

# **EFFECTIVE INBOUND MARKETING STRATEGIES**

**Business Blogs**

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# WHY HAVING A BLOG FOR YOUR BUSINESS CAN HELP

COMPANIES  
THAT BLOG

GET

55% more website visitors

97% more inbound links

434% more indexed pages

THAN

COMPANIES THAT  
DON'T BLOG

# WHY HAVING A BLOG FOR YOUR BUSINESS CAN HELP

A More Personal Connection

Expertise and Credibility

Customized Marketing

Search Engine Benefits

Visibility for Your Products and Services

Lowest Cost Advertising / Highest ROI

# WHY HAVING A BLOG FOR YOUR BUSINESS CAN HELP A MORE PERSONAL CONNECTION



While your website is a static page that simply tells them about your business, your blog is interactive!

Like social media, your blog gives you a chance to connect with your customers on a more personal level.

It's a way to start a dialog where they can leave comments and get to know you better. Your blog gives your business a human face.

Make sure that you use it that way and reply to each comment your readers leave.



## WHY HAVING A BLOG FOR YOUR BUSINESS CAN HELP EXPERTISE AND CREDIBILITY

One of the best things about a business blog is that it gives you an opportunity to establish your expertise and build your reputation.

By creating these type of content, you'll start establishing your blog as a valuable resource for your industry. Because people are more likely to share content that is educational in nature, your content will have the capacity to reach a larger audience of potential customers.

As a result, people will start to associate your business with industry expertise, translating to more credibility and trust in the products/services you have to offer.

In a nutshell, that's what SEO is. Becoming an authority in google, bing, and yahoo's eyes. The more people linking to you and sharing your information, the higher your S.E.R.P. will be.



You can blog about things you know. For example, if you're a law firm, blog about simple legal questions people have. If you're a cleaning company, share some easy house cleaning tips.

Your blog shows your website visitors what you know and this engenders trust in your business.

Did you know?

B2C companies that blog get 88% more leads/month than those that don't.



B2B companies that blog get 67% more leads/month than those that don't.

## WHY HAVING A BLOG FOR YOUR BUSINESS CAN HELP CUSTOMIZED MARKETING

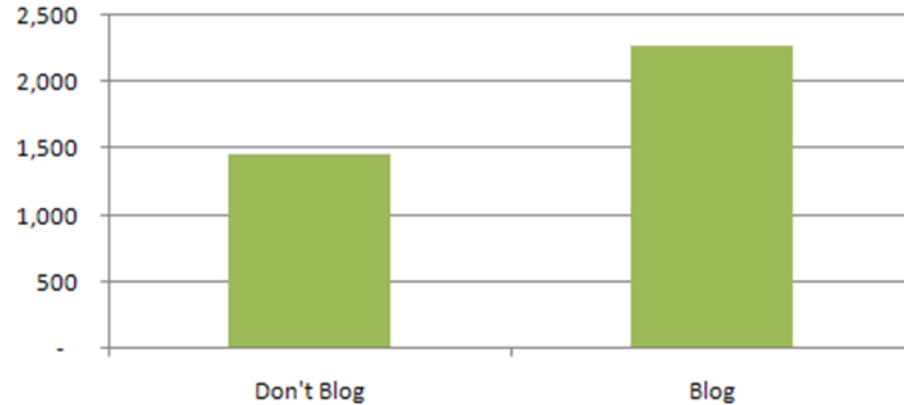
Blogging offers a much more effective and lower cost way to promote your business than other methods.

Other costly methods don't make the same kind of impact that a blog written by you makes.

You also get information on your target market through their reading behavior, comments, or analytics.



**55% More Website Visitors for  
Companies That Blog**



## WHY HAVING A BLOG FOR YOUR BUSINESS CAN HELP SEARCH ENGINE BENEFITS

Adding a blog to your static website is a great way to attract traffic from search engines. The search engines favor sites that have fresh, updated content.

If you write just one blog post per week, you'll see more searches coming your way, especially if you choose a few good keywords for each post. Write two or three blog posts a week and you'll really see your traffic climb.



### **Survey Says Holiday Shopping Stresses Us Out — These Tips Can Help**

November 27, 2012

By Ami Silverman, Senior Vice President of Sales Operations It's now officially holiday shopping season — a time for fun, frolicking and good cheer. But many consumers actually find holiday shopping to be stressful and confusing. According to a survey T-Mobile commissioned from Kelton Research, nine in 10 ...

