The Marketing Manager's Blogging Checklist

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DIGITAL THIRD COAST

INTRODUCTION

Blogs have come a long way.

From their genesis in the 1990s to the explosion during the aughts, blogs are an indispensible force of the internet. Companies are told it's an essential part of their marketing. But far too often marketing managers consider it a low-level priority. Blogging can pay off when it's done well. And to do it well, we've created this blogging checklist for you.

Blogging seems easy enough — choose a topic, write a few hundred words, click publish and immediately vault to the top spot in the search results. Simple, right?

Well, unfortunately, that's not quite how blogging works. While part of blogging's appeal is its quick-to-market allure, it also requires strategic planning to cover topics that your audience will appreciate and find interesting.

The easiest way to ensure that your blog is relevant to your target audience is to write for a specific buyer persona. While it may be tempting to try and write a post that will appeal to everyone, the surefire way to failure is trying to please everybody. It's only logical that a small business owner doesn't have the same concerns as, say, a marketing manager. If you try to write for both of those personas, there's a solid chance that neither one will read your blog post. The more specific your content is, the more it resonates with your target buyer persona (and ultimately your actual readers).

For example, consider a blog post about the "Top Ten Resume Tips for College Graduates Looking for Jobs in Digital Marketing" compared to "Resume Tips for College Grads." Which one do you think will get more attention? Often, bloggers overlook writing for a target persona because it requires more forethought. They miss the mark altogether because they don't really know their buyer personas. Writing your blog posts for a specific persona will help you stand out from your competition.

BLOGGING FOR YOUR PERSONA

That blinking cursor is intimidating.
Every writer faces it. It's flashing and your words aren't flowing, writing a thought-provoking, insightful blog post can seem impossible. Don't panic. Writing a blog post is easier when you break it down into small steps. Take a look:

1. Review your persona profile

Your persona profiles help get you into the mind of your customer. Give it a readthrough to remind yourself of their basic information, their job description and their buying style.

2. Outline your blog post

Use your content calendar, buyer personas and target keywords as a guide. Be sure to bounce your ideas off a coworker. Or, if you work solo, spend some time away from the outline and return to it fresh for a new perspective.

3. Flesh out your main points

Flesh out your points one at a time. Be careful not to be too self-promotional (which is a huge turn-off to readers). Position your blog as a resource for your persona. Keep the tone conversational, as if you were actually speaking to the real-life version of your persona and write with your user in mind. Include references from other sites when applicable to increase credibility.

4. Be brief

It's true that longer-form content tends to perform better (since longer content captures more keywords). That said, if you've made your points, there's no reason to drag on a blog post for 500 more unnecessary words — that would only anger your persona. Remember, you're writing for them first.

5. Make sure your post is readable

Add subheadings and bullets when logical. Add images or screenshots to illustrate your post further (visual content tends to attract more backlinks). Don't forget to add alt-text.

6. Add a punchy title

Ideally, your title is concise enough that its title tag is less than 60 characters (so that it shows up on Google's results pages in its entirety). Address your target persona specifically. For example: "The Freelance Designer's Guide to Building an Online Portfolio." Make the title interesting enough that people want to click and read.

Be sure to include some of your keywords in your title tag. Title tags are meant to quickly define the title of a page and they're used often in search engine results pages. Using your keywords in your title tags increases your chances of getting noticed by a user.

7. Proofread

Proofread your post twice for good measure — once on your own, and once with someone else in the office. As a writer, you're too familiar to proofread well. To combat that, read your post backwards so that it's harder for your brain to predict what's coming next.

Signed, sealed, delivered — you're ready to publish, right? Nope, not quite. Your blog post still needs a few more things before you send it out into the internet.

YOUR BLOGGING PUNCHLIST

Blogging for your buyers

With blogging, best practices change pretty quickly. Shorter or longer posts? More images or less? Enticing clickbait headlines or titles that simply state what the post is about?

While keeping up with these trends is a big part of making sure your blog stays fresh, the most important thing to remember when blogging is to write with your persona in mind. By keeping this perspective, you'll be able to focus your writing and your blog content on the things that truly matter to your company and your buyer personas.

On-site

Add internal links and write your meta description. Internal links improve your SEO by creating better navigation, establishing a hierarchy and increasing backlinks on your website.

Your meta description is seen on search engine results under the page title. Limit the meta description to between 150-160 characters so that it fits on the results page.

Off-site

Promote your published post. Use every tool you have at your disposal to share your post with the world. This includes, but is not limited to: social media, sharing with influencers and adding it to your email newsletter.

Instead of sending the same copy and link through each of your social media accounts, target your efforts to where your target personas hang out. If you've built your buyer personas correctly, you should know their preferred social media platforms and means of communication. Use this information to create a message that resonates with your personas on the platforms they naturally gravitate towards.

Keep a close eye on your blog's analytics. You'll eventually start to learn which blog post topics resonate most with different personas, and you can start crafting your content calendar to better reflect these topics. Choose which analytics you want to measure based on your content strategy goals. For example, if your goal is brand exposure, measure overall traffic. If your goal is to generate leads, measure email captures and goal conversions on blog pages.

Over time, your blog content strategy may eventually influence the rest of your content marketing plan for a more focused, user-centric strategy.

THE MARKETING MANAGER'S BLOGGING CHECKLIST

☐ **Review your buyer persona profile**

- Basic information: _____
- Job description: _____
- Shopping style: _____
- Other: _____

☐ **Outline your blog post**

- Main idea: _____
- Supporting point: _____
- Supporting point: _____
- Supporting point: _____
- Keywords to include: _____

☐ **Flesh out your points, positioning your blog as a resource**

- Reference: _____
- Reference: _____
- Reference: _____

☐ **Make sure your post is readable**

- Subheadings
- Bullets
- Images and alt-text

☐ **Add a title (< 60 characters)**

_____

_____

THE MARKETING MANAGER'S BLOGGING CHECKLIST

☐ **Add internal links**

- Link 1: _____
- Link 2: _____
- Link 3: _____

☐ **Write your meta description (150–160 characters)**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

☐ **Write your title tag (< 60 characters, include keywords)**

_____

_____

_____

_____

☐ **Promote your post on social media**

☐ **Promote your post in an email newsletter**

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THE MARKETING MANAGER'S BLOGGING CHECKLIST

☐ **Influencer outreach**

- Name: _____

- Email: _____

- Name: _____

- Email: _____

- Name: _____

- Email: _____

☐ **Review your blog's analytics**

- Overall traffic

- Referral traffic

- Time on site

- Top content

- Email collection

- Conversion rates

- Bounce rate

- Lead generation

☐ **Additional notes**

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