

BLOGGING

How to generate traffic and
New Leads for Business

ROQUEPRESS

Creating a blog is one of the most effective ways to reach your audience. It's a free marketing tool that's statistically proven to help your business thrive. If you're ready to see why you can't afford one more day without a blog, you have come to the right place. Follow along to learn how to increase your audience through captivating blog posts.

01 **Why do you need a monthly blog**

Regardless of if your business is a tech start-up or a clothing company for puppies, you need to have a functioning blog. It's a way to connect with customers and get the word out there. Plus, if you happen to write something that sparks particular interest in the social media sphere, you have the opportunity to go viral and reap the benefits. Not convinced? Check out what else a blog can do for you.



Foster Connection

Arguably, the best parts of business blogging are the connections that you develop. Blogs are interactive. People can like, comment, and share them across the internet. Smart businesses realize the importance of this aspect and take the time to reply to comments, start discussions, and listen to their audience. People take notice when their voice is heard.

Provide Social Media Content

Going hand-in-hand with fostering connection, your blog adds value, something relevant to share on your social media pages. Create several different social media posts for each blog by isolating interesting facts, statistics, or an important quote that relates to your niche. If you're releasing a new product or a special offer, post about it and link back to your blog with more information. The more active you are on social media, the more growth you'll see. It's free, customized marketing, take advantage of it!

Build Credibility

As you begin to publish more blogs, your audience will begin to trust you as a reliable source of information. Your credibility in your field will rise and people will start coming to you first when they have questions or concerns. A blog gives you a chance to showcase your expertise in a visually appealing and easily accessible way. Plus, the more your audience grows to trust you, they're likely it is that they'll turn into loyal customers.

Provide Social Media Content

When you first start blogging, stick to things that you know and can easily explain. Doing so allows you to build your reputation. However, even though you're an expert in your industry, it's important to stay up to date with advancements. Blogging allows you to do this. It keeps you on the edge of your seat and allows you to continually grow. Just make sure to do your research if you're writing about something new.

