# 101 Tips for Creating Viral Blog Posts

A viral post is one that spreads like a virus. A post can suddenly catch a whole lot of attention and suddenly, it's everywhere. YouTube has too many viral videos to count – but who could forget 'Charlie Bit my Finger' which has (at the time of writing) 826,280,455 view.

Most content creators secretly dream of writing a viral blog post. While there is no magic formula for making one go stratospheric, there are many ways of giving it the very best possible shot. Let's start by looking at the introduction to a current viral video post so that we can see how it was achieved.

What Does a Viral Post Look Like?
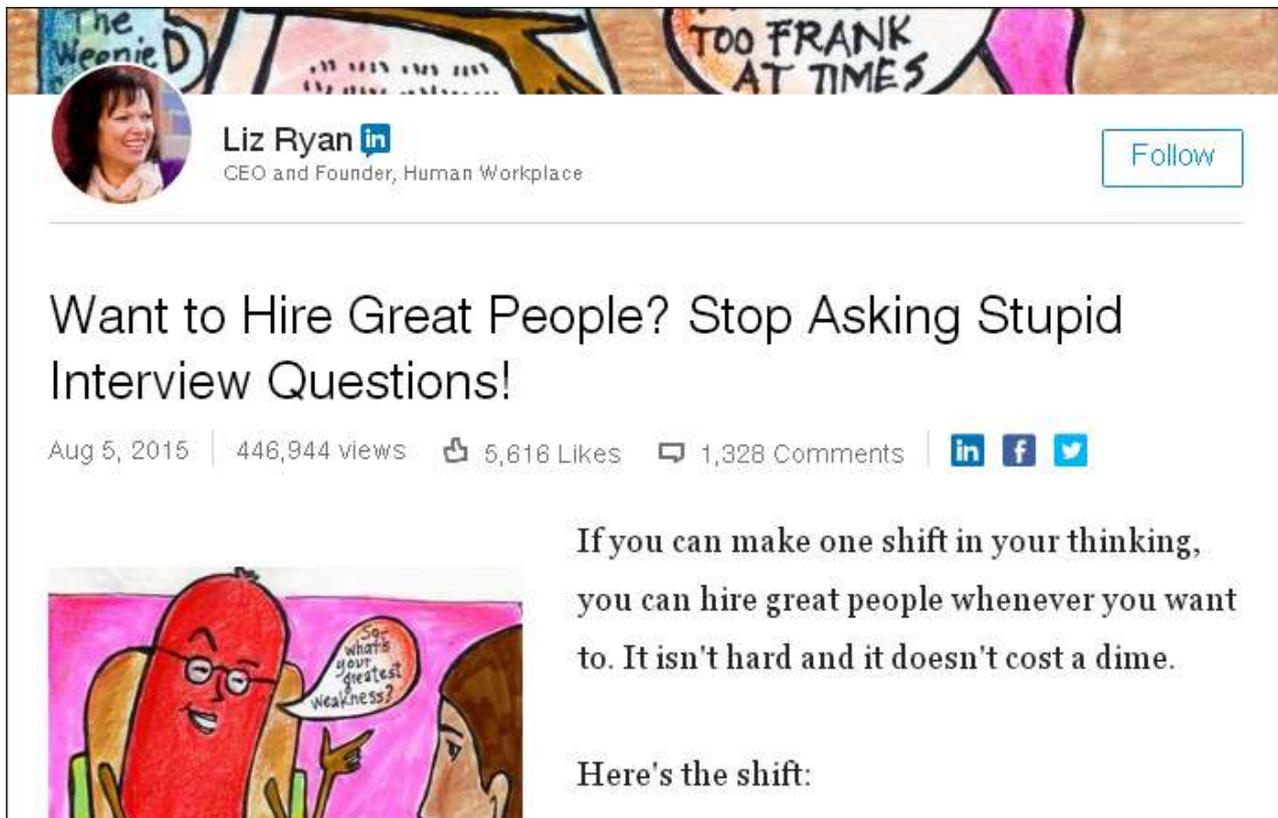
Take a look at Liz Ryan's post on LinkedIn. See those eye-watering numbers of views, likes and comments?

Look closer. The title grabs you immediately. Who wouldn't want to hire great people? The next sentence, 'Stop Asking Stupid Interview Questions' hits the right people in all the right places. People who are going to be interviewed always dread the question that they fear will catch them out – like the perennial favourite "What's your biggest weakness?" Try answering that without it coming back to bite you. No more stupid questions? Instant relief.

If you're the HR person facing a day of trembling people with sweaty palms, it promises a less formulaic and more fulfilling experience.

And that's just the title.

The intro delivers the next hook. What's required of the reader? One shift in thinking. That's do-able. And…it's easy and free. Now does Liz have your attention? You bet.
And then straight into the 'How To'. Does it make you want to read on? 446,944 people did.

A great example of a viral post.

KRISTI HINES - VIRAL BLOG POSTS HAPPEN IN TWO WAYS – LUCK AND PROMOTION

You either write a great piece of content and get lucky when someone with a huge audience shares it, someone from Lifehacker picks it up, or it gets hot on Reddit.
Or, you write a great piece of content and take the time to promote it every way you can think of – email, social media ads, etc. While the latter will take work, it is the only sure way you can make viral happen.

Kristi Hines talking to Konrad Sanders in
an *interview* for The Creative Copywriter.

START WITH THE BASICS

Groundwork 1 of 2

Is Your Site Ready to Help your Post Go Viral?

Some of these may sound obvious but laying the groundwork now will pay dividends when you unleash your epic post.

1 Most of the traffic that comes to a blog post arrives within the first few days following publication. You can get surges of traffic long after a blog post is published, but the bulk of the traffic comes sooner rather than later. So if you're going for viral, it stands to reason that your site, your audience and your promotion strategy all need to be ready to rock 'n' roll from the moment you hit 'publish'. Having said that, many bloggers continue to publicise a post long after publication – especially if the post is evergreen.

2   Make sure that you site loads quickly. Visitors don't hang around waiting for slow loads. A study found that 40% of people will abandon a web page if it takes more than 3 seconds to fully load. You can use a free website speed tester such as WebSiteOptimization.com,WebWait.com or WebPageTest.org

3   If your site is slow, check that you have optimized (compressed) your images. Image compression means taking an image down to the smallest size in bytes that you can without degrading the quality of the image. You can do this via a free online service such asImage Optimizer or Caesium.

4   If you're on WordPress, you can make your images and iframes load even more quickly with a free plugin such as B J Lazy Load

5   The most basic element when aiming for a viral post is to make sure that you have clearly visible social sharing icons.

6   Make it really easy for your visitors to share your post. Have share buttons at the top *and* bottom of your post. Floating sidebars stay in view at all times. These can make viewing on some mobiles awkward but they really do bring in a lot of shares. One of the most popular free follow and share tools is Add This

8   Make sure you have a Pinterest account for sharing all of the images on your site. Create a board just for your blog post images. If you don't think you need it, you should know that as of April 2015, Pinterest had 46.64 million unique visitors from the United States alone. In January 2012, it gained more than 11 million visitors making it the fastest independent site in history to break through the 10 million visitor mark.

9   While we're talking about image sharing sites, you might want to consider signing up for aTumblr account. Tumblr has 420 million users with around 120,000 new users signing up every day. Yahoo bought Tumblr in 2013 for an astonishing $1.1 billion.

