

# Remarkable Tips for Growing Your Blog

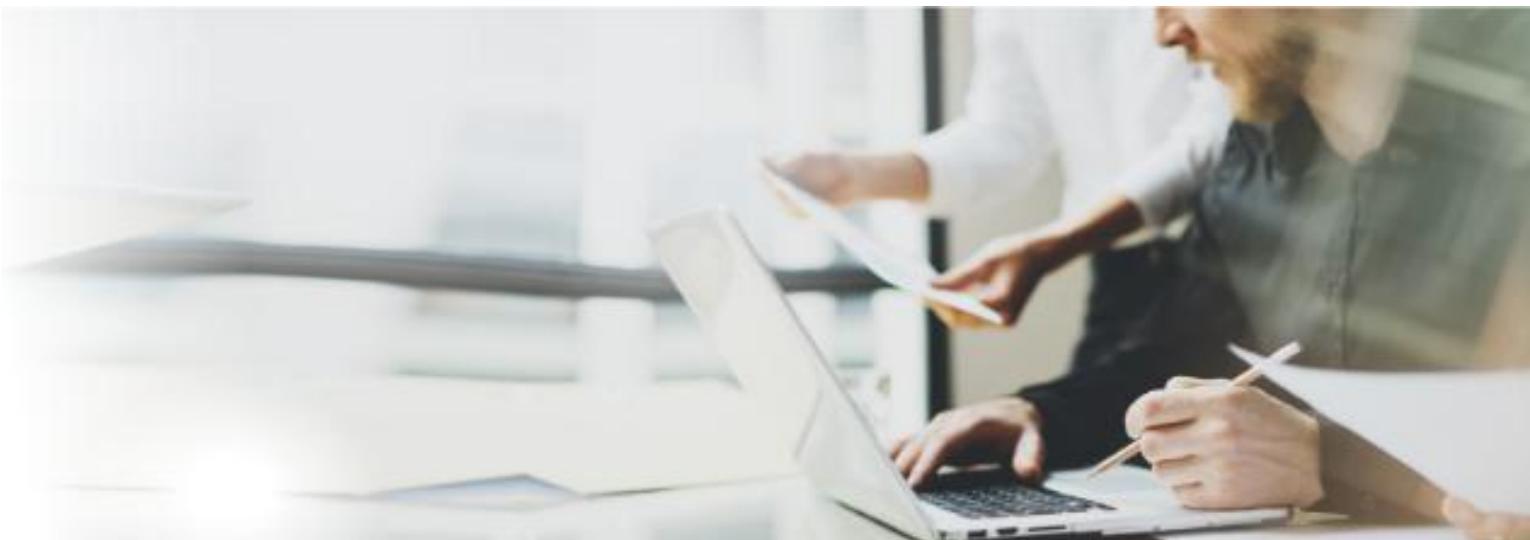


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## 7 Signs Your Blog is on Life Support

Life support. I can imagine that's not a good place to be. Yes, humans and animals get sick and languish near death. I'm sad to say, though, that many blogs are deteriorating.

How would you recognize the warnings signs that your blog is heading towards the Pearly Gates of the Blogosphere? Is St. Peter waiting for your blog?

Consider the following tell-tale signs that it may be time to pull the plug on your blog. Translation: A redesign may be in your very near future.

1. **My blog** is updated every two weeks—or every three months—depending on when “The Bachelor” or “Game of Thrones” is on the tube.
2. **My blog** content is all about me. Hey, my name and mug shot are on the top. Who else would I want to spotlight? Tip: The branded banner on your website or blog is fine, but the stories and information you share must be about helping the reader solve a problem.
3. **My blog** has links that lead to dead-ends and expired pages. I've been too busy to deal with those small details. Source: Refer to No. 1.
4. **My blog** has posts with word counts of 3,261, give or take. A study said I'll appear smarter if I have long-form content. Snarky insight: Repetition is fabulous when it comes to word count.
5. **My blog** is quite humble. I don't like to brag and self-promote with keywords and such. I'm sure those search engines and that Google thingie will bring readers my way. I'm not looking to be an overnight success. I'm comfortable behind the scenes. Rhetorical question: How can your business succeed if you're not front and center?
6. **My blog** is consistent in its appearance. All the colors, graphics, and fonts are from a template my 12-year-old neighbor designed. How cool is that? I couldn't afford one of those flashy web consultants. Who needs white space, a theme and snappy headlines? And what the hell is WordPress anyway? Words of wisdom: You get what you pay for.
7. **My blog** is easy to maintain. I turned off the response option so people can't comment. It's low-maintenance for me and keeps out nasty anonymous jerks. Hint: Social media is a two-way street. People like to be part of a community and share their insights.

Oh no, is that a flat line?

## 8 Ways to Increase Traffic to Your Blog

No one likes to sit in traffic, but everyone *wants* traffic. Suddenly, traffic is good.

