

Blog Post Workbook

Plan, post, and measure
your way to blogging success!

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Start Here

set your goals...

You have to know why you're blogging before you blog. Let me explain. If you're blogging because you need work to do, stop. Every blog post should offer a clear path to something else you offer. The post can lead readers to a product you sell, to sign up for your email list where they can keep learning from you, or build credibility and trust that you are an expert in your field.



If you want readers to follow you on social media, make a clear ask in the last paragraph of your blog to invite them. Give them easy links to follow, too!



If you want readers to spend money with you, link your products in the blog or explain in your post how you can help them more when they book a service.



If you want to build relationships with readers and help them keep learning (and eventually spend money), use every post to drive sign-ups to your email list.

Planning Worksheet

Before you start writing, do a brain dump of ideas you have for future posts. Not every topic needs to be a blog so it needs to get flushed out a bit before you start that first draft. Use the content variations below to get your wheels spinning.

Make a list of the first blog topics that come to mind - any category, any topic!



Let's get specific. What tutorials/tips/tricks could you blog about that would help your audience better understand what you do and how you can help them?



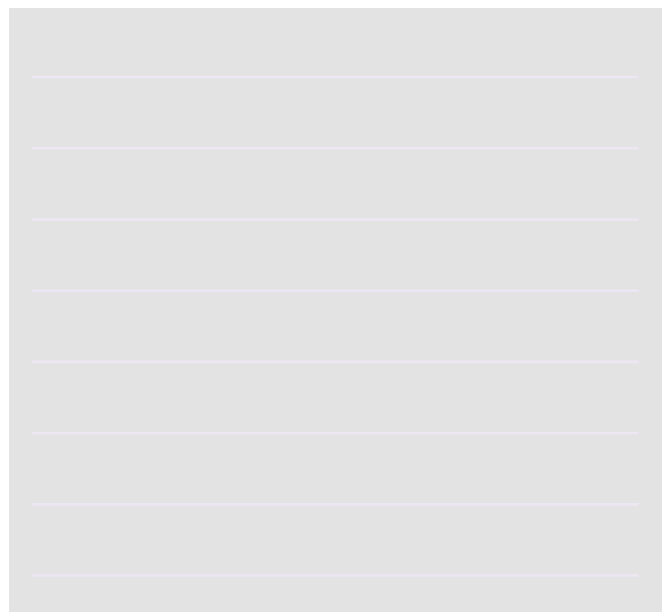
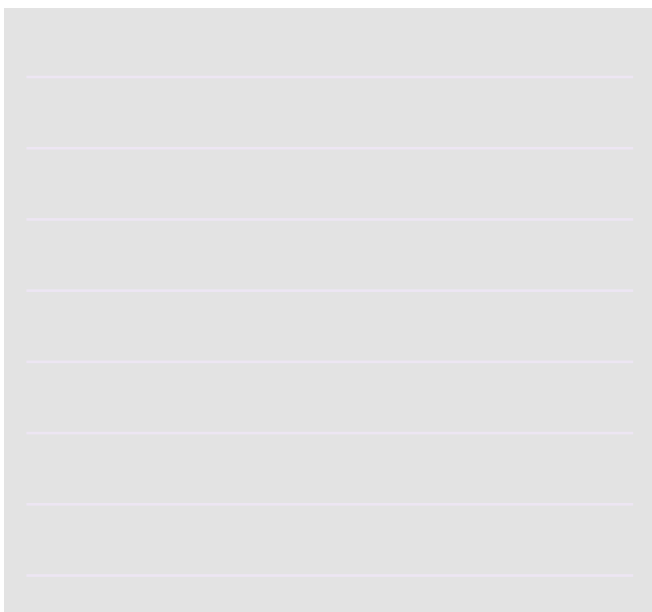
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What kind of posts could you write as a "round-up" of resources related to your nonprofit or business?



What kind of posts could you write that spotlight your work, your clients, or the programs you offer?



Plan your post

Choose one of the topics from your worksheet and work through the process of planning the post. I recommend using a Google Doc so you have plenty of room to write your responses.



Write your topic and a few sentences that explain what the post will be about.

Write the goal of your post. After someone reads it, what will you ask them to do?

What category of post will this be? A round-up of resources, a tutorial, a case study? Who is the post for? Describe the specific audience for your post.

List the 3-5 main points of the post. This will be the start of your post outline.

Is this a topic your audience cares about? How do you know? Do a google search on the topic and see what others have written about it. Is there more to say from your perspective? List a few links to other similar posts so you can reference them later if needed.

Blog post checklist

Every post will be different but these are the primary items you'll want to focus on for each post. The more you write, the easier it gets!

