USE WHAT YOU'VE GOT

A Guide To Reviving Old Blog Posts

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Introduction

If you've been blogging for any length of time, you have a back catalog of posts. They're still getting a bit of traffic and there's a lot of good information hidden in those posts.

Some of the material may be outdated, some links may be broken, and your writing, formatting, and image creation skills have come a long way since those early days. In other words, there's a lot you can do to make these older posts better.

You put a lot of time and effort into your blog posts. Why not make sure you get the most from them by going back from time to time and reviving them? Instead of writing new content, schedule some time each week to revive an old post or two.

Of course I'm not suggesting you should stop writing new content. That's always a good idea. All I'm saying is that you should also set aside a little time to revive old blog posts and turn them into traffic, subscriber, and money generating machines.

And that's what this short report is all about. I'll walk you through the process and to make it easy to follow along- in just 9 simple steps.

There are two different ways you can tackle this. You can work in batches, doing step one for a couple of blog posts, then move on to step two, etc.

I prefer to start with one old post and work on it from start to finish. Pick whichever method works best for you. Either way it won't take you long to revive old blog posts.

On my website, with over 1200 articles, I publish 1-2 revived posts per month. If you are having trouble giving yourself 'permission' to republish old posts, try looking at it this way: few readers have been following your website since its inception. It is unlikely they have read every post you write. And if your readers have read it, because it is a popular article, it's likely they have forgotten about it, or the reminder will inspire them to act.

Another bonus? This is the perfect thing to do when you know you have a busy day/week/month ahead of you, but new articles aren't ready for publish and you have a set schedule for posting.

Are you ready to revive some old posts?

Step 1 - Look At Your Stats

You're ready to revive some old blog posts, but you're not sure which ones you should tackle first. If you've been blogging for a while, there's quite a back catalog of posts and I'm sure most of them could use some attention.

The worst thing you can do is look at them all, get overwhelmed by the sheer amount of work involved in making everything better, and give up.

I also don't want you to randomly pick one post, give this a try and see little or no results. After all, the whole point of reviving old blog posts is to make them relevant and then get more traffic to them, gain new readers, and build a larger audience – without having to write fresh content.

With that in mind, we want to pick some posts that are getting a decent amount of traffic and work on those first. They will have the biggest impact the quickest.

To do that you want to look at your website stats. Do you have a tracking program installed? Chances are that your web host is running some default tracking for you, and while that's better than nothing, you want to make sure you get good data.

If you haven't already done so, install Google Analytics on your blog. It's free, very powerful and super easy to add. Once you have Analytics up and running, wait a few days to collect some useful data and then come back to this.

Look at your stats and figure out what your most popular posts are. You can do this in Google Analytics by going to "Behavior → Site Content → All Pages". That will give you a list of pages (or posts if it's a blog) on your website ranked by how often they were visited.

Browse through these pages and make a list of five to ten older blog posts to use in the next step.

That was easy, wasn't it?

Step 2 - Pick Your Blog Posts

Grab that list of popular blog posts from step 1 and take a look at them. Does one of them stand out to you?

Maybe it's a post that doesn't need a lot of work. Maybe you are looking at a post and you're already getting ideas for things you can do to improve it. Or maybe you have the perfect product to promote in one of the posts.

How you choose the first post to work through is entirely up to you. Pick something that sounds interesting, fun, or profitable. Got it? Great.

If you are feeling ambitious, go ahead and make a list of posts you want to work on over the coming days and weeks. I find it helpful to have a list with the post title, the URL, and notes about what changes I need to make.

A spreadsheet works really well for this. Download the one I use here. Feel free to use it, or come up with your own.

Over the next few steps, we'll update the content, work on formatting to make the posts easier to scan and read, pretty it up with some images, make sure it is easy to share via social media, and -of course- monetize it. These are the types of things you want to make notes on in your spreadsheet or notebook.

That's about all the planning we need to do. Just make sure you can log into your website interface - most likely that will be your WordPress dashboard - and edit those posts.

With that said, let's move right into the next step.

Step 3 - Update The Content

We've done the planning and figured out what blog posts need updating. Now it's time to get to work. The first thing we'll focus on is the content. Start by reading through your blog post. Is the content still valid? Have some things changed?

Make note of any major changes you need to make to what you've written in the past. I find it helpful to grab a notebook and pen or open a word document and jot down what changes I need to make.

Somteimes the content is pretty evergreen and not much needs to be fixed. Other times, there's a lot of rewriting to do. The key is to have a plan and then just sit down and rework the post.

