THE BLOCK BARD

Writing Service

The Block Bard
WRITING SERVICE

BLOG CONTENT GUIDELINES
'Business & Growth'

THE BLOCK BARD 2022 Content Guidelines

Thanks so much for your interest in contributing content to The Block Bard. You'll work with me, Mackenzie Andres, to produce content that supports the entire Business community. Keep reading to learn what that process looks like.

Who Can Write for Us?

To write for The Block Bard you must be a seeker of knowledge and growth.

Articles should be of interest to other members of The Block Bard, be written to help other business professionals succeed, and be written by a person, not a content manager or PR department. While we encourage drawing from your own experiences in sales to support your ideas, promotion of yourself or your product/company will prevent us from publishing your article. (Just ask us first, we are usually more than happy to write an article linking a great product/service).

You also need to create a Gravatar profile, and upload your preferred headshot there.

- Go to gravatar.com and click "Create Your Gravatar"
- Use the following formats for the email, username, and password:
    - Email: Your best Email.
    - Username: First+Last
        - EXAMPLE: johnsmith
    - Password: [your call]
- Don't pay for an account. You just need to register, confirm your account, and edit your personal information.
- Be sure to upload your image. Jpeg format is best.

You must be willing to help us promote your article once it goes live. You can do this by:

- Starting a discussion about your article in our community.
- Posting on LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, or other social media.

Who Are You Writing For?

Our goal is to help businesses grow themselves faster and better *NOW* while preparing them for the *future*.

To that end, we publish a wide range of topics for every level of entrepreneurship, from the individual contributor, to leadership.

Our readers of the 'Business & Growth' Blog are primarily business owners and self-help seekers. While we do have a smattering of people in other roles, our readers are looking for ideas and tips *from* business owners *for* business owners.

Our *current* demographics:

- Copywriting & Leadership - 60%
- Market Trends & Business Analytics - 30%
- Culture & Consumer Science - 10%

Current List of Desired Topics

I'm looking for content on all sales topics -- just being aware that people are working remote, in a poor economy, with challenges they've never had before. That opens a lot of doors for new slants on *business growth* topics. But we should continue to cover basic leadership skills and organization tactics that will help them succeed.

General Needs
- Growth tips, strategies, step-by-step guides, best practices.
- Back-to-basics, in-depth coverage of core sales skills and/or methods that we haven't already covered.
- Tips and strategies for every stage of *The Buyer's Journey*.
- Career advice for entrepreneurs and professionals.
- Customer sentiment/relationship advice.
- Templates, scripts and downloads.

Specific Topics (Find a unique angle to focus your approach)
- Selling to the CEO.
- AI / machine learning in automating.
- Scalable coaching.
- Intent reporting.
- Sentiment metric.

Some Most Popular 'Business & Growth' Articles to Date

- **4 Tips to Start Email Marketing Your Small-Business TODAY**

- [6 Proven Ways of Creating Captivating Copy](#)
- [The Richest Man in History and The History of The Richest Man](#)
- [The Importance of a Pre-Launch in Today's Digital Age](#)
- [Is Marketing A Social Science?](#)

Our Criteria When Considering an Idea

When you pitch an idea, I evaluate it against 3 criteria:

- It's 100% geared to helping business people gain new skills or improve their game.
- It's a topic business people are interested in right now. It solves a problem they're struggling with, or addresses a new trend they're talking about.
- We don't already cover that topic. A new approach or angle is okay, but we don't publish duplicate content.

Our mission is to make the future of Business better by helping every leader and professional get better at their job and do it smarter. As an author, you're helping us do that. So we don't want vague, generic writing. We want war stories, lessons learned, and actionable ideas for getting better and working smarter.

Secondly, we want *engagement* and discussions to grow around your article. That means no duplicate content and no generic content that compiles ideas from other experts. Show me what *you've* got.

When coming up with ideas for us, please look for gaps in our coverage, new slants to an existing idea, or up-and-coming topics business people and leaders are wanting more information on.

** Submission Checklist **

1. Document access is set for **anyone with the link** to **edit**.
2. The document name is: [author's name] - [title]
3. You / the author have joined The Block Bard Community by either liking our Facebook page and/or subscribing to our blog https://www.facebook.com/theblockbard
4. You / the author, have left us a 5 star review on our google page https://bit.ly/2K07CDr
5. You / the author have a Gravatar profile with the same email address as your member profile.
6. Your article is 750+ words (or you've checked with Mackenzie that it's okay to be shorter).
7. Your article is NOT a reprint.

Format & Structure Guidelines

Length
Posts should be *no shorter than 750 words*. Ideally, they should be 1,000+ words.

Making Your Article Actionable
Always end your post with 3–5 KEY TAKEAWAYS or WHAT TO DO NEXT. The idea is to help readers apply the information you just shared with them.

Making Your Article Readable
Short sentences, short paragraphs.
- 3–4 sentences per paragraph.
- No run-on sentences that lack punctuation.
- Make good use of **bold** and *italics*.
- Bullets or numbered lists work well.
- Try to limit paragraphs to 150 words.

