

# 21 DAYS TO A BETTER BLOG

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## DAILY CHALLENGE

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## Introduction

Do you feel like your blog is letting you down? You work so hard as a blogger to generate interest, attract visitors, and then turn those visitors into loyal customers. Yet you don't feel like all your hard work is being rewarded. You hear story after story about bloggers making a good living from their little pieces of Internet real estate.

Every now and then you see glimpses of success, and you think it is your turn to finally make a full-time living from your blog.

**Then the traffic inexplicably slows, so do your sales, and you have to put your dreams of becoming a million-dollar blogger on hold.**

It doesn't have to be that way. With a successful plan full of proven blog-boosting tips and best practices, you can transform your ho-hum blog into a traffic-magnet presence on the web that helps you reach all your blogging goals. In as little as 21 days, you can see a real change in how your blog performs.

Listed below you will find 21 different one-a-day tasks and activities for getting more traffic. Some of them are one-and-done jobs, like building a "Start Here" page that funnels new traffic exactly where you want it to go. Once you build this page the right way you don't have to go back and redo it, unless your analytics show it is not performing up to your expectations. Speaking of analytics, you should have at least one day each month where you pour over the numbers of your business.

This means using Google Analytics, WordPress SEO by Yoast or some other traffic-tracking software suite to monitor how many visitors you are getting, how long they stay on your blog, and other important metrics. Some tasks, such as connecting with other bloggers in your niche, will be done repetitively, month after month after month.

Also, don't look at the following list as being done in any specific order.

You can tackle any of the 21 blog success tips below on any of the next 21 days. The idea is to implement one task per day for 3 weeks, which gets you into the habit of working to improve your blog each and every day. Over time, this will become an automatic activity that exponentially builds on itself, eventually delivering all your blogging goals.

If you are ready to take the 21-day challenge to build a better blog, let's begin by developing the "Start Here" page mentioned above.

## 1 – Create a "Start Here" Page

This is a simple way to get your blog visitors to go where you want them to. You create a starter page. When someone arrives on your blog for the first time, and they see a tab that says "Start Here", guess where they are going to go? This page should link to your email squeeze page, and should also introduce you and your business.

Then you go on to tell someone exactly how you can help them, and where they need to go for specific information. Start Here pages often get visitors to spend a lot of **time** on your blog, because they lead to more on-site clicks and greater satisfaction for your blog visitors.



## **2 – Connect with Other Bloggers**

Identify those blogs in your niche that are authority sites. These are the ones that continually rank high in Google for keywords and phrases you want to rank for also. Reach out to these blog owners. Make a connection. Let them know you are in the same market, and that you are open to joint venture suggestions and partnerships.

You will find the majority of people you reach out to will not respond. However, out of every 10 or so bloggers you contact, you will get 2 or 3 warm responses. These are the people you are going to offer to help, by doing things like writing guest posts (day 17 of the challenge). Once you help another blogger expand his or her reach, that person will be more likely to help you build your blog as well.

### 3 – Use the Right Keywords

Market Samurai, SEMRush, Google.com/keywords, Keyword Tool, KWFinder and Moz's Keyword Explorer are excellent pieces of software to identify the keywords and phrases that can bring in the most traffic. Spending a day doing nothing but keyword research provides you with information that can make you money and build your business.

These are the words, phrases and questions your target audience is typing into Google and other search engines. The websites and pieces of software mentioned above will reveal some low hanging fruit, words and phrases that get decent amounts of searches each month, and that your competitors are not really targeting.

Every few months you want to revisit this task. Some markets change over time and others are evergreen. Knowing what phrases and words your audience is looking for is important for obvious reasons, and today's challenge activity will reveal exactly that.



## 4 – Maximize Your "About" Page

Break out that list of keywords and phrases you created yesterday. Add them to your "About" page. On many blogs and websites, this is one of the most visited pages. Look it over. Is it just a couple of hundred words of content? If it is, you have some work to do.

Cover briefly who you are and what you offer. Make sure you mention if you have a dog, what your favorite sports team is, and if you like fishing. This helps them connect with you.

Then spend the rest of this page talking about how you are going to help the people in your market. Although some of the About page is about you, most of it should be about your reader and *how you can help them*.

