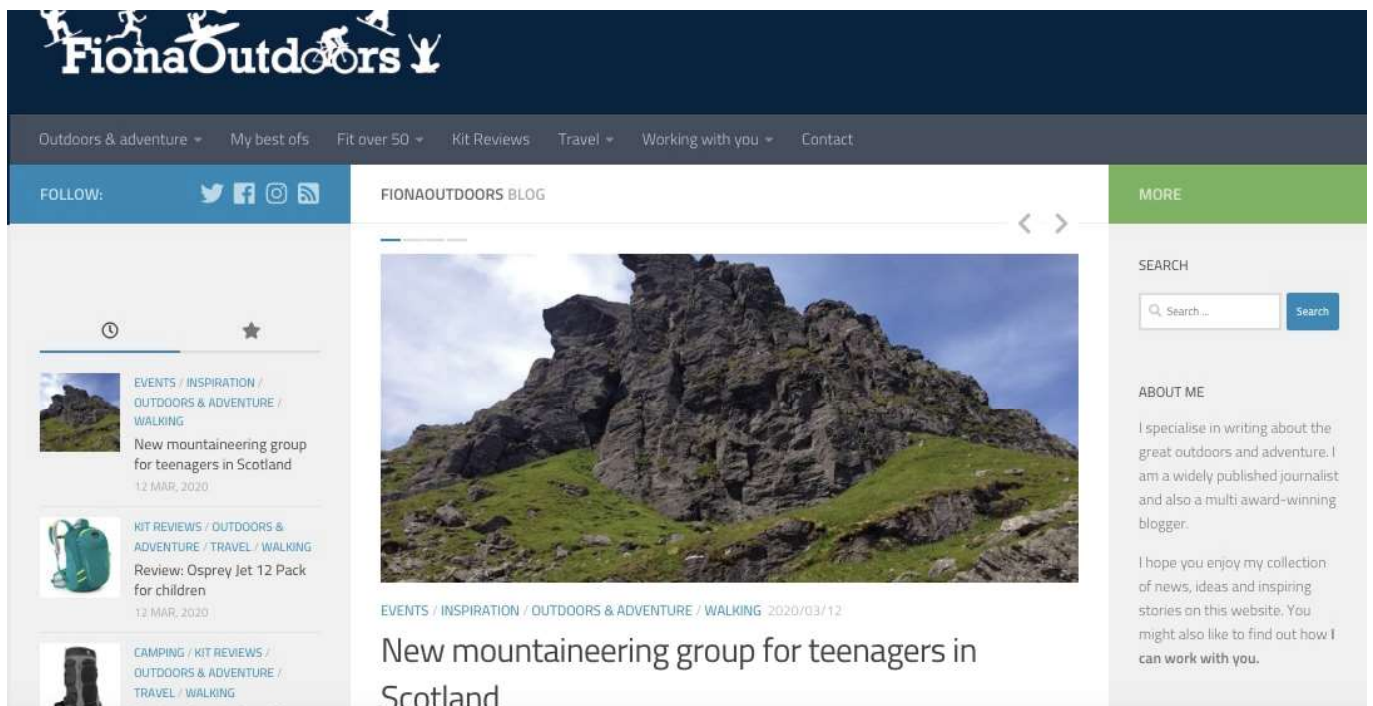




A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO...

**BLOGGING
FOR BUSINESS**

WHO AM I?



www.fionaoutdoors.co.uk

- **Started as a press journalist**
- **Freelance journalist**
- **New career as a blogger (award winning website)**
- **And a ghost blogger**

BLOGGING FOR BUSINESS

This session will cover:

- **What is blogging?**
- **The benefits of blogging for business (including SEO)**
- **Tips for successful blog writing**



THE ORIGINS OF BLOGGING

Where did it start? :

Web log – a personal log/diary on-line

Grown: Now there are hundreds of millions of blogs worldwide,

Not all blogs are the same...

- **Personal diaries** (*can be a blogging platform or on Facebook etc*)
- **Blogs that have become websites**
- **Blogs as news pages on company and business websites**



A FEW EXAMPLES: A PERSONAL BLOG

- A runner writing about her training and races.

DEBBIE MARTIN-CONSANI


Sugar-coating not included

WEDNESDAY, 25 SEPTEMBER 2019

Centurion Track 100: Race report

Centurion Running Track 100
Photos by Jack Atkinson
Official race report

A race report about running 402 (and a bit extra) laps around a 400 metre track. Where do I start? If I've got your attention thus far, I'll try and spice it up a bit. I promise it won't be a turn-by-turn account of the day, but hopefully a tale of not shit-quitting when things weren't working out the way I wanted them to.