Use a logical structure to present your information or tell your story. Good formats are lists, how-to steps, or a "what-why-how" presentation. Always include:
- Short, clear intro: Tell us what you're going to tell us and (if necessary) why it matters.
- First sub-header **(H2)** should always reflect the most important topical idea.
- Second sub-headers (and so on) should reflect ideas of lesser importance.
- Actionable conclusion: Summarize your points, tell us what to do next, and the benefit of doing so.

Inclusivity
One of our core values is diversity and inclusion, and we extend this commitment to our voice on the blog. Eliminate phrases or colloquialisms that are sexist, racist, or otherwise exclusionary.

Working with Us

Here's what you need to know about working with us:

- **When you have an idea for an article**, shoot me an email to tell me about it. (Mackenzie Andres - contact@theblockbard.com). I'll let you know if the idea will work for us, and I'll help you refine it or find another idea if it isn't a fit!

- When we agree on a topic, please give me a date for when you think you can have the article ready for my review.

- Please submit your draft as a **Google Doc** using **these sharing setting:**
  - **On - Anyone with the link**

- ○ **Access - Can edit**
- Title the Google Doc with your name first, then the title of the article:

<div align="center">Your Name - The Title of the Article</div>

- **The byline goes to the author**. If you do not include a title one will be appointed to you. FEEL FREE TO LINK BACK TO YOUR WEBSITE AT THE END and INCLUDE YOUR POSITION.

- Be patient. It could take a few weeks for me to get to your article, depending on how many articles are in the queue, and how many clients and customers I have at the moment.

- We'll try to let you know when the article is scheduled and when it goes live. That said, we sometimes get busy and forget. We won't get upset if you follow up with us to check on the status.

- Please help us promote the article, so it gets lots of traction. Some ideas:
  - ○ Share it in social media
  - ○ Include it in your newsletter
  - ○ Link to it in other articles you write

NOTE: *The Block Bard retains full editorial control and will edit or tweak as they see fit. These tweaks include anything from removing too much promotion, to optimizing for SEO, to rewriting sections for clarity or readability. We also optimize the headline for maximum clicks unless your original is absolute gold. Be prepared for edits both small and large. Please don't submit an article if you aren't comfortable with this.

TO SUM IT UP: Don't sell things. Be interesting. And have intelligent thoughts on controversial topics that other people would want to learn about.

Content Best Practices

Sellers today want to know how to solve problems and break through barriers to success. That being the case, the articles that perform best are diagnostic and actionable.

When writing your article, here's what you need to focus on:

1. Sell the problem, not the product.
Great content is about **solving problems**, not selling your product/service. Your article must NOT come off as a sales piece. Your goal as a writer should be to share your experience or knowledge to help the other salespeople.

- No backlinks to lead gen, sales pages, or product landing pages.
- No product demos, screenshots from only YOUR product.

- No talking exclusively about your product, your solution, your people.

TIP: Tell readers what to do and how to do it without mentioning your own brand or product. If you then decide to mention a product that does the job, mention several, not just your own.

2. Provide clear, actionable takeaways

Readers should be able to read the post and go apply something to their daily work right away. A good rule of thumb is to answer the question "how" rather than "why."

3. Specifics are critical

Only sales professionals can fully understand the challenges that all sales professionals experience. That's why we want our authors to be in sales — not on the content team.

Please DO insert yourself into the article. Speak in the first person. Tell stories. Share your experiences. Don't talk generally about sales concepts "out there." That doesn't sound like you're the one doing the speaking, and we want our articles to sound like YOU.

BTW, if that worries you, don't. Our editing team will make you sound good.

War stories – If you're telling us that grit is important in sales, tell us the story of the grittiest sales rep you ever managed. If you're telling us about the biggest mistakes in cold calling, tell us about the time you called a prospect by the wrong name and totally blew it.

Examples/templates/checklists – If you're telling us the best presentations include visuals, include some screenshots or links to attractive presentations. If you're telling us that the best email subject headings are short, include some templates that have worked well for you.

4. Have a Point of View/Thesis

Good: "Dreamforce '18 was the Best Ever. Here's Why"
Bad: "Top Five Takeaways from Dreamforce 2018"

5. Challenge Conventional Wisdom

Good: "Why The Top Sales Contests Don't Reward Top Performers"
Bad: "At the End of the Day, Sales is about People"

Bonus points for:

- Third-party statistics: "According to Forrester, 50% of marketers struggle with x" (Please link to your source.)

- Links to current events: "We all saw the news story about the avocado shortage due to Millennials making unprecedented amounts of avocado toast…"
- Sensory details: "There I was in a crowded room that smelled like wet paint, hands sticking to my Hugo Boss pants, with a thousand eyes staring back up at me." Make us feel like we are there in the scene: sight, touch, taste, sounds.
- Original research and data: "We analyzed 250,000 content contributors using machine learning AI, and learned 'Business & Growth' content contributors are 97% more likely to be amazing than the average content contributor." (Please link to your source.)