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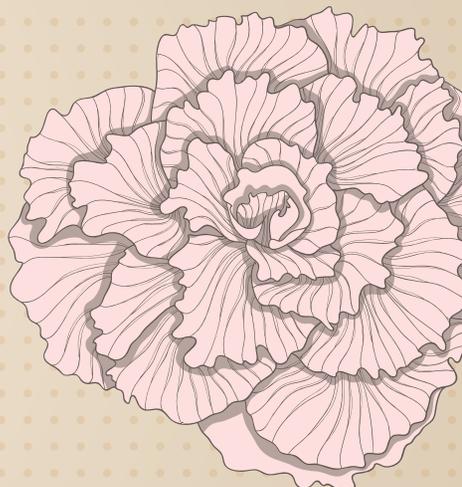
SIMPLE STEPS

THAT WILL GIVE YOUR

WORDPRESS BLOG

an

EFFICIENCY
MAKEOVER



Presented by  **SHORTSTACK**



If you've been thinking about updating your blog, but are worried that it might be overwhelming (or expensive), here's some good news! There are eight super simple things you can do to update your blog to help you work more efficiently and make your blog more effective at bringing in leads and encouraging sharing. And the best part: You don't need to spend a dime to implement any of the tips. If you have a basic understanding of how to use WordPress and minimal design skills, you are all set.

If you're thinking, "My blog looks beautiful! It doesn't need a makeover!" Know that we're not focusing on aesthetics. Functionality is first and foremost. If you keep user experience in mind AND great design, your readers will keep coming back for more.



Are you ready to see a boost in your blog's metrics? Here's what you need to do:

1 CREATE CTA FOOTER IMAGES

A call-to-action (CTA) footer image is a clickable image that you insert at the bottom of each blog post. These images are an effective way for business bloggers to promote resources, products or a specific message to their readers. On most really popular blogs, like Hubspot's, you will notice CTA footer images.

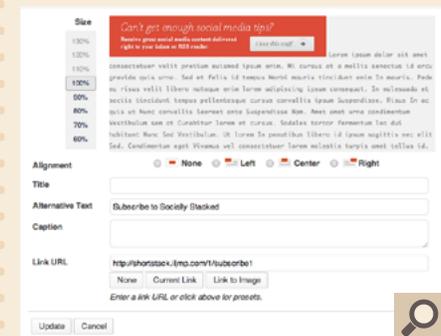
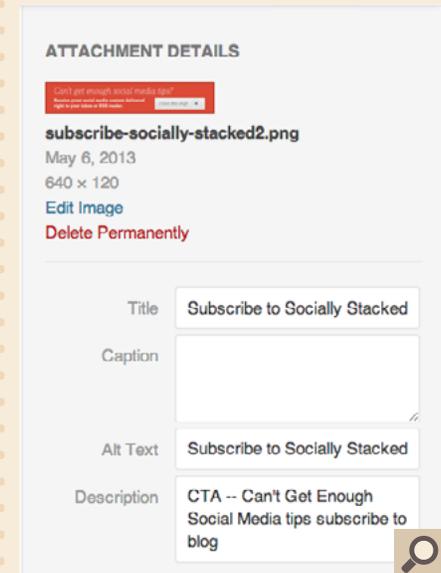
On ShortStack's blog, Socially Stacked, we also place a CTA footer image at the bottom of every blog post (right above our share buttons) to feature one of our latest eBooks or PDF downloads. When readers click the image, the free resource immediately gets downloaded onto their desktop.

We also use CTA footer images to encourage readers to sign up for our newsletter. We have created about ten CTA footer images including the two examples here and we rotate them at the bottom of our blog posts.



To create these CTA footer images, we use Photoshop to design bar images that are the width of our blog post column. Once we've created them, we upload them into the WordPress Media Library and type "CTA" in the description box of the image. This way, after we write a blog post, we can easily search "CTA" in the Media Library and all our CTA footer images will appear, making it easy for us to alternate them. The next few steps are as follows:

1. Once your CTA footer image is inserted into your blog post, click the landscape icon to edit it.
2. In the "Edit Image" tab, insert a link in the "Link URL" section that is appropriate to your CTA footer image. For instance, if the CTA footer image we feature is about our latest holiday eBook, in the "Link URL" section we insert the direct download link for the holiday eBook.
3. Click "Update" and you're done!