So firstly let me delve a little into how I found myself running in circles again, after swearing on everything I loved and possessed that I would never – like, ever – repeat such a torturous and pointless endeavour.

I still hold the Scottish 100 mile record of 15:48:18, which I set at the World 24 hour Championships in Poland in 2012. I went on to run 217km that day. It doesn't take a mathematical genius to work out that I completely detonated at 100 miles and I when wrote a post on 24 hour running ([link here](#)) this race featured quite highly on what not to do.


I'm not really one for "records". Yeah they're nice as a target and focus, but they are there to be broken. I just wanted another crack at setting an official 100 mile personal best for me. Not on a trail and not a time that's on a spreadsheet on someone's broken laptop somewhere. Yes, I'm seven years older, but I'm not ready to give in yet.

Although following in the footsteps of some of the classics from the 70s and 80s, this is a relatively new format for the modern day British ultra-running scene. It is billed as "An elite level event, designed for runners to compete under the fastest possible conditions and with a focus on





 Instagram

CENTURION
RUNNING
ULTRATEAM



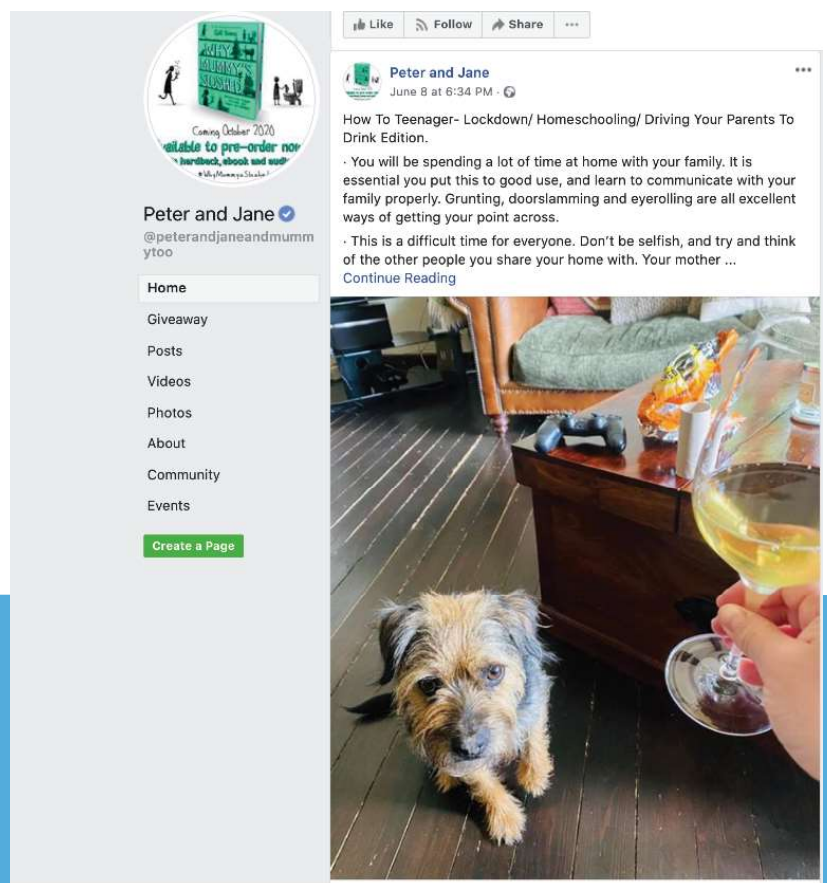
THANKS TO MY SPONSORS



A SOCIAL MEDIA BLOG...

