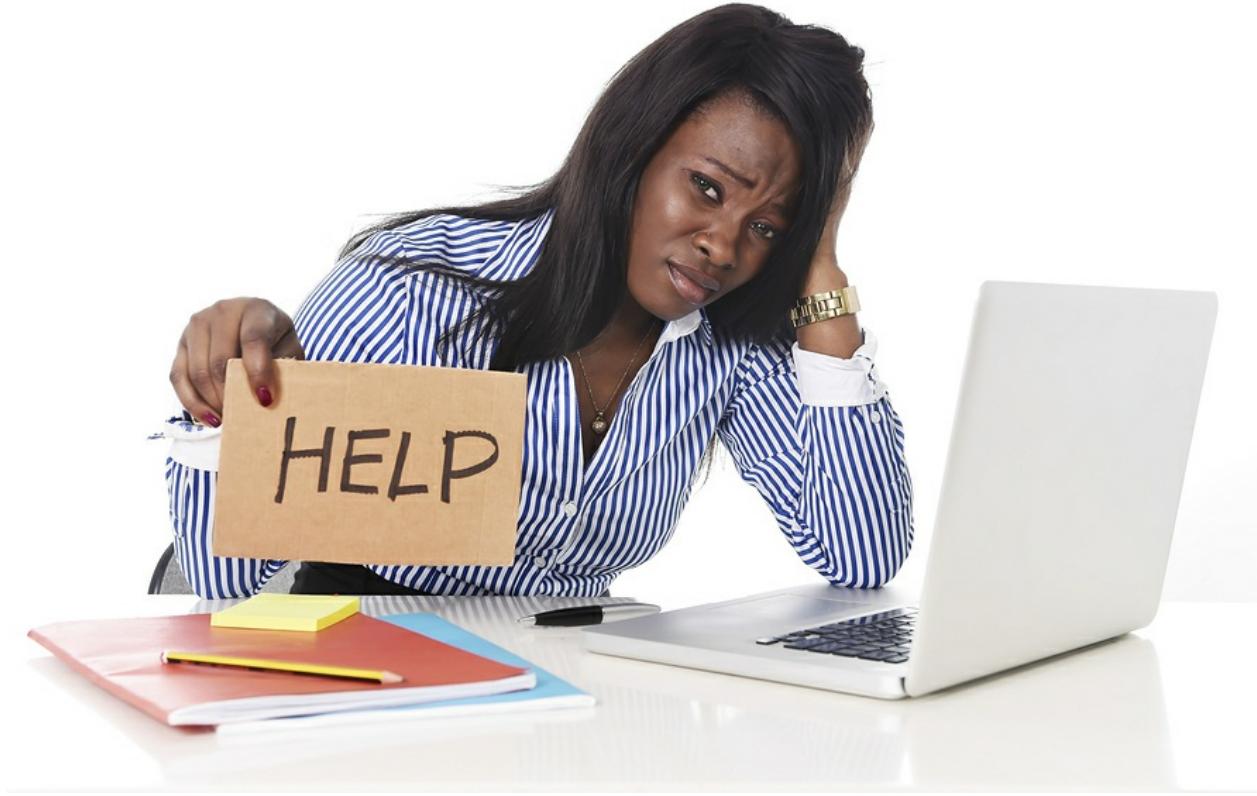


8 Signs You Should Outsource Your Blog Content Writing

 contentfac.com/8-signs-outsource-blog-content-writing/



Before you can write killer content for someone, you've got to get to know them. At TCF, we interview new clients about their business, voice and goals; research their industry, market and competitors; talk to them about obstacles and opportunities; and hash out a strategy together — all before we pitch our first blog. The only thing we don't always learn about our clients' businesses is what brought them through door — and equally importantly, what keeps some potential clients away.

I've seen some tantalizing hints: business owners who (literally) jumped with joy when we shared copy with them, proving that we really could write compelling, topical blogs in fluent English; tense, suspicious first meetings followed by cheerful, relaxed second meetings; clients baffled at how we seemingly know exactly what to write to generate traffic (are they psychic? Was I teleported to the Marvel Universe?). It's clear that some of our clients have worked with content writers before that, well... weren't quite up to TCF's standards.

