



How to Promote Your Blog to Build Your Reputation and Supporter Base

Integrate Your Blog with All Your Content Marketing Strategies

Build a Blog Sharing Plan to Optimize Relationships with Folks who can Take Your Nonprofit to the Next Level.

SPECIAL GUIDE

with Tips, Checklist and Examples

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Engagement marketing, sometimes called "experiential marketing" ... or "participation marketing," is a marketing strategy that directly engages consumers and invites and encourages consumers to participate in the evolution of a brand. Rather than looking at consumers as passive receivers of messages, engagement marketers believe that consumers should be actively involved in the production and co-creation of marketing programs, developing a relationship with the brand. It is a long term connection that must be enhanced over time.

Engagement Marketing, wikipedia

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Introduction

One of the key reasons you need a blog is to create a hub for fresh, remarkable content that will drive folks to you – like bees to honey.

Another key reason is to take advantage of the interactive nature of blogs – the way they offer a natural means for connecting with your constituents in real time. You can ask folks for comments. You can respond and engage in a dialogue. You can promote your posts online via social media channels, and ask for more feedback there. And so forth.

But what really makes a blog super powerful is its leveraging power. If you can get your constituents to promote your content on your behalf, then you'll really be cooking!

Sharing is caring.

One desired action response (DAR) you always have is to get your blog post shared. This is where a lot of the blog magic lies. One of the great outcomes from a good blog is to establish you as a thought leader in your field. So you want to be broadly distributed, creating new awareness of your awesomeness.

You must promote your blog. You must get others to promote your blog.

Sadly, blog promotion is often considered a secondary function. It's not uncommon for folks to spend the lion's share of their time researching, writing and publishing their post. But... then what? Too often it just sits there like a lead balloon. Until you're well-known, people are not going to naturally find you. That's why knowing how to promote each of your blog posts is your key to ensuring more people see it, read it, and hopefully even sign-up to your email list.

I recently engaged in a lengthy discussion with folks in the "Marketing Professionals" group on LinkedIn about what's more important: content, engagement or promotion. Content had the leading edge. But I just can't agree. Not that I don't think it's super important. Who cares about promoting dreck? Good content is essential. But all three must work together. They're three legs of a three-legged stool; unstable if any one leg is missing. Without promotion your super-de-duper content just sits there. Dead. In. The. Water. That's just sad.

This Guide is all about sharing your remarkable content. It's about seeing it take off as virtual "word of mouth" that builds your reputation and drives new supporters to your blog and website.

Let's figure out how you'll achieve this...

4 Ways to Create an Ongoing Dialogue Flow from Your Nonprofit Blog



This above all: Listen to build relationships with constituents. Don't yell. It's not about you.

1. **S**hare.
2. **S**hareable.
3. **T**alk.
4. **S**earch.

That's the four ways. You need a **s**uper **s**onic **t**ransport **s**ystem that will enable all your brand messaging – across multiple channels – to emanate from your blog. [Your blog is your content hub](#). It's the essence of you and what you do. But it's not something that has meaning separate from the rest of your marketing

communications efforts. It won't get you anywhere if you don't put the wheels in motion. And since things are fast, fast, fast these days -- let's get you in motion super sonically!

So let's take these 4 Principles one by one.

Share

The first part of your blog post super sonic transportation strategy is to figure out how *you'll* share your posts. I offer you five key pieces of advice:

Where folks are

1. Figure out where your constituents hang out; share *there*.

To share meaningfully means to deliver your content at the right time through the right channel(s). Otherwise you're simply engaging in "spray and pray." Trust me; if your strategy is to throw everything at the wall to see what sticks you'll quickly exhaust your resources – not to mention your poor little self.

It's worth taking a bit of time to see where your traffic comes from. Of course, you can always do a survey and ask folks which social media platforms they use. This is easy (and free) using Google Docs (see an easy YouTube "how to" video [here](#)) or [Survey Monkey](#). However, it's even better if you can track what your constituents actually do. [There are a variety of free \(Google Analytics\) and/or inexpensive analytics tools, including some that are more expensive.](#)

Once you've determined where your fans hang out, pick just one channel to focus on in the beginning. You don't have to be everywhere. Quality trumps quantity when it comes to social media. You don't need to be everywhere. Check out [3 Essential Building Blocks to Kick-Start a Successful Nonprofit Social Media Strategy: Website, Email and Something Else](#) to learn that it's okay to build your sharing plan in phases. It may seem counter-intuitive, but you'll actually move faster – and get more traffic – if you choose one channel and do it well than if you choose all channels and do them poorly.

Across multiple platforms

2. Optimize your social media strategy.

Though it makes sense to start small, ultimately you'll want to share your blog content across multiple social media platforms. This will happen naturally as you begin to develop traffic from different sources. You can help this process along by intentionally building a social media following. Otherwise, who are you going to share with?

In [Is Your Blog a Deadzone? Maybe You Forgot to Do This](#), the marketing manager at [Fourtopper](#), Michael Adams, reminds us of the importance of systematically and patiently building your list by beginning with friends, colleagues and family. Then you can move on to industry contacts, people you know who are active in social media and press.