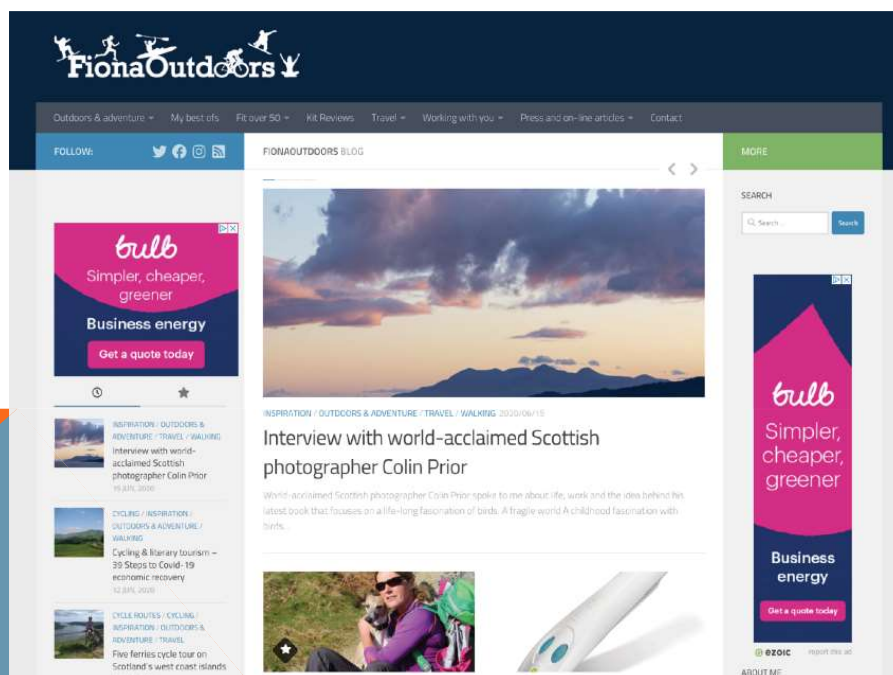
- **Peter and Jane and Mummy, too.**

Extended posts on the Facebook platform that tell a story of a life This has been so successful, Gill Simms has become an author of many books



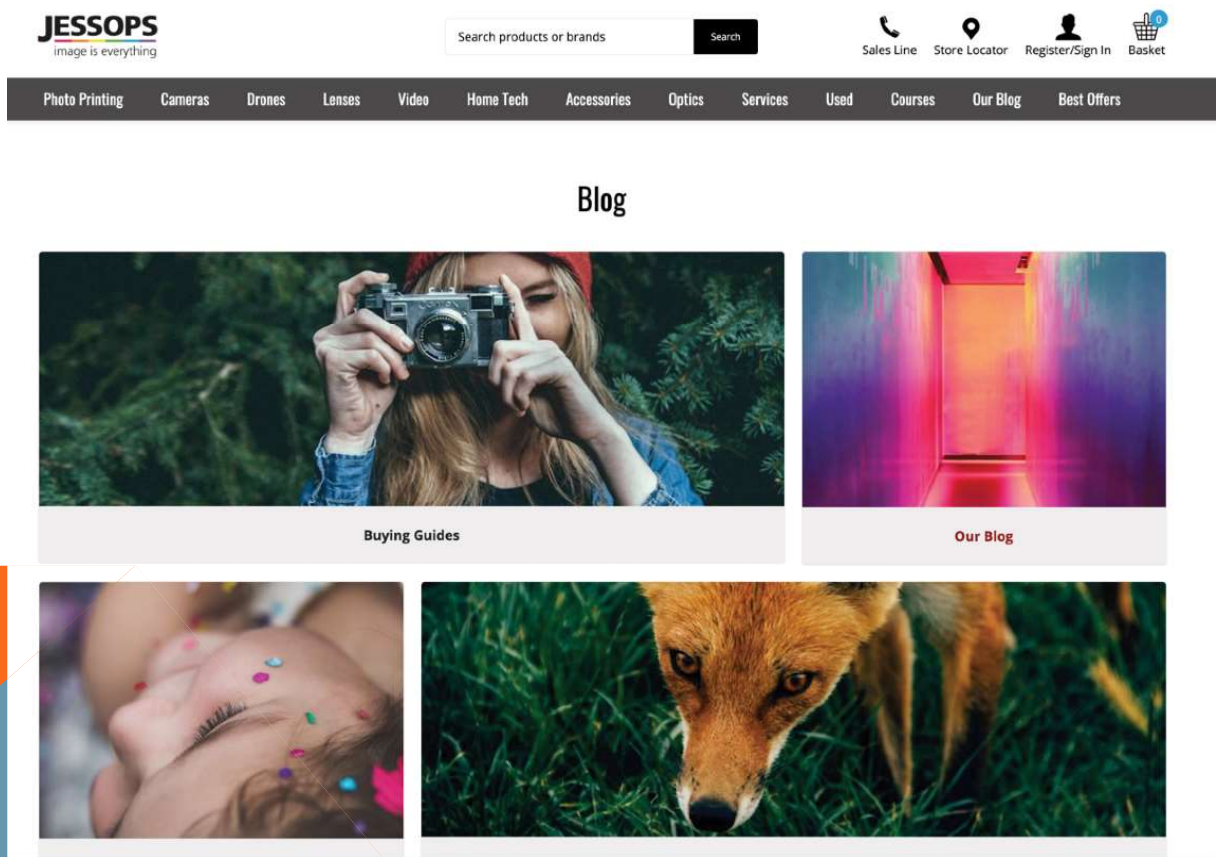
A BLOG AS A WEBSITE

- When a personal blog turns into a larger magazine style website, with tips, advice, interviews, reviews etc.
- Items are still added in chronological order but under different categories



A BLOG AS A NEWS FEED

- Many companies and businesses have blogs as a page on their website.



