

*How to get more*  
**CONVERSIONS?**



**PROVEN BLOG DESIGN**

**PRINCIPLES THAT DELIVER RESULTS**



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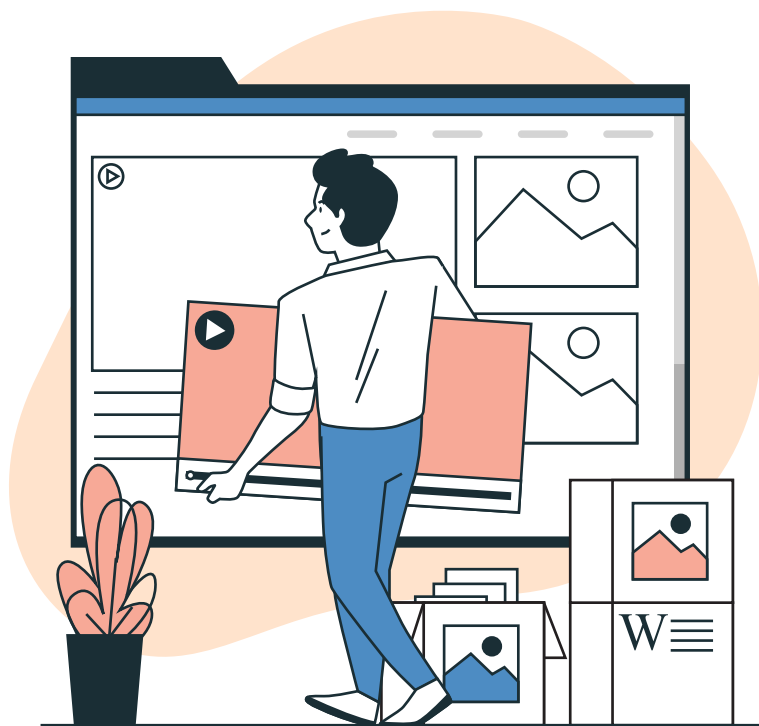
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# How to get more conversions? 7 proven blog design principles that deliver results



Ever since we relaunched our website in 2019, our blog design has always bothered me. This was for two reasons. Even though we got a really neat-looking and cool website design, our blog, which was an important source of our inbound traffic (as it should be for anyone else), ended up getting a second-hand treatment. Let us just say, we did not work enough on the layout or the readability part (font and design wise) of the blog.

We can now admit that it was a grievous mistake. [Here is why.](#)

According to research, most humans are hardwired to like things that are aesthetically pleasing. In short, we do give importance to how a person looks. How is this related to blogs?

[Read this.](#)

In 2011, researchers at Melbourne University found that people tend to trust websites that have an appealing design and look good.

Also, here is an interesting finding by Dr Brent Coker, a researcher and author who has spent years studying marketing.

“As aesthetically oriented humans, we’re psychologically hardwired to trust beautiful people, and the same goes for websites. Our offline behaviour and inclinations translate to our online existence.”

To cut it short, people are attracted to clean, well-designed blogs. A well-designed blog can get you higher conversions. And by conversions I don’t just mean visitors turning to loyal customers, I also mean more email subscriptions, more shares, more comments. Those are all the things you want from your blog.

Design of the blog, especially its readability, is super important to make your readers stick around and read your content. Otherwise, all you will be left with is a high bounce rate.

Secondly, and more importantly, no matter how much you optimize your blog, if you cannot get your reader to read what you write, you will end up with a very low traffic-to-lead conversion. This simply means, you will not be getting conversions from your blog even though you might be getting traffic to it.

So, we got thinking - how do we improve our conversions so we can get more leads, more email subscribers, more shares, more comments and more loyal readers by changing elements of our blog design?

For starters, we started jotting down what we liked about some of the very popular blogs with high footfall. What could we learn from them?

## Here are some interesting points we noted.

### Mashable

Since its launch in 2005, Mashable attracted around 2 million readers in just 18 months. And it is easy to see why. Apart from the extremely informative content, the layout was clean, with lots of white space. A decent font size for the quirky headings and easy share buttons under each make it simple for the visitors. On the right is a list of articles focussed on whatever is coming up in technology, entertainment and society in general.

### Huffington Post

A single-grid layout with bold headings, neat font and crisp images help this blog draw in close to 17 million visitors every month. Across the middle of the page, a banner on “Trending News” runs and easily grabs attention. A banner for subscribing to the newsletter also comes up as you scroll. The content resonates with readers as it focusses on opinion pieces and unbiased news.

### Lifehacker

With close to 3.5 million monthly visitors, this blog shares tips on almost every aspect of life. Lifehacker banks on audience feedback to build its crisp and often bulleted content. Ample white space, clean layout, and a clear font style and size help too. The button to subscribe for newsletters appears both on the right sidebar and top right corner.

“

**If you cannot get your reader to read what you write, you will end up with a very low traffic-to-lead conversion.**

”

The next stage was finding tweaks that popular blogs made on their layout and the results they got from that.



## Here are some great facts we found.

- ◆ Last year, the Quick Sprout blog saw a **27%** increase in social traffic after using plugins like Flare and Sharebar to introduce scrolling social buttons in its blog posts. This made it easier for readers to share or tweet.
- ◆ Medium is undoubtedly one of those blogs that convert leads. In 2016, the number of visitors converting to subscribers increased from **2% to 5%**, when the opt-in box was shifted from the sidebar to the header.
- ◆ Neil Patel was able to reduce the bounce rate on his website by **29%** by introducing a layout that is compatible with all devices, a decent font size, and improving loading time.

# This is what our research focussed on

When we decided to make tweaks to our blog, we first decided to see what other marketers were doing. We started scanning through websites of top content marketing/inbound marketing agencies, consultants, Conversion Ratio Optimisation agencies, and even some brands, and see what they were doing different and better.

**Overall, our research was focussed on these main points:**

## 1. Layout and design

How was the blog layout? How many grids did it cover? Did it use pictures and descriptions for each blog that was laid out? Did it have a good-looking top banner for displaying the headline? What were the other elements that attracted the visitor to explore the blog and read more? How was the overall design of the page?



## 2. Readability

How readable was the content? What was the font size they were using and the line height (space between the lines)? How much spacing did they leave around the text? What were the elements that were prompting the reader to scan more content?



## 3. CTAs

What were the Call to Action buttons used for improving conversion ratio optimisation of the blog (be it converting the visitor to leads or increasing email



subscriptions. What were the overall conversion techniques being used?

As we finished our research, we thought it would be useful to put together what we found since the research did throw up some interesting points.

As we finished our research, we thought it would be useful to put together what we found since the research did throw up some interesting points.

