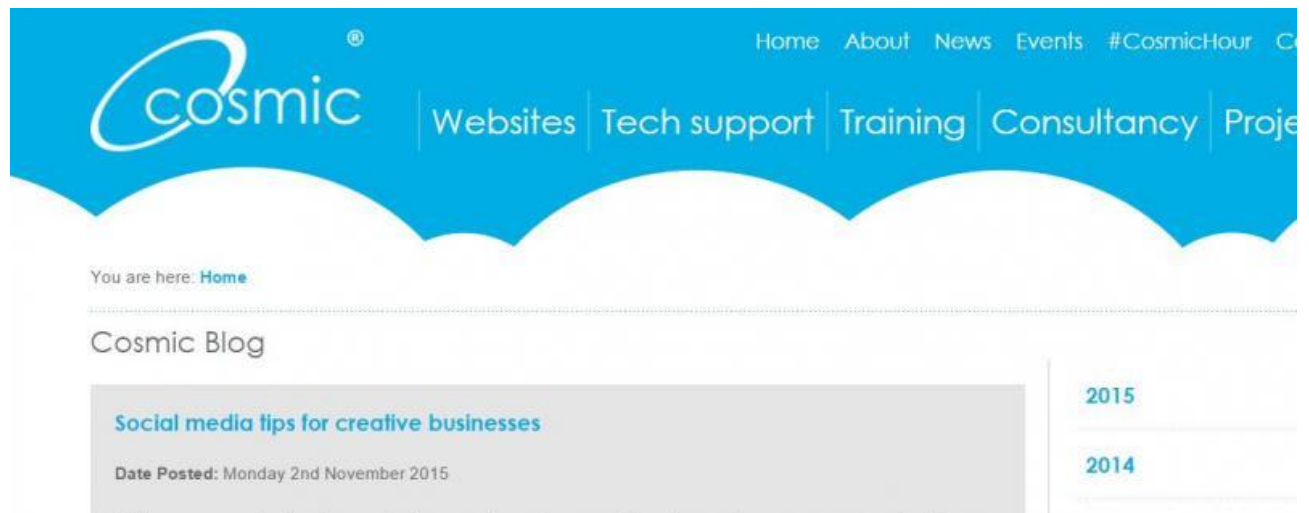


# Bloggging for Business

## Part 1

We have written a series of reviews recently on a number of blogging platforms that you have access to (both paid and free) but you may not have the first idea of why you should be blogging, or what indeed, is a blog?

Here at Cosmic we highly recommend that you blog regularly for your business and so over the next series of blog posts we will talk you through what is a blog, where did it originate, how is it going to be useful for you, and your business and how you can benefit from it.



First of all, let's take a look at some stats...

- 6.7m people blog on blogging sites
- A further 12m blog via Social Media
- 77% of internet users read blogs
- Small businesses with blogs generate 126% more leads
- 61% of consumers have made a purchase based on a blog post
- 60% of businesses who blog acquire more customers
- 5th most trusted source for accurate online information

And if that wasn't enough to convince you;

- A new blog is created somewhere in the world every half a second
- Around 175,000 blogs are added to the Internet daily
- There are over 150,000,000 blogs on the Internet

## So, what is a blog?

A blog is a regularly updated website or web page, typically one run by an individual or small group that is written in an informal or conversational style.

**Blog** (noun) – a journal or diary that is on the Internet.

**Blogger** (noun) – a person who keeps a blog 'Bloggers are revolutionizing the way news is shared.'

**Blog** (verb) – to write a blog 'I am going to blog before breakfast this morning.'

**Blogging** (verb) – the action of writing a blog 'Blogging is my way of sharing my passions with the world.'



## When was the first blog created?

It's generally recognized that the first blog was [Links.net](#), created by Justin Hall, while he was a Swarthmore College student in 1994. Of course, at that time they weren't called blogs, and he just referred to it as his personal homepage.

