

WRITING & PITCHING BLOGS

WHY BLOG?

Why bother writing a blog? Think about what information you need to share and WHY. What's your goal? Do you want to educate a specific audience? Do you want your audience to take a specific action? Who do you hope will read your blog, and what do you hope they'll do with the information? A well-written blog or op-ed takes time to research, write, edit and submit. Make sure you have a specific, concrete purpose for your blog—and many of the decisions you make about the blog will follow naturally.

Audience – This is your most important decision. Who do you need to reach, and what do you want them to do once they've read your blog?

Timing – Find a reason why your audience needs to read your blog NOW. Why is your topic timely?

Tone – Your tone should match what you think your audience expects (technical? Conversational? Emotional?) and what your target media outlet prefers.

Signatory – Decide if you – or someone else – is the writer "signer" of the blog or op-ed.

CONTENT

Keep it short – A quick, engaging read; no longer than 600 words.

Don't bury the lede – Let readers know right away what the blog is about.

Take a position – Focus on an argument, using strong, convincing language.

Pair problems with solutions – Outline the problem, and be sure to offer a solution.

Focus on results, not process – Write about the outcome, not the journey.

Tell real stories – Provide real-world examples, anecdotes and people-focused stories.

Stories back up data – Explain data in ways people can understand.

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Include visuals – Photos, charts, and graphs that support the data and/or stories.

Close with the ask – Help your readers understand what they can do.

OUTLETS

Research – Pick an outlet that will best reach your target audience. Try to answer these questions:

- Is your topic relevant to their readers?
- What else has the outlet published on the subject?
- How recently have they published content on the subject?
- Do they tend to publish single pieces on a topic, or might they consider a series?

Avoid these pitfalls

- Make sure the outlet hasn't published a similar blog/op-ed recently. Check their archives – if it's been more than four months, you're probably safe.
- Check the word limit before you write – if you write a thousand words and they'll only accept 600, you've wasted a ton of time.

Submission do's and don'ts

- Write a pitch email—no more than a paragraph emphasizing why the blog/op-ed is timely and the signer's connection to the topic.
- Find the correct editor's direct email and then cc the general address for submissions.
- DO NOT attach the blog/op-ed – embed it below the pitch in the body of the emails.
- Submit to only one outlet at a time, as many have an exclusivity clause.

After you submit

- Give the editor at least 24 hours before contacting again, preferably 48 hours unless it is urgently time sensitive.
- After that, email or call the editor to assess their interest.
- If you don't get a response within 48 hours, tell them (by email, phone or voice mail) that they're your first choice, but due to time sensitivity you need an answer so you can submit elsewhere.
- If you don't hear back after 4-5 days, go ahead and submit to your next choice.

Have a backup plan

- Always have a back-up plan in case your first-choice outlet declines or doesn't respond.
- Customize the blog – content and length – to make it suitable for the next outlet you choose to pitch.
- As a last resort, publish the blog on your company or organization's website.