This is best done with targeted commentary, but automating your social sharing is better than not sharing it. Develop your own *modus operandi*. And don't stress too much about this in the beginning.

Remember that sharing is a two-way street. If you want to build a community of folks willing to share on your behalf it's nice to do something for them. [You must begin by being an active listener](#). So read and share some of their content. Get involved in discussions. Let them know in advance what's in it for them if they share your posts.

Follow and share buttons

3. Assure you have working follow and share buttons.

For every channel where you want to connect you'll want to have: (1) follow buttons and (2) share buttons on your blog. The former are to help build your following. The latter are to help you and others easily share your posts to your chosen platforms. Again, you do not have to be everywhere. I cannot stress this enough. Less is quite often more for most nonprofits. If you don't have a super-geek on staff, or an entire team of people dedicated to nurturing your different networks on a daily basis, don't spread yourself too thin.

But do spread yourself somewhere! If you're interested in trying out some different channels, take a look at [How to Promote Your Blog with Social Media](#). It's a great step-by-step guide that provides a "how-to" for sharing posts ten different ways. And note that sharing is different on different platforms. You'll want to learn best practices for each platform (for example, one uses hashtags on Twitter; on Facebook or LinkedIn, not so much). Take a look at [Platform Counts! The Differences between Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn Writing](#) and [How to Promote Your Blog Posts with Social Media Writing](#).

To get the share buttons installed on your site, WordPress has a number of plugins that are easy to install. There are also a number of blogs out there that will walk you through installation (see [Spice Up Your Blog](#) which tends to have instructions for both WordPress and Blogger. Or simply “Google” “*How to install social share buttons*” to get the latest updates). You can also go directly to the social media websites themselves and install their ‘official’ buttons directly from their sites (they won’t necessarily match one another, but this may not be an issue if you’re only using one or two social media platforms). Hint: Once you get them installed, test them to make sure they work.

Email...

4. Spread the news – and forget about social media for a moment.

I’ve little doubt you already use email. And you probably even have an e-newsletter. [Share your great blog content via email](#). In fact, one of the easiest ways to create an e-newsletter these days is to simply link to several of your past month’s blog posts. Add a sentence or two to entice folks to click the link. Maybe add the announcement of an event or two to your newsletter, sprinkle in some photos or a video, and voila! The work you’ve done creating your blog content is suddenly doing double duty.

Even if you don’t have an e-newsletter, you can use email to send a link to your post to your email list. If you send a link to your blog to 1000 folks on your email list, and 20% (200 people) click on it, and of those maybe a dozen share with their friends on *their* email lists, or Twitter, or Facebook, or Pinterest... and so on... then you just might find yourself with another 100 visitors. [Ask them to subscribe](#) to your blog. And ask them to share with *their* networks.

You can also use your blog email list to create a monthly (or quarterly) email that lets folks know what’s coming. Or you can create a summary of a series of posts on a particular subject area that alerts folks that “This may be of interest to you; we’d very much value your feedback and opinions.” Some great resources for launching emails and managing your subscription list are [MailChimp for Bloggers](#) and [Aweber](#).

You can also share the link to your blog URL in a bunch of creative ways:

- (1) On your business cards;
- (2) From your email signature;

- (3) On your event registrations;
- (4) On event nametags (it's helpful to give your blog a name so folks will remember the URL);
- (5) In your hard copy communication materials, and
- (6) In footers to Slide Share and Power Point presentations.

Website...

5. Don't forget to feature your blog prominently on your website!

The best way is to have a tab at the top of the page. Ideally, the look of your blog should match the look of your website so that the user never knows they've gone to a different site. [Your blog will drive more traffic than your website](#) so it's a great idea to freshen up your website with your blog's content.



We began with how you share. Now we're going to talk about how to get other folks to share on your behalf. This is what gives 'wings' to your promotion strategy.

Share and share alike. We all know this old adage. But if you're given an apple and no knife to cut it into pieces, it's difficult to share. Similarly, if you share a blog post but offer no sharing tools, it's not likely to be shared. People who read your posts have networks. You want to tap into them!

It's your job to make it easy for folks to spread the good word. In [Why You're Not Getting Traffic From Social Media](#) on Maximize Social Business Lila Bulloch discusses the importance of providing a straightforward, effortless way for your readers to share from every page of your blog. With just a few social shares, the reach of your content can expand exponentially at an amazing rate!

Here are eleven tricks and tools of the trade:

Integrate share icons

1. Make sure to fully integrate user-friendly social sharing buttons.

Remember the old adage: Out of sight, out of mind. If you're too subtle about the placement of your share icons, folks won't notice them. The first thing on most readers' minds is not "how can I share this post?" It's your job to place this thought in their minds!

Put share buttons everywhere. At the top of every post. At the bottom of every post. Even along the side of every post (Here's a nice [example](#) of all three). And don't forget a "share by email" button. It's still the number one way people share blog posts, followed by FB and Twitter.

