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25 Tricks That Will Enhance Your Blog's Value

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Introduction

Companies sometimes forget how valuable their blog is. With all that has to get done in a day, putting together another blog post ranks somewhere in between organizing that jam-packed file drawer and restocking your desk with paperclips. "What's the point?" some may ask. **"It's not like our blog is getting us any leads. No one even reads the thing!"** And if you're writing purely for SEO purposes, it's hard to get excited about bending sentences to include a few keywords that are supposed to help your page rank.

Your blog, however, is one of your company's most important assets in attracting potential clients.

- **Blogs are 63% more likely to influence a buying decision than magazines**.
- **Companies with blogs get 97% more inbound links than others**
- **Effective blogs give their company's website 434% more indexed pages**
- **Nearly 40% of marketers see blogs as the most valuable content for their company.**
- **43% of companies are using blogs a serious part of their marketing strategy**

Your blog is how your company will be judged. Those who read it will determine the worth of your product or service. If there's no value in the content, then there might not be in what you're selling. And with the **changes in Google's new algorithms, content that's not being shared by readers or is heavily optimized will rank lower**.

The List of 25 Items

So what to do? You've got no time. It's just an SEO pencil drill, and readers couldn't care less. Here are 25 items that can help with all these areas and add value to your company's blog.

1. Have a Tagging Strategy:

Most blogs have "Categories" and "Tags," and without a plan, this can confuse readers who might be looking for specific information. Use **"categories" to segment general topics** and/or products and services, but keep to a minimum. **For "Tags" use related keywords** as well as the category names related to the post. Make sure, too, that your **tags are visible to readers** in case they want to read more on a similar topic.

2. Make Lists:

Lists can be **quick to write**; they're **quick to read** and **stick out in Google** searches. Use the actual number, rather than spelling it out, and put it at the beginning of the headline. Another related tip, make a checklist that readers can use, for example, "5 Things to Check Before Publishing a Blog Post."

3. Convey Value in the Headlines:

The headline can be your one and only shot at getting someone to click, so it needs to **convey what a reader will get from it**. "Closing Tough Sales" is too vague, but "How to Close Sales Your Competition Cannot" tells readers they will gain both knowledge and an edge over their competitors.

4. Lose the Jargon:

If SEO is your blog's purpose in living, then shoot it now and put it out of its misery. Sure, a few keywords are fine. Too many becomes jargon (and Google will penalize you for it). **Instead, write the way you would when talking to another person**. There are plenty of other SEO tips in this list that will compensate for writing a post readers can use and relate to.

5. Ask Questions:

You have a post with useable content. You have a headline that captures readers. You have relatable content. Now you need engagement. A good way is to **ask readers for their suggestions or opinions**. One effective tactic, if it makes sense, is to save a main point and leave it up for discussion i.e. "My reason why X is the most effective way to reach clients is Y, but rather than explain this, I'd like to hear your thoughts on why or why not this would work."

6. Include Calls to Action:

Every blog post should have a call to action, preferably at the end. This can be as simple as a line such as, "If you want to find out more, go here to get X." Even better is a graphic element linking to an offer or an invite form to sign up for something like a newsletter. If someone takes the time to read your blog, there's a high likelihood they will sign up if asked.

7. Embed Video:

Like lists, embedded videos make for easy posts, plus they perform well in searches, especially YouTube. (If you don't have an account, it would be a good idea to set one up.) Just **make sure the videos have good descriptions and are tagged with the right keywords**.

8. Invite Guest Bloggers:

This could be a post unto itself, but for now, know that inviting thought leaders who blog to guest post on your site spreads goodwill, builds links, and **exposes that person's audience to your blog**.

9. Tie Content to Strategy:

Picking random topics for blog posts is less effective than a series related to a current marketing campaign. If you have a new product launch coming up, **build buzz by blogging about topics** surrounding that product's function.

10. Show, Don't Tell:

If you tell readers all the whiz-bang things your company can do, they probably won't care. Essentially, you're just providing sales copy. **If you *show* them what you can do, especially in an entertaining way, then they will stick around**. Let's say you're selling a new software program. Write an amusing story about all the problems you once had without this software. This puts your product into a context people can relate to, and they will probably remember it more than they will a list of features. (Now take it a step further: Have a picture of a free brochure with the software specs as a call to action.)

11. Current Events & Pop Culture:

Get your creative juices flowing. **Talk about a current event or a pop culture reference and relate it to what your company offers**. What sounds more interesting: "5 Leadership Tips You Can Use" or "5 Leadership Tips You Can Learn from Yoda"?

12. Keep it Short:

Short means not taking up a lot of your time, right? Yes, and the same is true for readers who don't have much time to read super long posts. Oh yeah, and **posts that are 300-600 words perform better in searches. *BUT***, this is only a general rule. My series of posts exceed this, but that's because I don't want the content to be so short that it fails to be valuable. **Short and sweet is good, but don't skimp on content**.

13. Optimize in the "Write" Places:

I've already mentioned a few spots where you can optimize outside of the actual post, but **one key area is in the meta description and meta keywords for a post**. This is what Google searches on, so add all the related keywords (remember the tagging strategy?), and write a brief summary of the post using the most important keywords. Some blog platforms also have a space to write an SEO title using keywords. When Google pulls up search results, this title and the meta description are what you see in the listed summaries. Keep these titles under 70 characters and the description under 160 characters. This is typically how much text shows in those list results. (Some blog platforms vary, so check to see if you have these features and if not, how to get them.)