2 INSERT TRACKING LINKS

Commit to using tracking links on your blog. Tracking links will help you become a whole lot more efficient at tracking the return on your blog's content. The link-tracking software that we use for ShortStack is Improvely – the least-expensive plan is \$29 a month and well worth the investment.

Improvely links are awesome because you can use them anywhere: an ad, highlighted text, a newsletter sign-up button, etc. When a reader clicks on the asset that has an Improvely link in it, you are then able to see in Improvely's dashboard whether any of those properties produced any conversions.

All of our blog's CTA footer images (see point above) have Improvely links in them. To do this, after we've uploaded our CTA footer image into a blog post, we edit the image's Link URL to be an Improvely link – it's that simple!

Using improvely links in our CTA footer images allows us to easily analyze which of our CTA footer images are clicked most and which are converting the most blog readers into blog subscribers or service users.



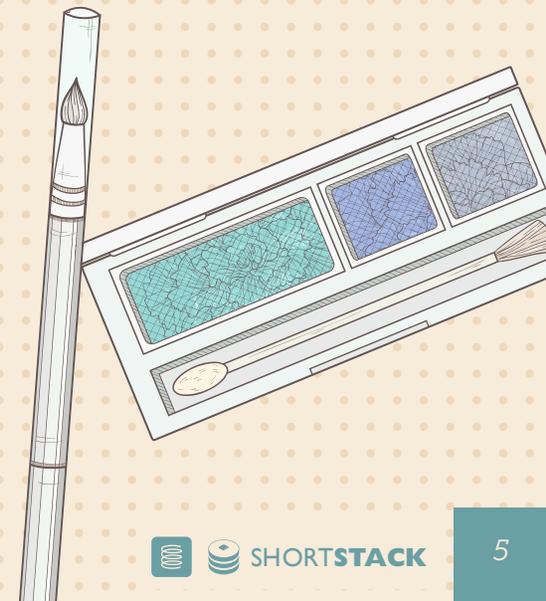
3 ALLOW FOR PIN-READY BLOG POST IMAGES

Pinterest has become one of the web's top social platforms and is a huge source of traffic for many blogs. To make your blog content more Pinterest friendly, keep this one little trick in mind: After you've updated your blog post images, edit your image's "Title" and "Alternative Text" sections to have the same title as your blog post.

Doing this helps with your blog's SEO and it makes it so that when a reader clicks on either your blog's Pinterest plugin or share button, your blog post image is ready to be pinned right away. Whatever copy you put in the "Title" option of your image will appear as the pin's description copy.

HERE'S A SHORT VIDEO
TUTORIAL THAT
EXPLAINS THIS TIP IN
DETAIL.

WATCH 



4

DOWNLOAD TWEETABLE CODE (THE WAY THE NEW YORK TIMES DOES)

In August of 2013, the New York Times tested a new feature in one of their online articles that allowed readers to tweet highlighted quotes from the story (see example to the right). [According to Mashable](#), the publisher reported that the story they tested the new feature with first was shared approximately 11 times more than their most popular Times stories from the previous month. Even if you get a much smaller bump, it's a very simple way to highlight chunks of tweetable text.

To download Tweet to Code and learn how to use the feature on your WordPress blog, [click here](#). If you're thinking you'd rather not have to download something to your WordPress blog, but you love the feature, there are other options. Consider using a simple and free online tool like [Click to Tweet](#) to create highlighted, tweetable text pieces within your posts.

The Humble Beginnings

- DANA CARVEY** I was doing stand-up and being offered a lot of bad TV shows. **Bill Murray, [Dan] Aykroyd, [John] Belushi** — they were guys who might make you laugh, but they could beat you up if they wanted to. I looked like Timmy from the "Lassie" show. 🐦
- MOLLY SHANNON** I heard that Lorne Michaels was looking at tapes. I used my waitressing money and made a tape of my characters. I was on a pay phone across from an El Pollo Loco, and I found out that he had passed on it. I was crying. I was devastated.
- TRACY MORGAN** I was married, I had three sons, and I was on welfare. I didn't want that no more. 🐦 I knew that if I got "Saturday Night Live," it would change me and my family's lives forever.