IN BUSINESS TERMS: A BLOG IS...

- Put simply, a blog is a series of articles on a page of your website, usually in chronological order
- For most: An integrated blog platform (but could be a page)
- Could be under a variety of headers: News, blog, tips, inspiration, ideas



EXAMPLES OF BLOGS ON BUSINESS WEBSITES

Blog Videos How to Book Payments Reviews App Contact Us +44 (0)141 530 4392 | +1-844-893-2284 (USA & CANADA)

MACS ADVENTURE

feefo Service Rating 1204 reviews

f t i y

Self Guided Walking Holidays & Cycling Holidays

Home Walking Holidays Cycling Holidays Camino Tours About us

Camino & Pilgrimage Tours

Follow a Pilgrimage Trail: Walk With Purpose

HOLIDAY FINDER

Location	▼
Activity	▼
Grade	▼
Month	▼

A BLOG BY ANOTHER NAME

John Lewis

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The running blog The Guardian's blog on all things running, from jogs around the park to ultra marathons

13 November 2017

How was your weekend running?

Mud, mud, inglorious mud. Cross country season is upon us, and may it pass quickly. As always, come and share your weekend stories below the line as usual. Just make sure you clean your spikes before you come in, ok?

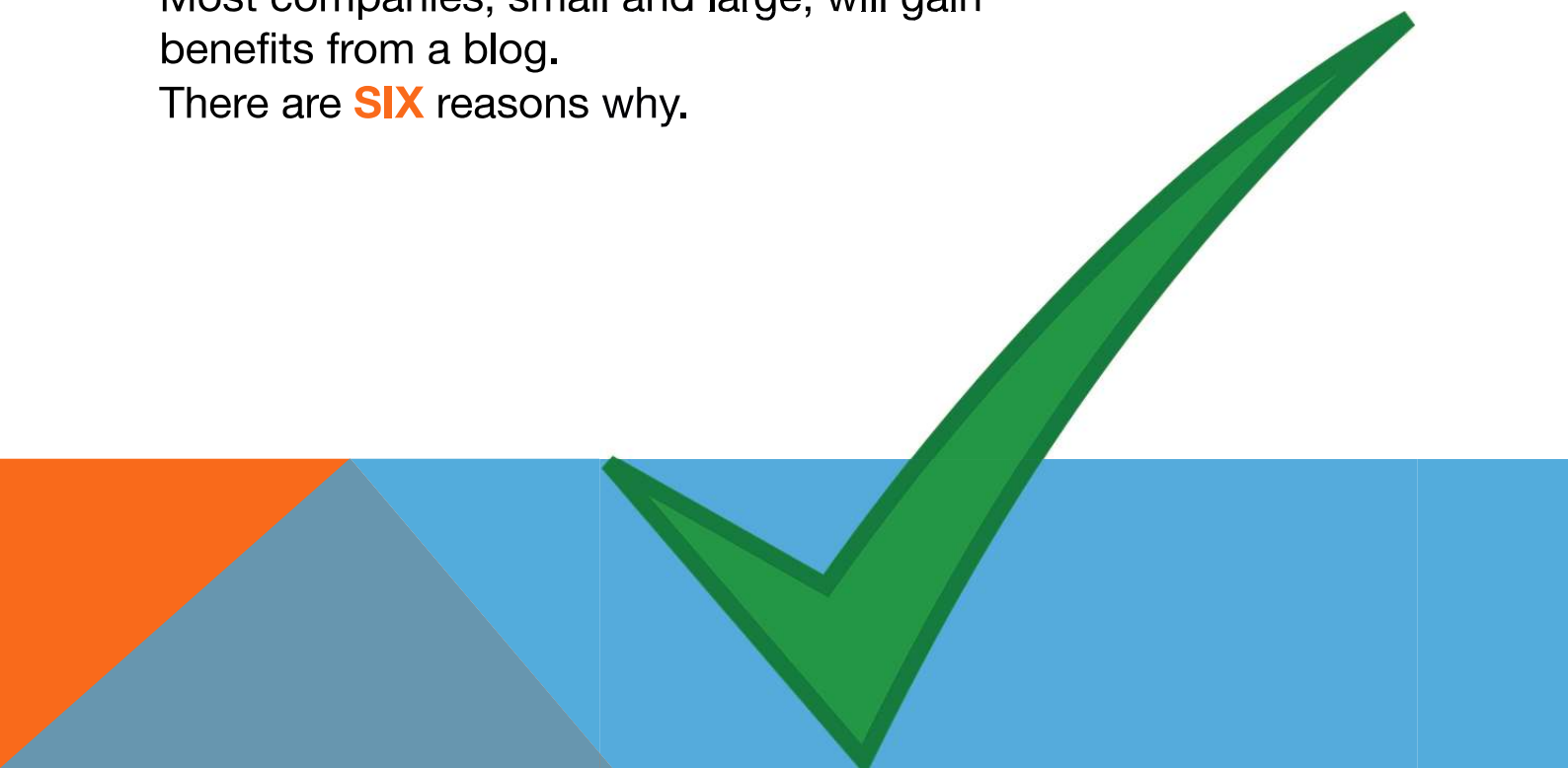


DO I NEED TO BLOG?

... Or what are the benefits of blogging?

Most companies, small and large, will gain benefits from a blog.

There are **SIX** reasons why.



WHAT IS THE POINT OF BLOGGING?

Reason 1 - and the most important

For SEO (Search Engine Optimisation)... but what is SEO?

It is the practice of increasing traffic to your website through search engines

