



Building Business Value Through Blogs

Want to learn more?

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Blog. It's a strange term, an even stranger phenomenon to some. With all the hoopla surrounding blogs, it's easy to dismiss them as more sideshow than substance. Yet, as numerous small businesses have discovered, blogs can provide real business value as a communications tool that helps define your image and bring you closer to your customers.

Here at VerticalResponse, we've reaped the benefits of launching our own blog and would like to provide a quick primer on the world of business blogs and the benefits it offers. We'll begin by answering the natural first question posed by those who are new to the concept of blogging

What, exactly, is a blog?

At its root, a blog is a communications tool; a forum for airing ideas and building community over the Internet. More specifically, a blog is a simple, Web-based content management system that allows users to distribute information with little or no technical experience.

Blogs can be used to voice opinions, establish dialogues with readers, link to interesting articles and studies, post press releases and to display graphics. While you can accomplish many or all of these ends with other web content formats, blogs, because they're easy to use and call for a casual writing style, can provide a personalized quality that distinguishes them from more traditional media.

Why do I need a blog?

There's no guarantee you do - they aren't for everyone. But if you're trying to achieve one of the following business objectives, blogs might be worth a look:

Competitive Positioning

For companies that are proactive about discussing and shedding light on current events, emerging trends and customer concerns, blogs provide an efficient, cost-effective way to position your business as the thought leader in your field and to differentiate you from the crowd.

Customer Relations

Blogs allow you to strengthen your ties to customers while taking a break from the hard sales approach that can be time consuming. Presenting tips and responding to comments from customers publicly helps develop customer loyalty and enables you to keep your finger on the pulse of what's happening.

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Search Engine Marketing

Blogs are an effective way to improve your rankings on search engines such as Google and Yahoo! that tend to order pages based on their relevance to a specific subject. Because most top search engines index sites based on content, frequently updated blogs that focus on specific topics can boost relevancy ratings and put you higher in the rankings.

Brand Building

The informal nature of blogs makes them a perfect place to promote your brand in a way that expresses your company's particular style. Blogs provide a virtually cost-free channel through which you can present your company's image, values and objectives.

Media Relations

By establishing your company as an industry expert, blogs serve as an information resource that compels the media to come visit your site – instead of receiving, and perhaps dismissing - unsolicited press releases.

Getting Started

VerticalResponse used TypePad to launch our blog. It took roughly 30 minutes to set up. It's an easy-to-use ASP solution the gets you started right away at a minimal cost. You can also research Blogger as well. If you need more customization, check out Moveable Type and WordPress, a solution which requires software hosting.

Low Investment, High Reward

These benefits illustrate the point that, done properly, blogging offers a unique means of stimulating and shaping discussion about your company, with almost no capital investment. And with an email component you can start driving people to your blog immediately. As a low-cost, low-maintenance way of bolstering marketing and outreach efforts, blog is a strange word that's worth getting to know.

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