[More »](#)



### **No Surprises: T-Mobile Enhances Usage Alerts for Our Customers**

November 15, 2012

By Jim Alling, chief operations officer, T-Mobile USA T-Mobile has begun providing customers with additional usage alerts that can help prevent overages and unwanted surprises on their bills. These new alerts will make it easier for customers to know when they are nearing or exceeding their service plan limits ...

[More »](#)



### **T-Mobile Unleashes Mobile Gaming Experiences With New Devices and Services**

November 1, 2012

Mobile gaming is quickly becoming a huge component of the gaming industry — and it's on the rise — so T-Mobile is jumping ahead of competitors with new devices and services that cater to both our casual and hard core gamers.

[More »](#)

# WHY HAVING A BLOG FOR YOUR BUSINESS CAN HELP VISIBILITY FOR YOUR PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

Through your blog, you can tell your customers about your products and services.

Let them know about discounts, special offers, new inventory items and offline events that you're participating in.

You can also add a feed to your social media sites so that every blog you post shows up there as well.\*

# WHAT BLOGGING SOFTWARE?

# WHAT BLOGGING SOFTWARE

## Blogging services

Where a third-party service is handling the blog software and hosting for you

(i.e. Typepad, WordPress.com, and Blogger)

blog.domain.tld or domain.tld/blog

## Blogging software

The software you use when you set up and host the platform yourself

(i.e. WordPress.org, Movable Type, etc)

yourdomain.tld/blog



yourblog.wordpress.com

## Pros

## Cons

Easily Set Up	SEO going to host, not you
Hosting Provided	Limited customization
Free	Inconsistent branding
No <i>sovereignty</i>	Sends traffic away from main site
	Looks unprofessional
	Looks spammy
	Content in 2 places - maintenance
	No option for email

# WHAT BLOGGING SOFTWARE BLOGGING SERVICES

## SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION (SEO)

If you're writing good quality content with keywords and gain SEO power, having your blog on a different domain is giving power to them, not your main site.(i.e. wordpress.com)

## BRANDING

Adding a blog to your existing site, will use the same colors and styles that are already being used on your current website. Staying consistent with your branding will avoid confusion for your visitors.

yourblog.com

## Pros

## Cons

SEO Benefits only you	Need to provide hosting
Centralization of Content	Requires more time and work to maintain. -updates
Consistency of branding	Greater security risk - malware
Able to retain visitors more easily, won't get confused	<b>Most expensive - bandwidth</b>
Look professional	
Not limited to terms of host	
Ownership- <i>sovereignty</i>	

# WHAT BLOGGING SOFTWARE SELF HOSTED SOFTWARE

## SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION (SEO)

All the great content you're able to provide will help benefit your main website's search engine rankings, by indexing more pages, and optimizing for additional keywords.

