



CONTENT COOKBOOK



Quick-and-Easy Recipes
to Create Fresh, Juicy,
Sizzling Hot Blog Topics
and Social Media Updates



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CONTENT COOKBOOK



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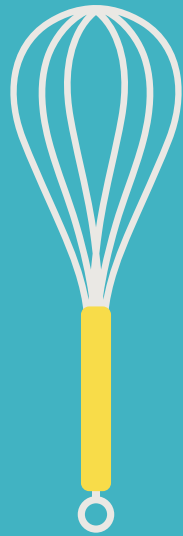
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WELCOME

“Passion is energy.
Feel the power that
comes from focusing
on what excites you.”

–Oprah Winfrey

Hello there!!

“Passion is energy. Feel the power that comes from focusing on what excites you.”

-Oprah Winfrey

I'm delighted to invite you into our content kitchen and show you exactly how we've been creating gorgeously gourmet social media updates and content for small business owners, industry leaders and more, for the last 3 years.



When Ms. Winfrey talks about passion being energy, I nod my head. Vigorously.

Because I'm passionate and hugely excited by creating communities that engage and that engagement, in part, comes from content and updates that resonate with your readers.

I also, know that not everyone is so excited by the prospect of creating social media updates or interacting on Facebook or even, posting on their blog.

I know that you may be struggling with coming up with topics that your audience wants to read about.

I know that you may feel like a fake when on Facebook or Twitter.

I know that your heart may thump like crazy each time you need to publish a blog post.

I know that your passions may lie elsewhere.

However, with this content cookbook I hope to infuse you with the same passion, skills and excitement that I have when creating content for business blogs and social media channels.

You'll feel the power, as Ms. O says, and that'll keep you fired up, excited and inspired to create a community that reflects and resonates with who you are!

Ready? Roll up your sleeves, don your apron and dig right in!!





RECIPE 1

Who You're Serving AKA The Secret Sauce Recipe

RECIPE 1

*Your goal is not to make an image.
It's to make a statement.*

–Tom Asacker

Imagine this, you walk into your favorite café, order a toasted cream cheese bagel and latte and get ready to finish the last chapter of your latest book, when the waitress brings you a doughnut and a café mocha. Whhhaat??

That is how your audience will feel if you serve them blog content and social media updates that they never wanted in the first place.



Knowing who you're serving is muy importante when you're engaging with customers or clients online.

Knowing why you're serving them your awesomeness is even more important.

Knowing who you are is important too.

Knowing all of this is how you'll create your secret sauce.

The sauce that you'll lovingly drizzle over your blog content and social media updates.

Note: If you already know your secret sauce, woo hoo!! Great for you!! I'd still recommend going over this section though just to get you in the groove but, feel free to skip over this section and jump straight ahead to Recipe 2.

Now all of this may seem overwhelming but think of the benefits:

- You'll create content that'll be lapped up eagerly.
- Your content will resonate with your audience and have them knocking your door down for seconds and thirds.
- You'll be the first name that'll come to mind when people are talking about experts in your niche. Woohoo for word-of-mouth publicity!
- You'll be respected by peers and competitors even, because hey, you've figured out the secret sauce and that is something to be super proud of.

The Secret Sauce Questionnaire

This questionnaire is THE most important step in this content cookbook.

It's also, probably one of the recipes that'll take you the longest.

You'll leave it, come back to it, leave it again, hate it, get frustrated with it, but remember, it IS the secret sauce. It is awesome but it ain't easy!

So, give yourself time, do it in small blocks of time.

If you have to, ask for support from me and the rest of the group in the [Content Café on Facebook](#) and trust me, you'll get it nailed down and then, everything else will seem as easy as pie!

Knowing Yourself

1. What are your core, closest to your heart, values?

Core values are what drive you to do what you do, what you feel STRONGLY about, what you absolutely wouldn't give up {even if the most decadent dessert were placed in front of you!}

Tick the 10 core values that you resonate the most with:

(Fill in blanks for those that are not included)

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Love | <input type="checkbox"/> Truth | <input type="checkbox"/> Wealth |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kindness | <input type="checkbox"/> Authenticity | <input type="checkbox"/> Health |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Peace | <input type="checkbox"/> Friendship | <input type="checkbox"/> Wholeness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Freedom | <input type="checkbox"/> Honesty | <input type="checkbox"/> Centered |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patience | <input type="checkbox"/> Confidence | <input type="checkbox"/> Acceptance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Service | <input type="checkbox"/> Respect | <input type="checkbox"/> Honor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Luxury | <input type="checkbox"/> Wellness | <input type="checkbox"/> Focus |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exclusivity | <input type="checkbox"/> Balance | <input type="checkbox"/> Grace |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Relationship | <input type="checkbox"/> Harmony | <input type="checkbox"/> Excellence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Connection | <input type="checkbox"/> Creativity | <input type="checkbox"/> Openness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trust | <input type="checkbox"/> Abundance | <input type="checkbox"/> Faith |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Integrity | <input type="checkbox"/> Self-Care | <input type="checkbox"/> Humility |

Now choose the 5 that you're absolutely passionate about.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

These are the values that reflect who you are and will shine through your brand and your communication whether on the blog or on social media.

These are the values that will help you set yourself apart from everyone else and be truly you-nique.

These are the values that will add that dash of sublimity to your secret sauce.

2. Who are you when you write?

Now that you know your core values, it is time to dig a little deeper and think about who are you?

Not on an "I'm an entrepreneur/parent/man/woman", level but on a deeper, more meaningful level.

Finding your voice and letting your personality shine through will not only establish your credibility with your customers and contemporaries but also give you an easy sense of flow when creating content.

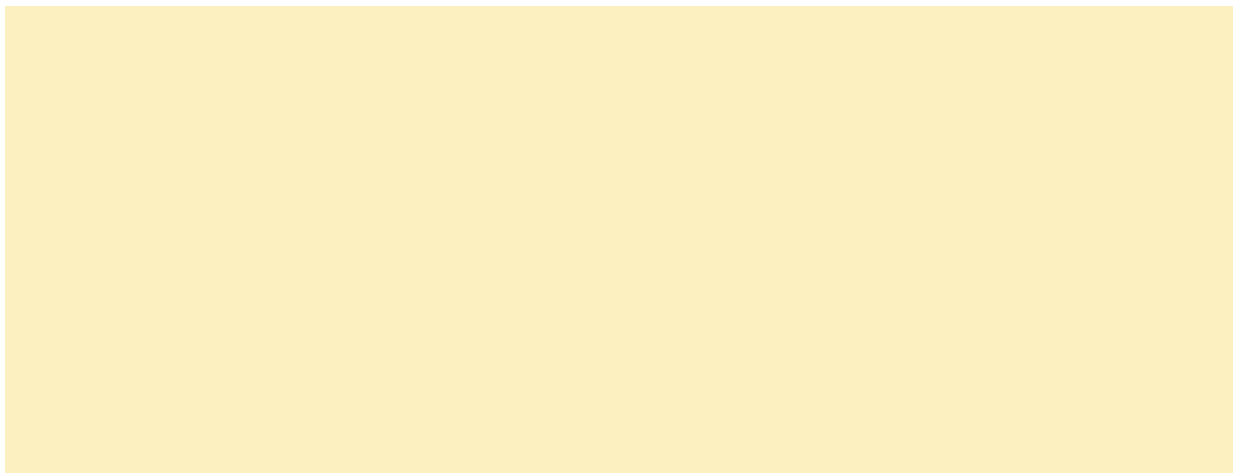
Think about it:

Are you a cloth nappy boutique owner or a mom who feels passionately about creating a better and safer world for kids, while saving the planet too?

Are you a business coach or a spunky, sassy, tough love ideamaker who guides entrepreneurs so that they can make their ideas happen?

Are you a designer or an artist who brings dreams and visions to colourful, glorious life?

In simpler words, describe how you feel about what you do? What are the strongest emotions that come to the fore when you're talking about your business to say, a friend or a family member?



Knowing Your Business

What is the purpose of your business? How does it make life simpler, easier, better for customers? What is your long-term vision?

What is your product or service? List all your offerings here. If it's information-only, say a blog, list the kind or categories of information

How do your products and services tie in with your values? The values we'd identified in Part 1 of this questionnaire.

How do your products or services help your audience? What will be the top 5 benefits they'll get from using them? Feel free to list more but aim for a minimum of 5.

Benefits can be:

Freeing up time, increasing energy, saving money, earning more, bringing joy, restoring balance, losing weight, eating healthy, feeling calmer

What sets you apart from your competition?

Think out-of-the-box and indulge yourself here: your background, your story, your expertise, your product quality, your attention to detail, your commitment to customer service, your return and/or shipping policies.

Put simply: What's your sizzle factor?

Sizzle factors can include: free shipping always, no questions asked return policy, 24/7 customer service, your unique story, handmade products, customized packages, handwritten instructions or thank you notes.

Knowing Your “It’s-a-Delight-to-Serve” Customer

Great!! You’ve made it to almost the end!! Now that you know what your business is all about and what your product’s sizzle secrets are, it’s time to discover your “it’s a delight to serve” customer or client!



