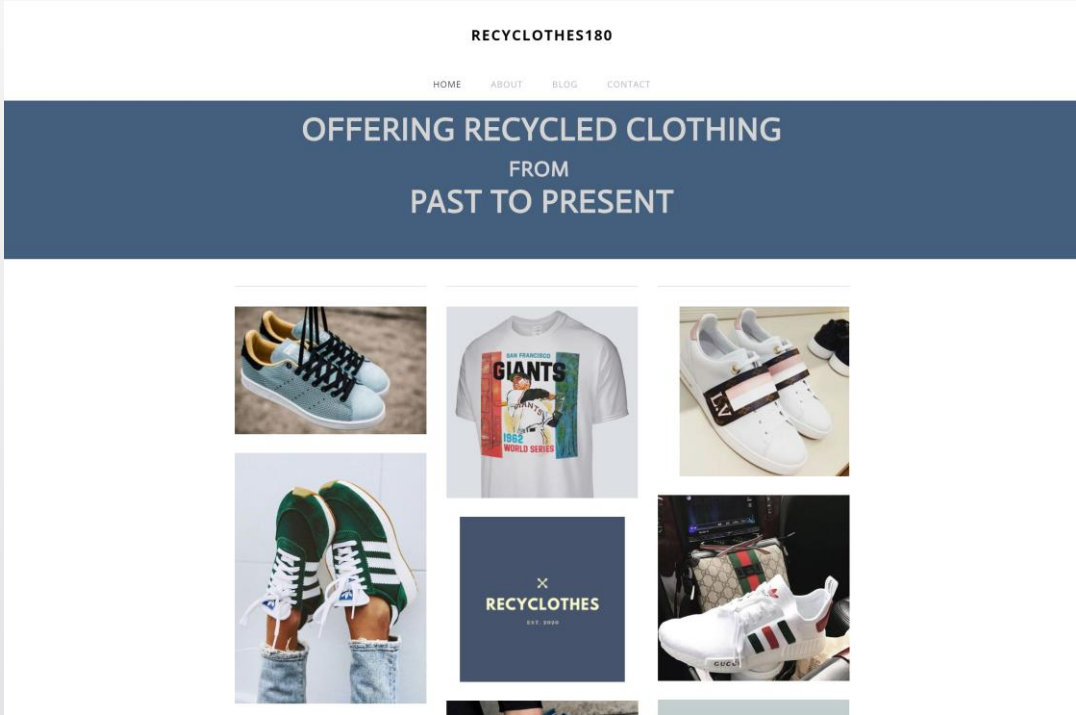
Type of Blog	Searches
craft blogs	1,000
education blogs	1,000
marketing blogs	1,000
relationships blogs	1,000
adventure blogs	590
film blogs	480
gaming blogs	480
pet blogs	390
self help blogs	390
entertainment blogs	320
humor blogs	320
money saving blogs	320
outdoor blogs	320



<https://www.wix.com/start/blog>

www.weebly.com/pages/+ Blog

- Today, there are a variety of blog platforms available, each with its own unique capabilities.
- From business and personal blog sites like **WordPress, Wix and Blogger**, to community blog sites like **Medium.com and Tumblr** that are open to all publishers.





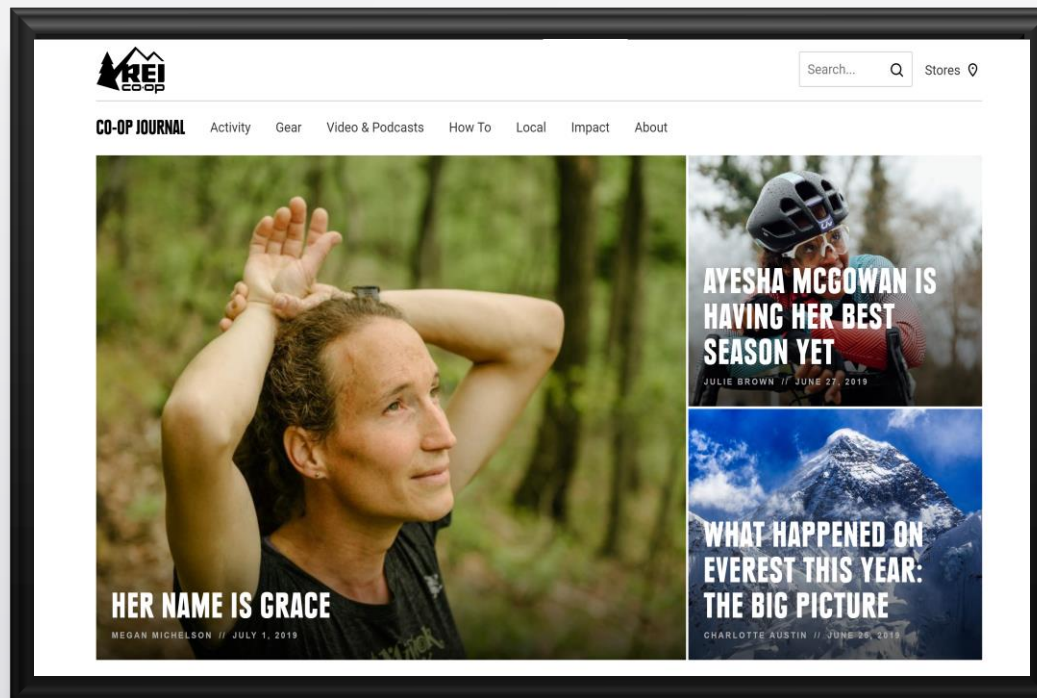
Why are Blogs so Popular?