Some folks like a simple [AddThis](#) widget, which allows content to easily be shared across dozens of popular social networks. Of course, if you're targeting only a handful of networks this may not be the right choice for you.

Drip your tweets

2. Add a 'tweetable' or two to your content so your readers can drip your post's key components

Content marketing expert [Derek Halpern](#) notes: "*People love to share quotes on social media. Make your perfect blog post as quotable and shareable as possible.*" Doing so is easy. You simply highlight quotes ("sound bites") within the body of your post that you'd like folks to share. That way folks don't have to think about what they're going to say when they share your post.

- To make a soundbite or tweetable, pull the best bits from the content you've written and include a "Tweet This" or "Share This" link alongside the text.
- Consider adding "[ClickToTweet](#)" into your blog posts to encourage tweeting ([click to tweet](#)).

3. Chop your post into a set of tweets and drip out over time yourself.

This works well when you have long lists and can make each one a tweet.

Incorporate images

4. Incorporate pinnable images where appropriate.

When folks with [Pinterest](#) boards 'pin' your image to their boards it will create an instant link back to your blog. No budget for photography? Photos taken with smart phones work just fine. And here are some other great [tips on how to find great free pictures](#) for your blog. Plus there are now a number of tools to enable you to create your own beautiful images. I like [Canva](#) (and you can have some fun playing on their website).

5. Add in infographics to visually convey the content in your post.

Infographics are highly shareable (and pinnable) and attract inbound links that help people find you when they're searching for related content. For a great primer on how to create nonprofit infographics, check out [Infographics: Should Your Nonprofit Hire A Designer or Do It Yourself!](#) by [Beth Kanter](#). Canva is also a great tool for making your own, plus it's super inexpensive.

6. Include videos in your posts.

Like images, videos tend to be shared more than plain text posts. For a taste of the types of videos that tend to become viral, you can [check out this site](#).

7. Place images on Flickr that link back to your website.

Share your photographs and other images via Flickr. Give them public rights if users link back to your blog.

Want more tips re images? I've got links to tons of ideas on my Pinterest board: [Trends: Visual](#).

Use hashtags

8. Expand shareability on social media with [hashtags](#).

Include relevant hashtags, especially on Twitter, where appropriate. Don't use more than two or three per post, as research shows there's a point at which too much is too much and will depress response. Increasingly folks are also using hashtags to assure their content gets found on Pinterest.

Leverage the power of tribes

9. Leverage LinkedIn Groups to target content delivery.

Join LinkedIn Groups that are relevant to your topic and share your blog posts there. One strategy is to begin a discussion; then include a link to your post that provides your organization's take on the issue. You can also join discussions started by others, including a link back to one of your relevant blog posts.

Spotlight your blog's presence

10. Create a public profile for your blog on various social media networks where appropriate.

For example, create a Business Page on Facebook (versus your personal profile.) You can easily do this on Twitter and Pinterest as well. Then you can link to your blog in your social media profiles.

Make your value proposition explicit

11. Include an [engagement value proposition](#) that gets people talking!

If folks know exactly what you want them to do they're much more likely to take action. So don't forget that to make a post shareable it must include an explicit engagement value proposition.

In other words, it's got to have something in it your readers care about. And that they might care about *enough* to share with their networks. Think of yourself as a director of customer experiences. Think about what will excite... intrigue... engage your fans. Perhaps it's a contest. Or helpful tips they think their friends might find useful as well. Or a really cool video. Or the most cutting edge research related to your mission. Or a recipe. Or an e-book. Or a reading list. Or a Top 10 Recommendations list. Get inside your readers' heads.

When you align empathically with your customers it's a game changer. Businesses and organizations must earn relevance by understanding their constituents, providing meaningful content and engaging with their tribes. It's *not* about getting X number of 'likes' so a box can be checked off on a strategic plan. That's a [waste of time](#), both for you and your fans.

It's about figuring out what your fans like; then translating this into something that will be a win/win for both fans and organization.

BOTTOM LINE: People trust word-of-mouth marketing more than any other source – and a whopping five times more than paid media!

These are the findings from a recent study by [Forrester research](#). That's why getting your stakeholders to share your content is so important. It's not only how people find you; it's how they learn to trust you. And once folks trust you, you'll become their go-to resource. That's what you want!



Whether we admit it or not, the opinions of other people matter. Whether it's about simple things such as which brand of laundry detergent to buy, or bigger decisions such as who to consult with on critical business matters, we've always taken into account the points of view of those we deem important in order to get the information we need to make the best judgment calls.

Now that we've talked about the importance of sharing your blog and making it shareable by others, we've got to take the next step. **How do you get folks to really talk about you in a way that influences others?** How do you create that irreplaceable word of mouth – that one thing marketers have always wanted to tap?

According to [Nielsen's report on Global Trust in Advertising and Brand Messages](#), a whopping 92% of the world's population trust recommendations of other people regarding products and services, while only 47% trust ads on TV, magazines, and billboards. Brands need to go back to making people talk about them instead of talking *at* people.