- **You want customers to search for a product or service on-line – and then discover your website**
- **When someone does a search on, eg, Google, the search results are based on the words and phrases found on different websites**
- **So you want your website to have the right words and phrases to capture the searches**



WHAT IS THE POINT OF BLOGGING?

Reason 1 continued

SEO is really important:

- **Google loves new and updated website content**
- **Google loves relevant words and phrases** (*these are words relevant to your business, service or products*)
- **Google searches blog titles, sub-heads, captions and other content**
- **Blogs are a great place to add SEO-friendly content**



Reason 2

A BLOG HUMANISES YOUR BRAND

Your home page and “about us” give a few clues to your company or business...

But a blog reveals who you are as a person, brand and business

For example, write about your values, what makes you different from other companies, why you are a more professional service provider...

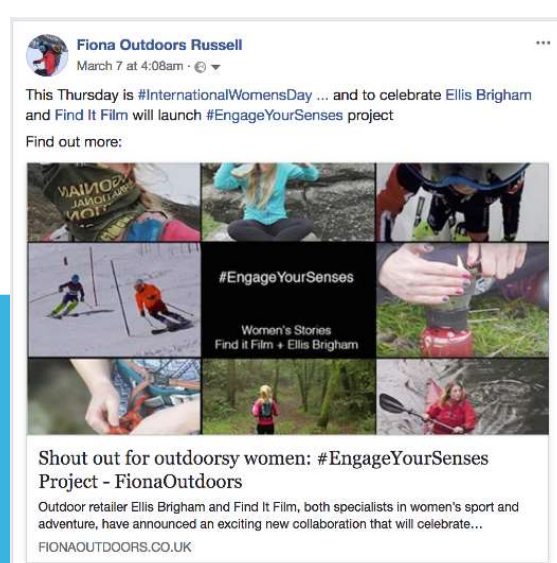
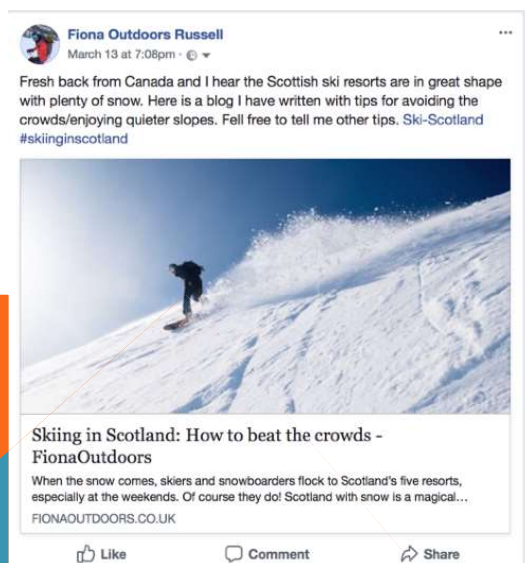


Like... Your virtual sales assistant

Reason 3

SUPPORTS SOCIAL MEDIA... & OTHER MARKETING

- **Social media is good for marketing businesses.**
- **Blogs are good for sharing.**
- **Blog content can be used in other marketing, such as email newsletters**



Reason 4

A BLOG HELPS TO BUILD TRUST

Blogs are seen as a more trusted source for potential customers than a company's press releases and official company PR.