This guide is supposed to help anyone (businesses and individuals) who is looking to improve the lead conversion ratio of their blog through simple tweaks. Remember that the best brands that generate leads through their websites and blogs are constantly optimizing their blogs to get more leads. It's amazing how you can generate more conversions from your blog content by simply implementing these 7 design strategies.

So here you go.

“

**The best brands that generate leads through their websites and blogs are constantly optimising their blogs to get more leads.**

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# 7 most-effective blog design principles to get more conversions

## 1. Go for a clean and organised layout on your blog's home page

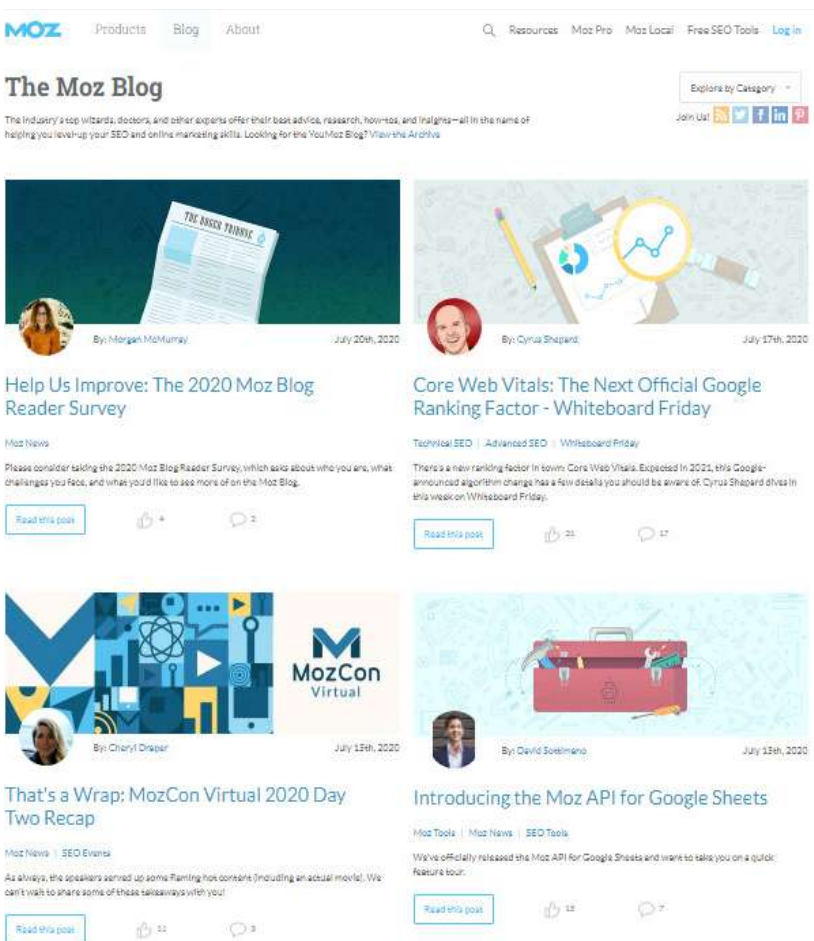
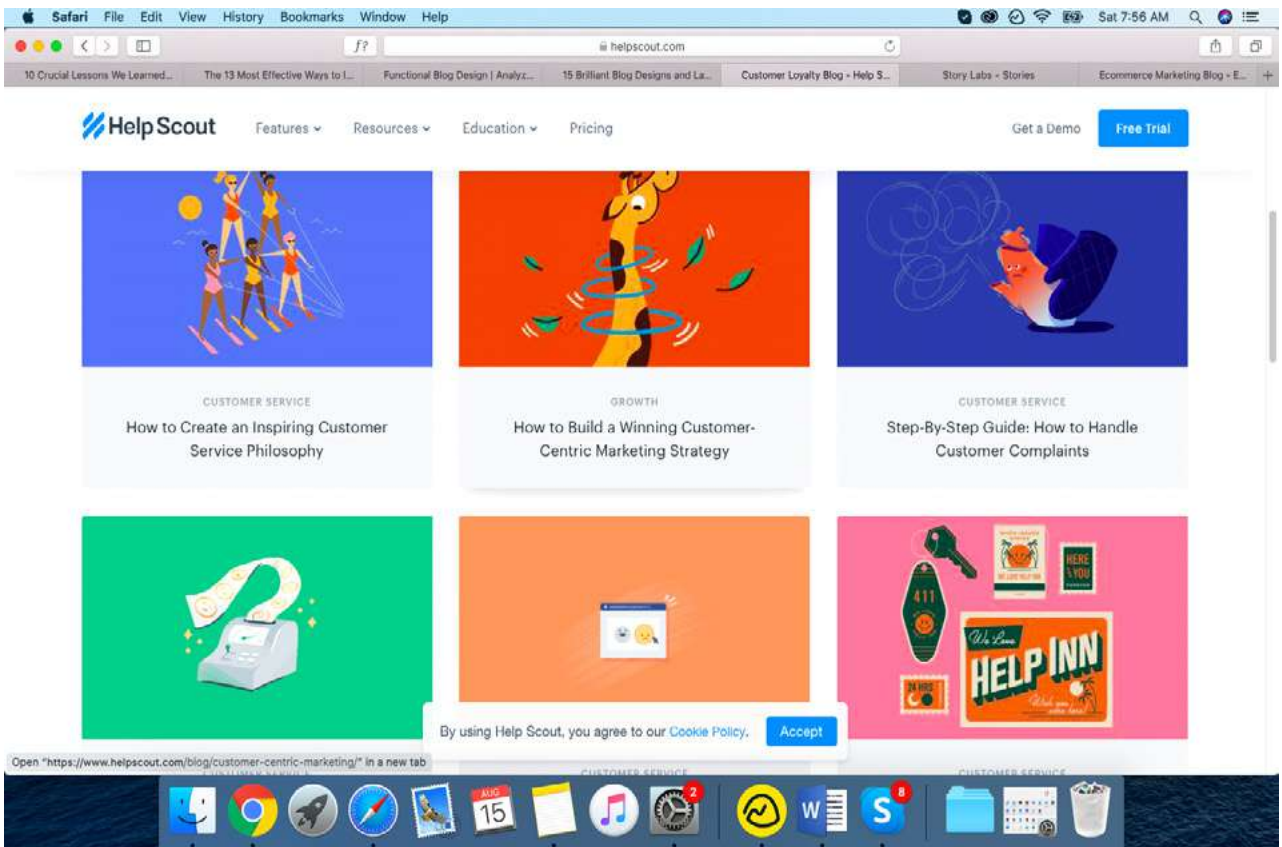
We come across so many blogs that have great content, but not that great a design. A good layout always prompts the reader to explore and read more. A neat and organised design with just the right amount of white space, and an appealing colour scheme, can have the right psychological impact on visitors and encourage them to scroll down the blog page more and explore the content further.

