

Christian Indie Publishing Association (CIPA)

Guide: Blogging

Blogging drives traffic to your website. As an author, you want to be found and Google likes websites that post new content. So make it a goal to post an article weekly. An author needs to create an intentional **plan** when blogging. What topics/themes do you want to blog about? Within that theme determine your focus. This is done by creating blog categories and keywords.

Part 1: Blogging

1. **Create 4–6 categories** within your theme that you will blog about.

For example Healthy Living Series blog (<https://susanuneal.com/healthy-living-blog>) theme is healthy living and within that context these are the separate categories: fitness, gut health, gluten, health & wellness, lifestyle, nutrition, recipes, stress, weight loss. Second example: Christian Indie Publishing Association blog (<https://christianpublishers.net/blog/>) categories are awards, book marketing, book sales, podcasting, self-publishing, search engine optimization (SEO).

2. **Determine 3–5 keywords** you would like your blog to rank for over time. Use these sites to choose keywords that have high search levels: Google Keyword Planner at <https://ads.google.com/home/#!/> (free), UberSuggest at <https://neilpatel.com/ubersuggest/> (3 free uses/day or paid), and Publisher Rocket (paid). For the Google Keyword Planner, login, click Tools & Settings, click Keyword Planner, click Discover new keywords, and enter your keyword. **As a member of CIPA you receive a 30 percent discount on Publisher Rocket** (that discount covers one-third of your annual CIPA membership fee). One of the many benefits of belonging to this association. If you want to be strategic and sell more books, this software is indispensable. To claim your CIPA member 30 percent discount, be sure to get the discount code from the membership platform (CIPA.Podia.com) under Discount: Publisher Rocket. If you are not a CIPA member here is a link to purchase Publisher Rocket: <https://susanuneal--rocket.thrivecart.com/publisher-rocket/>.

For example, the Healthy Living Series blog (<https://susanuneal.com/healthy-living-blog>) primary keywords are low-sugar diet, low-carb diet, gluten-free, Candida, and food addiction. Secondary keywords include healthy diet, healthy lifestyle, healthy eating.

Second example, Christian Indie Publishing Association blog (<https://christianpublishers.net/blog/>) primary keywords are self-publishing, how to self-publish a book, Christian book, Christian authors, best-selling Christian authors, book marketing, indie publishing. Secondary keywords include Christian publishers, Christian writers, indie authors, independent authors.

3. **Create blog guidelines:**
 - Subject should be applicable to one of the blog categories.
 - Article should contain 90 percent new content. Use Grammarly or ProWritingAid

to check for plagiarism. (CIPA members get \$150 off a ProWritingAid lifetime membership under Discount: ProWritingAid.) **Google penalize sites with repeated information.**

- Include keyword.
 - Length should range from 1000–2000 words.
4. **See 7 tips for creating content** that ranks in Part 2 below.
 5. **Determine best keyword and metadata description** for each post by using Google Keyword Planner, UberSuggest, or Publisher Rocket. Use the keyword in the title and first sentence of the article or rewrite the metadata description (usually the first sentence of the post is automatically used). Add the keyword several times throughout the blog.
 6. **Add tags** to your blog which are words that help the user find a subject within all your blog posts by typing a word into your blog's search bar or by category.
 7. **Make an engaging blog title:** How to; 5 Ways to: Avoid these Mistakes; Client Success Story; etc. Solve your customer's problem in your title. Use the headline analyzer at <https://aminstitute.com/headline/>. Try to get a score of 40 or more. **Titles should be between 40 and 70 characters.** Use <https://convertcase.net/> to determine your title's character length.
 8. **Use block paragraphs** (no indentation) with one line space between paragraphs. Blog format should contain short paragraphs grouped by a topic subtitle. Use Heading 2 for these subtitles. Check out the headings within this article: <https://susanuneal.com/lower-blood-sugar-levels>. Subtitles (use H2), bullets, and numbers (<https://susanuneal.com/kids-to-eat-healthy>) help make articles easier to read. Use shorter paragraphs.
 9. **Use Headlines to break up sections.** Readers scan content to save time. Therefore, if sections of your article are broken up by subtitles, this helps the reader digest the content quicker. Use different tiers of headlines to help your post read smoother. For a WordPress website, use Heading 2 or H2 for secondary headlines and Heading 3 or H3 for tertiary headlines such as About the Author.
 10. **Add a link to one or more of your other blogs** within a post. In this article <https://susanuneal.com/do-you-have-a-bug-in-your-gut>, see how a related healthy living blog link is included in the second paragraph. Be sure to have related blog links open in a new window, so the reader can toggle back and forth between the two posts. These links should be dofollow links. Dofollow links allow Google to point back to the website contained in the link—your website to your other blogs.
 11. If you have a **guest blogger**. Allow one dofollow link back to the writer's website and make sure the link opens in a new window.
 12. **Before you publish** the post, make sure to put the article in one or two of your blog's categories and add some tags. Also, if you do not like the Permalink URL (web address

or title you see for a given post) that is listed (it is under the title when posting your blog), you can revise it to include a keyword and make it concise. (Do not change the URL of an existing blog.)

