



Time-Saving Tips for Smart Business Blogging

With Patsi Krakoff, Psy.D., The Blog Squad

&

Joan Stewart, The Publicity Hound

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present:

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(This is a transcript of a telephone seminar conducted on Jan. 20, 2010. The handouts begin on Page 22 and are supplementary material. If you ordered the audio version of this product, you don't have to follow along on the handouts. Simply refer to the handouts afterward for more in-depth information.)

Joan: Hi everybody. I'm Joan Stewart, The Publicity Hound. Welcome to today's teleseminar, "Timesaving Tips for Smart Business Blogging." My guest today is Patsi Krakoff, a longtime friend and business associate.

Patsi is also a former psychologist and a journalist who specializes in helping small business professionals with content marketing strategies. She writes for ContentforCoachesandConsultants.com at <http://www.contentforcoachesandconsultants.com>. She's also, the co-founder of The Blog Squad, and her award-winning blog is at <http://www.writingontheweb.com/>. Her free ebook, Content Marketing for Online Profits, can be accessed at <http://www.contentmarketingprofits.com/>.

Patsi lives in Mexico with her husband, Robert, who is president of Razor USA. She has two cats named Huey and Dewey. She's an avid tennis player, and she's writing a novel about life in Paris in the eighties. I didn't know all this about you, Patsi, until I read your bio just now. It's great to have you here with us.

Patsi: Thanks a lot, Joan. I'm very happy to be here sharing this phone platform with you today, because you're a longtime friend and colleague. I admire what you do. You're a very clever, smart lady.

Joan: Likewise. We have a ton of content to share so let's jump right in. This is going to go about 70 minutes, until about 10 minutes after the hour, so if you can't hang around, you can catch the rest of it on the replay. But we hope you stick with us.

Patsi, let's start out by talking about why blogging is important. What makes blogging such a powerful marketing tool?

A Blog is the New Website

Patsi: Let me just give a brief overview. For me, a blog is the new website. Forget having the traditional website, the brochure online. Really, if you're starting out today, the thing to do is a blog. A blog is just a special kind of website that allows interaction with your readers. When a visitor comes on your site, they can leave a comment. That makes it easy to get in touch with the people who are looking for your solutions.

A Blog as a Marketing Tool

I think there are a couple of things that make it so strong as a marketing tool, besides the fact that your visitors can actually interact and leave something, to communicate with you.

First, blogs are very search engine friendly. It's easy for you, as a business professional, to write on them and to maintain your blog or your blog site. And because it's so content rich, it's really easy for the search engines to categorize what you're about, and for your content to be pulled up in searches.

When people are looking for solutions to their problems, you want to get found. A blog is really a very good tool for doing that without having to spend a lot of money on search engine optimization. It's simplified the website marketing problem for small independent professionals, and even for large companies. That's really why everybody's getting on the blogging platform.

As a former psychologist and journalist, I can also tell you that one of the reasons they work has a lot to do with persuasion, because they're so easy to write on and communicate with your targeted audience. You can give away a lot of free information. Because you're doing that, there's a buying trigger, or persuasion trigger, that gets activated. It's called **reciprocity**.

When you're giving something to a person, they feel obliged. They feel grateful, and think, "Oh, this person really knows what they're talking about, and they're giving me all this free information." Soon that relationship gets built up and there's a certain amount of trust generated. When it comes time for you to ask them to buy something from you, you've already primed the pump through your words, through reciprocity. Does that make sense, Joan?

Joan: Absolutely. Blogging was one of the earliest platforms for social media. Correct?

Patsi: Correct. It is part of the umbrella term "social media." Today, it's linked to all those social media sites like Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. We're going to talk about that a little bit later on. The whole idea of having a platform on the web to communicate your core message, and to connect with people that are looking for what you're offering, is phenomenal. It's revolutionized the way the Internet is working today.

In addition to reciprocity, what makes a blog such a good marketing tool is **social proof**. Social proof happens when you're talking about your clients on your blog and explaining how you helped somebody. The readers see you in action and they think, "Oh, I've got a similar problem. Maybe she can help me." Those two things, reciprocity and social proof, I think, are the psychological triggers behind why blogging works so well as a marketing tool.

Joan: I'm still getting a lot of questions about the basics of blogging, like "What kind of a platform should I use?" and "How do I find a name for my blog?" Give us an overview of the blogging essentials that people need to know before they start to blog.

Four Essentials of Blogging

Patsi: I think the handouts will help them on that. There are four things that are essential. (See "The First Seven Steps Before You Create Your Blog" in the handout on Page 23 of this transcript.)

1. What's Your Business?

First, clarify **what business you're in**. This is something you might not want to do by yourself. You might want to do it with a partner or a trusted colleague or a business coach. You really have to know what you're in the business of doing, selling or promoting. This involves knowing very well who your **targeted audience** is. Who are the people that you want as your clients?

The next thing in that whole category of knowing your business well is, **what's in it for these people?** What are you going to provide for them that's going to change their lives, make it easier, save them time, energy or money? There are really several things under that category.

- **What business are you in?**
- **Who are your customers?**
- **What's in it for them? What are the benefits of working with you or buying your products?**
- **What problems do you solve?**

I say this over and over again on my blog, <http://www.writingontheweb.com/>, because it's so important that you are clear and that your readers identify, in the first few seconds they land on your blog, what it is they're going to find. What problem do you solve? That's really step one.

2. Find a Brand Name

The second step, and it's tied closely to this, as you can imagine, is to find a brand name. You need something that's easy to remember. Probably the correct word would be memorable. Just like The Publicity Hound. It's clever, and it sticks with people. The Blog Squad is another example of a name that describes what I do. You need to find the brand.

Again, that requires working with another individual, although sometimes, in a flash of brilliance, you can come up with something really good. You need to claim the **domain name** for it in several variations (.com, .net, .org). That second step is not something you're going to do overnight. Sometimes it happens right away, but a lot of times it comes after you're already in business. But whatever way you do it, the process is very important.

Once you've got that name, you can set up your blog. You can initially set it up with another name and then, find the exact brand name and re-brand it, but that's a little bit more difficult. Ideally, you would want to find that name right from the start.

3. WordPress, TypePad or Blogger?

The third thing, which more people worry about more than anything else, is what kind of blog platform to get. Should I get WordPress? Should I go with TypePad? Is a free Blogger account OK to start with? These are the questions most people spend too much energy on. In my opinion, it doesn't really matter. Go with WordPress if you have some tech skills and know what you're doing, or you have somebody to help you out on that.

If you don't know what you're doing, technologically speaking, get a TypePad account, because they're going to host it for you and take care of all the tech issues. I don't recommend Blogger, even though it's free, although I've seen some professionals use Blogger very well. It does require some customization.

I prefer Typepad or WordPress instead of Blogger. What I'm saying is that it's not the platform that's going to make the difference. It's going to be really clarifying what business you're in and what problem you solve, then finding a good brand name for it. Does that make sense?

Joan: Yes, it does. You also gave me a little tip about four other important things that people should remember about their blogs. You had an acronym that was CODA, I believe. Would you talk about that?

4. CODA: Content, Outreach, Design, Action

Patsi: This is a shorthand system. Because there's so much information, you can really get overwhelmed when it comes to blogging. Basically it boils down to four letters, CODA. "C" is for content, "O" is for outreach, "D" is for design, and "A" is for action. Your blog must have some really important stuff in all four areas for it to work as a marketing tool.

It has to have good design, and we're going to talk a little bit about that later. You have to have good outreach and good connections with other bloggers, the people who comment on your site and your contacts on social media sites, like Twitter. All of this adds up to get your blog functional.

Your content has to be rich. It has to be relevant to your readers' needs. It has to be reasonably well written. We'll talk a little bit about that. And then, you need people to take action. This is what sets a blog apart. This is where the rubber meets the road. If you can get people to take some sort of action—leave a comment, subscribe to your blog, buy a product, download a free digital special report—you've connected with your readers and got them involved, got them engaged. All four of those areas are important for your blogging.

Most people spend too much attention on one area and neglect the others. If you're a techie, you might be into the design and the set up and put a lot of fancy widgets on your blog. Or if you're real social, you might want to spend all your time on Twitter and Facebook, on leaving comments on other people's blogs, which is all great, but you need to spend effort and attention in all four areas in order for your blog to work. If you're going to spend a lot of time blogging, and I recommend you spend sufficient time, not a lot, you want it to work. You don't want to waste your time. You don't want to spend all this time writing on your blog and not get results.

(Editor's Note: Most blogging experts recommend that bloggers post at least three times a week. If you can't adhere to that schedule, then post as often as you can.)

Blog Design

Joan: Can we talk about design for a bit? Could you tell us what we need to keep in mind to have a good blog design so that when people come to the blog, they see a person who they can trust, a good brand and a place where they're at home. What are some design areas that are important?

Patsi: I am not a design person or branding person, but I've really learned how important this is. It's pretty simple, but you do have to pay attention to it. First of all, be consistent. Get your blog to look like your other marketing materials. For example, if you already have a website, make sure you're using the same colors, the same logo, and that you have the same business photo on your blog as you do on your website. You want everything to look like it's a part of your company.

