

# What to Blog About: Filling Your Blog Editorial Calendar

When you get an idea to become a professional blogger, you really want to start off on the right foot. You take the time to find out which platform is best, which plugins will help you make the most of your visitors' experience – but you get stuck when it comes time to create the actual content for your blog.

You'll find that many marketers who teach this topic are always talking about themes and plugins – but that's often because they make a significant commission on the promotion of those tools.

When it comes time to instruct you on creating content, they're often just as lost as you are about the process, so you're left struggling in front of your audience. It can be embarrassing and it can hurt your blog traffic if you start abandoning your blog frequently to wait for inspiration to strike.

You have to take a three-pronged approach to blogging. First, get everything organized. If you're scattered on your blog, it confuses the readers, search engine spiders – and even you.

Then you want to map out a schedule for your blogging efforts. Having a deadline for yourself can benefit you and help you work towards a specific goal, not just something vague.

Last, you want to begin creating your content – and we're going to cover three options for you to choose from – a series, an individual post, or a guest blog post (and you can mix these up – you don't have to choose from just one).

## Getting Your Editorial Calendar Organized

There are two things you can do to get organized. The first is a planning calendar and the second is an editorial calendar, which is for completed work that you are doing on your blog.

You can either buy a calendar or print one out from a site like this: <http://www.pdfcalendar.com/monthly/>. Print one out for the current month, and possibly the next month. You can schedule it as far out as you like.

If you're like me, you'd prefer something electronic to keep up with your blog - and in this case, I have two options for you. First, you could just use Google Calendar. I find this one to be especially helpful when I'm planning on the fly because it syncs automatically to all of my devices.

I've also been loving Edit Flow, which is a Wordpress plugin that offers me an editorial calendar right inside my dashboard.

### Planning for Blogging Success

Regardless of which method you choose, this will become your blog planning calendar. You can use this to fill in the days with whatever you'll be blogging about (and we'll go over that shortly). This helps you plan what needs to be written, and when.

This is perfect for using yourself or for whenever you're using a freelance ghostwriter to create your blog content and you want to share it with them so that they can plan for publishing dates.

Once you have the blog posts created, you can use a different type of organizer to help you schedule them for publication. Another free plugin called WordPress Editorial Calendar makes this a simple drag and drop process - much like Edit Flow.

As soon as you upload a new post, you can drag the post around on your calendar to wherever you want it to be for it to go live. This can help if you have some timely information that needs to bump a previously scheduled topic.

By using a calendar plugin, you can glance quickly at your blog schedule and see where there are gaps. You want a consistent publication schedule, and we'll look at that in depth next!

## How Often Should You Be Blogging?

Many people want to know how often they *have* to blog. Well if you feel that way, you probably shouldn't be blogging in the first place! Blogging should be for someone who can't WAIT to wake up in the morning and share more information with people.

If you lack that, it could be a sign that you're in the wrong niche. But let's talk about traffic and authority. You'll see some leaders in a niche who blog very infrequently.

This is sometimes because blogging is a side tool for them. They primarily use other things like television, radio, webinars and live, in person seminars to attract and cultivate an audience.

For bloggers who want to use this platform as their primary source of audience engagement, then you need to make a commitment to show up and share on a regular basis.

The more, the better – but there's an asterisk to that\*

\* It's only better when there's more *if* there's something valuable that you're sharing. In other words, don't blog just to blog. Don't slap up meaningless content that dilutes the truly valuable blog posts you have just because someone told you to blog 3 times a day.

What you ought to do is go through and develop your editorial calendars to see how much content you can conceivably create. You'll be surprised at how many ideas you generate once you understand how to look for good blog ideas.

As far as search engine bots (spiders) are concerned, they like to see a certain amount of "freshness" in your blog. They typically start off visiting your blog once every couple of weeks, but they narrow their visitation schedule to index your site if you blog regularly, and this looks good and helps you get content indexed faster.

It's also helpful to your blog subscribers if you blog frequently. If this is a topic they're interested in, then you want to be the go-to authority figure in your niche – the person they know will have continual updates and fresh information.

A daily schedule is best. Some people post several times and day, and this is great too. Don't burden yourself trying to reach that goal, though. Just be consistent.

If you can only manage to post 3 times a week, then do it three times a week. However, there is such a thing as blogging too little. When you start going weeks or months without blogging, don't expect a blog audience to stick around and become subscribers and fans of your content. In fact, they won't even know who you are!