- They give everyday and your brand people a **voice**.
- They provide an **easy way for anyone from around** the world to share **opinions** and **ideas** with a large audience.
- They also help readers keep up-to-date on **trends** and topics they are interested in. And lastly, they are a great marketing tool for many businesses.

Marketing with Blogs

Today, many marketers use business blogs to disseminate information and increase the visibility of a brand online.

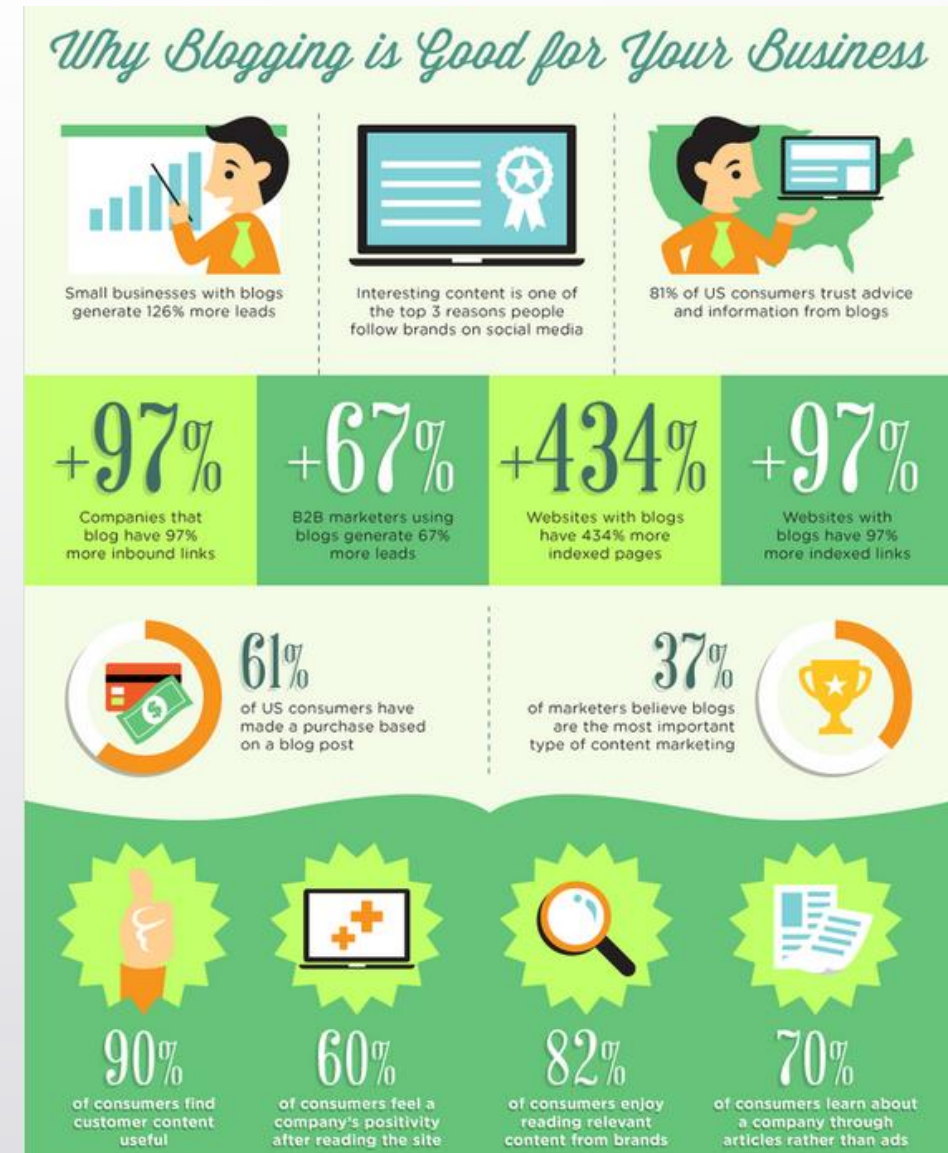
In fact, "53% of marketers say blog content creation is their **top marketing priority**"



- Blogging has many *benefits* for marketers:
 - Increases **brand awareness** by reaching a large audience
 - **Humanizes** the brand
 - Facilitates word-of-mouth marketing
 - Provides an easy way to keep **customers up-to-date** on industry **trends** and company products/services
 - Creates meaningful and **shareable conversations** with customers
 - **Ranks well**: Search engines rank blog posts higher in search results, making a brands blog content more discoverable than other content
 - Helps brands establish **credibility** and **trust** with customers by showing industry expertise: In fact, blogs are the fifth most trusted source for accurate online information
 - **Increases web traffic**: companies that publish 11+ blog posts per month receive 3X more web traffic, and 97% more links to their webpage
 - Helps brands get **discovered** on social media through social sharing of blog posts
 - Generates **leads**: B2B marketers who use blogs receive 67% more leads (Hubspot), and small businesses generate 126% more leads



