

Blogging For Business

SHARING YOUR EXPERTISE TO INCREASE WEBSITE TRAFFIC

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The two most popular blog sites today are Blogger (Google purchased Blogger in 2003) and WordPress. They are free web-based tools people can use to publish on the web instantly (monthly, weekly, daily or hourly) without writing code or installing software. Hobbyists, families, celebrities, writers, politicians, as well as businesses and publications use blogs to communicate their thoughts, relay their experiences and make connections. Today many people use Blogger in place of the traditional website or home page.

Anyone Can Blog

Anyone with a computer and internet access can have a blog; and it's free. Blogs may focus on nearly any topic whether it's personal or business. From a business standpoint, choose a professional topic within your range of expertise.

Bloggers can Write about Anything

Before you start your blog, consider a few things if you are looking to profit from your time. Profit and success can mean many things; building a following, driving people to your website and business, making money and so on. Success could be as minor as affecting one reader. Ask yourself the following questions:

- What do you want to gain from blogging?
- What is your topic going to focus on?
- Who is your target audience?
- What will your audience gain by following your blog?

Once you've settled on your answers, make sure you never preach about how great your products and/or services are - it will turn your customers away in a snap. Instead, write posts that improve your reputation, reinforce your credibility and prove you are an expert in your field. Post relevant and timely information. Keep visitors interested enough to post comments and come back to read future articles. This combination will build you a following of loyal readers over time! The goal is to post content that invites participation and interaction which, in turn, builds your relationships and increases SEO (search engine optimization).

A couple last notes:

1. Often bloggers find great posts and comments from other socialites and want to re-post them. It is perfectly ok to repost or link to them, but give credit to the original poster.
2. Format your posts in easy-to-read articles with paragraphs and headings and styles. Spruce it up with images and links too. Images draw more attention.

Connecting with Others

The reason we use these various active medias is to increase our ability to network. That means meeting people, finding leads and staying in touch. Of course the number one way to connect with people is to interact with them. Blogs provide a hub for social networking; follow others and eventually they will follow you... comment on other blogs and eventually they will comment on yours. Post helpful or interesting comments on other blogs that relate to your industry and interests. Encourage contribution (constructive comments) rather than the general "cool article" comment. Blogs are intended be personality driven - stick with your voice and style by showing your readers the person behind the posts.

It's time to link up and connect. Include a link to your blog on your website... and on top of that, include links to your other social networks on your website and in your emails (when appropriate, of course)! Finally, make sure your topics are consistent and of interest to the audience you wish to reach, whether they are educational or entertaining.

Use the blog to improve customer service by carefully reading what customers and potential customers are commenting. Though blog comments can be controlled, take the opportunity to be honest and straightforward.

Don't focus only on publishing and responding to positive comments. Read, listen and understand the negative comments as well. Respond in a respectful manner with facts and substance to support your response. Sometimes the best referrals occur when you go out of your way to fix a customer's negative experience.

Happy Blogging!



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