### ◆ The grid layout

The most popular blogs we visited and liked were laid out in grid format. The grid usually uses block-based design to organise and show content on a page. We like the neat look that comes with the grid layout, especially the ones which were laid out in 2 or 3 columns.

**A good example we found was the Help Scout blog.**

If you look at the page, the layout offers the maximum amount of content to be shown to the reader without compromising on the quality of images or content or readability.



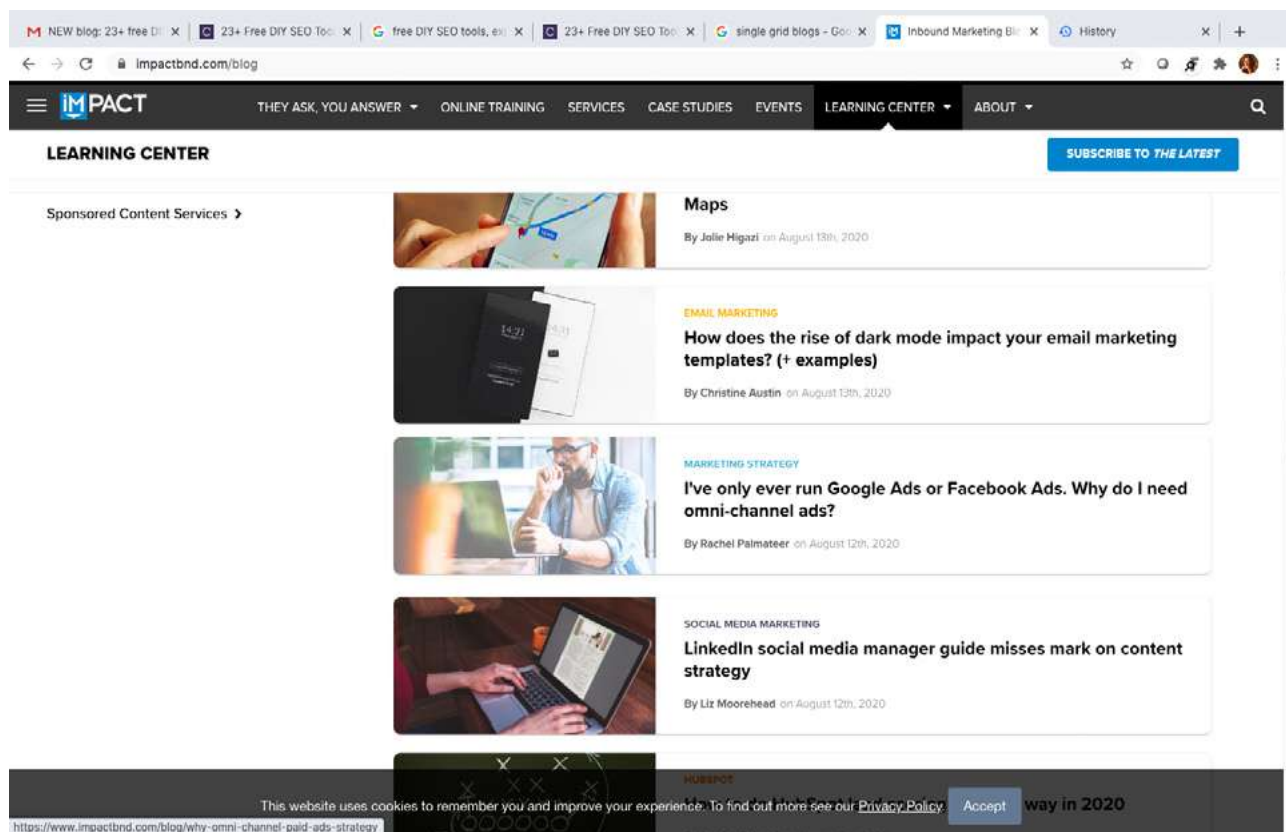
We also liked the 2-column spacious and neat grid layout of the [Moz blog](#). The entire layout is broken into two columns with just the right amount of white space all around that makes scanning the content easy.

Apart from neat and bold post titles, the Moz blog also uses snippets to encourage visitors to read more. Just 2 or 3 lines can do the trick, as a reader's average attention span is not more than 8 seconds.

