

TIPS ON HOW TO WRITE AN AWESOME BLOG!

A blog is a great tool for sharing information, mobilizing support and starting a discussion about an issue of great interest or concern. As a youth advocate, a blog can be used to create awareness, educate and empower others to mobilize through accurate information dissemination.

When writing a blog, think of it as an opportunity to simultaneously reach a diverse audience spread out across the world. To effectively maximize this opportunity, you must pay attention to some key elements:

1. Headline
2. Body
3. Visualization (photos)
4. Conclusion

Headline

This is the title of blog post in three to six words. It is the catch phrase that tells a reader why they should stop by your page to read what you published. Your headline should be attractive enough to draw readers to your content. Think of the headline as the door to your room (blog). A good headline means readers can be attracted to walk through the door. It's common to write headline last when the content of their blog post is ready

Body

If the headline attracts readers to a blog, the body is what retains the readers and inspires them to share the content with others. The body of a blog post is the main content. This can be in text, photo or video format.

When the body is in text format, the writer must ensure he/she is articulate and the information provided is well researched and evidence-based. If you use sources, try as much as possible to insert hyperlinks to these sources. It is also important provide a comprehensive perspective of the topic, by including some statistics and a human story. Your role is to provide the evidence to make your case, but also share how the issue affects people and communities.

In photo format, the pictures must have good caption that will provide additional information beyond what is in the pictures which tells the story.

For videos, it must be good quality and be well embedded into the blog.

In sum, it is important to Keep It (the body) Short and Simple [KISS]. The text contents should always be between 300 to 800 words [sub-heads should be used if blog post is longer than 500 words to keep the readers engaged], the pictures must not be more than 5-7 and video should not be longer than three minutes. The language must be simple and easy to comprehend, which is appropriate to your target audience.

Visualization

To make the content of the blog post come alive, it is important to always provide a visual to your blog posts. This can be in the form of images, especially when the body of the blog is in text format. When presenting statistics, use visualization tools provided online for easy comprehension and to also make your post exciting to readers. Graphics are powerful ways to communicate your message. A good tool is infoagr.am <http://infoagr.am/> where you can create your own graphs.

It is important that every blog post have a deliberate conclusion, which can be achieved by highlighting the issues raised in the body of the post or by providing a call to action. As an advocate, make it a point to ensure your blog posts are usually solution-focused. As it is, there are already thousands of critical blogs out there. You want to stand out by not only sharing your facts about a challenge but by also suggesting ways to tackle the challenge.

Get started on your blog post right away! What will it be about? Here is a summary of how to make it a good one:

1. First decide what you want to write about! It is very helpful to know the what. This is your roadmap.
2. After deciding on the what, ask yourself, "How do I want to present this blog post?" The 'how' includes the format you will use in presenting your blog-- A video? A podcast? A photo story? An essay?
3. Videos must be in good quality. It must not be longer than three minutes. Of course, unless there is need to have an hour long video. Keep in mind that the most powerful messages in video formats are those that are one and half to three minutes short.
4. Only high-resolution pictures should be used to communicate messages. Each picture should also have a good caption that gives readers additional information about the event beyond what the eyes can see in the pictures. Photos used as stand-alone content must not be more than seven in a post.
5. Blog content presented in text format should be between 400-800 words. Information provided must be fact-checked before publishing to ensure accurate presentation of statistics and data, as applicable. As much as possible, link to your sources
6. Use a story telling technique <http://beafreelanceblogger.com/storytelling-blogging/> in your writing style! Blog contents presented in a storytelling technique retain readers, prompts them to share the blog link, and cause them to visit again and again.
7. Remember you are writing for a diverse audience. Language use must be simple and easy to comprehend.
8. Do not copy-and-paste contents from other sources without acknowledging the source of your contents. Even if you are only quoting a line or two, always attribute your source and link where possible
9. Keep your blog content solution-focused. As a change-maker, your audience might be looking up to you for direction.
10. Always ensure your concluding paragraph gives a call to action or provides a to-do for your readers to take on.
11. Make sure the headline of your blog post is attractive and not longer than six words.
12. Blogging is fun! There are people waiting to hear from you. Get started and enjoy the ride!