This is where social media comes in. With people trusting other people's opinions more than paid advertisements, and with so many people utilizing social media to have conversations, we can safely say that social media has become a powerful "word of mouth" channel. But how do you kick start the process?

You begin with [constituent-centered content](#), of course. No one is going to share crap, no matter how easy you make it for them to do so. Your content must

be remarkable if you want it to get opened and read. Your content must also give folks something engaging to talk about. Let's assume you know this, and you've got the good stuff lined up for publication. Now you need to get folks walking your talk!

You want more than short-term share transactions. You want shares that drive desired action responses; you want transformation! First let's review who your "talkers" are; then we'll examine nine ways to get the conversations flowing.

How to Find Your Talkers -- Nonprofit Blog Influencers vs. Advocates

There's debate about the relative merits of "Influencers" and "Advocates." Influencers are generally defined by the size of their audience. Advocates are defined by how much they like you and are satisfied with their experience with you.

It has been said that influencers drive awareness; advocates drive action. Suffice it to say they can both be helpful to you, provided they have credibility with your target constituencies and an audience of folks that resembles your target constituencies.

Influencers are those folks hanging out by the water cooler that people are somehow most drawn to. The popular kids. It's tempting to simply seek them out and put all your eggs in their basket. After all, they've got thousands and thousands of followers. They'll make you go viral. Right?

If all the stars are aligned, getting influencers to share your blog posts can work. In [Social Media Influence Marketing : When the User Becomes the Ambassador](#) Ray Morin talks about how General Motors partnered with Klout to find users with social scores of 60+; then offered them road tests of the cars GM wanted to promote. Once they experienced the 'ultimate ride' many of them could not resist the temptation to talk about their experience on social media. It worked. And it's worked for nonprofits like Charity:Water who've been able to attract [a host of celebrity spokespersons](#).

More than influencers, you need advocates. Let's get real. Most nonprofits are in a somewhat different situation than a major brand, like GE, that offers a product with universal appeal. Everyone (almost) is interested in cars. So going the Klout route may be somewhat extreme unless everyone in the universe is interested in what you do. And most small to medium-sized nonprofits do not have celebrity endorsers. So you're probably not going to want to put all your eggs, if any, there.

For a great discussion of the relative merits of influencers vs. advocates check out [Short-Term Lease vs Long-Term Relationship: The Difference Between Influencers & Advocates](#) and this cool infographic by Jay Baer [Social Media Influencers versus Brand Advocates](#). The truth is that influencers (just like the popular kid in school) tend to have their own agenda. As soon as someone better comes along they'll drop you quicker than you can say "hot potato."

Whatever you call them, you want to find out who your natural "sharers" may be. By 'natural' I mean folks who are already connected to you or who have a demonstrated interest in your work. Folks who are passionate about your cause. Folks who won't abandon you at a moment's notice. Here are a few possibilities:

- Donors
- Volunteers
- Patrons
- Clients
- Families
- [Niche bloggers](#)

Begin by finding those folks who are most enthusiastic about your organization (aka brand), service or product. You can do this by asking people via email, Facebook or Twitter to let you know: "*On a scale from 0-10, how likely are you to recommend us to your friends?*" Those who answer 9 or 10 are your most likely 'brand advocates'. The other way to figure this out is by simply noticing who shares your content the most; then reach out to them. This latter group is golden, as they're the ones who genuinely enjoy sharing. Plus they tend to be on the look-out for new things to share.

Brand advocates are the key to unlock your promotion strategy potential. According to [one study](#), brand advocates are 83% more likely to share information than typical web users, and 50% more likely to influence a purchase (aka donation). These folks tend to truly value their relationship with you; they like you to notice and appreciate them.

Appreciate your blog boosters! Show your advocates some love. We'll talk more about how to do this below. But if you remember only one thing, remember to religiously say thank you whenever someone talks about you. They gave you a gift. Give them a thank you note. It's what [Miss Manners](#) would tell you to do. If you think people are going to feel or behave differently just because they now have digital communication options, think again. [People are people; making friends matters](#). When it comes to building and sustaining transformative donor relationships, the fact that there's so much noise in today's multi-channel marketplace makes it even more important that we distinguish ourselves in the minds of our supporters as distinct, relevant and caring.

9 Tips to Get Others to Promote Your Nonprofit Blog for You

Talking is what builds your reputation and develops relationships with those who share the values your organization enacts. Talking is central to your blog – and entire social media – strategy. So... let's talk! We've discussed how to find your natural "sharers" – those folks willing to be spokespersons on your behalf, whether they be influencers or advocates. Now let's talk about how to get these boosters to spread your good word through digital word-of-mouth.