Just make sure you spend at least 1,200, 1,500 or 2,000 keyword-rich words getting your point across. When you're done, link to this page from your social media accounts and send a shout out to your email list, to begin building inbound links that will help your search engine rankings.



## **5 – Get the Most Out of the Photos on Your Blog**

Are your photos up-to-date? Every time you add new content to your site, media of any type such as video, text or pictures, you have a new chance to get the search engines' attention.

Replace old photos if they look “blah” and dull. Make sure you add a description of a photo to its alt tag and caption, including a relevant keyword or phrase if you can. This not only helps search engine rankings, but it also gives a textual description of your picture.

## **6 – Link Your Posts & Make Your Blog “Sticky”**

Google loves it when you link your blog posts and pages. There are very few times when Google's representatives tell you exactly what you do to improve your search engine rankings. Google has repeatedly said that it understands better how to rank your pages and posts if they are linked to each other. Every page and post on your blog should be linked to at least one other page or post.

This also has the added benefit of making your blog “sticky”. This means that people may land on your website to read a particular blog post and then, thanks to links you've included to the rest of your content, they'll stick around to consume more and more of your content.

## 7 – Brainstorm Blog Post Ideas

Today you are going to blow up your brain! Go to the library or your local bookstore, and read about your industry, market or niche. Look over your blog and the blogs of others in your industry. Sift through the comments made on your blog posts and social media updates.

These are all great ways to brainstorm for future blog post ideas. Today you are going to devote yourself to nothing more than playing Sherlock Holmes, detecting topics for future blog posts that seem to be generating a lot of buzz in your niche.



## **8 – Tweak Your Email Opt-In Page**

The squeeze page you use to build your email list should be simple and straightforward. List-building best practices show you should ask for the minimal amount of information possible. If you can get by with just asking for an email address, that is what you want to do. Don't have a lot of imagery or distractions on this page.

Give someone only two choices, either to join your email list or leave the page.

There should be no other content on this page other than the offer of a free piece of content or some other type of opt-in bribe in return for joining your list. Everything else is a distraction. You're not trying to win a beauty contest here. A simple, straightforward, to the point opt-in box that asks for a minimal amount of information is almost always going to be your highest converting squeeze page.

## 9 – Crunch the Numbers

WordPress SEO by Yoast, Google Analytics and SEMRush are applications that reveal things like how many people are visiting your posts, what they do when they get on your blog, and even what your competitors are up to.

Google Analytics is so powerful and empowering that it is used on more than 50% of the top 1 million blogs and websites in the world! It has incredible tools and capabilities that make studying traffic and other on-site behavior simple, and it's absolutely free.

Inspectlet is a free and premium traffic monitoring service. This ingenious piece of software creates videos that show you what people do when they get to your site. This reveals every click and mouse movement, shows you where and when a visitor scrolls, and uncovers exactly what keys that visitor presses while on your blog, as well as how long he or she stays there.

ChartBeat is a premium service which starts at just \$10 per month. It can help you identify your best and worst performing content, and where your traffic is coming from.

Clicky is a free and premium service which shows you on-site visitor activities such as downloads and clicks on outbound links, displays your bounce rate, tells you where your traffic is coming from and lists your conversion rates.

Whatever blog analytics software you use, take one day during your 21 day challenge to find out exactly how the individual pages and posts on your blog are performing.

## **10 – Identify Most Popular Posts and Improve Poor Performers**

Yesterday you checked out the analytics of your blog. No doubt there were some positive and negative surprises. Understanding the numbers of your business is extremely important. However, that knowledge is absolutely useless unless you put it to work. That's what you're going to do today.

Look at those blog posts and pages that are performing the best for you. What do they have in common? Do they have catchy titles that draw a surfer in and beg them to read more? Are they long or short? Do they have videos and images? Do most of them cover a similar topic?

Try to uncover what it is about these popular pages that has made them your top performers. Then do the same thing with underperforming pages and posts. Write down the topics of your best performing content. Put that list aside for later, because you will use these to make future posts that cover information your audience evidently loves to read about.

This information is also great for surveying your audience. You can ask your readers and email list members why they preferred some pages, posts and material over others.

