

How to Write a Blog Post



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Introduction: It's easier to plant your flag of expertise on top of a mountain of content

Do you feel like a fraud when you call yourself an expert? Many of us do. It's called the imposter syndrome and I've dealt with it myself. (Actually, it's nice to realize that it's affecting me less and less every day.)

What IS happening every day is that I'm meeting tons of new people, whether it's in person or online (such as on [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#)).

Today, with a mountain of [385 blog posts and counting](#), I'm much more confident about presenting myself as an expert web writer, editor, blogging consultant, content marketing strategist and writing coach.

I know that I can point a new colleague or prospective client to any number of blog posts I've written about whatever topic we're discussing.

Growing your confidence as an expert will be a lot easier for you if you create high-quality blog posts, [publish them consistently](#) and keep building your own **mountain of content**.

1) The "how to" post

Whether you're a new blogger, a lapsed blogger or a blossoming blogger-to-be, you may struggle with the very concept of how to write a blog post.

I suggest you start with the "how to" post. It may be the quickest route to building a connection with the prospective clients who need you.

After all, they have a problem to solve. If you help them do that, consistently, it will solidify you as an expert in their eyes. When they're ready to invest in a more in-depth solution, they'll remember you.

Writing a "how to" blog post - Pack your bags!

To write the most effective "how to" blog post, I want you become a tourist amongst your target market. Here are my seven suggested steps:

1. **Know the locals** - Who is your ideal client? Create a client persona that is detailed enough for you to imagine you are speaking directly to him or her.
2. **Understand their plight** - What is the problem your ideal client is trying to solve? Why is he or she looking for help? What impact is this problem having? [If you are a member of your own target market](#), think back to what you wish you'd known.
3. **Pack light** - We cannot solve anyone's problem all at once with one article, but we can still help. By breaking the solution into bite-sized tools, we give our readers small successes they can build on. That feels good - and you made them feel that way!
4. **Put yourself in their shoes** - Imagine that you are brand new to hearing about this solution or method. You don't know the language, you don't have any of the background materials and you don't even know what you don't know.
5. **Get them from A to B** - Create a concrete set of steps that would enable a complete beginner to use one simple tool. Challenge yourself to stay in their shoes and resist the temptation to take them [too far, too soon](#). Test it out on a real tourist (someone outside of your industry, or new to your industry).
6. **Wrap it up** - Introduce your steps by addressing your audience (so your reader knows he or she is in the right place) and describing the problem and its impact. Conclude your post with a call to action to deepen the learning (an exercise to try, a question to reflect on or a way to take the next step with you).
7. **Jazz it up** - [Give your blog post a creative and descriptive title](#) that uses the language your ideal client might type into a search engine.

Bonus tip: Presenting your directions as [a list of numbered items](#) or bullet points will make them easier to read and follow. Many people will only skim the list, so be sure each point is very descriptive.

Writing a "how to" or "[core](#)" [blog post](#) will demonstrate your expertise at solving the unique problems of your prospective clients. You'll be giving them a small success they can feel good about - and that will make them feel good about you!

So grab your sunscreen, passport and "beginner's mind." Visit your target market as a tourist and discover everything you could be teaching them how to do.

P.S. For more help on "how to" posts, you can [visit this page](#) to [download the Top 10 Article Generator](#), a step-by-step guide to [writing a Top 10 article](#).

2) The personal post

There is nothing wrong with [sharing a personal story on a business blog](#), as long as you have a business reason for doing so.

Sometimes that might be to demonstrate that [you are a member of your own target market](#). As you're achieving successes, you're [sharing your experience with your audience](#).

Sometimes it might be to [reinforce a lesson](#) that you wrote about previously.

And sometimes your reason might just to be show your readers more of your personal side, because we do business with those we know, like and trust.

How to write a personal post for your business blog

Business reasons aside, a personal post also gives you the opportunity to focus on the entertainment factor of your blog. So you'll want to make your story as compelling as possible.

Blogging consultant Brad Shorr has a helpful primer on [simple storytelling techniques for your blog](#). And Lou Hoffman shares a wonderful example from the CEO of Marriott International in his post about [applying storytelling techniques to corporate blogging](#).

And since **of course** you're going to be [reading your story out loud before you post](#), you might want to practice some [oral storytelling techniques](#) as well.

I suggest you keep your personal posts short at 250-300 words or so. If it's turning into a full article, consider reworking it into a "how to" or thought leadership post instead.

At some point during your story - maybe in the introduction and/or conclusion, subtly remind the reader who you are and what you do. After all, depending on the subject of your story, this post could end up in front of an entirely new audience.

For both new and returning readers, a personal story is a nice opportunity to show another side of you, your business and your life. If the reader happens to be your ideal client, this will bring you closer together. If they're not, that will become clearer.

3) The thought leadership post

Thought leadership posts (or "[thought pieces](#)," as I've called them before on this blog) are an important part of a balanced blog. They play a key role in [establishing and deepening your relationship with your readers](#).

Do you need to be a thought leader?

