



HOW TO WRITE CONSISTENT
CONTENT FOR YOUR

Small Business Blog

AM:PM | WEB
& DIGITAL

A framework to help small business bloggers consistently create content that helps them achieve their business goals.

A common misconception among small business bloggers is that you have to publish new content every day if you want to be successful. For many small businesses, publishing 2 or 3 new items a week can quickly become unsustainable, potentially affecting the quality of the content.

Instead of focusing on the frequency at which you publish, your focus should be on consistently creating content that helps you achieve your business goals. In this article, we'll explain how to establish editorial guidelines, create an editorial calendar, and periodically review your progress.

HOW TO CREATE EDITORIAL GUIDELINES

Taking the time to establish editorial guidelines for a small business blog might seem a bit unnecessary at first, especially if you're the only person creating content. But in the long run, establishing these guidelines can help you stay focused and keep you on track to achieve your goals.

Your editorial guidelines can be as expansive (or as minimal) as you'd like. If you don't think you need your guidelines to be as in-depth, for example, don't force it – just do what feels right for you. In fact, for many small businesses, it's enough to focus on the following 3 sections:

Your business goals

The content on your blog will ultimately be helping you achieve your business goals, so it's a good idea to be clear about what those goals actually are. Write your goals down – as detailed and specifically as possible – so you can refer back to them at any time.

Your audience

It's important to know who it is that you're writing for. Are they local professionals who need your expertise? Are they everyday folks who will be looking to you for advice of some kind? What are their interests, and what type of content are they going to want to see from you?

Your writing goals and principles

In this section, you're aligning the goals of your business with the needs of your audience, then explaining how your content will help those people.

For example:

- **Empower.** We help people understand our brand by using language that informs them and encourages them to make the most of our products.
- **Respect.** We treat our readers with the respect they deserve. We're considerate, inclusive, and we don't patronize. Instead of marketing at people, we communicate with them.
- **Educate.** We tell readers what they need to know, not just what we want to say. We aim to give folks the exact information they need, along with opportunities to learn more.
- **Guide.** We are tour guides for our readers. We want to communicate in a friendly and helpful way.
- **Speak truth.** We understand our place in our users' lives, so we avoid dramatic storytelling and grandiose claims.

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In order to achieve those goals, we make sure our content is:

- **Clear.** It's important that we understand the topic we're writing about and that we use simple words and sentences to convey the information in a way that makes sense.
- **Useful.** Before we start writing, we ask ourselves: What purpose does this serve? Who is going to read it? What do they need to know?
- **Friendly.** We write like humans. We're not afraid to break a few rules if it makes the writing more relatable.
- **Appropriate.** Our copy has to suit the situation. We adapt our tone depending on who we're writing to and what we're writing about.

The goals and principles that work for us may not make sense for your business, but they should help spark a few ideas. Think about your specific goals and audience, and then try to brainstorm ways your content should benefit them.

EDITORIAL CALENDARS AND PLANNING

Your editorial guidelines will help keep you on track, but your editorial calendar will help you figure out how – and when – you're going to get all that writing done.

How you plan your editorial calendar depends on the time and resources you have available to devote to writing – and the types of posts you're planning to create. Here's a simple 5-step approach you can try:

1. Determine how long each post will take to write

Take your list of blog posts and think about how long each of them will take you or your writers to create. Remember: In-depth analysis pieces (5,000+ words) will typically take a lot longer than short-form posts (-1,000 words), so be sure to budget your time accordingly.

If you're new to blogging, you might over- (or under-) estimate how much time you'll need for any given post – and that's OK. As you get more accustomed to blogging, you'll find that you're more accurately able to predict how long a particular post might take you to write.

2. Determine the order in which your posts will be written

Think about what makes sense for you and your business. Which posts are most important? Is there a logical order that makes sense to follow? Will some posts require additional work or research?

Be sure to consider the actual calendar dates, too. If you're planning to write something that needs to be published during a specific time of the year – like the end of the fiscal year, the beginning of summer, or the holiday season, for example – it will likely affect the order in which the posts are written.

3. Consider your time constraints

Chances are that you have a lot of stuff on your plate. Be sure that you're considering your regular responsibilities (along with any other factors that might increase your workload, like upcoming holidays) as you're planning out time to work on your blog.

Above all else, be honest with yourself and don't give yourself more work than you can handle. Are you really likely to be able to devote a certain number of hours to writing a post in order to hit the desired publishing date? If you're not sure that you can do it, you may need to rethink the order in which these posts are written.

4. Schedule time to review your progress

Adding time to your calendar to review the work you've done is a great way to monitor your progress and determine if you need to adjust your schedule. Some folks like to review progress monthly while others prefer to check in every 3 months, but feel free to choose a cadence that makes sense for you.

5. Write, write, write

Once you've got your calendar planned out, it's time to start writing your blog posts. Here's a few tips to help you get started.

- **Figure out what time of day works best for you.** Some people do their best work first thing in the morning with a hot cup of coffee in hand. Others find that the words flow more freely at the end of the day once they've had a chance to relax a bit. Everyone's different, so try out different times to figure out what works best for you.
- **Consider your environment.** Do you need peace and quiet to write? Or would you prefer working where there's a bit of background noise, like at a coffee shop or local park? Be on the lookout for a location that not only allows you to focus but inspires you to be creative, too.
- **Get rid of distractions.** Distractions can stifle your productivity, especially when you're trying to write. Answering a quick question from a co-worker or responding to an email might only take a couple of minutes in real time, but it can break your concentration and cause you to waste precious time trying to get back into the right frame of mind. When you're ready to write, consider putting your phone on airplane mode, closing any chat windows, and shutting down your email so that all of your attention is on the task at hand.

REVIEWING YOUR PROGRESS AND RESULTS

It's easy to get so wrapped up in writing, publishing, and doing all the other stuff required to run your business that you forget to review your progress, but this step is actually very important. Ask yourself questions like:

- Have you met the publishing dates you set yourself? If not, what stopped you? Has something else become a higher priority?
- Have you written other things that you didn't originally plan for? If so, have they contributed to your goals?
- Have your goals or priorities changed? Does it still make sense to write all the posts you've planned?
- Which posts are generating the most web traffic or engagement? Could you create more things like this?
- Have you been following your own editorial guidelines? If the answer is no, does it make sense to update or change them?

This way you can measure whether you're reaching your broader business goals and if your content plans still make sense. And if something isn't working, then you know what might need to be done differently.

Just like you keep tabs on how your emails, automations, or social media ads perform, analysing your content results can help you make smart decisions about where to dedicate your time and resources – and get to know your audience, too.