It wasn't until 1997 that the term "weblog" was coined. The word's creation has been attributed to [Jorn Barger, of the influential early blog Robot Wisdom](#). The term was created to reflect the process of "logging the web" as he browsed.

## Did you know?

- The first blogs were hand-coded by the authors, however then came the rise of the blogging software.
- Blogger was created in 1999
- WordPress 2003
- Many more followed as you have read about [here](#) and [here](#).

## Part 2

**Last time we introduced you to blogs** - what are they, where did they originate from and who uses them. This time we want to tell you why you should be regularly blogging for your business.

### So, why blog?

- A blog gives your company a voice
- They are easy to use
- Free!
- A blog enables you to connect and share with your customers
- It is a direct communication channel
- Your blog will fuel SEO
- They share your expertise
- It will keep you focused, motivated & energised
- They are stimulating for you and your readers
- A blog builds confidence, relationships & sales
- And it tells your story
- 

But let's go a bit deeper than that.

A blog is a simple, easy-to-use platform for connecting with and sharing timely and relevant information with customers. It's your direct communication channel. On your blog you can share so much more than you can on your social media platforms and go into more detail. However, that content used within your blog can then be distributed throughout your Facebook page, Twitter, LinkedIn, email newsletters, e-books, etc, so it is such a valuable basis for your content marketing efforts.

Blog writing makes you think - about newsworthy topics, your industry, your customers and the world around you. It helps you learn and expand – the research you will do writing a certain blog post will stay with you and help you build your expertise in your industry.

It creates a two way conversation with your customers and peers. It encourages interaction, comments and feedback. Just make sure you reply to all your comments. It can also be fun, energising, and something that you really look forward to.

We have spoken about time management in previous blog posts – well writing a blog really does keep you focused on your content marketing strategy. You must create a schedule and stick to it to continuously deliver relevant content.

A blog will build confidence – not only your own but your customers confidence in you. They will look to you as a reliable resource for information on your industry. Confidence becomes trust which becomes a relationship and then a sale.

Through blogging you will become an expert in your field and be able to position yourself as a thought leader within your industry. And all from writing a few words!

## So how will you make your blog stand out?

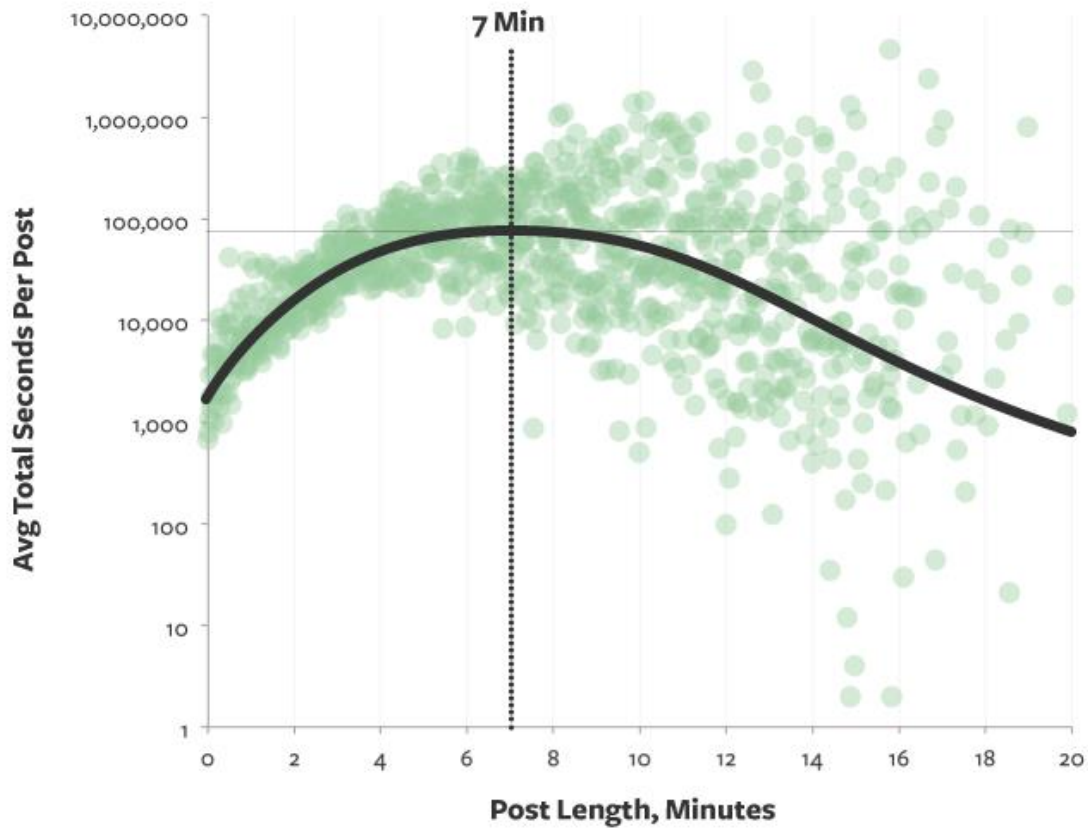
- The top 5 things you can do to make content that stands out in 2015:
- Focus on consistency, great topics, and growing your audience.
- Publish more quality content than anyone else in your niche.
- Try under-used content formats.
- Focus your time on fewer content formats.
- Plan your blog to save time when you actually write your posts.

