

PURPOSEFUL BLOGGING

BLOGGING FOR RESULTS

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For those who want to realize an outcome from
their investment in blogs and blogging.

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Introduction

Originally written in 2011, I've updated this whitepaper to take into account the dramatic changes in Google since then. The original concept of being a *purposeful blogger* and many of the original strategies are still valid today.

Blogs continue to provide opportunities to attract online sales prospects to either complement an existing website, or even as website replacement as WordPress is now more commonly used.

This whitepaper examines strategies to maximize blogging efforts by being *purposeful*.

Blog Basics

What is a blog?

A blog or 'Web Log' is a form of website arranged as a series of articles or 'posts'.

Blogs are ideal for publishing and retaining a series of articles, short stories or diary entries online, and so are used widely in the internet.

The WordPress blogging system is the most popular blogging system used on the internet (Refer [Wikipedia](#)) with *more than 18.9% of the top 10 million websites as of August 2013*.

Internet exposure

Blogs are very useful for gaining internet exposure, with new blog posts typically digested by search engines more quickly than new website pages, so they can fast track your message and presence throughout the internet.

Blogs vs Social Media

Blogging as a strategy has been lost in the shadows of the apparently sexier Social Media limelight, but I have no doubts a blog will produce better sales outcomes over the longer term.

Let's compare how a Facebook 'post' operates as a sales vehicle compared with a blog post.

The Facebook Post

Your Facebook 'article' is posted to a network of your 'friends', will appear in their news feeds, and maybe friends of friends. Eventually, or in many cases quickly, the new post will scroll off feeds into oblivion as newer items appear.

Your Facebook post is presented to your existing network, analogously to a letterbox drop in your local neighborhood. Many people don't allow you to leave your leaflet in their letterboxes, and sadly most people are not interested right now, but you hope that some are, or at least will remember your offer when they do need you.

Overall this marketing medium typically has a very low success rate. If you've got thousands of Facebook friends that will buy from you repetitively then maybe that's OK.

The Blog Post

A blog post can be distributed simultaneously through a couple of key channels including:

Email Subscribers

Your subscriber network receives an email alert for each new post. Of course these may fade out of mind quickly; get hidden away in spam folders or even buried in the flood of other emails.

Found in Searches

Blog posts also appear and remain in Google searches – a key advantage of blogging. A searcher can click through a Google search, see your post then be introduced to your business. Notably this continues to happen for *years after you have published your post*. In a sense a blog is a virtual asset, which can attract clients for years to come.

Permanent Content

Blogs continue to exist in your blog/site and so can be presented to visitors as permanent content in the form of *Recent Posts* or *Frequently Asked Questions* or even a *Glossary* - See the Frequently Asked Questions example in Repurposing Posts.

Viral

Occasionally readers will forward your post to a colleague, introducing new prospects to your services. Posts with a high value to your target audience are more likely to be forwarded so focus post topics on information that's important for your clients, not just you!

Publish your blogs to Social Media

WordPress plugins like JetPack provide a publishing interface to social media channels so you can create your entry in your blog, then publish it into Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+, Twitter and more social media accounts. This is an important personal productivity tool for the busy business person.

Blogs are good for your site too

Blogging on a regular basis also benefits your website by adding a stream of fresh Google enticing new content all about your business, your offerings and experiences. Blog posts are long term *attractor* content for potential clients. By establishing a quorum of blog posts that Google sees as relevant to your client base, you help build a virtual sales asset.

Blogs let you tell your story

Blogging also give you the chance to tell prospective clients more about you and your business, even before they've contacted you. Testimonials, case studies, new products, industry commentary all help potential clients help form a positive first impression about your business for researchers.

Where should my blog live ?

Importantly maximising a blog's benefit and especially SEO benefit, is only fully realized if your blog is located *inside your domain*

ie <your website domain> or <your website domain>/blog

.. but not if the blog is located in a sub-domain or inside other domains:

blog. <your website domain>
<your website domain>.wordpress.com
<your website domain>.blogger.com

How often should I blog?

The perennial question is *how often should I blog*. A blog's success depends largely on the intensity of competition for the target *keywords* and related long tail keywords. The more competition, the more posts you need. Also if you want the benefits sooner, post more.

