

Blockbuster Blog Posts

A Checklist for Effective Blogging

READY. SET. BLOG!

Blogging can be enormously gratifying or enormously frustrating. Results depend in part on the quality of your blog posts. Here's a checklist to make sure each post has the greatest chance of catching fire.

- **Is it aimed at your audience?** Blogs are a great place to establish your voice as an authority on the values you are working to protect. Use that voice to build a community of support.
- **What's the carrot?** Put yourself in your reader's chair. Why engage? What's the incentive for people to take part in your conversation? Examples include the opportunity to learn something useful or fascinating, to win a prize in a contest, to enjoy a laugh or a moment of entertainment.
- **Is it true?** Accuracy is critical. When in doubt, leave it out. Double check facts and link to source material.¹ If you make a mistake, fix it immediately.
- **Is it timely?** Jump on current events and emerging themes as quickly as possible. A [Google News Alert](#) can help you stay abreast of breaking news and current events.
- **Is it easy to read?** Focus on one idea per post. Use a conversational tone—a blog is not a press release. Use short words and simple, declarative sentences. Edit sloppy words before posting. Keep posts to 300 or so words. Use powerful verbs and vivid nouns. Use humor where appropriate.
- **Does it grab?** A short, punchy and provocative headline will grab the readers' attention. The headline is critical if you want folks to read the rest.
- **Are you using imagery and video?** Show, don't tell. We are a visual species, so use pictures with every post. Use Flickr'r, YouTube, Vimeo and other sources liberally, while respecting copyrights.
- **Are you engaging your audience?** Don't preach — *engage*. End blog posts with a question to trigger a conversation. Carefully read comments and respond to each one.
- **Is it connected?** Build connections with other networks and communities in your field. Engage actively, sharing content back and forth. Use targeted advertising to drive up your audience.
- **Is there a clear ask?** Have one clear action you want the reader to take: share the post, comment, spread the word, donate, contact a decision-maker. If you don't ask, they won't do it.

¹ Use [bitly](#) links to track the number of clicks generated by your post.

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