That creates trust. When people see the same colors, the same look and feel everywhere they go, it builds **credibility**. They'll know that this person they're working with is trustworthy and knows what they're doing.

Of course, you have to have some sort of personality. This is fairly easy to convey, because it's easy to put an image on your blog. I recommend using a professional photo. I don't recommend using a photo that your husband shot in the backyard with a lot of sunshine and trees in the background, because it usually doesn't make for a good photo. On the other hand, if you're a dog breeder, and your business is dogs, I would recommend using a professional photo with you and a dog. That would make sense.

You also want to have a professionally designed banner for your blog. I don't care if you do all of your blogging or design yourself. Unless you're a professional graphic designer, get someone else to do the masthead or the banner in which you have the name of the blog.

You probably want to put your name, as the author, in the banner, and a tagline describing who the blog is for and what they're going to get out of staying and reading it. That's very important. With a good banner on your blog, it doesn't really matter what the rest of the design is, it's going to look professional.

Joan: Here's a quick tip on where to find good people to create a banner. If you don't know a designer, there are several good sites out there where you can post your project and people will bid on it. The one that I like to use is called RentACoder.com, at <http://www.rentacoder.com/>. There's also Elance.com, at <http://www.elance.com/>. Go to those places or just go to a blog that you like and ask that blogger who did their header. Ask for referrals.

Patsi: Excellent choices. Let me just say a little bit about personality. Joan, you've done such a great job bringing in dogs on The Publicity Hound site at <http://www.marketerschoice.com/app/?af=1112099> and your blog at <http://www.marketerschoice.com/app/?af=1112099&u=http://www.PublicityHound.net>. I think that's important. Blogs, because they're so heavy in content and have a lot of text, require a little bit of relief on the eye. They also are a good way for people to get to know you. I use an animated figure on one of my blogs, because it creates a personality other than just my photo. I think using images like that really helps give personality to a blog.

Again, you might want to work with a graphic designer or a branding person to help find that personality and to set it up. Once you've determined the personality, it's fairly easy to upload images and keep them consistent on your blog.

What Blogs Must Have

Let me give you a list of things you *must* have on your blog. You can go crazy, because there are a lot of widgets and fancy stuff you can add to your blog. You want to keep it simple and make it easy to navigate. Most blogging platforms will allow you to have a navigation bar at the top. If you don't have it at the top, make sure you make it easy for people to find what they're looking for.

An email subscription form

The first thing I tell people to put at the top on the sidebar is an email subscription form. You can get one from FeedBurner.com, at <http://www.feedburner.com/>. It's a fantastic site and free. Make sure that your blog is set up with FeedBurner.

Joan: Would you explain what FeedBurner does, because this is an important thing that I don't have at my blog yet, I'm embarrassed to say. I'm going to be installing it this week. What does FeedBurner do?

Patsi: You might want to think about that, because you have a fantastic email newsletter that goes out every Tuesday, I believe.

Joan: Yes.

Patsi: You have a subscription form for that newsletter and, if I were you, I'd just stick with that, because you don't want to have two email subscription forms on your blog.

Joan: OK.

Patsi: It confuses people. Most people don't have a newsletter like you do. But if they do, they can create a separate page and talk about the newsletter on that page.

Let People Subscribe to Your Blog

Patsi: You want to still get people to subscribe to your blog, because it's the way that people are going to get daily email deliveries of your content. When people are surfing the web, they may not find your blog again unless they subscribe to it. An email subscription form is very important.

All blogging platforms come with what is called an RSS feed. I'm not going to go into that because it's a little bit techie, but there are two ways to subscribe to a blog, either by RSS feed or by email. I recommend email because everybody uses it, and not that many people use RSS. You want to keep that email subscription form on your blog, but definitely get it from FeedBurner. It's easy to set up. Non-techie people can do it. I used to call myself a technoidiot, but I don't think I am anymore. I'm quite capable of doing this myself, so if I can do it, you can do it.

Include an "About" Page

The other thing that's essential for a blog is the "About" page. Most people miss the boat on this. The "About" page is your bio page. Not everybody but, unfortunately, a lot of people just copy and paste their company resume, written in the third person, and it's very boring.

This is an opportunity, because everyone checks out the "About" page. They want to know who's writing this blog. They ask themselves, "Should I believe what they have to say?" and "How do I know they know what they're talking about?" This page is very important. You want to write it in the first person, using "I." Let people know your true story. Let them know why you formed this blog, why you know what you know, and the pivotal moments in your career and in your life that made you so passionate about what you do that you just have to do it. This is where you can emotionally connect with people. People are curious about the people behind the blog. If you're not using that page to full advantage, you're missing the boat.

Offer Something for Free

Another thing you want to have on your blog is some cornerstone content. This is what other people might call pillar posts or stand-alone pages. This is free information. It could be a free special report or a white paper or an ebook, whatever you want to call it, that gives compelling information that people who come to your blog really need to know.

I would add a graphic image like an ebook cover and put that in one of the site's columns. Blogs come in many different shapes and forms, but most have at least one side column for you to put stuff in. Some have two. It's up to you how you want to set that up, but I recommend setting it up so that people can download it in exchange for an email address. It's a great way to build a marketing database.

"How Can I Help You?"

If you're in business, another page that you absolutely must have is a "How Can I Help You?" page. This gives information on how people can hire you or buy your product. If you don't have that, you're missing a good opportunity. Sometimes people read the blog and say, "Fabulous! I really like what this person has to say. I'll subscribe to the blog."

But if you're not giving them the possibility to work with you or buy something from you, you're missing a big opportunity. People are curious. They know you're in business. They know you have something to sell. Give them a page where, if they're interested, they can go and find out how to work with you.

Add a Client Page

The other thing you want to have is a Client Page where you have a description of your target audience and a couple of testimonials. What are your clients saying about you? What kinds of results do they get when they work with you? If somebody comes to your blog and they really are seriously looking for the kind of help you can give, you want to make it easy for them to find out who you work with, how they can work with you and what kind of results to expect.

Other Miscellaneous "Must Haves"

Other things you might want to have in this sidebar are your affiliate links and banners. This is up to you. I don't promote a lot, but there are a couple sites, like KickStartCart, at <http://www.kickstartcart.com/app/?pr=31&id=147851>, the shopping cart system, and AudioAcrobat, at <http://dr-patsi.audioacrobat.com/>, the teleseminar system, that I promote on my site. I don't actively promote them, but I have a banner image and an affiliate link on them. Joan, do you do any affiliate links on your blog?

Joan: Yes, I use them throughout the blog posts. I don't want to say I'm liberal about it, but whenever I write a blog post, I always think to myself, "Am I an affiliate for any products or services that I can promote within this post?" That's one way that you make money from your blog.

Patsi: Absolutely. Another thing I would put in a sidebar is a list of books that I've read, because I'm an Amazon affiliate. Not that I earn a lot of money from that affiliate account, but listing the books that you read gives your blog personality. If you see that a blog author is reading the same books that you are, you feel a sense of identity and affinity with them. It's a good way for them to get to know you.

You definitely want to have your other accounts listed. How can people follow you on Twitter? On Facebook? There are ways of adding that to your blog. I'm not going to go into the details, but it's fairly straightforward and user friendly. Go to any social media site and there will be applications where you can add an icon to your blog. Just by clicking on the icon, it will take them to your Twitter page and your Facebook page.

Joan: Yikes! I don't do that! It's one more thing on my to-do list.

Patsi: That's a must-have. If you go to my blog, <http://www.writingontheweb.com/>, you'll see an example of all this in those side columns.

Joan: This is a timesaving tip, because if you're sending all these people from your blog over to the social media sites, that's less time that you have to spend finding people to follow you.

Patsi: That's right. Another thing you want to have is a "Retweet This" on every post. That's something that's a little bit different on every blog platform. It's a widget that you can install either on TypePad or WordPress blogs so that when people read a post they really like, there's a button that says, "Retweet This," or "Tweet This." There are several different systems that you can install. It's real easy. People just click on it and they're taken to their Twitter account, and they can retweet about that post. That's a huge driver of traffic back to your blog. It's definitely something you want to set up on your blog design.

(Editor's Note: Joan uses Tweetmeme. You can see it on her blog at <http://www.marketerschoice.com/app/?af=1112099&u=http://www.PublicityHound.net.>)

You definitely want to install a site meter, like SiteMeter, at <http://www.sitemeter.com/> or Google Analytics, at <http://www.googleanalytics.com/>, or even FeedBurner. FeedBurner offers excellent site analytics. Set that up through FeedBurner so you'll know how many people are coming to your blog, where they're coming from, how many pages they visit, and how long they're staying. All this is very important for you to know.

I would also put on a Vizu poll, at <http://www.vizu.com/>, and ask a question. If you know that your readers are experiencing certain challenges, ask them to vote on what their biggest problem is. This creates interaction, and it also adds a little eye candy to your blog.

And guess what? You can blog about the results of that poll. It keeps you better informed as to what readers want to know.