And more trust leads to greater sales.



Reason 5

BUILDS AUTHORITY IN YOUR INDUSTRY



Helps you / your company to:

- **Become a knowledge leader**
- **Create trust in your expertise/knowledge**
- **To be an authority in your field.**

Reason 6

TO LEARN MORE

- **When you write about your business, you learn more.**
- **While researching what to write about, you'll gain a greater understanding of your business and the field it operates in.**
- **Learn about competitors.**





HOW TO BLOG: THE BASICS

- Blog/news feed integrated into your website
- Basically, it is a page or sub-page on your business website
- Many people use wordpress but there are many other eg Squarespace, Wix, GoDaddy. Weebly etc
- If you are unsure, ask your website developer to help



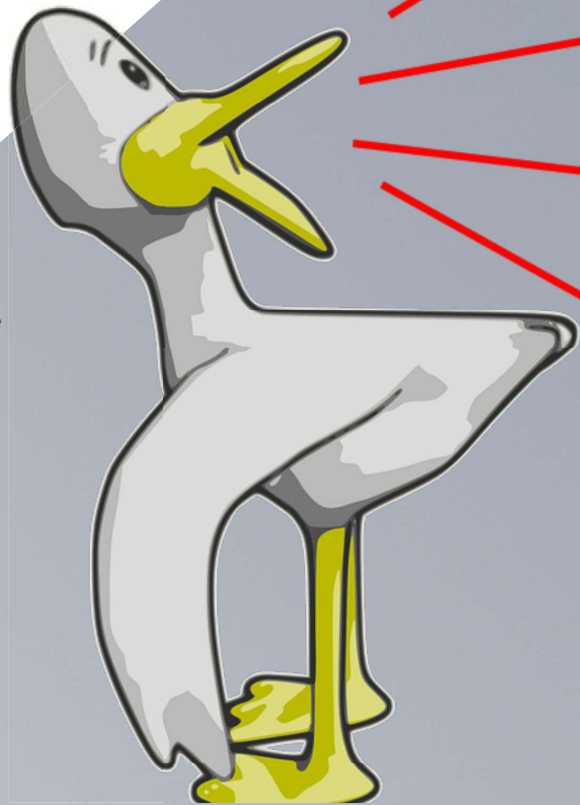
WHAT SKILLS DO I NEED?

- **A passion for your topic**
- **Knowledge about your business and industry**
- **Ability to write (or have someone in your company who can)**
- **Basic understanding of your blogging platform**
- **Perseverance (blogs take time to develop)**
- **Self discipline**



Who are you talking to?

- **Identify your audience/
potential customers.**
- **If you are unsure about your
audience/new customer base
ask for professional help,
such as a digital marketing
specialist**
- **Write notes to ensure you
speak to the same people
each time you blog.**
- **eg plumber merchant and
DIY store...use different
language**




WHAT WILL I WRITE ABOUT?

Remember why you are blogging... as a traffic driver through SEO, front-of-house voice, sales convertor, authority builder etc.

Choose one of the above reasons when you think about each **blog topic** *(it might end up covering other reasons but stay focused)*



IDEAS FOR BLOG TOPICS:

- **Write about company news or information**
 - **News about your industry**
 - **Tips/ideas for services or items to purchase**
 - **New products**
 - **Product reviews**
 - **Marketing pointers eg discounts and sales**
 - **Events information**
 - **Personal challenges & charity stories**
 - **Interviews with industry people/staff/service providers**
- 

BUT I'M STILL STUCK FOR IDEAS

- **Ask yourself: What would I search for on-line? What words and phrases would you add to Google search?** How to, Best way to, Tips for, Ideas for, Favourite xxx, Guide to xxx
- **Season themes:** eg Easter, Christmas, national days, special events



EXAMPLES: M&S

Blog is called “Inspire Me”

One blog title is “Father’s Day Gifts”

TOP 10 FATHER'S DAY GIFTS

From snazzy gadgets to grooming gift sets and food and drink treats, we've got pop-pleasing finds to raise your gifting game

[More great ideas here](#)

Pick up a polo

Give his seen-better-days T-shirt collection an upgrade with a smart but sporty polo shirt. Choose from luxe pla-mix knit styles, bold stripes and cotton classics in a host of sun-ready shades.