10   Sign up for a free, Flipboard account. It's very like Pinterest but is another place to get eyeballs on all the lovely images from your site. Er…let's just rewind for a moment there…I know that '*getting eyeballs on content*' is a buzzphrase at the moment but it makes me squirm. And I'm an ex-Nurse with a cast iron stomach. So let's try that one more time…
It's very like Pinterest but is another place where people can see your images and follow them back to your site. Phew, that's better.

11 If you don't have a LinkedIn account, sign up for one now. If you want to appear professional, having a LinkedIn account is crucial. It takes a while to find your way around but you can connect with other users and publish your content. Join as many relevant groups as possible to maximize your exposure.

12 Have a comments box ready to go and make sure comments are enabled

13 Make sure your site has an RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feed. You can use a free tool such as WebRSS to create and track your own RSS feed. You could also try FeedYes – be sure to enter a tag or the feed URL won't generate.

14 Is your website optimized for mobiles, tablets and other hand held devices?

This is important for your potentially viral blog post – but more than that, it's also crucial to keep Google happy.

Google *isn't* happy to send mobile users to websites that provide a frustrating browsing experience and could drop your ranking lower. If you're building your site on WordPress, it's easy to choose a responsive theme.

You also need to:

1. Use large text that is easy to read.

2. Use large, clear, optimized images.

3. Keep the website layout simple.

4. Use large, calls-to-action that are easy to view on mobiles.

15 Enter your website URL into the free Website Grader from HubSpot. It's fast and fun and it not only tells you where you may have issues, but how to fix them.

PAT FLYNN - ISOLATE SUPER IMPORTANT LINKS

We're talking about **your audience** and they are coming via mobile, and they will "fat-finger" your links if you don't think about it….

51% of all email opens happen on a mobile device.

The link below is isolated on its own line and it takes up the entire line too.

Read: 5 Minute or Less Blogging Tips that Yield Big Results

SmartPassiveIncome.com Facebook Twitter Google+ LinkedIn YouTube Channel

Groundwork 2 of 2
Is Your Audience Ready to Help your Post Go Viral?

16 Who is your viral post going to be read by? Knowing your audience means that you can write something that you can be confident they will enjoy. You can find out a lot about them via your Google Analytics.

17 Build up your email list. The people that you send your content out to in newsletters are your best and most immediate audience.

18 Build up your social media. Blogs with a high volume of traffic and long email lists usually have high performing social media sites. Don't be tempted to pay for Facebook followers or Tweets. While they might swell your ranks in the short term, these signups are not real engagers and will not enhance your site authority. And Google *really* doesn't like them. 'Nuff said.

19 Some shares on social media are worth more than others. If you manage to get an influencer to share your content [ahem] it can give you more than 30% more shares.

What is an influencer? Someone who has a much higher than average impact in a particular niche. Influencers are experienced, often well connected and looked up to for their knowledge and advice.

> You can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get people interested in you.
>
> ~ Dale Carnegie

If you would like an influencer to help you, please remember to play nice. These are busy people who are not going to share your content just because you ask them.

That is why this tip is in 'groundwork'. It takes time to build a relationship with people and to do that, you need to make connections.

Find people who inspire you and share their content via your social media. Sign up for their newsletters and take the time to leave well thought out comments that add value to their posts. This is relationship building but you will also learn a LOT while you do it – and you will probably enjoy it to.

20 Build up your network – through services like Tiberr and Viral Content Buzz, you can get hundreds of people to share your content on the social web.

21 Did you know that you can publish your blog to Kindle? It doesn't take long to do and requires a screenshot of your site, a banner and your RSS feed. Get it set up now so that when you publish your post, it will automatically publish to Kindle.

CHOOSING WHAT TO WRITE ABOUT

22 You will be taking a lot of time over this post so choose a topic that can deliver a large amount of content. That content has to be awesome so don't make your choice until you're sure you can do the topic full justice. Make a shortlist of ideas and then do some research on each one. Read on for lots of ideas.

NEIL PATEL - THE CONTENT ITSELF MUST BE WORTHY

You need to learn how to create content that has the possibility of going viral.

Looking at the anatomy of viral content, you have to keep in mind that the content itself must be worthy to be shared.

It has to solve a particular problem, enhance your reader's life, or make something better.

If it doesn't do any of these, no one will share it.

QuickSprout.com NeilPatel.com Facebook Twitter Google+

23 Align your content with your brand. It will stick out like a sore thumb if you decide to write about something that has nothing to do with your brand, simply for the sensationalist value. Your site visitors will lose trust in you and that's a big no-no.

25 Use facts and numbers as they are known to capture people's attention. Percentages are also good as they evoke emotion. For example "How to increase your traffic by 400%."

26 If you decide to use numbers, choose uneven ones rather than even. An article in Wired magazine explained how Terence Hines of Pace University, New York, discovered that our brains take longer to process odd numbers than even ones. The brain makes all of that extra work worthwhile by lodging uneven numbers in our memory for longer than even ones.

27 Statistics are better than personal opinion because people trust them more. For even more impact, use data that backs up your main point in your headline.

28 Maybe a **post with a twist**? We're all enthralled with Game of Thrones (*how* long until the next season…?) and that is due, in part, to the fact that you can never relax when you watch it.

The writer, George R. R. Martin is not afraid to kill people. He kills the people you least expect, when you least expect it.

This has us coming back for more because of the edge-of-the-seat excitement and tension.

If you can work something like that into your post, you're onto a winner.

29 Choose a **controversial topic** to evoke emotion.
Neil Patel tells the story of a friend who wrote a blog post about why men are better than women. He didn't really believe this – he wrote it as a joke.

The post was so controversial that he was featured on Dr. Phil. The TV show drove such a huge surge of traffic to his site that his servers went down.

The takeaway from this is that if you find out what most people think about a topic…and then write the opposite view, you will evoke emotion and gain traffic.

People Love Content That Teaches Them Something.

Here are a Few Ideas:

SUE ANNE DUNLEVIE - KEEP AN IDEAS FILE

We can get great ideas but if we take action on every one, nothing gets done! File the idea under "ideas" in Evernote or Asana or something like that and take a look at your "ideas" every month and see if you want to go in that direction.
That's the only thing that helps me keep focused!

SuccessfulBlogging.com Facebook Twitter Google+ Pinterest

30 Create an **in-depth 'How to'** post or tutorial. Step-by-step posts with a lot of helpful images are very popular. These are best aimed at a beginner or beginner / intermediate. If you must use jargon, be sure to explain what it means. You want people to feel that they're learning – not make them feel humiliated because they don't understand what you're talking about.

31 Write the story of someone who started with nothing and built an empire – the classic **'rags to riches'** story. This is where telling your own story is a bonus as you can take people on the journey that you travelled to get where you are. Stories about people who have made millions, lost them and then made them again are alluring because they appear to have 'worked out a formula' for making money. Think Richard Branson, Donald Trump and Robert Stiller (Founder of Keurig Green Mountain).

32 Write the ultimate **product review**. Remember to align it to your brand so if you're a blogger, it could be a tool that you use and there are plenty to choose from – laptops, software, coffee machines etc. Here, you'll get more interest if it's a positive review rather than a negative one. If you can find a new angle, so much the better. Make it as detailed as possible. You'll be spending a lot of time on this so before you start, email the company that makes the product to ask them if they would like to link to it or use it as a testimonial. If they're not interested, move on to the next item on your list. It sounds harsh – but hey, we're going for viral here. It's worth joining CJ Affiliate by Conversant (formerly Commission Junction) or another affiliation site – or check out the product company's own affiliation policy. If this baby goes viral, you might make some decent money.