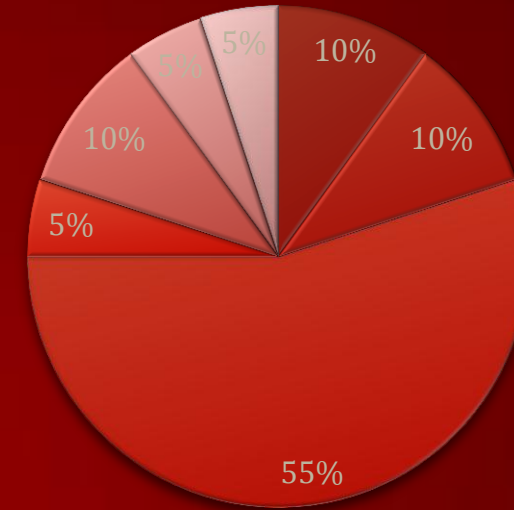
## BRANDING

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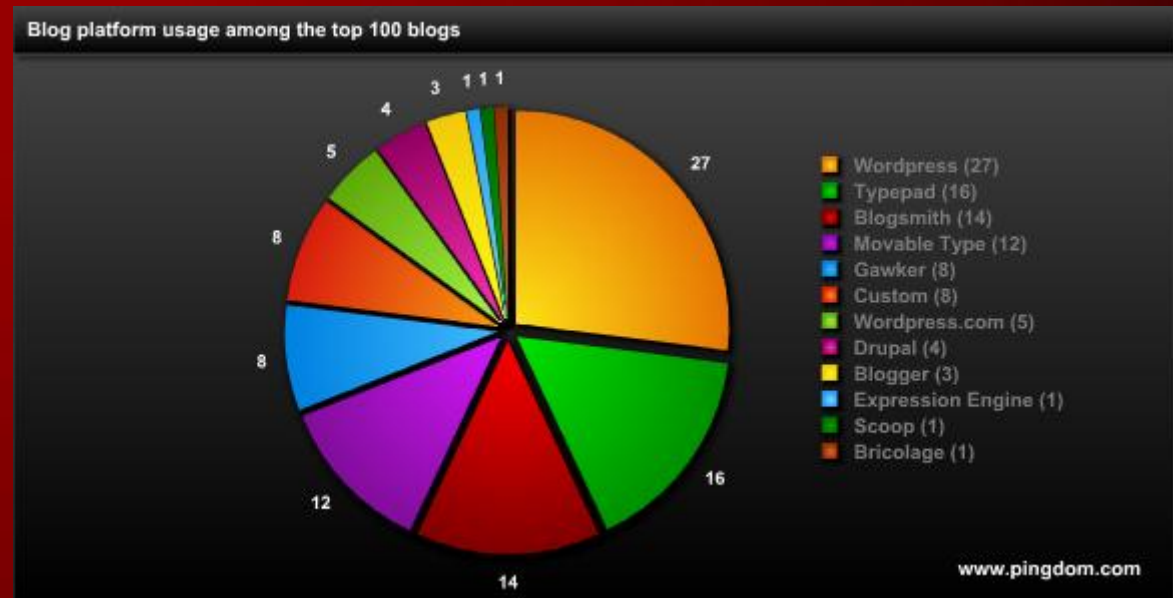
# WHAT BLOGGING SOFTWARE

Rank	Blog	Software
1	<a href="#">The Huffington Post</a>	<a href="#">Movable Type</a>
2	<a href="#">Gizmodo</a>	<a href="#">Gawker</a> bespoke software <sup>[1]</sup>
3	<a href="#">TechCrunch</a>	<a href="#">WordPress</a>
4	<a href="#">TMZ.com</a>	<a href="#">WordPress</a>
5	<a href="#">Engadget</a>	<a href="#">Blogsmith</a>
6	<a href="#">Mashable</a>	<a href="#">WordPress</a>
7	<a href="#">The Corner</a>	<a href="#">Drupal</a>
8	<a href="#">Boing Boing</a>	<a href="#">WordPress</a>
9	<a href="#">Hot Air</a>	<a href="#">WordPress</a>
10	<a href="#">Gawker</a>	<a href="#">Gawker</a> bespoke software <sup>[1]</sup>
11	<a href="#">Think Progress</a>	<a href="#">WordPress</a>
12	<a href="#">The Daily Dish</a>	<a href="#">TypePad</a>
13	<a href="#">The Daily Beast</a>	?
14	<a href="#">Newsbusters</a>	<a href="#">Drupal</a>
15	<a href="#">CNN Political Ticker</a>	<a href="#">WordPress</a>
16	<a href="#">Ezra Klein</a> at <a href="#">Washington Post</a>	<a href="#">WordPress</a>
17	<a href="#">Breitbart.tv</a>	<a href="#">WordPress</a>
18	<a href="#">Big Government</a>	<a href="#">WordPress</a>
19	<a href="#">ReadWriteWeb</a>	<a href="#">Movable Type</a>
20	<a href="#">Matthew Yglesias</a>	<a href="#">WordPress</a>

Software



■ Movable Type
 ■ Gawker bespoke
 ■ Wordpress
 ■ BlogSmith
 ■ Drupal
 ■ Typepad
 ■ Other







### 1. **WordPress is Easy to Use.**

Dashboard interface. Users appreciate the ability to add, remove and update text, images, video, etc.

### 2. **WordPress Has Themes & Custom Design Capability.**

WordPress offers hundreds of themes or design templates.

### 3. **WordPress Provides Independence.**

WordPress gives clients the ability to make changes to the site on their own. They can access and update content as often as they like, completely independent of the website designer.

### 4. **WordPress Plug-Ins Offer Advanced**

Features. WordPress has thousands of plug-ins that can be incorporated into a website to enrich usability. Some of our client favorites are contact forms, slide shows, photo galleries and blogs.

