Partner Blog Guidelines

- Thought leadership blogs have the highest traffic and do best on the MRI website

- We won't publish sales pitches of a partner product – why?
    - We've found our clients and visitors to the website aren't interested in sales-centric content. They look for information that they didn't already know. You can include links to your website within the blog, but it's suggested to surround that link with thought provoking content.

- Want to see good examples of a Partner blog?
    - https://www.mrisoftware.com/blog/real-estate-budgeting-cre-benchmarking-data/

    - http://www.mrisoftware.com/5-questions-ask-now-make-buildings-management-teams-profitable-2017/

- How often are items added to your blog?
    - The MRI blog is updated regularly, typically twice per week. Other types of content are added to the MRI website regularly as well, such as press releases, videos, and marketing collateral.

- How much time would our content be presented, or would it need to be refreshed?
    - Blogs are never deleted. If the information in the blog becomes outdated, blog authors can send revised content to MRI and we can update the post.

- Are there any specifications to be aware of?
    - Length - Successful blogs are typically between 600-800 words long.
    - Images - All blogs will include an image. Partners can submit an image along with their blog, or MRI will choose one.
    - Author – the blog can be published under a specific author's name, or under a generic "MRI" authorship. Each partner blog will include introductory text that lets the reader know the blog was written by an MRI partner.

Tips for writing the best blogs ever

Blog writing is both an art and a science. While there are no hard and fast rules, we've put together a few best practices for effective blog writing to help you create the best blogs ever.

Blog basics

Blogs are less formal than textbooks or news-type websites. People like to read blogs because they feel like they're making a connection with a real human being. So, don't be afraid to let the "real you" shine through in your content. This is one of the best ways to make your blogs more effective and readable, and it also establishes your "blogger persona" and enhances your personal brand.

Basic housekeeping rules:

- Best practice for blog length is 600-800 words.
- Blog must relate to MRI-Partner integration or industry leading content/thought leadership.
- MRI Marketing may suggest minor edits to your blog post and title, and we will optimize both for keywords/SEO.
- Stay Focused – Answer one question. Don't start off answering one question and then start covering every different category imaginable. Your readers probably don't want all that information, so choose one question to answer and stick to the subject at hand. If you want to talk about another topic, put it in a separate blog post. Too much information makes it difficult for your visitors to find the answer they're looking for, and they may leave the blog page and go somewhere else.

Blog styles

- Numbered Lists – Just like Dave Letterman's famous "Top Ten List," readers are drawn to blogs such as, "Top Four Ways CDN Drives Cloud Adoption."
- Ask a question – Many blog headlines post questions that grab the reader's attention. Example: "Can Your Website Handle Online Traffic Spikes?"
- Conversational – Write as if you're trying to explain or teach something.

Headlines

Some people find it helpful to write the post titles first, but others prefer to wait until after the article is finished. However, writing the title first usually gives you a clearer idea of your topic or exactly what question you're going to answer. In other words, you've basically mapped out the whole post if you write the title first, and this helps avoid the dreaded Brain Dump Blog Post.

Blog Format

Once you've decided on a topic to write about, how do you begin putting it on paper? While there is no one best practice regarding blog structure, take a few minutes to think it through before you start typing away.

While your blog format is up to you, below is a simple formula that works with most topics. This is a good way to begin, especially if writer's block creeps up on you.

- **Step 1: The situation**
  - Describe the situation your blog will address. For example, your introductory paragraph could set the stage by discussing a customer problem or challenge. Example: Describe the business challenge of scaling your own servers and keeping them secure.
- **Step 2: Ideal world**
  - Next, describe how this scenario would work in an ideal world. This is a "wouldn't it be great if…" type of statement. Example: Ideally, you would have space to expand and add on more servers as your business grows, along with the ability to keep them in a secure physical environment.
- **Step 3: How do you get there?**
  - What are the steps required to create this ideal world? Discuss how MRI's solutions can help customers achieve the utopia you previously described. This is where you can write specifically about MRI's products and their benefit to the customer.
- **Step 4: Call to action**
  - This is a summary section that makes readers want to learn more about the scenario you just described. For example, Marketing may add a link to a relevant video, datasheet or other piece of collateral that offers additional information on the topic. However, not all blogs will lend themselves to a specific piece of marketing collateral. In these situations, you can end your blog with something like, "Contact MRI Software today to learn how we can help you create a secure, scalable infrastructure."

Additional blog guidelines:

Use Headings and Sub-headings

Break up large blocks of text with headings and sub-headings. Most readers are only going to scan your article, and these bolder fonts make it easier to see your most important points. They also provide a visual breath of fresh air and give your reader a mental "bookmark."

Explain Industry Jargon

Your goal should always be to attract new visitors, so it's important to keep in mind that those first-time visitors may not be familiar with the industry jargon you use. However, you also don't want to bore your long-time followers by repeating information they already know.

The solution? Briefly explain industry jargon in each post and then refer your new visitors to blog posts that explain it in greater detail. Your long-time followers aren't bored, your new followers get the information they need, and you're building a strong internal linking structure – all at the same time.

Keep It Short And Sweet, BUT…

You've heard this one before – keep it "short and sweet" because people who read stuff online don't have a lot of time and blah, blah, blah… There's a certain amount of truth to that statement. However, that doesn't mean you have to sound like a textbook or a robot.

Getting "to the point" is certainly important, and if you follow all the other tips on this list you should be fine.

So, what would you like to write about today?