I wanted to know more, so I reached outside our client base and asked businesses if they blogged in-house or outside, and why. Before we get to that, though, here's what's at stake if your content doesn't show off your business:

Considering outsourcing your content writing and want to know how much it costs?

Check out our Generic Proposal and Pricing List.

Get It Now



Why Content Writing Matters: Traffic, Traffic, Traffic!

Let me just get this out of the way: Blog! Blog! Blog! You must blog! This isn't optional — if you have a business with an Internet presence (and we hope, dearly, that by this point if you have a business, you have a website), you need a blog with lots of content.

The business blogging hype can get monotonous, but it really does affect your bottom line. On average, blogs increase both indexed links and inbound links by 97%, and lead to 434% more [indexed pages](#). That means businesses that blog get more search traffic from Google and more visitors surfing in from other sites, which benefits sales, ad revenue, and brand loyalty. It's not just the obsessive bloggers who reap the rewards, either. One [Hubspot study](#) found that just 1 – 2 blogs per month can boost B2B leads by 70%.

But with so many businesses blogging, Google competition is fiercer than ever. A [Chitika study](#) found that 92% of search engine traffic goes to the first page, with 33% going to the first organic result alone. Businesses that don't have good blogging strategies risk being buried in search results, making it much harder to connect with customers.

And it's not just traffic that's at stake. Blogs are rated as the [5th most trusted](#) source for online info, with 29% of consumers viewing them as more accurate than other online sources, including news sites, online magazines, and brand sites. With more consumers doing research, comparison shopping and purchasing alone (by 2020, customers will manage 85% of their relationships online without talking to an actual person), having a blog that's accessible, trustworthy and highly ranked is crucial to gaining an edge across your business.

Why Do Companies Outsource Blog Content Writing?



For [Candice Galek](#), outsourcing blog content writing is the only way to produce all the material she needs. Her online swimwear company, [Bikini Luxe](#), outsources “the majority of the content, solely on the fact that we need so much of it.” Her company relies on outside writers for “everything from product descriptions to blog posts, newsletters and pitches to reporters.” Good content is important, and she realizes how vital it is that businesses have strong copy supporting their website:

“For our newsletters, press releases and product descriptions we have an amazing team of authors from all around the world. We find this to be a much quicker and more efficient way to get the content we need quickly.”

For most of the respondents that contacted me, however, getting an outside writer (or a few of them) was a way to complement in-house talent, rather than replacing it. Conrad Lumm, Marketing Director of online sign retailer [SmartSign](#), runs [multiple blogs](#) with the help of outsourcing. Because his bloggers don’t have his industry expertise, he needs to be a part of the process. However, the writers bring an invaluable outside perspective to his company:

“In the same way that being too close to your own website can mean overlooking its flaws, being too close to your own company’s products can be a problem, too. We work with traffic safety products, and people in our industry sometimes have strong opinions that don’t translate well to the general public. The freelancers I work with are often better than I am at framing content when I’m looking for more consumer-oriented writing rather than B2B content.”

While talented content writers have helped both Candice and Conrad, not everyone who has tried to outsource blog content writing has had a fantastic experience.

How Outsourced Blog Content Writers Let Some Businesses Down

When I started interviewing business people about their blog outsourcing strategies, I expected a range of opinions, from “mystery content marketing elves take care of all my online needs!” all the way to, “hell no, no one touches my blog!” But the thing that surprised me most (aside from the fact that mystery content marketing elves aren’t real) was how many negative experiences people had had.

Some respondents had a very narrow niche, which made it hard to find the right person. Mark Aselstine, founder

of wine club, [Uncorked Ventures](#), needed bloggers immersed in the local wine culture. “It turned out to be difficult to get a real coherent blogging strategy with people we hired,” he said. “We only sell wine from California, Oregon and Washington, so articles and stuff on a Bordeaux tasting they attended didn’t seem appealing to us.” He eventually went back to blogging for himself, because he couldn’t find anyone who could keep his customers informed of wine news in his area.



Will Schneider had a similar problem with warehousing and fulfillment company [FulfillmentCompanies.net](#):

“With each attempt at outsourcing, we ran into the same problem — the outsourced writers didn’t have enough specialized knowledge in our industry to write articles that contained specific enough information. On the flip side, as a small business, the highly specialized writers within our niche charged quite a bit more per piece, where it wasn’t as cost effective for us to outsource. We found the happy middle ground for our company was to keep it in house.”

