



THE **7** MINUTE BLOG STRATEGY

Stanford Smith



Feel free to give this guide to whomever you feel needs it. The best Blog Strategy starts with sharing!

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Introduction

This quick guide will give you a potent tool for pushing your blog to the head of the line.

The tool is a blog strategy.

Sounds simple but it isn't. I'm willing to bet that 99% of blogs are started without more than 30 minutes thought given to their strategy. The authors do a 5-minute Wordpress install, pick a theme and start writing. They keep plugging away hoping to get noticed. In the end most of them fail.

On the other hand, a smart few decide to plan before they post.

They think about their audience, their content, their timing and what it means to be successful. They are "In It to Win It" and their success seems effortless from the outside.

These blog strategists work hard but they achieve much more with the time and resources they are given. They seem to come out of nowhere and are everywhere at once.

The incredible part is that this astounding performance is the result of just a few minutes of careful and focused thinking.

In fact, 7 Minutes is all you need.

This quick guide will walk you through 7 critical strategic questions. I'm betting that you already know the answers. You just need to write them down. Once they are on paper then you'll have the beginnings of a plan that will rocket your blog to the head of the pack.

Let's get started.

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Minute #1: What Do You Want?

Would you like to put your blog on the map in record time? How about having people approach you for guest posts in months rather than years? Do you want every post you write to have an immediate impact on your audience and go viral within hours?

Well the key to unlocking this success is to craft a blog strategy with a specific and quantifiable objective.

What is Your Objective?

Every strategy requires an objective. Your objective describes where you are going. Objectives are powerful because they focus your attention, energy, and time. In other words, they help you achieve more in less time.

In order to work, your objective needs to be clear and concrete. You should know exactly what it means. Think of your objective as the destination for a road trip. Without a destination you are not going anywhere. The same for your blog objective - the clearer the objective the quicker you'll achieve breakthrough success.

Blog Objective Thought Starters

Make Money:

Simple enough right? The blog's objective is to generate \$100,000 in revenue in the next 12 months. The objective is specific and quantifiable.

Credibility/Thought Leadership:

Your blog exists to showcase and promote your ideas and perspective; the more people who see your posts the better. For example, this objective could be: "Attract 10,000 Fans before December 12, 2012."

Influence and Power

Your objective is to rule the world! No, seriously, your goal may be to organize a group of activists that has a specific mission. Every political campaign these days start with a candidate blog. The goal is to attract voters and grassroots support. Non-profits also use blogs to organize around specific causes.

[Use the Minute #1 Worksheet to Zero in on What You Really Want](#)

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Minute #2: Who Are You Talking To?

Your blog's readers are the fuel you need to fulfill your goals. They will be your surrogate family, close confidants, and source of inspiration. Depending on your blog's objective, you'll interact with them in very specific ways. Your readers may be future clients, voters, donors, or be a part of your support network.

In order to attract the type of readership you want, you should spend this minute imagining your ideal blog reader. Visualizing your reader helps you uncover the voice, tone, and style you should use to write your blog posts. A clear picture of your reader also creates an authenticity that shines through every action on your blog.

You simply can't achieve any rapport unless you know exactly whom you want to talk to.

How to Describe Your Reader in 60 Seconds

Answer these quick questions:

1. Why is your reader interested in your topic?
2. Are they socially active or lone rangers?
3. What experiences do you share with them?
4. How would you break the ice with them if you were to meet them for the first time for coffee?
5. Describe the emotion you feel after talking to them for an hour
6. What's their "emotional age?" Are they young at heart or an old soul?
7. Where are they likely to live?
8. How do they entertain themselves?
9. What are their goals and aspirations?
10. What cause are they willing to die for?

Did you notice that these questions are emotional (even spiritual)? Here's why. Your blog is a social tool. It's most powerful when building rapport and creating connections.

Simple demographics can't paint an accurate picture of your reader. You need to understand WHO they are. This is the most effective way to point your message directly at your intended audience.

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[Work the Minute #2 Worksheet to Uncover Your Real Audience](#)



Minute #3: What Are You Talking About?

First, I'm going to make an assumption. I assume that you want people to pay attention to what you have to say. This means you aren't writing a public diary. You have a clear objective and want your readers to take an action.

If you are still with me then let's get down to brass tacks...

