

*Onboardly Blog*

# *Guest Posting Guidelines*

If you are interested in contributing to the Onboardly blog, here are some quick reference points to follow. **Please note, though we love great and engaging material, this is not a place to sell your product or service.** You can, at most, mention your company once throughout the document and in your bio. We encourage you to submit a topic heading, bullet points and general argument before submitting a completed draft.

## Writing for Onboardly

Below are the guidelines for all content written for Onboardly. As a (potential) contributor you are expected to follow this guide through the writing process. Aim to write to educate, entertain, and provide high quality content. Keep the post as short as possible yet actionable.

## Onboardly Blog Style Guide

The Onboardly blog, an integral part of the Onboardly brand, provides educational, sometimes entertaining and trending content about marketing, content development, social media and customer acquisition for startups and small business. The content should be interesting to our target market.

### 1. Persona 1 (Assumed). Meet Bob:

**Demographics for a “Bob”:** Male, ages 28 - 50, mid-high income, founder or executive level.

**Company:** Small - Med, generally B2B, SaaS based entrepreneurial minded top level employee, founder or executive.

**Where does Bob get his information:** High quality industry blogs and research papers, guides / whitepapers / eBooks.

**Challenges:** Lead generation (low quality, no leads), brand visibility, establishing expertise in industry, growing the business, wants to be seen as a go-to leader and expert in the space.

**Priorities:** Allocate time and budget to an established agency or small team  
Focus:

- Will the effort favor the long-term success of the business?
- Will the results of the efforts impress the rest of the team / executive team?
- What is the goal / end result?

**Role:** Decision maker and / or strong influencer.

## Purpose

**For the audience:** To establish Onboardly as an expert in the space of helping small - medium sized companies gain the visibility they need to generate quality leads and sales. We provide viral and pillar content that teaches the SMB's tactical and strategic approaches to quality content marketing, PR and customer acquisition practices.

**For Onboardly:** Our content, including our blog and contributed posts, is a top of the funnel approach to increasing quality leads for our sales pipeline.

## We recommend that you

- Link the post to a very relevant outside source (blog, website, or other article) at least once per article.
- Discuss 'edgy' topics, but keep it clean. And be controversial! Have a voice and create an argument!

## Topic suggestions (If no topic assigned)"

- How-to's
- Stats/data
- Graphs (Infographics and data representation)
- News (Timely news that is relevant to the blog)
- Interviews with leaders, inspiring stories, how-to's, case studies

The focus is on content that is:

- Unique
- Shareable
- News Worthy
- Entertaining

Entertain, have fun, make it hilarious yet relevant.

## You should avoid

- Saying defamatory or derogatory things. If you must discuss a negative event, be sure to explain the facts but maintain a neutral standpoint.
- Swearing or personal attacks.
- Changing the topic you submitted. You must write according to the topic and content agreed upon.

## Content Guidelines

- All posts are business relevant with focus on social media, PR, marketing, entrepreneurship and lead generation.
- Use 'I' to add context and personalization to the piece, but *limit your use*.
- The first paragraph should be anecdotal
- Use how-tos, facts, stats and actionable content. We want our readers sharing!
- Keep the post as short as possible with use of bullets (500 – 1000 words)
- Use images, videos, audio, graphs and infographics where possible, but please remember to source them appropriately.
- Structure should flow. Paragraphs should be 2-3 sentences long.
- Be sure to end the post with something actionable. Entice people to want to leave a comment, tweet or Facebook share the post.
- The content, posts, articles that you submit to us as a contributor becomes the property of Onboardly, unless otherwise stated.
- The information provided in the posts are the views of writer contributor and do not reflect those of Onboardly.

## Post Structure

- You must insert at least one relevant image per post. (Try [compfight.com](http://compfight.com))
- Images are best used if they are high res screen shots with a width of 640 pixels.
- Do not link images.
- Do not use logos where possible.
- Do not use a sub heading or heading within the first two paragraphs.
- Use bullets and sub headings where appropriate.
- **Remember:** readers are often drawn to bulleted points first and typically read the first few only, so save that space for the most important items!
- Use one space after a period.
- Names should be written first & last name at first mention, then referred to by last name.

