

Your Business Blog Is Boring And Nobody Cares. Change That And Start Generating Leads.

by [Carol Lynn Rivera](#) | Aug 20, 2014 | [Writing & Content Marketing](#) |



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Carol Lynn is a content creator and marketer who has been in the business of digital marketing since 1999. Along with her husband and business partner Ralph, she owns and operates both {Web.Search.Social}, a consulting and marketing services business, and Rahvalor Interactive, a web and creative services production studio. On any given day Carol Lynn will wear the hat of project manager, consultant, social media manager and content marketer. Her true passion is writing, whether it's web content, a blog post, email campaign or social status update. When she's not writing for customers, {Web.Search.Social}, or her own blog, she's planning her early retirement to Barcelona as a famous and wealthy novelist.

If you've got a business blog I bet you think you're riding the content marketing wave. And now you're posting away, day after week after month.

But what is the net result of all that posting? Are you getting traffic to your site? Generating leads? Filling the internet?

If your blog is rocking your world, if you're growing your email list by leaps and bounds, if you're making money hand over fist, then take the day off. This article isn't for you.

But if you've got a business blog and it's kind of sitting there looking pretty (or not) and taking up a bunch of your time or money...

If you're doubting the point of this content marketing thing at all...

If you're trying hard but only getting frustrated by the deafening silence of your own irrelevance...

Read on!

I want to share with you some reasons WHY that's happening and how you can fix the problem and turn your blog into a lead generating machine.

Four Years. One Lead.

We started blogging for business in 2010. Initially our goal was to provide a resource for existing clients. We weren't in lead-generation mode. Want to guess how many leads our blog generated when we weren't trying?

Zero.

Not surprising, right?

We started blogging in earnest in 2012. And by "in earnest" I mean "so people would notice us and start to pay attention".

We weren't in lead-generation mode then, either. We were in list-building mode. We had a "services" page on our blog but it said a whole lot of not much and do you know how many leads we generated?

Zero.

The good news is that we grew a nice list. Met and talked to some great people. Built relationships.

By 2013 we sat down and had a serious conversation that went something like this:

Me: *Pft.*

Ralph: *Yeah, let's get some leads.*

And so we started blogging with the single intent of generating leads.

It took us 10 months from "Let's do this thing" to "OMG a lead!"

During that time we made some mistakes, fixed some things, figured some stuff out, changed our minds a lot and eventually found our stride. (Side lesson: marketing isn't about following some rules and a 10-step plan. There will be trying, failing, fixing and eventually success.)

I tell you this for two reasons.

One, if you think I'm just blowing smoke, you'll see that's not the case. What I'm about to say is lifted right from my own experience.

Two, we made the same mistakes you're making right now. We spent months working through our goals, our strategy and tweaking and testing before we hit on something that worked.

And now we're generating leads almost every day.

Do they all turn into paying customers? Nope, but that isn't how marketing works.

So I'm not promising you scads of money, but I can tell you that if you rethink your blogging strategy and incorporate some of these tips then you'll generate more leads than you're getting now.

Which, if you're anything like we were a couple of years ago, is probably zero.

Your Industry Is Boring And Nobody Cares. Get Over It.

Somewhere in your travels you may have landed on a blog post that advised you to write about "industry news". That usually makes the list of "top 10 things to blog about when you're stuck for ideas".

Allow me to be the one to say it: nobody gives a flying hot crap about your industry.

Too harsh?

Ok, how about this: people are busy. They're managing their own lives and businesses and family. They don't have the time or brainpower to process the intricacies of the thing YOU know and love.

Unless you can make it about them.

How would you feel right now if this post were about the latest trends in content marketing rather than a slap in the face about how to make content marketing work FOR YOU?

I could cite rationales and statistics, tell you about the latest conferences and go on at length about how consumer expectations are changing.

But isn't it more helpful to know how you can take your blog and use it to make money?

It's my job to know marketing. It's your job to be bored silly by it until something perks up your ears by telling you how to profit from it.

If you're blogging about your industry – news, trends, latest products or services, predictions – stop it. If your blog reads like the front page of the Sunday paper – stop it. If you use any jargon whatsoever, and that probably includes every industry word you can think of – stop it.

This is a bit of an ego-checking exercise but it's important to make sure that you're not writing about you. Begin every sentence you write with this simple question: *Why would my prospect care?*

Relearn The Art Of The Three Bears

Did someone read or tell you stories when you were a kid? If you have kids now, do you read or tell them stories?

Have you, at any point in your life, attended a backyard barbecue or Sunday dinner or holiday brunch where someone spun a tale or two that had a group of onlookers listening in and laughing or groaning?

Everyone loves a good storyteller. Notice I said a *good* storyteller. I don't mean the kind of storyteller that my neighbor used to be, the one I would go to lengths to avoid if I ever saw him across the yard. He told me plenty of stories, about the neighborhood kids and the weather and whoever was having surgery and whoever was planting petunias. I don't know that I'd call those stories so much as ramblings.

A story has a point. It has emotion. It has something the listener (or reader) can relate to.

A good story is partly in the telling but it's also partly in your ability to make it *about the listener*.

It comes back to the question I asked you earlier: why would someone care?

I talked at length about this before so you can [read about storytelling here](#).