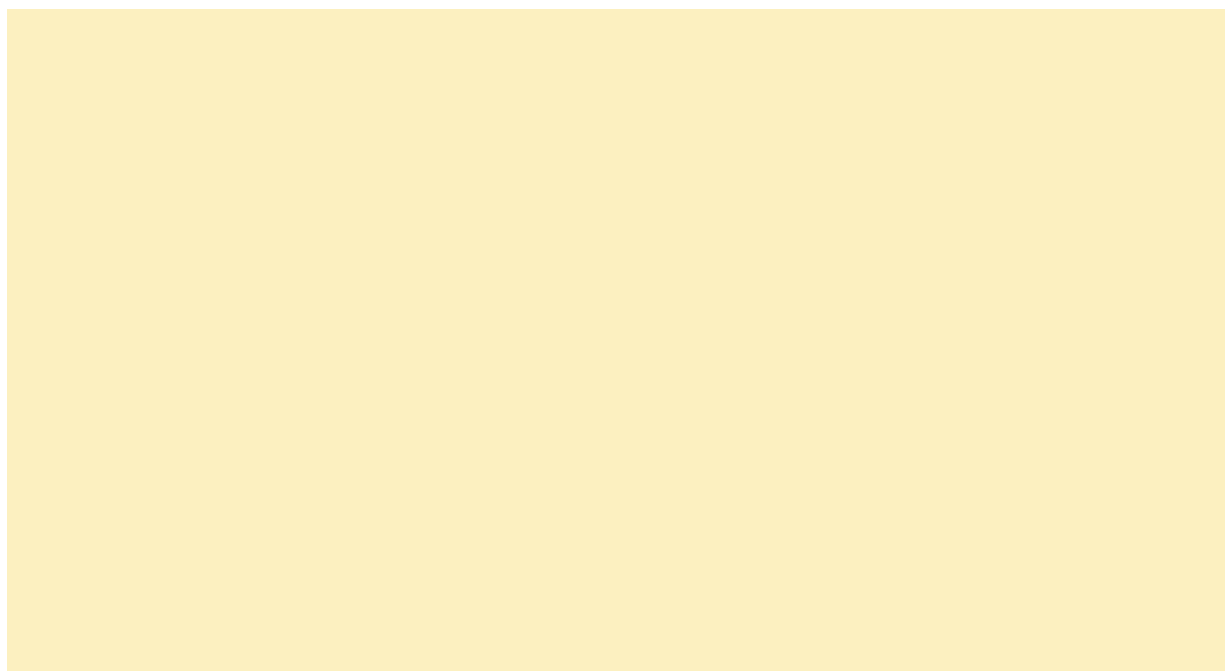
Knowing this key person will help you create content that’ll really resonate with them, talk to them and address their pain points. We want that, don’t we? So, let’s dig in!

We want to be really, really specific here and talk about who this person is.

Think about what age they are, how do they look, what do they love watching/reading/eating, what are their pet hates, what do they like doing when they’re not working, where do they work.

Yes, let your inner writer loose and create a “real” person.

Give them a name, a designation, an address, a family, a life. Draw a picture of them, visually and with words!



Cook It Now:

Print out the Secret Sauce questionnaire or fill it in right here and spend some time on it. It's okay if you don't get it done in one go.

It's okay to see it evolve.

It's okay to make changes.

But it's NOT okay to not take action.

Action is what will make your secret sauce happen.

Cook it now!!



RECIPE 2

Cooking Up a Storm with a Content Calendar

RECIPE 2

“Every piece of your content should be excellent, enough that customers are compelled to share it.”

- Joe Pulizzi

Yes, every single piece of your content strategy should be excellent for it to be share-worthy and memorable.

This recipe is going to teach you how to create a content calendar and use it to be a more productive and impactful blogger for your business.



Using a content calendar can help you save both time and energy when it comes to content marketing for your business.

A content calendar is simply a “map” or calendar of topics that you’ll be sharing across social networks.

I’ve included the calendar template I use for my clients to create the weekly and monthly calendars. Feel free to use it for yourself!

When creating your calendar, remember, it is NOT written in stone.

You can and you often, will change things as you go along but having a calendar of topics and posts is handy when you're wondering, "Ahh! What should I post now?"

If you're a more spur-of-the-moment sorta person, a calendar is still a great tool to have.

Instead of the exact posts, just use it to map out what 'type' of posts will you be sharing through the month. Use it as an idea dump so that you can quickly scan it and always know what to blog about.

Using a calendar will help you:

- Have a ready-to-use content bank for social media updates.
- Tie in your social media efforts with your overall marketing goals.
- Showcase your products and services without feeling sales-y because you'll be mixing them up with a wide variety of other content.
- Establish yourself as an expert by curating content that your "it's a delight to serve" customers will enjoy and find useful.
- Identify places you should be hanging out at to connect with your "it's a delight to serve" customer. You can do this via guest posts or commenting on blogs.
- Create a comprehensive content marketing strategy including, the free content you wish to giveaway, any specials that you want to run as well as keywords that you wish to focus on for optimizing your content for search engines.

Here is a sample of a filled-in blog content calendar to help you see how it works and looks like:

Month: *June*

Theme of the Month: *Healthy Eating*

	WEEK 1	WEEK 1	WEEK 1	WEEK 1
DATE/DAY	01-Jun	07-June	14-Jun	21-Jun
BLOG TOPIC	3 Easy Ways Working Women Can Eat Healthy at Work	Struggling with Snacks? Snack Ideas for Kids and Grown Ups!	Baby Steps to Eating Healthy When on a Road Trip	How to Eat Healthy on a Shoestring Budget
BLOG SERIES	Kick Off Healthy Eating Blog Series			
FREEBIES FOR BLOG	Launch Cheat Sheet for Health Boosting Smoothies-Freebie Optin			
GUEST POST PUBLISHING	Elephant Journal	Mind Body Green	Tiny Buddha	101 Cookbooks
GUEST BLOGS TO PITCH	Kitchen Stewards	Kris Carr	Om Gal	Nom Nom Paleo
PRODUCT/SERVICES SPECIALS	Coaching Calls		eBook Special	
SEO TERMS	eat healthy	healthy snack ideas	eating healthy	eat healthy

Cook it Now:

Download the Content Calendar template from the Bonuses section. Identify and create your posting schedule - once a week, thrice a week, once every two weeks or once a month.

Create this keeping in mind how much time you have available as well as the kind of content you create. For example, if the type of articles you intend to share are intensive, research-based and long form content, you may want to do just 2 posts {or even, 1 post a month}.

- Write down the dates in the date/day column.
- Identify blogs that you can guest post on and write down their names in the 'Guest Blogs to Pitch' column.
- Are there any product or service specials you want to highlight in your content that month? Write that down in the 'Products/Service Specials' column.
- What keywords do you wish to rank for? Note those down in the 'SEO terms to focus on' column. Check out the SEO Bonus Recipe to learn how to optimize your article.
- For the actual post topics and titles, go through Recipe 3:Content with Curry for Your Blog to add the finishing touches to your calendar.



RECIPE 3

Content with Curry for Your Blog

RECIPE 3

“If there is any one secret to success, it lies in the ability to get the other person’s point of view and see things from his angle, as well as your own.”

- Henry Ford

Like Mr. Ford says, the secret to success is in getting the other person’s point of view as well as your own. That, dear friend, is also, key to creating successful content.

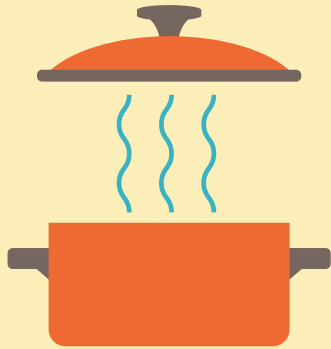


92% of companies who blog multiple times per day have acquired a customer from their blog.

{source: Hubspot}

Mm... things are getting yummier now!! Let’s put on our aprons, roll up our sleeves, and create some sassy, saucy and spicy content with curry for our blog and get those customers lining up!!

Let's get started, then, shall we?



This recipe will give you:

- The steps to create delicious content, every single time.
- Ready-to-use topics to serve up, no matter what your niche.
- How to beat blogger's block and always stay inspired!

The Never-Fail Recipe for Delicious Content

Have you ever read a blog post and come away feeling inspired, encouraged and absolutely raring to go?

That's because that post had every ingredient down right, it was mixed well and served perfectly.

This perfecting of the recipe is what you'll learn to do here.

Like a great casserole recipe that's been tweaked and tested by different people with different tastes and yet, the basics stay the same, this content recipe can also be tweaked to suit your business niche and industry but the basics stay the same.

A STRONG HEADLINE

According to Copyblogger {my go-to site, by the way, for content how-tos and inspiration!}:

80% of people will read your headlines.

But only 20% of those people will read the rest of your content!

So, yes, your headline NEEDS to be really, really strong.

Resources to help you create a strong headline:

- [How to Write Magnetic Headlines](#) by Copyblogger
- [How to Double Your Traffic by Writing Irresistible Headlines](#) by Write to Done
- [5 Easy Tricks to Help You Write Catchy Headlines](#) by Goins, Writer

A Body of Content That's An A-Star

Next, once you've created that perfect headline, you need to ensure that your content is absolutely awesome.