One simple way to do this is by using a tool called Survey Monkey, which you will be putting to work tomorrow during your 21 day challenge

## **11 – Run a Survey**

Survey Monkey is a website that allows you to survey and poll your audience. It's easy to integrate into any blog, site or email, and it helps you discover exactly what is important to your market. This is a simple way to generate valuable information that can help you decide on topics for new blog posts and products, and since everyone likes to give their opinion, it drives engagement with your blog visitors and list members.

Poll Daddy, Survey Nuts and Survey Gizmo are three other survey-generating and tracking websites and you can use.

## **12 – Hit Social Media**

Chances are you already have a presence on one or more social media sites. Get active today, posting updates and linking to your blog at different times throughout the day. Social media traffic can significantly impact your blog, so you're going to spend this day of your challenge being sociable!

## 13 – Create an Editorial Calendar

An editorial calendar is a tool that helps you organize and track blog post ideas, plan future product launches, and schedule social media interaction. Whether you use a simple spreadsheet to plan every aspect of running your blog, or you use a WordPress plug-in or web-based app, planning at least 30 days of activities into the future is important to the success of your blog.

Google Docs, Kapost, WordPress Editorial Calendar, SocialCast and ToDoIst are just a few editorial calendar templates you can use to organize your future blogging tasks.



## **14 – Outsource Tasks You Don't Need to Be Doing**

Do you hate writing? Maybe you simply don't have a talent for writing. If that's the case, you should be outsourcing the creation of new blog posts. Fiverr and Freelancer are two websites filled with talented virtual assistants and other freelancers that can handle email inbox management, social media interaction and other tasks which rob your free time, and keep you from spending more time on the important aspects of running your business.

## **15 – Monetize Your Blog by Writing a Product/Service/Book Review**

Today you're going to write a review. Create an in-depth review of a book, product or service that is relevant to your industry or niche, one that you have used yourself. Speak in your own "voice", and mention the good as well as the bad, giving your honest opinion. Include an affiliate link and this simple activity can produce sales and profits indefinitely and on autopilot.



## 16 – Write a "How To" E-Book

Today you are going to write an e-book. This piece of content can be sold on your blog or given away to build your list, or listed on Amazon as a free or paid e-book that improves the awareness of your business and makes money. If you have not written a book before, don't look at this as a daunting task. You can easily write a 2,500 to 5,000 word e-book in a day.

You probably know of several big problems your target audience has. Choose one and think up a really good "How To" title. If you are a blogging coach and you teach others how to launch and run a successful blog, you could perhaps title your e-book "How to Write a Click-Magnet Blog Post That Builds Your List and Makes Money on Autopilot". List-building and money-making are two of the biggest goals every blogger has. That is a catchy title that tells someone exactly what is covered in your e-book, two topics that are near and dear to the hearts of your target audience.

Divide your e-book into the following sections.

- Introduction
- 7 to 10 Chapters
- Conclusion or Wrap-Up
- Recommended Resources

Use your own knowledge, Google, best-selling books and other information sources to come up with 7 to 10 chapters about writing effective blog posts. Write down at least 15 or 20 possible chapter topics, and then whittle those down to the best 7 to 10 candidates. These are your chapter topics. This is the meat of your e-book. If you come up with 10 chapters, and write just 250 words per chapter full of actionable, excellent information, you have 2,500 words of content.

Add a short Introduction and Conclusion. In the recommended resources, include a link to your blog and email opt-in page. Add affiliate products and services that pay you a commission when someone makes a purchase. When you follow this formula for writing a short e-book, you can easily produce a 2,500 to 5,000 word piece of content that does a good job helping spread the word about your blog.

## **17 – Write a Guest Post for Another Blogger in Your Market**

On the second day of this 21-day challenge, you contacted important blog owners in your niche. This is valuable for so many reasons. Now you're going to take those connections you made and offer to write a guest post. As you know, there are so many things you need to do as a blogger. Often times, finding the time to sit down and plan and write a really great blog post is difficult.

If you have this problem, it just makes sense that other bloggers do as well. You'll be seen as a white knight coming in to rescue the damsel in distress when you offer to take on the task of creating some valuable new content for a fellow blogger. Obviously, you offer this service with the stipulation that a link is included with your guest blog post that sends people back to your blog, building awareness of your business.