[Shop polo shirts](#)

Cup winner

Celebrate your tea-drinking, coffee-loving super dad with his very own mug. Fill with his favourite chocolates for an extra-sweet personal touch.

[Get it here](#)

Drink to that

With a delicious bottle of fresh and zesty Caccabel artisan tequila plus limes, salt, a mini cactus and a tasty bag of cashew nuts, this hamper has all he needs to toast Father's Day at home.

[Get the tequila](#)

Listen up

Whether he's a podcast, curated playlist or The Today Programme kinda guy, elevate his listening experience. These Bluetooth wireless headphones look good and sound even better.

[Headphones here](#)

A fiery homemade feast

Spending Father's Day together? A home-cooked dinner makes a great gift. Try marinating chicken wings in our new extra hot chilli sauce before baking. Made with one of the world's hottest chillies, it's guaranteed to spice up meal times.

[More recipe ideas](#)

King of the grill

Turn up the heat on his grilling skills with this portable barbecue set. With everything he needs to barbecue on the move, outdoor cooking enthusiast dads will be thrilled.

[Get on the scene](#)

Scents of adventure

Transport him to Provence via a L'Occitane homme gift set, featuring two shower gels, one starring lavender, the other zesty citrus notes. Or treat him to a celebrity spritz from presenter Dermot O'Leary's range.

[Shop grooming](#)

The gift that keeps growing

This cactus and succulent trio, which comes in contemporary teal and ceramic pots, will bring an instant update to Dad's home office set up. Plus, they're super easy to care for – so no green fingers necessary.

[Send the plants](#)

ETSY BLOG

News
Etsy to Donate \$1 Million
Toward Justice Reform
and Black-Led
Institutions

We Stand in Solidarity #BlackLivesMatter



Read on

#BlackLivesMatter



News

It's official: The Etsy UK TV ad is here!

3

Our latest Etsy UK ads have hit screens all across the UK



News

Discover Etsy: Sharing Stories with Jacqueline Colley

We are continuing to shine a spotlight on our wonderful sellers who have taken part in our recent Discover Etsy

#StandWithSmall



News

#StandWithSmall to Support the Etsy Community

It's more important than ever to shop from small businesses.

0




A FEW WORDS ABOUT KEYWORDS

- Key words or key phrases are what customers will be searching for
- **Make a list of relevant keywords - these are words that are “key” to your business eg cafe, coffee, tea, fresh cakes, take aways**
- **Have a look at on-line keyword tools: keyword tools on-line, such as , Google Keyword Planner, Keyword Surfer, Keyworddit etc**

STEP 1: HOW TO WRITE A BLOG


- **Keep it simple: One theme or idea per blog**
- **Write a title (headline) and introductory paragraph: This helps you to focus on the topic and content.** *(Explain what you will be writing about)*

1st paragraph tips:

- Empathise with your reader and tell them they are not the only one struggling with a specific problem or “search”.
 - Promise your reader your advice will make their life better/cheaper/easier.
 - Reassure your reader that your tips are easy (everyone loves shortcuts and simple tricks) or cost-effective/value for money
 - Tell people about your attention to detail, professionalism, specialism and/or care for the environment
 - Inspire readers with ideas, trends, recommendations.
- 

SET 2: HOW TO WRITE A BLOG

You have a headline and a first paragraph...Now:

- Write the middle part of the blog: **Be concise, to the point, short paragraphs**
 - Stick to the point: **Return to the header and intro paragraph to make sure you are still “on topic”**
 - Keep it fairly short: **It is better to write 350 words well than 1000 words badly**
 - A keep people reading: **Use smaller headlines and photos, videos to break up text**
 - Write captions for photos: **Good for SEO**
 - Last paragraph: **Use this to sum up what you have been writing about. Repeat keywords that were used in headline and first paragraph**
 - Call to action: **Add a paragraph at the end that reminds potential customers why they might want to use your service/buy your products**
- 