### 5. **WordPress is Affordable to Have and Maintain.**

Many of the software's most popular features are free, keeping it an affordable way to create a professional result for even the smallest business. Also, when updates are available, WordPress notifies users right on the dashboard so they can be uploaded with the click of a mouse.

### 6. **WordPress Can Be Updated From Anywhere.**

WordPress can be accessed from any web browser so clients can update their content from any computer....even their smartphone using the WordPress app!

**7. WordPress Grows With the Organization.** As our client websites grow, WordPress grows with them. For example, after launching their site, a client may wish to add a blog, a stream for Twitter, Facebook or Google Maps or an event calendar. The software can support virtually anything they need.

**8. WordPress supports multiple users.** With WordPress, more than one person at the organization can help manage the content. Clients can create individual accounts for employees to share the responsibility of keeping the site current.

**9. WordPress offers security features.** Even though multiple users can be authorized for the WordPress site, the main operator can set limited access features on different user accounts as needed.





# WHAT TO BLOG ABOUT?

Refer to handout

Text-based copy

Charts or graphs

Audio content (podcasts, interviews etc.)

Cartoons

Infographics

Guest blog articles

Curated lists

Industry-related book reviews

Q&As

Videos (interviews, screencasts, instructional how-to's, entertaining/funny videos, music videos, news-style videos, etc.)

# WHAT TO BLOG ABOUT?

BE A KNOWLEDGE RESOURCE FOR YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

Formats

Types

Industry Data / Market Data

Best Practices For Your Industry

Reports Based On Your Research Into Your Industry

Educational Content

Anything Thought-Provoking Associated With Your Industry

Case Studies

Industry News

# WHAT TO BLOG ABOUT?

## BE A KNOWLEDGE RESOURCE FOR YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

### Contests and Giveaways

Hold a contest through your blog and offer a prize to the winner. Make sure that you promote your contest on all of your marketing channels including social media, your website and your offline materials. The goal is to get as much traffic to your blog as possible. Post the rules online and tell them about the prize you're offering.



### Case Studies

Case studies are great because they accomplish so many things at once. They attract readers, showcase clients, educate customers, and show off the benefits of using your business. A case study gives them concrete information they can use and also shows the results that your business gets.



# WHAT TO BLOG ABOUT?

## BE A KNOWLEDGE RESOURCE FOR YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

### Customer Success Stories

Similar to case studies, customer success stories work as testimonials for your business. When a customer thanks you or tells you how your business helped them, ask them if they'd mind being featured on the blog. If they prefer, keep them anonymous. This is a great way to show directly what your business can do for people.

### Lists and Checklists

Lists and checklists are loved by all for a reason. They're easy to read and digest. They also get lots of reader comments going, especially if you ask them at the end, 'What are some of your ideas?' Top ten lists are always a crowd-please, as well as biggest mistakes to avoid.



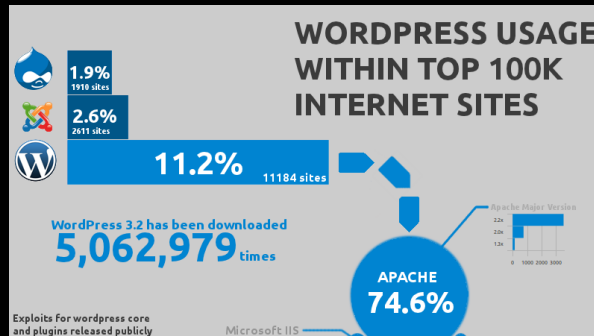
## Creative Ideas for Your Products

One great strategy is to write blog posts that show people how to use your products in creative ways. This not only informs them with new ideas but also shows off the benefits and versatility of what you offer.

## Fun Videos

You don't have to write your blog posts. You can also create videos! Videos are great because they show rather than just telling. Make videos that teach your customers something from your business expertise. Make it fun and you'll increase the chances of your video being shared and going viral.

## Infographics



Infographics are visual representations of information. They give your readers another way to digest the information you offer. You can make your own infographic using free online programs. Take the information you want to convey and make something creative with it.

## WHAT TO BLOG ABOUT? BE A KNOWLEDGE RESOURCE FOR YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE



The best business blogs mix it up. Some days they post an infographic; other days, they do a video.

They might talk about a new product in one post and offer a list of simple tips in the next. Vary your blog posts as much as possible and keep your eye on traffic analytics.

Your stats will tell you what works and what doesn't. Keep trying out new ideas to see what sticks with your readers.