Additional business benefits of blogging are featured in the below infographic:





Disadvantages of Blogging

There are also some *disadvantages* to blogging worth noting:

- Requires a large **time commitment**
- Receives **no instant payback**: the longer you blog, the more traffic you will generate over time.
- **Needs updating**: new blog content needs to be added regularly in order to keep readers engaged; this means brands must have a continuous flow of fresh ideas
- There is a **large saturation of blogs online today**, making it increasingly hard for brands to compete
- **ROI can be difficult to measure**

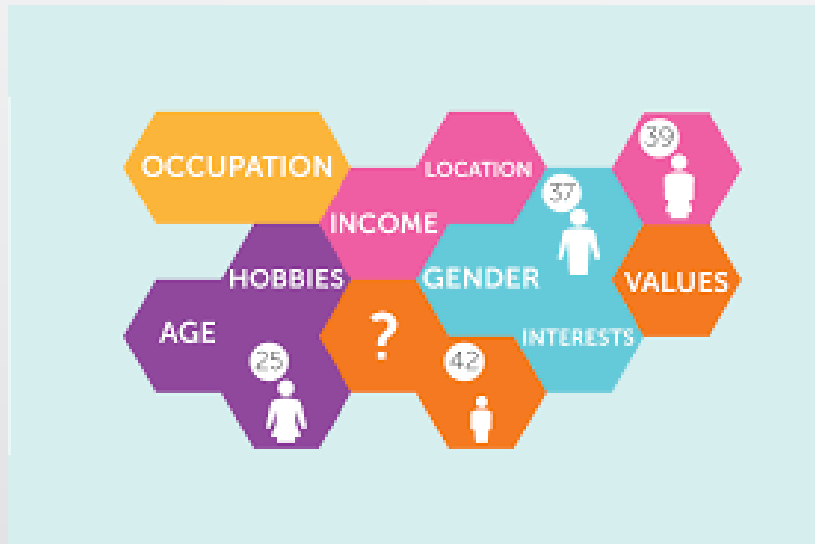


Getting Started with Blogging

1. Set Goals

- Like objectives for other social media marketing efforts, the goals for blogging **should be tied to the overall marketing and organization goals**. If a blog is new for the company, include specific and measurable goals for the launch and post-launch of the blog. Goals could include metrics on:
- Clicks or click through rate (call-to-action links or URLs embedded in blogs)
- Engagements (likes, comments, shares)
- Number of visitors
- Leads
- Level of website traffic
- Number of blog or email subscribers
- Quantity of blog posts produced
- Social shares