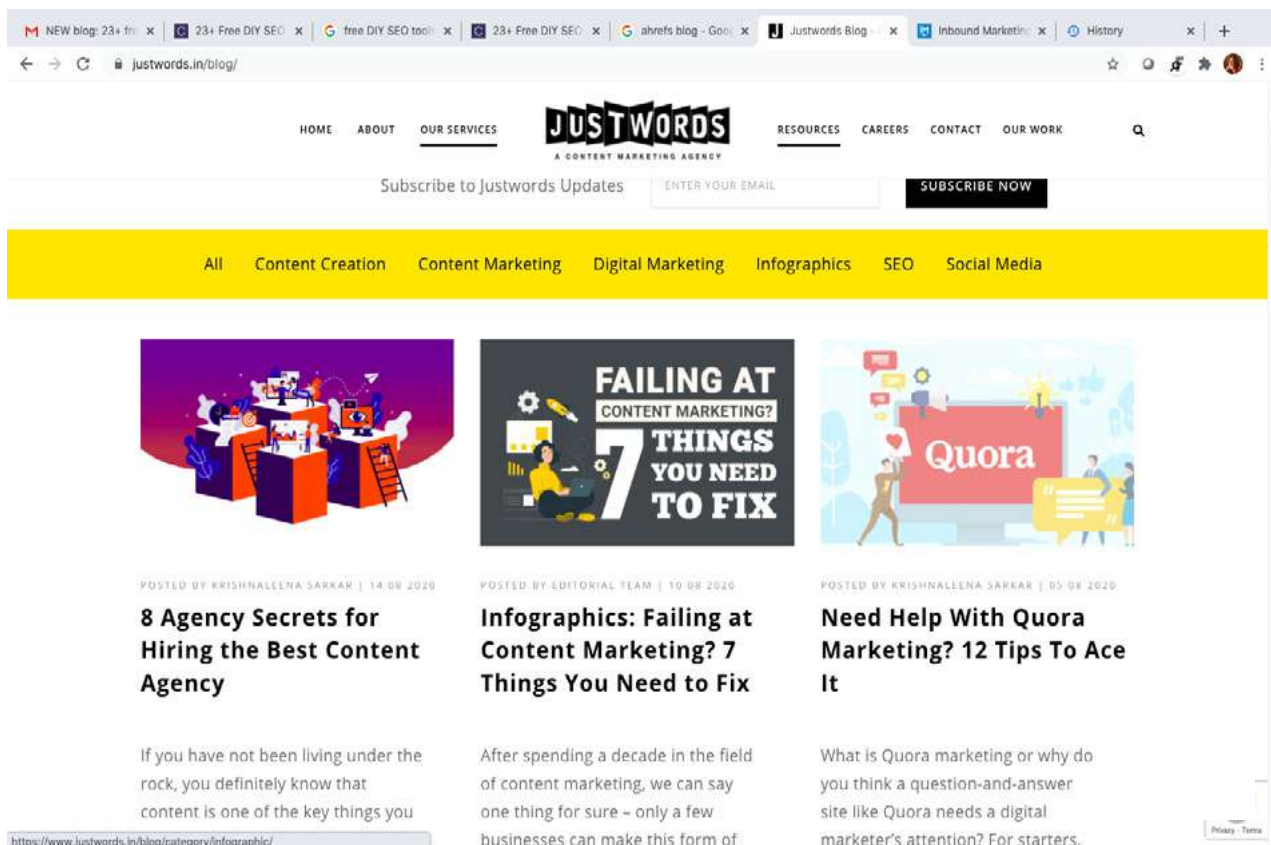


Now, let us come to the [HubSpot blog](#) which uses an uneven grid layout. The advantage of this layout is that it helps in organising the information neatly. Visually, it gives a clean and clear look and helps the reader scan the information faster. The eye does not get lost in the content crowd.

You could also go for the single blog layout like the [Impact blog](#) or a super minimalist one like the [Ahrefs blog](#).



We, however, found that the 3-column grid layout was the most popular. The Justwords blog also uses the same layout since we feel we can share more content as well as do justice to the images.



## 2. Make sure readability is never an issue in your blog

We have learnt this the hard way. So, we don't want any of you to make the same mistake. Make sure everyone who is coming to your blog can read with ease.

And by everyone I mean, people with and without glasses. If you are asking your readers to zoom in to read your blog content every time, you might as well as say goodbye to them.

Let us get this straight - Your blog's readability cannot be an afterthought. It should be a fundamental aspect of your blog design. So, what is readability?

Here is a great definition on designshack.net and it is pretty bang on.



**Readability is the ease with which text can be read. Comprehension is a key factor in terms of readability, as is being able to quickly look at — and understand — lettering. Readable text can be scanned quickly, from a distance.**



## **Here are a few visual things that determine readability**

### **◆ Font type and size**

The perfect lead generation blog has to get these things right. Serif or Sans Serif font types are ideal. Verdana ( [TechCrunch](#) , [CopyBlogger](#)), Arial ( [Google Blog](#), [Engadget](#)), Georgia ( [Huffington Post](#), [BoingBoing](#)) and Lucia Grande ( [Lifehacker](#), [Mashable](#)) are popular as well.

Font size should be 11-point or above, for easy readability. Engadget and Mashable use 12-point, while Seth Godin, Huffington Post and Lifehacker use 13-point, and ProBlogger and Wired use 14-point.

### **◆ Active white space**

I cannot say this enough but allow your letters to breathe. The right amount of space around your letters makes it easy to read and allows the reader to comfort-

ably settle down on your content. Don't cram your website with content. Let the content stand out with space around them. Let that invisible halo of white surround the important information points that you want them to read. This makes it so much easier to focus.

**A black or grey or white background is a great way to attract attention to a certain block of the text or headline.**

## ◆ Line height

This is the last thing you need to take care of. Make sure there is enough distance between each line. This makes it more readable.

Here is an interesting explanation I found.

Lines that are too narrowly set impair reading speed because the upper and lower lines are both taken in by the eye at the same time. The eye cannot focus on excessively close lines and ... the reader expends energy in the wrong place and tires more easily. The same also holds true for lines that are too widely spaced.

— Grid Systems in Graphic Design, Josef Müller-Brockmann

## 3. Internal page design

The design of your internal blog page determines to a large extent whether the visitor will convert or feel motivated enough to take an action. Hence, deciding what you want to promote and how is important.

This [Convince & Convert internal page](#) is one of the best examples in this case. This

# The 6 Best Influencer Marketing Studies of 2020

Authors:  [Kyla Matthews](#) Posted Under: [Influencer Marketing](#)



With the first quarter of 2020 now past us (phew!), it's a perfect time to examine [influencer marketing](#) research to see what it indicates for the rest of the year and beyond. Here are six influencer marketing studies that could impact your marketing decisions for the coming months.

## 1. "The State of Influencer Marketing 2020" Report From Linqia


This influencer marketing report from Linqia offered some valuable findings regarding how companies plan to work with influencers this year. Some of the conclusions may come as surprises, however.

*Grab your copy of "The State of Influencer Marketing 2020" from Linqia*



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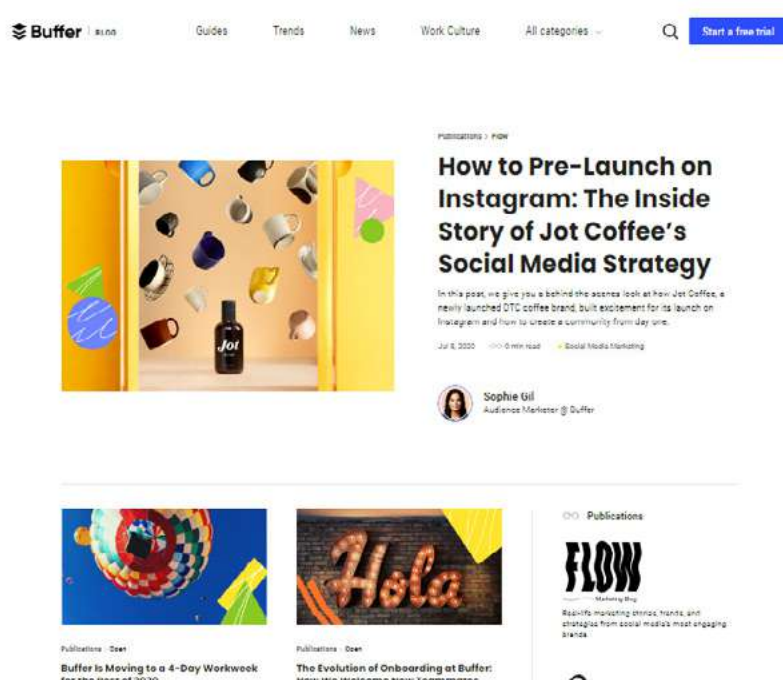
internal blog page has social share and contact buttons twice, near the top, on both left and right sides, and once at the bottom. A slick option to “listen” to the article is also present above the main heading, for those who are extremely busy. The main image for the post is sizeable and attractive.