# CORRECT BLOG CATEGORIES AND STRUCTURE SETUP

## Goals:

It may be to simply inform your customers, or to generate traffic for your site. Although you may have a few goals, pick one that's the overriding one. Write down this goal and make sure you have a way to measure it (for example, a certain number of new prospects per week, etc.). Keep it flexible and modify it if you need to.

Who is your target Audience?

Ask yourself these questions:

Who are you writing to?

What do they expect from your blog?

How do they like to digest information?

How do they see themselves?



# CORRECT BLOG CATEGORIES AND STRUCTURE SETUP

Define your Blogs goals w/metrics

Define your Target Audience



## Choose Keywords

It always helps to have some high-search keywords in your blog posts. Use Google's [free AdWords tool](#) for ideas. You don't have to spend too much time on keyword research for every post. Just make a list of keywords that get a fair number of searches per month and use them naturally in your posts.



Brainstorm the first four or five categories that you'll blog about. Pick some specific areas within your niche that people might be interested in learning about.

One category can be introducing your products or services, or showing customers how they can benefit from them. You should also load up your blog with the first few posts before you launch it. Take some of the common questions your customers ask and answer them.

## CORRECT BLOG CATEGORIES AND STRUCTURE SETUP

Choose Keywords →

Brainstorm Categories

Gather keywords for initial posts



<http://demosites.us/businessblogging>

Adding 1 post in 1 category with 3 tags...

<http://www.yourdomain.com/category-with-keyword/post-name-with-keywords>

<http://www.yourdomain.com/category-with-keyword/>

<http://www.yourdomain.com/tag/tag-1>

<http://www.yourdomain.com/tag/tag-2>

<http://www.yourdomain.com/tag/tag-3>

## CORRECT BLOG CATEGORIES AND STRUCTURE SETUP

Keeps your posts organized. Easily to navigate for both your visitors and for the search engines.

Pages created dynamically with php, no need to add links to multiple pages like with traditional html/css based sites.

## Know Where to Get Ideas

Bookmark some good sites for getting new ideas when you run out. You can find interesting ideas absolutely anywhere online, but some of the best places include forums, question and answer sites, article directories, social media sites, or other blogs. Read what people are talking about. Take each question you see asked online and write a blog post that answers it.

The lazy approach- have [google feed](#) you ideas!

Google [advanced search](#) - file type, or date.

<http://www.buzzfeed.com>

<http://www.technorati.com>

## CORRECT BLOG CATEGORIES AND STRUCTURE SETUP

IMAGES, WHY THEY ARE IMPORTANT  
TO INCLUDE IN EVERY POST

For every blog post, use at least one image.

Visitors are scanning your blog post to see if it's relevant to them before they dive in.

A relevant image lets them know right away that they should start reading.



Other reasons:

Helps break up text, easier to find your place

Adds color and a visual to set the right mindset

Helps individualize your posts

Makes associated text, more important

Pictures are worth a 1000 words.

Helps with SEO – alt, title tags

## IMAGES, WHY THEY ARE IMPORTANT TO INCLUDE IN EVERY POST



You can either pay for these from copyright-free image sites, or contact image owners and ask for their permission to use their images.

The background features a dark red sunburst pattern with rays emanating from the top and bottom edges. A solid black horizontal band runs across the center of the image.

SEO

70% of the links search users click on are organic.

70-80% of users ignore the paid ads, focusing on the organic results.

75% of users never scroll past the first page of search results.

Companies that blog have 434% more indexed pages. And companies with more indexed pages get far more leads.

Inbound leads cost 61% lower than outbound leads. An example of an inbound lead might be from search engine optimization. An outbound lead might be from a cold call.

81% of businesses consider their blogs to be an important asset to their businesses.

A study by Outbrain shows that search is the #1 driver of traffic to content sites, beating social media by more than 300%

SEO leads have a 14.6% close rate, while outbound leads (such as direct mail or print advertising) have a 1.7% close rate.

## SEO WHY IS IT IMPORTANT



# 12 STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL BLOG DESIGN

### 1. CLEAR CONNECTION TO THE WEBSITE

Your blog isn't an island; it's a key component of a successful website. your blog design must make it clear and simple for a blog reader to get to key parts of your core website. It's great if you have awesome content, but it needs to be connected to your products or services to help move relevant visitors further along in the buying cycle. Have a clear blog navigation that connects to your website, and consider using some sidebar real estate to direct visitors to key website pages.