## **18 – Respond to Comments on Your Blog, Social Media Posts**

If people comment on your blog posts, that's a great thing. You have probably seen countless blogs that had absolutely no comments at all. This means the audience simply did not feel engaged enough to say something about what they just read. If someone does spend their valuable time commenting on your social media updates and blog posts, you have a very warm prospect.

That person is expressing an interest in what you had to say, or in the video or images you posted. So many people that comment on blog posts never expect to get a reply because that has never happened in the past.

When you reach out to commenters that respond to your social media and blogging material, you can develop a very deep connection with just a few words. Make sure to respond positively, never engage someone that has negative things to say, and this simple practice can boost the number of blog visitors you have, while also improving your image as an authority in your field.

## **19 – Install the WordPress Related Posts App**

There's a really good chance, actually an excellent chance, that your blog is hosted on a WordPress platform. WordPress is the go-to platform for the biggest bloggers in the world, it's super simple to use, and the vast number of free and premium blogging templates and themes means you can find one that fits your personality and business.

If you're on WP and you're a blogger, you absolutely must install the WordPress Related Posts application.

This smart piece of software compiles a list of blog posts and other on-site content that is related to the information on a particular page. It lists these posts and pages at the bottom of your blog post. You can set this up to include any particular posts that relate to a post or page. This dramatically lowers your bounce rate and keeps people on your site, giving them more of the information they're looking for.

## 20 – Write a Really Great Blog Post

There used to be an unwritten rule that you should be writing 1 blog post per week. Some people even cranked out 2 or 4 or 5 posts each week. That worked very successfully back in the day, when Google only looked for keywords. Now the algorithm that is Big G is smarter than that. You have to have really great content that goes in-depth, is more than 1,200 or 1,500 words long, and uncovers problem-solving information that people would pay for.

This means that if you only publish 1 high quality blog post each 21 to 30 days you will likely see better performance than if you are pumping out 3 or 4 low-quality, short blog posts each month. This once-every-3-weeks blog post production schedule also gives you plenty of time to uncover what you are going to write about. On day 7 of this challenge you brainstormed great blog post ideas, and now you're going to write an epic post about one of them.



## 21 – Optimize Your Blog Post Keywords for the Search Engines

Way back on day 3 you identified keywords and phrases that are important to your target audience, and that also relate to the topics, products and services that are important to your business. These are the words and phrases you want to be found for. You must ensure to include this information in your blog posts.

Don't go crazy. Google and the other search engines hate "keyword stuffing". You can't simply cram a single keyword into a blog post 100 times and expect to see a rise in the rankings. One way to optimize your blog posts for the search engines is to include a specific keyword phrase a few times, and then surround it in a blog post with other related terms.

Look at your analytics from earlier in the challenge. Take one of your posts that's not performing very well. Add a target keyword that you found in other blog posts which draw a lot of traffic. Put that keyword in the title of your poor performing post, add it a few times in the content, and then include related words and phrases.

Be sure to include 2 or 3 long tail keywords on every page of your site. In other words, instead of sprinkling the phrase "dog training" throughout your content, add phrases like "training your dog to sit", "how to potty-train your dog" and "how to get your puppy to stop biting". Long tail keywords identify phrases and topics people search for, and they help the search engines know exactly what your content is about.

## Wrap-Up

The 21 daily activities just covered really can have a significant impact on your blog. Even though some of them may seem small and may not produce any noticeable results right away, over time all of these practices can have a positive cumulative effect.

How do you eat an elephant? You take one bite at a time. These 21 bite-sized daily blog-boosters make it possible to eat that elephant, which in this case represents whatever it is you are trying to accomplish on your blog.

After your 21 day challenge is up, take a couple of days off from your blog. Play with the kids, have a "do nothing" day, attend a concert or go fishing. Do something that gets you away from your computer and your smart phone. Bloggers tend to stay connected 24/7, and while dedication to your blogging business is admirable, you need to have some downtime so you can appreciate the other things in your life.

Then after a couple of days off, hit your blog and check your analytics. If you practice the 21 proven and profitable blog-building steps discussed above, implementing one each day over 3 weeks, you are virtually guaranteed to see a significant and positive impact.

Here's to your success!