

Why You Should Start a Blog For Your Business

And how to avoid common mistakes



Brought to you by: Terry Petrovick

Learn more at: <http://TerryPetrovick.com>

Why You Should Start a Blog For Your Business

Your online business is up and running, but you need something that will help you stand out, something that will help you establish YOUR Brand. You want a little oomph. You want to create a solid link between yourself and your customers. A web log is the perfect solution.

A web log or blog is an Internet web page that allows you update the site using your Internet connection or from your cell phone. The ease of using a blog makes them critical to online business owners. You do not need to mess with tricky HTML coding. Many web log software sites take care of this for you. If you can type, you can keep a blog. If you don't like writing or you're pressed for time, there are plenty of talented ghostwriters writers for hire who specialize in blog posting. Not to mention a variety of private label rights content providers like [All Private Label Content](#) and [Easy PLR](#).

Realistically, the methods behind blogging began in the 1980s when the Internet was just starting out. As time progressed, the first true blog started in 1994 thanks to a college student who wanted to record a diary of his life on the Internet.

According to Technorati, in 2007 there were 120 million blogs being tracked and approximately 120,000 new blogs formed every day. The numbers are astounding. Blogs have become the best way to reach your potential clients or customers. At the same time, with so many blogs, it is important to ensure your blog stands out!

For many online businesses, a blog has become their most important marketing tool. It helps them reach new customers and maintain connections with previous clients. Blogs can help them sell their product, get customer feedback and list breaking news in seconds. If your blog is successful, word of mouth will spread quickly bringing you more and more potential customers or clients.

Blogs always display the newest information at the top. For this reason, they offer clients and customers with up-to-the-minute news, product reviews, detailed descriptions and other important items in a format that allows your customers to find quickly. The reverse chronological order makes it simple for your readers to keep up with your additions because they always start at the top.

Your online business blog should look professional, contain neutral colors and themes that match what your business represents. Make sure you use a font that is easy to read and large enough for those with vision problems. Avoid lots of flashy ads that slow computer-loading times. If your blog loads slowly because you've put in too many graphics, you are not doing yourself any favors. A huge percentage of Internet users state that slow loading Web pages are guaranteed to

drive them away.

CRITICAL REASONS TO START BLOGGING

You'll find many reasons to start your own blog, but it is always important to make sure your blog is your business tool, not a site for letting off steam about personal issues—there are already excellent sites for consumer complaints! The goal of your site should be to create a strong link between your company and your customers.

1. **Offer reviews of the products or services you offer:** Regardless of your business, if you sell a product or service it is critical to have quality reviews posted for all to see. A review from a current or former customer will go a long way to selling the product for others. People know that businesses make promises in order to sell their product; it's their job. An unbiased customer has no ties to the business and needn't mislead the public with a rave review; consumers know that user reviews are going to be honest! Try to incorporate as many honest reviews as possible. You don't have to write a completely positive review, in fact, a review that points out any negative aspects of a product or service along with the positive will show your readers that the review is real.

2. **Promote sales:** The best way to promote sales is by linking clients directly to your product. Put in a direct link to the page where they can buy your product. If you're an affiliate for another company, like [Amazon Associates](#), you can use their "Build Links" function to create colorful, graphic images of any item they carry. The format is simple. You simply copy their HTML code and paste it into your blog entry. The blog program knows how to read the code and does the rest for you. On your website, you end up with an attractive ad that links directly to their website where you get credit for the sale. Many online retailers use affiliate programs to draw business.

You can also visit other blogs within your niche and comment on their posts using your website link. Not only is this advertising method free, but it helps draw in traffic through reciprocal links.

3. **Use your blog as a business related newsletter:** With your online business, you need to reach customers. The best way to do this is by keeping them informed of new products, exciting news, recall notices and other important tidbits that relate to their needs. It is important to remember that you are there for them. If you fail to reach or satisfy a customer, it could lead to a decline in business. For this reason, you must clearly think over all of your posts. Will your post matter to them, or are you heading off on a tangent that will drive them away? Make sure it fits!

You must add new posts, at least 2-3 times a week, to your blog. Failing to keep information fresh will drive readers away. When creating your posts, remember that visitors want to read your information quickly. If you create a blog post that is the size of a small novel, you have guaranteed that readers will give up and move on. Blog posts should be short and sweet, generally 300 words or less works best. People are incredibly busy and must have time to quickly read an article. Short and sweet must always be your motto when posting.

4. **Gain customer feedback:** Blogs make it incredibly easy for others to leave comments. You may need to sift through Spam from time to time, but overall, a blog is a fantastic arena for debate, questions or even suggestions. By keeping a blog, you are giving your clients and potential clients a forum to ask questions, seek advice, offer comments on your product or service's quality and simply form a close, personal relationship.

One of the best examples of a successful business-related blog falls with The Consumerist (www.consumerist.com). This Web site is pro-consumer and allows readers to send in praise or complaints they have with businesses throughout the United States. Readers are allowed to comment on items they've read or share similar experiences. In the case of a negative dealing, other readers can offer suggestions on getting out of a transaction. The Consumerist also lists incredible sales for a number of companies from time to time allowing readers to tap into bargains they may have missed otherwise. With readers from all over the world, The Consumerist is a great blog to browse to see what consumers are looking for or dislike!