### 2. A CTA IN EVERY POST

You **MUST** put a call-to-action in each of your blog posts. yes, you should test the design and placement of your calls-to-action, but first and foremost, you need to use them in your posts. This is one of the most powerful levers for transforming your blog into a well-designed lead generation machine.

### 3. SUBSCRIPTION CTA

Every visitor to your blog isn't going to convert into a lead instantly. Some visitors will need to learn about your business over time. A way to help expedite this process is to get more visitors to subscribe to your blog via email or RSS. To do this, you need to have a clear call-to-action that encourages people to subscribe via either method.



#### 4. SOCIAL MEDIA SHARING BUTTONS

Too much of a good thing can be bad. Yes, you want people to share your blog posts, and having social sharing buttons on your blog is helpful. However, giving people too many sharing options is distracting. It actually causes users to become overwhelmed and, subsequently, take no action. So limit the sharing buttons on your blog to only those networks that send traffic and leads to your business. If you don't get any traffic from StumbleUpon, then why clutter your blog with its button?

#### 5. POST PREVIEWS

Marketers must think like publishers. It's easy to think of your blog as just a blog. However, you should think of it as a digital publication. your blog is just like a trade magazine for your industry. one trait of magazines that people love is the table of contents that provide a preview for all of the articles in that issue. Instead of displaying your entire, most recent article on your blog's homepage, display only an excerpt and an image from several of your most recent posts. This will allow visitors to scan some of your blog's content and give them a choice of what to read first.

#### 6. SIMPLE SORTING OF CONTENT

Depending on how prolific of a writer you are and how long your business has been blogging, your blog design needs to make it easier for visitors to find older and relevant content. As a marketer, you have several design elements to help achieve this, including blog search, tagging and recommendation widgets. As with social media sharing buttons, you don't need to use all of these. Organize some user testing sessions to understand what people unfamiliar with your blog find to be the best methods for discovering past content.

## 7. A CLEAN SIDEBAR

A blog's sidebar can easily become the junkyard of the page. It's all too easy to keep cluttering a sidebar until it has a seemingly endless list of useless widgets. Look at the sidebar of your blog. Look at each widget or design aspect of that sidebar. does it really serve a purpose? Is that individual element encouraging the behavior you want your readers to take? If the answer to either of these questions is "no," then delete it from your sidebar. de-clutter that blog sidebar and get users to take the actions you want.

## 8. SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOW BUTTONS

Your blog is a great place to promote your business' presence in social media, and it's often the first place people look to find it. Consider adding buttons with links to your corporate Twitter account, Facebook fan page, linkedIn company page and google+ business page to encourage people to connect with you on social media.

## 9. A SEARCH BOX

Encourage readers to spend additional time on your blog by enabling them to easily search for other blog content. This can easily be accomplished by adding a search box to the header or sidebar of your blog.

#### 10. PROMINENT HEADLINE FORMATTING

In your blog design, make sure that your headline is formatted correctly. This means it needs to be the star of the show when it comes to the text on a page. Make sure it is significantly larger in font size than the body or subhead text on the page. This may seem like a small detail, but making your headers pop makes a huge difference!

#### 11. PROMINENT POST IMAGE DISPLAY

A great blog is visual. you shouldn't knock readers over with blocks and blocks of text as soon as they arrive. look at your blog design. How are you using images to draw in readers? There are many ways to showcase images from posts in the design of your blog. It can be as simple as an image next to an intro paragraph on your blog's homepage or something far more customized. The important thing to remember is to not make assumptions on what your readers want. Instead, conduct user tests to collect feedback and determine the best option for your audience.

#### 12. FAST PAGE LOAD TIMES

Online readers are impatient. when they are looking for information, they want it Now. If your blog post takes too long to load, then your visitor will bounce and go elsewhere. In order to prevent this issue, you need to test your blog's load time. This free tool from pindom will tell you how long it takes for your blog to load. Ideally, the load time for your blog will be under two seconds.

# INTEGRATING YOUR BLOG TO SOCIAL MEDIA, FACEBOOK, LINKEDIN, AND TWITTER

<http://www.designandpromote.com/feed/>

RSS

Really Simple Syndication

Wordpress has plugins to auto post to twitter and facebook.

Facebook - [RSS Graffiti](#)

LinkedIn – Wordpress Applications

Twitter - <http://twitterfeed.com>