AUTHORITY LINKS

**In terms of SEO,
Google favours
blogs with authority
links...**

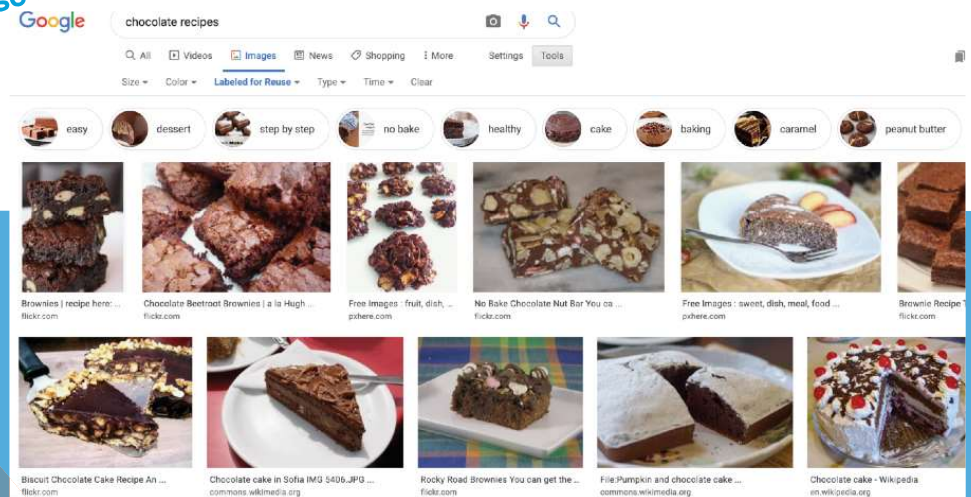
**These might be links to claims,
research, studies, others in
your industry to back up what
you are writing about**

A FEW WORDS ABOUT PHOTOS

Photos and videos are useful for breaking up blog text and offering emotive visual cues. But...

- It is vital you do not use photos that are owned by other people.
- Take your own or hire a photographer
- Pay for a stock of images from eg Getty, iStock
- Free-to-use sources, eg Pixabay, Unsplash, Pexels, Flickr (limited)

• Also... you can access free-to-use images via Google



GOOGLE ANALYTICS

Sign your website up to Google Analytics.

It is free

Keep an eye on your blog posts and check what blogs have had the most traffic.

Do a short course as a workshop or on-line so you understand Google analytics



ALT TEXT

Perhaps we're getting a bit technical but...


Alt txt (alternative text) is a very useful extra for improving SEO

Alt text is a word or phrase that can be inserted into a text box in your blogging platform. It is used to provide a description of the contents of an image file.

It is very important for website accessibility. One of the uses of alt attributes is to provide spoken text for visitors who can't see images in their browsers.

Alt text is also said to be helpful for SEO. Google indexes words in the alt text box.

ATTACHMENT DETAILS



IMG_0483.jpeg
25th November 2018
52 KB
480 × 640
[Edit Image](#)
[Delete Permanently](#)

URL	<input type="text" value="https://www.fionaoutdoors.c"/>
Title	<input type="text" value="glasgow mural"/>
Caption	<input type="text" value="One of Glasgow's many beautiful street murals."/>
Alt Text	<input type="text" value="One of glasgow murals"/>
Description	<input type="text"/>

- GET THE WORD OUT ABOUT YOUR BLOG.
- POST THE BLOG ON SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS SUCH AS
- FACEBOOK, TWITTER, & INSTAGRAM,
- USE IN EMAIL DATABASE, NEWSLETTERS ETC

SHARE YOUR BLOGS



PLAN AND SCHEDULE

Planning ahead is important...
Don't say: "I'll do it tomorrow."
You won't!

- Buy a small notepad (or use your Notes on a smartphone or tablet)
- Write down ideas every time you think of them
- Set a time for blogging and adding posts
- Task a staff member
- Think like a magazine editor/variety
- Look at competitor blogs.



A WORD ABOUT: GUEST BLOGGING

- **What is guest blogging?**

A method used by the owners of blogs to increase traffic to their site. You offer to write content for other similar blogs in your industry as a guest blogger.

In exchange, you receive a link to your blog/company site and an opportunity to promote your name and brand in your chosen industry.

- **Where to guest blog.**



DOS & DON'TS FOR BLOGGING

Do be different, interesting, unique and informative in your blogging

Do brainstorm/look at other blogs

Do think about your audience/potential customers

Do think about search engines when writing headers and intros

Do plan ahead and keep a list of ideas

Do share on social networks, via email databases etc

Do get someone to read your blog before publishing



THE DON'TS

Don't flog your blog (over spam with keywords; write for the sake of writing)

Don't go for the big sell with every blog

Don't over-write or under-write, just write whatever comes and not to a set length. Just write well and with purpose.

Don't write a blog that you wouldn't bother to read.



THANKS FOR LISTENING

Fionaoutdoors

www.fionaoutdoors.co.uk

Fionaoutdoors@gmail.com

Business Gateway East Dunbartonshire

- Offices in Kirkintilloch and Milngavie
- Assist existing companies and people planning to set up their own business within East Dunbartonshire
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