5. **Run periodic contests:** People love freebies! Free items always attract a huge crowd. Offering a free sample or prize to a limited number of entrants is one way to quickly boost your blog traffic and draw attention to your online business. You can use your blog to run contests. Make the rules clear from the beginning and use a ploy such as only those who post responses to blog entries will be entered. You can even ask entrants to leave a comment on your blog, and then have them mention the contest

on their own blogs in order to be eligible. Contents will help you gain traffic, develop new relationships and give away a product that your readers will enjoy.

The prize should draw attention, but it doesn't need to be incredibly expensive. Items that seem to do well include MP3 players, new televisions, free music CDs, t-shirts and more. In fact, if you give away t-shirts, you gain additional promotion because people will be wearing that t-shirt in public. As t-shirts are not as expensive, you will have more prizes to give out. Winners are going to return to your blog time and again because of their positive experience.

CHOOSING YOUR ONLINE BLOGGING SOFTWARE

Dozens of online blogging software websites exist, which makes it hard for some to choose their platform. Features and usability are your key factors. Many of the blogging software companies offer free blogs, so you will not be faced with a huge start-up fee. You should look into purchasing a domain name (www. Your company's name . com) so that customers or clients can easily find you. Your domain can then be linked directly to your blog page.

Among the more popular blogging software Web sites:

1. Wordpress (recommended)
2. Blogger
3. b2evolution
4. Livejournal
5. MySpace
6. Serendipity
7. TypePad

Each blog software company comes with similar features and a few that help them to stand apart. The best way to compare features and discover the program that best suits your needs is by visiting <http://www.weblogmatrix.org/> and doing a side-by-side comparison of each program.

WordPress and Blogger are the two most commonly used programs. Blogger tends to be easiest for the beginner, while WordPress offers more versatility. No matter which route you take, it pays to spend time reading the help guides to make sure you are accessing all of the features offered.

One more thing, with Wordpress you control the content because you also have to host your blog. I have heard of people using Blogger and losing everything that had done. You do not want to take this risk!

GETTING STARTED

New blogs are easy to set up. Most online programs do the hard work for you and offer a wide selection of themes to fit your needs. Knowledge of HTML and programming is not necessary, so don't worry if you lack solid expertise in Web design. The program you use will handle all of that.

Always include a little bit of personal information so that readers see you as a person and not just as a corporate head. You need to connect with customers on a personal level, so some personal information is required.

Once you have your blog formed, you should list it in blog directory to draw in traffic. One of the best sites for this is www.blogexplosion.com. The service is free and allows you to list your blog in their huge directory to gain maximum traffic. There are other directories, so don't over look them. Submit your blog link to the search engines like Yahoo, Google, and Ask.com.

Technorati.com is a great resource for beginners. Not only do they help you come up with tags, but you can also link your blog to their site and their spiders will routinely search your site and help boost your traffic ratings. Again, their service is completely free.

If you have a cell phone, look into the options that will enable you to add postings via your cell phone. This is a handy feature for anyone who is always on the go. You can simply type up blog posts ahead of time and submit them as needed or enter the blog post from your cell phone. It's one of the handiest features around. Make sure you are posting content daily. If you go days or weeks without a new post, readers/customers will become bored and move on. It is critical to keep the content fresh. Most blogging experts suggest at least one new post per day, though two or three is an industry standard.

If you need help keeping up with your blog posts, consider hiring a ghostwriter to help you out. You tell them what you want added, and they will do the work for you. Most ghostwriters are not overly expensive, so your out-of-pocket expense should be minimal.

PROMOTING YOUR BLOG

Once you have your blog up and running, add the link to all of your business cards, your email signature and any other promotional items you use. This ensures that your customers or clients always have your blog address on hand.

Magnetic business cards are very inexpensive through VistaPrint, and they are meant to last a very long time. Consider using these as a way to stand out. Put your blog address on any packaging materials you use. Consider creating your own mailing labels that contain a line with your blog's address. This technique exposes you to the person receiving the package and any mail handler in between.

Make sure you have submitted your blog to all blog directories, Google, Yahoo, Ask.com and other search engines. Keeping your content updated will ensure that your blog develops a strong showing online. The more content you have, the more your name will come up when an Internet user runs a search.

Be sure to visit other people's blogs and add your own blog address to your

signature. This allows others to check your site out and will quickly boost traffic. Not to mention, this is a completely cost-free technique that allows you maximum exposure without investing your advertising dollars.

Your business can soar if you spend a little time making sure customers are finding you. Low cost blogs are the perfect solution. Updating is easy, visibility is tremendous and the range of information you can produce is endless.

Please feel free to share this free resource. You can get a lot more great information like this at TerryPetrovick.com and OnlineIncomeTipsForYou.com

Best of Success!



Terry Petrovick