Another way to find out what people are interested in is to get a professional, custom designed survey. Through Joan, I was exposed to Jeanne Hurlbert and MySurveyExpert.com, at <http://mixiv.com/vp/59093/19900/>. You can get a custom designed survey and get people to take the survey. It's an excellent way for people to interact with you. Are there any other things that you can think of, Joan, under the category of design?

Joan: I just got a question from somebody that ties into this. This is from Janet, and she says, "I see that she has Skype on her site in the networking buttons. Why? And how does she use it?"

Patsi: I don't know that I use it, but it's there so that people can find me on Skype. It's just one of those widgets where you can add anything you want. You can add YouTube, LinkedIn, Facebook and/or Twitter. All of that is under the umbrella of social media. It's a way for people to stay in touch with you.

Joan: Terrific.

Outreach in the Blogosphere

Patsi: Our next section is on outreach. If you haven't set up your own blog, you can start by participating in the blogosphere. Find blogs in your field, read them and start commenting on them.

Joan: This is important. I want everybody to pay attention to this, because this is a critical part of blogging that so many people are missing.

We just got another question, Patsi, that ties into this directly. Somebody asks, "How do I get more visitors to my blog and how do I get people to comment?" Continue with what you're saying, Patsi, because this is a way to make both of those things happen. Go ahead, Patsi.

Patsi: Later on, we're going to cover some traffic driving tips, which is what that question is all about. Definitely, outreach is important. If you're not visiting other people's blogs and commenting on their blogs, why would you expect people to do the same on your blog? It's a two-way street. What goes around, comes around. If you can get known in the key blogs in your field, they'll get curious about your blog and start visiting. They'll see your comments and they'll follow the trail and come back to your blog.

One of the ways you can find which blogs to start commenting on is through a great site that I love called AllTop.com, at <http://www.alltop.com/>. You can find all the top blogs on that site. It's a system that aggregates blogs in every niche, every category. You can find your favorite blogs in any field. You can also create your favorite blog page on AllTop. For example, I have my favorite blogs in content marketing, but I also have them in tennis, psychology and publicity. I have a wide variety of interests so I've created my own AllTop page where I can aggregate all my favorite blogs. When I go to post a blog, and if I'm lacking any ideas, all I have to do is go to my AllTop page, find out what other people who I like are blogging about, and I'm instantly inspired.

Now, there are other ways to stay in touch and find blogs in your field. There's the biggest blog directory online, Technorati, at <http://www.technorati.com/>, where there are something like 200 million blogs indexed. Certainly, you can find blogs in your field there. Another way to find them is through Google Alerts and Google Blog Search. There are a million ways to find blogs in your field. When doing a Google search, you'll find that a lot of the search results that come up will be blogs or blog posts.

Another way to find blogs is on Twitter. You'll find who's talking about what. Do a search on Twitter for keywords or for topics. A lot of the people who tweet on Twitter are saying things, they're posting a tip, and they're giving a little shortened URL to blog posts. You can follow those trails and find blogs that are really interesting. When you do find a blog that's interesting and in your field, be sure to subscribe to it so you can stay in touch and get updates.

Joan: Another way to find great blogs is to go onto LinkedIn and ask the question of a particular LinkedIn audience. Let's say I was trying to find the top 10 blogs on public relations. I would go to the public relations people and ask them what they think the top blogs are in PR. Once I know what they are, I'd write a blog post on that. Then I would share that link to my blog post with all those other people on LinkedIn who responded to my question.

Patsi: That's an excellent thing to do. Believe me, as soon as you start posting about other people, they're going to find that post, because they've got Google Alerts set up at <http://www.Google.com/alerts>. They're going to find out that you just posted something and included their name. And they'll leave a comment, because they now know that you exist.

Joan: They might go to their blog and link to your top 10 list that includes their blog in it.

Patsi: They've very likely to do that.

Joan: Which means you get exposure to their audience.

Patsi: That's really a good way to build traffic and to get known.

What else? Certainly, you can post your videos on YouTube, which I recommend. Always give your blog URL when you do that, because it's going to drive traffic back to your blog. A lot of people are using Twitter these days because it's real easy and fun. It's a great way to connect with people. Just in a few short words, you can share a quote or give a tip. If you're not connecting your blog to your Twitter account and not connecting your Twitter account to your blog, you're missing the boat. (See "How to Use Twitter to Amass an Army of Followers, Customers & Valuable Contacts—and Promote." Go to: <http://www.marketerschoice.com/app/?af=1112099&u=http://www.publicityhound.com/publicity-products/marketing-tapes/twitter.htm>)

Your blog is where you have all your valuable and relevant content, which can go as deep as you want to go. Twitter is like throwing out breadcrumbs in the forest. You want people to follow the trail back and find out more about you. It's the same with Facebook. You want to update your status on Facebook. The whole idea is for people to get to **know you, like you and trust you.**

You can't really do that on Twitter, because it's too short. That's why you have to be blogging and blogging frequently. When people land on your blog, you want them to say, "Oh! I hadn't thought of that before. This person really expresses himself well," and "They've understood the real problem." Does that make sense?

Joan: Absolutely. Is there anything else in the outreach category before we get to content?

Patsi: We'll touch a little bit more on that when we come back to driving traffic to your blog. I think it's one of the most overlooked categories for effective business blogging. People don't do enough outreach. It may be because it takes so much time and energy just to get your content up on your own blog. By the time you get that done, you're too tired to go out and find out what other people are saying. But it's extremely important if you want your blog to succeed.

Finding Content for Your Blog

Joan: Another reason, I think, people are not getting traffic to their blog is because they're not asking themselves certain questions before they sit down to write. These questions fall into a category you're going to talk about called content. Tell us how to create content and things we should think about before we start to write.

Patsi: Joan and I compiled this humongous list of 101 places to get resources. Joan said, "Let's give them a list of 77 ideas for finding fresh content to write about." I asked Joan, "Do you think we'll find 77?" We ended up with 101. (See the list on Page 32 of this transcript.)

Joan: That was a brain dump.

Patsi: They will give you inspiration. But let's be smart about it. Let's save some time, too. If you're just going off and blogging about this, that and the other thing, it doesn't make any sense. I suggest you start with those worksheets that are in the handout (See the handouts on Page 23 of this transcript) and really think about a couple of things first.

List the categories that you're going to write about on your blog. Unfortunately, I had listed so many categories on my own blog that it's untenable. There are too many categories. But if I were to start over, I would start with seven to nine categories. Eventually, you're going to be adding new categories, but anything more than 15 categories gives readers too many choices. Too many choices will make them go away.

Focus on the key things that you're an expert on. Again, go back to that problem/solution question. What problem do I solve for people that will help them? The answer to this question will tie into your keywords. Anybody who is doing anything online knows how important keywords are. The keywords are what people ask Google or Yahoo when they do a search. How would people be searching for you?

Let's say your ideal client had exactly the kind of problem you could solve. What would they type in a search engine? Remember, those keywords are very important. You want to identify them for your blog and remember to use them. Strangely enough, it's easy to forget keywords sometimes. Remember to put them in your headline, in the first paragraph of your blog post, and a couple of times in the rest of the body. It should come naturally, but sometimes you need to remind yourself. That's why it's good to keep a list of keywords. It's good to identify certain keyword phrases that you want to rank very high for in

searches. For example, I've identified content marketing and content marketing with blogs as search terms that I want to rank high for, so I use those a lot. At times, I've written posts and those words weren't there. I'd say, "Duh! Let's stick them in the headline. Let's stick it in the body of the post."

What I'm talking about really has everything to do with content marketing for blogs or with blogs. Don't forget that. Write about the problem, the pain, yourself. Use stories. Stories resonate with people. Every time you talk about something, think of a client or yourself and make that story come alive with real live examples.

The other things you want to talk about are the peripheral needs of your readers. These might go outside of your category. For example, if you write a blog for speakers, maybe they need things like voice recorders. You want to be as helpful to your readers as you can be, even if it means talking about things you're not an expert in, but you know that your readers can really benefit from this information. You want to be a go-to resource for your readers.

I have a good formula for writing blogs. Some of it is in the handout (see "Better, Faster Blog Writing: Time-Saving Tips for Smart Business Blogging" in the handout on Page 37 of this transcript), but it basically starts with finding a problem you want to write about, and then asking your readers the question, "What are you doing about XYZ?" That's a great way to start a blog post because, right away, you're engaging your reader to think, "Ah! What am I doing about this?"

Joan: It's a great idea.

Patsi: Start with a question for your readers. End your post with a question to your readers. Remember, you want them to take an action. Start your post with a problem and a question and then, give them three to five bullet points. These can either be three ways the problem manifests itself or three solutions to the problem. It doesn't matter which your blog post focuses on.

Structure your blog writing so that it goes quickly. I'm a firm believer in the grocery list method of writing. Write a question, write three bullet points, or five, and then write a couple of sentences to explain what you mean. Then, wrap it up. Always end your post with a question. Ask your reader to leave a comment. I think that readers don't leave comments because you aren't asking them a compelling question. If you're not asking them the right question, they're going to go away without commenting. It's true that not very many people go onto a blog and comment. I think statistics are only 1 to 2 percent of readers comment on blogs. You have to have a lot of traffic before you start getting comments. But there's a lot you can do to encourage them, too.