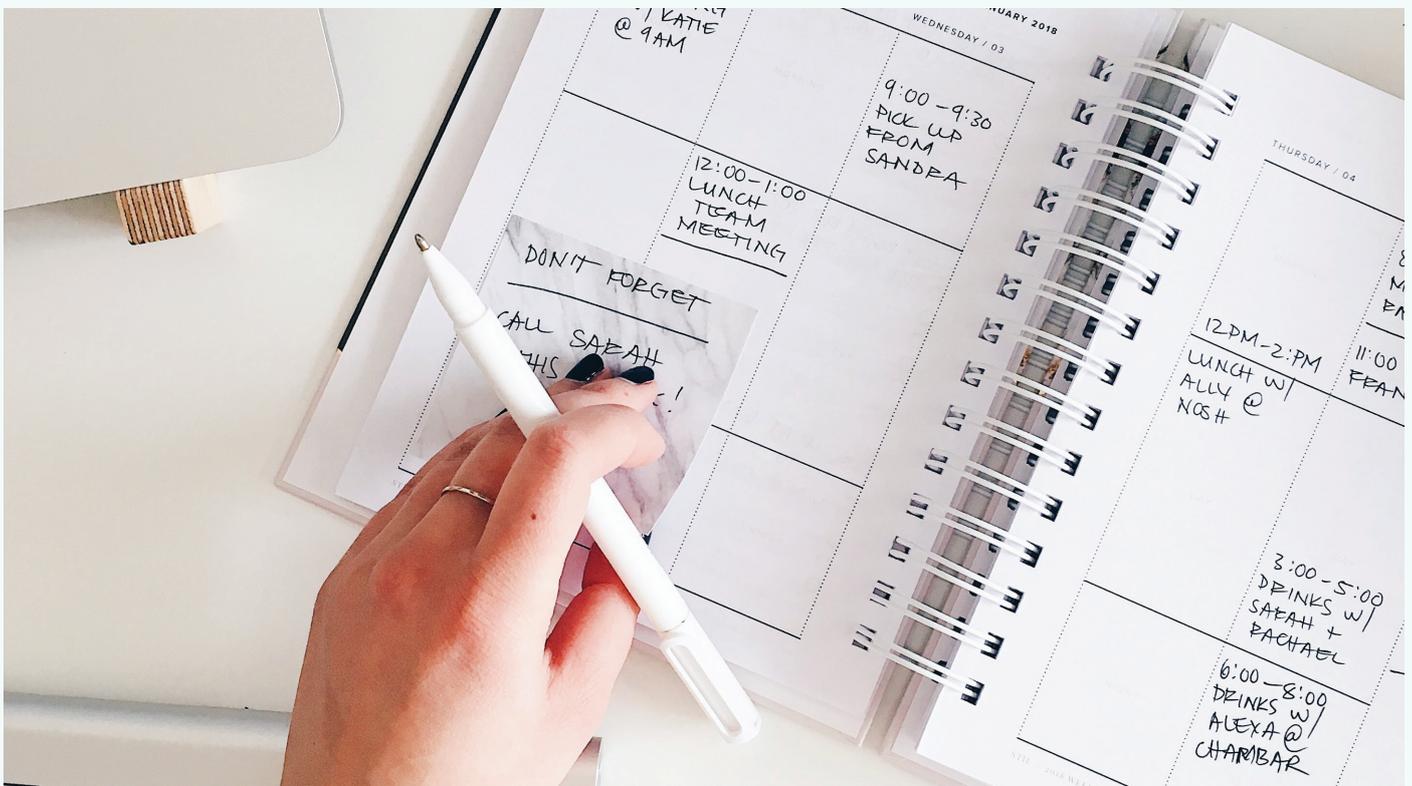
Improves Your SEO

Blogs are imperative when it comes to strong SEO. Releasing bi-weekly, monthly, or even quarterly blogs allows you to strategically target keywords and enhance your search results rankings. Figure out a schedule, create a content calendar, and be consistent in posting. Just remember, it's more important to focus on quality than quantity.



02 Finding the time

So you're probably thinking, oh boy, i'm already overly busy, and now this guy wants me to put together a blog every week? No way, no how, it's not going to happen. If you're thinking it's not worth your time, go back and re-read the last section. In today's world, a blog can help your business grow. it has the potential to give you a massive return on investment. To find the time and motivation, check out these tips.



Keep Track of Your Creativity

Carry around a notepad, have a stack of post-it's handy, or create a folder in your phone for when ideas spark. They may come at odd times, but they have the potential to be absolute winners. Even if it doesn't quite make sense now, jot it down anyway. When it comes time to pick some topics, you'll have a plethora of creative ideas to choose from.

Find Inspiring Sites

The internet is a wonderful place. There are millions of opportunities to foster creativity and find inspiration. If you're struggling, check out forums, social media, and even some of your competitor's blogs for ideas. if your prospects/clients are asking questions, use them as a blog topic and respond to them with the link. it's a win-win.

Figure Out Your Productivity Peaks

Everyone is different. Some people love getting up early and knocking out their toughest tasks first while others experience peak productivity in the afternoon. Figure out what works best for you and work with your biological clock rather than against it.

Create an Inventory

When you sit down to write, try to knock out a few blogs at a time. Better yet, consider devoting an entire day every other week (or as often as you feel inspired) to writing. You'll be able to create an extensive inventory so that you can consistently post new content even when you experience a bit of writer's block.

Hire a Writer

If all else fails and you're still struggling to channel your inner Hemingway, consider outsourcing your blogs. There are thousands of people that write for a living and would be more than happy to put together a strong blog for you. Once you receive the final edits, you can always go through and make changes to better represent your voice.



03 First Steps: Pre - writing set up

So you're convinced, your business needs a blog. great! You've taken the first step in growing your online presence. The next step is taking some time to answer the following questions. Don't start pounding away at the keyboard until you've gotten all of the preliminary work done or you could find your blog heading in a completely irrelevant direction.



Who's your audience?

This is arguably the most important question that you need to answer before starting your blog. Creating a blog that mirrors your target audience is the only way to draw them in and foster relationships. Think of the following:

- Who is your ideal client or customer?
- What do they like to do in their spare time?
- What needs or problems are they facing?
- How do they digest information?
- What do they expect from your blog?
- How do they see themselves?



A sample client persona if i was looking to target Manufacturers:

Joe the Manufacturer

Who is your ideal client or customer? Manufacturers based within 30miles of Elmhurst, illinois with revenue of \$1-5 million

What do they like to do in their spare time? Work on his golf game and spend time with grandchildren

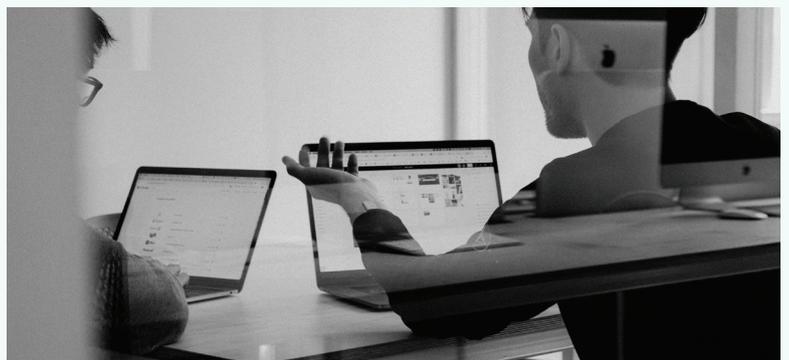
What needs or problems are they facing? Dealing with an old outdated website that doesn't properly communicate what they do and isn't mobile friendly

How do they digest information? Reads shared articles on linkedin, but mostly searches on google

what do they expect from your blog? Quick and to the point information relating specifically to manufacturers and their websites

How do they see themselves? As someone who traditionally hasn't used digital marketing or a website but realizes the industry landscape is changing

Once you start writing, collect data so you can see if you're capturing the attention of the right people. if you are, great, keep going. if not, make some changes and try again. Blogging is both an art and a science; you'll get there.



