*Lyrical HOST

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TIPS & TRICKS FROM 15 YEARS OF BLOGGING

Bite-size advice to help boost your blogging game

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Hi! I'm Jenni, co-founder of Lyrical Host and long-time blogger. I've been blogging, creating websites, and promoting content since the early 2000s, and below are some tips I've learned along the way. I hope they help you on your blogging journey!

Blog Post Ideas

1 The more you try and force blog post ideas, the harder it is to come up with any! A good tip is to take your most popular post and make a follow up to it. For example, if you've written a post on where to find great free stock images, follow it up with a post on using stock images effectively. Turn a positive into a negative or vice versa, e.g. 'The awkward truth about dieting', or 'How to make the most of your trip to Paris'. Take an experience you've had and turn it into advice, e.g. 'What I learned about _ _ _ _ '. Add a monetary value, e.g. 'How to do _ _ _ _ _ on a budget', or 'How I made $100 from _ _ _ _ _ '.

2 An organized drafts system is vital to keep you pumped and on track. If you're a visual person, WordPress has free content calendar plugins for easy draft organisation – just drag and drop draft titles into specific slots. Keeping a physical diary or planner can help too (especially with lots of stickers!). If a title or part-written draft has been sitting around for a while and you're not feeling it, don't be afraid to ditch it. Trust your instinct and free your mind up for new ideas on a regular basis!

3 Keep a notebook or doc (stored in the cloud) handy so you can add random ideas whenever you think of them. Even if they aren't complete titles or fully formed ideas yet, write them down anyway. Every so often, go through and grab ideas for posts or delete ones that aren't going anywhere.

4 If you have a sudden rush of inspiration and write several blog posts in a short amount of time, resist the urge to publish them very close together. Instead, aim for consistency with your posting schedule and give yourself some breathing room just in case you need a few extra posts to cover a vacation or busy time in your life.

5 Break up big topics or long posts (1500 words+) into a series of shorter blog posts before you hit publish. It gives you more content, means you don't have to come up with as many ideas, and makes your posts easier to read and process. Just make sure each post tells a complete story on its own and you're good to go.

Blog Post Images

6 Struggling to find an image to fit your blog post? If you're writing a blog post with no literal imagery, like productivity or growth, go for a metaphorical image that explains the concept. For example, if you're writing about being productive, you could use images of bees. For growth, a green plant or a tree. For success, a bulls-eye.

7 Try searching Pinterest for an emotion or abstract concept, like 'love' or 'happiness'. Not only does it instantly create a mood board for you, it also shows you which images are the most popular so you can get a feel of what will work best for your audience.

8 Stay positive with your imagery. A photo of a woman guiltily raiding the fridge or someone looking sad for your post on healthy eating is going to make people feel bad in the way they identify with it. Instead, show them the end result of what following your advice will do for them: someone looking happy, or strong, or a colorful arrangement of appetising food.

9 Make sure you optimize your images so they load faster. If you can, 'Save for web' in Photoshop or run your image through a free online compressor. WP Smush is a great plugin for lossless compression after you've done that. Try to keep your images under 1200px in all dimensions if possible.

10 Using flatlay images? Pick ones that work both vertically and horizontally. That way you can make both a feature image for your blog post and a vertical image for Pinterest quickly and easily by rotating it and pasting text.

Promoting Your Blog Posts

11 Take advantage of all the great blogging groups on Facebook, and pledge to join a new one every week. You can use Facebook's search to look for suitable groups and include keywords relating to your blog niche, e.g. 'fashion blog', 'fashion bloggers'. Once you've done this, open a spreadsheet and list the days of the week across the top. Look at the rules of each group you've joined and look at which day of the week you're allowed to share your own posts (and if there's a specific thread to do so). Then list it under the appropriate column in your spreadsheet. That way, you can open up the file any day of the week and know where you can promote your latest blog posts.

12 Facebook groups are also great places to find active Pinterest group boards to join. There's also PinGroupie.com, where you can search for group boards to join. Pinterest group boards are brilliant for sharing your blog posts to gain followers and boost your traffic. Spend some time creating beautiful images, make sure you include your URL on your image, and add a keyword-rich caption when you post.

13 Be an active member in the communities you join. If you're in a lot of groups, narrow it down to the ones your target audience are most active in. Start discussions, reply to questions, and you'll gradually build up your authority. Instead of just dropping your links and running, take some time to craft a genuine personal response to a question and then link to your most appropriate blog post.

14 The most successful blog posts tend to be ones that help your reader with something they're struggling with, e.g. creating a good blogging routine, walking in high heels, or meal planning. Long emotive posts can also work well when shared on networks that people typically spend more time browsing individual pieces of content (e.g. Medium rather than Pinterest).

15 Include quotes and links to other bloggers' posts in your posts and then @ mention them when you share them on Twitter. For best results, only include 2 or 3 people per post and choose a mix of people at your level and influencers you admire.

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