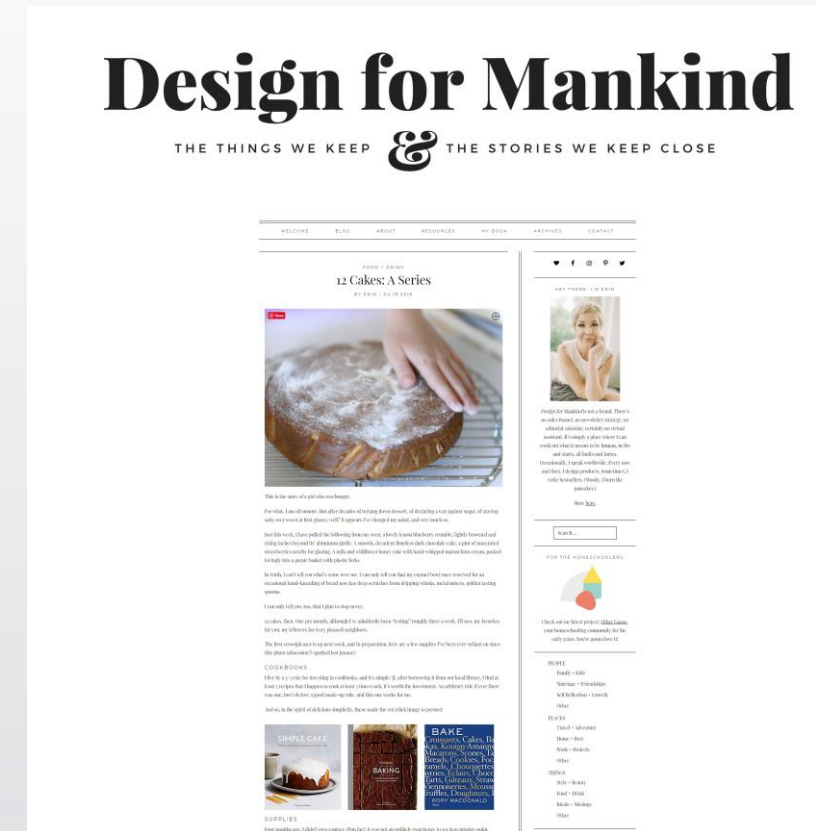
2. Identify the Target Market



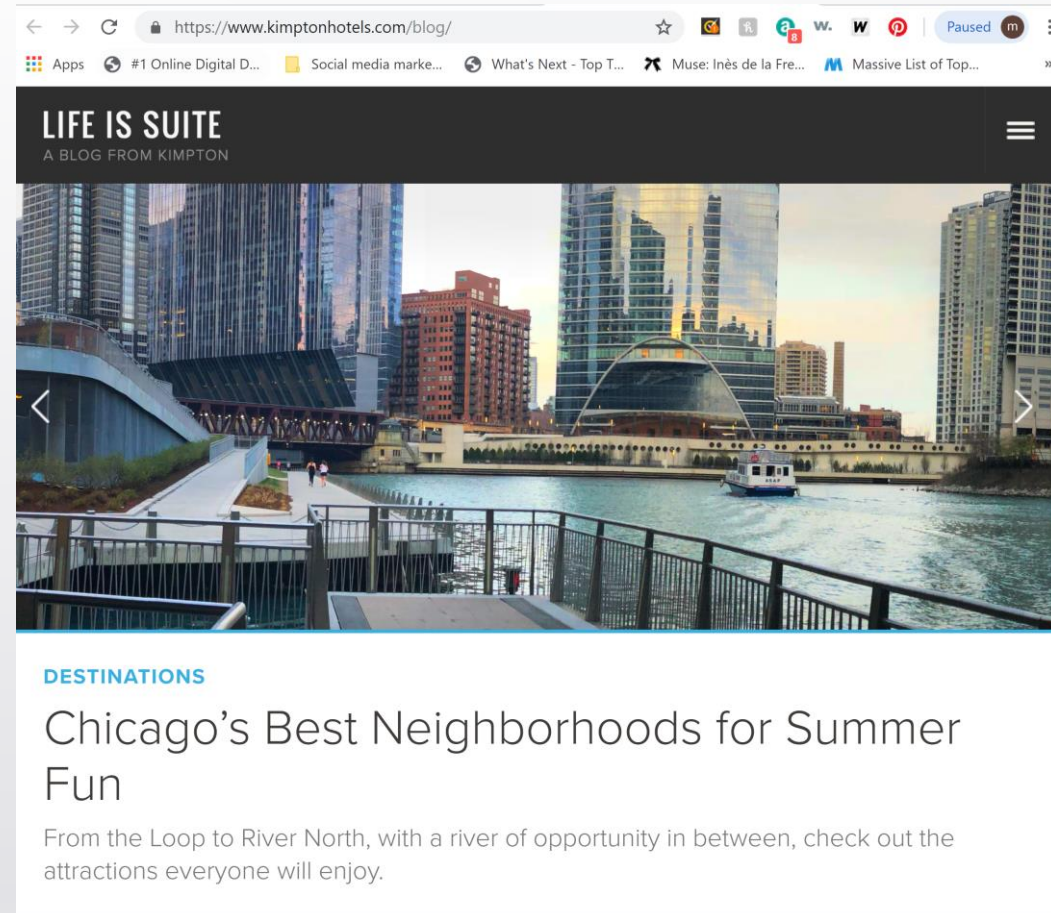
- Before writing blog content, brands must have a clear understanding of their **target audiences**:
- What do audiences want to know about? (mind map)
- What **topics** will resonate with audiences? (empathy map)
- Think about the **customer personas** for the social media marketing strategy outlined in Chapter 3.
- Brands should develop customer personas for their blogs, including demographic, behavior and lifestyle information on each of their target customers.
- The target market developed in this step will direct the content strategy of blog posts going forward.

3. Create a Blog Site

- In order to publish blogs, businesses must have a place to do so. Blogs can be hosted within a **company website**, which is the preferred option, or on a third-party website. As previously mentioned, there are many blog websites, such as WordPress, Blogger, Tumblr, Weebly, Blogster and more that businesses can leverage to create a blog site.
- Consistent **branding and color schemes**
- Consistent content **categories** for blog posts (stay true to your themes)
- **Highlighting** blog authors, popular posts, related posts or archived posts Blog Post templates with the ability to include graphics and videos
- **Search function** (remember keywords in your post)
- **Sharing buttons** as a way for readers to comment or share the blogs on social media
- **Subscribe button** for readers to get access to future posts or email updates



- Boutique hotel brand Kimpton has created a sleek lifestyle blog called “[Life is Suite](#).”
- The website is visually pleasing, with great graphics and easy-to-find content sorted into the following categories: destinations, eat + drink, entertaining, Kimpton buzz and travel tips.
- Readers can even filter and search for content by city across the world.