For others, it was the quality of the writers that sandbagged their outsourcing. Margo Schlossberg, Marketing Manager at Gently Loved Jewelry, was initially told by her boss that her time was “too valuable” for blog content writing, but ended up taking over blogging duties when they couldn’t find the right people. According to her, the bloggers they contract with “never seemed to have a consistent voice with what our story is and how we speak as a company and as a brand.”

The whole experience left her skeptical of outsourcing. Teaching, training and explaining their brand to an outsider “who does not have the same vested interest in the organization and in its success” just proved too much of a challenge for her.

Creative Control Worries: Is This Really My Content?

The problem isn’t just unreliable bloggers or a lack of expertise, however. A lot of businesses that might benefit from outsourcing are reluctant to trust someone else with their voice. [Strategist and entrepreneur Ross Simmonds](#) is an experienced blogger and marketer, but when it comes to his coffee subscription site, [Hustle & Grind](#), he didn’t want to give up control:

"We initially thought about outsourcing our blogging efforts for Hustle & Grind but came to the conclusion that the best approach would be to let people write under their own name as guest bloggers. As a consultant, I see the benefit of outsourcing your blogging efforts but as a founder — I see the struggle of giving up your voice to someone else."

Christopher "Zippy" Kaufman, a voice actor, comedian and prolific [blogger](#) from Stamford, Connecticut went even further:

"Maybe it's because I'm a one-man shop, but I think it's crazy to outsource blogging. To me, blogging is as much of a conversation as it is me just throwing thoughts down in a doc file. If that conversation is being outsourced, then you're not having the convo with me; just someone who has an interpretation of what my voice sounds like."

What a Blogger Should Do to Make Clients (Or Themselves) Happy



For an experienced blogger like Ross, or an entertainer like Zippy, sometimes keeping everything in house makes sense, but many other respondents really wanted to outsource. They were busy business owners, operators and marketers with limited time, but they couldn't find a way to let go and trust outsourced blog writers to uphold their vision. Lisa Chu of children's formalwear company Black N Bianco puts it best:

"Trusting someone to speak on your business' behalf is a very big deal, if you hire the wrong outsourced blogger they can damage your brand and even offend some of your readers."

I was impressed by their integrity, and had to give them credit for trying, but I can't help feeling many gave up too soon. Blog content writers aren't here to make you feel disempowered, or to take control of your brand — we're here to amplify your voice, to help you reach and connect with your audience and to save some of your precious time. If you've been struggling under the weight of your business blog, here are some signs that it's time to let go.

1. You think anyone can make good content. If you believe this, you're probably not writing engaging content. That breezy, conversational tone you see in your favorite blog? Hard work. Being informative and entertaining while sticking to the brand voice? It's trickier than you think.

A good blog has to grab the reader from the first line (well, actually, from the title, but we'll get to that later). Because we're all about modesty here at TCF, we'll use our own [Content Marketing Guide](#) as an example (seriously, click over, it's a great read!).

In the first sentence, it tells the reader everything — what they're going to learn, what level they should be at, and where they can learn the prereqs if they're not there yet. It includes two links to our own blogs, which encourages readers to click around the site — that improves user experience, builds our brand, and helps us get more traffic. The second sentence finishes it off with an intriguing question to get readers thinking — and keep them reading.