What problem are you solving? The best blog strategies are focused on finding tough problems and devising novel ways to solve them.

For example, one of my favorite blogs is Charlie Gilkey's ProductiveFlourishing.com. His blog helps me be more productive with my time. Simple.

Most people have a problem with money, relationships, health, beauty, and career. Focus your blog strategy around creating a clear and simple answer to your chosen problem.

Extreme Niches

Don't be afraid of small or exotic niches. If you are the expert at breeding purple ladybugs then be the best purple ladybug problem solver ever. The goal isn't to pick huge niches flush with cash (even though that's awesome). What you should shoot for is a topic that is useful and large enough to fulfill the goals you created in the first minute.

If you do pick an extremely small niche, then it's a good idea to look for complementary topics that your skills could apply to as well. That way you can increase your content repertoire AND attract readers from different communities.

Content Pitfalls

Take the time to make sure that your topic isn't relevant ONLY to you. Although this may be personally satisfying it will make it hard to build and monetize an audience (if that is your goal). I recommend that you survey your potential audience, read comments on similar blogs, and lurk in forums to see if there is a real hunger for your perspective.

Ok, let's move on to Minute #4

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[Use the Minute #3 Worksheet to Find Irresistible Topics](#)



Minute #4: How Much Content Do You Have?

Burnout is the most lethal blog killer.

That's why it's smart to determine how much content you have ready to publish. Even if your posts are just ideas you should still think about if you will be able to deliver quality information regularly for years to come. A realistic examination of your potential editorial calendar will save you from starting a blog that starts fast but fizzles when the content well has dried up.

Quality and Quantity Are Equally as Important

Most bloggers agree that quality content is a prerequisite for success. However, most ignore the equally important mandate to **Always Be Creating**. A blogger who can only cough up a 1000 word post every few months will have a very difficult time getting noticed by the public.

As a general rule, content quantity is heavily dependent on: 1) Creativity of the blogger, 2) Vibrancy of the niche, and 3) Frequency of posting. Success will go to the blogger who has developed a practical strategy for balancing these three factors

Here are some thoughts to consider when evaluating your Content Quantity plan:

1. Prior Planning Prevents Piss Poor Performance

This sacred military maxim applies to blogging as well. A well thought out editorial schedule can map out a robust content publishing schedule a year in advance.

2. Consider Guest Posting

Decide from the start if you will allow others to post content on your blog. One advantage of guest posts is that you can get quality posts published on a more frequent basis. Also, remember that you can control the quality of the posts you allow. The quality of your contributions will go up as your blog becomes more popular.

3. Post Length Matters

Don't be a "post length" snob. You are in this race for the long-haul so don't limit yourself to 2,000 word posts. Short well-thought out posts work just as well as their larger cousins. Shorter posts are also easier to produce over the long term.

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[Go to Minute #4 Worksheet To Quickly Plan Your Editorial Schedule](#)



Minute #5: How Often Are You Publishing?

Bloggers and social media purists are infatuated to distraction with numbers. We'll argue ad nauseum about the ideal number of words in a post, the number of letters in a headline, and (our favorite) how many times a week you should be posting.

Here's the good news. You can publish as often as you like. No one will really care...but you. You can post twice a day, or once a year. Like I said, it's entirely up to you.

Just consider this. The bigger the blog, the more frequently they post. These blogs have tested the water for you and have settled on a daily posting schedule for maximum traffic growth and size.

You don't have to decide if this is good or bad. It's just the facts. You DO need to decide what type of blog you want. If you want to beat the #1 blog in your niche then you will need to post accordingly. For example, if the top Honey Bee management blog posts 2x a week, then you should post 2x a week **minimum**.

The Quality Trap

Whenever I watch this debate, there are always a few people who insist that "Quality is the only real consideration." Umm...yes, quality is critical. This is obvious and really isn't a factor in the discussion.

You need to produce quality content yes...but you also need to ship that content frequently. Don't use quality as an excuse to be lazy. If you want to compete with the big boys then you must craft a strategy that out-publishes them with the very best you have to offer.

I understand that this isn't easy. But anything worth achieving rarely is easy.

Just don't delude yourself.

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Minute #6: Converting Attention into Action

Recently, some very successful bloggers have kneecapped a favorite social media misconception.