33 Write a post **showcasing** amazing creations – such as home decor items, fashion, food etc. Again, align it with your brand but focus on the visual. This is where Pinterest and Tumblr accounts work for their living. These types of post are most successful when they showcase something very new, classic or just beautiful to look at and own.

34 **Practical advice** and **actionable tips** that can help improve the readers life in some way is always in demand. Just look at the meteoric rise of Lifehacker. Their tagline is "Tips and downloads for getting things done." The site launched in 2005 and Time Magazine included it in their "50 Coolest Web Sites" and one of the "25 Sites We Can't Live Without" in 2006.

35 Conduct an **interview** with a top influencer or do a 'round up' post of **Influencer's advice**. These are always popular. One word of caution – do your research meticulously. Don't email a question about SEO to Michelle Phan and a cosmetics query to Rand Fishkin. Neither will answer. Although…there might be an untapped gem there…

Let Me Entertain You

36 **Entertaining content** goes viral regularly. People love to laugh. This element can be worked through your post, even if the primary focus is not comedic. Entertaining posts are easy to read and have a great 'feel good' factor that is likely to get it shared…a lot.

JAIME BUCKLEY - AUTHOR - ILLUSTRATOR - DAD OF 12

No-one does entertaining like my good friend, Jaime Buckley.

Go and visit Jaime's site Wanted:Hero and prepare to be entertained and to learn how to be entertaining.

Jaime is an author, illustrator, podcaster and champion commenter.

Facebook Twitter Google+ LinkedIn Pinterest Instagram YouTube

Places to Look for Ideas

37 **Discussion Boards** and **Forums** are a good source of ideas. Visit ones that align with your brand and see what people are saying. Are they asking for particular content? That makes life easier – just supply it. An easy way to find relevent forums is to do a Google search. Type the following into Google Search allintitle: 'keyword' forum

Er…you might want to choose something that is more popular than matchstick models.

Six results Google? Seriously?
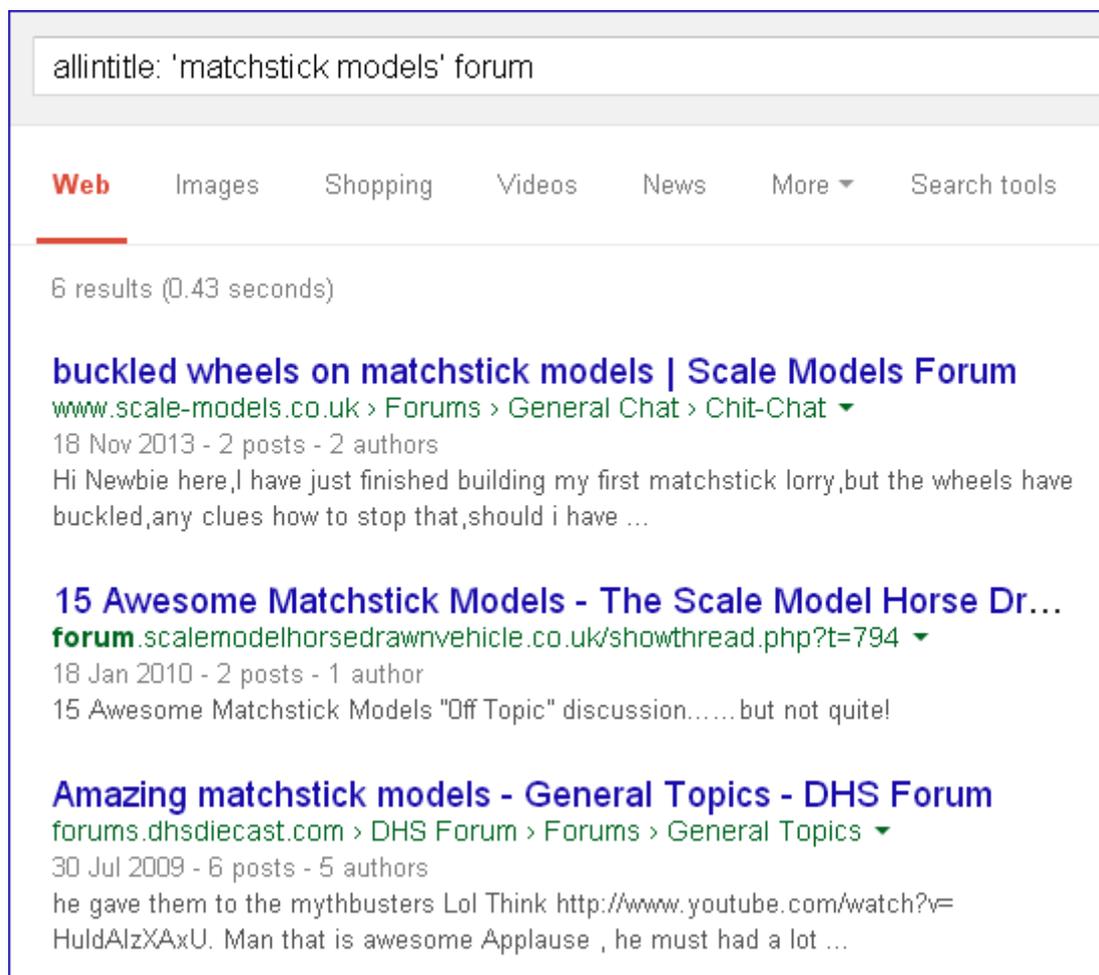
38 Try Quora for ideas. Quora's tag line is that it will supply the best answer to any question. The image shows the search to do for topics on Quora. Reviewing the answers may give you a great idea for your post. You can also guage the interest in potential blog post subjects by posting questions and seeing how many people answer them.
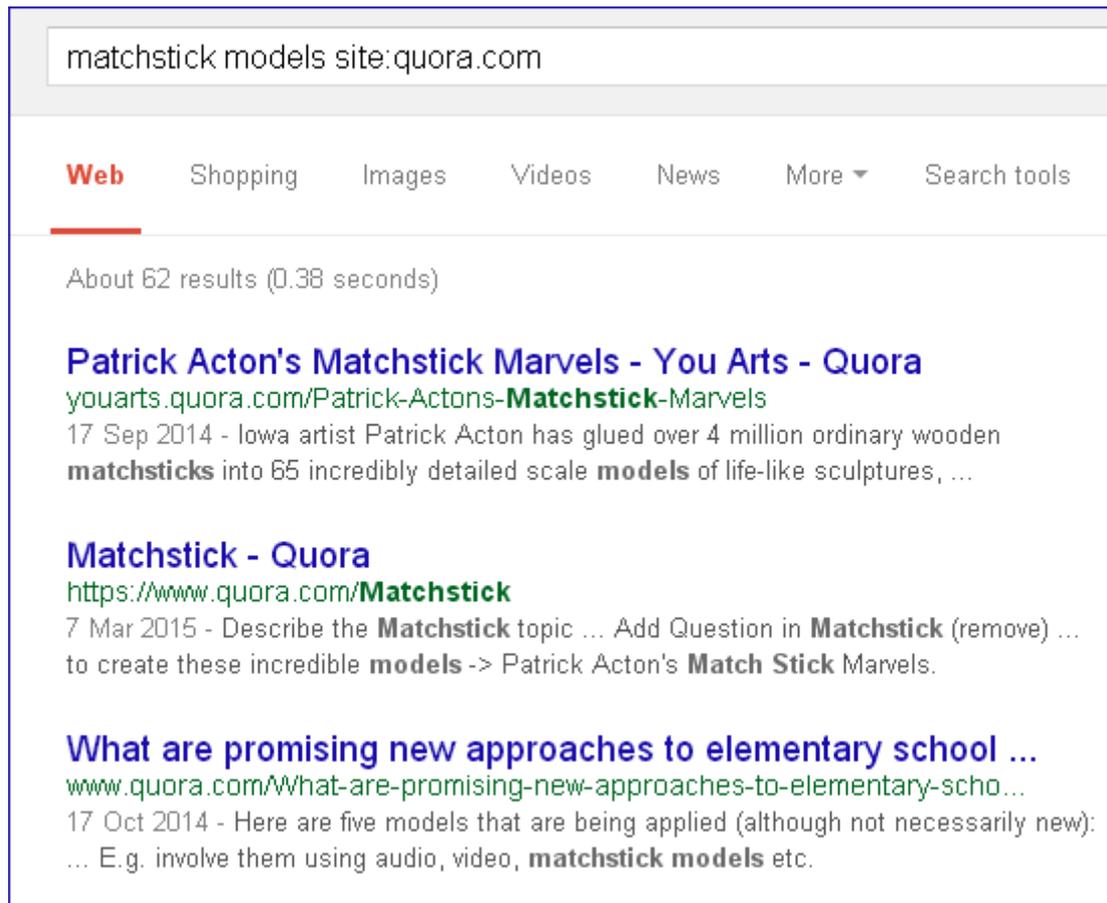
39 Try Blog Topic Generators for ideas:
- HubSpot's Blog Topic Generator Enter three different nouns and the generator will give you five blog topic ideas.
- Portent's Content Idea Generator
- Link Bait Generator Type in your keyword and then choose
- Controversial
- Fun
- A List
- Shocking