Joan: I started this a couple months ago. At the end of a lot of my blog posts, I'll write things like, "What do you think?" "Am I wrong?" Or, "I've given you five tips. Let's see how long a list we can compile. Feel free to add to the list." Things like that let people know that I want them to engage in the conversation.

Patsi: One time I wrote "10 Ways to Do Such and Such," and I only came up with nine, so I said, "Number 10 is for you guys. You tell me, what's the 10th good tip?"

Joan: I love it!

Patsi: And make sure you respond to others when they ask a question or make a comment. I used to respond in a private email: "Thanks for stopping by. I like what you had to say. Keep it up. Keep coming back." I don't do that much anymore, but I will respond in a public comment on the blog post.

Respond to Your Comments

Joan: Can I give you another tip on something that I just noticed? I have a WordPress blog, and there's this little feature on there which my web guy set up that automatically lets me comment to a comment. It shows up right under their comment. I started doing that for almost every person who comments at my blog. Here's what I discovered. When I have six people who have left comments at my blog, and I respond to all six of those people, it shows up as 12 comments.

Patsi: It sure does. That's very important. You have great participation on your blog. One of the things that you do right, Joan, is that you're talking about your readers. They're giving you examples and problems, and you're featuring them in blog posts. Well, wouldn't that encourage you to leave a comment if it's going to get picked up by the author and maybe featured in a blog post?

Joan: Yes.

Patsi: Be sure you're doing this. I think a lot of people don't get enough comments because they're not getting enough traffic, and they're not getting enough traffic because they're not posting often enough.

Joan: Another great way to get comments is to write about controversial topics. Take a strong position on the most controversial topic in your industry. That's a terrific way to get comments.

Patsi: Absolutely. I think people don't go out on a limb enough, and they don't stir up the pot enough. It's obvious. The newspaper headlines that get the most attention are the ones that are negative. Right? None of us really want to go online and be negative. However, you can certainly report on other people who are being negative. If you're being too nice in your content, you're not going to get the attention you deserve. And if you don't get the attention, you're not going to get the readers. You have to be provocative.

Formatting Tips

Patsi: Let me just throw in a few tips about formatting, because I think it's important. Be careful on your blog. Leave lots of white space. Make your paragraphs short so there's more white space on the page. It makes it easier to read. This means breaking up your paragraphs after one or two sentences. You also want to have your sentences a little shorter than normal.

You want to talk in a conversational tone, not academic. I don't have too much to say about the length of your blog post—400 to 600 words, more or less. It doesn't really matter. But you don't want it scrolling down the page forever. Most blog platforms will let you create a

length where it says, "Read more," so that you just get the first paragraph on the home page of the blog.

You want to get to the point. Ask those questions. Give lots of bulleted or numbered lists. Write short sentences and paragraphs. Start and end with a question. Ask for comments.

Use images. It breaks up the monotony of text. I use IstockPhoto, at <http://www.istockphoto.com/>. Shutterstock, at <http://www.shutterstock.com/>, is another. The images sometimes can compel people to read your posts.

Use an exciting headline. I always write the headline last, because I'm not always sure what I'm going to say when I start writing. You want to make it curious and compelling. Joan does a good job of this, "5 Forgotten Tips To...," "How to Save Time When You Haven't Got Any," "8-1/2 Reasons For..." Make it interesting so people want to read your posts. Anything to add to that, Joan?

Joan: I don't think so. I think you're doing a terrific job. Keep going.

Calls to Action

Patsi: Let's go on to action. Remember we talked about CODA: content, outreach, design and action.

Joan: The calls to action are on my New Year's Resolution list. One way that I'm going to improve my blog is by including calls to action in every blog post. Tell us what a call to action is and why it's important.

Patsi: The term is used in sales to get people to buy. In a blog, it's a little bit different. The action can be subtle. You can get them just to think about something. At least you're trying to get them to think about it. Right? You don't want to just simply deliver information. You want to tell a story and move them emotionally. Then, once you have them involved and engaged, you want to ask them to *do* something.

Now, one of the best things I can think to do is build your marketing database by asking them to download a file or an ebook. You can also use a survey, a quiz or a poll. This has double payoff, because you get to know what they're thinking and it builds information for your blog post. You want them to leave a comment. You want them to subscribe to the blog.

I wouldn't ask them to do too many things in one blog post, but always ask them to do one thing at the end of the blog post. You don't always want to ask them to leave a comment, but ask them a question. You can say something like this, "If you like this blog post and feel that it's interesting enough to want to know more, I suggest you subscribe. You can get email updates in the subscription form in the upper right-hand corner." If you don't spell it out for people, they won't think to do it.

You want to evoke a little emotionality in your calls to action. Use psychology. Everybody knows enough about psychology to realize that nobody's going to take action unless you make them want to. Know a little bit about psychological hot buttons.

Everybody wants to have power, prestige, money and relationships. They want to be first on their block to know about something. They want to achieve goals. They want to acquire

things. We all have these human drives. There's nothing wrong with them. You need to tap into them and to honor them.

Certainly, the way you tell stories and the way you share things about yourself are important. One of the most powerful things you can do on your blog is to share a mistake you've made, and then show what sort of lesson you learned from it. It establishes you not only as an expert and credible in your field but, also, as a human being who is capable of making goofs and learning from them, and you set the example for other people. It builds trust. It builds credibility. People want to trust you and go along with you on whatever it is you're trying to get them to come along on.

Joan: Absolutely. There are so many other challenges to blog writing. People can't get that creativity spark going. Talk to us about some of the challenges that bloggers face, and then give us some tips and solutions on how we can get inspired.

Blogging Challenges

Patsi: On my blog, at <http://www.writingontheweb.com/>, I have a poll that's been there longer than I've ever left a poll up. It's about the biggest challenges people have with blogging. The Number One challenge that I hear about is that there's never enough time to write on their blog.

When I talk with clients, this is a big problem, and I know that from my own experience. It's never really lack of time. It's lack of inspiration. The lack of inspiration comes from not being sure about what you want to write, or you're not sure you're doing it right or doing it well. It's really a lack of confidence, not knowing whether blogging is going to be worth it. In other words, it's those two bugaboos—fear and doubt.

Without going into those issues too much, the only way it's going to go away is just to do it. Like Nike says, "Just do it." It helps if you know what you're doing. Even not knowing what you're doing, but having faith that just doing it, is going to turn out all right. When I started out five years ago, I didn't know what I was doing and I didn't have the system. It takes a while to get results from your blogging efforts.

Once in a while, a reader's going to leave a comment or email you with something that's going to make it all worthwhile, and all of your doubt will go away. Never forget that even though people aren't commenting, or aren't telling you, somebody out there needs you and they need the solutions that you're giving away to them for free. Nobody starts out writing well. Everybody has a piece of genius within him or her. It's just a question of finding it and putting it on the computer screen. It won't happen if you don't do it.

How to Start Writing a Blog Post

There are two ways to go about starting a blog post, even when you don't know what you're doing. One, go inside. Two, go outside. I think the easiest way is to go outside is to find a blog post you like, or dislike, and write about it. Use it as a jumping off point. You start by asking your readers a question about something. End by asking them a question or asking them to comment. Link to the source of your inspiration, whether it's a post you don't like or a post you do like.

Find a photo, either of that person, their book or of the subject matter. Put the photo on the blog post. Write your perspective and your opinion. Save it as a draft. Then come back an hour or 24 hours later, it doesn't matter, and re-read it. Make it better. Take out all the extra words. Correct the grammar and the spelling and all that.

Then publish it, even if you think it's just so-so. It's OK. You won't get better until you do this over and over. That's how you do it by going outside of yourself. When you do that, you're bypassing fear and doubt, because it's not about you. You're writing about what somebody else wrote, somebody else's post, whatever it is. It's not about you.

Go inside. That's the second way. It's a little bit harder, but sometimes it's worth it. Sit down and ask yourself, "OK, I've got this blog. What am I going to write about?"

- What really matters?
- What do my readers struggle with?
- What have I struggled with?
- What have I learned?
- What kind of tip can I share that's really going to make my readers' lives better?
- What's going well?
- What's not right? What's wrong?"

Immediately, you can think of something to write about. Think about why a situation continues when there are solutions.

- Why aren't the solutions working?
- What pivotal things happened to you that made things different for you, make you unique and a real expert in your field?
- Again, which huge mistake have you made that almost caused you to miss the boat entirely and that taught you a big lesson?

These are two ways of finding inspiration and bypassing fear and doubt. When you tap into your passion, into the real reason that you're writing a blog in the first place, the real reason why you're in business for yourself, you immediately bypass fear and doubt and tap into the energy that's within you. Does that make sense?

Joan: It sure does. A lot of the things that you're talking about are on our sheet of 101 ways to find content. Some of them are really quirky and fun. We encourage you to look at that handout (on Page 32 of this transcript). Again, not all 101 ideas that Patsi and I came up with are going to work for everybody, but I'll bet that everybody here can find at least 25 or 35 terrific things to blog about that fit in perfectly with your area of expertise.