9 TIPS FOR GETTING YOUR TALKERS TALKING:

1. Give your top boosters a little love, and a reward or two, to show how much you welcome their participation.

- **Invite them to join your communities** – perhaps a Google+ Community or a LinkedIn Group – in which you can share ongoing news and benefits with this highly motivated market segment.
- **Ask them for comments** at the end of every post. One great enticement for anyone who happens to have their own blog is a WordPress plugin called [CommentLuv](#). What it does is link back to the commenter's most recent post. So, for example, if you're trying to get Mommy bloggers to comment on and share your posts about your organization's after-school program, they may do so because they anticipate folks will also find their own blog this way. Whenever you can provide value for members of your community, that's a win/win. You can [read all about CommentLuv](#) in a great post by [Lilach Bulloch](#).
- **Ask them to review you** (Yelp is great if you're an organization that provides a terrific volunteer experience; check out these 5-star [Yelp reviews](#) for the San Francisco and Marin Food Banks). Think of this as a version of asking for testimonials, which is something you should also consider. See [Testimonials Can Spur the Confidence and Actions You Want](#) by nonprofit marketing guru [Nancy Schwartz](#). It generally makes folks feel important when you ask for their help in this manner.
- **Create sub-email lists with special offers** for these folks; launch posts separately with slightly more personalized twists that encourage sharing (e.g., let them know they can offer discounted tickets to their friends as a special thank you for their long-term support).

2. Ask folks to share a personal story.

Maybe you're a community center and they met at your gym; then lived happily ever after. Perhaps you're a human services agency and you made it possible for their loved one to live their last days with caring and dignity. Or you're an advocacy organization that helped pass legislation that vastly improved their lives. Interview them, and put their story on your blog or videotape it and put it on YouTube; then watch it travel through cyberspace.

3. Ask key supporters to do a guest post on your blog.

Perhaps they have an area of expertise to share, or they've been in the field volunteering, or they've attended a program, or... the possibilities are limitless. Just remember that if you're going to ask for guest posts you need to have some guidelines to facilitate the process. How long? What type of writing? Are they prepared for you to edit the post? Do they have a pretty clear idea of your brand's voice? (More on this below).

4. Guest post on somebody else's blog.

Let's say the same Mommy blogger we spoke of above is looking for some content about art programs for kids. And you happen to have one! This is a great fit, and it's likely the site host will promote you through their various networks. Plus you'll of course include some internal links back to your own blog and website. This is how you expand your reach and link to other people's audiences.

5. Start discussions in forums like LinkedIn Groups or [Yahoo Answers](#).

LinkedIn is my favorite, and there are quite a number of groups for nonprofits dealing with fundraising, social media, management and boards. Plus there are [many topic-specific groups](#). You can either begin a discussion with a link to your blog post or you can include a link when you provide an answer to someone else's discussion query. It's a great way to establish credibility and authority.

6. Comment on other people's posts.

If any of your boosters have their own blogs, give 'em an atta girl whenever it's appropriate. Even the most influential bloggers – the 'celebrities' – like to be admired and appreciated. Commenting and playing nice is a great engagement strategy and will help you show folks you know who they are and are listening. Go one step further and share the posts where you took the time to comment. That's what transforms transactions into lasting relationships.

Whatever you do, always show sincerity. Don't automate everything. One reason why word of mouth is one of the most effective ways of marketing and advertising

is because it's *honest*. If you do need to use prescheduled responses or posts, make sure that you are also regularly monitoring social media so that you can answer your constituents' queries as soon as possible.

7. Talk with experts in your field via video.

You can do this via a number of different platforms as well as in real life at conferences and events. Cross post your content on video platforms like YouTube.

8. Leverage conversation on other social media platforms.

Use the social media conversation to broaden your base of social media acquaintances. For example participate in [Twitter chats](#).

9. Be consistent.

Consistency is one of the keys for successful social media word of mouth marketing. It takes time to develop relationships offline, and it's no different online. Keep the conversations going long past your online events or campaigns are over and keep your fans interested.

Absence does *not* make the heart grow fonder. This is truly a case of "out of sight, out of mind." You need to stay top-of-mind with your audiences. Assure them that they matter to you. Make them feel special and foster passionate advocates who will continue to recommend you to their friends both online and offline for a long time.

Don't worry about too much messaging. A classic rule of advertising is that folks must see something from you seven times before they're ready to make a purchase. My hunch is that, in the age of information overload, this number is probably even larger today. [BTW: This doesn't mean all these messages should be pitches! Try to offer up seven useful and/or interesting pieces of content for every one "ask."]

BOTTOM LINE: Simply ask people to talk about you. Invite partners, allies, co-workers and personal contacts to help disseminate your blog. Brainstorm for bloggers who care about your mission or particular campaign. When I worked at the San Francisco Food Bank, we found that food bloggers and mommy bloggers were good constituencies for us. The former cared about making good, healthy food available to everyone. The latter cared about kids and nutrition. You, your partners and colleagues can be crucial in disseminating your blog to target audiences. Provide sample tweets and Facebook updates to your bloggers and partners and encourage everyone to share the links with their networks.

TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE ACHIEVED!

What you'll do by [engaging](#) folks in the ways described above is create a virtual marketing force that you can [leverage for much more than just reviews](#).