An all-star recipe.

Here's a quick rundown of the ingredients you need to make sure that your content blows the socks off your customers:

- **Original** - Being inspired is one thing and is COOL. Ripping off someone else's content is a very different and so NOT cool. Let your "you-niqueness" shine through.
- **Engaging** - Draw your readers in with a story, a question, a thought. Talk to them, not 'at' them.
- **Relevant** - Is the information you're sharing something your "it's a delight to serve" customer be interested in and benefit from?
- **Actionable** - What will be the ONE thing that you reader will be able to do after reading your content? What key action do you want them to take once they're done. Include that.
- **Responsible** - Have you done your research? Backed up your views with information from other sources? If you're sharing advice, have you included references? Don't just shoot off content. If you want to be thought of as an expert, behave like one. Simple.

Besides that, you can season your content to be:

- **Encouraging** - Be gentle. Remind people that life isn't a race. Give encouragement in healthy doses. Sprinkle your support for your community throughout your content.
- **Uplifting** - Inspire. Infuse with passion. Your writing doesn't have to be fancy, it just has to be powerful. A word that drives you. A quote that lifts you up. A mentor you look up to. Share it.
- **Thought provoking** - Ask questions. Invite readers to look within and around them. Discuss. Dissect. Detail.
- **Controversial** - Don't agree with what the world says? Share your point of view. With respect.
- **Funny** - Make someone smile. Share a joke. An anecdote. Something funny your kids said or did.
- **Emotional** - Cry your tears of joy or sadness out in your content.
- **Raw** - Life can be tough. Being raw and open helps people to relate to you and think of you as one of them. If you're going through a tough time, don't hide it. Let it shine.
- **Real-life** - Share snippets from your day and life. Showcase what you do and how you use what you sell.

Sites I Recommend Learning From:

- [Copyblogger](#)
- [Alexandra Franzen](#)
- [Goins, Writer](#)
- [Boost Blog Traffic](#)

FABULOUS FORMATTING



All your content, either on the blog or on social media, must be formatted perfectly.

Some ways to make sure the formatting is ideal for reading online include:

- Shorter, tighter paragraphs. Paragraphs that are 2-3 sentences long are perfect.
- Bullet points.
- Numbered lists
- Quotes or images in the middle of long, chunks of text.

IMAGES THAT INVITE YOUR CUSTOMER IN

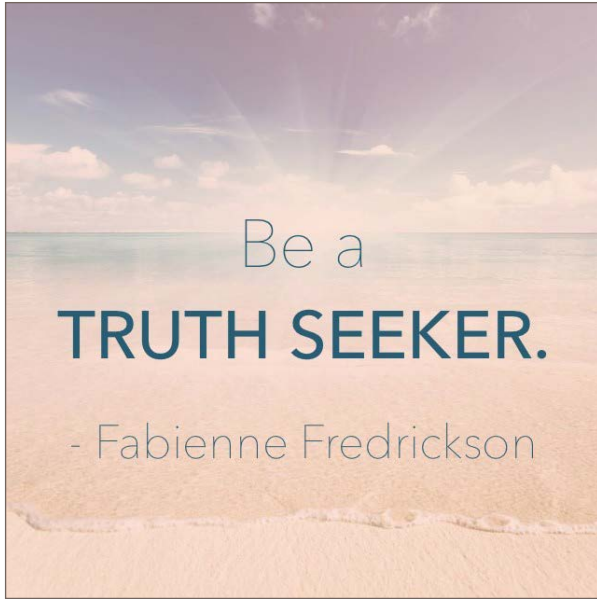
In a day where content is king, an image is the queen. Trust me.

Use images that are visually appealing, sized appropriately and reflect your business or blog branding.

Some examples of excellent, visual content in blog and on social networks:



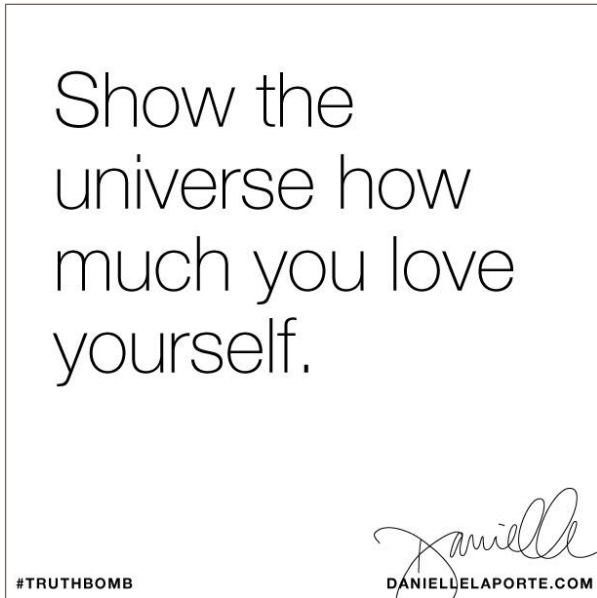
Female Entrepreneur Association



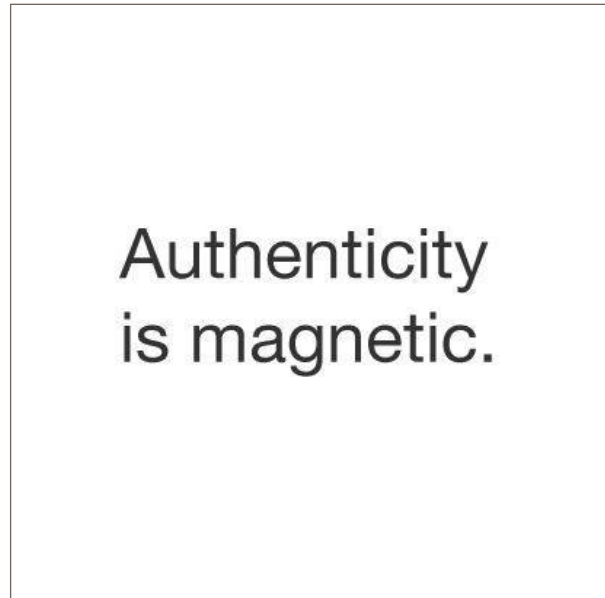
Fabienne Fredrickson



Build a Little Biz



Danielle La Porte



Marie Forleo

Check out the **Bonus Recipe on Sizing Images** appropriately to know what is the perfect size for every social media network.

30 Ways to Always Have Content for Your Business Blog



Writing can be easy for some and not-so-easy for some. So, how do you ensure that you make blogging for your business a less stressful and more exciting experience?

By getting yourself a serving of inspiration and motivation juice!

This is what this section is all about – 30 ways to always have some deliciously delightful content for your business blog. Yes, always.

Before you start reading the 30 ways, here's what you need:

- A notebook
- A pen
- 30-45 minutes for brainstorming topics for every 'way'. I recommend choosing one way to create content for each week till you find the best fit for YOU.

Okay, here we go with 30 ways to always have business blog topics to write about:

1. Read blogs in your niche. Great to help you keep tabs on industry trends, identify gaps and then, fill those with your content!

2. Read your competitions' blogs to know what your customers are asking and to stay abreast of industry trends and news. NOT to swipe their ideas!!

3. Read blogs not in your niche. Great for thinking out of the box.

4. Read a business book and talk about your take-aways from it.

5. Read the business news section and talk about a key item from it.

6. Share photos of places, products and people that you like, admire or want. This is a simple way to add more "you" to your content.

7. Share behind-the-scenes look at your business.

8. Share the vision and/or mission statement of your business.

9. *Share the story behind your business.*
10. *Share the people behind your business.*
11. *Share personal but not-too-personal stuff.*
12. *Share customer questions and queries, with their permission of course.*
13. *Share customer testimonials.*
14. *Share upcoming events, specials and promotions.*
15. *Share tips on using your products or services.*
16. *Share tools your business uses.*
17. *Share tools your business does not use and why.*
18. *Do a podcast.*
19. *Do a video interview with another entrepreneur or person of interest in your niche.*
20. *Do a webinar.*
21. *Write about doing a podcast, interview, webinar.*

22. *Write about fun things – food, travel, hobbies.*
23. *Write about running a business.*
24. *Write about making a business work.*
25. *Write about the challenges of running a business.*
26. *Write about the joys of running a business.*
27. *Write about using social media for your business.*
28. *Write about not using certain social media for your business.*
29. *Write about people who influence your business online and offline.*
- 30. Write. Just write.**

Each of these 30 ways can easily be used to churn out at least three, if not more, topics for a business blog. In fact, the last one will give you ALL the content you need!

But seriously, let's see how you can actually use this list to come with actual business blog topics for your posts.

For instance, let's take Number 15: Sharing tips on using your products or services. Say, you're in the cloth diapering industry and have a boutique that stocks different brands of cloth diapers.

If you're using Number 15, here are some of the possible topics you can create:

- How to use cloth diapers
- How to use cloth swim diapers
- How to care for your cloth diapers
- How to use all-in-one cloth diapers
- How to use flats or prefolds?

