

Momentum

Day 5

Bring Sexy Back to Your Blog

By Maria Rass

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Day 5:

Bring Sexy Back to Your Blog

Blah, blah....BLOGGING.

If you just sighed in disgust, overwhelm or sheer panic at simply reading the B-word, today's assignment is just for you.

Blogging is, in my opinion, one of the single best ways to grow your business, boost your brand and hustle up some thought leadership street cred. Think of it like you are the editor of your own little magazine: press releases and pitching be darned! You have the ultimate "in" with the editor of You.com—YOU.

But before you write off this assignment by telling me you'd rather dance on hot coals than *write anything*, please stay with me....you're in for a surprise!

Consistency is Not The Hobgoblin

Did you know that Thoreau's famous line is often misquoted as "*Consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds.*" Over time, this quote lost the most important part of the point:

The quote is actually:

["A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds"](#)

Hence, not all consistency is foolish, my friends.

My business, Red Slice, was named after a personal blog where I waxed poetic on all things wine, food, film and culture.

It was personal, so I just updated it when I felt like it. It's not like I had a lot of readers. It was just a way to express myself and do what I love most: writing. This random inconsistency was fine, because it wasn't done for money. Just passion.

When I started my consulting business, I also blogged....inconsistently. When I felt like it. And no one cared.

No one cared about reading my blog and learning about my expertise because it was clear from my commitment that I didn't care either. People were busy. They weren't proactively checking my website every week to see what amazing things I had to say. They had crap to do!

And of course, in the beginning, I didn't care too much about this. I was getting my name out there and booking clients. I was getting my entrepreneurial feet under me, giving presentations and submitting articles online (to boost up *their* website traffic, I might add).

Had I realized early on how much good I could have done my business if I would have devoted even one hour a week to my blogging, who knows? I might have gotten much farther, much faster.

Here's the thing: **This is not a hobby.** You run a business of some sort and net-net, you need to attract customers, clients, donors, art patrons, readers....whomever. That means you are building a brand.

And building a brand for that business (or blog, or author platform, or non-profit, or whatever) requires that you gain trust and offer value. And you can gain trust and offer value by sharing your expertise. And you can share your expertise by....blogging.

How Blogging Helps Your Brand and Business

Here are six reasons why a blog does your brand good:

1. It gives you a forum to promote your expertise and point of view. On your terms.
2. It's SEO-licious, meaning you can write about your core industry using lots of sexy keywords and search engines will develop huge crushes on you.
3. It provides your target audience with information, advice, and entertainment—all great things to build community and nurture future sales and customer loyalty.
4. It offers you content to share in social media (for those days when you're like, "What the heck should I Tweet about?").
5. It gives visitors a reason to keep coming back to your site. Ah, smell that fresh, new content!
6. It provides the press with examples of your expertise in case they are writing a story for which you'd be perfect. **BONUS:** It can act as writing samples when you pitch contributed articles to media outlets.

I could go on and on.

Stop Whining! Three Tips to Make Blogging Easier And a Helluva Lot More Fun

“But I hate writing, Mariiiiiiaaaaa!” (enter whining) “I don’t have time.” “What should I blog about?”

I will admit that I have it a bit easier, as writing is my joy—it’s my favorite form of expression. But, yes, even I have days where there’s just a blank page and a blinking cursor mocking my lack of creativity. We all do.

The muse does not always show up when it’s convenient for us. Sometimes she’s out grabbing a caramel macchiato and surfing One Kings Lane for fun household furnishings. Here is your three-step backup plan:

- 1. Jot down every question someone has ever asked you about your line of work.** Seriously, the [juicy ones](#), the silly ones, the obvious ones, the annoying ones. Are you a knitting store? How about “How can I learn to knit?” “Where can I find fashionable patterns?” “Isn’t this something just old women do?” Or are you a personal trainer? “What are the best super foods I should be eating?” “How can I start on Day One if I’m overweight?” “Don’t I need to be wealthy to have a personal trainer?” Perhaps you’re a social media consultant: “How do I start on Twitter?” “Which platforms should I be on?” “When are the best times to post on Facebook?”—or even “What questions should I ask to find a good social media consultant?” Got your list? BOOM. You just came up with three months’ worth of blog post topics.
- 2. Riff on trendy topics:** Let’s say the Grammy Awards are coming up. Can you relate something about your business back to music, a Grammy winning star or even something controversial that happened at the show? New movies come out all the time. Can you relate some tips about your products or services back to a [popular film](#)? These kind of posts are as much fun to write as they are to read—and you can take advantage of trending topics when promoting the content on social media. For example, if #Grammys are hot, hot, hot the day after the event, you can use that hashtag to promote your post.
- 3. Interview interesting people:** Who would your target audience (or you) love to hear from? Are there related experts who complement what you provide that would be valuable for your readers? You don’t have to come up with all the blog post ideas yourself—sometimes the best thing to do is feature another interesting person with juicy nuggets of wisdom to share. Not only will your audience love it, but you create a built-in promotional partner—and you get to be generous and support someone else’s great brand so perhaps later they may support you.

If You're "Not A Writer" Or You "Hate To Write"

Here's a little secret: Creating consistent and valuable content is not just about words. It's not even about a lot of words. If a few sentences or one-paragraph musings are easier for you, by all means, do that. It works for [Seth Godin](#) and [Bernadette Jiwa](#), who both rarely publish super-long blog posts.

If writing is still not your jam, try podcasts, images or video. The point is to offer fresh content that showcases your style, expertise and point of view and to do it regularly. I personally define a "blog" as consistently updated content you post **on your own website**, before you share it in social media. It lives on your digital hub, not just on Facebook or LinkedIn. Amy Schmittauer of Savvy Sexy Social, is a friend of mine and a video queen with a robust YouTube channel. But she [posts her videos with teaser copy](#) on her own website as well. She simply lets her videos do the talking.

You could go this route and take it a step further by hiring a transcription service to offer folks a written version, if you like.

My point is that you should always post your core weekly (or whatever interval you use) blog on your website first so you own it and then share it out in social media. This is your digital hub and all traffic should lead to it.

"But I post on social media all the time, Maria! Isn't that enough?"

If you're not into writing but more into imagery, it's still perfectly fine to bet everything on an Instagram or Pinterest account. But you are still showcasing your content in those channels, so make sure that your website is very clear that THOSE are the places where you update your latest and greatest. Place the social connection buttons front and center so people will click there to follow you. And always, always, guide them back to your main site from those places so they can learn more. Or embed your accounts into your website so they don't have to click away if they don't want to.

The visual-social-media-only approach can work really well if you sell products or you're a lifestyle brand. But remember, you still need to string some words together. **It is my firm belief that service providers who want to be authorities in their field, such as coaches, consultants, trainers, or authors, need to have their latest, updated content located on their website first.** People need to get to know you and your website is the perfect place to guide them. I'm not convinced that simply offering Pins or tweets with no deeper points of view helps a prospect understand the breadth or style of your expertise. But that is one expert opinion! Plus you won't get many of the other blog benefits we talked about above.

Hate writing? Think you're "not a writer?" You can hire a ghostwriter to add polish and shine. Simply record yourself talking about the topic and hand it over, or have the writer interview you over the phone talking about it so they can fashion it into a lovely post. And when money is no object? You can hire a marketing manager whose job is simply to write blog posts based on topics you choose.

Your Assignment:

Seven Blog Post Ideas To Tickle Your Fancy

Try your hand at brainstorming seven topics to write about right now! If any of the questions below do not resonate for you, just skip it. The point here is to come up with new ideas in a fast and furious way!

Pssst....**BONUS ALERT!** Any of these can easily be turned into your free email opt-in incentive, lead magnet for your next course, eBook, podcast, video...you get the idea.

Oh, and the **numbers below are arbitrary**. Play around with short and sweet (*Three quick tips...*) versus long and in-depth (*64 ways to....*).