40 HubSpot reports that according to BuzzFeed, most of their successful content falls into one of the following categories:
- LOL – humorous content
- Win – useful content
- OMG – shocking content
- Cute – cute content (think fuzzy baby animals)
- Trashy – ridiculous fails… typically of others

- Fail – something that frustrates everyone
- WTF – strange, bizarre content

41 Size *does* matter. Bloggers often produce 'standard' 500 word posts but Google prefers much longer pieces of content.

"I've found that writing content that is long and thorough, such as 40,000 word guides, produces more traffic than writing short blog posts. My advanced guides on Quick Sprout can easily generate 300,000 plus visitors."   ~ Neil Patel

42 Noah Kagan from OKDork (and also Chief Sumo at SumoMe and AppSumo and hard core taco lover) found the same result. In his epic post Why Content Goes Viral – What Analyzing 100 million Articles Taught Us he included the following chart showing the shares that you can expect from various lengths of the content. I urge you to go and read that post. It's a masterclass of why content goes viral.

Average Shares by Content Length
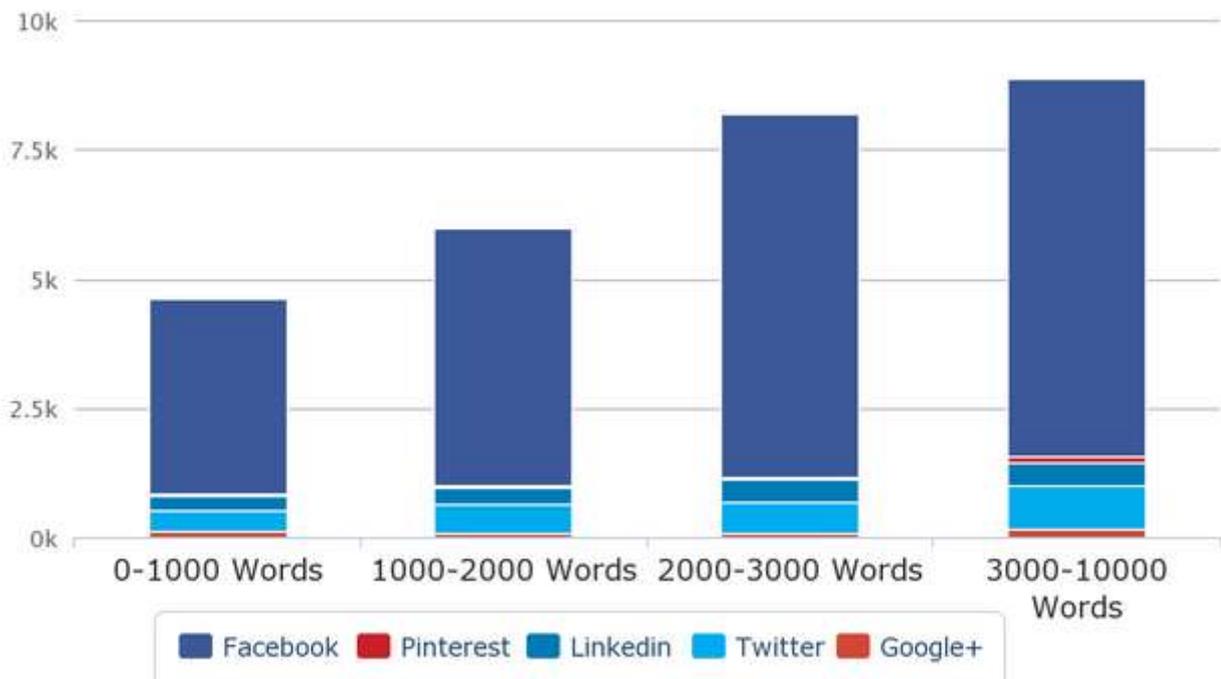
Noah Kagan has allowed sharing of this chart.
To put it onto your own blog or site, use this code:

```
<div style="clear:both"><a href="http://okdork.com/2014/04/21/why-content-goes-viral-what-
analyzing-100-millions-articles-taught-us"><img src="http://okdork.com/wp-
content/uploads/2014/04/Shares-by-Content-Length.png" alt="Please include attribution to
OkDork.com with this graphic." border="0" /></a></div><div>Courtesy of: <a
href="http://okdork.com">OKDork</a></div>
```

43 If you want to ride on a wave created by the latest news story or topic that is trending, you can useGoogle Trends. It displays how often a particular search-term is entered relative to the total search-volume across various regions of the world. The statistics are taken from Google Search and you can narrow your results down by Category or Country.

For trending items, you could also check out BuzzFeed, Twitter (for what's trending),Digg, StumbleUpon and Reddit. If you're writing a topical post to catch a surge of interest, be aware that your post will not be evergreen. There are arguments for both – a potentially huge surge in traffic vs a long, slow burn. This is why your blog has to be primed and ready to go. You won't be able to leap on the next big story if you're not totally ready.

44 Content Strategy Helper is a Google Doc tool that generates blog topic ideas into a Google spreadsheet. The tool gathers information from Google News, Google Insights, Reddit, YouTube, Topsy, and more sources to show the topics that everyone is talking about.

45 Evergreen content is what we are all striving for. If a post is evergreen, it means that the content that will stand the test of time. So aim to create a post that is not too tied to current events. But can an evergreen post go viral? If the content is awesome, *any* post can go viral.

Even if your evergreen post *doesn't* go viral, it can still get a ton of shares because it is likely to be shared for a lot longer. The other payoff is that you can recycle evergreen posts from your archives.

If you're writing a showcase post, you could make it evergreen by doing a round up of classic design that has stood the test of time – or relate new items back to what inspired them or their creator.

Emotion

46 A well written account of a personal experience rates highly on the authentic score and is always interesting to read.