Define your goal

The next step is defining a clear goal for your blog. Do you want to inform customers on new trends? Generate traffic to your site? Influence people in your industry? Get as specific as you can and make sure it's measurable.

Brainstorm categories

Next, it's time to start creating categories to blog about. Once someone lands on your blog, categories should be clearly shown so that people can easily see what your posts are about. This allows them to filter posts by category and find specific topics faster. If you've defined your audience, you can determine a few areas in your niche that they would be interested in reading about.

Think about products, services, informational posts and anything revolving around how they'll benefit from your business. You can also consider creating a category with current events in your industry to keep your readers to date.

Research Keywords

Take a look at what keywords people are actually searching for. There are many free tools to help give you insight. You can even look at customer emails to see what terms they use to describe your products/services. This is important because if you rank for a keyword, but no one searches for it, you're not going to see any ROI.





Blog design and hosting platforms

Ideally, your blog will be a part of your main company website. Meshing the two together allows you to easily drive traffic to the blog from your website and vice versa. Doing so also makes it easier to embed recent blog posts throughout your website, helps grow your traffic and SEO over time, and drives awareness of other pages on your site. Having your website and blog powered by WordPress makes this an easy to achieve reality. Alternatively, you can set up your blog as a separate website, either on its own domain (yourblog.com) or as a subdomain (blog.yourcompany.com). This isn't the route we generally recommend going, but there are situations where this is the best choice.

Determine a schedule

Think about how often you want to upload new posts to your blog and create a schedule. If you want to start out with doing a blog each week, be consistent. The worst thing you can do as you're growing your following is be inconsistent. WordPress has the built-in ability to schedule your posts ahead of time. You can easily load up as many posts as you'd like and schedule them to automatically go live at specific days/times. For instance, you can add in 4 blog posts and have one go live every Tuesday at 7am for the next four weeks.

Write!

Now that you've got everything set up and planned out, it's time to hit the keyboard. Upload at least one post to start so your blog isn't empty when you launch it and then follow your schedule. Make sure that your writing is engaging and draws in the right audience. Encourage comments by asking for feedback/questions and always respond to your readers.

04 Struggling with customer engagement

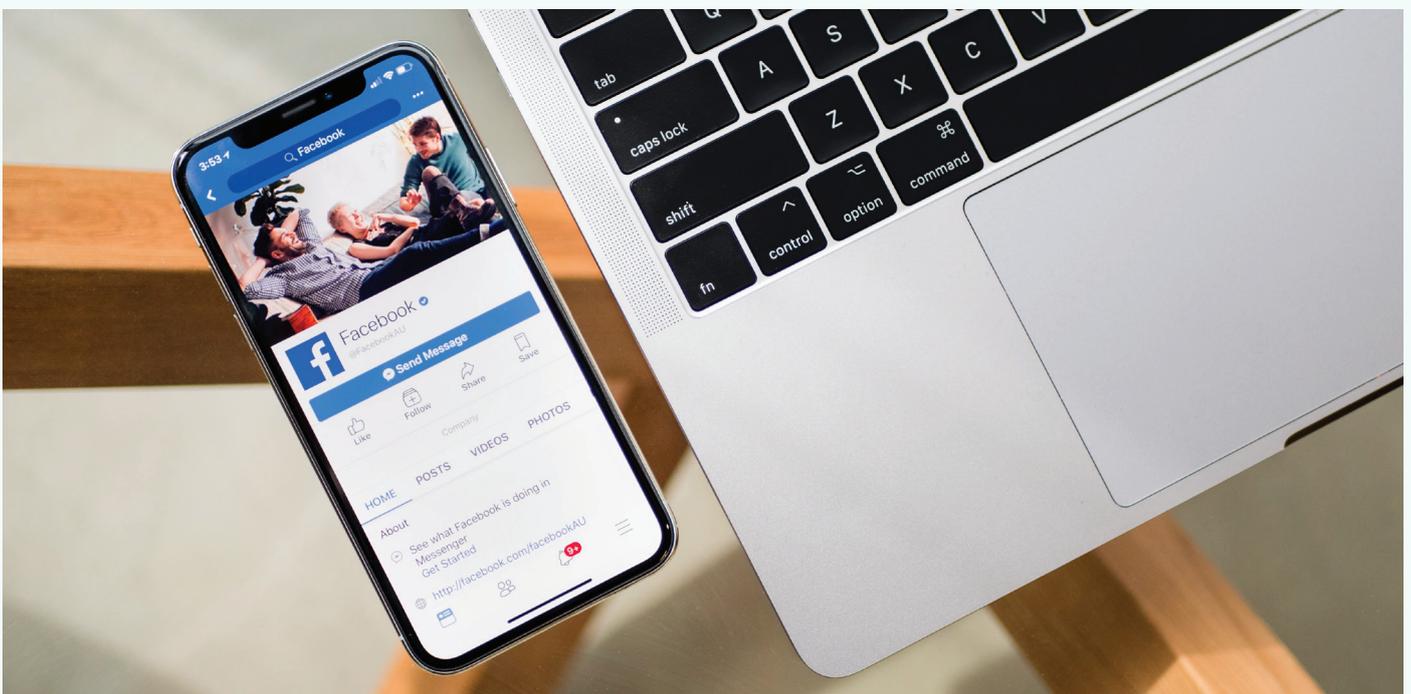
If you start writing and publishing your blogs and notice that your customers aren't as engaged as you'd hope, don't worry. There are a few tried and true actions you can take to help boost the interactions.