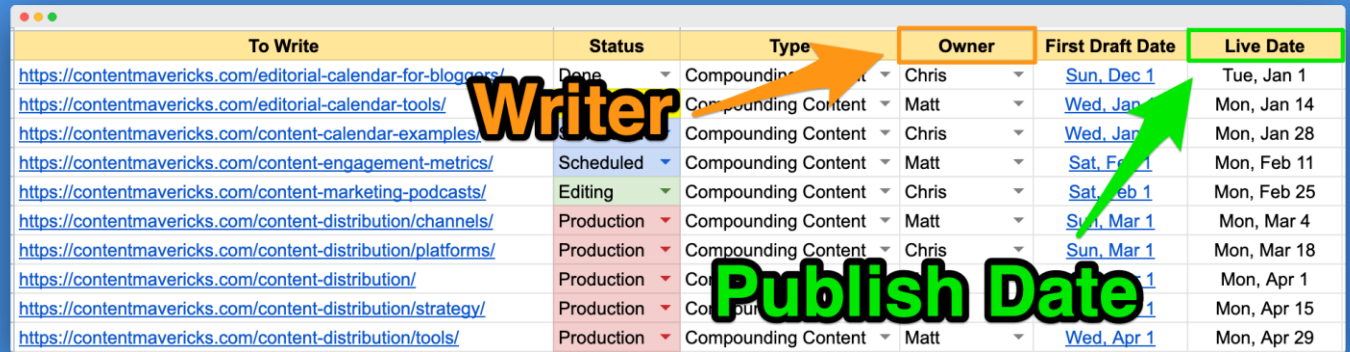
4. Brainstorm Topics and Post Topics

- Use social media listening or **interview** customers to determine what their pain points are and the kinds of topics they are interested in learning about.
- **Ask sales teams** the top questions customers are asking.
- **Research competitors** to determine the topics that they are posting about.
- Conduct **keyword research** to find out what information is being searched for the most.
- Look at all **available content already developed within the company** to determine which can be broken up into blog posts. For example, a large whitepaper or e-book can be broken up into 3-4 blog posts to promote the whitepaper or e-book.
- Once a list of topics has been identified, **brainstorm the different angles that will be utilized for each topic and the types of blogs that will be published for each.** The image below includes a list of 32 common blog post types. Over time, brands can analyze which type performs best to direct future post strategy.



5. Create an Editorial and Distribution Strategy

- The editorial strategy will determine **who will be writing and editing the blog content as well as the subject matter experts who need to be involved to contribute content**. Some brands choose to leverage in-house subject matter experts and writers, while other brands hire external agencies to produce and write blog posts.
- A blog distribution strategy will determine the quantity of blogs and how often and when to post them.
- The **cadence** of posts may be determined by the company size and industry, as well as the blog resources available to the team.
- However, the **greater the quantity of blogs**, the more **traffic** a brand's blog will gain over time. When creating a distribution strategy, make sure that there are enough resources (writers, editors, publishers) to manage the post cadence.
- With an editorial and distribution strategy in place, it's time to start writing blog posts.



The screenshot shows a content calendar table with columns: To Write, Status, Type, Owner, First Draft Date, and Live Date. An orange arrow points from the word 'Writer' to the 'Owner' column. A green arrow points from the word 'Publish Date' to the 'Live Date' column.

To Write	Status	Type	Owner	First Draft Date	Live Date
https://contentmavericks.com/editorial-calendar-for-bloggers/	Done	Compounding Content	Chris	Sun, Dec 1	Tue, Jan 1
https://contentmavericks.com/editorial-calendar-tools/		Compounding Content	Matt	Wed, Jan 1	Mon, Jan 14
https://contentmavericks.com/content-calendar-examples/		Compounding Content	Chris	Wed, Jan 1	Mon, Jan 28
https://contentmavericks.com/content-engagement-metrics/	Scheduled	Compounding Content	Matt	Sat, Feb 1	Mon, Feb 11
https://contentmavericks.com/content-marketing-podcasts/	Editing	Compounding Content	Chris	Sat, Feb 1	Mon, Feb 25
https://contentmavericks.com/content-distribution/channels/	Production	Compounding Content	Matt	Sun, Mar 1	Mon, Mar 4
https://contentmavericks.com/content-distribution/platforms/	Production	Compounding Content	Chris	Sun, Mar 1	Mon, Mar 18
https://contentmavericks.com/content-distribution/	Production	Compounding Content	Chris	Sun, Mar 1	Mon, Apr 1
https://contentmavericks.com/content-distribution/strategy/	Production	Compounding Content	Chris	Sun, Mar 1	Mon, Apr 15
https://contentmavericks.com/content-distribution/tools/	Production	Compounding Content	Matt	Wed, Apr 1	Mon, Apr 29