## Frequent Considerations

- Article titles: Headline style (capital/lowercase)
- Headlines: Capitalize only the first word and proper names.
- white paper, not whitepaper
- website, not Website, web site or Web site
- internet, not Internet
- eBook, not e-book
- “like”, not Like or “Like”

### Capitalization:

- Do not capitalize content marketing.
- Capitalize first letter after colons only if the clause is a complete sentence.
- Capitalize job titles (e.g., VP of Sales). Capitalize specific types of web pages.
- Unless it is in a headline, there is no need to capitalize the names of marketing channels, concepts or technology terms, such as word of mouth, search engine optimization, direct response, internet, dotcom, ecommerce, etc. Exceptions: Flash, Web 2.0, VoIP, TiVo, Wi-Fi.

### Other style issues:

- For any unfamiliar terms: Put in quotation marks for the first reference, but do not give special treatment after that. (e.g., “Content Chasm” first use; thereafter, Content Chasm throughout).
- You vs. we: As a very general rule, posts should be directed toward you, not we.
- Google+: Use Google Plus in the headline and title/meta tags and first usage and then Google+ after.
- Website sections/features: When referring to a proprietary site section, app, or functionality, set in headline style. (e.g., “On the About Us and Contact page, you will see . . .”)

### General Considerations:

- Abbreviations: Unless a term and its abbreviation are so ubiquitously well known and interchangeable (for example, JPEG), spell out the complete term the first time it is used and include the abbreviation in parentheses; for example, pay-per-click (PPC).
- Bull’s-eye: bull’s is possessive; hyphenate.
- B2B: Use all caps, do not use “b-to-b” or “B-to-B.” blogosphere: lowercased blogs: lowercased, short for weblogs (also acceptable) broadband: one word; no capitals
- Cellphone: all one word, but mobile phone is two words click-through: one word, hyphenated.
- Colons: In a headline, capitalize the first word after a colon. (Example: The X-Factor: The sex factor.) Capitalize the first word after a colon only if a full sentence follows.

- Company names: Follow standard grammar rules, capitalize the first letter, but all other letters are lower-cased. Companies are an entity and should be referred to as an “it” not a “they.”
- Commas: Put commas between the last two items in a list. (Example: Spinach eaters are healthier, happier, and have better skin.)
- Composition titles: Book titles, movie titles, opera titles, play titles, poem titles, song titles, television program titles and titles of lectures, speeches and works of art should all be italicized.
  - Magazine titles are in headline style. Do not use italics or quotation marks. Also, lowercase magazine unless it is part of the name; for example: Newsweek magazine. Also capitalize The in publication titles where it is part of the brand name; e.g., The New York Times; The Wall Street Journal.
  - Creative campaign titles use initial capitals and do not use quotation marks; for example: The Art of the Heist
- CPA: This can stand for either “cost-per-action” or “cost-per-acquisition.” The first time it is used, spell it out and include CPA in parentheses; for example: cost-per-action (CPA) or cost-per-acquisition (CPA). Each subsequent use of the term should just use the abbreviation.
- Dates: Avoid using th or st after numerals in dates. For example: April 8, not: April 8th.
  - Months: Write out all month names in full.
  - Remember to include a comma after the year if a full date is given (for example, “On October 11, 2007, the RIAA ruled.”). No comma is needed when only the month and year are used (for example, “The CAN-SPAM bill was signed in September 2005.”).
- Dashes: Use the em dash and en dash with a space before and after. ( Example: The company’s marketing team—and other technical employees—were used in the presentation.) Single use of em dashes is acceptable when used for emphasis that is stronger than would be appropriate for parenthesis or commas. (Example: Look for technology solutions to emerge for marketers to make, distribute and generate leads from this content—whether it’s content publishing systems, podcasting, or webcasting.)
- Degrees: Spell out (for example: 10 degrees, not: 10°).
- Dial-up: two words, hyphenated
- Dotcom: one word
- Email: not e-mail, eMail, email. etc. Always abbreviate and use a period at the end.
- File formats: Use all-capital-letter abbreviations for formats that are acronyms: GIF, JPEG, MP3, PDF. Capitalize only the first letter of proprietary program names: Flash, Java
- Headlines: Should appear in capitals/ lowercase.
- Headline guidelines: Don’t use business jargon, like ‘monetize’ and ‘optimize’
  - Try to use action verbs as much as possible
  - Avoid yes or no questions in headlines.
  - Try to incorporate terms that refer to royalty, conflict, and emotion. • When possible, include big brand names for added impact.
  - Aim to keep headlines to 45 characters or fewer.