1. **3 Crucial Tips for... (YOUR SUBJECT AREA HERE)**. ...*Building a Website*, ...*Finding Inner Peace*, ...*Choosing a Killer Date Outfit*, ...*Buying the Right Engagement Ring*. Whatever your business does, surely there are three basic tips that you always seem to share with prospects or customers. This worked well for me when sharing [4 Clever Ways to Make it Easy for Others to Promote You](#) and [3 Tips for Smarter Small Business Marketing](#). Don't fall into the trap (as I once did before a wise woman slapped me upside the head - with love) of assuming "everyone knows this." They don't. It's why you have a job.

Quick! Write down one (just one!) tip list idea you could share about your subject area. Use any number you like: 3, 5, 15...

2. **6 Questions to Ask When... (YOUR SUBJECT AREA HERE)**. People love to read articles that guide them when making a decision. And, heck, no one says you can't choose questions that would immediately point them to your products or services if it's a good fit - just make sure you're being unbiased, or people may feel like you're being slimy instead of helpful. So how about: ...*Choosing the Right Accounting Software*, ...*Picking the Perfect Executive Coach*, ...*Creating Your Social Media Strategy*.

Quick! What questions could people ask when choosing someone in your profession:

3. **5 Powerful (YOUR FIELD) Lessons from (POPULAR NEWS TOPIC/CULTURAL REFERENCE)**: This one is super fun, because it allows you to be timely (and show up in what people are searching for right now) and showcase your cleverness in relating your expertise to something that culturally

binds us. One of my most popular blog posts was [4 Powerful Business Lessons from James Bond and Skyfall](#). The other form this can take is “What (POPULAR TOPIC) Can Teach You about (YOUR FIELD).” Relate key lessons or tips you always talk about to something timely and hot and give it a fun spin (if the topic allows for it) or simply analyze a current news story through the lens of your expertise, as I did in popular posts about [Lance Armstrong’s](#) and [Susan G. Komen’s](#) epic brand fails.

Quick! Write down your favorite movie or an upcoming big cultural event (The Super Bowl, the Grammy Awards) which you could tie into your work. Has something topical happened in the news lately, like a women’s leadership survey or a health craze? It’s not important to know HOW it ties in just yet!

4. **7 Lessons I Learned When (YOUR FIELD OR INTEREST):** You have wisdom to share based on your experience (See #1 above) and your audience is thirsting for it. What can you share about mistakes you’ve made, unique things you’ve done, or clients you’ve worked with? What can they learn from your story? Remember, share your lessons but ensure you make it about how it applies to the reader. I loved sharing [7 Lessons I Learned While Writing a Book...and What They Can Teach You](#) as well as, yes, the [7 Lessons That a Brain Injury Can Teach You about Your Brand](#).

Quick! Write down a pivotal life moment, mistake or achievement that you could relate to your work. Again, doesn’t matter if that is clear right now, just write it down:

5. **Pose a question related to your subject area:** Think about the most popular questions you get asked about your business, brand or profession and turn that into a single-threaded blog post. *How Do I Write Good Sales Copy? How Do I Work with a Stylist? How Long Does a Website Take to Build? [What Is a Brand Strategy?](#)* This helps you showcase your expertise, offer great advice and even make it easy for new people to join your tribe and not feel like they don’t know some inside joke. Remember, your audience may be at different phases of the buying cycle and are only just now getting to know you and your brand.

Quick! Write down the one question about your work that you get over and over. Even by your grandmother who may not understand what you do:

6. **Interview another rockstar expert:** Are there folks related to your field from whom your audience would loooooove to get the inside scoop? You don't have to be the expert in everything. But you can be the go-to resource for curating that info for your community. Are you a health and wellness coach? Interview a stylist to help your clients showcase their new healthy bods. Are you an Etsy store selling handmade jewelry? Interview a party planner on how to throw the perfect jewelry party. Do you sell customer management software to small businesses? Interview a branding expert to give them tips on how to build their brand online and create compelling content. These can be super easy to create. In my [Slice of Brilliance column](#), I interview experts in related fields that are of interest to you and send them a three-question form to fill out. I get a great blog post, my audience gets great content, and I get the added bonus of that rockstar also promoting my post.