The sidebar on the right features attractive CTAs that prompt you to find out how they helped major clients or see their case studies. As you scroll down, a big CTA appears for weekly updates, encouraging you to sign up.

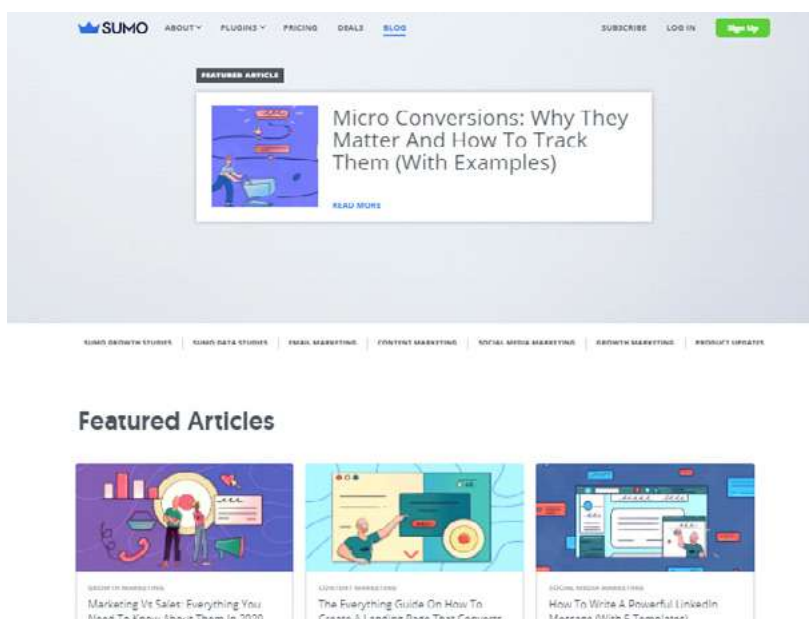
At the end of the blog post, a large CTA appears to prompt you to buy their popular e-book. This internal page also stands out because of the bright orange colour it uses for headings, CTAs, and graphs.

## 4. Never forget to invest in good images for your blog

It has been observed that the human brain can register and recall visuals much better than plain text. So, beautiful and relevant images can compel readers to click



on a post and read it till the end. Check out how Buffer uses lively and colourful photos that please your senses or make you curious. Sumo also uses funky graphics and crystal clear post headlines to capture attention. And, you can't miss the CTA for newsletter subscription in a big font at the bottom.



In short, images play an important part in helping the reader to connect to the content. The headline and image (both on the blog home page and inner blog post page) play a crucial role in getting the reader to click and read the blog or scroll down the blog to read more.



## 5. Do not ignore the sidebar on the right on inner blog pages

If there is one thing most blogs ignore, it is the right-hand side space of the blog – the sidebar. The sidebar is an important space on a blog inner page and can yield a lot of results if used correctly.

There is a lot of argument out there on whether to use the side bar or not. There is Neil Patel advising against it since he feels the sidebar takes away the attention from the main content (he has, however, retained it in the inner blog pages), and then there are other marketers arguing for it.

So, what is the final conclusion?

There are definite advantages to the sidebar, if you use it properly but keep it for the inner blog pages and not for the blog home page.

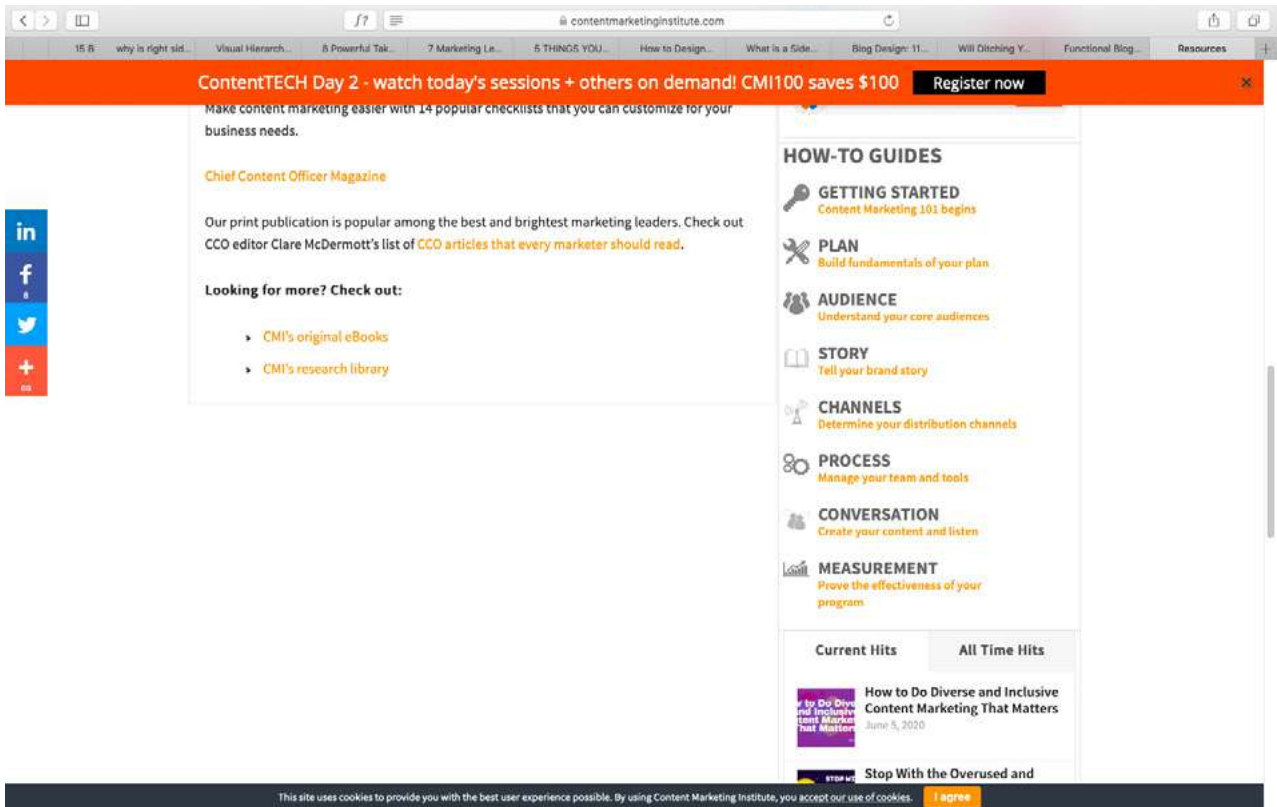
**The best things a blog sidebar can do are –**

### ◆ **Extend the shelf life of your best content pieces**

Very few people actually remember those really great pieces of content that you spent hours writing. Putting it right in front of them is a great way of ensuring those content pieces are not forgotten and buried. This is a great way to extend the life of your already published content. This section can point to your best long-format blogs or the best content lying in your resource section.