Writing and Optimizing Blog Posts

Outline

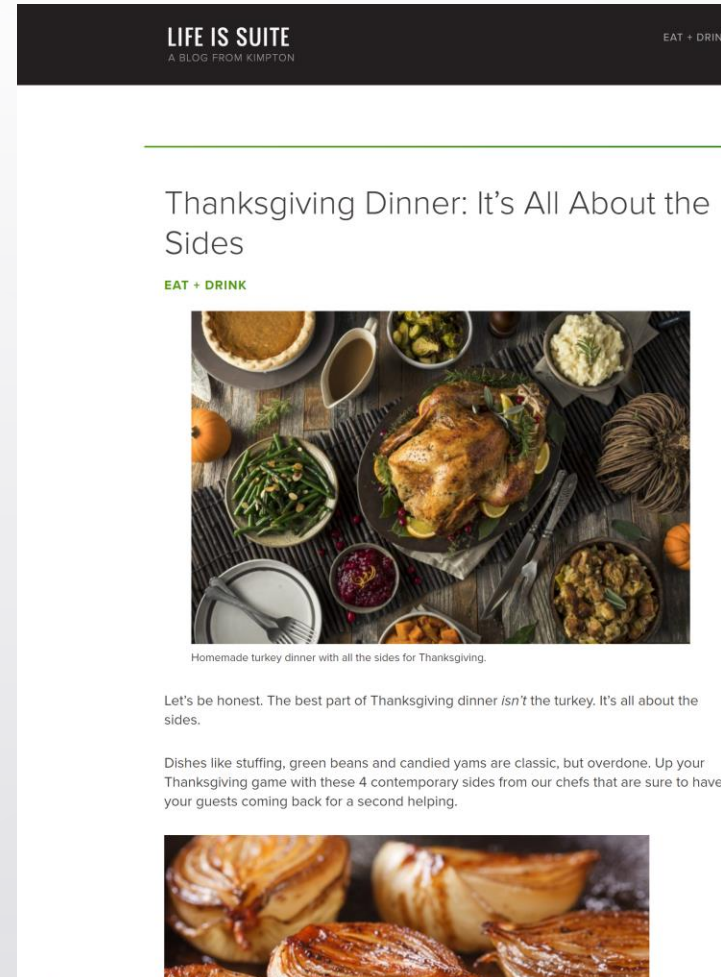
Armed with the **blog post topic, post type, audience** and **background** research on the topic, begin by organizing the content of the blog into an outline.

- Write down all of the **main takeaways** and **key** points to include in the blog and organize them into sections.
- Decide **how long the blog will be**.
- **Longer posts tend to perform better** on search engines; however, shorter posts may resonate with readers more.
- A good best practice to follow is anywhere between **400-1,000 words**.
- However, the **content strategy topic and audience** will ultimately dictate the length of the blog post.



Title

- Before writing, come up with a few working titles for the blog post.
- The working title will help **focus** the blog post content into something more specific than what would fit into a general topic.
 - For example, if your topic is “blogging,” then a good working title would be “How to Write a Great Blog Post” or “10 Tips to Perfect Your Next Blog Post.”





Write Catchy Blog Titles Like These To Get Way More Traffic

Best Performing Content

What 10 Studies Say About The Best Times To Post On Social Media

9 Types Of Blog Posts That Are Proven To Boost Traffic

20 Ways To Be Creative When You Don't Feel Inspired

How To Attract An Audience With The Best Blog Photography Tips (+128 Free Images)

43 Data-Driven Headline Ideas From 1,000 Of The Most Popular Posts

VS.

Worst Performing Content

How To Discover Awesome Writing Techniques That Will Improve Reading Comprehension

How To Use Marketing Performance Metrics That Will Improve Your Blog

5 Teaching Theories That Will Improve Your Educational Content Marketing

How To Work With Designers With Authentic Advice From CoSchedule's Designer

How To Meet Deadlines When You're Sick And Tired Of Missing Them

21,489 Pageviews

4,954 Pageviews

That means you could get 438% more traffic by following this advice!

Online Tools to Get Started

- There are many tools online like **headline generators** to help individuals and companies create great titles for blog posts.
- A simple **Google search** will yield hundreds of websites that offer guidance. Below are blog title structures to get you started.

1. What {#} Studies Say About {Subject}
2. {#} {Noun} That Are Proven To {Desirable Outcome}
3. {#} Ways To Be {Adjective} When You Don't {Verb} {Adjective}
4. How To {Verb} An {Audience} With The Best {Subject} Tips (+{#} Free {Resources})
5. {#} Data-Driven {Noun} From {#} Of The Most Popular {Noun}
6. {#}+ Easy Ways To {Verb A {Noun} That Will Skyrocket By {#}% In 1 Year
7. How To Use {Noun} To Increase Your {Desirable Outcome}
8. The {#}-Minute, {#}-Step Solution For The Best {Noun}
9. How To Rock A {Noun} That Will Save You Tons Of Time
10. How To {Verb} Your {Noun} For Massive Growth

Title

Once the blog is complete, finalize the title based on the content that was actually written in the post. The final title may end up being “New to Blogging? Here Are 10 Writing Tips for Your First Blog”.

Blog post titles should:

- Convey what the article is going to be about
- Be catchy and engaging, pulling the reader to learn more
- Use words the audiences use
- Contain power and emotion words, like jaw-dropping, greatest, fascinating, risky, dangerous, staggering
- Ask questions
- Use numbers and facts: titles with numbers and facts receive 206% higher traffic than those that don't
- Include at least one industry or popular keyword based on prior keyword research
- Be short and to-the-point: titles that are under 70 characters will not get cut off in search results

8 Ways to Have a More Sustainable Wedding

CELEBRATIONS

The moment you make the leap to “ever after” is monumental. And it’s a big opportunity to give the planet some love. No matter the size of your wedding, there are clever ways to save energy, resources and time. Read on for inspiration and tips from Suzanne Halperin, VP Catering & Banquets Operations for Kimpton Hotels & Restaurants. You’ll soon see: Reducing your footprint is something that’s easy to stay committed to.