5 INSTALL TWITTER CARDS

Installing a WordPress plugin that enables Twitter Cards makes your blog's content pop in the Twitter feed. When one of your readers uses your blog's Twitter button(s) to share a link to one of your Twitter-card enabled posts, their tweet will feature intro text and an image from your blog articles in the tweet (see example). The more visible and attractive your blog's content is in the Twitter feed, the better, and the more likely it is to be shared.

Installing Twitter Cards to your WordPress blog is a little tricky and can take some developer skills. If you're serious about using Twitter Cards, do a little research on them. Here are a few helpful links you can read or share with your business's on-staff developer:

- <https://dev.twitter.com/cards>
- <https://github.com/niallkennedy/twitter-cards>



6 ESTABLISH GOOGLE AUTHORSHIP

Google authorship is more powerful than it looks. When you set up Google authorship on your WordPress blog, it connects blog post authors' Google+ accounts to WordPress. The immediate change after you do this is that your Google+ profile image and byline are featured in search results pages.

The deeper benefit of Google authorship is that it makes your blog's content stand out in search results. [According to heatmap eye-tracking studies](#), discussed in a [great blog post](#) on Buffer's blog, rich snippets (search results that feature a photo) are more eye-catching and get more clicks – the research proves it.

If your blog's writers already have Google+ accounts, establishing Google authorship is a breeze. After you "link your Google+ profile to the content you create" there are just a few more simple steps to complete. The whole process takes about five minutes.

LEARN MORE ABOUT
HOW TO ESTABLISH
GOOGLE AUTHORSHIP:

LEARN MORE ▶



7 ADD TWITTER BUTTONS

If you want to use your WordPress blog to increase your brand's number of Twitter followers, use Twitter buttons in your posts. They're incredibly easy to use and customize.

If you [click here](#), you will be taken to one of Twitter's resource pages. There, select the Twitter button you want to use in your blog post, then copy and paste the code Twitter gives you into WordPress's "Text" tab of the post you're working on. And boom, you're done! If you want, check out the new feature in preview mode before you publish your article.

Twitter buttons

Add buttons to your website to help your visitors share content and connect on Twitter.

Choose a button

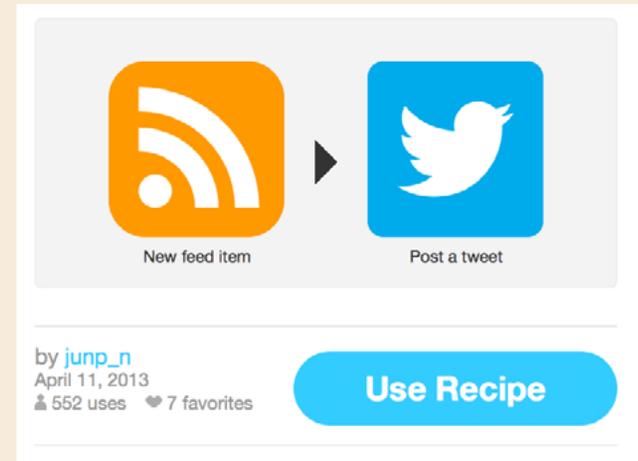


8 CONNECT YOUR BLOG TO AN RSS PUBLISHER

It can be time consuming to log in to each of your brand's social platforms to post about your latest blog article. To save time, use the [free tool IFTTT](#) – it stands for “If This Then That” and it allows you to create time-saving social media “recipes.” What does that mean, exactly? You can easily connect your blog's RSS feed to your different social platforms.

For instance, you could use the “[RSS to Twitter](#)” recipe so that whenever a new article is published on your blog, a link to it is tweeted out on your brand's Twitter profile. Essentially, recipes make sharing your blog's content automatic. And automatic content sharing allows your WordPress blog to be super efficient.

Now is the perfect time to reflect on how you can improve your business's blog. Whether you're one of the 37 percent of marketers who say “blogs are the most valuable type of content marketing,” or a small business owner who wants to make your blogging efforts more efficient, these eight tips can help your blog perform better this year than it did last year.



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