

my top 11 blogging tips

Design - I'm putting design at the top of the list because for myself, as a blog reader, I know that I'm very turned off from messy, blinky, ill-designed blogs. When it comes to blog design, less is always more. You can easily create your own blog design! Two of my favorite sites are picmonkey.com for creating my logos, and if you're on Blogger, iconsdb.com for putting together social media icons. **Etsy** stores sell super cute designs for great prices, and you can always seek out a website designer for something more custom. My blog was designed by [Restored 316 Designs](http://Restored316Designs.com).

Social Media Buttons - these are your buttons leading your readers to places they can follow you. They need to be at the top of your blog, on most of your pages, at the bottom of your blog, and it doesn't hurt to include them in the bottom of every post you write. Readers are "lazy"; they don't want to have to search for your social media pages, so make it easy for them! [This tutorial](#) shows you how to make your own set in Picmonkey.

Profile Photo - I love to know what the blogger looks like. It helps me connect to them and it peaks my interest in their blog. This photo should be near the top of your blog, greeting readers as they show up on your "door step". It's very easy to customize a profile photo in Picmonkey.

About Me Page - readers want to get to know you! Brands want to know what you're all about. Your About Me page is pretty crucial to your blog and should be well detailed. [This post](#) by Rachel is amazing; she lays out in detail what to think about when putting your page together.

Content - the most important component of your blog, obviously! This is truly what will bring all the readers to the yard, so put your heart and soul into it and make it awesome! My main quick tips for good content:

- write as if you're talking to a good friend
- be honest
- be open
- be useful (is your post entertaining, inspiring, helpful, informative?)
- break it up (paragraphs help give the eyes a break)

- be YOU (there are a million bloggers out there but none of them have your exact perspective, and that's what your readers want!)

Engage Your Readers - awesome, so you've got readers and they're loving your posts...keep them wanting more by linking to other posts you've written. The best place to put these links is directly in your posts, the bottom of your posts, and in your sidebar. Keep them clicking around! Use a widget like [LinkWithin](#) (for Blogger) or [Related Posts by Zemanta](#) (for WP users) to highlight similar posts at the bottom of your posts. Also add your most popular posts to your sidebar.

Be Consistent - the one piece of advice you will find all over blogland is be consistent. Your readers want to know what to expect; if they check your blog and you haven't posted in days and they don't know when you're going to post again, they're going to lose interest. So my advice would be to:

- decide how often you want to commit to posting a week
- decide which days work best for you
- create an editorial calendar (more on that in a minute)
- try to post as consistently on those days as you can
- if you really want to be on top of things, consider picking one day out of each week to sit down and write out all of your posts so that when life happens, you don't have to worry about writing a blog post that day
- utilize your platform's schedule option and schedule your posts to go live on the days planned

Create An Editorial Calendar - no blogger should be without one of these. For Wordpress users use the [Wordpress Editorial Calendar](#), and Blogger users can use [Google Calendar](#). I personally like to have a planner that I can write in - I use the calendar inside [The Inner Guide Planner](#) for scheduling my blog posts. [Target](#) has super cute, cheap planners as well. With a well-crafted calendar, you will never be left trying to come up with a post idea at the last minute. Tips for making your editorial calendar:

- make a huge list of blog post ideas. These can be one time topics and also monthly themed posts
- once you have your post ideas ready to go, plot them out in your calendar. As you can imagine, you could technically plan out your entire year easily in one sitting
- consider holidays and special events when planning out your posts

Build Your Email List - social media sites are always changing and it's a good thing to not put all of your eggs into any one basket. Facebook, for example, has been making it harder and harder for pages to have their content seen. What to do? Don't rely on them! Create a newsletter through a site like **MailChimp**. The number one way to reach readers is through their inboxes. Make sure you have a subscription button on your blog, ideally near the top and even in your posts if you can manage. I use **Magic Action Box** to insert a sign up form under all of my posts. Offer your readers something for free (like I did with these blogging tips). It can be a product like a free printable, tips, an ebook, worksheets, etc. Make it worth their while to subscribe.

Build Community - in order to get the most out of your blog, you need to build community. You can't go this blogging road alone...you don't want to! Not only is befriending other bloggers an awesome experience in itself, but your blogging buddies will be the ones to share your work and support you. They will be the ones there commenting even when you write a dud or face real life issues that affect your blog. They will be ones cheering you on when hit blogging achievements or come up with new blog goals. Bloggers who don't respond to other bloggers are missing out.

One of the biggest pleasures of blogging is connecting, and if you aren't doing that, blogging can quickly lose it's appeal, not to mention your readership will suffer. Tips:

- respond to comments
- comment on other blogs
- share other bloggers' work
- follow other bloggers on social media
- engage with your readers on social media

Google Analytics - GA is one of the best ways to find out your blog's exact numbers because it doesn't count spam clicks and you can even set it up to not count your own clicks. I check GA weekly so that I can see what my most read posts were and where most of my referring traffic was coming from.

Enjoy it - my bonus tip. Enjoy all of it, because blogging is an amazing adventure if you let it be. If something makes you dread blogging, stop doing it. If something doesn't feel right, don't do it.

The more fun you have, the more successful you will be because everyone will sense your good energy and want to keep coming back to your blog. Focus on the positives:

- write with passion
- challenge yourself and grow
- feel the pride of hitting and surpassing your goals
- experience the incredible friendships that happen in the blog world
- enjoy the ride!

I hope you've gained some knowledge and insight with these tips! I wish you all the best!

Jessica

Follow me here: [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Pinterest](#) | [Bloglovin](#)