I KNOW I NEED A BLOG,
BUT I HAVE NO TIME TO MANAGE IT.
HAWTHORN AT A GLANCE

Enterprise Websites & SEO

Destination, Ski Resort & Hotel Magazines

Maps & Area Guides

Social Media & Email Campaigns

Brand Collateral, Rack Cards & Brochures
Why do you need a blog today?

• Content marketing **costs 62% less** than traditional marketing.  *(Demand Metric)*

• It **produces 3x more leads** per dollar spent than traditional marketing.  *(Kapost)*

• **Website conversion is nearly 6x higher** for those using content than those who don’t.  *(Aberdeen)*

• **Site traffic is almost 8x higher** year over year for those using content effectively than those who don’t.  *(Aberdeen)*

• Companies with **blogs produce 67% more leads** per month.  *(A Guide to Marketing Genius: Content Marketing)*
If you feel behind the eight ball, you’re not alone.

- Only 38% of marketers say their content marketing is effective. (CMI and MarketingProfs)
- 81% of marketers cite creating compelling content as one of the biggest challenges of content marketing. (Starfleet Media)
The power of content: Distribution and shortening path to conversion
What you need is content, not always a blog.
A DIRTY LITTLE SECRET: THIS IS WORK

Two goals for today

1. Help you streamline the front-end strategy and plan for your blog.

2. Minimize your time investment once it’s up and running.
STEP 1:
5 Key Strategy Questions
STEP 1: 5 KEY STRATEGY QUESTIONS

#1: Who are you trying to reach?

- And how would you rank those audiences in terms of priority?
STEP 1: 5 KEY STRATEGY QUESTIONS

#2: What are the blog categories that will...

Speak to those audience(s)?

Reinforce your site’s overarching keywords?

Reinforce why your audience should value you?
STEP 1: 5 KEY STRATEGY QUESTIONS

#3: How will you distribute this content once it’s produced?
STEP 1: 5 KEY STRATEGY QUESTIONS

#4: How much content can you realistically produce that will feed that distribution plan?
**STEP 1: 5 KEY STRATEGY QUESTIONS**

#5: What do you want them to **DO** when they get to this content?
1. Who are you trying to reach (and how would you rank them)?
2. What are the blog categories or buckets of topics that will speak to those audiences, reinforce your keywords, and reinforce the reasons your audience should value you?
3. How will you distribute this content once it’s produced?
4. How much content can you realistically produce and also feed your distribution strategy?
5. What do you want them to do when they get to this content?
STEP 2: Blog Build-Out
STEP 2: BLOG BUILD-OUT

Where to build?

- Ideally, it’s a part of your enterprise website CMS.
STEP 2: BLOG BUILD-OUT

Where to build?

• **Second best option**: Subdomain  
  (Ex: blog.noblehousehotels.com)

• **Rarely worth it**: Independent blog sites (blogger, Medium, etc.)
STEP 2: BLOG BUILD-OUT

What to build?
STEP 3:
Finding Easily Produced Content
STEP 3: FINDING EASILY PRODUCED CONTENT

Single-source (or no-source) content is king!

- Q&As
- Recurring “departments” that repeat the same format.
  - Seasonal dishes from a chef
  - Insight into a seasonal event from an expert (not always the organizer!)
  - Simple themed concepts  Example 2
  - Local’s picks under a theme
STEP 3: FINDING EASILY PRODUCED CONTENT

Additional tactics for quick content

• Aggregated content from other sources with your intro/take. (ex: family hotels in NYC)
• What do your customers always ask you about (and you can answer in your sleep)?
• Can you tap others to write for your blog who have that expertise? (Both destination region, as well as expertise; backlinks and the promotion of being an expert on your blog)
STEP 4: Building an Edit Calendar
STEP 4: BUILDING AN EDIT CALENDAR

Why you need an edit calendar

• So you don’t forget the strategy you just worked so hard on!
• Easy to delegate and hand over the reins to others
• Easy approvals from the powers that be
• Helps everyone stick to the needed frequency and timelines
STEP 4: BUILDING AN EDIT CALENDAR

Tips & Tricks

- Don’t use an off-line document (use Google Sheets, project management tools, etc.)
- Monthly housekeeping
- What columns to consider, including:
  - Blog categories and “buckets”
  - Audience segments
  - Any other keys stemming from five strategy questions
  - Timeline
  - Writer assignments
  - Distribution (social, email, etc.)
STEP 5:
Writing Posts
STEP 5: WRITING POSTS

Tips & Tricks

- If the vision for the post is coming from someone other than the writer, have a 10-minute “assignment description” conversation.
- Have writer record notes from the above in a shared space. (Ex: edit calendar doc)
- Do all reporting/sourcing of materials before starting to write.
- Force yourself/writer to finish a post draft in one hour.
- Rather than a Google doc, use a static format, like Word, for actual writing.
STEP 5: WRITING POSTS

Tips & Tricks

• Almost all posts should be 500+ words.
• Tape website-wide keywords somewhere at workstation.
• Create a template Word doc with all the essential elements of each post for writer. (Ex: Categories, keywords to use, tags, etc.)
STEP 6: Sourcing Photos & Videos
STEP 6: SOURCING PHOTOS & VIDEOS

Tips & Tricks

- This may be your most important step! Don’t make it an afterthought.
- Consider the visuals when defining ideas.
- Could writer take smartphone photos?
- A good stock photo is better than an OK photo from a source.
- One great photo/video is better than three mediocre ones.

STOCK PHOTO/VIDEO SOURCES
- Shutterstock (10 images for $29/month)
- Unsplash
- Pexels

REMEMBER VISUALS AT EVERY STAGE

DON’T BE AFRAID OF STOCK
STEP 7: Posting & Distributing
STEP 7: POSTING & DISTRIBUTING

Tips & Tricks

• Develop an easy system for notifying internal/external stakeholders of new posts on a regular basis for sharing potential.
• Social ads is part of distribution plan.
• Social management platform? (Ex: Buffer, Hootsuite, etc.)
Reviewing What Worked – and What Didn’t
Review Google Analytics at least quarterly.
Take a few notes on your big takeaways to revisit over time (Google Sheet).
Social analytics? If you have time. Website analytics are more important.
5 Google Analytics stats to review for blogs

Behavior > Site Content > All Pages
1. Number of unique visits
2. Average time on page
3. Entrances/bounces

Acquisition > All Traffic > Channels
1. Social
2. Referral