CREATING THE CONTENT FOR YOUR POST

- Set up an outline of your post using 3-5 main points of your post.
- Under each main point, add one or two supporting sentences.
- Now, go back and start to polish. Add in experiences, examples, or research.
- Try to add a link to at least one of your own resources and one outside resource.
- Find a photo or two to help you break up the post and add value to the post.
- Workshop a title. Keep it short and to the point and use at least one keyword in the title.
- Edit your post. Check for spelling, grammar, and ensure all links are working.
- Double-check: Is your call to action clear? If not, revise until it's obvious!
- Write a post-excerpt that can be used for your SEO description.

TAKING CARE OF DETAILS AND PROMOTION

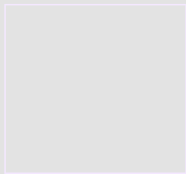
- Use a simple URL so the link is nice and concise.
- Add relevant categories and/or tags.
- Create a professional, engaging thumbnail image and size for social media
- Add an opt-in to your post so readers can join your email list.
- Add related posts at the bottom to keep readers engaged on your website.
- Post 1-3 pins on Pinterest with links to your post.
- Send an email to your list, give them a short description of the post and a link to read the post on your website.

Plan your next 3 posts

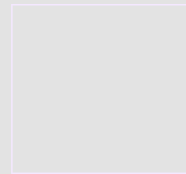
Keep the momentum going! Plan your next three posts as soon as you publish the first one. This will keep your momentum going and Google LOVES when we give it new content that's relevant, actionable, and interesting!



Post 2 Topic:



Post 3 Topic:



Post 4 Topic:

Blog Prompts+



The number one way my small business has grown in the last year is through building my email list. And nearly 65% of my email list subscribers found me on Google through a blog post I published! Need blog inspiration? You can [visit the One Nine Design blog right here](#).

Hi, there! I'm Andrea and I help small businesses and nonprofits like you increase your reach and impact so you can tell more people about the incredible work you're doing!

You are obviously interested in blogging since you spent your hard-earned money to buy this guide. First, thank you. I take the responsibility of educating others very seriously and I will always aim to exceed your expectations.

Now, here's what you might be thinking. 52 ideas! What? I haven't even published one post yet. Or, maybe you've posted here and there and just taken the random approach? Shhh...I won't tell a soul. This guide is designed to equip you to publish one blog per week. But, let's be realistic. If you haven't been communicating this way much at all, you're not going to go from zero to 80 (or 52 in this case) all at once. Start with planning one post for now and three to follow that one. See how those go. Record some metrics. And then decide how to move forward. Maybe you'll want to increase it to twice monthly or maybe once a month works for you. If so, you now have four years worth of post ideas!

And listen, not all posts need to be major productions. Let's lighten the pressure a bit. These posts can be very simple and rather short. A quick introduction paragraph, the topic at hand, and a link that correlates to your goal for the post. When you take this approach, it lessens the workload on you and makes it easier for your readers -- they'll be able to skim the post and quickly decide what they want to do with it.

Here's what's included in this guide:

- An eight-page workbook to help walk you through the blogging process
- 52 prompts to help you decide what to post about
- 20 Subject line ideas to use when you email your post link to your people
- Metrics that matter

How this works: Pick a prompt and use that as your inspiration for your post. Then, use your companion workbook to work through the writing process!

Don't overthink it. You'll get the hang of it soon enough! Before you publish, be sure to use your checklist so you can publish with confidence!

Blog prompts for an entire year!

1. The story behind your latest win -- new client, new service, new program, new gift, etc.
2. A day in the life of you as nonprofit director/business owner (or a team member)
3. The questions you get asked all the time
4. A round-up of all the places your business or nonprofit has been featured in lately (press, social, etc.)
5. How you're collaborating with other nonprofits or companies
6. A personal story about one of the people you serve or a customer (with their permission, of course)
7. Positive feedback you've received from clients, families, the community, or even donors
8. What success looks like for your nonprofit or business and how it's going so far this (year, month, quarter)
9. The story of how your nonprofit or business was formed and how that relates to current events
10. The "why" behind your nonprofit or business - what drives your mission and how is that different from others
11. Trends in your industry or nonprofit sector -- relate current trends to what you are doing on a local or state level
12. Three ways your audience can support your nonprofit or business right now (be sure to include at least one non-monetary option)
13. Three goals you have for the current quarter and how you plan to reach them (with your reader's help, of course)
14. Three things we learned at (insert a recent conference, seminar, or workshop you or your staff attended) (Hint, this really helps educate your audience about your industry)
15. The biggest misconception people have about your nonprofit or small business (and then debunk it)
16. The five most popular social media posts or blog posts you have -- copy and paste the social media posts (with links to the original post) and provide a short summary of your blog posts with links to the post
17. Share gratitude! Highlight three things you and your team are thankful for right now
18. The uncomfortable truth about (insert your industry here) - Share startling statistics that make the case for why your nonprofit or business is critical to solving the problem
19. A behind-the-scenes glimpse at what you're working on or something coming up
20. I can't believe we've come this far! A look back at your history and progress.
21. Survey your readers and then share the survey results in a future post.