> "At a minimum, you should spend just as much time on outreach as you do creating your own content"
>
> ~ Jon Morrow, Boost Blog Traffic

One of the best examples of this is a post written for Copyblogger by the inspirational and hugely talented Jon Morrow. The title grabs you by the throat: On Dying, Mothers, and Fighting for Your Ideas

You should also read a post that Jon wrote for Problogger – How to Quit Your Job, Move to Paradise and Get Paid to Change the World. Both of these posts have incredible titles that immediately make you want to read them. The posts themselves are masterclasses in how to evoke emotion in your reader.

ADRIENNE SMITH - ENGAGEMENT SUPERSTAR - YOU WANT AN EMOTIONAL CONNECTION WITH YOUR READERS

All you need to do in order to make your content more interesting is to just think about what they want to know…and focus on forming that friendship with them.

Be there for them, answer their questions and always respond to their comments.

That's how you can get them wanting to share your content and wanting to come back for more.

AdrienneSmith.netFacebook Twitter Google+ Pinterest LinkedIn

47 To make a post viral, it has to touch people in some way. If there is no emotional pull, they are likely to move on without sharing. Neetzan Zimmerman is one of the undisputed kings of generating page views. He was an Editor at Gawker and in 2013, nine out of their ten biggest stories were his. That's some track record.

> *"Human interest stories and stories that inspire people "are the bread and butter of the viral internet"*
>
> ~ Neetzan Zimmerman

48 Seven Emotions that are Often Evoked in Successful Posts:

- **Awe** – this can be caused by the subject of the post, a real-life story, a major achievement or one of the seven wonders of the world. It's pretty much anything that will make someone say "Wow!"
  ~~Like watching Aidan Turner in Poldark, especially the~~ scything scene.

- **Anger** – Posts that 'go against the grain' can cause anger. If you take the opposite stand to a long held belief it can really rile people.

  If you're going for this, be careful. Emotion is necessary but anger is a difficult one to come back from.
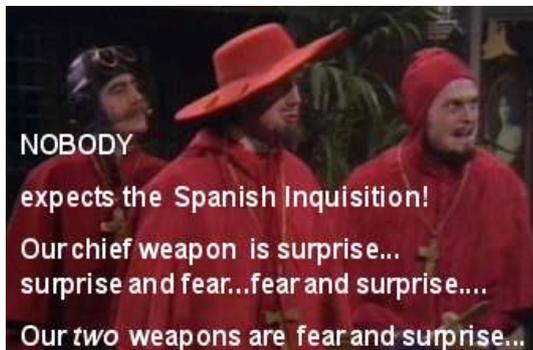
  Making people angry may cause a stampede to your site, but if they are too angry, you may never see them again…or anyone else.
  Be prepared to handle the fallout carefully and well.

- **Anxiety** – is not a comfortable state to be in and yet it is often evoked to make a sale…"*If you don't buy x,y,z your traffic will suffer*," "*The one thing that is standing between your site and success*," "*If you don't have x,y,z you're leaving money on the table*,"…all rely on anxiety to make people reach for their credit card.

- **Fear** – Everyone is scared of something. A common fear for people who browse the net, is that they are doing something wrong – but they don't know what they need to know…until someone tells them. Find a common weak spot, make people aware of it and supply the solution.

  Evoke their fear and then offer to get rid of it for them.

- **Happiness** – People love a feel-good story. Uplifting posts tend to do better than negative ones. You can induce happiness with inspiration, comedy, nostalgia and human interest stories where someone achieves something against the odds.

- **Lust** – not just sexual, although that usually gets people's attention. ~~Like watching Aidan Turner in Poldark, especially the~~ scything scene. People lust for success, power, money…even food. Food porn is a fast growing market, especially in image sharing. Take your pick of the lusts and go for it.

- **Surprise** – Although this one is quite difficult to pull off, it can be hugely successful. There is so much information and content on the web that it is not easy to catch people out. One way is to take a widely held assumption and explain, clearly, why it's wrong. You could also come up with a fresh, new way of doing something mundane or reveal statistics that overturn long-held theories.

NOBODY

expects the Spanish Inquisition!

Our chief weapon is surprise...
surprise and fear...fear and surprise....

Our *two* weapons are fear and surprise...

You would have to spend a lot of time researching but the reward could be well worth the time you invest.

I couldn't resist mentioning the Monty Python sketch "Nobody Expects the Spanish Inquisition."

49 Buzzsumo shows the most popular existing articles. You can search by topic so that you can see what's already out there. Put your idea in and see what comes up. You can also narrow your search for stories from last week or last month.

50 **Create Something Unique** – I've left this one until last because it is the most difficult thing to do. It's also a common barrier to new bloggers and writers. Are you holding back because you're waiting for your muse to deliver the one thing that no one has ever covered?

There is an old adage that says "There is nothing new under the sun" and there is a lot of truth in it. The way forward is to stop trying to re-invent the wheel. Find a new slant or deliver content infused with your own personality.

Success is often due to *how* you say something…rather than *what* you say. That said, if you find the holy grail of unique content, you could probably retire tomorrow

"Be yourself.
Everyone else is
already taken."

~ Oscar Wilde
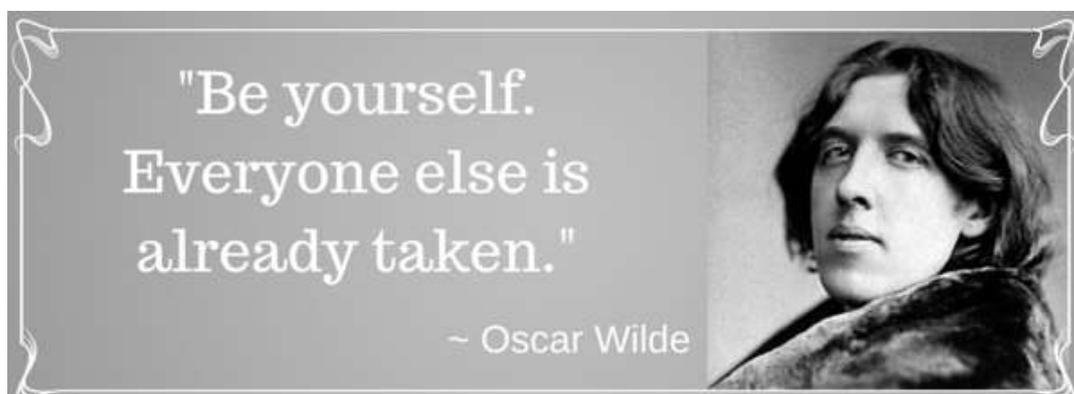
WRITING YOUR POST

What to Call It?

Let's start by looking at headlines. The headline is not always written first but if you have an idea of what you're going to title your post, it will help to keep your writing on track. Sketch out a 'working title'.

51 Put your main topics into Google Keyword Planner (formerly known as Google Keyword Tool) and title the post based on the most popular search terms that is comes up with.

