



“If a tree falls in the forest and no one hears it, does it make a sound?”

This is supposed to be a deeply philosophical thought experiment, but to us there's a simple answer: who cares? Unheard noise might as well be silence, just like unseen awesome digital content might as well be a blank screen.

During the time it took to read that first paragraph, five billion new blogs were posted to the internet. Okay, not quite, but the point stands: it's now harder than ever to stand out online. So to help make sure your blog posts are getting the exposure they deserve — today and tomorrow — we've created this handy future-proof checklist.

Let's make some noise.

FIRST THINGS FIRST...

1



Get Visual

The data is clear: strong visuals are needed to grab the attention of today's web user. If you're including all text, or only dull stock images, you're not setting yourself up for success. We recommend including in any blog post:

- 1 bold and relevant feature image
- 2 additional images to support the body and narrative of your text
- 1 punchy interactive or animated visual embed (meme, gif, short video, etc.)



2



Optimize for Search



SEO best practices change as quickly as the algorithms that dictate them, but some cornerstones for gaining search visibility will never go out of style:

- Identify a target keyword, plus several longtail variations, and populate them throughout your post
- Run Google searches for these terms to learn about types of content that are already ranking
- Use tools like BuzzSumo and Answer the Public to find out what's trending socially around the topic
- Write a meta description that accurately depicts what's inside and compels a click
- Draft an irresistible title tag that includes your target keyword
- Crosslink to other relevant content within your post, leveraging keywords in anchor text

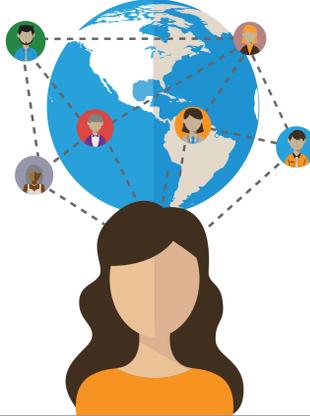
3



Plan for Social

Social media is made for sharing. But with so much sharing going on across every network, a well crafted approach is critical. You'll want to lay groundwork for a sound social strategy, mixing organic and paid promotion. Take these steps before clicking "Publish":

- Develop a budget for paid reach on the channels used most by your audience
- Draft several different sets of social copy for organic posts tailored to each network
- Build relationships with influencers and thought leaders with authority around the post topic (outreach, social interactions, comments on blogs, etc.)
- Identify online communities, groups, or forums covering the subject area, and create a helpful presence

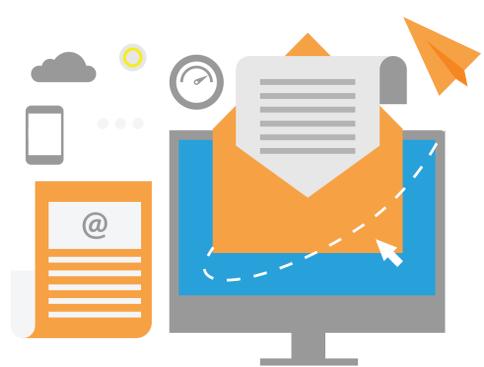


ONCE YOUR POST IS LIVE...

4



Engage Your Email List



Much like social media, email remains an effective platform for blog promotion, but today's environment necessitates more nuanced and thoughtful campaign execution. Here are a few ways to make your deliveries more dynamic:

- Use an RSS-to-email feature to automate blog post deliveries
- Segment your subscriber list and target only groups relevant to the post topic
- Write attention-grabbing subject lines, and A/B test to optimize
- Make sure formatting is clean, simple, and (above all) mobile-friendly
- Include links for recipients to share socially directly from the email

5



Follow Through on Social

The prepwork from Step 3 will make this one a breeze. Now that your post is live in the wild, it's time to share and amplify via social media so people can find it. Follow this formula:

- Publish organic posts with teasers, trackable shortlinks, and eye-catching images on your social networks of choice
- Schedule several spaced-out posts to those same networks over the following days and weeks
- Boost your best-performing organic promo posts through paid amplification
- Reach out to influencers whose specialties tie to the subject, and ask if they'd like to share (providing them with pre-written posts will make it easy for them)
- Include the social handles of experts mentioned or quoted in the post to get their attention
- Share the post in relevant communities or groups where you've established a presence



6



Spread the Word

There are a number of additional actions you can take to maximize your blog post's reach and impact. For example:

- Add a link to your email signature so it appears at the bottom of each message you send
- Include the post in your company's next newsletter, if applicable
- Write a guest blog for a popular industry site and link back to your post
- Share directly with high-value customers who are most likely to find the post useful
- Link to your post on social bookmarking sites like Digg or StumbleUpon
- Encourage coworkers to share in their networks

7



Ongoing Promotion

The work doesn't stop. In order to truly get the most out of your post, and set up future entries for success, you'll want to make sure you're systematically enhancing your promotion process for sustainability. Build a routine around these practices:

- Vigilantly monitor analytics to determine which channels are driving the most traffic, and invest more in top referrers
- Switch your heading and/or imagery if the post isn't gaining traction
- Thank influencers and peers who shared your post; pay back the favor by sharing their content
- Continually build your personal brand to expand your network and find new readers



RINSE AND REPEAT

Creating an exceptional blog post is hard work. Don't do it a disservice by failing to properly promote and amplify.

Consistently following this checklist will ensure your content doesn't fall silently in an empty forest.