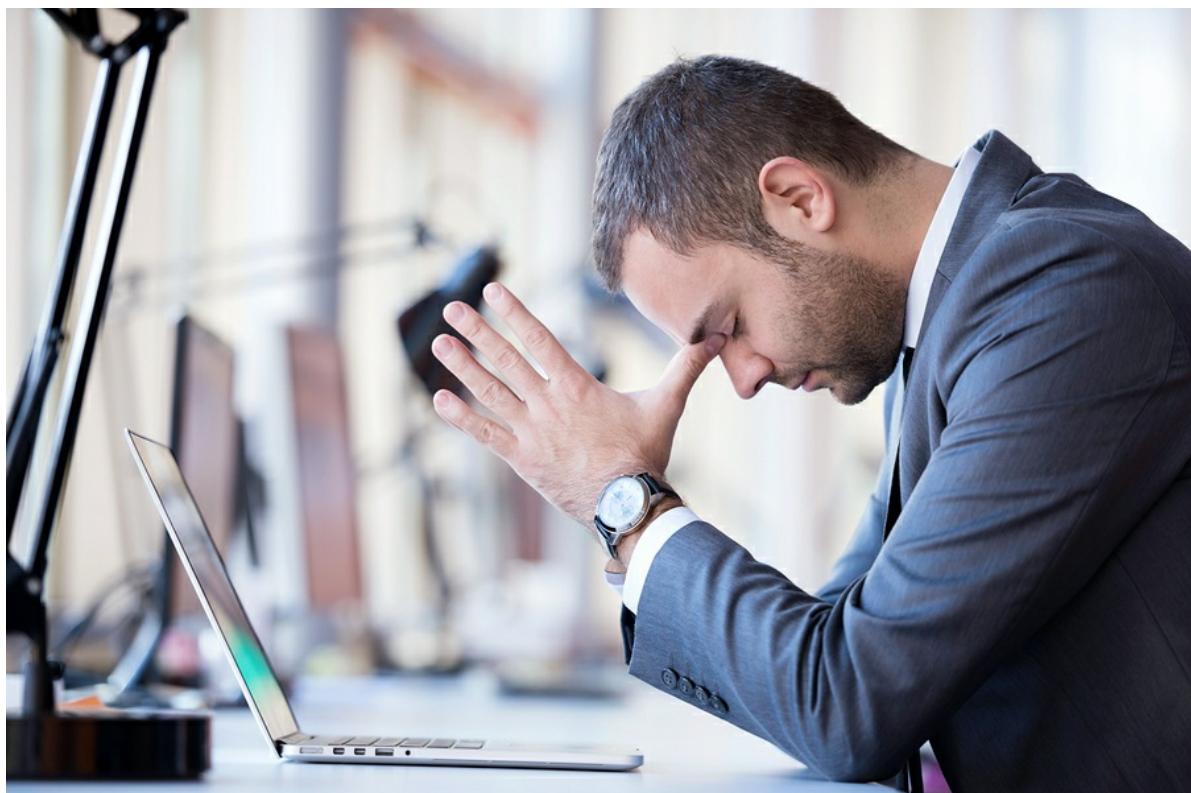
And notice the way it starts with "By now" — like it's in the middle of a conversation? That's intentional, too. Not "content marketing is very important because..." or "this complete guide, in which you will learn..." It makes the reader pay attention by throwing them right in. Trying to tune it out is like trying to ignore someone tossing you a baseball. You're going to be engaged before you even think about whether you want to play.

Even a mediocre [headline](#) can sink an article (8 out of 10 people will read it, but only 2 out of 10 will read the rest). To grab readers, a headline has to be:

- Short enough so people can see it in Google search;
- Specific and accurate enough to tell your reader what's inside;
- Sexy enough to pique your readers' interest, without coming off as spammy;
- [Targeted](#) toward your prospective clients;
- Optimized for SEO.

And on top of all of that, you have to keep up with trends. Remember the big Upworthy splash headlines: "5 Amazing Things" and "10 Simple Tricks" and the ever popular "You Won't Believe What Happened Next!" Everyone started doing it, and now readers are getting bored of it. One study shows blogs can actually [decrease](#) clickthroughs with words like "amazing (-24%)" "magic (-59%)" and "simple" (-49%).

There are thousands of articles like this, dissecting every aspect of blog writing, but there's no magic formula. To be good, you need the writing skills to understand what your audience is looking for, and the time and dedication to refine your craft.



2. You're grouchy and/or fragile. Whatever you've heard, there is such a thing as bad publicity. Between customer complaints, scandal-mongering and trolling, there are plenty of people who want to see you melt down on social media. If you don't have a calm demeanor and decent PR skills, you need someone else to handle the public online.

The experience of [Donna Lynes-Miller](#) from [Gourmet Station](#) shows just how an arbitrary online scandal can blow up. Her gourmet food business decided to start a blog in the voice of T. Alexander, a fictional sophisticate and foodie, popular with her customers. Cute, right? Harmless at worst. What could go wrong?

Plenty, it turns out. Somehow, her "inauthentic" character blogging struck a nerve, earning a deluge of nasty comments, including a personal "Beyond Lame Award" from one generous marketing blogger. Fortunately, she kept her cool, explained her perspective. It took a while, but the furor died down, and she reaped the reward in extra traffic.