As a general guide, start publishing about one post per week, while monitoring results then adjust the post interval accordingly. Refer to Scheduling posts page 9 to help achieve this.

Aim for at least 100 posts.

Establishing a new blog? Consider amassing 20+ posts for publishing on cutover and give your site a head start.

What should I write about?

Write about the things that your clients want to or need to know. Answer their commonly asked questions, provide information about your business, the products, and your team. Give visitors an insight into your business beyond your About Us page.

Here's some ideas to get you started:

Products (or Services)

Feature each and every one of your products (or services). Explain in non-technical non-jargon language what the product is used for, how it is used, features, usage tips etc. Include photos of the product.

You might also write an 'industry version' using jargon and technical terms and link the two. Write posts about the common questions (ie Frequently Asked Questions) asked about this product and link them to the posts as well so you create a mini-network of posts in your site all on that product.

Frequently Asked Questions

List and answer real client queries. If one client is asking then surely many others will as well. See our suggestion below for making an FAQ menu to display them.

Industry News

Illustrate how knowledgeable and well connected you are with your industry by announcing industry news, making comment on industry trends and developments etc

Glossary

If there's lots of jargon or technical language in your industry provide a series of blog posts on each explaining each term using 'plain speak' and reveal what it actually means, how the jargon evolved. Link to related terms to create another internal mini-network.

Repurposing Posts

WordPress also allows you to utilise blog posts in creative ways as well. Here's a simple example for Frequently Asked Questions :

- Create and apply a Category of *FAQ* to relevant posts
- Setup a menu item filtered to the *FAQ* category

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The FAQ menu will list any posts you have categorized as an FAQ. New posts with that category will dynamically appear in the FAQ menu. Checkout the FAQ section of our site as an example: <http://succinctideas.com.au/faqs/>

Keywords

Key to connecting with your clients online is understanding what they are typing into search engines. These are known as 'keywords'.

Arrange for your business website or blog to be viewed in searches for searches for your keywords, and you have the opportunity to entice these visitors to your website, and so promote your business, and its products or services.

Finding your target keywords

Selecting target keywords is a critical initial step in online marketing, with the process detailed in a companion whitepaper by Succinct Ideas titled [Discovering your Target Keywords](#).

Synonyms

Contemporary Google is also very good at relating synonyms i.e. words with similar meanings as your target terms, so use synonyms in your text and headings.

Also be aware that you can be penalized by Google for 'over optimizing', so balanced, engaging, well written text with a sprinkling of keywords and synonyms will likely produce better outcomes than obsessively focusing on a single target keyword phrase.

Using Long Tail Keywords

If you are starting out on a 'Purposeful Blogging' campaign consider using a long tail keyword strategy.

Long Tail keywords are used by searchers to fully describe their topic and might be a search consisting of 4 to 5 individual words. For example consider these steps from a 'broad' or very general keyword toward a 'long tail keyword':

- *Lawyer: A very broad search term*
- *Traffic Lawyer*
- *Traffic lawyer Adelaide*
- *Traffic defense lawyer Adelaide*

Finding Long Tail keywords

I find the Google's search suggestions a very effective tool to identify long tail keywords

These suggestions appear as you type the term terms, and do influence the terms people use in their searches.



Recheck the selected long tail keywords in Google's Keyword Planner.

Targeting your blog

To be found in searches for target terms, we need to emphasize those terms to search engines, and there are a couple of important places in a blog where this is best achieved.

Permalink

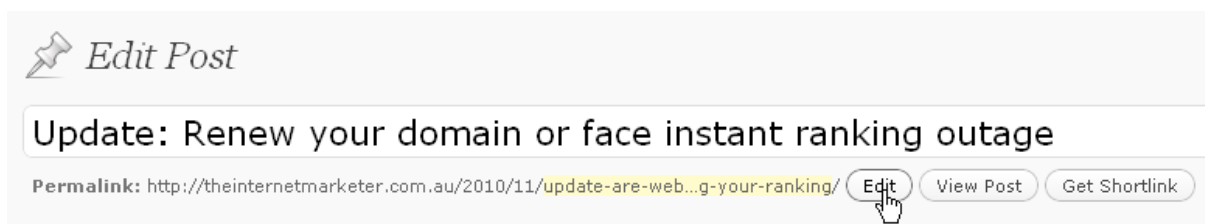
The web address of an individual blog post is called a *permalink*, and it is an important area where keywords can be emphasized to search engines.