And it doesn't have to be expensive. In [Creating a Citizen Army: Social Media Training for Non-Profit Volunteers Ric Dragon](#), on *Social Media Today*, suggests ways to get people talking even if you have limited resources. One caveat: If you're going to use volunteers to be your brand ambassadors, it's a good idea to do some work fleshing out your "[marketing personas](#)."

As a reminder, personas are imaginary versions of your prospects, customers and the public that contain in-depth, lifelike character traits, including fun names, to help develop content and marketing. Here are some great resources to help you develop personas for your constituents (you may have several different personas for different market segments):

- [How to Build Better Buyer Personas to Drive Killer Content](#)
- [The Marketer's Guide to Creating Buyer Personas](#) [Free downloadable template from Hubspot]
- [The Nonprofit Marketing Personas Workbook](#) (free download from Socialbrite, by John Haydon)



We covered the importance of sharing your blog, making it shareable by others and getting folks to talk about you with their online networks. But there's one important component of your super-sonic blog promotion strategy that we've missed. Here it is:

SEARCH

Let's begin with why it's important to talk about search. Because you want more readers for your blog, right? Well, the people who are your friends plus the people who are *their* friends are not *all* the people in the world. They're not even all the people who may be interested in what you do! Search is how most people find you. [Search is the most common online activity after email](#), and that fact cuts across generations.

You've probably heard of SEO (search engine optimization) and may think it's very mysterious and only for tekkies. Not anymore. It's easy to do and very powerful. Of course, you can make it complicated if you wish. But let's begin at the beginning.

SEO is simply the process of appealing to search engine algorithms to boost your site's rankings in natural (aka organic) search results. This used to be expensive and complex. That was then. It's a new day.

Today, basic SEO is free. You provide Google and other search engine content; they find you. And today they find you more easily when you serve up lots of fresh content. Regularly. You tend to do this with a blog; with a website, not so much. So Google today loves – LOVES – blogs.

NOTE: It also bears mentioning that Google loves all its own products. So, right now it loves Google+. I'm no expert on the subject, but you may want to check out this article from someone who is, [Mark Traphagen: Google Plus SEO: Everybody Talks About It – How Do You DO It?](#) Mark contributes regularly to *Maximize Social Business* if you want to [check out his articles](#). While you're there, you can [check out mine too](#)– I'm there every month with an article about social media and nonprofits!

Today, basic SEO is easy. Most modern themes you'll buy are pretty well-optimized for search traffic already. And if you want to do more, [you can get good enough to do SEO yourself](#) (more on that at the end of this article). If you want to stick with simple, trust me; you can. People who know me know I'm a troglodyte. I learned most of this in the past few months. Here are the basic tools:

PLUGINS

I use [SEO for WordPress](#). It configures titles and posts to be Google search friendly. It's also friendly for linking posts to Facebook and Twitter. You can find best practices and also grab the plugin for your own use [here](#).

My buddy and mentor over at Pushing Social, Stanford Smith, also likes [SEO Friendly Images](#) – which adds blog titles to your [alt-tags](#) for images (reminding us of the importance of putting the right keywords in [titles](#)) – and [SEO Smart Links](#) – which automatically links key phrases in your blog post to other posts on your site.

KEYWORDS

Before you get anxious, keep this in mind – and this advice trumps all other advice about search:

At the end of the day keyword optimization has little to do with SEO. It's about knowing your constituency so well that you learn which words will grab their attention and persuade them that what you're offering has value for them.

How to do this? LISTENING. One way is simply to ask whoever answers your phones to write down the key questions people ask. Then notice which words keep popping up over and over. You then just "optimize" your writing by including some of these frequently used words for maximum effect.

Optimizing key words used to be a lot more difficult than it is today. Marketing analysts used to spend months analyzing particular market niches. Today you can do research in minutes using fairly simple keyword research tools. Is it important? Perhaps. From a traffic perspective, business blogging pundits will tell you that a post using the optimal keywords can bring you 10,000 visitors, where one you write off the top of your head might bring you 100. But if you don't have the time for keyword search, and you do this at the expense of putting effort into providing valuable copy, you're not going to get repeat readers (or buyers, supporters, advocates, volunteers or whatever else you're after). You don't want to lose sight of the forest for the trees and weeds.