Had she been less calm about the whole thing, it might have gone very differently. Amy's Baking Company is the classic [social media meltdown](#) (it'll be in all the marketing textbooks one day). After an appearance on Kitchen Nightmares showed the restaurant in... let's say, an unflattering light, Amy and her husband started to get some flack on their Facebook page. So naturally, they proceeded to defend themselves. Forcefully. In all-caps. Soon things spread to Reddit, the all-caps gathered steam and exclamation points, and things got really ugly. The restaurant closed, and the meltdown became Amy's legacy.

Look, someone (or some angry horde) is going to have something nasty to say about your blog or your business (or your face). It's going to hurt your feelings and make you angry. To you, it's a personal attack, but to an outside blogger, it's just part of the job. If you can't keep your cool, outsource your blog content writing to someone who can.

3. You can't get it done. Are you a perfectionist? A procrastinator? Do you just find blogging incredibly tedious and boring? Whatever the reason, if you're wasting time and not producing content, you need to outsource to someone who can.

Most marketers can write a 500-word blog post in [1 – 2 hours](#). [CopyBlogger](#), which features longer posts, takes about 5 – 7 hours, including research and editing.

You don't necessarily have to write that quickly, of course; writers work at different speeds, and projects have different requirements. A post describing the deal of the day at an online retailer is probably going to go a lot quicker than one explaining the new features of an esoteric business application, for example. And if you've got a very particular voice or style you need to write in, or a lot of research to do, that can take time too. You're the only person who can say how much time you're willing to commit. It might be worth it to spend a full day on 1 – 2 perfect blogs a week, because you know they'll connect with your customers.



The problem is when you bleed through that time and still don't get it done. Bloggers who spend two hours obsessing over the first paragraph before they finish a first draft don't last. Ditto for content writers who immediately get so bored and frustrated that they start Googling "outsource blog content" instead of writing (welcome, by the way!) If you can't turn blogging into a normal work process with a fairly predictable time requirement and workflow, consider outsourcing it to someone who can.

4. You lack supplementary skills. Everyone loves a story about an independent blogger whose fantastic concept or charming voice makes them into an overnight viral success. Unfortunately, the reality of blogging is a lot less romantic. You can't [write a blog post that brings in business](#) without content marketing skills. You'll need to build a content strategy, and find [keywords for SEO](#) that support your site. Then there's running A/B testing to see what titles work, finding sources, getting coverage, Facebook sharing, [Google+ marketing](#), and the list goes on.

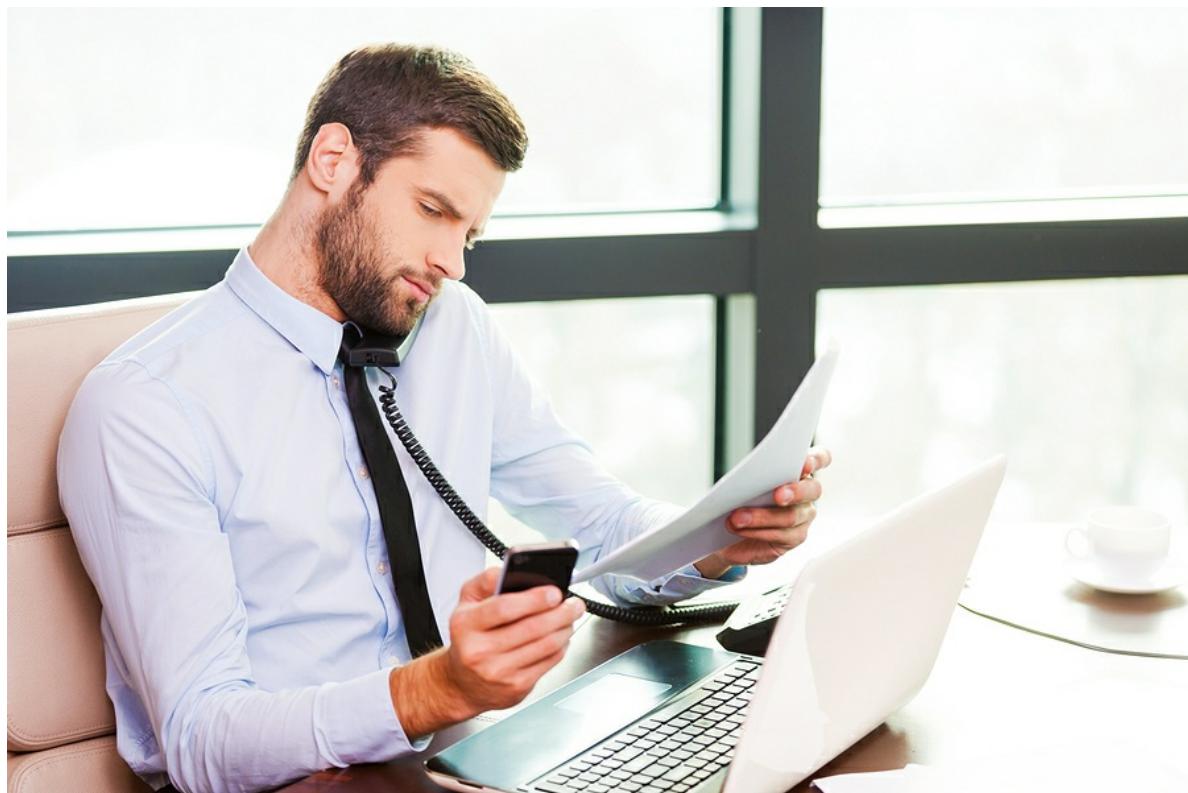
If you want your blog to look good, you'll also need some coding skills. At the least, you should learn a bit of HTML (Javascript and CSS don't hurt either) and know your way around a content management system, such as WordPress.