Something else worth thinking about is if you have learned something new to share since you first wrote the post. If so, you can either just rewrite the post, or write an update section to the post. Depending on what makes the most sense, you can add it to the top or the bottom of the post.

Last but not least, take a look at the comments the post has gotten since you first published it. Are there any great tips or questions your readers have shared? If so, you may want to highlight them within the updated post.

Make your changes, do your re-writing, and save your work. Go get some coffee, go for a walk or work on something else for a little while. Then come back and read over your rewritten post. It's time to do a little editing to make sure no spelling errors snuck in and that everything makes sense and flows well.

A Word About Saving Changes

Before we move on, let's talk about saving the changes you are making. If you are working in WordPress or other blogging software, once you hit save, the changes will go live on your website.

If you want a chance to go back and edit first, or finish making all the changes we will talk about in the next few steps, do your re-writing in a word document or a new WordPress draft and paste it in when you're ready to publish.

Another option is to put your post into 'draft' mode. I only recommend doing this if the post isn't receiving daily visits. Don't give readers a dead link while updating posts!

However you choose to do this, be sure to save frequently so you don't lose any of your hard work.

Are you ready to move on to the next step?

Step 4 - Monetize

Now we get to the fun part. Before we worry about prettying things up, let's make sure this refreshed content will make us money. Ideally, each post and page on your website should serve a purpose. It could be that you're growing a list, building a relationship with your readers, just plain entertaining them, or selling them something.

For the purpose of this section of the report let's assume you want to make a living from your blog. In that case, you need your readers to either sign up for your list so you can market to them via email, or make them an offer directly in the blog post.

If you chose to rework this particular blog post because you have the perfect product in mind to promote, this part will be easy. If not, take a few minutes and think about what the purpose of this particular post is. Do you want to encourage readers to sign up for your list? Is it supportive information for another post or page? Or can you think of a product that would complement your content?

Take a few minutes to think about that and make a decision. Once you know what you want to promote or how you want to monetize your post, you can either write a call to action toward the end of your post, or work your recommendation directly into the content.

If growing your list is your goal, try adding a call to action and a signup form at the end of your post. This signup form can be different from the one you have in your blog sidebar. In fact, it should be so you can track where your signups are coming from. I find it helpful to craft a call to action that's directly related to the content of the post.

Let me give you an example. My website is dedicated to Ireland travel and this article was about Dublin Airport tips. Because I know that most flights to and from Ireland utilize Dublin Airport I know that most visitors will spend time in Dublin. So my call to action at the end of this post would be something along the lines of:

I hope this was helpful and I'd love to help with more of your Ireland vacation planning. If you're ready for more Ireland travel tips enter your email below to sign up to the monthly Traveling in Ireland Newsletter. I'll also send you 5 Dublin Day-trips that Don't Require a Car.

Notice how the call to action flows from the content of the article to what the monthly newsletter and opt-in freebie are about?

Another option is of course to promote a product in your post. There are a few different ways to do this. By far the easiest method is to grab a graphic from your chosen affiliate center (or a picture of your own product) and stick it right in the middle of your content. That's also, by far, the least effective way to monetize your post. Another way you could monetize the post is by adding some code in there to display Google AdSense ads. Again, probably not your most effective way of monetizing your content - but it's better than nothing.

Not a member of an affiliate network? Commission Junction is my most profitable network. Email me (JLHalsted@halstedenterprises.biz) and I can make an introduction.

Even better is to do something similar to what we did with the call to action to sign up for our list. Toward the end of your blog post, transition to a recommended product and let them know why you think it's a good fit, or why you think they should buy it.

Better yet, make your recommendations right in the content itself. Once you do that, it starts to make sense to also incorporate product pictures. This is particularly easy to do if you are

writing a blog post where you're reviewing a product. As far as monetizing old content goes, it can still make sense to work product recommendations directly into the content itself.

Let's go back to our Dublin Airport example. Knowing that most Ireland travelers will visit Dublin, this is a perfect opportunity recommend Dublin transportation options, as well as Dublin attraction savings cards, both of which can be direct affiliate links, or links to articles that are more in-depth into those topics which then contain affiliate links.

I hope you've gotten some good ideas about monetizing your blog posts. Have another look through the post you're updating and figure out what you want to promote and how you want to monetize it.

If your primary goal is to grow your list, grab the code for a new opt-in form and write a strong call to action that invites readers to sign up.

If your main goal is to promote a related product, be it your own or something you're an affiliate for, think about how you want to incorporate it into your content. Grab your link and product images as needed and work them in.

Now that the old blog post is better monetized, let's move on to step five.

Step 5 - Make It Pretty

Now that we've updated the content and made sure it will make us money, let's make sure it looks good when our visitors come and visit the udpated blog posts.