14. Build a Series:

Caught on to this one? **A good series will keep people coming back** provided the content is all useable. Announce you're doing a series to set an expectation.

15. Pictures Worth 1,000 Keywords:

Every post should include an interesting, eye-catching photo. When you're loading it up, **make sure to tag it with keywords and give it a description using the best keywords**. Go a step further. Can you convey in one picture what would've been a 500-word post? What about an **Infographic?** Readers love eye candy.

16. Be Bold:

Sometimes it takes a long post to make a point. **Bold the main points**, key phrases, and embedded links to **make the post easy for readers to scan** through or for new readers to quickly determine if what you have to say is of value. If they just see a mass of words, chances are they will move on. One other thing, **use black for bolded text** even if your blog's copy uses another standard color.

17. Have an Editorial Guide:

Many of you may have several people writing posts for your blog. An editorial guide that addresses grammar, punctuation, formatting and many of the items in this series will **get everyone on the same page**. And if you're the designated blog editor, this will make your life easier too. (If you'd like an editorial guide template leave us a comment, and we will send you one.)

18. Be Consistent:

Don't be sporadic in your posting. **If readers can expect a new sales tip every Monday morning, then they will show up every Monday morning looking for it**. Having an internal editorial calendar is the best way to manage this. Share it will all contributors and put in your editorial guidelines standards for when posts are due (I suggest a week prior to the planned publish date). Keep a few extra posts in reserve to fill last-minute gaps. By the way, Google likes fresh and frequent content; a good goal is at least 3 posts per week.

19. Make it "Sticky:"

One thing you want to do is **keep people on your blog or website for as long as possible**. Making a post "sticky" can do this. Use embedded links that will draw readers to other pages or information. The link could be an **author**, a particular **tagged keyword**, a **category**, a specific **product/service** or a **reference to another post**.

20. Reply to Comments:

I cannot emphasis how important this is. **Do NOT ignore or forget about comments**, especially a really good one. If you were talking to a client and they commented on something you mentioned, you wouldn't blow them off, right? No, because it's rude. Same applies here. If you can, **reply using a personal profile** with your name and face—the company logo makes you a faceless entity. If your comment setup doesn't allow for this, then at least end your comment with your name. (Idea: If you write a paragraph or two when responding to a commenter, then your response might be good fodder for a separate blog post.)

21. Incentivize Engagement:

Does your company have a sample product or perhaps a book? These are good items to use as simple giveaway offers to incentivize engagement. For example: "Leave your most successful closing technique in the comments below. Our panel of 3 sales professionals will decide on the best one, and the winner will receive our book…" Couple things here: **keep the equitable value low dollar** (there are legal issues, $50 max is safe), make the **qualification criteria objective if possible**, or **if subjective, use a panel or third party**. Also, use an incentive that ties to your company—some people have used gift cards, but there's a high chance people will take the money and run.

22. Visual Appeal:

You know what they say about first impressions. You may have the best content in the world, but **if the overall visual appeal looks amateurish, then a reader's initial thought could be that the content will be too**. The same could be true if it looks too gaudy. And by the way, Google will penalize your site if you have too many product ads. (A personal suggestion: If possible, keep your blog's graphic elements brand consistent, but use a layout that differentiates your blog from the company website. This makes the blog feel less sales-oriented and lets readers know they are at the right place.)

23. Social Elements:

Social Media and blogging go hand-in-hand. **If your content is great, readers are more likely to share it, especially if it's made easy for them**. There are at least two sets of social buttons you should have: large icons that encourage readers to follow you on your social media profiles, and "chicklets" that encourage readers to share each of your posts. The large icons should be prominent and above the fold. The chicklets should be in between the comments and the post. Include calls to action for both sets ("Follow Our Networks & Get More" and "If you liked this post please share it.") **Huge item here: Google is starting to rank content that's shared higher than content that's purely optimized. Get people to share your superb content**.

24. Plugins and Widgets:

These are handy tools for your blog, and they serve a variety of functions. **Focus on the ones that foster engagement, help grow your social media reach, and are visually appealing**. **Facebook** and **Twitter** offer some good options. Others that work well are those that feature "Most Popular Posts," "Most Commented on Posts," and "Most Frequent Commenters" Your blogging platform may offer a menu of widgets and plugins that are easy to incorporate onto your site.

25. Scan Ready:

Like bolding key text, **the overall look of an actual blog post influences a reader's decision to read the content**. Big blocks of words can look like it will take a lot of time to get through a post. Short, spaced out paragraphs that are 2 to 3 sentences long are inviting. So are bullet points.

Conclusion

In the world of social media, **content is king if you want your company to get noticed. If you have no audience at the moment, it will take some time to build it up**. In fact, the strategy of, "If you blog it, they will come," isn't a smart one. Go find your audience rather than waiting for them to come to you. Ultimately, the question you need to ask yourself is, does this blog post provide value to readers? If not, you're blog's not adding any value to your online marketing efforts either.

Contact **LyntonWeb** for more information about effectively managing your web marketing.
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