See?

Let's take another example. Say, you're in the business of selling handmade jewelry for women. Here's what you could write about using the same #15 premise:

- How to choose the right jewelry for your face cut
- How to wear your accessories right
- Jewelry buying tips for the first-time buyer
- How to care for your silver (or whatever material you use) jewelry

I'm sure you can see where I'm going with this.

What to Do When Blogger's Block Builds Up

Despite your best intentions to share content, there can {and will} be times when you suffer from a bad case of “I don’t know what to write about” or even if you have an editorial calendar with topics mapped out, the words don’t come.

Or..You know what you want to say but when you type out those words, they come out all wrong.

You just can’t think of what to write about.

You haven’t blogged in weeks and just don’t feel the joy.



First, know this:

You aren't alone.

You aren't going crazy.

You haven't lost your creativity. You've just misplaced it or blocked it.

You're just suffering from blogger's block and the best part is there IS a cure.

In fact, we have 15 cures to beat blogging blocks and write a killer blog post, right now:

15 WAYS TO CRUSH BLOGGER'S BLOCK FOR GOOD

Pick a method or a combination of them and get ready to crush that block right now and free up your creativity.

1. Understand Your Writing System

Only you know what your writing system and flow is like and you need to respect that.

For instance, for me, writing is super easy when I do it early in the morning with zero distractions and a rested mind. Come afternoon, I can sit and stare at my laptop screen for hours and not an idea will come. So, I respect my process and make sure that the early morning hours are sacred and reserved exclusively for writing.

Your writing system can be writing in bits and pieces as and when the urge strikes you, so go with that. Do it.

It can be writing in batches and chunking articles together. Do that.

2. Start with a Template

Sometimes when you can't think of what to write about, it is a good idea to start with a template.

For instance, you can have a “How to {drop any idea}” template that can look like this

- Title
- Introduction or Reason
- Step 1

- Step 2
- Step 3
- Result and Benefit
- Call to Action

With a template all you need to then do is just fill in the blanks and then, add more meat to it as you let it sit awhile. Having a template gives you a structure of sorts to begin with and once the creative juice starts flowing, you'll be on a roll.

3. Use a Timer

I'm a BIG timer gal and love using timers for everything, from baking to spending time on Pinterest. Anyway, back to the point, set a timer for 15 minutes and just write.

Write whatever comes into your head. Don't bother about structure, grammar, spellings or even the idea of the post. Just get into the zone and write.

4. Write a Draft

Sometimes, writing a draft is much easier than writing a full post. A draft can be rough, ugly, warts and all. You aren't "scared" about showing it to the outside world. Write a post, rough edges and all. Walk away and then, come back to it later to edit, refine, revise and review. For now, just think you're writing a draft.

5. Nurture Your Creativity

As bloggers and business owners, we're guilty {yes, we all are!} of holing ourselves up in our own little worlds and then, we whine about not having any ideas.

Get out there! Now! Leave the laptop, tablet and smartphone at home.

Observe people the old-fashioned way. Look at them. No, don't stare or scare them away!! That may land you in trouble.



Creative folks require creative strokes and you aren't going to make that happen by sitting at home and staring at the screen.

6. Read to Write Better

That's right. Read to write better. Your mind can be a fertile ground of ideas if you water it right.

Books, blogs, magazines are all great sources of inspiration and when you're stuck, just don't force yourself.

Instead, pick a book and throw yourself into it. You'll be amazed at the ideas that come to you once you're done reading.

7. Have an Organized System

I have an organized system for my blogging needs and business. I invest time in creating an editorial calendar, a blogging checklist and scheduling time for blogging.

An organized system may not work for everyone but if you're the sort who thrives on structure, you'll love knowing what you have to write about and then, go from there.

Download your editorial calendar template from the Kitchen Tools section and schedule time in your calendar to sit down at the start of every month and organize a list of topics, like we'd learnt in Recipe 2.

“The way to get started is to quit talking and begin doing.”

–Walt Disney Company

8. Schedule Blogging Time

Part of my system for blogging includes scheduling time for it. Like I said, I devote the entire early morning slot of my workday to blogging.

How does scheduling time beat a blogger block?

By getting you in the habit to sit down at the same time every day and write.

It may work. It may not.

But you'll never know until you try it. So, give it a shot.

9. Capture Your Ideas

You know when the best idea hits you? When you don't have a laptop with you. That is why it is so important to have some sort of idea capturing system in place.

For me, it is a notebook and pen with me, the Notes application in my iPhone and of course, Evernote. It may seem a lot but it works for me.

Every time an idea crops up, I know I have some place to jot it in and come back to later.

10. Interact with Other Bloggers

The wonderful thing about blogging is the community and if you aren't making use of it, you're losing out... big time.

The next time you can't think of what to write about, mosey over to one of your favorite blogs, read a post or two, and comment.

Join a group or forum if you haven't already. Ask what other bloggers are struggling with? Share, vent, celebrate. Interact and you'll free up a lot of that blocked creative source...magically.

11. Ask Your Readers

Struggling to find something to write about?

Ask the people who matter the most.

Your readers.

At the end of every blog post, along with the call-to-action, ask any of these questions:

- What is your biggest struggle with {insert your expertise area}?
- I'm planning a new series around {expertise area} and would love to know what will YOU want to learn?
- How can I help make {expertise area} GOOD for you?
- Invite readers to email you or share with you in the comments. And when they do, please acknowledge and respond.

12. Ask Yourself

Maybe your blog is so new that there aren't too many readers.

Or maybe your readers, themselves, don't know what they want.

So, how about YOU ask yourself? You run a business. You know what your ideal customer struggles with. You feel their pain.

Now address it. Ask yourself what would your customer want to know the most about. And then, go from there.

13. Solve a Problem

When you're stuck with "What should I write about?", how about you just solve a problem?

Say, you're in the jewelry business and you're stuck thinking what should I write about.

Think about a few problems that your customers have and then, solve those.

A few ideas, include:

- What to look out for when buying a diamond ring for the first time?
- How to clean jewelry?
- What to keep in mind when buying jewelry online?

*Solving a problem in an area that you're specialized in is way easier than writing a blog post. Right? **smiling***

14. Question a Convention

How about you bust blogger's block by questioning a convention. Turning something over on its head.

If everyone says, "Go for it", how about you say, "Don't".

But remember, you will need reasons to flip things over. So, if you have a few good reasons, go ahead, crush that blogging block and question a convention.

15. Get Help



Finally, let's face it. As business owners, managing everything on your own, sometimes your blogger's block is not really a creativity block.

It is a time management block. You may not have the time for it. You really and truly may not want to write the posts.

Writing may take you tons of time that you could easily spend doing other business tasks, like product creation or marketing, that would give you greater joy. When that is the case, it is time to [call in the troops and get help](#).

Ready to Use Meals Topics for Your Blog {No Matter What Your Niche}

You know how sometimes, you've planned your meals and even, gotten everything you need from the grocery store but you still want to order in takeout from that greasy diner down the road? Yep, happens here very often.

It also happens with our blogging routine. We have everything planned and we have the tools to inspire and motivate but we want to switch things up or just do something different.

This section is that.

Your go-to diner. Your takeout option. The super-easy-fix recipe.

30 ready-to-eat write blog topics that you can just swipe and use, to add some newness to your usual blogging style, to infuse more 'You'-ness in your blog, to experiment or simply, for a fun change!

- 1. The movie that changed my life*
- 2. The book I just couldn't put down*
- 3. The toughest life challenge I've ever faced*
- 4. 5 people I look up to and how they've changed my life*
- 5. 10 Things I LOVE about _____*



6. *Funniest Facebook/Twitter/blog updates I've read this week*

7. *How to make _____, my way*

8. *The best compliment I received and why it changed my life*

9. *The BEST quotes for _____*

10. *My guide to starting a _____ business*

11. *The top 5 websites/blogs/magazines every business owner/mom/writer must read*

12. *A letter to my 13-year old self*

13. *A letter to my 75-year old self*

14. *How I find time to _____*

15. *The Book I want to write*

16. *How _____ use social media*

17. *29 ways to infuse peace into your day*



18. *What I no longer believe in*

19. *How my business is changing the way I live*

20. *If I weren't a _____, I would be a _____*

21. *5 truths about running a business, I wish I'd known when starting out*

22. *21 things I want to tell my best friend/partner/spouse/child*

23. *The tools I use to run my business*

24. *The tools I use to manage my home*

25. *Apps I can't live without {and neither should you!}*

26. *A step-by-step, fully illustrated guide to make*

27. *FAQS about* _____

28. *How to reach your goal of*
_____ *{and how I reached mine!}*

29. *26 ways to add more fun to your day*

30. *The gut-wrenching mistakes I've made as a _____ and my lessons from each one.*

Serving Up Seconds

Sometimes you may not have the time to write a full blog post or you may want a few of your posts to get some more eyeballs.

When that happens, it's time to serve up "seconds" or third servings with your existing blog content:

I have 5 delectable ways YOU can repurpose personal or business blog content and serve it up for increased traffic and more social media engagement. Yes, seconds can be sizzling hot too!!