As the blog author you can set the permalink for each blog item to include your target keywords, this can be achieved manually or automatically.

e.g. mywebsite.com.au/**all-about-my-product**

Manual

Click the edit button adjacent the permalink as pictured below and edit it as required. Note that when you click OK the system may standardize the permalink changing it slightly.



Automatic

Changing the default permalink settings to use the blog item name will ensure this is automatically used in the permalink.

Access this setting via Settings | Permalink in the WordPress Admin menu as illustrated below:

Post name

<http://succinctideas.com.au/sample-post/>

Once this setting is made, all we need to do is ensure that blog item **name** contains the target keywords.

e.g. If I'm targeting *Purposeful blogging* as a search phrase, then I'd title my article "Purposeful Blogging" The resultant permalink would be:
www.myblog.com.au/purposeful-blogging/

If the permalink generated is unacceptable then use the manual permalink edit to refine it.

Tags & Categories

Blogs provide *tags* and *categories* which provide a level of organization of the blog items for management, ease of searching etc.

Categories tend to be more structured, typically representing broad subject divisions much like folders in a filing cabinet. Typically a Category may be reused across several posts, while tags identify individual characteristics of a post and may be unique to just one post in the entire blog.

eg *SEO* is a Category which is used in many posts on the Succinct Ideas website, while the tag *iPhone* is used infrequently.

Both Tags and Categories can signal keywords to search engines although in my experience tags tend to do more so.

Meta tags

Meta tags and in particular the **Title meta tag** helps search engines understand what the page is about, so ensure you help the search engine with that by using and maximising your site's Title meta tags. Importantly meta tags are also what Google uses to shape the Search Engine Result Page (SERP) element which searches see.

Succinct Ideas

succinctideas.com.au/

We use SEO SEM and more to create online sales opportunities for your business. Get your site selling Call 0409 507 920.

Writing the content

Avoid keyword stuffing

Your content should contain your target terms and synonyms. How repetitively you ask ?

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This is one of the areas that Google has changed its approach and should be treated with caution to avoid the risk of over-optimising penalties.

Here's some tools you can use to check the appearance of keywords in your copy:

Keyword cloud tools:

Provide an visual representation of the prominent terms in the page

<http://www.metamend.com/seo-tools/keyword-density-analyzer.html>

<http://www.tocloud.com/>

SEO Plugin for Wordpress

Yoast - highly recommended - provides a wide range of SEO tuning ability including checking keyword use in individual pages

Google WebMasters Tools

Provided by Google to allow diagnosis of your site, this system is the most reliable tool for assessing your site's keyword profile. The *Content Keywords* section shows a list of terms in order of significance from Google's perspective - and that's the one that counts!

The strategy here is to eliminate inadvertently repeated terms and increase the repetition of target terms and synonyms.

Where to place target terms

Keyword emphasis can be gained by placing your keywords and/or synonyms by:

- Adding the term to the Title tag
- Having the term formatted in HTML H1 format
- Bolding (indeed any font treatment) on the target term
- Having the term in your posts text

Again, the target term should be used in *moderation*

Scheduling posts

WordPress provides the ability to schedule posts for later release, so you can create a batch of posts then schedule each to appear in sequence into the future.

This automates the process of creating a sequence of posts to maximize the possibility of ranking.

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In WordPress, a post can be scheduled by clicking on *Edit* adjacent to *Publish Immediately* in the Publish dialog.

A calendar appears and the scheduled publish date and time can be easily set. I find releasing the posts at 2-3 day intervals the most effective.

Summary

To maximize your investment in blogging:

- Create articles that reflect your client's interests
- Use their language (ie keywords and synonyms) in the article in:
 - Heading
 - permalink
 - Categories
 - Tag(s)
 - Text including some bolded text
- Publish articles regularly

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