Patsi: Absolutely.

Joan: Talk about some time-sucking traps.

Time-Saving Tips

Patsi: I believe in re-purposing everything. I've been blogging long enough now so that if I ever get stuck, I just go into my archives and I find something and I can update and recycle. I'm a firm believer in that. A lot of people fear the duplicate copy or duplicate content bugaboo, and I say to hell with that. Don't worry about it. Some people fall upon your blog for the first time. They've never read anything you've ever written. I'm not

suggesting you copy and paste everything word for word. I'm suggesting you take old ideas, recycle them and put a new spin on them. This can clearly be a time saver.

Unless you're verbose, which is one of my big errors. I can get bogged down writing my memoirs when I really shouldn't be spending time that way. Ask what's in it for your readers. Continually and consistently keep the focus on providing relevant stories that your readers can use for their benefit. That'll help you from getting bogged down in writing too much personal history and personal content.

Joan: That's probably my biggest downfall at my blog. When I come up with a good idea, I'm not satisfied with three paragraphs. I have to write the novel on everything you always wanted to know about X, Y and Z, and that just turns into a time-suck trap.

Patsi: Yes. Sometimes you need to do that. That's why I say save it as a draft and come back later, because you'll cut out 50 percent of it and you'll make it so much better. I always have one blog post draft saved on the back burner. I leave it there for 24 hours and come back. I always have one simmering.

When I started out, I didn't think I had anything to say. I was getting all of my content off of other people's blogs. I would write about what they were saying. Maybe I'd add my perspective, but it was really 75 percent of stuff other people were saying and only 25 percent of my own. Now it's the other way around, because I accumulated a body of knowledge and I'm more confident that I do know this stuff and can put my own spin on it.

Set yourself a time limit. For me, it's 20 minutes. But some blog posts take longer and, sometimes, I'll spend an hour. I only do that when I have the luxury of spending an hour. When I talk about posting 20 minutes or 30 minutes a day, it means I'll write it in 15 minutes, spend a few minutes for the headline and put an image on it that I've found on <http://www.istockphoto.com/>. Then, I'll go back into the blog post and link all of the names and books to relevant sources. I'll leave it as a draft and come back 24 hours later and publish it.

You really can do this in a half hour. If you're not sure what you're writing and have to do a lot of research, it might take you an hour. Set yourself a time limit. That's the only way that you're going to get better. Use a timer if you have to. Don't spend two hours coming up with a blog post, unless you're really doing some valuable research and you're getting something out of it.

Joan: There are two tips that I want to add. You and I talked about this, and I wrote about this in my newsletter. First, there's voice recognition software program out there. Patsi, have you heard of it? I think it's called Dragon, at <http://www.nuance.com/>.

Patsi: Yes, I have heard of it. I haven't used it, though.

Joan: There's one called Dragon, and another called Quillsoft, at <http://wordq.com/>. As a matter of fact, the makers of Quillsoft set up Google Alerts, apparently for the keyword phrase "voice recognition software." They found my newsletter in the archives online, emailed me and offered me a free copy of their voice recognition software to test and blog about. (Editor's Note: You can get a free 30-day trial of QuillSoft at <http://wordq.com/>.)

Patsi: Cool.

Joan: Now, that's an example of a smart company. I didn't have time to test it before this teleseminar, but I'm definitely going to test it and then write about it. Voice recognition software is a great way for you to blog. You can talk into your headset microphone right in front of your computer. This is great for people who struggle with writing. Also, Patsi, you and I talked about a blog, at <http://www.copyblogger.com/>, which is a terrific place where people can get writing tips specifically for blogging. Do you want to talk about Copyblogger?

Patsi: Yes, I'll just mention it. The reason it's so important is that before Brian Clark started Copyblogger, there were lots of sites about copywriting and sales pages and how to write copy that's designed to sell on the web. However, nobody had connected the two. The Copyblogger site introduced a new concept, and it ended up being called Content Marketing, although Brian Clark didn't realize it at the time. He was showing people that when you write a blog, it should be designed to connect with people, build your credibility, establish trust, and a call to action. It's not entirely sales copy, per se, but you're using a lot of the tactics and tools from sales copy writing.

If you're not familiar with what those are, it's a good idea to take a course in copy writing or study the free stuff online. It's just a different way of writing. I came from a journalism and psychology background. Well, as it turns out, that's perfect for sales writing, copy blogging or content marketing, but I didn't know it at the time.

You do have to learn how to connect with your readers. It doesn't happen overnight. It doesn't happen if you're not blogging. You need to be blogging a minimum of three times a week for you to get the benefits from the search engines and for people to find you. For example, Joan blogs about things and companies find her and give her free products. That's a perfect example of why you should be blogging.

Joan: We have about 10 minutes and I've asked you all the questions that were submitted. If you have any questions that you'd like answered, please email them to JStewart@publicityhound.com/. While you're doing that, Patsi's going to talk about how to drive traffic to your blog.

Driving Traffic to Your Blog

Patsi: There's just one other question that I want to answer that ties into that. Someone asked me about a blog that has other bloggers. She wanted to know how she could get other people to contribute as guest bloggers. Obviously, the more you write on a blog, the more traffic you're going to get. But it takes time. If you don't have a lot of time for writing on your blog, you'll want to recruit guest bloggers. There are several examples online of group blogs, where they have three or five people running the show. I definitely recommend that. Anyone can do that. It's easy to set up and invite a guest writer on your blog.

However, if you're not writing enough on your blog, you're not going to get those people who you need to reach. They're not going to find you. You may not believe this, but the best way to increase traffic to your blog is to write more frequently. I have tested it on my own blog. I know other people have, too. If you double the number of posts per week that you're writing, say from twice a week to four times a week, you will see your traffic double. I don't know why that is.

Joan: There's a site that I wrote about in my newsletter, a couple of months ago, that a couple of people have just raved about. It's a place where you can offer yourself as a guest blogger to other blogs. You can also find guest bloggers for your own blog. It's called

BloggerLinkUp.com, at <http://www.bloggerlinkup.com/>. Plug in your email address, your first and last name and join the site. I just found out today, while looking around, that if you have a free product, like an ebook or something that you want to offer to other bloggers for review, you could offer it right at this site. I have my free ebook on the "Best of the Publicity Hound's Tips of the Week of 2009." I'm going to go over here tomorrow and offer that book to any bloggers who want to write about how people can get free publicity. (Editor's Note: If you're interested in downloading the free ebook, or you want to share the link at your blog and social media sites, it's http://www.marketerschoice.com/app/?af=1112099&u=http://www.publicityhound.com/free_publicity/Bestof2009.html.)

Patsi: I know the site and the service. I think they're excellent. But I didn't know that they were offering reviews of information products. That's great.

Joan: They let you offer your product to other bloggers who want to write about it. It's like a little marketplace where you can find all these bloggers who are interested in your product. Then, you give it to them to review and wait for the reviews and, hopefully, sales to come pouring in.

Patsi: Fabulous. Whatever you're doing on your blog, I suggest you do more of it. Granted, some of the increase in traffic will come from the same people, because they're subscribed to your blog, but the more people subscribe and read your blog, the more they're going to share it. They're going to retweet it. What goes around, comes around. People are going to hear about it. They're going to find you. They cannot find you if you're not posting on your blog.

Nothing makes me sadder than to go to somebody's blog, because they've got a link on their website that says "blog," and click on it and find they haven't written in a year. I know people are busy, and I know there are reasons, but I think it's sad, because when I go to someone's blog, I want to find out what's going on with them.

Joan: I hear that the biggest reason people don't blog is that they do it for two weeks, don't get any traffic and then, give up. Well, that's like going to the gym on Monday hoping to lose 20 pounds, and then dropping out on Friday because you haven't lost the weight.

Patsi: That's why I've tried to simplify it. There's a lot that goes into blogging. If you chunk it down into those four areas, and you have a system for writing three to five bullet points and know where you can go to get inspiration, it's not that bad. I recommend acquiring a daily blogging habit of 20 minutes a day. You get up early in the morning, or you do it late at night before you go to bed, and just do something on your blog, whatever it is. If you can acquire that habit, you will get results. It won't happen next week, or it may, but months down the road, you will have built a substantial body of content that will look really, really good. When somebody's looking to hire, and you've got all that good content on your blog, who do you think they're going to choose? They're going to choose the person who has the most credibility.

Joan: Everybody wants to hit a homerun. But to win the game, you have to hit a lot of singles to first base.

Patsi: Yes. I'm with you there. As far as driving traffic, and getting to first and second and third base, all of the things we've talked about up until now really count. Showing link love, writing about other people, linking to other people, retweeting your blog posts, getting your blog posts fed into Twitter, are all important.

Let me just say a couple of things about that. You can have your blog posts automatically fed into Twitter by going to TwitterFeed.com, at <http://www.twitterfeed.com/>. That is pretty user friendly. You can do the same thing on LinkedIn. Go to the navigation bar on the top of LinkedIn where it says "More." There's a drop-down menu that says "Application directory." Click it, and then look for the application that says "Blog links." Not only can you feed your WordPress and TypePad blogs into LinkedIn, but you can also access the blogs of your LinkedIn connections through that little widget/application. It goes both ways.