Dig in!

1. Turn the most read or popular posts into an eBook. For instance, I took some of my most popular organizing and decluttering posts, added some more content to them and turned it into [an awesome free eBook for my readers on The Mom Writes](#).

2. Turn blog posts into photo quotes. You can use any of the amazing [free photo editing tools](#) available to help you do that in a jiffy.

3. Create an infographic from a blog post. Here's what I did for our hugely popular [Facebook party guide blog post](#). You can do the same and instead, publish the infographic exclusively.

4. Turn related blog posts into an eCourse delivered via email. All you'll need for this is an email subscription service that allows autoresponders, like Mailchimp or Aweber.

5. Take a blog post and turn it into a podcast! Yep, [Pod-castomatic](#) is a cool tool that converts blog into a podcast instantly. It isn't fancy but it is free and super-easy.

Cook It Now:

Identify 5 topics that you will blog about this month, 1 per week. Choose from any of the many that are given in this recipe or create your own, but choose and then, schedule them into your planner or calendar to write and post.



RECIPE 4

Rustling Up Tasty Tweatables and Snackable Facebook Updates

RECIPE 4

“Make it simple. Make it memorable. Make it inviting to look at. Make it fun to read.”

- Leo Burnett

Pretty simple, right? Leo knew what he was talking about and what he says is true for your updates on social media as well.



However, talking about your business or what you do on social media can be quite challenging for many business owners.

You don't want to feel pushy.

You don't want to come across as sales-y.

You don't want to offend people by bombarding them with products and service offers.

You may not even have the time to think about what to share.

You feel that your social media “voice” is stilted, contrived and artificial. Totally not you.

You feel as if you're in a party and no one's talking to you.

Yes, I've heard all of these and more in my coaching sessions with clients and in conversations with mastermind buddies.

That is why it is SO important to nail the recipe for your secret sauce, and that's why we'd cooked it right at the start.

This step-by-step recipe is EXACTLY what I do when I create social media updates for clients, like Leonie Dawson, Tsh Oxenreider, Andreea Ayers, Anne Samoilov and many, many more!!

So, here's how to create tweets, Facebook updates and posts that are steaming hot and SO in sync with who you are! THAT is the purpose of this recipe. Create updates that reflect who you are and what you're all about while helping you realize your business goals and dreams.

The Step-by Step Recipe to Create Fresh and Juicy Social Media Updates

1. Every Saturday or Sunday, sit down with your social media calendar template {found in the Kitchen Tools section}, power up your website and a few other websites that you or your "it's a delight to serve" customer would love reading.

Also, get any books or magazines you're currently reading and loving. And finally, keep your camera or smartphone handy.

2. Fill out your calendar with the dates and days of the week.

3. Next fill out the types of updates for every day.

Types of updates can include:

- **Photo updates:** these can be “caption this” photos where you share a photo and ask your community to give it a funny caption or a quote on a photo, like the ones I shared in Recipe 3. You can also turn testimonials into photos, like this one



**More time+energy!
Over 300 fans in 2
months!!**

Perna has taken a crucial piece of my business off my plate and given me the time and energy to step away from the computer more and do some of the more meaningful work in my business: teaching. Not to mention, her updates and social media expertise have helped me interact more with my people and gain over 300 Facebook fans in two months.

 **Beryl Ayn Young**

You can share product photos shoots, behind-the-scene photos of you working on a project, day-in-the-life photos with your family or your pets or just your neighborhood. The list is endless!!

- **Text only updates:** questions, fill-in-the-blanks, statements, quotes.
- **Blog post updates:** sharing links to current and past blog content. You can also take a full post and share it like, a long update. Those do really well and help your community engage better with your content.

Here's how we do it for Leonie Dawson's page.



Leonie Dawson
Posted by Perna Malik [?] · Yesterday at 6:11am · 🌐

Want to work with affirmations, lovelies? Here are some of my tips!

I think the best way to work with affirmations is to use the *language* and *words* that fit most powerfully to you.

I don't think we should all use the same affirmations with the same words. We all need to learn our lessons and bloom *our way* in our own personal dialect, whether that's English, Dutch or Espanol *and* whether that's Leonie-speak, Irene-speak or Another-Goddesses-Inner-Speak.

For instance, I have a Louise Hay affirmation calendar on my desk that I read everyday. And some days she uses words that *I* don't personally use, have affinity to or understand in the same way. The words just don't *fit* for me. There's no point in me saying over and over again words that don't make sense to me, or ring true for me – so I either transfer the meaning into something that makes sense to me, and that I can resonate with, or go back to another affirmation that does work really well for me.

My little personal rule of thumb – if you can't remember the affirmation off the top of your head, it probably doesn't have personal and deep resonance.

I also advocate only using affirmations when you have at least a smidgen of a belief that the affirmation could possibly true.

There's no use saying an affirmation over and over again when everytime you hear it, you flinch a little, and a big part of you says "THAT'S NOT TRUE!"

- **Other People's Content:** sharing links to content you've read and enjoyed or something you're promoting for a colleague or peer.

- **Engagement updates:** updates designed to get to know your audience better, like finding out how many kids they have or where do they like to spend time online, what do they enjoy shopping for and so on.
- **Product & service offerings:** product/service features, FAQs, testimonials, specials, links to your opt-in offering
- **Special events:** giveaway, contest, a party!



Stick to 3-5 or a maximum of 7 updates in a day to keep it easy and non-overwhelming for you. If you're still looking for ideas, I've covered this in greater detail in the next section where I share 12 awesome content ideas for your social sharing!

4. When you're done filling out the types of updates, simply write down what you'd like each one to say.

Here's a sample filled out social media calendar for a fictional business:

<i>Monday 1/6/2014</i>			
10:45 PM	Had a an exhausting weekend? What are some of your best "make-Monday-work" tips? #productivity	Question	Twitter
12:30 AM	"Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow. The important thing is not to stop questioning." —Albert Einstein	Photo Quote	Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram
5:45 AM	Share with us, by completing this sentence with one word, "The ONE word that inspires me is ___"	Fill in the Blanks	Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest (after converting in a photo)
9:00 AM	Oh, have you seen how gorgeous these tees look? They've just arrived and I can't wait to snag a few for myself! Fit perfectly and such pretty colours!! +Photo+link to product page	Product Quote	Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram

How to Find Social Media Content Ideas: 12 Ideas from Our Pantry

1. Choose quotes that resonate with your core values.

Head over to goodreads.com, brainyquotes.com or your favorite author or blogger's websites and pull quotes from there. Use the search function to make it quicker and easier. Copy these down into a Word file or a notebook {if you're classic, like that!} and simply turn batches of them into photos every week.

2. Dig through your blog content and pull out “quotable quotes” by YOU, yes, YOU!! You know where to go for these, right?!

Open up a blog post from the archives, look for a phrase or a word that really resonates with you. Copy the text and turn it into a photo quote using Quozio, Picmonkey or Canva.

For example, if you ran a 6-post series on getting organized early in the year or even, last year, open up that series. Take the key takeaway from it and turn all 6 into gorgeous photo tips that you can NOW share all over on visual social networks, like Pinterest and Instagram! Fun!!

Remember to add the link to your post or sales page in the photo and in the comment section!

3. Review your emails from your customers and see what questions did they have about your product or services. Answer those in a blog post that you can share on social media OR answer them as an FAQ-style post directly on Facebook or Twitter.

Head to your email inbox and pull those emails, and turn them into social media updates, both photos and text.

4. Toot your own horn, a little! Share appreciation, praise, awards and recognition from clients and industry bodies.

Every month, review your highlights. Got published in a major blog? Interviewed by someone? Recognized for your good work? Highlight it and share it!!



5. Skim through magazines and books that your It's a Delight to Serve customer would enjoy and share thought provoking articles from them. Take a photo of an article that you liked, share it. Share a quote from a book that resonated with you!!

6. Take people behind-the-scenes and share snapshots of your workplace or a work-in-progress project. Ask for their inputs on color, naming or just what they think about it.

7. Read blogs or websites that are key to your industry and share interesting posts from them. This is also known as content curation and is a great way to position your expert and “in-the-know” status.

8. Read blogs that resonate with your core values or are just plain fun to read, and share interesting posts from them.

9. Ask thought provoking questions, engage in debate, invite people to share their views on current trends or a newsworthy topic.

10. Invite guests to “talk” with and engage your audience.

11. Share your business’s purpose, core values and mission in a fun and interesting way. Think, video, photo collage, a montage!

12. Ask your audience for their favorites. Blogs, brands, products, books, music, places to travel.. the list is endless. It’s a great way to get to know your audience MUCH better!!

So, you see, the basic recipe is to keep it high on engagement and really simple:

1. Keep it conversational. Like you and I were sitting across the table and actually “talking”. Remember, you have to “be social” rather than just “do social”!

2. Include a call-to-discussion in posts. Invite people into the conversation. Whether it’s asking for their opinions, ideas, views or experiences? Ask!

3. Show that you know, understand and respect them. It shines through.

4. And as Leo says, make it fun to read and make it inviting to look at.

Need a dose of non-caffeinated inspiration for fun to read updates?