Export the Google Keyword Planner results into a spreadsheet so that you can choose the best to incorporate into the body of your post or use as a guideline. Don't forget that well researched, quality content will be naturally rich in organic, long tailed keywords. If you can fit the top keywords into a compelling headline that doesn't sound dull, that's fine. But if using those keywords makes your headline sound stilted or boring…lose them.
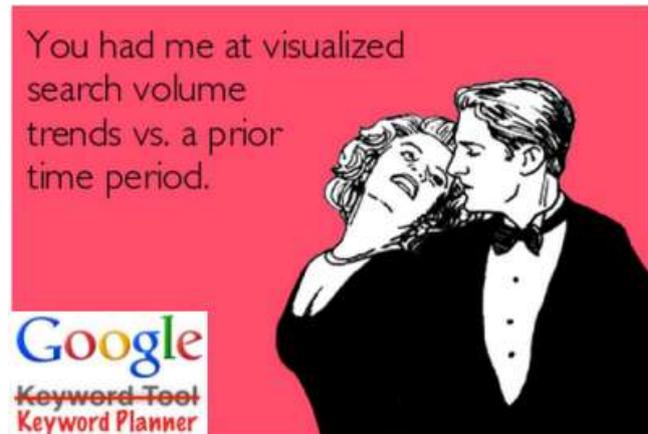
The Millennial buyers hold negative views on sales pitches and Google wants quality content. This means that you should put your readers before the search engines.

BRIAN CLARK - CREATING VIRAL COPY IS ACTUALLY A PROCESS

*Just keep at it. Put your audience first with everything you write, and success will come. Creating viral copy is actually a process, not a single event. You're building relationships that result from showing up, day after day, giving your readers the best you've got. Sometimes it just takes a while to get noticed, but the time invested is still likely a better value than advertising.

*Excerpt from Brian Clark's **'Viral Copy'** – one of the first free giveaways on the Internet. You can still download the free pdf today.

In 2006, Brian Clark started a blog called Copyblogger, now one of the most powerful and influential blogs in the world. His other projects include the personal development newsletter Further, the New Rainmaker podcast for digital entrepreneurs, and Unemployable, which provides smart strategies for freelancers and solopreneurs.

52 Keep your post URL short as it's easier for sharing on social media. For example, WordPress automatically permalinked this title to
http://www.writehacks.com/101-tips-for-creating-viral-blog-posts but I shortened it to
http://www.writehacks.com/viral-blog-posts/

53 Keep the title under 65 characters so it doesn't get cut off in search engine results. This will help your post to rank.

54 Deliver what you promised to your reader. We've all read posts where the headline announced just what we spent the last 30 minutes looking for and then failed to deliver that information. This kind of headline is called clickbait*. It's very disappointing and a waste of people's time but worse still, it can cause visitors to lose confidence in you. That can harm your traffic and your email sign ups.
***What is Clickbait?** Clickbait is frowned upon. It's a negative term describing web content that is aimed at generating revenue from online advertising, at the expense of quality or accuracy, and relying on sensationalist headlines.

55 A bracketed clarification [which looks like this] will increase your CTR (click through rate) by around 38%. That's huge! Infographics often play a part in this. I have posts on this site such as How to Write the Perfect Blog Post [Infographic] and What SEO Used to Be and What it is Now [Infographic]. You could also work brackets into a *non*-infographic headline, for example "What No-One Tells you About Blogging [But I'm Going to Tell You Now]."

What is CTR? Your Click Through Rate is the number of clicks that an advert on your site receives, divided by the number of times your ad is shown with the final CTR expressed as a percentage. For example, if you had 10 clicks and 2000 impressions, then your CTR would be 1%.

56 Particular words in headlines are known to increase your CTR. For example, the word 'photo' will increase it by 37% and 'who' takes it up by 22%.

57 The flip side is that some words can damage your CTR and your traffic. We are in the millennial age where young buyers have never known a world without technology. This immersion has lead them to have an aversion to advertising and sales pitches. Words like 'credit', 'easy' and 'simple' are all big turnoffs.

58 Using your Headline to create a sense of urgency will encourage readers to share it quickly. This can be done by creating anxiety, fear or a time constraint.

59   Combine elements for an even stronger enticement. Use a learning opportunity, an uneven number, a desire for success and a fear of failure. That might sound like a lot but it's easily achieved – for example 'How to Get 300% more Visitors Using These 5 Steps."

60   We all make mistakes. Create a headline offering to help people avoid them – or help them to learn from mistakes that you have made. That takes care of anxiety, fear, a desire for success and an opportunity to learn. All good motivators for reading and sharing your post.

61 Questions make good headlines. This is because we are naturally curious and will want to find out what the answer is. If the answer helps with a common question, it can increase your traffic and shares.

62   One of the best headline resources is from Boost Blog Traffic. Sign up for their newsletter and get your free copy of *'52 Headline Hacks. A Cheat Sheet for Writing Blog Posts that go Viral'* by Jon Morrow. You'll never be stuck for a headline ever again.

Now For the Writing…

63 Now that you've caught someone's attention with your headline, you need to hook their interest with your content. Make your introduction compelling to keep them reading. Remember the viral post at the top of the page? That's what you're aiming for. It could contain a question, an empathy with their situation, an impressive statistic or a thought provoking quote. Whatever you choose, make it awesome. A poor introduction could have them moving on and not sharing.

64   Talk to your reader in the second person, using the pronouns "you," "your," and "yours." These pronouns are used when you're addressing one, or more than one, person. You can also use the first person pronouns "I," "my," "me," etc. Try to relax and talk to your reader as if you're talking to a friend. Remember you're trying to make a connection, especially an emotional one.

65   Make your content easy to read. Stop after you've written a few paragraphs and read it out loud. Is it easy to read or are there areas where you stumble? If there are, go back and re-write them. Then try and continue in that style. Don't forget that your words are not written in stone. Every thing can, and probably should, be changed.

66 Resist the opportunity to show off what you know or what you have researched. This isn't about you. It's about teaching your visitors something without sounding like their teacher. It's about connecting on an emotional level which is easiest to achieve with a relaxed, chatty, friendly style.

67 Massive blocks of unbroken text are an immediate turnoff for readers. You may have given them the best content ever but sadly, they will never know because they won't stick around to read it. Use short paragraphs, bullet points, bold text, italics and images.

Don't be afraid of white space. One of the best examples of a positive use of white space is Leo Babauta's site Zen Habits. Visiting the site gives you an almost instant feeling of calm – away from the overcrowded, noisy, colourful, overstimulating world of the Interwebz.

If you need any more convincing about white space, Zen Habits has more than a million readers each month. TIME named Zen Habits as one of theTop 25 blogs and one of 50 Websites That Make the Web Great

68 Don't be too wordy. Get your message across as concisely as you can and cut out unrelated content – unless it adds value. Once you've said everything, edit and then edit again. And then edit it some more.

69 Create a structure to your post that makes it easy for people to understand what you are communicating to them. A structure will also make it easy for you visitors to go back and find a piece of information that resonated with them.

70 Despite the popularity of longer posts, people don't tend to read. They scan. And they scan-read in a Z shape. You can capitalize on this by putting your most important points into that shape. Use bold to highlight important takeaways.

71 Don't be rude or use bad language. Writing this way does appear to be a growing trend but the majority of readers still prefer politeness and a lack of curse words.

72 If you can relax and let your own personality shine through, people will feel as if they know you. There's the beginning of your emotional connection…and it's always easier to be yourself than to try and write in a style which you may admire, but doesn't come easily to you. Writing as yourself gets easier with practice.

73   Everyone loves a quiz. Including one in your post can really encrease engagement and sharing. Just take a look at how many people post quiz results to Facebook. If you can catch the "Take this quiz and pass it on" wave then you're really in business. Quiz Maker (free for unlimited quizzes) or Online Quiz Creator (free to create unlimited quizzes with 15 questions each).

Visual Content

74   It's now crucial to include visual content in your posts. Visual content is processed 60,000 times faster by the human brain than text so it's not surprising that people love to share images. If you don't include them, you're leaving money on the table.