Source: Contently 19.10.2015

## How long should my blog post be?

Well there isn't really a definitive answer to this one, as there are conflicting opinions from various experts, but...

According to [Medium.com](http://Medium.com), the ideal length of a blog post is 7 minutes, 1,600 words.



Medium.com argues that regardless of however many experts say shorter is better; 'what it means is that it's worth writing however much you really need. Don't feel constrained by presumed short attention spans. If you put in the effort, so will your audience.'

However, [Seth Godin](#) writes short blog posts, commonly under 150 words and he is one of the greatest marketing minds of our age.



### Should we pander?

In a race to go faster, cheaper and wider, it's tempting to strip away elegance, ornamentation and subtlety. If you want to reach more people, aim for average.

The market, given a choice, often picks something that's short-term, shoddy, inane, obvious, cheap, a quick thrill. Given the choice, the market almost never votes for the building, the monument or the civic development it ends up being so proud of a generation later. Think about it: the best way to write an instant bestseller is to aim low.

The race to popular belies the fact that our beloved classics were yesterday's elitist/obscure follies.

Bob Dylan, Star Trek and the Twilight Zone vs. The Monkees, The Beverly Hillbillies and Gilligan's Island.

Zaha Hadid and Maya Lin vs. Robert Moses.

A Confederacy of Dunces vs. Valley of the Dolls.

No one watches Ed Sullivan reruns (except for one, the exception that proves that rule).

Ultimately you need to write how much you need to write to make your point. Don't worry about too long or too short, as long as it is written well, and is informative, educational or inspiring then you have achieved your brief.

Here are a few tips to bear in mind...

- Use correct spelling and grammar – if possible get someone to read through it before posting
- Blog weekly if possible, if not then as regular as you can
- Use good quality images – and make them pinnable
- Don't waffle!
- Always share your blog through your social media
- Link to your website from your blog
- Try to get guest bloggers once you are a little more established
- Read other blogs
- Plan ahead

## Part 3

In the previous two blog posts we have shared a brief history of blogging, what it means to blog and why you should be introducing blogging into your business strategy. This week, we concentrate on hooking your potential readers with catchy titles, what to blog about and sharing your blog through Pinterest.

So, you know why you need to blog, but what do you talk about? And how do you get readers clicking and subscribing?

**Well, here are a few content ideas for things to write about.**

- Run a contest/giveaway
- Review books/products/films


- How to's/guides/tutorials
- Interview someone
- Post a cool infographic
- Create a photo post
- Write inspirational/motivational post with famous quotes
- Lists – 15 best ways to...
- Behind the scenes
- Ask questions / post responses to blog comments
- Share your goals
- Share your favourite blogs / bloggers
- Invite readers to submit guest posts
- Share your fail stories, not just your successes
- Historical 'On this day' posts
- Hints & Tips about your industry

There are so many ideas it's difficult to know where to start, which is where your content strategy needs to make sense, and that is why it is important to plan your content as we discussed in part 1.