Turn to Social Media

When people decide to connect with you on social media, it's because they're interested in engaging with your business. Always share your blog posts on your social media profiles. Ask questions, share relevant information and respond to comments. Companies that engage with their customers are memorable and are more successful at fostering lasting relationships.

Host a Contest

People love contests and giveaways; the opportunity to win something is thrilling. Post the rules on your blog and link back to your post on all of your social media platforms. Use hashtags and geotags on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn and make sure one of the rules is to share your post. The more eyes that see it, the more traffic your blog will get. Just ensure that the prize is relevant to your target audience and you're good to go. You can also enable social media sharing icons directly on your blog posts to make them easier for people to share without having to leave your website.





Make it Visually appealing

Text is more appealing when it's scattered with engaging imagery. include appealing formatting and graphics so your readers can digest your posts with ease. no one likes to see a massive post of all text with no formatting.

Include Success Stories

The main goal of marketing is showing how your products and services benefit your audience. Use testimonials and case studies within your blog posts to give your readers real-world examples of these benefits. It's a great way to unequivocally show what your business can do for people and can trigger follow questions and blog traffic.

Incorporate Lists

People love lists. They love reading them, checking things off of them, and even making their own. They're easy to digest and they're satisfying to work through. Lists are the perfect skeletons for blogs so use them whenever you can. How can they boost engagement? Towards the end of these types of blog posts, ask for other suggestions to include on the list or if they've seen any success (or struggles) from the action items.

Consider Vlogs

Vlogs are like blogs, except in video format. They're gaining lots of traction in today's world and are great because they're more personal and contain a visual aspect that normal blogs can't. Teach your customers something using your industry expertise or show them creative ways to use your products. You can even include them as a companion to a normal blog post, where you talk through (but don't directly read) your own blog post. As long as you make it fun and interesting to watch, it's likely you'll see some shares. Who knows, you might even produce the next viral video.



When you first start incorporating these engagement techniques, mix it up a bit. Vary your posts and keep an eye on analytics to see which ones perform the best. Once you find out what works and what doesn't, make the adjustments and keep giving your readers what they love.

05 **Make communication easier**



Your blog is a way to communicate directly with your customers. It's a priceless relationship-building tool that shouldn't be overlooked. To foster more two-way communication, take the following steps.

Create a community that people want to be a part of

Transform your blog into a place where people come to share ideas, ask questions and discuss possibilities. To do this, you'll need to install a plug-in. WordPress offers a built-in comments platform, but we recommend taking it to the next level with plug-ins like Disqus, Jetpack, or Postmatic. They create a small community that lives and breathes on your blog website.

Elicit feedback from your customers

If you want to know what your customers think about something, ask them. If you're curious about how they can relate to your post, tell them. Make it known that you want their feedback and they will be much less reluctant to give it to you.

Always respond to questions or comments

If someone takes the time to leave a comment, good or bad, make sure you grace him or her with a response. It can be challenging to respond to negativity, but doing so will show that you care about your readers in all aspects. You'll foster more engagement when your audience sees that you are an active participant.

When you begin to develop your business blog, keep in mind that you have customers that may not be as active online. Talk to your offline customers and let them know about your blog. Give them incentive to visit and participate so you can grow your traffic even more.

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At Roquepress, clients come to us with a broad range of business problems and the solutions vary dramatically. What is constant is the importance we place on the upfront strategy, distribution and channel-neutral thinking to design and develop websites.

Get in touch with us for more information.



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