We'll break this section down into two different parts. The first is basic formatting and the second one is adding images.

Formatting Your Blog Post

Having a well formatted blog post actually has two big benefits. It makes it easier to read, but it can also help with Search Engine Optimization. SEO is a big topic that's a bit out of the scope of this short report, but I think it's important to at least mention it here.

The basic idea behind SEO is that you pick a keyword or key phrase that you would like to rank for and then optimize your blog post around that phrase or keyword. Some of the ways to do this are:

- Using the keyword in your post title.
- Using the keyword in the URL of your post.
- Using the keyword or related terms in headings, bolded or italicized font.
- Using the keywords or related terms in the file names and alt tags of images on the page.
- If you use Wordpress be sure you have the Yoast plug-in

This is just a short list, but it shows you how a well formatted post can help you get more free search engine traffic.

It bears repeating. Always, write and format for your readers first, but keep the search engines in mind as well.

With that said, take a look at your content. Do a little keyword research, if you didn't do this originally, and decide what you would like this particular post to rank for. Go through the list above and see if you are including the keyword in at least most of those areas. Don't change the URL, because it will hurt you more in terms of search than help, and make sure your content still reads well. Don't stuff your keywords in there unnecessarily. It will alienate your readers and may actually hurt you when it comes to organic search results.

Things like alt tags and image names are easy to add or change and bolding a keyword here and there won't take more than a few seconds.

Back to formatting for your readers though since that's our main goal here. Make sure it is easy to scan your post. Can your readers get a pretty good idea of what it is about by reading the headline and any sub-headings you may have?

Are you breaking the text down into small paragraphs to make it easy to read online? Are you using sub-headings and bullets to break things up and again, make it easier to consume the information?

If not, work on that now until you get the formatting where you want it. If you're not sure, ask a friend or fellow blogger to take a look at it for you. Don't worry if this seems hard at first. After you reformat a few blog posts, this process will become second nature.

Adding or Updating Images

Let's wrap this section up by talking about images. Pictures are a great way to add interest to a page and enhance the content. They are the perfect way to grab your reader's attention. And in an age of Facebook, Instagram, and Pinterest, you have to have images in your blog posts.

We'll go into a little more detail on social media in the next section, but for now, think about how you want to use images and how those images will apear when your post is shared on Facebook or Pinterest.

Different image sizes are recommended for Facebook vs. Pinterest and in general a horizontal image will do better in Facebook while Pinterest prefers vertical images. Think about which social media platform is more important to you and your target market. Where does your traffic come from? Actually a better question to ask is where your most profitable traffic comes from.

Once you know what social media site you want to focus on, optmize the image for that platform. In either situation it is usually helpful to text to the image. Think of it as yet another attention grabbing headline.

Not sure what I'm talking about? Look at the example below or head on over to Pinterest.com and take a look at images that fellow bloggers have added.

Let's talk about a quick and easy way to create these images for your blog posts. The first thing you will need is a picture. You can take your own, or use stock photography.

Here are a few of my favorite stock photo sites that you may want to check out. Some provide free images, most you will have to pay for. Be sure to read the terms for each site and know what you can and can't do before publishing someone elses picture or image.

Stock Photograhpy Sites:
- MorgueFile.com
- Pixabay.com
- IStockPhoto.com
- BigStockPhoto.com

- DepositPhoto.com

Once you have your image - be it from one of the sites above or your own pictures, it's time to do a little editing. Don't worry. We're not talking about anything complicated here and it doesn't invovle expensive programs like Photoshop.

This is going to be fun and easy. There are a few sites out there that allow you to do basic photo editing. My personal favorite is PicMonkey.com. Just upload your image, change the size and resolution if needed and add some pretty text and other fun overlays and you're done.

Let's take a look at a before and after image. This is one of the images created to help promote the report. Here's how it started out:
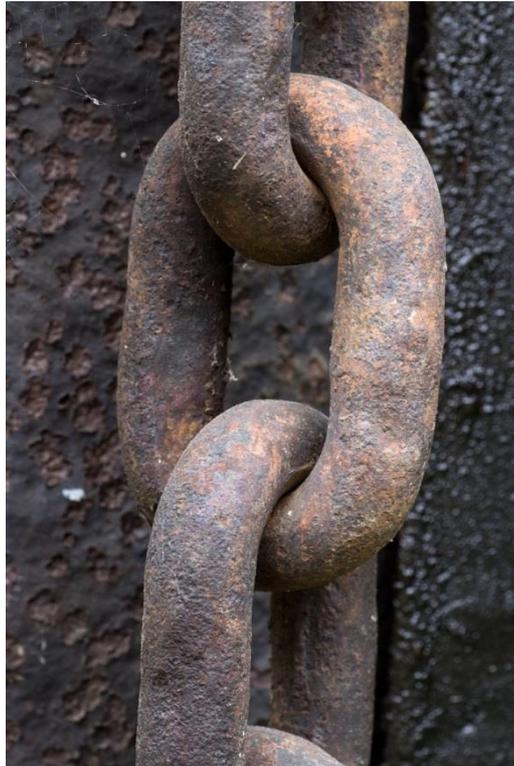
And after a little work in Picmonkey it turned into this