A Blog is Not a Business.

Blogs are powerful audience aggregators. Once you have the audience you need to figure out how to convert their attention into an action. That action is the Strategic Objective (Minute #1) of your blog.

Some bloggers convert their audiences' attention into eBook and home study course sales. Others use their audience to demonstrate their appeal to book publishers. No matter the goal, it's important to get good at "attention conversion" as quickly as possible.

Most blog owners worry about attention conversion last. They assume that they should attract their audience first. This isn't so...

Attract the Right Audience From the Start

Your blog post topics will attract a specific type of audience. If your posts appeal to college students then it will be very difficult to promote a thousand dollar home-study course!

Save yourself the hassle by carefully aligning your post topics with your end goals from the beginning.

Here are some pointers

1. List the action you want your reader to take along with the post title in your editorial calendar.
2. Select a standard call-to-action that gives you the most options over the long term. Getting your readers to sign-up for an email newsletter is an excellent choice.
3. Get used to asking for what you want. Remember that you are giving free quality information on a regular basis. You shouldn't feel guilty about promoting affiliate products, asking for a sale or encouraging people to take action.



Minute #7: Measuring Success

Top performers understand that “What Gets Measured Gets Managed.”

It’s important for you to build a mechanism for getting feedback on your performance. Just blogging day after day without any goals is a recipe for rapid burnout.

I strongly recommend that you pick one “metric” that helps you evaluate how well you are doing achieving your goal. Review this goal monthly. If you find yourself slipping, create a plan to get back on track.

Over time you will find yourself gaining momentum and confidence in your ability to grow a successful blog. You’ll also discover that measuring your progress makes it easier to brainstorm new strategies. Instead of being blindsided by obstacles, you’ll see them coming and create plans to overcome them.

Often measurement is ignored or scoffed at in social media circles. Worse, there is a tendency to substitute vague measurements (i.e. “build great relationships”) for specific metrics. Don’t fall into this trap. Have the courage to rationally evaluate your progress and make the choices required to keep moving forward.

On the flip side, don’t get obsessed with checking your stats. They are just snapshots of your performance. Set aside time to review them on a regular basis and move on; over time you’ll get a feel for how much weight to give to your metrics and how often you should review them.

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What Now?

Great job. You've made it through the entire workbook and now you should have the start of a great blog strategy.

Now, it's time for you to put what you learn into action.

My suggestion is to start small and keep your progress steady. It's easy to get overwhelmed and discouraged when your first starting.

By the way, if you want more help, resources, and techniques, then consider joining the Pushing Social Bootcamp. The Bootcamp is a weekly training group where you get in-depth advice on a growing list of blogging techniques. The Bootcamp is the quickest way to get rapidly improve your blog's look and content.

Check out the [Pushing Social Bootcamp here](#)

I Want to Hear From You

I want to hear what you think of this guide so that I can improve it over time! Email me at stanford@pushingsocial.com to let me know your thoughts and feedback.

I'm cheering for you!

Stanford

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Minute by Minute Worksheets

Minute #1 Worksheet: What's Your Goal?

Why did you start your blog?	
How would you define "success" for your blog?	
Can you describe your blog's objective in a single sentence? (your elevator pitch)	
How many RSS subscribers would you like to have in 12 months?	
How many email subscribers would you like to have in 12 months?	
In 12 months, what will your readers say about your blog?	

Minute #2 Worksheet: Who is Your Audience?

What is the #1 reason why a reader would visit your blog?	
What is your reader most passionate about?	
What keeps your audience up worrying at night?	
What problem can you help your reader solve?	
What makes your reader happy?	
Picture your reader. Now describe them in detail.	

Minute #3 Worksheet: What's Your Topic?

What's the most pressing problem your readers are trying to solve?	
Why are the current solutions to your readers' problem inadequate and/or wrong?	
Describe your solution in that little box to the right -> Don't cheat!	
What problem can you help your readers solve?	
What makes your reader happy?	
Speed Round: Brainstorm 10 topics that answer your readers problem and bring a smile to their face. Go!	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1.2.3.4.5.6.7.8.9.10.

Minute #4 Worksheet: Editorial Schedule

Week	Topic Idea	Completed ?
1		
2		
3		
4		
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24		

Week	Topic Idea	Completed ?
25		
26		