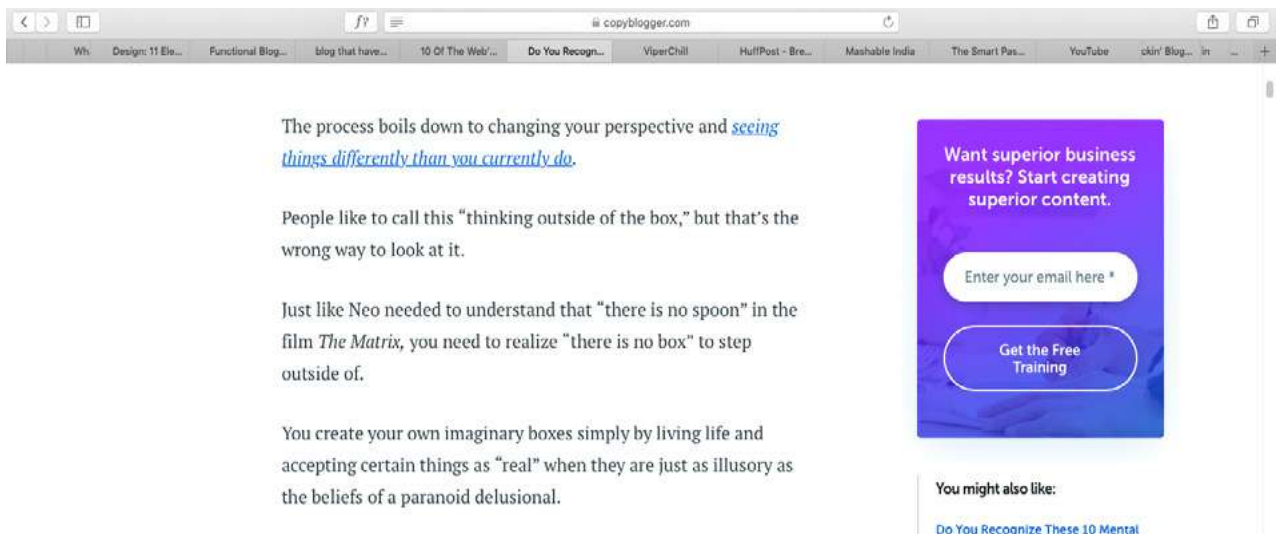
For example, look at [Content Marketing Institute's blog](#).

On their side bar, they have placed links to their evergreen pieces of content, making it easy for the reader to find them.



Also, here are some more wonderful examples of how a sidebar can be used to increase the shelf-life of content pieces (on which you have invested hours) that can get more traffic, conversions, and most importantly, increase the trust and brand authority of your website.

Here is one from [CopyBlogger](#). They use a neat and minimalistic style on the whole blog and we love the CTA on the email sign up box.



## ◆ Help the visitor look at critical information

A sidebar blog helps focus on important things like a Call-To-Action or a lead magnet like an EBook or a case study. This is an important Conversion Ratio Optimization Strategy, leading to more lead conversions.

The screenshot shows the Neil Patel website. The main content area on the left features a large headline: "How to Spy on Your Competitor's SEO in 60 Seconds". Below this is a sidebar with navigation links and a search bar. On the right side, there is a prominent call-to-action box with the text "Do you want more traffic?" and a photo of Neil Patel. The layout is designed to guide the user's eye from the main content to the sidebar and then to the call-to-action.

This one here is a screenshot of the [Conversion Rate Experts](#) blog. The only exception here is that they use the sidebar on the left side, one of the very few websites to do so, mostly because readers tend to scan pages in an **F pattern**.

The diagram shows a webpage layout with four numbered points indicating the F-pattern reading path: 1. Top left (headline), 2. Top right (mission statement), 3. Middle left (catchy words), 4. Middle right (eBook offer). The path starts at point 1, moves horizontally to point 2, then vertically down to point 3, and finally horizontally to point 4. Below the diagram, it states: "The most important content on this page can be seen in a few seconds. Image credits: tutstplus".

Now, as observed by QuickSprout, when the sidebar is on the right, people tend to read your blog post more. And when it's on the left, they tend to take action or convert more. So if you want your content to be read more, placing the sidebar on the right might be wiser.

## 6. Use strong, convincing and clear Call to Action (CTA)

If you want your blog to help you get more conversions or more email subscribers or more leads, you will need to tell your visitors what you want them to do. And this is where strong and clear Call to Actions help.

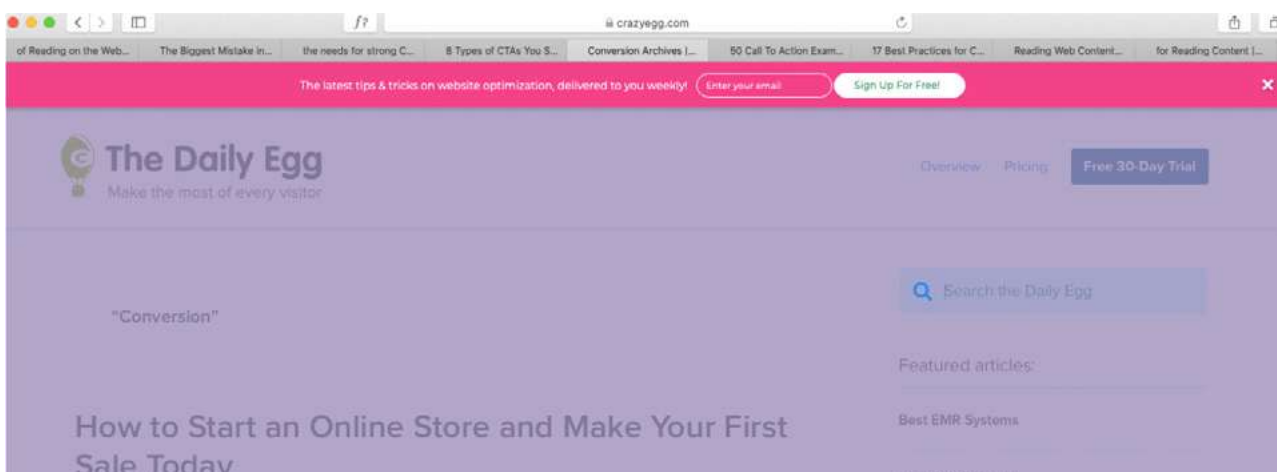
A CTA is designed to tell the reader what step he needs to take next. The idea is to convince people to click on the CTA. So, a mere “sign up” or “read more” will not really work.