We forge
the
CHAINS
we wear in
life.

Charles Dickens
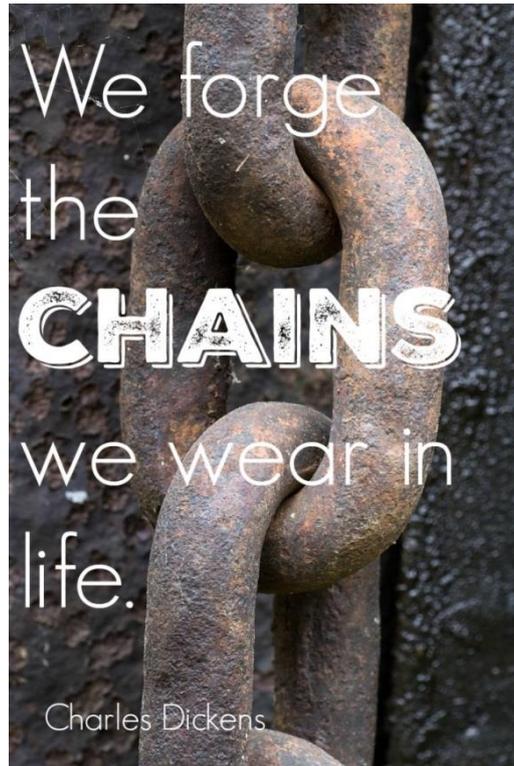
The PicMonkey.com image editor is very intuitive. Go ahead and give it a try. You'll also be able to find plenty of online tutorials on how to do all kinds of fun and fancy stuff. Just Google it or head on over to Youtube.com for some easy to follow tutorials.

Let's get back to what we are doing here. We want to enhance our content with one or two images that will also make it easy to share on social media sites.

Think about what kind of image would go well with your content. Then decide if you want to take it yourself or find something you can use on one of the stock photography sites.

Got your picture? Take it over to PicMonkey.com and add an attention grabbing headline. Save your work and you're ready to upload the image to WordPress or the blogging software of your choice.

Embed the image into your blog post where it makes sense and don't forget to save your changes. Be sure to completely fill out the media information- most importantly the description and alt tag. Place keywords in the places because these are what Google reads when it 'sees' your image!

One final word about images: just because you find it only does not mean you can use it. Only use images that are purchased stock photos, licensed for free use, or your own. Images are copywrited to their owners and using them without permission is theft.

Most of the hard work is done. There are just a few more steps we need to take to make sure we're getting the best possible results from all the hard work we've done editing, udpating and rewriting our content.

Take a deep breath. Ready?

Step 6 - Is It Social Media Ready?

Let's get back to something super simple. And since you're blogging the biggest chunk of work in step six is something you only need to do once. Our task right now is to make sure it is easy to share our updated (and new) content via social media.

When we talked about images, I asked you to think about what social media sites are most important to you. Where is your traffic coming from? Where are you finding your target audience? Where are you making money? These are the social media sites you want to focus on here as well.

Not sure where your traffic is coming from? Go back to Google Analytics -> Acquisition -> Source/ Medium or Referrals.

I'm sure you've seen plenty of blogs that have a big huge list of social share buttons at the bottom of their post. Chances are all those buttons aren't doing much good. Instead focus on your main two to three social media sites and make it easy for people to share.

Do you get a lot of traction from Twitter? Make sure you make it easy to tweet out little key snippets of text from your posts. Get good results from Facebook and have your content shared around? Put a big Facebook button on those posts. Do a lot of new readers and customers find you via Pinterest? Make sure you have pin buttons on all images and pay close attention to the alt tags on your images. The alt tags will become the default description for your pins. So be descriptive and inviting. Try a few different types of calls to action and see what gets you the biggest click through rates.

Let's break it down. There are two different types of work you've got to do here. The first is to make sure you have the share buttons in place you need on your blog.