## **Scheduling a Series for Your Blog**

A series is a good way to keep people tuning back in for more. It works the same way on television – you tune in weekly to see what happens next after you've seen a cliffhanger or an upcoming episode snippet.

But what can you do a series on for your blog?

Reviews make a good series. If you buy and implement a digital product, then you can go through the entire process in a series of blog posts. For example, your posts can include blogs about why you bought it and how the order and download or access process went (including a sales copy review).

Then you can break down each step of your implementation process over the next several days. If it's a text product, do a chapter a day. If it's a video product, do a video a day.

Always link to the previous and subsequent blog posts so that a new visitor who happens to land on your blog in the middle of it can find their way back to the beginning.

Step-by-step tutorials also make a great series for you to blog about. For example, let's say someone wanted to know how to start a container garden. You could go through a different topic each day, such as:

- Planning your container gardening space
- Picking which fruits and vegetables you want to grow in each season
- Building your containers
- Getting the soil just right
- The planting process
- Dealing with pests
- Harvesting...etc.

Q&A sessions with your audience work well for a series, too. Invite your subscribers to ask any questions they have – you can even schedule certain days to be “Mailbox” days where you answer audience questions.

## **7 Ideas for Individual Blog Posts**

If you're not doing a series but posting individual blog posts, there's a whole host of options for you! Make a list of these and try to mix it up on your blog so that you're not using the same old approach on a continual basis.

Top tip lists make great blog posts. These are tips you gather and then blog about, explaining each one. For example: 7 Ways to Fall Asleep Faster, 6 Ways to Say No to Sweets When You're on a Diet, the Top 3 Tips to Help You Save Money at the Grocery Store, etc.

Tips like this are easy to digest and people can usually come away knowing they've absorbed a few good nuggets, even if they didn't appreciate all of the tips you presented.

Reviews were mentioned in the last section as far as series that you can do. But they can also be done for individual blog posts. You don't have to draw it out if it doesn't call for it – or if it's for a tangible item that you want to go over.

Rants about a topic can generate a buzz for your blog. You don't want to be nothing *more* than a person who rants all of the time, but if you find something in your niche that needs to be exposed or discussed, don't be afraid to talk about it!

Curated content is something that everyone is buzzing about in the blog world. You can use short snippets where you quote or reference something from a magazine, news site, book or other blog and launch a discussion about it on *your* blog.

Usually, you'll do something like present a snippet or portion of something someone else created (not a swipe of their material, but a very small piece, with a link back to their site).

Then you add your own commentary about it. For example, you might be writing a blog post about hot flashes – and the Mayo Clinic has an article about it. You can take a quote from that, link back to the full article, and discuss their findings.

Think of it like a dinner party where you say, “Oh did you hear about ...” and then you add your own opinions, insights, and even disagreements about the subject matter.

Categorized posts will help you develop content for your blog. Some people map out the categories for their blog as they go. But if you have categories ahead of time, it can help you develop content just for that purpose.

For example, if you ran a health blog, you could do a post on health tips for boys, girls, teens, men, women and seniors. Then you can go through your editorial calendar and say, “I haven't done anything on senior health this week, so I'll do that today!”

Breaking news is always beneficial when blogging. Usually, this will help you see a spike in traffic because it's new and there won't be as many posts about it as there will be later.

Set up a Google Alert so that you get notified when news happens about certain topics. But also go out and search Google and specific news sites for breaking topics yourself.

## **Video and Podcasting: Alternative Content that Pops**

Did you know that the second largest search engine in the world is YouTube?

Yep. And it's only topped by Google (which, as you likely know, also owns YouTube).

Adding video content to your site on the regular can seriously increase your exposure and visibility in the online world - and that can lead to increased success for you.

You can create your own videos or even just share related ones from YouTube on your blog for added traffic. Or, start your own podcast and share those posts as well.

## **Soliciting Guest Bloggers for Filler Content**

Guest bloggers will often seek *you* out once your blog becomes a traffic hub for a particular niche. You won't want to accept everyone who requests a spot on your blog.

But you *may* want to use a guest blogger from time to time, as long as they continue with the purpose and direction of your own blog. You can approach people or post blog topic jobs – sometimes you'll pay for the post and sometimes the blogger will be happy with a link back to their own site.

You can ask someone who is an authority figure in your niche to provide a guest blog post – this reflects well on you as a blogger because you're pulling in valuable resources for your own readers, which they'll appreciate greatly.

Or, you can find new bloggers who are eager to get some experience under their belts. Either way, make sure the piece is suitable for your audience and don't let the topic veer off course.