

blogging for business



what is a blog?

A blog is like an online diary: a series of postings listed in reverse chronological order, with the name of the author and the date attached. They are also forums for discussion and feedback, since your readers are able to comment on every post you write - subject to the moderation settings you choose. Posts can include images, video and audio as well as text, and readers can subscribe to your blog using an RSS feed.

why should I blog?

Blogs are no longer just personal diaries. The business case for blogging is compelling. With a blog you can:

1. **Build trust with your customers**
2. **Increase search engine visibility – Google loves blogs**
3. **Drive traffic to your site with regularly updated, quality, topical content**
4. **Position yourself as an expert in your field**
5. **Reach a wider market – more people can find you in more ways if you have a blog**
6. **Create value for your clients or customers by providing useful content**
7. **Learn from your customers by inviting comments and feedback from them**
8. **Create a community of readers who will keep coming back for more**
9. **Create networking opportunities you never knew existed**
10. **Have fun!**

And it's cheap to get started...

how do I get started?

Familiarise yourself with the blogosphere by reading a few blogs to get the hang of conventions, possibilities and styles. There are two main choices for setting up a blog: using a service hosted externally, such as Blogger, or one hosted at your own web address. We recommend the latter if at all possible. It looks more professional, you have more control, and access to more features.

We recommend WordPress, which is very flexible, extendable, and easy to use. You can either install the software on your server, or use a WordPress-hosted blog with fewer features. You may want your blog to sit apart from your main company website on its own domain or seamlessly integrate with it.

WordPress templates are endlessly customisable, though you may need a designer to create a template that matches your site, or achieves the look and functionality you want. You may need some help installing the software and marketing your RSS feed. Once the technical bit is done - simply add words!

what will I write about?

If you are a business-to-business (B2B) company, write about developments in the industry you serve. If you are business-to-consumer (B2C) company, what do your customers care about? Include plenty of keywords relating to your business, and focus each blog posting on one topic. This will help your search engine rankings. Follow the journalistic principle of starting with the headline, getting the main story into your opening line and then get more detailed.

Finding topics to write about

- **Read other blogs and subscribe to the RSS feeds of ones that are relevant to you and your readers**
- **Use Google Alerts (www.google.com/alerts) for email updates in your area of interest**
- **Carry a notebook to jot down ideas as they occur to you**
- **Be topical. If you write about, say, a conference you recently attended, chances are people will be searching for information on that subject.**
- **Focus on what your target audience want to read about.**

how we can help

Our blog packages



Business Blog

- Set-up of blogging software
- Standard blog template with some customization
- Advice on blogging



Business Blog Pro

As Business Blog plus:

- Bespoke design to match your business or to your spec
- Email subscription function
- Marketing plan for your blog
- Facebook group
- Twitter feed



Business Blogsite

A business website powered by blogging software including a business blog or a blog-powered news section. As Business Blog Pro, plus the ability to update and maintain all your content yourself

how will I find the time?

- Set aside some time for updating your blog as you would for any other marketing activity—either daily or weekly, depending on how often you plan to write.
- Write a number of posts in one go, and then schedule them to appear over the next several days or weeks.
- Break up long posts into chunks and publish them over several days. People prefer to read material on the web in bite-sized chunks.
- Invite other people in your company to write blog postings. This shares the workload and involves and engages them. You may even want to invite external people to do an occasional guest blog spot. Multi-author blogs are easy to manage with WordPress.

how will I reach my market?

Once you have a few blog postings, the quality, frequency and topicality of your content will help people to find you via search engines such as Google. However, there is a lot more you can do to encourage people onto your blog.

1. **Blogroll.** Your blogroll is a list of related blogs that you put in the sidebar of your blog. You link to other people's blogs, other bloggers link to yours.
2. **RSS Feeds.** Latest blog posts can be read in a feed reader or on a personalized home page, such as Google (www.google.com/ig). Your WordPress blog comes with an RSS feed already set up—you just need to make the link obvious to your readers. We also recommend using Feedburner (www.feedburner.com) to monitor your feed statistics and provide extra ways of marketing your feed.
3. **Creating community.** Use social networking sites such as Facebook (www.facebook.com), Twitter (<http://twitter.com>) with Twitterfeed (www.twitterfeed.com), and MyBlogLog (www.mybloglog.com) to promote your blog. These free services are great for marketing your content.
4. **Social bookmarking.** Include links at the bottom of each posting inviting readers to 'Digg this' or 'bookmark in del.icio.us'. These are social bookmarking sites, where readers can save links to articles they like, and share them with like-minded people. You can also add links to 'Share on Facebook', 'email this' and so on, to help get the word out.
5. **Comment on other blogs.** Hopefully people are commenting on some of your blog postings. But don't forget to comment on other people's blogs too. A thoughtful, well-written comment on a relevant blog elsewhere, with a link back to your own, will help attract people onto your blog.

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