The second part is to pay attention as you create or revive your blog posts. Make sure your alt tags are descriptive for Pinterest. Make sure you pick good tweetable quotes for Twitter. And make sure your images and descriptions do well in Facebook. If you don't like the text Facebook auto pulls from your posts, try adding a different one in the meta description box in WordPress.

Got it? Great – go do that for your blog and the blog post you're reworking right now and I'll meet you back here when you're done.

Step 7 - Start Driving Traffic

Now comes the exciting part. Everything is updated and ready to go. If you haven't already done so republish or hit save. Go look at your post and make sure everything looks the way you want it to. Try the links. Are they all working and are your affiliate links tracking ok?

Great. Now it's time to get the ball rolling and give the post a little head start to get some traction.

Change The Date

Change the publish date to today's date so your post shows up on the home page on your blog and gets send out via RSS feeds. This alone will get some traffic coming to the new post and people may just share via social media etc.

Share on Social Media

Speaking of which… now is a great time for you to send out some of those social signals and make sure the stuff starts to get shared around on your best social media sites. Go ahead and pin your images. Then go back and re-pin it to one or two of your favorite group boards as it applies.

Share the post on Facebook, to your personal profile, pages you manage, and groups as well. Don't spam, but share it freely where it is welcome.

Don't forget to tweet it a few times today as well. And work your mojo on whatever other social media sites you participate in.

The idea here is to get the traffic rolling and get things started. From here it will spread around. Some posts will do great and get you a bunch of traffic for a while, others may not. But they may surprise you a few months down the road. The key is to get the ball rolling and spread the word about your revived post. If nothing else, it will make sure that Google quickly indexes the changes. And you might just pick up a few new readers along the way.

And speaking of readers… there's one more thing we want to do.

Step 8 - Add It to Your Email Funnel

There's one more step to the process. It's a little more content marketing you can do to get your revived blog post the best chance of taking off and getting spread far and wide. It's also an easy way to stay in touch with your email subscribers and if you monetized the post, make a few bucks right away.

It's adding the revived blog post to your email funnel. You can do this in a few different ways.

1) Send a quick email to your list to let them know you've updated the blog post. Invite them to click through and read it and ask them to leave you a comment.

2) If you have an autoresponder set up, consider adding a similar message to it so all of your readers, no matter when they sign up for your list get to see all your messages (and all your important revived posts).

3) If you create a weekly, bi-weekly or monthly newsletter, feature the revived post it in.

Again, the goal here is to start spreading the word about your content and get the ball rolling. Since everyone has multiple social media accounts these days, every single one of your subscribers has the potential of spreading your post to their own circle of influence. And all it takes is the right person to share it for it to get you a fair amount of traffic.

And all those social mentions and links will help with SEO as well for the long run.

Most importantly though, you want to share it because it is good content your readers will enjoy and find helpful. Your goal should always be to serve your audience and build a closer relationship with them. Only then will you find out how you can best help them and they will know, like, and trust you enough to spend their money when you make a product recommendation.

Only one more step!

Step 9 - Rinse and Repeat

We've made it all the way to step 9. If you've been following along, reviving a blog post as you were reading through this, you noticed that this wasn't that hard and not really all that much work.

And the good news is that it gets easier. Some of the things like setting up social media buttons are already taken care of and you don't have to do them again. Other tasks like finding blog posts to revive you can easily do in batches and you probably have at least a few more posts picked out at this point that you want to go over and revive.

Creating pretty pinnable and shareable images gets easier with practice. In other words, you'll get better and faster at this whole process.

And that's a good thing because the last step is to "rinse and repeat". Keep going and start reviving old blog posts. Of course, that's not the only thing you want to do on your blog. Keep writing fresh, new content, but also set aside a little time each week or month to revive an old post or two.

The effort is well worth it since chances are good that these posts are already getting a fair amount of traffic. By improving and reviving them, expect to see more signups and more sales as a result. And by doing what you can to promote the revived content from your end, you will start to see even better results.

I hope you have found this little guide helpful and put it to good use. Keep all the content on your blog fresh, up-to-date, helpful and profitable by regularly going back and reviving older posts.

I hope you found this helpful for your blog! Here's to your success!

Everything I use to successfully run 4 websites and make a decent living blogging.

Some of it isn't as high-tech as you might think....

As a blogger since 2004 you could say that I have a bit of experience. I've tried a lot of things, and laid out a lot of money to find what does and does not work.

Though I don't write about blogging, I do have a resource page of blogging tips, tools and resources that I use and recommend. You'll find everything here from blog hosting & security to social media scheduling & SEO tools to camera recommendations and courses. If you are ever looking for blogging tools that work I am always happy to make recommendations or tell you about my experiences.