In the next section I also have some ready-to-use ideas for posts of each type. Feel free to swipe and serve them up!

[Printable/Fillable] Ready-to-Eat Use Updates:

Fill these out right here and then, print them out or simply copy and paste right into your Facebook page, Twitter profile or Google+ account and enjoy the engagement and the time that this frees up for you.

Don't forget to include links to your site, the blog post in question or product pages where needed.

And if you're really short on time and want MORE of these printable and fillable updates that are ready-to-use, don't forget to check out [The Social Spread: A Feast of {Over 600} Ready-to-Use Social Media Updates for the Time-Starved Entrepreneur](#) for over 600+ of these!

“TOOTING YOUR OWN HORN” UPDATES

1. Super-thrilled to share that yours truly is featured on _____

2. Oh gosh! It's such an HONOR to be included in this amazing lineup of business owners at _____ for _____

3. ****DRUMROLL**** Delighted to share that _____ has been awarded _____ for _____

4. **** Roll out the red carpet!!**** Honored and humbled to share that one of my articles has been published on _____. Head over to share what YOU think of _____

5. **Woohoo!!** Have you checked out _____? Guess who's been featured in it? Hint: It's the writer of this update!

“SHARING OTHER PEOPLE’S CONTENT” UPDATES

1. Have you read this amazing article by _____? Do you agree with “_____”

2. I came across this lovely post on _____. The quote “_____” really resonated with me! What do YOU think?

3. Here's an interesting read on _____about _____. Do you struggle with this too?

4. **LOVING** this post on _____! Check it out and let me know what's YOUR biggest takeaway from it!

5. _____ always has the BEST reads on _____. This post really got me thinking! Can't wait to hear what you think of it!!

“SHARING YOUR OWN CONTENT” UPDATES

1. HOT off the blog! Here's what I think about _____. Look forward to seeing what are your thoughts about it.

2. Oohh... I am SO excited about what I'm sharing on the site today! It took me a while to write but I'm loving how it's turned out! Check it out and let me know if you agree... or not!

3. Are you up for the challenge I'm sharing this week on the site? Yes, no, maybe?

4. This oldie-but-goldie post has everything YOU need to _____. What action will YOU be taking this week?

5. This post may have been written in _____ but it still stands true!! What will be YOUR takeaway from it this time?

“PRODUCT AND SERVICE OFFERINGS” UPDATES

1. LOVED hearing this from _____!! +Add client testimonial or feedback

2. How'd you like something that'll help you _____+ Add your product's main benefit.

3. Will you be joining _____ others as they _____?

4. Have you downloaded your FREE _____ to _____?

5. Oh wow!! Totally blown away by this lovely testimonial/love note from _____. +Add client testimonial

6. Did you know that when you order/sign up for _____, you get _____ that help YOU _____



7. Our _____ is a HIT with _____ because it helps _____ ! Makes us SO humbled and delighted!!

8. Grab your FREE _____ and start _____ NOW!!

9. Mmmm... Don't these look just gorgeous? Will YOU be getting one? Or two?!

10. " _____ " " _____ " " _____ " just some of the words folks use to describe our _____!! Yes, we're flattered and delighted!!

"ENGAGEMENT" UPDATES

1. Why do you think you're feeling _____?

2. Who's been a HUGE inspiration to you this week?

3. What's on your bookshelf or eReader this month?

4. Besides Facebook, where else do you like hanging out?

5. Curious to know... if you could have dinner with ONE celebrity, who would it be and why?

6. Mm... looking to add some magazines to my reading list... what would YOU recommend?



7. What was the last movie you saw that really left you thinking, in a good way?

8. One movie that's hugely overrated is _____

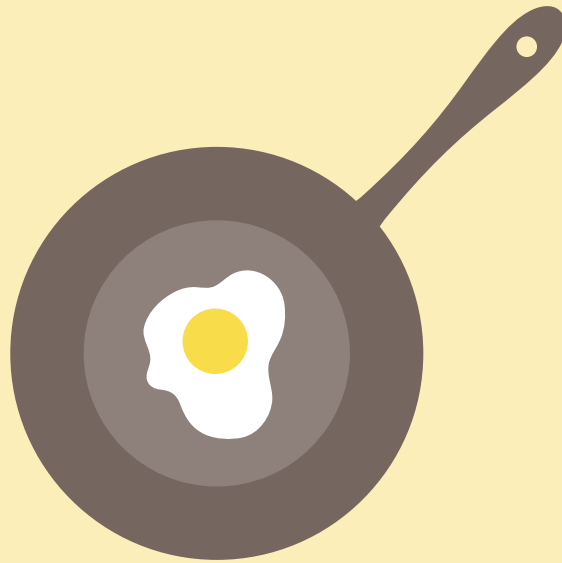
9. Winter or summer? What do you prefer?

10. Do you have a pet or pets? Dog, cats or gold fish? Share their pic and let's spread some furry, fuzzy warmth!

Cook It Now:

Schedule time this week or weekend to sit down and prep your social media content calendar for the next week. Use a mix of updates and yes, feel free to get started with the ready-to-use posts in this section!!

Get cooking!!

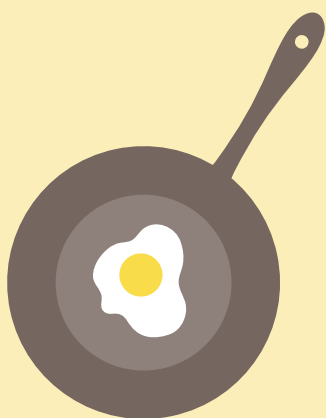


RECIPE 5

How to Never Go Hungry for Content Ever Again

RECIPE 5

Alrighty then, we're almost at the end of this 5-course meal and we're going to wrap up with a fun way to never go hungry for social media or blog content ever again.



Chances are if you've gone through the first 4 recipes, you'll never be looking for content ideas, but if you like prepping for extras, here's the recipe or rather the tools that'll ensure you never run out of ideas ever again.

Buffer Up a Bunch of Ideas

Buffer is a nifty tool that'll ensure you never run out of content ideas to share on social media ever again.

To get started:

- Simply sign up for a [FREE account with Buffer](#) and install the bookmarklet for Chrome browsers. [Here's how to do that.](#)

Next, whenever you're doing your weekly reading and you come across a post you love, simply click on the Buffer icon in your browser bar and ta-dah, you have new content to share.

How I Use It:

Every Saturday and Sunday, I spend 60 minutes or an hour reading some of my favorite blogs and websites. Once I'm done reading them, I buffer them. Easy-peasy and doing double duty! Read and have social media updates to share that are useful, relevant and engaging!

If you already have your social media updates planned out, doing this will give you an added boost and not just help you share awesome content with your audience but also, help you connect with the people who've written the content. Nice!

Evernote for Everything

Evernote and specially, the Evernote Clipper is a tool that I rely on for saving blog post ideas, post series ideas and even, information product ideas. It's like my very own personal swipe file tool!!

How to get started:

- [Sign up](#) for a FREE {don't you love that word!} account and install the Evernote Clipper on your browser's bookmark bar. [Here's how to do that.](#)

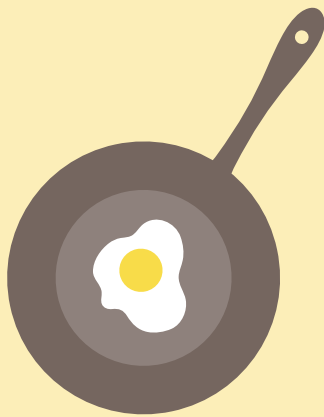
Next whenever you come across a blog post you love or an idea you think you'd be able to give your own personal spin to, simply click on the little elephant icon in the bookmarks bar and voila, it'll let you save it to the "notebook" of your choice and tag it as well for easy searching later on.

How I Use It:

I've installed the Evernote clipper and have created "notebooks" in Evernote for Blog Post Ideas, Social Media Sharing, People Who Rock and more. During my weekend reading, whenever I come across something that I'd like to save and comment on later or link to, I click the little elephant in my browser bar, choose the right notebook, add the perfect tag and ta-dah, out of my head and into the elephant's! Works beautifully.

The Oldie Yet Goldie Way

Another way I make sure I'm never out of content ideas is by keeping my Moleskine notebook and a pen handy. When I'm working on a project, and something interesting floats into my head, as things sometimes do, I just jot it down.



The good thing with this is you have a ready reckoner of post ideas and content juice to drink up. Some things you may discard later and others may go onto become your best posts ever.

If I don't have my notebook and pen handy, say when I'm out on a walk and inspiration strikes, I use the Notes feature in my iPhone. It's synced with my Macbook and shows up when I log in.

Cook It Now:

Choose one of the ways you would be comfortable curating and storing content ideas for your blog and social networks. Then, schedule time into your calendar or planner to actually use them. I use them every weekend. 60 minutes. You??



BONUS RECIPE

Creating Punch-alicious Pinterest and Instagram Photos

CREATING PUNCH-ALICIOUS PINTEREST AND INSTAGRAM PHOTOS

The right photo is worth a thousand words. Or probably even more. In this virtual sea of words, an image that is striking, fresh, appetizing is more likely to have you pause what you're doing and actually read or click.