Joan: I didn't know that.

Patsi: It's great. You can find out what your other people are blogging about.

Joan: You can also have your blog posts fed into your Facebook status as well.

Patsi: That was the next thing I was going to say. I'm not going to give you specific directions on how to do that, but go to "Settings" and click around. It's user friendly. I didn't mention all the other social media sites, but there are tons of them. Whatever sites you're using, there's going to be a feature there somewhere. They're going to let you set it up so that your blog automatically feeds into your status updates, your retweets, your Friends, whatever system you're on. You want to make sure that happens automatically.

Also, a good way to use Twitter to drive traffic to your blog is by tweeting a couple of tips from a blog post. I get tremendous traffic from all three sites over on my blog. I didn't always do that. It's funny, because I can just finish posting something and a half hour later I've got a comment from somebody. I'm thinking, "How do they find it so quickly?" Well they found it through Twitter. The people on Twitter are used to putting their two cents worth in. Right? These are the people who comment frequently.

Joan: Before we close, can you talk about blogging directories? I get that question often. Are there maybe one or two blogging directories where people must have their blog registered?

Blogging Directories

Patsi: There are so many. There are over 200 blog directories. I recommend that anybody just starting out, once they have their blog set up and several posts, find out which blog directories are in their niche. To do that, they might have to do a Google search, or go to TopRankBlog.com and search on that site. They have a list of all the RSS blog directories.

Joan: Can you spell it for us?

Patsi: It's at <http://www.toprankblog.com/RSS-blog-directory/>. That's Lee Odden's site. There are other blog directory sites if you Google that. It's a fast way to get indexed by the search engines. It's just covering your bases. It's very important, because each of those blog directories are going to have you listed on their site. These are linked back to your blog. In the search engine algorithms, this counts and gives your blog rank or authority.

I happen to offer a blog directory submission service, because it's very time consuming to submit your blogs to directories. You don't want to waste your time doing it, especially with over 200 directories. If you're interested, I charge \$125 for it, and I have somebody do it for you manually. It takes about 10 to 12 hours to do it, but it's well worth it.

Joan: I don't have any more questions in my email box. Are there any parting thoughts before we close?

Patsi: This all ties together. The blog is like the hub that you want to draw people back to. Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and all the others are great social media sites, but they don't operate in isolation. Your blog doesn't either. YouTube is a great way to post a short video and then, you can embed it on your blog. It's a way for people to get a taste of who you are, because they can see you and hear you. All of these things work together. They don't work in isolation.

There's a lot to know, but the thing to remember is don't get overwhelmed. Start with a blog. Set it up designed for trust and branding. Use some outreach. Find blogs in your niche and start commenting on them. Blog frequently. Write simple solutions to problems your readers have. And always ask them to do something.

If you get bogged down, get some help. There are so many freelancers out there who, for next to nothing, can really help you make a difference. Get a virtual assistant who can help with the tech aspects of your blog. (See "How to Find a Virtual Assistant to Help with Your Publicity Campaign." Go to:

http://www.marketerschoice.com/app/?af=1112099&u=http://www.publicityhound.com/publicity-products/marketing-tapes/find_a_virtual_assistant.htm)

There's help available. All you have to do is ask. If you have questions, shoot me an email at PKrakoff@gmail.com. Joan, you've also offered your email address.

I have a new ebook, which hasn't even been launched yet, but it is available to the people on this call if they go to <http://www.contentmarketingprofits.com/>. You can register for it. You'll get lots of tips on how to make your content work for getting sales.

Joan: How much is it, Patsi?

Patsi: That's a freebie.

Joan: It free! That's wonderful. Give us the URL again.

Patsi: It's at <http://www.contentmarketingprofits.com/>. Of course, it's "free." I use that in quotes because I'm going to upsell you to the for-fee ebook at the end Content Marketing for Smart Professionals: <http://www.myknowledgegenie.com/contentmarketingsmarties>. In the very last chapter, I'm going to give you a survey to take. If you don't pass the survey, I'm going to tell you that you need to buy my ebook!

Joan: Also, I think downloading this book is a good lesson for people who want to do more content marketing and Internet marketing. Watch how Patsi does the upsell when you download the ebook. Watch how she tries to get you to buy something and then, use that same technique on your own site. Patsi, tell us how else you can help us and where we can find you.

Patsi: Obviously, the place to find me is at my blog, because that's where you'll really get to know what I am about. There are pages on there that will tell you how you can hire me, buy me, rent me!

Joan: What is your blog URL again?

Patsi: It's <http://www.writingontheweb.com/>. I offer special writing services for anyone who's an executive coach or a consultant. Some of your readers may be executives, coaches and consultants. They can visit me at <http://www.contentforcoachesandconsultants.com/>. That's about it. Google my name, "Patsi Krakoff," and you'll find me.

Joan: I am at <http://www.marketerschoice.com/app/?af=1112099>. There's a link to my blog at <http://www.marketerschoice.com/app/?af=1112099&u=http://www.PublicityHound.net>. I also hope you'll visit my new blog at <http://www.mysocialmediasolution.com/>, which I created with my new partner Jeanne Hurlbert. Patsi, again, thank you very much for this hour. I have a long to-do list.

Guess what I'm going to do when I get off this call? I'm going to blog about a couple of things that I'm going to do at my blog, and then I am going to link to the page where people can buy the recording or the transcript. I'm not going to give away all the tips, because there are people who paid to get on this call, but I'm going to throw out a couple of the tips as an enticement. This is another way of re-purposing content.

Patsi: I think you're an excellent example for the call to action, because your newsletter is always giving valuable information and cool tips, and you drop in the line, "If you want to know more, you really ought to have this ebook."

Joan: Yes, that's the upsell. Patsi, thank you. Thank you everybody for participating. As Patsi is fond of saying, "Blog on."

Patsi: Blog on.

Joan: Take care everybody, and we hope you join us for our next teleseminar. Thanks.



Time-saving Tips for Smart Business Blogging

These are the handouts that accompany the
teleseminar with Joan Stewart,
The Publicity Hound

ContentMarketingwithBlogs.com

Patsi Krakoff, Psy. D.

The First 7 Steps BEFORE You Create Your Blog by Patsi Krakoff, Psy.D. The Blog Squad

Complete these steps before you set up a blog account. They will guide you through the reasons you want to start blogging and help you determine your blog's intention and purpose (and name!)

1. Examine the reasons why you want to publish a blog:

a. What are 3 "higher purpose" reasons? What is the real mission or purpose of your business?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

b. What are 3 business objectives for your blog?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

2. Who is your ideal reader?

Who are you writing to/for? Who is your ideal client? Describe three:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

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3. What problems do you solve for these readers? What pain do you relieve? List as many as you can think of:

3a. List problems, pain points, and challenges:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

3b. List 3 or more benefits readers will get from reading your blog. List as many as you can think of.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

3c. How do you want your readers to feel when they read your blog? List 3 emotions or more you would like to inspire in your readers:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

3d. What do you want your readers to DO when they read your blog?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

4. List 5-8 categories and pick keywords you'll be writing about. Do some keyword research to find out how people are searching on the Web. If your ideal clients were looking for answers to problems that you solve in your business, what phrases would they use? (Try <http://freekeywords.wordtracker.com/> and <http://www.keyworddiscovery.com/search.html>).

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

5. Name your blog. Think in terms of key words. What's your niche? How does it relate to your business? What is your business brand?

Brainstorm 10 ideas with peers, vote the top 3, and pick one:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

6. Write a short tag line to go after your blog name. Include such elements as

- Identifying who the targeted readers are
- What's in it for them if they stick around, what are they going to learn
- What your name is
- What is your expertise

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____

7. Register your blog name as a domain name. There are many places to register domains. www.GoDaddy.com is among the least expensive and offers many services. Map your new domain URL to your blog URL. Rather than having Typepad in your blog URL, your blog can be branded with your own unique brand and domain name through a process called domain mapping.

Go Get a Blog!

Sign up for a free trial blog at, for example, www.typepad.com. Typepad has a free 15 day trial, then 3 levels of payment plans from \$4.95 to \$14.95 per month. They take care of the backend maintenance and offer tech support. The blog is hosted on their servers.

Or, if you want your own blog software hosted on your own server (more control, but requires more tech savvy), download a free Wordpress blog platform at www.wordpress.org. There are also multiple Wordpress blog themes you can buy for a small fee, if you search online. Wordpress will also host your blog for a small fee at Wordpress.com.