You don't have to get into the weeds this much, but a teensy bit of keyword research can probably go a long way. And if you're interested in learning more about search keywords – and having a bit of fun -- you can check out these resources:

➤ **KEYWORD ARTICLES**

[Keyword Research for Web Writers and Content Producers](#) 5-part Guide, on Copyblogger

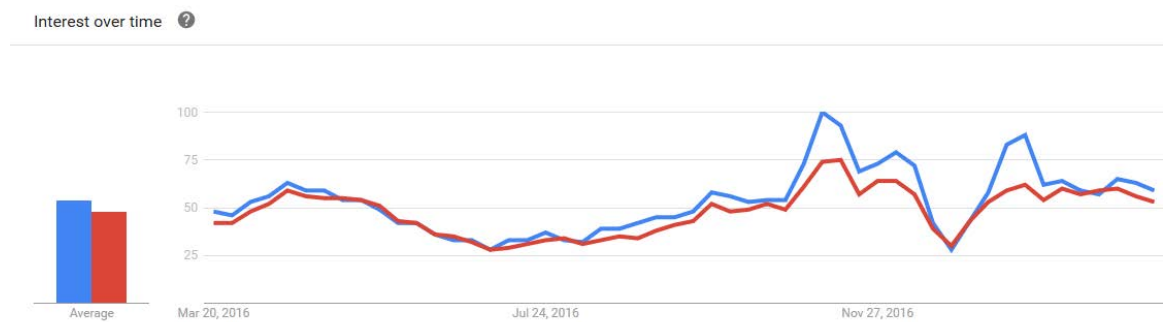
[How to Find the Keywords that Work for Your Content Marketing Goals](#) includes research tools for social networks, on Copyblogger

[SEO Copywriting Made Simple](#) free report, on Copyblogger

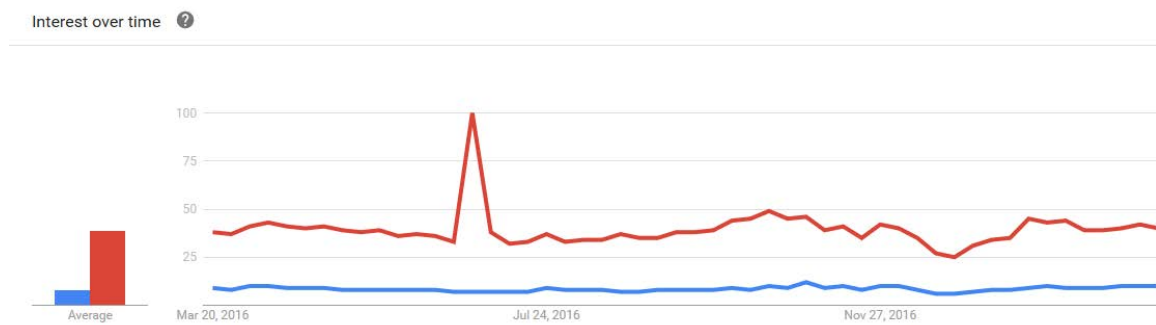
➤ **KEYWORD TOOLS**

Keyword research tools collect information from different search engines to estimate the number of times people search for different phrases. Results on each platform will differ as they all collect information from a different mix of search engines. Some charge a small monthly fee ([Wordze](#), [Keyword Discovery](#) and [Wordtracker](#) all offer free monthly trials). [Google trends](#) is free and could not be easier to use. Just type in any phrase of your choosing in the "Explore" tab and you'll see if more or less people have been searching on this phrase. (e.g., I searched for 'global warming' and 'climate change' and also 'domestic abuse' and 'domestic

violence' I found the latter to be more trending in each case over a 12-month period). Here's what the graphs look like:



Blue is climate change. Red is global warming.



Blue is domestic abuse. Red is domestic violence.

➤ KEYWORD PROPRIETARY SOFTWARE

If you want keyword research, you usually must purchase software. There are some free tools such as [Wordstream Keyword Grouping](#). Other tools may be wrapped into software you already own. For example, [Scribe](#) content marketing software by Copyblogger is a standard feature of the [Rainmaker Platform](#) and built into all [Synthesis Managed WordPress Hosting](#) accounts. You can also install the [WordPress for SEO Plugin](#).

I recently found a really cool website called [SpyFu](#) that allows you to type in the name of a competitor. They'll then show you an overview of organic and paid search, inbound clicks, top competitors, top keywords, top ad word buy recommendations and more. So if you can't pay for this research, maybe you can borrow from a competitor who can.

Okay, enough about Search Engine Optimization, because...

CONTENT

Today, you optimize for readers first and search engines second. In plain English that means focus on your content. [I talk a lot about content marketing on Clairification](#). [Good content is king](#). Always has been. Still is.

And good content will stand you in good stead no matter what Google algorithm changes may portend. And since [they change these around 500 – 600 times each year](#), it's hard to keep up! Luckily, [changes Google has made](#) over the past few years with Panda and Penguin have simplified SEO and made content the core of your search strategy as well (if you want more of this story, read [this](#)).

If you know what your readers want you to give them, and you deliver it, then they're probably going to find you. Still, it doesn't hurt to give your content a little boost and a push out the door.

Today [SEO and content marketing are two parts of a holistic program](#) to assure that folks find you. [If you'd like to learn more about developing remarkable content that will knock your readers' socks off, check out the complete [Clairification Blogging Playbook: How to Write a Great Blog with Amazing Content for Your Non-Profit](#).