First, places where you can find gorgeous images that you can use as backgrounds or backdrops:

HERE ARE MY FAVORITE SITES TO FIND FREE PHOTOS AND IMAGES EASILY AND QUICKLY:

All these sites allow you to download images for use without attribution with the exception of Free Digital Photos.

- [Morguefile](#)
- [Pixabay](#)
- [Creative Commons Flickr](#)

- [Free Digital Photos](#). You need to give attribution to both the site and the photographer for this one.
- [Death to Stock](#)
- [Picjumbo](#)
- [Gratisography](#)
- *Your Own. **Yes, really.*** You can take photos yourself using your camera, iPhone or iPad and turn them into works of art using any of the photo editing tools mentioned below!!

READY-TO-GO PHOTO QUOTE TOOLS:

The tools below are super-simple in the sense you don't have to really play around with dimensions, formats, etc.

All you do is pop in your quote, choose a layout you love and ta-dah, you're done. Some of them offer you the option of choosing different fonts or colours but other than that, they're super-easy to use and so-not-complicated!

The only downside to these tools is someone else may also have a similar layout and photo albeit with a different quote or text on it.

- [Recite](#)
- [Pinwords](#)

- [Share as Image](#)
- [Quozio](#)

PHOTO EDITING TOOLS NOT UNLIKE PHOTOSHOP

These two tools are the ones I go to when I want something totally custom created and something that wouldn't be replicated so easily.

They're sorta like Photoshop but only much easier and simpler and of course, fabulously fun!

They both offer you TONS of layouts, formats, fonts, frames, textures. You name it and you'll have it!

[Canva](#)

The upside of Canva is there are plenty of super fun layouts and overlays PLUS you can buy stock images for as little as a \$1 to add even more uniqueness to the image you're creating.

The downside is it's a little glitchy and there have been times when I've gotten frustrated with trying to resize an image or save one and have moved to Picmonkey instead.

[Picmonkey](#)

The upside of Picmonkey is that it is insanely easy to use, has fewer kinks that need workarounds and the Royale version gives you lots of more options for fonts, textures, overlays to play with.

The downside is, well, there really isn't any downside, except maybe that it doesn't have as many options as Canva does, but then neither does it have the glitchiness.

Here is a [quick video tutorial](#) on how to use Picmonkey to create gorgeous photo quotes in literally minutes. Seriously, put on a pot of tea to brew, and you'll be done by the time it's ready.

Instagram Apps for Inviting Photos

Here are my fabulously fun and inexpensive ways to prettify up those photos you've been taking on your smartphone and you want to share on Instagram! Turn every photo into a work of art, quickly and effortlessly with these babies!

[Instaquote](#)

Well, this was the first app I discovered and it was love-at-first-type. Seriously, guys! The FREE version has quite a few backgrounds and styles available but the paid version is even better and it doesn't have the InstaQuote branding.

[Overgram](#)

I discovered this one later thanks to the folks in my mastermind group but it's just as awesome and FREE too! Yes, am all about saving money here while creating visual delicacies!

[A Beautiful Mess](#)

Finally, there's Beautiful Mess by the ladies at A Beautiful Mess. Now this one is a paid app but .99 is a small price when you'll see the gorgeousness that awaits you inside. Photo filters, fun fonts, hand drawn doodles! Yes, gorgeousness has a teensy price tag.

You'll love it!



BONUS RECIPE

Content Kitchen Tools to Save Time

CONTENT KITCHEN TOOLS TO SAVE TIME

[Download your blog editorial calendar template](#) ▶

[Download your social media calendar template](#) ▶

Tools I use to create stunning images for blogs and photo quotes, easily and without using Photoshop!

- [Picmonkey](#)
- [Canva](#)

Tools I use for quick, easy and effortless social media management:

For Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook and G+

- [Buffer](#)
- Facebook's own scheduling feature. This one, of course, works only for Facebook.
- *Alternatives:* [Hootsuite](#), [MarketMeSuite](#)

For Pinterest

- [Viraltag](#)
- *Alternative:* [Ahalogy](#)



BONUS RECIPE

Sizing Guide for Social Media Images

SIZING GUIDE FOR SOCIAL MEDIA IMAGES

Social media is constantly dynamic and ever-changing, and so here's where you can find a [sizing guide for perfect social media images](#), that'll be updated with changes and reflects the current trends and must-dos!

what size should i make my images?

facebook

when you post an image on your page...

NEW pages!

squares look good

500x500

landscape rectangles look good

500 wide x any height

portrait rectangles end up with bars on side

500 tall x any width

and if you post a LINK you see a rectangle image on your page + in the newsfeed

so most images get cut off when you post a link

400x209

1.91:1 ratio

when you click

image opens much bigger in lightbox

960x720

(so a tall banner wouldn't look good)

pinterest

portrait
rectangles

+

tall
banners
look
good

on the feed
238 x
any height

squares
look good

landscape
rectangles and
wide banners
don't look as good

when
you
click

image opens
much bigger
in lightbox

735 x
any height

and of course images look
much smaller on mobile devices

other

instagram

squares only

720x720
when shared
to facebook

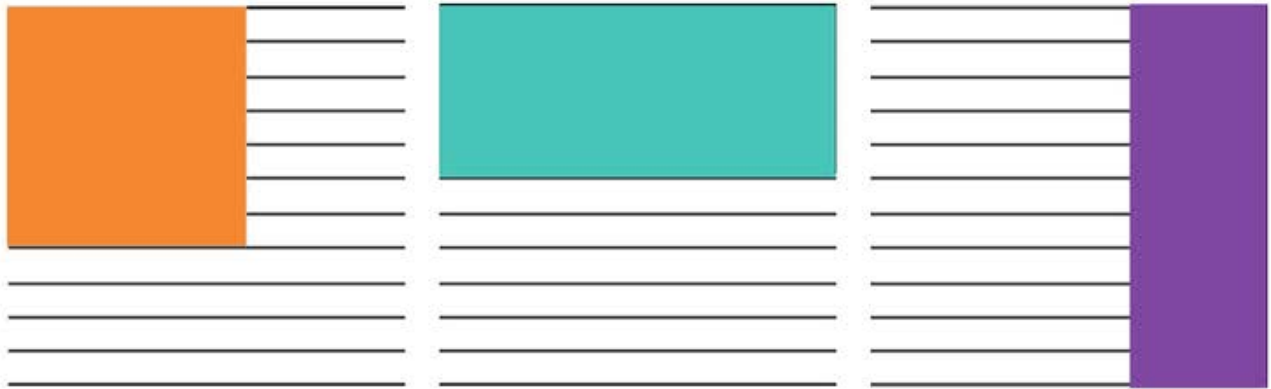
twitter: 433 wide

squares + rectangles
work well
tall or wide banners
do not.

google+ is similar to pinterest. 425 wide x any height

blog & email

you get to decide what you like the look of best!



know your website, blog, and newsletter widths!

start with what will work best for YOU.

what platforms are your priority?

where and how do YOU like to share content?

MY TIPS: save your image as a .PNG file

for sharing LINKS on facebook =
divide your width by 1.91 to get the perfect height

for UPLOADING images to social media platforms
= squares work everywhere

your images should look good small (for mobile)
but make them BIG (for clicking open)

make different versions of one image
OR make one image and use it in different places.
= do what works best for you!

more handy image sizes:

profile images



facebook = 180x180

pinterest = 165x165

twitter = 400x400

google+ = 250x250 view = circle

youtube = 100x100



MY TIP: use the same one everywhere!

those are minimum sizes. when you click, the images
open bigger so make your profile image at least 500x500

cover images



facebook page = 851x315

facebook group = 960x300

twitter = 1500x500

google+ = 2120x1190

pinterest board = 217x147 portion of any pin

youtube = 2560x1440

with: 1546x423 safe area, 2560x423 max width

→ MY TIP: do a search for free templates
and use these to get your exact placement for content
as each platform has its own little quirks

for a free class on creating shareable social media images:
visualmarketingschool.com

*Included, courtesy my friend and design genius Karen
Gunton of [build a little biz](#).*



BONUS RECIPE

**SEO Sauce for your
Small Business Blog**

SEO SAUCE FOR YOUR SMALL BUSINESS BLOG



Do you often wonder why your gorgeous new website doesn't get you any sales?

Have you been sending out product sample after product sample for reviews because you've heard that they're good for SEO but besides getting some great word-of-mouth you haven't seen any improvement in your Google rank?

Do your traffic reports show you that *all* the traffic landing on your site is looking for something else?

If you've answered "yes" to any of these questions, you need to roll up your sleeves and learn a bit about **search engine optimization** (SEO) and how to use it.

Ready? Let's go!

But first...here are the top three reasons WHY you need SEO:

- 1. To attract **targeted traffic** that's interested in and searching for what you have to offer.*
- 2. To **be found by those looking** for industry leaders and experts in your niche.*
- 3. To tell your story and actually **have it heard**.*

How to Start with Keyword Research and SEO for Your Business

In one of my personalized workshops with a client who runs a children's boutique, we talked about how to improve traffic for her website.