If you want your blog to stick out, you'll need to enrich it with infographics or charts. You may even need to create your own podcasts or videos at some point. That means adding recording and video editing to your already massive list of skills to acquire.

It's all stuff you can learn, but it's also stuff that takes a while to get good at. Unless you're producing massive amounts of content, it doesn't make sense to hire those skills inhouse, either — it'll cost a fortune to have coders, developers, audio and video engineers, and graphic designers standing by. Working with an outside blogger (or your friendly, neighborhood [content marketing agency](#), wink wink) is the best way to get the skills you need at a price you can afford.

5. Low engagement. If people aren't coming to your blog, you're probably doing something wrong. The problem is, it could be any number of things. You might have a basic problem like lack of sufficient promotion, boring articles, lousy/nonexistent SEO or poor targeting. You might be facing a competitor's aggressive marketing campaign, or using lousy URLs that stop Google from reading your keywords. Alternately, your blog might just be too new. Pretty much everything you do on your blog affects engagement, so the problem could be almost anywhere.

There's no checklist that covers every potential problem, but a few metrics can let you know if you should be concerned. Every blog should keep track of page views (how many people are clicking on your blog) and comments per post. Engaged viewers stick around, so you should also track time on site, and bounce rate (how many viewers leave after viewing a single page).



There's plenty else to look at, including:

- Keyword rankings
- Traffic sources
- Click-through rates
- Conversion rates
- Social shares
- Backlinks

If you install widgets to measure basic things like clicks, you'll start to get a clear picture. Once you gather a couple months of data, use a tool like [SEMrush](#) to look at your competitors' stats (look at your stats too, to get a realistic comparison, since these tools can sometimes distort data).

If your blog is gaining in popularity or owning the competition, hurray! However, if your blog posts are sitting alone in a neglected corner of the Internet, week after week, it might be a good time to outsource your blog content writing.

6. Too much engagement. People are flocking to your blog! You're getting more visitors, a steady stream of click-throughs, and hopefully, some new clients as a result. So, should you just keep doing what you're doing, and reap the rewards? Not necessarily.

As [John Egan](#), Editor in Chief at [LawnStarter](#) explains, blogging needs can change as a company grows:

"Here at LawnStarter, all of our [blog posts](#) are produced in-house. Why? Because it's cost-efficient for an early stage startup such as ours to do that. Plus, it's easier to control the tone and voice of blog posts when they're created internally."

At my last employer, I outsourced the bulk of the blog content because I had four blogs to feed and because I had the budget to spend on freelance content. Our internal resources there wouldn't have been sufficient to produce enough timely content for our blogs."

