The Content Rules Easy-Peasy Blog Post Template

There is not one single way to write a blog post, just as there is no one way to write. But having some kind of framework to pass along to would-be blog post writers encourages contributions by demystifying the fundamentals of a solid blog post, and makes contributors more comfortable with the process. Kodak's chief blogger, Jenny Cisney, provides a simple blogging template to every contributing blogger of Kodak's A Thousand Words blog.

You'll notice that this blog post template -- which is based on one Kodak provides to its employee-contributors -- is very basic; it's intentionally a straightforward post skeleton. As such, it's suggested only for limited, occasional use by nonwriters and those unfamiliar with blogging. It's most appropriately shared within an organization to entice contributions from a reluctant or reticent staff; it's not intended for use as a universal, absolute and definitive framework.

Those with a flair for the subject (or for writing) will be able to enliven those bones, adding flesh and blood to create something on the page that's truly alive. Others won't; and it's likely that any post that relies solely on this framework might be similarly straightforward and, perhaps, a little bare.

That's ok, because the real value in sharing a template like this with others in your organization (or using it yourself) is to help neutralize the natural angst of confronting a blank page. Everyone feels that kind of anxiety, but it's a real shame the way it paralyzes so many would-be writers, turning their creative juices to frozen concentrate, and making them feel that blogging is scary and hard and simply not worth the trouble.

You can also think of this template as blogging training wheels. It will get you going the first couple of times, but before you know it you will be cruising on your very own.

Post title

Let readers know how the post will be useful for them, and add an element of intrigue. Some tried-and-true formulas are**:** "How to _____," "Nine Ways to _____," "The Secrets of _____," "What You Should Know About _____," or "The Weirdest (or Best, Worst, Funniest, Most Ridiculous, and so on) _____ I Ever Had."

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First sentence

Your goal here is to hook your reader. Ask a question. State something mildly controversial, or universally interesting to your readers, that might spark intrigue. For example: "Have you ever wondered what it might feel like to trade jobs with someone for a day? Even a really boring job—like a highway toll taker?"

It's important to keep it simple: One idea, one key takeaway per post.

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Next paragraph

Here's where you begin to answer the question you raised earlier, or to start to explain your initial statement. Begin to fill in the details related to your initial statement or question. Share why you've made the statement and back it up with what helped you get to that feeling.

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Bullets or number lists

Create a list of your key points. If you've been writing about trading places with the toll taker for a day, for example, you might create three or four points:

- The job is surprisingly social
- But you breathe in a lot of fumes
- You don't need to have more than a few of these points

- _____
  _____
- _____
  _____
- _____

Add an image

Graphics add personality and interest to a post. Include a relevant photo or graphic. Sites such as Flickr.com allow you to search for images that are for public use under a Creative Commons license. Read the license closely and give attribution to the photographer.

Close with a question

End with something that invites interaction in the comments section below the post. Something as simple as "What do you think?" is fine. Even better is something more specific to entice your readers to share a bit about themselves. On this post example, you might ask, "So what's the job you always wish you could do for a day?" or "What's the worst (or best) job you ever had?"

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Other Helpful Advice for Blog Contributors

Brevity is best. On the Web, short trumps long. Blog posts that meander tend to get tedious; so shorter is generally preferable. Your post should not have to be the blog equivalent of *War and Peace*: It need only to be long enough to convey your message. (Sometimes even a single paragraph can work.)

Respond to comments. After your blog post goes live, keep an eye out for comments. Respond to them as quickly as you can. (Note: Kodak suggests eight hours, but we recommend an hour or two, if you can manage it).

Shout it! Spread the word! Tell your family! Your friends! Facebook! LinkedIn! Let your network know your post is live; generate excitement for the post and earn some well-deserved kudos.

Source: ContentRulesBook.com