

# BLOG



## Business Blog Basics

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### **Eleven essential considerations when starting your corporate blog**

“About this social media thing, we need to start a blog” or “Our blog doesn’t seem to be working, it seems to be taking a lot of time and not generating the business results we want!” These may sound like common phrases to you, or like the new challenge that your boss has put upon you, tasking you with ‘making social media work.’ Rest assured you’re not alone with deciphering the blogosphere.

Social media is increasingly putting the publication of editorial right into our hands with communication tools such as blogs. Content is being distributed at a faster rate than ever and consequently we’re left with a new set of challenges than posed by sharing news and driving business via traditional media – how to do we ensure that our blog is being read by the right audience? How can we ensure our blog is driving business opportunities? Finally, does the effort and time we invest in our corporate blog, make sense commercially? Below are eleven business blog basics that should be considered when starting or reviewing any corporate blog.

#### **1. Establish a common and agreed upon set of objectives**

What does your organisation hope to achieve with your blog? Perhaps it is driving new business, providing value added information to clients or consumers, keeping in touch with journalists. Establishing the objectives for your blog is the fundamental step for providing the framework (which you will define by working through the considerations below) and being able to measure success.

#### **2. Define and understand your audience**

Defining your objectives will go hand in hand with defining your audience. This in turn will help you to set the tone of voice of your blog, the type of content that you want to share and ensure that your content is correctly targeted and positioned. Having an understanding of your audience will allow you to be able to engage with them by going to where they are online and proactive share or draw attention to the content that you offer.

#### **3. Establish your messaging**

As with any communication that is distributed, you should have some underlying key messages that you share in order to ensure that your content is consistent and that

the voice of your blog matches your corporate branding. Define what your messages are and all of your content should relate back to this.

#### **4. Define roles, responsibilities and guidelines**

Much time can be spent talking about who is going to do what instead of producing great content. Making these decisions at the start can save a lot of time. You may choose to have one author for the blog or have the responsibility shared amongst a team or elect one member of each department to contribute. This will help to provide a varied voice to your blog. Whatever the decision, ensure an overall responsible has been assigned along with an agreed upon set of guidelines that are in line with the company communication policy and social media policy. This key person should ensure that these guidelines are followed.

#### **5. Set goals**

When starting your blog it's really important to set goals to help you build a solid base for continuity. Many blogs tier off after a few months, by setting blog goals you can establish a plan of action such as dedicating one day per week to post, committing to one or two posts per week. This is especially important when establishing your blog, your readers will quickly learn what to expect and when they return to visit your blog.

#### **6. Set up a content editorial plan to cover a compelling mix of topics integrating multimedia**

In order to keep content compelling and newsworthy a content editorial plan should be devised. This can include a mix of media to vary the content. This may include:

- establishing a set of constant themes that provide a framework for your blog, will help readers to know what to expect e.g. one news item, one interview, one community story
- choosing to have an overriding theme for your blog each month which may be based around key events specific to your company
- integrating multimedia into your posts such as completing your blog post with an images or a video will liven up your story and makes for more engaging content
- Using fresh content provides exclusive, tailored and bespoke content for your site
  - using interviews adds a third party perspective which can provide endorsement and credibility

- using guest blog posts (whereby you invite someone to write a blog post which will be featured on your blog) is another way to add a third party perspective. This could be from an internal person in your company who wishes to discuss a certain topic that readers are interested in or to provide an opinion of expertise e.g. a car manufacturer may choose to share a guest post from one of their engineers as it will allow their readers to really get closer to the 'creators behind the organisation'.

#### **7. Create consistency and interlink social media platforms**

The voice and messaging of your blog should be consistent with the other communication that your company distributes. There should not be any major surprises in content between the various social media platforms you use such as twitter or facebook.

In order to leverage publicity of your platforms, you should link all your platforms with one another so that readers are aware that they can also find out information about your company on other sources, making it easier for them to find information about your products and services.

#### **8. Ensure content is shareable across various social media platforms and email**

A simple rule of social media is that content should be shareable. Unless someone is following your blog they will not come across your content so it is important to ensure that you make your content 'searchable' by adding a 'share button' on your blog posts which allows readers to share your posts over twitter, facebook or to save it onto social bookmarking sites. Also ensure there is an RSS feed that readers can sign up to make following your blog effortless.

#### **9. Connect and create conversations with your audience**

Engaging writing is not just about producing interesting copy, it is about finding out what your audience wants to hear about and delivering the relevant information. This can be achieved by following the conversations and news that is shared on relevant online forums or social media platforms or even by talking to your audience directly.

#### **10. Personality – let your personality shine through your blog**

Remember that a blog is a conversational tool so allow a bit of personality to shine through in your blog posts. A blog post that has a human touch and voice will always be more engaging.

## **11. Integrate search into you blog**

Finally, take the time to integrate search into your blog to help ensure that it appears in more places than on your corporate site. This point overlaps with point eight, ensuring that your blog is shareable on social bookmarking sites such as delicious. Social bookmarking sites help to build your presence in search engines. Hyperlinking, the use of multimedia such as videos and photos and using key words in your blog posts also helps to leverage your blog in search engine rankings. All of this helps your audience to easily find your blog and access your content.

This list is not exhaustive however by considering these steps will help you craft your blog to send out the right messages as well as reach your target audience. Your blog is essentially a communications tool that allows you and other key persons in your organisation to get closer to your audience beyond traditional media and provide a more personal perspective. Depending on your objectives, you can share your product or service developments, thoughts, news, ideas or advice which should engage your relevant audience to have further conversations with you and, when handled effectively, ultimately drive business.

As mentioned this list is not exhaustive, we'd welcome any thoughts or suggestions that you may have to add to this conversation.