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Problems/Solutions Content Worksheet
by Patsi Krakoff The Blog Squad

As you begin to write on your web pages and blog, you'll find that you'll get better results when you are clear about your purpose and objectives. The key question to ask is "What problem do you solve?" The more clarity and variety, the better content you will create that will connect with your readers. These questions will help you write better content that does the job of getting readers to take action, no matter if you're writing an article, a newsletter, a blog post or a sales page. Write out answers to the following questions:

1. What are your business objectives?

2. What is your blog's objective?

3. Who are the members of your target audience?

4. What are your products?

5. What services do you provide?

6. What problems do you solve?

7. How has this problem been solved before?

8. Why is it that traditional solutions aren't working?

9. Why are readers / prospects still stuck?

10. What's new about this situation that contributes to more frustration?

11. What's been missing in traditional solutions, with what's available from most sites/blogs/businesses up until now?

12. What is possible?

13. What is different now?

14. What should your readers/ prospects/ clients do now?

101 Ways to Find Content for Your Blog

1. Create **Google Alerts** for your topics and subtopics at <http://www.Google.com/alerts>.
2. Set up **Technorati WatchLists**.
3. Monitor the **feeds** of your favorite blogs.
4. Monitor your favorite blogs on **Alltop.com**.
5. Use **other people's blog posts** as inspiration and jumping-off points to write your own post.
6. Subscribe to **e-newsletters** and use other people's articles as inspiration.
7. Use a **poll tool** such as Vizu.com and set up a vote from readers on biggest challenges, worst experiences, etc.
8. Create a **survey** (SurveyMonkey.com, MySurveyExpert.com).
9. **Announce your own events** and products and services, speaking gigs, etc.
10. **Announce other people's events** (especially those for whom you're an affiliate!).
11. Share **information and tips** you think might interest readers, but in a way that engages a conversation, asking for their input and ideas.
12. Share tips on how to **save time, money or energy** (always important to readers!).
13. Make a list of your topics and subtopics, **categories**, areas of expertise.
14. Set up an **editorial calendar** with a day for each subtopic.
15. Ask favorite blog writers to contribute a **guest post** on a topic of their expertise – (make sure it is appropriate for your readership – this is especially useful when you are traveling or just plain tired).
16. Grow **blog antennae** – these are two radar like ears that are continually scanning the Web, newspapers, magazines, email, and daily life, etc. for interesting items to blog about. Use your own life (challenges and mistakes make for great blog posts!).
17. List your **top 10 or 20 favorite blogs** for 'xyz', and publish this list (great for link backs!).

18. Refer to **classical literature**.
19. Refer to **magazine articles**, popular press, tabloids.
20. Refer to **historical events**.
21. Refer to **holidays**.
22. Refer to **customs and cultures**.
23. Write about **sports events**.
24. **Read newspaper articles** and comment on whether they were fair and balanced, or accurate.
25. Tie into **business books** you're reading. Someone else's perspectives you may or may not agree with adds depth to your posts.
26. Write about a **character in a novel** who possibly is like a client.
27. **Song lyrics** that speak to a value.
28. **A pivotal event** in your life/career... a lesson hard learned
29. Your **pet peeves**.
30. Your **dreams**.
31. **Universal human needs** (the desires to acquire, learn, bond, protect).
32. **Emotional hot buttons**, prestige, money, efficiency, achievement, power, family.
33. Do a **keyword search on Twitter**, find out what people are tweeting about in real time.
34. Take a look at your own **e-newsletter content**, find an article and update it.
35. Use **articles** you've posted on article directories as inspiration to update a post.
36. Go through your own **old blog posts** and see what inspires you. You can do several versions of the same ideas reworked into new posts.
37. Browse through **photos** on a site like www.iStockphoto.com, find a cute animal photo, or a funny image, and write a post around it.
38. What **project** are you working on right now? Did you write something that can be turned into a blog post? It can be an email, a list of steps you need to do, an outline for a speech, anything you've written down is good blog fodder. While writing an outline for a blogging teleseminar, I must have created 5 new blog posts.

39. Search **Twitter**.
40. Search **Facebook**.
41. Search LinkedIn, use the **Answers** feature.
- 42. Book reviews.**
43. Comment on **someone else's blog** post.
44. **Comment on article** in industry publication.
45. Free **resources**.
46. Explain **industry definitions**, particularly those that confuse people.
47. "**My favorite**" (My favorite free Google tools, iPhone apps, social media sites).
48. Product **reviews**.
49. Share a question someone emailed to you, and the **answer or solution to a problem** your audience is facing.
50. Tip from **your book**.
51. Tip from your presentation handouts.
- 52. Tip of the day.**
53. Comment on content from **Google News**.
54. Comment on content from **Google Alerts**.
55. **Blodex** – Top Blogged Stories.
56. **Top 10** lists.
57. About.com's **Urban Legends** Blog.
58. **Publicity** you've received.
59. Anything found on **social bookmarking sites**.
60. Audio and video podcasts.
61. Fun, quirky, interest stuff on **Craigslist**.

62. **Yahoo! Answers.**
63. **Wikipedia** (But you can't be sure that this information is 100 percent accurate.)
64. **Technorati.com**
65. **Linking** to others
66. **Pick a fight:** Many bloggers try to generate traffic by loudly criticizing another popular blogger, hoping the blogger will respond and generate traffic from his or her own readers.
67. **Make a list:** Lists are enormously popular. Examples: 5 ways to tie a knot, 50 best jazz albums, or a list just like this one on how to generate blog content.
68. Write **how-to instructions.**
69. Recruit a **guest blogger** at BloggerLinkUp.com.
70. **An opinion** that's widely held by other people.
71. Good **advice.**
72. Interview key **people in your niche.**
73. **Invite your readers** to submit articles.
74. Instead of exchanging links, get together with other bloggers and **review each others' blogs.**
75. **Contrast two or more positions** in a post.
76. Write a **series of posts** around a common theme.
77. Write about the "**advantages/disadvantages**" of something.
78. **Debunk a myth.**
79. Offer a **tutorial.**
80. Write a **funny** post.
81. Share a **joke.**
82. Create a huge list of **your best posts.**
83. Offer a **hypothesis and conclusion.**

84. Buy a **how-to book** from a bookstore and use some of the ideas from that book to generate ideas for posting, but don't copy from the book and violate copyright.
85. **Summarize someone else's blog** or blog post, and link to it.
86. Write a post that incorporates the words "**desperate,**" "**dangerous**" or "**futile.**"
87. Encourage visitors to subscribe to the **RSS feed** of your blog by offering a reward.
88. Write about your **fellow bloggers' top posts.**
89. **Take a poll** and publish the results.
90. Designate **each day of the week** as a theme day where you will always post about a particular topic on that day.
91. **Watch TV** and comment on shows, characters, plots, commercials.
92. **Watch a movie** and comment on characters, plots, themes.
93. **Complain about the A-list bloggers.**
94. **Explain what the A-list really is.**
95. Complain about **Google AdSense** and how you never make any money with those ads.
96. Write a post listing **various topics you could write about** if you wanted to.
97. Visit a site that features famous, popular or quirky **quotes.**
98. **Ask family, friends** and social media friends, followers and fans for ideas.
99. Meditate
100. What are the **top three tools** in your office that you can't live without?
101. What **one goal** do you want to accomplish this year?

Better, Faster Blog Writing: Time-Saving Tips for Smart Business Blogging

Serial Writing Formula: $1=5+2=7+1$

http://www.coachezines.com/2007/05/serial_writing_.html



I'm no math genius, nor do I even think remotely in analytical terms. But once in a while I stumble upon something that makes sense, saves time, and produces exponential results.

I'm talking about serial writing. You take one main concept, break it down into a list of 5 key elements, write an introductory overview, write a concluding summary, and here's what you get:

- 7 stand-alone articles to post on your blog and to submit to article directories
- 1 longer article you can include on your website, ezine, and format into a PDF special report to sell or give away as a bonus.

1 idea = 5 points + intro + summary = 7 articles + 1 PDF report

Here's why I like to do this:

I know that each week I need to come up with fresh content from my blogs and ezine. That could be a struggle to keep fresh, yet stay focused and on topic. Or, it can get my creative juices flowing if I sit down and look at a concept from the stand point of this formula.

Here's what I'm talking about. I learned this while I was doing it last week. I decided to try to encapsulate the main ingredients of successful online marketing systems - that was the main concept.

I made a list and came up with 6 key elements (actually only 5; the 6th one was recycling the first 5 steps).

I wrote an overview listing all 6 steps, then posted one point each day on our blogs. After the 7th posting, I wrote an 8th one summarizing the points, and including some additional information about the tools necessary for each step.

Then I edited each blog post to become a stand-alone article for submission to article directories. The goal here is to get these keywords out onto the Web in as many different ways as possible. I also am writing a press release with the 6 steps included.

Then I gathered all 8 articles together and edited them into one stand-alone special report and formatted it into a nice PDF file. This can be used as a free give-away for signing up or registering for something, or can be sold as an ebook.

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We can also take the 8 articles and turn them into a series of autoresponder messages and call it a mini-course. This would be used to drive traffic to a landing page for selling a course or ebook or other program.

This week, as I wondered what to write about for my blogs, I remembered how easy it has been the last couple of weeks while completing the online success series.

So this is the start of another series: How to Write a Series of Articles for Marketing. Maybe I can find a catchier title, like Confessions of a Serial Writer...? Stay tuned as I walk my talk and show you how to make your writing life easier by multi-purposing.

Confessions of a Serial Writer

http://www.coachezines.com/2007/05/confessions_of_.html



I'm not sure when it began or who's to blame, but at some point in my writing career I got lazy. Or maybe I got smart. I started skipping the long research on a topic and reading up on its history.

