How to jump-start your blog

It's been [gasp] seven long months since I posted anything on this blog. Before my last post, I had been posting about monthly (ish), but it became harder to come up with good ideas. And I believe if you have nothing worthwhile to say (blog), then don't say (blog) anything.

But here we are in a new year, and it is time for a fresh start. I need to jump-start my blog, and here is how to do it.

Do I really want to blog again?

The most crucial question to ask is: Do I really want to or need to start blogging again? There's no getting around that blogging requires a good deal of work, commitment, and time. Perhaps you don't have the resources to blog, or the motivation to do it consistently.

If you decide not to start blogging again, I recommend eliminating or at least hiding the blog from your website. An outdated blog is the equivalent of a dusty, cobweb covered office. When I visit a website, I always check on the blog to see when it was last updated, and if it hasn't been updated in a while, I am not sure if the business or organization is still active.

If you do want to blog, take these 5 steps:

1. **Get clear on your motivation or goal for the blog.**

Remember or reset your objective for blogging. What do you want to accomplish? It could be:

- Thought leadership
- Lead generation
- Inform your target audience
- Advocate for a cause
- Provide added value for your customers

2. **Brainstorm topics and issues**

Once you know what you want to do, then you have to think of ideas or topics. I recommend setting up a brainstorming session (if you have a team, definitely get them involved). Start with topics/categories and then get down to specifics. For example, an animal defense charity could list topics such as: animal rights, endangered species, etc. With that topic list in mind, start thinking of specific issues you want to cover, such as: new laws that are affecting animal rights, new additions to endangered species, , etc.

3. **List your keywords**

Blogs still work to improve your search engine optimization (SEO). You may have a plug-in on your blog to help with SEO (e.g., All in One SEO, Yoast). However, you have to be strategic in your blogging and use keywords and key phrases that you want your website to rank for. Take the time to do some keyword research and then list your target keywords/key phrases.

4. **Set up an editorial calendar**

When you put things in writing, you have a better chance that they get done. An editorial calendar is a great tool to make blogging happen. You will have an overview of what you want to write and when you will publish it. It doesn't need to be complex or require special software.

To create an editorial calendar, set up a table or spreadsheet with these tabs (at minimum):

- Month/Date
- Topic/category
- Subject/working title
- Author
- Target keywords

If you need some additional information or templates, check

out "How to Create an Editorial Calendar [example + templates]" on Hubspot or "Editorial Calendar Tools and Templates To Help You Master Your Content To-Do List" from the Content Marketing Institute.

5. **Find inspiration**

To make it easier to find relevant issues to write about, seek out inspiration. Here are a few ways to find inspiration:

- Set up Google Alerts for your topics
- Follow relevant hashtags on social media
- Read industry publications
- Attend professional development events or presentations about your subject

Now, you should be set to start blogging [again].

Please let me know in the comments if you've stopped blogging and why, and whether you plan to restart your blog.