I naturally suggested using optimized content and her first response was, "I'm afraid that it will be too stuffy and stilted, and my readers would feel that it's not me".

While we managed to overcome her fears by creating an editorial calendar that was chock-full of interesting, useful AND optimized posts, I can totally understand why many business owners would be concerned about the same thing.

So, I created a step-by-step guide on how to SEO your business blog content without being stuffy or sounding unlike YOU.

A little note - whilst this guide is for WordPress website users, many of the tips here can be used for other platforms too.

The Step-by-Step SEO Guide for Business Blogs

1. Brainstorm Post Topic Ideas

You're already covered for this, thanks to the recipes in this cookbook, right!

2. Conduct Keyword Research

Next, use a **keyword research tool** to find high-traffic, low-competition keywords for your niche. While I personally prefer paid pro tools, like [Market Samurai](#) and [Long Tail Pro](#), you can easily start with a free tool like the [Google Keyword Planner](#) or any of the other [free keyword research tools](#) in the market.



Things to be aware of: You will not always find a keyword or keyword phrase that gets TONS of traffic and has very LOW competition. My “play it safe” guideline is to choose keywords with a minimum of 3,000 local monthly searches, and then use the competition factor to do my final selection.

If you're using the Google Adwords keyword tool, **ignore** the competition column in that and instead, type in your search term in the search field in good ol' search engine Google **using quotation marks like “this” to see how many sites are competing for that term.**

3. Focus on Long-Tail Keywords

When narrowing down keywords, focus on long-tail keywords. No, that doesn't mean your keyword grows an actual tail, it's just a techy way of saying don't use *just one word* to be your keyword. Instead, focus on a **phrase**.

For example, if your business is handmade jewelry, a keyword phrase for you might be "easy handmade jewelry care", provided it meets the traffic and competition criteria.

Drill down into the keyword research tool by experimenting with **keyword phrases** that are at least 2-3 words containing your focus keyword. Then, **weave your chosen keyword phrases** into your blog posts when you write them.

"Learn everything you can, anytime you can, from anyone you can – there will always come a time when you will be grateful you did."

–Sarah Cardwell

4. Use Your Keyword Phrase in the Title and Sub-Heads

Once you're done writing your post as naturally as you can, it's time to come up with **a title that is engaging, attention-grabbing AND optimized for search engines with your keyword phrase**. Do the same for the post sub-heads usually formatted with Heading 2 or <h2> tags in WordPress.

5. Repeat the Keyword Phrase in the Post

Next, go over your post and see where you could use your keyword phrase instead of an existing combination of words. **But remember not to stuff your posts with your keyword phrase.**

6. Find Images Related to the Keyword Phrase

We already know an image is worth a thousand words, but they can also be worth a thousand searches.

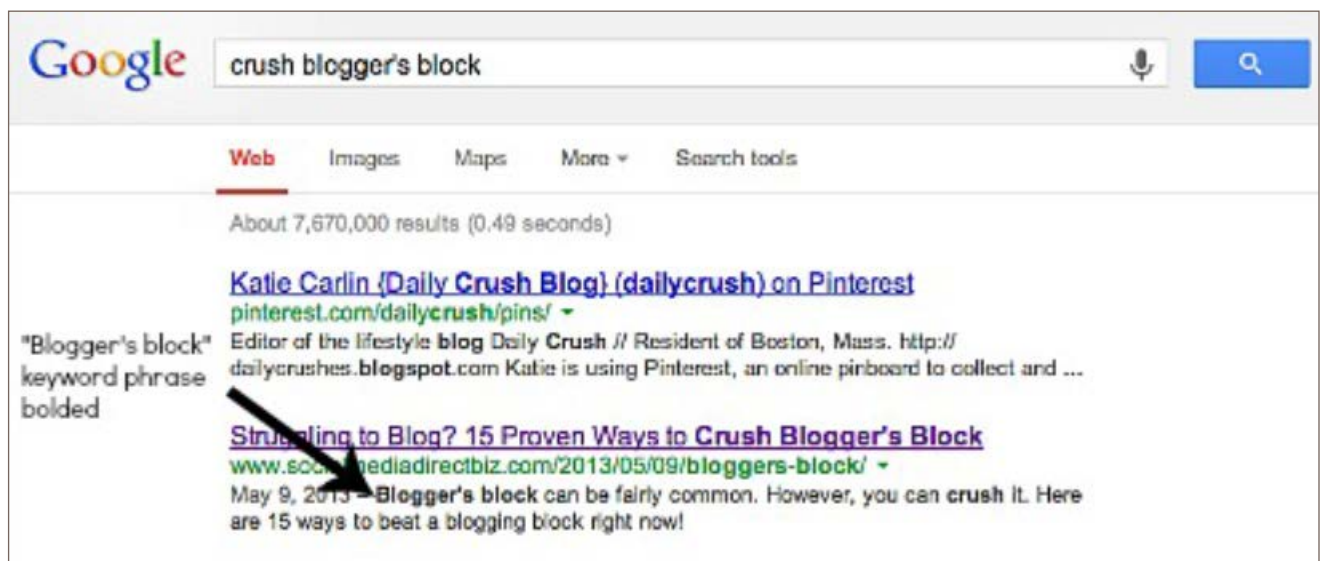
Choose an image that's related to your keyword phrase and give them a file name that matches it. For example, name your image "easy-hand-made-jewelry-care.jpg". Also, be sure to use your keyword phrase or a variation of it in the "alt description" of your image

7. Use the Keyword Phrase in your Meta Description

WordPress users will be familiar with the Meta Description field under every post, especially if you've installed an SEO plugin like Yoast's SEO plugin or if you use an SEO-friendly theme like [Thesis](#) or [Genesis](#).

It's important to use your keyword phrase when writing the Meta description for your post.

While your meta description may not help you get ranked higher based on Google's algorithm, **it will get you found faster because when someone types in your search term, Google will bold it in the search results**, as shown below.



8. Review Keyword Density and Post Content

Check to see that your post isn't keyword stuffed. Again, this is something that the Yoast SEO plugin can show you under Page Analysis. If you don't have this plugin, you can use a free [keyword density checker tool](#). Review your post content to see that it's **engaging, reads easily, is packed with useful information and has no grammatical errors or typos.**

9. Hit "Publish"

Simple, right?



ABOUT THE CHEF

“Give them quality.
That’s the best kind
of advertising.”

–Milton Hershey

ABOUT THE CHEF



Prerna Malik is the creator of gourmet content and community management solutions for time-starved entrepreneurs.

She works with her husband, Mayank at [Social Media Direct](#) where they've dished out yumminess for some awesome folks like, Leonie Dawson, Tsh Oxenreider, Anne Samoilov, Andreea Ayers, Heather Allard and many, many more, all across the globe!!



Tsh Oxenreider

Not sure what kind of wizardry Prerna is doing, but when she took over the blog's FB page in June, we were at 28K followers. Today, we're at 40K. Amazing, friend! Thanks so much for all you do for the blog. You're an encouragement to me! ❤️

Unlike · Comment · Unfollow Post · October 10 at 10:33pm near Bend, OR, United States



They live in gorgeous India {yes, if you haven't guessed, gorgeous is one of her fave words to use!} with their delight of a daughter, Manini.



Cooking and community management are two of her many passions. Traveling, baking and reading are a few others!

She doesn't enjoy writing about herself in the 3rd person and yet she's managed to write this bio so far!


THE “LET’S GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER” BIO


Hi there!! I’m Prerna and I’m the chef behind this nugget of a workbook! I hope you’ve really enjoyed reading and working your way through it and that you’re ready to don your own chef whites and serve up content that’s juicy, fresh and sizzling!!

**Told her what I needed.
She made it happen.**

Working with Prerna was... well, in a word...**EASY**. I told her what I needed and she made it happen. I never worried about the wrong messaging going out or the tone not sounding like me. She just got it and got it fast. She took control of my social media during 2 different launches and didn’t wait for me to give her the final approval. In addition to that, she was also instrumental in setting up my affiliate program from top to bottom. I really believe there’s nothing Prerna can’t do...and I’m already looking for another project to bring her back for!

If you get a chance to work with Prerna, don’t wait...she books up fast...and I know why!



Anne Samoilov 

Massive Engagement! 10% Increase in FB Likes!!

Wow, working with Prerna has been amazing!

She took over my Facebook community and interacted with my audience on a daily basis.

My engagement skyrocketed and every post she creates for my Facebook page gets massive engagement.

My Facebook likes also increased by 10% every month since I’ve worked with Prerna.

I highly recommend her!!!!



Andreea Ayers 

You see, Mayank and I believe that content and cooking are pretty similar.

They both need to come from the heart to really mean something.

They both need seasoning to be flavored right.

They both make people feel content and satisfied, when served properly.

I could go on and on but you get the point, right?

If you’re ever in India, we could carry this discussion on then, ‘kay?! Till then, feel free to drop by our little world on [Facebook](#), [Pinterest](#) or [Instagram](#). Oh, and don’t forget to connect in the [Content Café!](#)

Talk soon!

*Warmly,
Prerna and Mayank*