WORKFLOW

Those who are thoughtful give their best work a strategic shove. This requires being consistent and methodical every time you post something to assure it is optimized to get traffic. This means sharing on the major social platforms used by your constituents, whether you do it manually or by using sharing tools like Buffer, Hootsuite, Tweetdeck and the like. And it means thinking just a teensy bit about the keywords that you guess will help more folks find you. A lot of your guessing can be informed simply by listening, as we discussed above. Other things you can do on a regular basis (calendar this in your blog content/engagement/promotion plan):

- Put key words in your titles
- Put key words in your social profiles
- Put key words in your 'shares' of posts to your social channels
- Put key words in your posts
- If you have software (like Google Analytics) on your blog, check to see which keywords are driving the most traffic

A lot of search results today depend on which social channels happen to work best for you. You don't know until you try. For me it's LinkedIn and Twitter, so I'll pay more attention to keywords I post in links and discussions there. For many it's FB. I even know a few today who swear by Pinterest and Instagram (and that may work for you too if you're a visually oriented organization). Check out [Social Media and SEO – Do Search Engines Still Deliver a Punch?](#)

Again, don't obsess about keywords. Just don't be unconscious. We're talking about *optimization* here. How to give your posts a push and yourself an edge. I know I may sound like a broken record, but nothing is going to trump content. Consistent, fresh, compelling wow content. Don't trust me. [Trust the SEO experts](#). They all advise the same thing. [Focus first on what your audience wants](#).

Use common sense. Here's one of my favorite tips from the aforementioned experts:

“My best SEO tip is the obvious one: Create compelling content, presented in a lively and entertaining way. Once you've done that, boil down your post into one to three words that describe what it's about, and then use that exact word or phrase in the headline, the URL, the first paragraph and elsewhere in the text. Try to use restraint, though, or your SEO overkill will become obnoxious. For instance, “SEO tip: How can SEO experts leverage SEO to achieve SEO Nirvana in the SEO space? The answer: powerful SEO!”

-- Charlie White – Senior Editor, [Mashable](#) and co-author of [Bloggers Boot Camp](#).

Now you know that search today is not rocket science. If you're still worried about it, check out [The Lazy Bloggers Guide to Effective Blog SEO](#) by my friend Stanford Smith at *Pushing Social*. It's quite reassuring when it comes to optimizing search, and not at all daunting. Seriously, if I can do it you can do it. You can probably do it better!

ADDENDUM:

Blog Promotion Checklist

As discussed herein, there are many different ways to promote your blog. Here's a quick checklist to get you started. You don't need to do all these things. Simply come up with a system that works for you. Then, don't make "hit publish" the last thing you do. Help people find you. Promote your blog posts!

Disseminate On Social Networks

#1: Facebook Update From your on-page Facebook widget, share your new post with your community. Create a targeted SEO update with an image for promotion at a certain time. By clicking on the on-page widget, you encourage others to share it there as well.

#2: The Twitter Update Burst

Using the on-page widget, send out a [tweet to your community](#) announcing the publication of a new blog. This will up your tweet count on the post which will inspire others to share directly from your blog page.

#3: The Bursts on Other Networks

For additional blog promotion, share using the on-page Pinterest and Google+ buttons. (Also share on LinkedIn) Once you have used the on-page buttons, you can revert to promoting from your social network areas using scheduling and pre-created updates.

Distribute With Social Bookmarking Tools

#4: Share and Recommend on StumbleUpon

The StumbleUpon widget should be available from your blog post page. With every post that you publish, share it on the platform. Join a rating group. Get your friends to vote it up!

#5: Syndicate with Scoop.it and Digg

Use content curation tools like [Scoop.it](#) and [Digg](#) to showcase your content to larger communities. Don't forget to share and engage on these platforms for exposure.

#6: Share on Your Bookmarking Network

Blog promotion is about using the tools you have access too. Any other social bookmarking tools like [Delicious](#), [Reddit](#) or [Triberr](#) deserve to be part of your network.

Syndicate Using Content Marketing Strategies

#7: The 25 Comments Boost

For every blog post that you create, prepare to use your social bookmarking tools to help you find 25 different bloggers to support. Find a related post to yours, create a valuable comment and include a link to your blog.

#8: The Email/Newsletter Boost

Include your new blog post in your weekly email marketing letter. In fact, include all the links to all 5 posts that you wrote this week. You can also go into more detail about a subject that you wrote about in a newsletter.

#9: The Blog Network Boost

Get your network to visit and comment, and do the same on their blog. You should have a network of at least 5 authority bloggers that love to help you, because you help them. When you publish a new post, let them know – and invite comments and sharing.

#10: The Different Media Showcase

Turn your blog post into sharable media – a video, a slideshare presentation and a podcast. Add new dimensions to your conversation to make it interesting for readers that want to find out more about your topic.

There are a million other ways to get increased blog promotion for your posts. These however, are uniquely scalable, according to the limited budgets and time that many nonprofits have to invest in their blogs.

Don't Forget to Download your Extra BONUS:

["The Keys to Nonprofit Blogging that Drives Engagement"](#) (webinar recording for Good Done Great by Claire Axelrad).

To your success!



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