13. **Add an attractive photo** at the top of the post or under the first paragraph. You can use [Pixabay.com](https://pixabay.com), [Unsplash.com](https://unsplash.com), or [Canva.com](https://canva.com) (pro-version) to find royalty-free photos. Resize the photos so they have a maximum width of 1000px. Use [Pixlr.com](https://pixlr.com) to optimize your photo size. You can use the WordPress Plugin called Smush to decrease your photo size. Do not upload large photos to your website because it will slow your site's speed. **Title your photo with your blog's keyword** so Google can read it. Google bots can't read photos.
14. **Consider using the following WordPress plugins:** Smush, Google Analytics, Akismet Anti-Spam, All in One SEO or Yoast SEO. Autoptimize—automatically compresses photos and some coding. BJ Lazy Load—makes your website faster by only loading images as the reader gets to that part of the website.
15. **Open any links in your blog in a new window and make links a “nofollow” link** unless it is to a website you want to promote or give credit to (guest blogger, your own blogs—dofollow links).

To apply these two techniques, when uploading a post on a WordPress website, click on a link and a dropdown menu appears. Click on edit and link options. At this point, a box appears, and you can click on *open link in a new tab* and *add nofollow*. You want some of your links to be nofollow links, so Google bots think that your site is legitimate and not spamming dofollow links.

16. After you blogged for a while (25+ articles). **Create 1500+ word pillar posts** for each keyword and include links to other related blogs within the post. For example, for the Healthy Living Series blog keyword: low-sugar diet, the blog, [How to Eat a Low-Sugar Diet](#) links to [Healthy Alternatives to Sugary Drinks](#) and [Are We Addicted to Sugar and Carbs?](#) And these two blogs have a link to How to Eat a Low-Sugar Diet.
17. **Annually, plan some of your blogs** based upon holidays, seasons, events (New year goal/planning, valentines, spring, Easter, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Summer, back to school, Labor Day, Fall, Pumpkin patches, Thanksgiving, Christmas). Write down the twelve months, jot down a couple articles you could write each month. Other ideas will come to you. It is best to post weekly.
18. **Request guest blogs** from others. I've done this for the Healthy Living Series blog and the CIPA blog and it has worked well. I send an email with dates and the blog guidelines and asked individuals and professional group members (Christian Author Network, Advanced Writer & Speaker Association) to sign up. These guest posts can fill up the unplanned weeks in your annual blog plan.
19. **Update older posts** that receive significant views. On a monthly basis, analyze your blog

views through Google Analytics. Update older posts that receive significant views. If you don't have a new article, this is a great technique to use.

For example, for the Healthy Living Series blog, I found the following top posts: Best-Selling Books to Read, Best Audiobooks, 13 Ways to Lower Blood Sugar, Top Ten Cancer-Fighting Foods, and What is a Candida Overgrowth. The first two blogs were written a couple of years ago, so I should update them by first checking UberSuggest for the most searched keyword and add the **keyword into the title, metadescription, and blog** a couple times, plus add a **new date of publication** so the article appears to be new.

Part 2: 7 Tips to creating content that ranks (<https://neilpatel.com/blog/#p-141268>)

1. Solve the readers problem in your article.
2. Spend 40 percent of your time on creating your title. Usually 20 percent of your traffic reads the blog. Example: 7 Benefits of _____; _____ will Shock You. Use [UberSuggest](#) and click the Content Ideas button on the left to find more ideas.
3. Anchor your main blog topic to the keywords that have the highest search volume. **Find other similar keywords and put them in the article too.**
4. Build your content outline based on the most relevant keyword and what the competitor is doing. So type your keyword into Google and check out the content of a couple of the pertinent articles.
5. Offer practical and actionable advice: steps, tips, etc.
6. Do internal linking to other relevant blogs within the article you are writing. Do this for 2–10 links with your previous posts.
7. Nail the basic Yoest SEO parameters including title, first paragraph, metadata description, image title, title tags, H2 tags, URL structures. Enter your blog's URL into UberSuggest and go to Site Auto Report. It will tell you all the elements that are off. The report will prioritize what you should do and the impact it will have on your SEO.

Part 3. Added Level of Marketing

Write articles for other websites with a high Domain Authority (DA). Check their DA [here](#). Links to your website from high DA sites will increase your website's Google rank. Within your guest blogs, switch out using links to your website with one of your keywords, website name, and <https://susanuneal.com/>.

Determine if your audience/target market uses Pinterest. Pinterest is the second largest search engine in the world that Google doesn't own (Google owns YouTube). If your audience uses Pinterest, it would be beneficial to create Pinterest Pins for each of your blogs. You would need to create a Pinterest account and use it like other social media networks.

For my two blogs, Healthy Living Series and Christian Indie Publishing—both have significantly benefited from using Pinterest. Writers and people looking for healthy living tips use Pinterest. So my audience is there. Google Analytics shows that Pinterest is the #1 referral to both of my blogs.

If you want to learn how to use Pinterest, check out the course, [Grow Your Pinterest: Optimize Your Pinterest Account and Drive Traffic to Your Website](#). This course includes gorgeous Canva templates already created, so you can repurpose for your content. If you want to hire my Pinterest social media manager, check out her services at <https://thebeautyoftraveling.com/services/>.