Quick! Write down one person you know who adds complementary expertise for your fans. If you're a life coach, perhaps a nutrition or money expert. If you're a website designer, perhaps an SEO expert. If you're a stylist, perhaps a professional organizer. Write down that person's name and email:

7. **Make one observation about your industry and present your point of view:** These are the thought leader posts, the ones that inspire, delight, provoke thought – and get shared. There must be something you love or hate about your field that you have a viewpoint on: your disgust with smarmy sales pitches (if you're a sales consultant), your crush on brands that give back to the community (if you run an advertising agency), your confusion over why contracts can't be written in plain English (if you're a lawyer), your deep hatred of hyperbolic software sales claims (if you run a software company). How can you make this personal commentary interesting and relevant to your audience? Ensure there's a strong takeaway that they can ponder or act upon – otherwise it's just a rant. I tried to do this with my observations about [how perfection holds many people back](#) or [why you are called to create something that matters](#).

Quick! Write down one industry rule, trend or "sacred cow" about which you have a strong opinion either for or against. What do you find yourself commenting on over and over?

BONUS Assignment: And Now, Let's Write!

If you have time now, please feel free to take this extra step and share it with us. Or save this for later...

No more delays. No more excuses. You just came up with seven blog posts ideas. For those of you playing at home, that's almost TWO MONTH'S worth if you blog every week.

Set a timer for one hour, turn off your phone and draft a blog post, right here, right now. I'm a big believer that less is more. Pick the idea above that excites you the most and start writing. Just outline the copy. What are the main points? For a strong intro, can you start with a provocative question, *Picture This* scenario, fun fact or personal story? For a strong closing, how can you sum it up or offer one final bit of wise advice? Remember, getting it down on paper is half the battle! You can always hire a writer to polish it up.

Keep this first attempt short. No need to pen *War and Peace*. Some experts say no more than 500 words is a good blog post length. Obviously. I break that rule all the time, but if it helps take the pressure off yourself, go for it.

Start writing your beautiful little blog post draft below:

Not sure what title to come up with? Try these resources:

[10 Ways to Write Blog Post Titles That Make People Go, "Whoa!"](#)

[Headline and Title Analyzer](#)

[Title Tester](#)

Congratulations! You have just completed your fifth and final MOMENTUM lesson. Look at how much you've gotten done in a week!

But wait, you're not quite done....

Now: Post one or all of your blog posts ideas in our [supportive Facebook group](#) and if you're feeling sassy, please post your "extra credit" blog post draft as well! Would love you to add your personal insights or discoveries on this topic as well.

We are here to encourage you and provide any feedback. If you're like me, often it's fellow collaborators that help me polish my ideas to a glossy sheen.

Again, I'm going to reward the most creative (and complete!) ideas here, even if you don't have your draft fully written. Don't lose your MOMENTUM: Post it now and keep that train moving!

Keep Your MOMENTUM Going!

This has all just been a taste of what you can get working with me. Do you crave even more focus, guidance and support to keep your momentum ? There are so many more brand and marketing elements we can streamline and tackle together.

You're warmly invited to [check out the full MOMENTUM program](#) and keep me right by your side.

One Last Thing

Actually, a few last things.

Consistency is key. Create a realistic schedule. For example, Seth Godin may blog every day, but that does NOY fly in my world. Once a week works for me, and even then, if I go two weeks, my world does not fall apart. The point is that prospects don't visit my site and see that my last post was from 2009!

Batch as much as possible. Carve out a day per month to work on three to four blog posts and then schedule them to post in advance. It's better than scrambling every week. I know some folks who take a whole day each month or schedule a "staycation" to crank out six months of content in one go.

Don't stress about your writing ability! You can always hire a writer to add final polish. Refer back to the resources I shared in a previous assignment.

Find the method of communication that works for you: words, pictures, video, etc.

It doesn't have to be perfect. Just DONE.

You've got valuable knowledge. You owe it to the world to share it.

Write on,

Maria

P.S. If you loved working with me for five days to focus and streamline, imagine how your business will soar with me guiding you for six months. Learn more and join me for the full MOMENTUM program [right here!](#)

Goodies and Inspiration

And Now....Get Up And Dance!

Since we're at the end of our delicious challenge, here's a special treat to lift your spirits: check out [my boy Justin](#) as inspiration to bring sexy back, not just to your blog, but all your brand and marketing efforts!