- Hyphens: Hyphens are joiners. Use them to avoid ambiguity or to form a single idea from two or more words. As a general rule, compound nouns do not need a hyphen; compound adjectives do. Example: Real-time processing, he played the video game in real time. Hyphenate multi-dimensional, multi-channel, multi-cultural.
- media: Always use as the plural version of medium (never mediums), but paraphrase where possible; for example: “ad channels.”
- microblogging: all one word
- Millennial: Capitalize
- Numbers: Spell out all whole numerals less than 10. For example, “one” instead of “1.” All numbers greater than nine are in numeric form; for example: 10, 255, etc... Exceptions:
  - If it’s not a whole number (for example: 5.2, 3.6), use the numbers; for example: 5.2 percent and 1.5 kids.
  - At the start of a sentence, always spell out numbers. Numbers less than 9 that are accompanied by a dollar sign or percent sign should use numerical spellings (for example:
    - \$9 million; 4 percent raise)
    - Use numbers in headlines.
  - For ages, follow general number rules. Example: She was only eight years old when the earthquake struck. Only a two-year-old child would know how to do that.
  - For percentages, always use numbers. Example: GM’s earnings rose 4 percent over last year’s 10 percent drop.
- When referring to quantities of millions and billions, numbers should be used, and not just in reference to money. Example: His new salary was \$12.5 billion. There were 256 million starving children. The nation has 1 million citizens.
- Spell out numbers that start a sentence. Example: Twenty-seven detainees were released yesterday. (Exception: Sentence that starts with a year)
- Use Roman numerals for wars, monarchs, and popes. Example: World War II, King George VI
- For large numbers: use a hyphen to connect a word ending in y to another word. Example: twenty-one, one hundred forty-three, seventy-six thousand five hundred eighty-seven
- offline: one word
- online: one word
- opt-in: two words, hyphenated
- pay-per-click (PPC): hyphenated
- pay-for-performance (PFP): hyphenated
- percent: Spell the word out. Only use the symbol (%) in headlines to save space.
- Part: When referring to parts in the title of an article, capitalize “Part.”
- pop-up: two words, hyphenated
- Quotes: Use scare quotes (quotes for emphasis) very sparingly. Always use double quotation marks unless there is a quote within a quote.
- realign: no hyphen



- Regions and direction: Should be capitalized and one word. Example: East, West, Northeast, Southeast, Midwest. When referring to general directions, these should be lowercase and one word. Example: He traveled east to St. Louis
- rerun: no hyphen
- ring-back: two words, hyphenated ringtone: one word
- said and says: Use said in straight news articles. In features and cover stories, we generally use says, but be sure to be consistent throughout the article.
- search: Lowercase it unless it is part of a proper noun.
- Series title: As a rule, we don't reference the fact that an article is part of a series, rather than a stand-alone article. For headlines, if we're publishing multiple parts, add "Page" for the second page and all following pages.
- Spacing: Use a single space.
- Seconds: Do not use hyphen when describing increments of time less than one minute. Example: 55 seconds, 30 seconds
  - Hyphenate when time is used as an adjective: 30-second spot
  - Avoid using colon constructs (e.g., :30, :55)
- spam: lowercased
- States: Use AP abbreviations (for example, Calif., N.J., Fla.) rather than postal abbreviations (NJ, CA, FL). Also, there should be a comma after all city/state constructs (for example, "We left the La Quinta, Calif., conference on Tuesday.").
- Who/that/which: Who: refers to people. That and which refer to groups or things. Example: Consumers who respond to surveys are likely to be more deeply engaged. Example: Companies that issue surveys are likely to deliver better consumer engagement. That introduces essential clauses, and which introduces nonessential clauses. Example: I do not trust editorials that claim racial differences in intelligence. The editorial claiming racial differences in intelligence, which appeared in the Sunday newspaper, upset me.
- Time: hour, minute, no periods and lowercase p.m. and a.m. (for example: 7:00 p.m.)
- Titles: Capitalize all job titles. TiVo: Lowercase the i and the o. touchpoints: one word
- United States/United Kingdom: Always abbreviate, with periods (U.S., U.K.).
- versus: Either versus or the abbreviation vs. is acceptable, use best judgment but remain consistent within a body of work.
- viewership: one word, no hyphens
- view-through: one word, hyphenated
- VoIP: Lowercase the o. W
- wallpapers: Use as plural when referring to desktop/website graphics web: lowercased
- web-based: hyphenated
- webcast: one word
- weblogs: Lowercase it, but use blogs unless making a technical point. web page: two words
- website: one word, lowercased
- Web 2.0: capitalized
- Wi-Fi: Capitalize both the w and the f, and use a hyphen.
- word of mouth: Lowercased. Hyphenate when used as an adjective. Example (adjective): We do word-of-mouth marketing. Example (noun): Word of mouth is an important thing.