There's a lot of buzz about being a "thought leader" these days (though [according to Wikipedia](#) the term has been around since 1994), but do you need to be one? Absolutely not!

There is no need to pressure yourself with trying to reinvent the wheel, especially since [most of what you will write about is not new at all](#). In fact, breaking new ground as an innovator is only one of several possible reasons to write a thought leadership post.

Four ways to be a thought leader with your writing

1. **Propose your own theory** or explanation behind a specific challenge or phenomenon - this is what most people think of as thought leadership; coming up with a brand new idea to explain something better and more clearly than anyone before
2. **Take a stand on an issue** that's important to you, even when that is contrary to popular opinion - another commonly recommended blogging technique, where you attract attention with passion and controversy
3. **Present a puzzle**, unanswered question or other "food for thought" that leads your reader to new insights or awareness - a natural approach for coaches and trainers, this allows you to use your natural talent for empowerment to lead your reader to discover their own new truths
4. **Put your own unique take** on an established principle or solution - ah-hah, here's where anyone gets to be a thought leader; as [Andrea J. Lee](#) taught me, there are people in this world who can ONLY hear a message from YOU; they're tuned into your frequency and your way of explaining things (and I bet you're already writing these type of blog posts)

What makes something a thought leadership post?

You can set out to write a thought leadership piece, but you won't really know you've done it until you see the response. For example, earlier I wrote about the beating the imposter syndrome by building a mountain of content.

A few people responded publicly (by [tweeting](#), [retweeting](#) or [commenting](#)), and a few others have emailed me privately. I know they represent others who appreciated my take on this topic but didn't necessarily reply.

My stats in [Typepad](#), [HootSuite](#) and [AWeber](#) also showed me that many people clicked through to read the post (so the [article title](#) must have done its job!).

I knew I'd struck a chord with that post, and you'll know when it happens to you.

How to write a thought leadership piece

What are you feeling passionate about sharing with your readers? Do some free writing (either by hand or on the computer) about the topic and see where that leads you.

In my April 2010 post about [thought pieces](#), I suggested four ways to delve more deeply into a topic:

1. **Define** (what is your topic?)
2. **Deconstruct** (what's it made of?)
3. **Differentiate** (how is it different from other things? how are its elements different from each other?)
4. **Dispute** (how are other points of view on this topic inaccurate or ineffective?)

Use these broad categories to jumpstart your brainstorming, or as a structure for dividing what you've written into sections.

Introduce the topic by explaining why you think it's relevant for your readers, and conclude by asking them to take an action.

Even if you don't feel like a thought leader (maybe you actually feel like an imposter), I still encourage you to try your hand at writing a thought leadership piece. Chances are, you already have.

4) The connecting post

Writing connecting posts helps you to grow your network, [build relationships with prospective clients](#) and establish yourself as a trusted resource.

A big part of its appeal is that when you write a connecting post (I've called it a "[connective piece](#)" earlier on this blog) you don't have to start from scratch with a blank page or brand new idea.

Instead, you're connecting the dots for your readers (Andrea J. Lee calls it "[being their Google](#)") between:

- A [personal story](#) and a [business lesson](#)
- Your current post and a previous post
- Someone else's post and your own post
- A [client's story](#) and your reader's situation

How to write a connecting blog post

- [Keep up with the news](#) - To find relevant blog posts to share or potential guest authors to invite, try setting up [Google Alerts](#), a [Twitter search tool](#) or [a blog reader](#). I also suggest you commit some of your [article writing time](#) to following your mouse around the blogosphere to see what you can find. (*Note: That includes your own site - look for posts you can comment on or rewrite from a fresh perspective.*)
- **Make the content your own (even when it isn't)** - Whether you're sharing a link, posting a guest article or describing a client's

triumphant success, include an introduction or explanation. Show how the content relates to your blog's mission, which is (*hopefully*) to solve the unique problems of your ideal clients.

- **Review your week** - Look to your Inbox, telephone calls and personal adventures for stories and examples of the topics you write about in your blog. Grant yourself the license to make some [creative connections](#).

There are going to be some days when you just don't have any new content in you. And there will be other days when someone else just said it better. With connecting posts, you can keep blogging anyway, adding some variety and spice to your own mountain of content.



Linda Dessau is the author of *Write Your Way to More Clients Online*. She has helped dozens of small business owners connect with new clients online, and has guided hundreds more with the free advice on her blog, [ContentMasteryGuide.com](#).

Linda is a certified coach (CPCC) and a member of the Editors' Association of Canada. She is also the editor of VOICE, the newsletter of the International Association of Coaching. She loves hearing the delight when people see their brilliant ideas turn into clearly written words.

Linda has been writing for the web since 2003 and has attracted nearly 100% of her clientele through blogging, newsletters and social media. She created the "You Talk, I'll Write" service in July 2005 to combine her passion for coaching with her gift for writing.

Linda lives in Barrie, Ontario, Canada with Patch, a retired racing greyhound. She is currently volunteering her time and writing skills with the Barrie chapter of the OSPCA and with C.O.P.E. Service Dogs. For more FREE content marketing secrets, please visit [www.ContentMasteryGift.com](#).