We found these excellent examples of really powerful CTAs. Also note the areas in which they are placed in each website.

### ◆ The header CTA

These CTAs usually pop up right at the top of the blog, the minute you land on a particular blog page. The colours are usually bold and striking to catch the attention of the reader.

Check out this red CTA on [crazyegg.com](http://crazyegg.com), asking you to sign up for its blog. It is very difficult to miss. They use the Hello Bar.





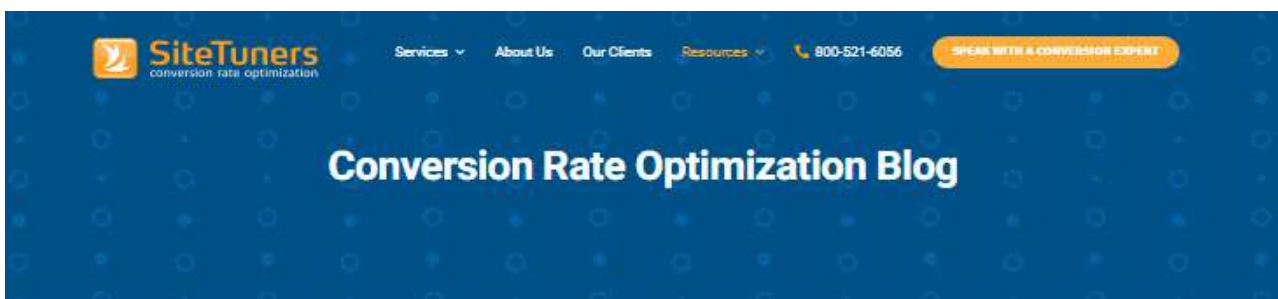
A lot of websites do this really well, for example the Content Marketing Institute.

The moment you open this post, a pop-up appears on top, prompting you to read the latest write-up from the Chief Content Officer.

## ◆ Side-bar CTAs

This is another great place to place your CTAs. Remember to put the CTA above the fold for maximum conversions.

A great example of this is again the Content Marketing Institute website (refer to screenshot right above this point). Do you notice the bright orange sidebar CTA for



**Free Webinar: Adapt the In-Store Experience for eCommerce**

With the shift towards online transactions due to COVID-19 comes the influx of shoppers who are unfamiliar with ecommerce. These...

[Read more](#)



**Google Search Console Basics: A Beginner's Guide to GSC**

[Editor's note: This post was originally published in June 2018 and has been updated to reflect the interface of Google... [Read more](#)



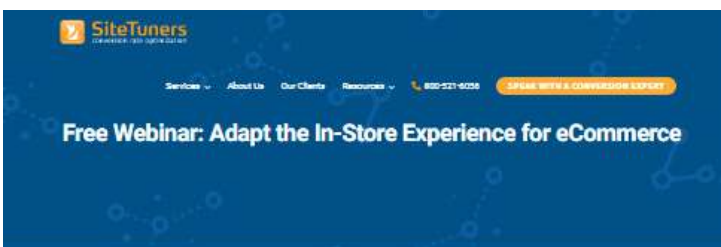
**FREE Webinar: A/B Test Your Way to More Revenue**

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the growth of e-commerce as more people rely on digital channels to make their purchases... [Read more](#)

email subscription, followed by a CTA that encourages you to connect on social channels. This one mentions the number of followers on each channel as well!

Right under that, there is another CTA on how-to guides on content marketing. And under that, there is another longish CTA, prompting you to read blog posts that are current as well as all-time hits! When you reach the end of the post, a big CTA for email subscription again appears, followed by emoticons for what you felt after reading, and a long list of comments from other readers.

Our research showed that in general, the main blog page had a crisp CTA, while the



internal pages have more detailed ones.

For instance, the [SiteTuners blog](#) has a neat “Speak with a conversion expert” on the top right-hand corner of the main blog page. Another short CTA at the bottom right hand corner encourages email signups.



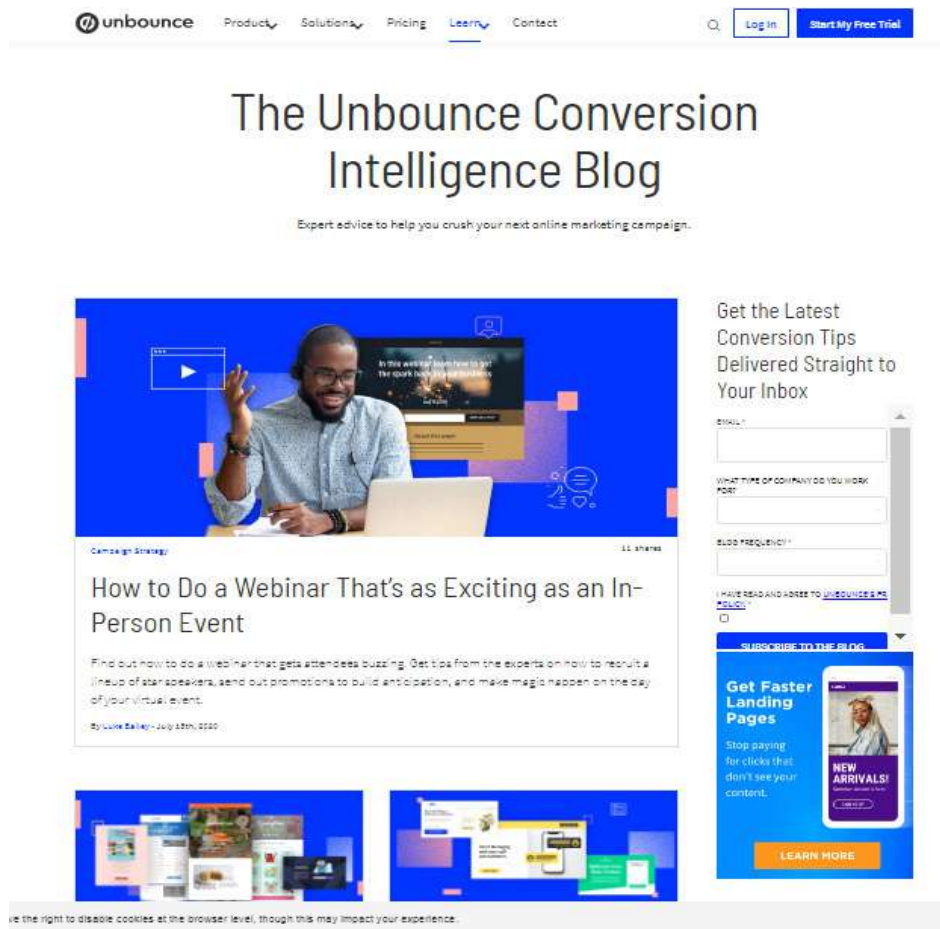
And on this [SiteTuners internal page](#), a very detailed CTA to call an expert is featured on the sidebar.