I just started making a list of main points and then writing out a couple of sentences on each item.

I think I got the idea from Jeff Herring, [The Article Guy](#), who said if you can write a 7 item grocery list, you can write a good article. Now Jeff teaches article writing for people who struggle with writing and have a hard time coming up with stuff.

That's not my problem. I love writing - but my problem is writing too much. Anyone with a doctorate suffers from the same disease. Dissertation-itis. Too much information. Nobody has time to read all those words anymore, especially not online.

That's when I fell in love with the "Make a List" writing school. The theory is anything worth reading can be written in a list of bulleted points.

I confess, I've taken the list building approach to an extreme. I've become a serial writer.

I wish I could say that it's the cure for writer's block, or that it'll turn your work into Internet gold. I do proclaim it to be a rousing success for saving you time and energy whenever you're faced with writing for your ezine, blog, web pages, press releases, and even white papers.

Here's how to start a serial writing project: (in list form, of course)

1. Find an idea your readers want to know more about that will benefit them
2. Make a list of 5 main points
3. Write an overview of the idea with the 5 points listed and post it on your blog
4. Each day for the next 5 days write a blog post about each of the 5 points
5. Write a summary of the 5 points, reviewing them and reminding readers why this is important
6. Edit each blog post into a stand-alone article

7. Compile the 7 articles into one full article.
8. Use the full article as a PDF special report or ebook bonus
9. Turn the blog posts into an autoresponder series or mini ecourse
10. Edit your work so that it is appropriate for article directories, press releases, white papers

This follows my secret writing formula: 1 idea = 5 points + intro + summary = 7 articles + 1 PDF report, or **1=5+2=7+1**.

The key, of course, is writing with the reader's interests in mind, keeping it benefit oriented. But I'll confess, the real reason I'm a serial writer is for me: to save myself time and energy and to get the most mileage from my writing. Of course, readers benefit because it is easy for them to digest information in lists and chunks.

But I'm doing it more for myself. There, I've said it. I feel better.

Make a List of 5 Key Points

http://www.coachezines.com/2007/05/make_a_list_of_.html



The key to writing multiple articles for your blog, ezine, web pages and marketing purposes is to start with a good list of 3-5 key points. My previous two posts on this explained the time and energy saving advantages.

This is not to mean you don't have to do any research or reading on your topic. It depends on how well you know your subject. If you know the topic well, it's easy to break down a concept into 3-5 elements.

Here's my 5 point list for any serial writing project:

1. Start with an idea that will benefit your readers
2. Break it down to 3-5 steps or key elements
3. Write an introduction to the article that includes the problem/solution, benefits to the reader, and your list
4. Post about each point in your list on your blog
5. After the final point, summarize and review, and remind readers why this is important to them and what they can do next

That's it. Writing the points as a daily blog post helps you to be short and to the point. Also, blog writing tends to be more informal and personal. For me that helps stay away from academic jargon or language that's formal or convoluted.

Posting daily breaks the full article down into doable chunks. This helps you avoid writer's block or procrastination because you have a writing plan: you have your list.

At the end of a week, you have several chunks you can gather together to form a full article.

20 Mistakes Smart Professionals
Make with Blogs

By Patsi Krakoff

Time-Saving Tips for Smart Business Blogging

Are you getting results from your business blog? Is it getting harder for you to spend time on this Web publishing tool because you're just not seeing results? If so, you're not alone.

I've been working for the last five years as The Blog Squad, and I've seen a lot of professionals start out great with a blog...then, fizzle. Some good, some excellent, but most pretty average.

Hundreds of blogs are started each day, and many of them are abandoned after several months because it takes time and energy to keep a good business blog going.

Make no mistake... blogs are a great tool for executive coaches who want to:

- Build community
- Establish yourself as a thought leader in your field
- Get found on the Internet
- Interact with potential clients
- Market your services

It's not enough to get a blog set up and start writing on it. You have to use it the smart way to drive traffic and gain readership. Yes, you need readers to subscribe and keep coming back. And to do that, you'll need to get found and know how to capture readers' hearts as well as their minds.

Not getting the most out of your blog is like having a Ferrari parked in the garage and only taking it out on Sundays!

The Best Content Marketing Tool on the Planet!

I'm unequivocal: A business blog is quite simply "the most powerful content marketing tool on the planet!" But only if you know what to do with it. I've worked with some pretty smart and successful executive coaches, and they're not always the ones who have the best blogs.

I've found several common mistakes executive coaches make with their blogs. To be fair, most of the coaches I deal with, my clients, are highly educated professionals who write and speak very well.

Often they're too busy with clients to pay attention to details on their blogs. However, none of these mistakes would take much time to correct. It's likely many executive coaches simply haven't learned what to do.

They simply haven't had experience writing on the web, in the relaxed yet focused way blog readers have come to expect. Why would they? Executive coaches are very good at what they do, and they don't teach you how to write on a blog in graduate school.

Mostly, executive coaches aren't using some of the features available to them with their blogging software because it hasn't been sufficiently explained.

Eyes glaze over with the mention of RSS, pinging, trackbacks and permalinks. Professionals may be ignoring these things hoping they don't really need to know.

Here's a list of mistakes I found on a recent trip around the ***executive coach blogosphere***:

Content:

1. **Not posting frequently enough.** (Recommended: 2-3 times a week, but more is better if you want to get more traffic.)
2. **Content is not focused,** and the target audience is not clearly defined. (It's not sufficiently specific to target all working adults with a pulse...)

Readers need to know that this blog is for them, addresses their needs and speaks to them. Know what keyword phrases your readers would use to find you, and write posts targeting those phrases. Be clear about what problems you can solve.

3. **Posting articles that are too long,** and not using extended post features. People are in a hurry and expect short snippets of information from a blog.

Long is okay, if you use bolded subtitles and break up the post using the "read more" feature. Use short paragraphs. The more white space the easier it is to read on the Web.

4. **Posts are complex.** Blog content by executive coaches is often too much like comprehensive articles, instead of short posts about just one focused concept. Blog posts should be more like a conversation starter. It should encourage reader comments.
5. **Writing style is academic** and impersonal, rather than informal and interactive. Professionals should use more pronouns like "you" and "I believe." Readers expect to learn about your experiences. Even sharing mistakes and bad experiences builds trust and connects on a human level.
6. **Not linking profusely** (because the professional either isn't researching their field on the Internet or isn't familiar or comfortable using the link feature).
7. Professionals, especially executive coaches, **write tentatively,** not wanting to offend anybody, rather than being bold and taking a stance. On the Web, readers want to read your opinions and have a chance to voice theirs. Be bold.
8. **Keep in mind "what's in it for me?"** Always write your posts and headlines to emphasize why this is important to readers.

Design

9. **No name of author** prominently displayed in title banner, tag line or in a side bar.
10. **No author photo.**

11. **No signature.** There's no way to tell who wrote post on a multi-author site.
12. **No subscription form.** There's no way to sign up through RSS or email subscription form.
13. **No links for leaving comments** and trackbacks for readers to use.
14. **Too many categories** or none at all.
15. No information about their **business services and products.** No way to hire the author.
16. **Calendars for no reason at all.** (Please, nobody uses these calendars that are built into many blogging platforms. Delete them.)

Marketing

17. The **About Page** has the author's bio written in the third person, with no personal story, just the facts and previous work history and education. Do not use this important page to copy and paste your resume. Use it to tell people your real story, how you got to where you are today. Connect emotionally as well as intellectually.
18. Blog isn't **submitted to blog directories.**
19. No participation and commenting on **other people's blogs.** No blog outreach to increase visibility.
20. No evidence of participation in **LinkedIn, Facebook or Twitter. Social networking sites** should be set up to automatically feed new blog posts into your pages and accounts. This is a major way to get new traffic to your blog.

What You Can Do

If you want to use a blog to build your business, optimize it by taking time to learn the features and steps that will ensure success.

Here are a couple of suggestions:

1. Take the time to learn about your blog software or hosting provider. **Typepad** and **Wordpress** are the two most popular platforms and, if you do a Google search, you'll find many helpful ebooks and digital downloads, some free, some for a small fee, including one I wrote called Build a Better Blog.
2. Hire a professional blog expert to rev up your blog. (Hint: I'm available!)

Getting Help from Others

One thing I've learned is that I can't see the obvious on my own blogs. Recently I hired an expert to help me improve one of my blogs. He knows me from years of blogging expertise on the Web. But I can't see what he sees. He opened my eyes. This report is a direct result of one of his suggestions.

What are you not seeing on your blog? What should you be doing that you just don't know about?

The more you ask, the more will be given.

Here's to your blogging success. Blog on!

Patsi

About Patsi Krakoff, Psy.D.



Patsi Krakoff is a newsletter, blog, and content marketing expert who co-founded *The Blog Squad*. She provides advanced training and coaching for professionals who want to beef up their blog for marketing optimization. She was trained as a journalist and has a doctorate in psychology, with ten years experience marketing online businesses. She is writing her first novel about life in Paris.