Once you have made a plan, and you know that the content you have planned in is in context (i.e. relevant to you and your followers) then you can start writing. Use the above list for inspiration but you will also find ideas everywhere!

The next step is to create a catchy title; you need to make people want to click on your post. Think engaging and entertaining – but how? There are a couple of tools that you can use for inspiration and these are [Hubspot blog topic generator](#) and [Portent's content idea generator](#).

The idea for both of these free tools is to put in your subject and they will suggest catchy titles for you to use. Give it a go – it's pretty fun!

The image shows a screenshot of a web-based tool interface. At the top, there is a decorative orange bar with various icons. Below this, on the left, is instructional text: "Fill in the fields with terms (preferably nouns) that you'd like to write about, and we'll come up with a week's worth of relevant blog post titles in a matter of seconds!" followed by a disclaimer: "Disclaimer: Our algorithm isn't perfect. After you have your titles, you may want to tweak them to be more relevant to your terms and grammatically correct." On the right side, there are three input fields containing the words "blogging", "digital", and "marketing". A question mark icon is positioned to the left of the first field. Below the input fields is a prominent orange button with the text "GIVE ME BLOG TOPICS!". The bottom of the screenshot shows a solid black horizontal bar.

## A WEEK OF BLOG TOPICS, JUST FOR YOU

- 1 The Worst Advice We've Ever Heard About Blogging
- 2 What Will Digital Be Like In 100 Years?
- 3 Why We Love Marketing (And You Should, Too!)
- 4 14 Common Misconceptions About Blogging
- 5 10 Signs You Should Invest In Digital

◀ TRY AGAIN



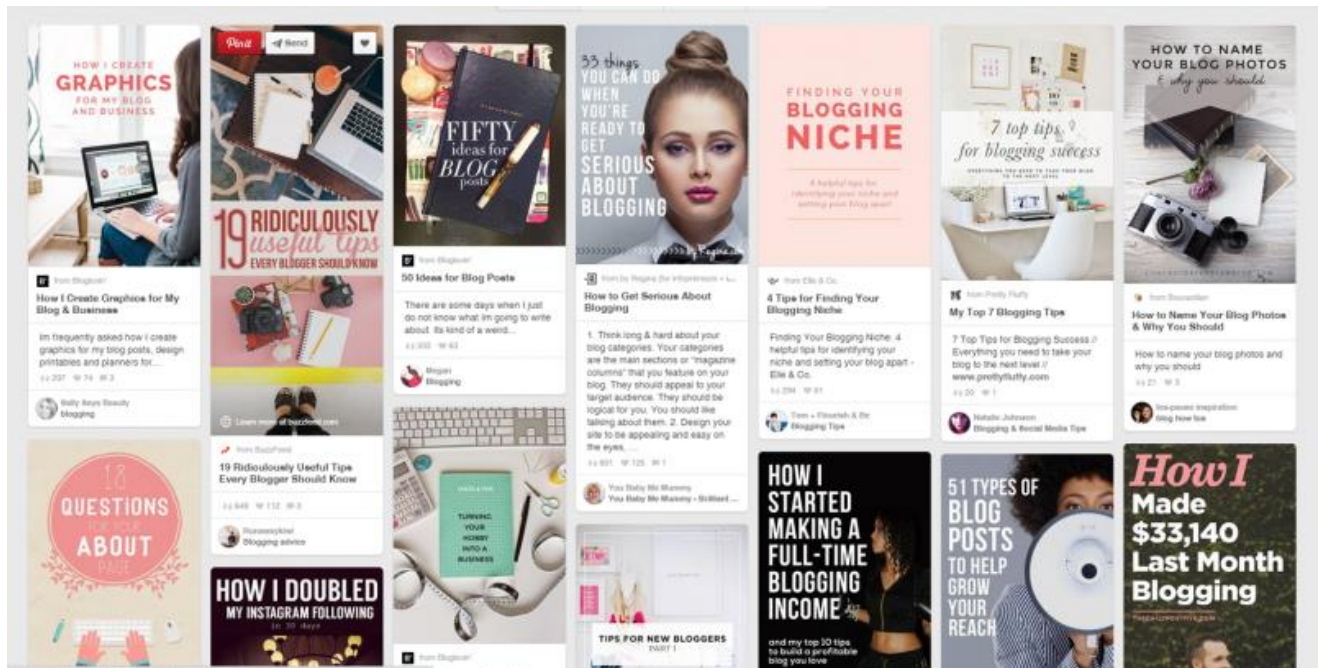
The screenshot shows the 'Content Idea Generator' interface. At the top, it says 'POCKET'S Content Idea Generator'. Below this, there are four words: 'Who', 'Really', 'Uses', and 'Advertising'. A text box contains the word 'Advertising' and a refresh button. To the left, a callout box says 'Flawed people are more interesting.' To the right, another says 'Use one space after a period. Seriously.' Below the words, there are two more callout boxes: 'Celebs? Experts? Chicken Farmers?' and 'I pity the fool who doesn't use it.' At the bottom, there is a 'Tweet This' button and a note: 'Did the Content Idea Generator Fall English? That's impossible! See below for tips on how to make it work better.'