Story can turn your blog from a term paper into something your prospects can't put down. It can also create context for your readers and explain ideas in a way that they can relate to.

We tell stories here all the time. I bet you noticed that I told one right at the start of this article! It was about me, sure, but the punch line wasn't about how awesome I am – it's about how I can help you and how you can profit from it.

Try taking an otherwise generic, dry or lifeless blog post and incorporating a story – whether it's a single sentence or a full paragraph. Use a story from your experience or a hypothetical from your imagination. Doctor up an anecdote or blend a few things together into one “big lesson”.

And always ask yourself: *why does my prospect care?*

But Don't Talk About The Three Bears

A cautionary tale when it comes to storytelling: I worked with someone once who was blogging his little heart out, telling stories, engaging people, being real and human and entertaining.

He was getting great feedback.

He was getting a ton of traffic to his site.

His blog was *not*, as the title of this post suggests, boring.

But he came to me with one problem: he wasn't closing any business.

It took me about two-point-two seconds to figure out why. He was blogging about stuff that had nothing to do with his business. Stuff that was great content but that would have been better served on a personal blog. I read at least half a dozen posts about his Easter holiday and another half dozen commenting on unrelated news stories. For a guy trying to sell law services, this was not particularly helpful.

People loved it – for all the wrong reasons. And they were finding his site in search – for all the wrong keywords. His traffic amounted to a bunch of happy readers. But nobody who wanted what he was offering.

I'm all for sharing personal stuff on your business blog but when you forget to do business then I hope you really, really, really enjoy writing because that enjoyment is about all you're going to get out of it.

A story interwoven with information, lessons and insights is a great idea. But a story without a business tie-in is a lead generation fail.

This one is tricky because on the one hand, I've insisted that you make sure people care. And if you tell a great story people will care! But you have to make them care about the right things. Not just your brilliant use of plot and metaphor but the solution you're providing to their problems.

Figure Out Who You're Talking To. Even If You Think You Know. Because I Bet You Don't.

When we first started blogging we knew exactly who we were talking to. But when we relaunched in 2012 we were a little less clear. *Prospects*.

So why weren't we getting any?

Well, for us the problem was that we weren't clear on what our prospects wanted from us. Truth be told, we were a little lost in our own heads, *thinking* we knew what to write when in fact we were just... well, filling the internet.

That's not to say we wrote crap. We wrote some great stuff. It just wasn't stuff that our prospects needed or wanted.

It was perfect for DIYers.

It was great for other marketing professionals.

But those are not our customers.

Some time after our first serious conversation, Ralph and I sat down and had another.

Me: *WTF?*

Ralph: *IDK.*

And so we rethought our content strategy and realized that even though we were writing some impressive content, we weren't writing it for the right people.

Ego-check.

This is a tough one because it requires you to question what you think you know, challenge your motives and figure out whether or not your content is something that your *real* prospects truly want and need to read.

If you're not generating leads, I bet the answer is no.

I bet you're writing stuff that *you* want to write.

That your peers or English teacher or mom would love you for but that doesn't matter to the people who pay your invoices.

This can be tough because it requires not only knowing who you're talking to but what they want and whether you're providing it.

Do you want some good news? I've got the perfect solution for you...

Listen.

I saved the best for last because this is the tip that's going to get you the most leads. It's also the one that's going to make your life the easiest.

All you have to do is *listen* to your customers. Listen to your prospects.

What are their questions?

What are their concerns?

What are they afraid of when it comes to buying from you?

What are they telling you about what they want your product to do for them?

What do they misunderstand or get wrong when it comes to your services?

What are they complaining about when they tell you about the last guy like you that they hired?

Every word out of your customers' and prospects' mouths is content for your blog.

The minute we stopped thinking about what to write and started addressing people's real-life issues was the instant that we started generating leads every day.

If you pay attention to your customers, you'll not only be talking to them about exactly what they want to hear but you'll never have to wrack your brain thinking up a blog topic again.

If you take only one lesson away from this post, I want you to open a text document or get yourself a pen and write down the first question you think of that prospects ask you over and over.

Then I want you to answer it on your blog. Even if it's a hard one. *Especially* if it's a hard one. If it forces you to dig deep and say things that you would otherwise keep close to the vest then that's your ticket to lead generation right there.

One of our most popular posts answers the question: [How much does a website cost?](#)

You might balk at the idea of sharing that information publicly. Do it anyway.

Since I'm already pushing 2,000 words I won't go into the myriad options you have for addressing customer questions and concerns but I urge you to listen and answer. Don't be afraid to tell them about the stuff that can go wrong. Don't be afraid to expose weaknesses.

Your customers want to know that they can trust you and that you know what you're talking about. What better way to prove both than to be perfectly honest and transparent about exactly the things they want to hear?

Now go. You've got homework. At a minimum you're going to start writing down questions. And if you need help turning those into stories or crafting them in a way that makes people care, [let me know](#). Hopefully you've read enough of my blogs to trust that I can do a pretty good job of making that happen!





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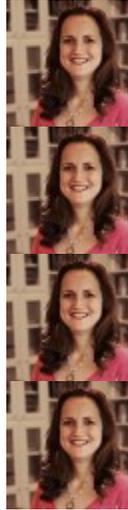
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