



How to start your blog – A 22-Point Checklist

1. Be clear about your reasons for blogging. Understand that blogging is hard work. It's not something that you just do for a week or two and abandon it. You must answer for yourself WHY.
2. Determine your niche. What will your blog focus on? What makes your approach different from other blogs and media entities in your chosen field? If you're just another me-too voice, it will be difficult to gain traction.
3. Select your blog name. If possible include your keyword phrase. Make sure that it's easy to spell and makes sense to your audience. The shorter name the better. Buy the URL.
4. Get a good web hosting service. You want to ensure that your blog doesn't hit bumps in the road when your service decides that you're using too much bandwidth.
5. Establish the technical basis. I recommend WordPress. It's easy-to-use and free.
6. Select your blog's brand attributes. This is an integral part of your blog's design. The important element is consistency. Over time, it makes your blog recognizable.
7. Craft your blog's About page. Show that there's a real person behind your blog. Readers check your About page just to see your point of view.
8. Set specific blog goals. What do you want to accomplish by blogging? The more concrete and specific your objectives are, the easier it is to accomplish them.
9. Imagine your ideal reader. Be able to describe him or her as if they were your best friend. What are they like as people? What attracts them in terms of content? Create a marketing persona.
10. Craft a list of blog topics. What areas will your blog focus on? As you're brainstorming, consider potential columns. Pretend that your blog is a magazine and you're selecting the different content departments.
11. List about ten to twenty keywords. They should be related to your niche and blog topics. Having a short list enables you to focus your content on these phrases. Write at least one column for each keyword.

12. Develop an editorial calendar. Use your topics as the basis for your editorial plan. Think about how often you can commit to publishing information. It's better to start with less posts and to expand your publishing schedule over time. Also, you should be consistent in when you publish. This helps train readers to show up. Here's research on blog post frequency.
13. Write blog posts. While this seems like the hard part of blogging, it's actually only a small portion of your time.
14. Craft attention getting titles. Understand that only one out of five people will read your article.
15. Keep a record of potential blog titles and content. Capture ideas as they come to you. Don't wait since ideas and content have a way of eluding you.
16. Make your blog post attractive to your core audience. Your blog's presentation is an important element in luring potential readers in.
17. Copyedit your posts. Don't just assume that anything you write is sufficient. At a minimum, let your content rest so that you can see any errors in a final review. Alternatively, have someone else edit it and proof it for you.
18. Optimize your blog posts for search. At a minimum, include your keyword in the title and URL. Have at least one link to your older posts and one link to a third party entity.
19. Incorporate other content formats. Think beyond text. Blogs can incorporate images, video, audio, presentations and PDFs.
20. Distribute your blog posts. Your work isn't finished when you hit the publish button. You need to place your blogs across your owned and social media.
21. Promote your blog posts. Get the word out regarding your posts. This takes as much work as crafting your posts. Here are thirty-four ways to promote your blog without using social media.
22. Measure the effectiveness of your blog. Your results should be associated with your blog goals. Here's a list of 65 blog metrics from which to choose.

The bottom line is that a blog can be the nerve centre for your content marketing, but it requires writing and good planning.