Marc Prosser, co-founder of [Fit Small Business](#) and [Fit Biz Loans](#), agrees that your content strategy has to change with your company:

"If your business is growing, you're going to encounter periods where you'd like to put out more content than your team can reasonably handle. For a while, that deficit won't be big enough to warrant a full hire. You have a few options: you can decide not to produce enough content to live up to that growth, you can push your team past their reasonable limits, or you can fill in gaps with a freelancer."

When your blogs start going viral and your Facebook page is teaming with customer posts, you should be celebrating, not tearing your hair out as you struggle to keep up with the new workload. Whether you need a big content push, someone to fill in while you hire more staff, or a permanent boost in production, outsourcing your blog content writing can help your online presence grow with your business.

7. Irregular posting habits. If you have a personality-driven blog, a lot of ideas, and the time to put it together, it's fine to sit down and write what's on your mind when you feel like it. As long as the ideas keep flowing, your audience will be happy to read your thoughts whenever you have new ones to share.



Unfortunately, it's an approach that can't last forever — particularly with a business blog. Eventually, other things will come up and your posts will dwindle. You'll have spoken your mind on a subject, and you won't have anything new to share. You'll be tempted to move on to other topics.

Search engines like Google reward blogs for new, engaging content. If your blog posts dwindle, or don't target your customers as well, you're going to start losing ground to competitors who blog more consistently. It can also alienate your followers, eroding customer loyalty.

The fact is, a lot of blog content— even good blog content — is repetitive and tedious to write. Your customers continue to have the same needs, meaning you have to be able to write about the same topics over and over again. If you're starting to burn out, it's time for a fresh pair of eyes. The right outsourced blog content writer will be able to bring interesting questions and perspectives to your readers, keeping your marketing content fresh.

and on-topic.

8. Missed opportunities. When something happens that affects your business or your community, getting your voice out there can enhance your authority, expand your reach and deepen your connection to your customers. The right commentary at the right time is what viral posts are made of, but you need to have someone ready to react.

Newjacking — getting a boost from blogging about news — is hard to do right. You need to piggyback on a popular story that's relevant to your industry or customers, with an informed opinion that adds value to it. You need to write a compelling, SEO-friendly blog that will stick out from all the other journalists and bloggers trying to do the same thing. And you need to do it quickly.

Ask yourself what happened last time there was a new law or development that changed your industry, or an event that affected your community. Did you find out about it immediately, or in a day or two? Were you able to drop everything and blog about it, or did you have to put it off until the end of the week? Could you come up with a fresh perspective, or did you just end up repeating the details?

Pro bloggers are adept at spotting a story, and jumping on it while everyone is still paying attention. We can turn around polished articles quickly, and promote them effectively, bringing new viewers to your website and getting your name out there. If you don't follow events in your industry daily, or don't have the time for an "emergency" blog, it's time to outsource your blog content writing.

Other Considerations When Looking to Outsource Blog Content Writing

Deciding to outsource is easy, but finding the right person may not be. Businesses often make the mistake of looking for the cheapest blogger possible, then give up when they get lousy results. You're going to have to do some research and spend some money to do it right.

The first step in finding a great blogger is knowing what you want. Are you looking for an [online marketing agency](#) to craft an entire blogging, [social media marketing](#) and [PR](#) strategy, or a blogger to write pieces for your internal marketing team? Are you writing for a technical audience, the general public, or both? Do you need press releases, marketing emails or whitepapers? What about design and web programming?

Treat the websites of potential partners as auditions. They don't have to be fancy, but it should be easy to navigate, with clean design and compelling copy. Contact a few of your top choices, and ask some tough questions. The good ones will be happy to talk.

There's No Need to Go at it Alone

Pride in your work can make you a great business success, but it can also make it hard to get perspective. You don't have to choose between being a fulltime blogger while running your business and losing control of your voice. Whether you're looking for [copywriting](#) for a particular project, a complete [website design and rebranding strategy](#), or just some advice on building your online presence, we can amplify your voice, bringing the message you want to the customers you need. [Contact us](#) to learn more or [click here](#) to get a copy of our generic proposal and pricing sheet for a detailed list of the services we offer and how much they cost. And as always, feel free to message us on Twitter [@ContentFac](#).

Not ready to outsource? Determined to go it alone? Build your blogging skills with our complete guide on [How to Write a Blog Post That Brings in Business](#).