From invites to flowers, a more sustainable wedding is all in the eco-friendly details. Image Credit: iStock

1. Save paper and plant trees.

You can go fully digital for eco-friendly invites. But if you do choose paper, make it purposeful. “Use seed paper — a type of handmade paper that actually has plant seeds in it which germinate when planted,” says Halperin, who sees sustainable wedding invitations as a [big trend right now](#). “Or use seed paper for your menus. It becomes a wedding favor in its own right.”

Intro

- Begin the blog post by writing an intro.
- This, along with the blog title, is arguably the **most important** part of writing a blog as it's the first chance to grab the reader's attention.
- If readers are not **hooked** within the first few seconds, they will stop reading before they give the blog a fair chance.
- **Tell a story**, share a joke, use a statistic, provide an interesting fact, ask a question or state something controversial.

LIFE IS SUITE
A BLOG FROM KIMPTON


EAT + DRINK

The Best European Christmas Markets

DESTINATIONS

With the crisp air calling for big jackets, cozy hats and warm gloves, Europe's the place to be for a truly festive experience. The aromas of mulled wine and spicy nutmeg set the mood this winter season.

We've pulled together our top picks from some of Europe's most loved Christmas markets. Now you can spend less time searching and more time shopping for that perfect gift.



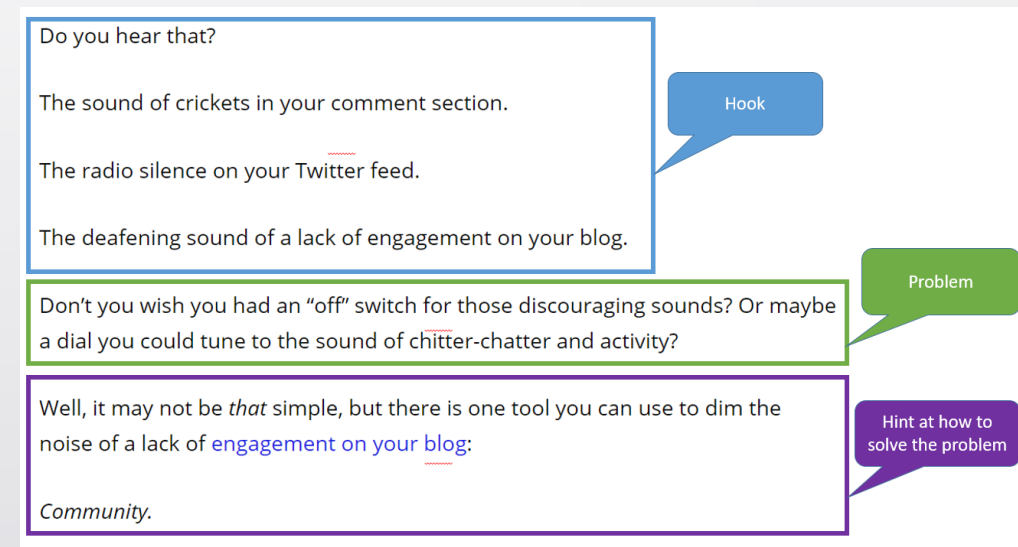
Our hearts skip a beat at the sight of London decked out in holiday cheer. Image Credit: @agatha.infinet via Twenty20

Zagreb, Croatia

For three years in a row, Zagreb's been voted as having the 'Best Christmas Markets in Europe' in a worldwide vote with [European Best Destinations](#), and it's easy to see why.



- The intro should also provide readers with the **purpose** of the post, directly addressing a problem the reader may have. Introduce the program and explain it in full detail.
- End the intro with a transition to hint at **how to solve the problem**.



Main Body

The main body of the blog post is where you get into the why and how of the problem presented in the intro.

First, present the **problem** in more detail with why the problem is so **difficult to solve**. Tell a **story** or give a detailed example to show readers you understand the problem they are facing.

Include **statistics** to further **illustrate the problem** through concrete facts. Then provide core points through a **solution** to the problem.

Conclusion

- The conclusion should bring readers full circle and summarize the main points and key takeaways of the blog.
- Tie the closing back to the statement presented in the intro of the blog as depicted in the image below:

The Start: “As a content marketer, you’ve always relied on your trusty three-wheeler to get your job done. Oh, you didn’t realize you owned a tricycle? Well, analogically, you certainly do.”

The End: “Let’s face it: Your one-seat tricycle is not equipped to take each visitor on a journey to Conversion City. You’ll need a four-wheeler to drive them there.”

As you venture further into the city, the lights display through Oxford Circus leads you all the way to the famous [Winter Wonderland](#) in Hyde Park.



Shimmering lights, festive holiday rides and a veritable winter wonderland make magic of Hyde Park.
Image Credit: @IlanitLevy via Twenty20

With rides as high as you can see and rotating bars, this new style Christmas Market is an activity-filled take on what you may typically expect. An ice rink for all ages is the focal point, with plenty of activities to choose from. Winter Wonderland is like a fusion of a Christmas Market and an amusement park all rolled into one—growing increasingly popular with families and friends, it also makes for the most romantic date night, so grab some roasted chestnuts and a drink from one of the internationally themed bars and enjoy the city from a different point of view.