75   If you have the equipment and the know how, creating a relevent video can get your content shared very quickly. The figures for this year are already showing that people are sharing 75% more videos to Facebook than they did last year. YouTube is obviously the first that springs to mind but there are others.

Take a look at Vimeo, Break,Metacafe and Dailymotion

Here are a few stats to convince you that it's worth the effort:
- 700 videos are shared on Twitter every minute. Source: YouTube
- YouTube attracts 1 billion unique visitors per month. Source: SocialBakers
- Posts that include videos can attract 3 times more backlinks than those that don't. Source:SEOmoz

76   Choose your images carefully to emphasise what you're saying in the text. Using random images that may be pretty but don't move the content along can just end up looking awkward and are not likely to be shared.

77   If want to use public domain images, make sure that they are royalty free. Take a look at Flickr: Creative Commons. If you use these images, you must give the correct attribution back to the creator. Read each licence description carefully. The easiest one to choose images from is: Public Domain Work : This refers to work which is not protected by copyright law. Flickr explains that "Typically, works become part of the public domain because their term of protection under copyright law expired, the owner failed to follow certain required formalities, or the works are not eligible for copyright protection."

78   You could also buy images from one of the many online companies such as Shutterstock, BigStockPhoto, Fotolia, or iStock

79   Create a file for all of the images in your post. This will save you a lot of time when you're ready to put them onto Pinterest or Tumblr – or both.

Alt Tags

80   We looked at optimizing images by compressing them.

Another form of optimizing is for SEO purposes.

Search Engines can't read images, so you need to help them by using alt tags (alternative tags) to describe your image.

Here's an example of how to get the most out of your images.

We'll use this image of cookies:
The alt tag reads: Stack of chocolate chip cookies

Alt="Stack of chocolate chip cookies"

Here is what the full image code should look like:

The file name for the image is chocolate-chip-cookies.png That is a fairly generic name and it could be improved by matching the alt text so: stack-of-chocolate-chip-cookies.png

The key to creating good alt tags consists of three points:

- The image needs a descriptive alt tag which may contain keywords but must not use keyword stuffing.
- It needs to be short and to the point.
- Separate words in the file name by dashes – and not underscores _

Image optimization may sound like a lot of work but it does help your SEO and with enough practice, it will become second nature to do this as you insert images.

81 Make your visuals worthy of going viral. Make them humorous, informative or surprising. The more surprising, the more of a chance the item has of being shared. Memes are great for this.

82 A meme (pronounced meem) is an image that is made by overlaying a familiar image with a humorous message.

Memes are easy to create, very popular and make it easier to get your post shared on social media.

I used a Husky Dog meme in How Authentic is Your Authenticity and a Mary Poppins one in The Perfectionist's Guide to Getting Started.
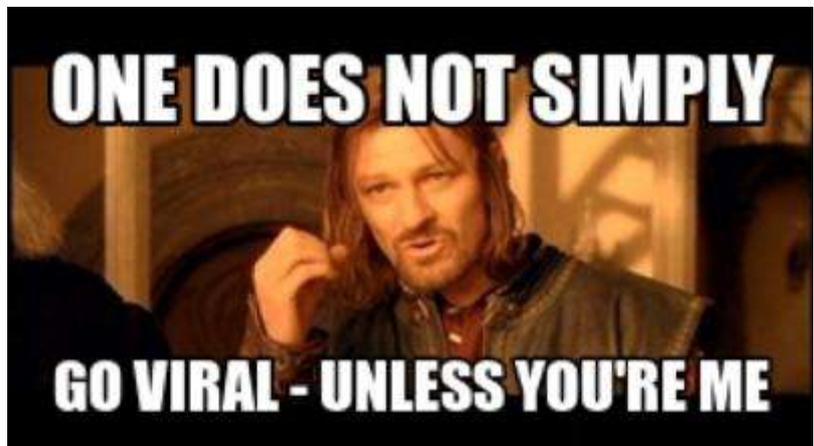
Before you rush off to play with a meme creator, make sure that it's going to be a good fit for your post. Individual memes have particular core uses so get familiar with them to avoid what is called a *meme jacking #fail*. For example, the one above with Sean Bean as Ned Stark from Game of Thrones always starts with "One Does Not Simply…" and if you broke with that tradition, the meme wouldn't work.

If you're totally new to memes, check out Know Your Meme Just be warned, looking at memes is very addictive. Head to MemeCrunch, We Know Memes or Meme Generator and get creative.

I love Canva but your could also try PiktoChart

84 Submit your Infographic to Self Publishing Infographics sites to spread the word and get the SEO benefit of backlinks. These sites allow you to create a free account and upload your own infographics to share.

- Graphs.net Register for a free Basic account and upload your infographics to the Showcase
- Love Infographics Register for an account, and infographics uploaded with the Basic package are free
- uCollect Infographics Create an account an post your own infographics
- VisualizeUs A picture bookmarking site with many infographics.
- Visualizing.org Visualizing.org is a free sharing resource.

- [Visual.ly](#) Sign up for a free Visual.ly account. Then you can start uploading visualizations that you've created, commissioned or would like to share.

Tip **85** – Get more tweets. Write the tweet with @clicktotweet – all your visitors need to do is click. http://bit.ly/1IuvKkA

Tweet This

86 Include a clear call to action (CTA). What would you like your visitor to do after reading your post? Now is *not* the time to be shy. Just ask them politely to Tweet, Like on Facebook, comment or share in whichever way. Visitors have come to expect some kind of prompt and if there isn't one, they won't take the time to go searching.

87 Although we were taught in school that pieces of writing should have a beginning (intro), a middle (content) and an end (conclusion) – those rules don't apply when writing blog posts. You should leave the ending 'open' so that your readers can fill in their own ending. This is more intriguing and more likely to get them sharing to see what their friends think. Then you can invite them to comment on their thoughts.

BEFORE YOU HIT PUBLISH…

88 Proofread for spelling mistakes, typos, spacing errors and layout errors. Keep viewing your post in preview to make sure that images are where they should be and your layout hasn't gone wonky.

89 Now try and read your post all the way through without stopping. For some reason, this is hard to do but try and resist the urge to pick at it. Now go back and correct areas where it doesn't flow. Keep repeating this until there are no stumbling blocks. If you have time, put it away for 24 hours and then go back to read it again. We get so close to what we write that we stop seeing errors. Having an enforced break can help you to zero in on previously unseen areas that need work.

90 Check the best times for posting to social media. If you pay for Buffer, you can use their Optimal Timing Tool. This shows you the most active times on your own social media sites. Buffer very helpfully tells you the best times to post. Or you can take a look at this [Infographic](#) which shows you the best times to post to Facebook, Twitter, Google+, LinkedIn, Pinterest and Instagram.

NOW IT'S OUT THERE – GET PROMOTING

CAROL AMATO - STICKY YOUR BLOG POST

Sticky your blog post.

I am actually getting more engagement, more comments, affiliate sales and subscribers from having a post that I want attention on – at the very top of my blog.

CarolAmato.com Facebook Twitter Google+ Pinterest Carol's Coaching

91 Should you post your content to a Blog Directory? The short answer is no.

It's very tempting because there are a *lot* of directories out there and it would seem an obvious way to get your post read by a ton of people. Blog directories were hugely popular until Google Panda popped the backlink bubble with its sharpened bamboo cane.

Hugely successful sites that had relied on exposure from blog directories lost virtually all their traffic – and their income – overnight. Some recovered but many didn't. The only 'safe' way to repost your content to another site is to ask the site owner to use rel=canonical but that's a whole other post.