The screenshot shows the 'Content Idea Generator' interface. At the top, it says 'POCKET'S Content Idea Generator'. Below this, there are four words: 'The 16', 'Best', 'Resources for', and 'Blogging'. A text box contains the word 'Blogging' and a refresh button. To the left, a callout box says 'Remember high school superlatives? No one cares who is 2nd "most likely to succeed!"'. To the right, another says 'Resource comes from the old French for "rally." Get readers excited.' Below the words, there are two more callout boxes: 'Odd numbers are more intriguing than even ones. Weird but true.' and 'Want shares? Create content that makes your readers look smart.' At the bottom, there is a 'Tweet This' button and a note: 'Did the Content Idea Generator Fall English? That's impossible! See below for tips on how to make it work better.'

We can't talk about blogging without talking about [Pinterest](#), as that is where your blog can really generate followers. Take a look at this screenshot below of a few blog posts about blogging. Each one has a catchy title and strong image. This is what you are competing with when writing your own blog.





Pinterest is invaluable for a blogger – we have discussed before about how [Pinterest brings an average of 300% more traffic to your site than Facebook](#). The beauty of Pinterest for a blogger is the longevity of the pin. Pinner will be re-pinning your pin (and therefore your blog) for weeks, months and years. Your blog post (if high content and in context, with great title and clear images) will continue to be seen and read for so much longer. It is a fact that the half-life of a Pinterest pin is 1,600 times longer than a Facebook post. Let's take advantage of the amount of engagement this can give us!

So this is why it is so important to get your title and your images right – your potential customer or client will need to decide instantly whether your blog is worth clicking on, and as soon as they have then you have hooked them in.

So remember;

- Include engaging photos or graphics – articles with images get 94% more views
- Use clean design and layout. Good design, along with quality content are the top two factors that add credibility
- Make sure your site is mobile optimised
- Have a unique voice – write conversationally, use simple words & short sentences
- Connect with Social Media to greatly increase your traffic
- Create a call to action – eg sign up to newsletter
- Write a comprehensive 'about' page
- Project yourself as an expert and thought leader in your industry



- Have regular makeovers of your blog to keep it fresh
- Read more blogs and engage with other writers
- Plan ahead, using your blog as a key part of your content marketing strategy
- Keep your content in context and relevant to your audience
- Check spelling and grammar – then check it again!

Good luck! If you would like any help with any of the above then please do get in touch with us. We are always keen to hear your thoughts and ideas for new how-to's and blog posts so we would love to hear from you.