Going Global | Holidays

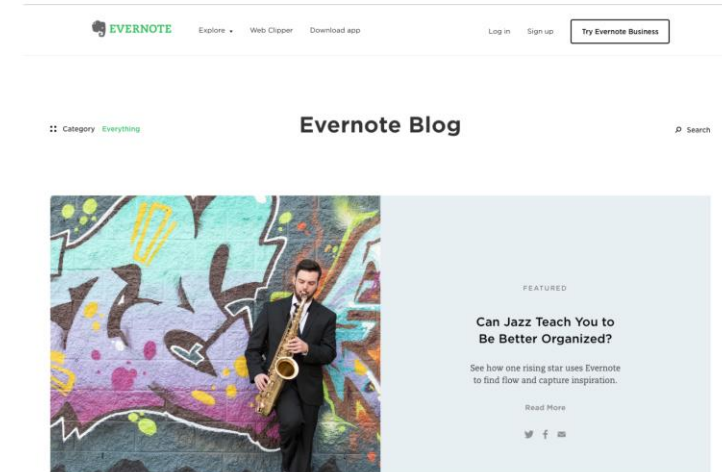
Share



Optimize for SEO

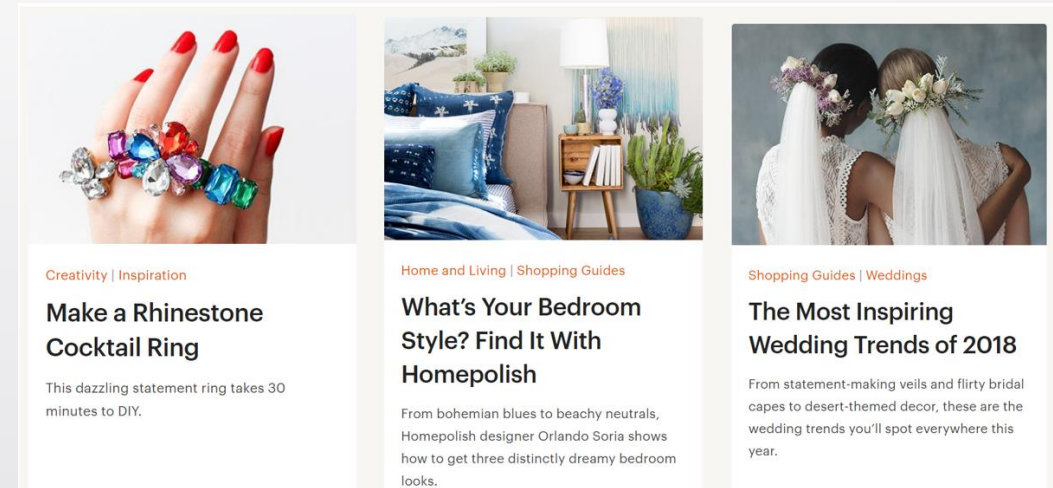
- Optimizing blogs for SEO is a huge component of the blog's success on search engines.
- Make sure that the blog includes **popular industry keywords**.
- When uploading images, be sure to name the image with keywords and include a brief description with the photo.
- Include at **least three or more hyperlinks to external websites** within the blog. Including hyperlinks not only provides more credibility by citing references or referring to another publication, they also increase blog views. When you link out to other popular pages, Google will increase the search ranking of your blog post, making it appear higher up in the Google search ranking.
- Give readers an **option to subscribe to your blog and share posts** on social media through social sharing buttons.

1. Evernote



Formatting the Blog

- After the blog post has been drafted, it's time to format the blog.
- Make sure the blog is formatted so that a **publishing date** is added to every post. This ensures readers that the content is timely and relevant.
- Every blog post must have a visually appealing main header image that is relevant to the blog topic. "Content with relevant images receive 94% more views than content without relevant images" (Leist).
- **In-line images**, or images that appear within the body of a webpage, can also be used to further illustrate a point or break up the post so it's more digestible.





Proofread and Publish

- The last step is to proofread and publish the blog post. A good best practice is to have different writers or editors proofread all blog posts before they are published.
- Hubspot offers a fantastic [editing, copywriting and proofreading checklist](#) to use to make sure your next blog post is in top shape before it gets published.

What is a Blog?



A blog is an online journal or informational website displaying information in the reverse chronological order

Blog structure



- Header with the menu or navigation bar
- Main content area with highlighted or latest blog posts
- Sidebar with social profiles, favorite content, or call-to-action
- Footer with relevant links like a disclaimer, privacy policy, contact page, etc.



Blog characteristics

- Archives
- Comments
- Blogs and websites
- What differentiates blogs from websites?



Did you know
you could earn money through blogging?



A blogger is someone who runs and controls a blog.
To be a blogger is an alternative career or job to many.



- <https://makeawebsitehub.com/examples-of-blogs/>