While most blogs have CTAs for email subscriptions, there are

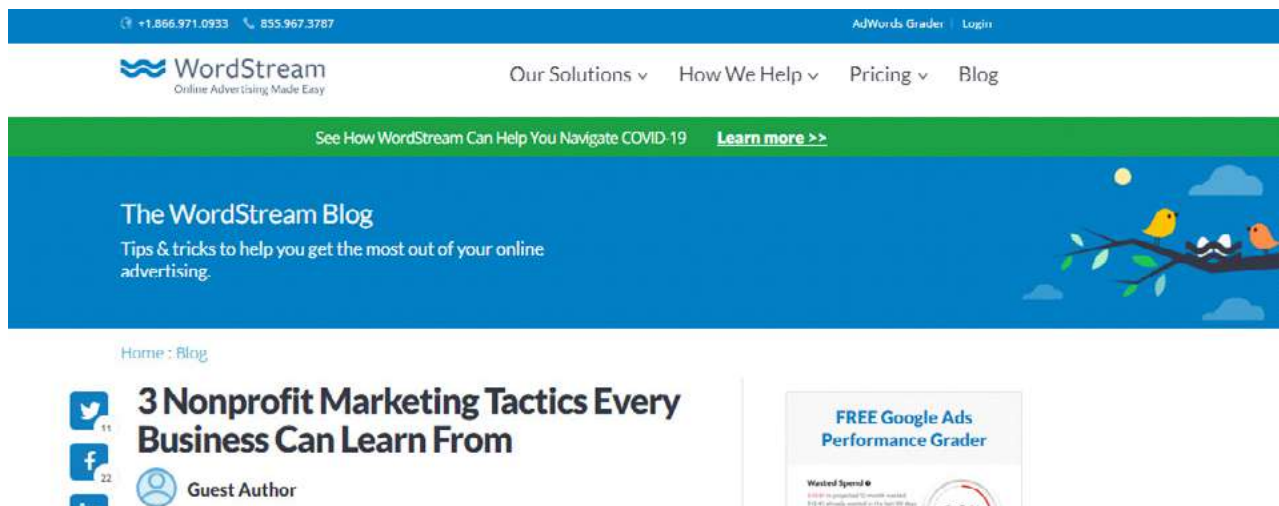
some very clever CTAs prompting the reader to click on lead magnets or get expert help or start the free trial of a tool.

The [Unbounce blog](#), for instance, has an additional CTA on the right, prompting you

to learn how to get faster landing pages. The main blog page of [Conversion Rate Experts](#) has multiple CTAs, asking readers to see case studies, schedule a free website strategy session, and download a free copy of their best-selling book.

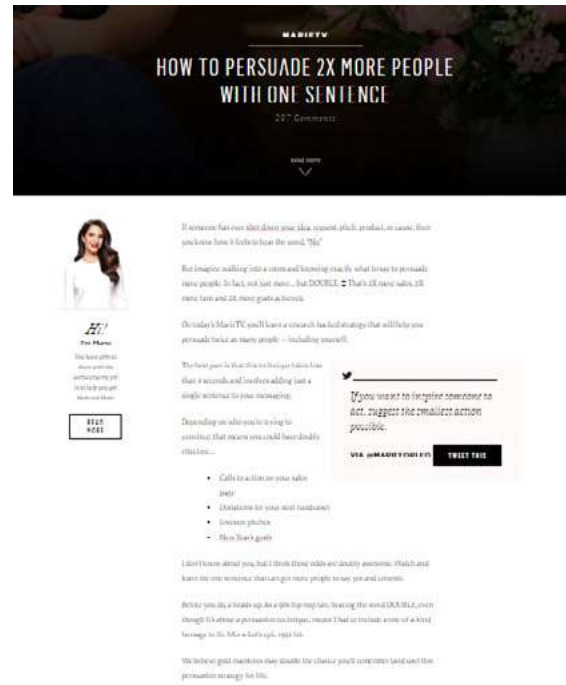
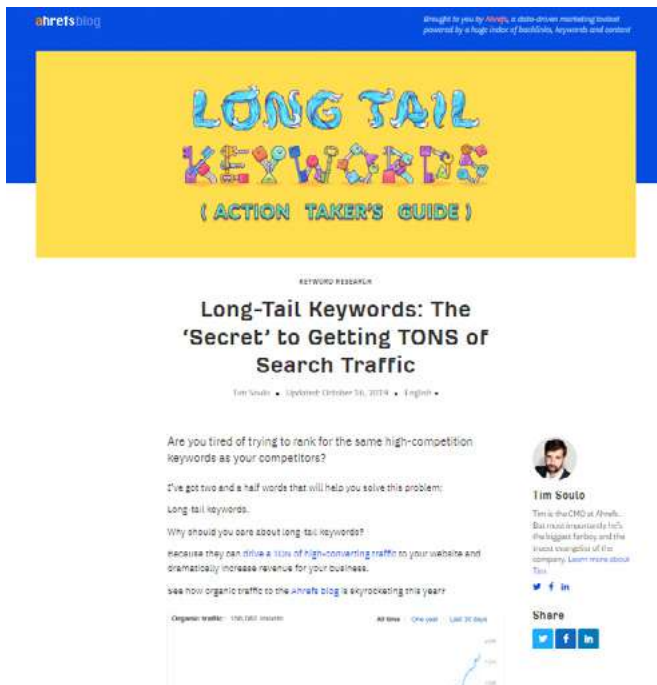


Check out this [WordStream blog](#) too, for its strategic use of sidebar, CTAs, pretty illustrations and well-chosen images.



# 7. Position of the bio

To connect well with the readers, a well-written and crisp bio with your image is essential. It increases the trust factor. When it comes to placement, you can choose from left or right sidebar, though most blogs use the right as mentioned before. This [Ahrefs blog post](#) is a good example. However, in this [Marie Forleo post](#), you can see how the bio positioning on the left sidebar looks great. Also, keep the text short and add a link for those who want to read more about you.



## Your takeaway

Your blog shouldn't just be about great content. The right layout, font, images, illustrations, CTAs, sidebar positioning and even your bio are some blog lead generation strategies that can make a world of difference to the number of visitors and conversions you get.



**Need a little expert**

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