22. A year in review post to talk about accomplishments, milestones passed, and growth
23. Write a tutorial on how to do something at a basic level (and then invite the reader to reach out for more help)
24. Announce a save the date for an upcoming event (and spotlight the past event if you can)
25. Share the results of an event and how the money you raised is being used or for businesses, share how and why you sponsored a nonprofit event.
26. Share an example of how your team has rallied together during a tough circumstance (hello 2020)
27. Spotlight a team member and tell your audience about their role and why it matters. With permission, you could even highlight some of their personal favorites to help your audience get to know them.
28. Share a specific need you have right now and how your audience can help
29. Celebrate an anniversary and give practical ways readers can help you celebrate
30. Provide a progress update on something you started a while ago
31. Watch the calendar for relevant holidays and post something relevant that ties the holiday into your work
32. Spotlight a local partnership with another nonprofit or company
33. Share how a membership you have works for you (Chamber of Commerce, for instance)
34. Share a success story and talk about how the donations you receive or how loyal customers make it possible.
35. Answer a frequently asked question
36. Write a “what not to do” post relevant to your nonprofit or business
37. Review a product you sell or a book that’s relevant to your nonprofit or business.
38. Post a list of current volunteer opportunities or for businesses, share a story about how an employee uses his/her volunteer time
39. Highlight your social media channels and encourage others to follow you and share your content
40. Invite readers to do a guest post on your blog!!
41. Share your biggest lessons learned as a nonprofit director or small business owner
42. Share a personal story to inspire your readers.
43. Nonprofits: Just finish your annual report? Post a PDF version of the report and pull out a few highlights to spotlight
44. Encourage your audience to advocate for your industry. Post updates about legislative policies that impact you, how to sign petitions online, etc.
45. Write an open letter to someone. Keep it kind but these types of posts often go viral when done well.
46. Highlight board members or businesses can have staff share about a board they serve on.
47. Do a post all about your email list, what kinds of content you send, and instructions on how and why they should subscribe!
48. Do a Q&A with a donor, volunteer, board member, or local community leader and share it as a post.

49. Share some tips for how to use your products, how to get the most out of a service you offer, or how someone can benefit from a program you offer.
50. Choose a quote that inspires you. Write a blog post about what the quote brought to mind and choose a call to action that correlates with your topic.
51. Write a post about the tools or apps you use in your business or nonprofit.
52. Reach out to an expert in your field and interview them. Post your interview audio or excerpts from your conversation.

Subject line ideas to increase your open rate

It's great to email your people and let them know when you've published a new post. This will get them to click over to your website, read the post, and then hopefully take action! In each email, give them a clear picture of what the blog post is about and maybe just a little excerpt to get them really interested. Then, clearly add your link to the post. Here are some subject line ideas that have worked great for me!

Subject Line Idea
Uh oh, did we forget to tell you?
(Name), you have to read this.
Are you coming?
Can I ask you a favor?
Just wanted to let you know...
Do you know someone who needs to know this?
I just hit publish on this...
This might be a hard read but there's hope
In case you missed it, here's what we said about (blog topic)
The only (#) numbers that matter
We finally did it
Have you read this yet?
This post surprised even me
(insert your blog post title)

Before you (do X), read this →
This story might be hard to forget once you read it
Can you read this and let me know what you think?
You're not supposed to see this
A quick round up of resources to help you (X)
She/He does this every morning. (Post about your routine or someone on your team)

Metrics that matter and industry standards

Every post you publish, regardless of the topic, must have a goal Why? Because when you have a goal, you are able to measure if the goal was achieved and make adjustments for next time.

Some sample goals for your blog might include driving more subscribers to your email list (my favorite goal), selling a product, selling a service, driving physical traffic to your store, etc.

So which metrics really matter? Here are three you should pay close attention to:

Website traffic: How many people came to the post? This is the least important of the three but still matters because it's hard data. If you had 100 visitors to that post in one week, this gives you some insight. If one post has 100 visitors and the next post has 600, you can start digging into the psychology behind that.

Click-Through Rate (CTR): Which links within the post did people click and what did they do once they clicked? Did they join your email list? Buy a product? Book a call? You can use Google Analytics to dive into this further or use a heat map to see which exact links on the page people gravitated towards.

Average length of stay: For my blog posts, I want to know how long someone stayed on the page. Traffic will tell me how many got to the post but they could have left immediately. By measuring the amount of time they spent on the page, I know if they read the post, skimmed it, or left. When I measure this for each post, I'm able to compare which posts have the most read time and try to model future posts after those!

Need more help? Please reach out to me via email and let me know how I can help you market your nonprofit or small business. You can reach me at andrea@oneninedesign.net