To drive readers to your blog—and keep them coming back—here are eight tips to consider:

1. **Stick with one thing.** It can be broad, but it's important that you know (and love) your subject matter. This helps to build your brand and online persona. Your blog is like a long-term relationship. You love it, and you stay together. When you focus on your niche and are passionate about it, readers will respect you as an authority in your field. Trust and passion shine.
2. **Read everything in your industry.** We are fortunate to have an abundance of resources and information at our fingertips. Stay current by reading the opinions and rants of others in your field— including competitors. Look and listen for trends. This leads to [quality content](#). No time you say? Just an observation: Binge watching Netflix isn't a productive way to spend precious hours.

**3. Write for the reader.** Blogging is not a 300-level college business class. If someone wanted that, they'd buy a textbook. Write as if you are speaking to one person. Conversational, casual and heartfelt. I believe that people don't want to follow your blog. They want to follow *you*. Reach out to them through your words, experiences and expertise. Let them get to know you. Then they'll come back— and bring friends. Stuffy stinks. Don't you agree?

**4. Solve their problem.** When you consider yourself a problem-solver and not a salesperson, people will be attracted to you and your message. Write with the sole purpose of helping your reader ease their challenges. It's not about you. Be the solution.

**5. Involve them.** You may think the only interactive part of blogging is the [comments](#) section. Think again. Ask your readers a question. Get into their heads. They'll feel as though you're connecting directly to them. Here are some examples:

- “Your thoughts?”
- “Did you ever burn the roast minutes before your guests arrived? Here's how to avoid cooking disasters.”
- “Stuffy stinks. Don't you agree?”
- “If you're like me and dislike the airport...”

**6. Keep it reader-friendly.** Catchy, relevant headlines that impact people will compel them to continue reading. Grab their attention with short and punchy sentences. Use images and pictures to break up the text. Use bold or italics to emphasize key points. We are all skimmers and scanners who quickly glance at something to see what jumps out at us. Give them nuggets.

**7. Forget the “rules.”** I don't know about you, but I hear a lot of buzz about editorial calendars, the number of posts you should write and word count. There are no rules. It's whatever works for you. Don't over think because it will paralyze you. I use a journal to write down ideas and notes that [spark my creativity](#). I don't need a calendar to tell me when to write. When I “feel” it, I write. We can't force creativity. Also, consider quotas. I don't like them. I prefer to write quality content that's relevant and inspiring. It may be two posts a week or four a week. Who knows? On the word count issue, just make your point. There is no word count. BUT...make every word count.

**8. Focus on the positive.** Sure, the world seems rougher than ever, and some people are mean. If you're in a foul mood, don't write. You'll only be spreading poison. The goal is to draw people to your blog, not repel them.

**BONUS!** Another key way to engage people—especially “non-readers” —is to create [video blogs](#). Sprinkle these into your repertoire from time to time. Vlogs allow viewers to hear your voice and observe your style. It's a fabulous way to build rapport.

## Should You Care if No One Comments on Your Blog?

You agonize about the topic, timing, audience, reaction and traffic that your new blog post may bring. You quietly pray for a comment or two. Then nothing. It's a sickening feeling—like throwing a party, and no one shows. Well, relax. It's not quite that bad.

It's human nature to want to be accepted, validated, and recognized. In [social media](#), that means a comment on a post or retweet. Social media is engaging in a two-way conversation. So, if no one acknowledges our work and engages with us, does that mean it stinks? If a tree falls in the forest...

Here are five things to consider if you're frustrated by a lack of comments on your blog:

1. **Avoid using the wrong metrics.** Just because no one commented doesn't mean your post wasn't read. It's like a radio station that's giving away concert tickets. If only five people called in to win, it doesn't mean only five people were listening. It takes a lot to motivate people to do something. Don't jump to hasty conclusions.

2. **Get over yourself.** Did you write your post with the intention of getting approval or validation from others? I imagine most people write to share good content and help others. Eleven-year-old's hope for validation on their new clothes or gadgets. "Did Emma really like my new jeans from Hollister?!" If you are OK with what you have written or recorded—blog post or jeans—then all is well. We're adults. Leave the shrieking to the kids.

3. **Keep in mind that some people are shy.** I [coach](#) some of them. Many are working diligently to become more extroverted, both online and in person. They shy away from offering opinions and participating in chats. It doesn't mean they're disinterested or didn't read your material. They might simply prefer to [hover](#).

4. **Take the time to practice.** [Writing](#) is a creative art that many people struggle with. It takes time, practice, and yes mistakes to improve. Keep working at it without worrying that you only have a small following (and no comments). Consider this a benefit that you are not stumbling in front of a huge crowd. Once you start to perfect the craft, you'll see that people will be there to read, and comment.

5. **Think about others.** Writing comments takes time and thought. Some people just can't spare one or both. A reader may be inspired or touched by what you've written, but they may not have the time needed to react with something thoughtful. So, they don't. Blogging and commenting (the good comments) require critical thinking skills.

If you want more perspectives on blogging—from Seth Godin and Tom Peters—[read this](#).

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