92 Once you've worked out your optimal times, post your content link to your social media accounts. Take time to get the wording right and include images wherever possible. Social Media posts with images always perform better than those without.

93 Create the best Tweet that you can with a knockout image, tweet it and then pin it to your profile to maximize exposure. Choose the post that you want to pin, click on the three grey dots (which will turn blue when you hover over them) to access the dropdown menu and then click on "Pin to your profile page."
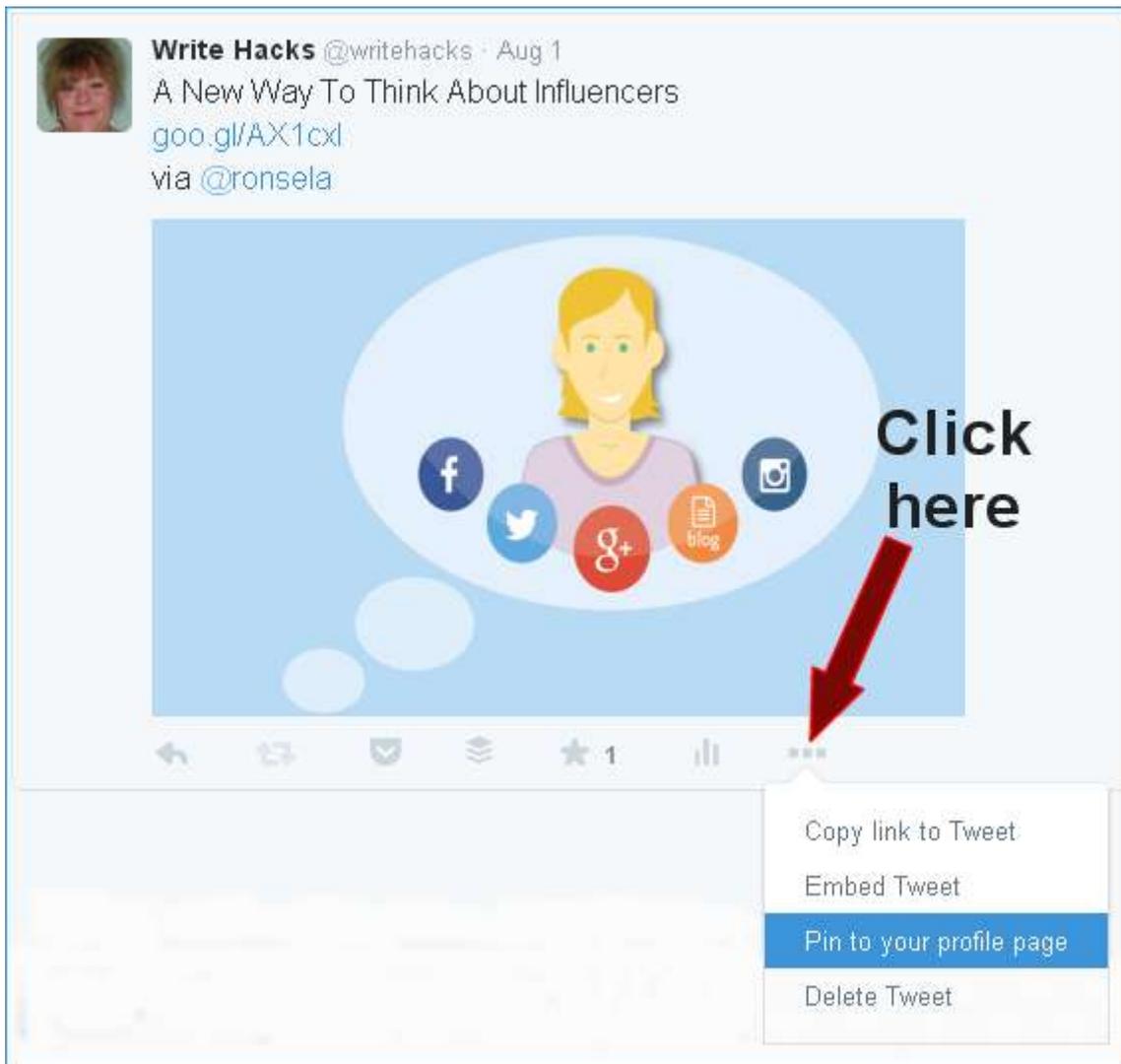
94 Use Click to Tweet to make an instant 'tweet this' button for your emails, blog or any eBook you may create. Create your Click to Tweet and click the "Generate Link" button to create a custom link. Copy the generated link from the "Here's your URL" field. Put your Twitter icon image where you want the button to be and then hyperlink it with the link generated from Click to Tweet. Here are four images for you to use. Just right click on the one you want and then 'save image as' to save it to your pc.

95 Ask for a retweet. This is an area where some people have no problem in asking for a RT and others squirm in discomfort at the thought of being so pushy. However it makes you feel, the evidence is there that this works. In a post for Copyblogger, Dan Zarrella talked about a study he did.

"I studied a a statistically significant sample set of more than 10,000 tweets and found that those that used the phrases "please retweet" or "please RT" were much more likely to be retweeted. In the case of the longer "please retweet" the tweets were four times more likely to be shared by followers"   .~ Dan Zarrella

96 Make your blog posts into PDF files and upload them to sites such as Sites like Slideshare, DocStoc and Scribd. If you choose to use Scribd, be careful that your content does not contain promotional marketing information. These three sites have huge audiences so for a few minutes work, you could get a lot of interest.

DOWNLOAD THIS POST AS A PDF

97 Add a link from your most popular posts to your new content. To do this, go to your analytics program and look for the most popular pages on your website. Only look at what has been the most popular for the last month or so because doing an all-time search may skew your results.

Next, sign up for a free account at Social Crawlytics to determine your most shared content. Type in your URL and wait…and wait…and wait…(I had to wait nearly 30 minutes…just go and have a coffee 🙂) to find the most shared content on your site.

Once you've found the most shared pages, go to them and add links to your new post. Add a link within the text if you can do it contextually. Add the new post at the end of existing posts as a "You might also like…" or "Other Great Posts."

98 Spread the word by adding your latest blog post to your email signature usingWiseStamp

99 Keep an eagle eye on your comments box. Make sure that you answer every single comment. This keeps your readers feeling valued – which they are – but also doubles your comment count.

100 Go on a commenting spree. Many sites now have CommentLuv (a WordPress plugin) which allows you to choose one of your most recent posts to tag onto your comment. This is where your earlier relationship building will pay off. Many blog owners have made their CommentLuv nofollow unless you've posted at least ten times – which is completely understandable. No one wants to feel used. Even if you have already commented multiple times, don't just hit and

run – take the time to read the post that you're commenting on and leave a complementary comment that adds value to the other persons' post.

101 If you happened to mention an organisation or charity, send them an email to let them know, with a link to the post. Brian Jackson wrote a post about his struggle with Ulcerative Colitis. He emailed the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation to let them know and asked if they would mind sharing it. His post went from 18 views to 2,081 overnight.

So there you have it. 101 tips to help you to create a viral blog post. I'd like to wish you the very best of luck. Let me know if your post goes viral and I'll be happy to feature your story on Write Hacks.

About Mary Collings

I've been a freelance writer for ten years. You name it - I've probably written it. I love working from home and I want to help you so that you can love it too.

Hook up with me on Social Media and let's enjoy the journey together.

Facebook • Twitter • Linkedin • Google • Pinterest •