

To Blog or Not To Blog

What's stopping you from Blogging? That's the question of the week. We're going to discuss why so many companies are succeeding with this medium and give you some ideas for getting started.

First, some blogging basics

Blogging is a shortened term for Web Log. It's a web-based publication consisting mostly of articles, usually posted in backwards chronological order.

There's actually nothing much new about blogging. It's a slight advancement from what the web has been doing for years – posting information. The big change here, and why it's getting so much attention, is that some smart folks figured out how to take web publishing away from the geeks and give it to the rest of us. Now, no programming skill is required to start blogging.

So why are Blogs doing so well?

First - Blogs are built and published by individuals, and there's a certain amount of trust that comes with that. That trust is gained because you don't walk into a blog expecting some high journalistic standards like you do at The New York Times. As news reporting standards are slipping, (go to CBS News and ask for Dan Rather) it seems like a more honest experience to read a blog. Readers increasingly doubt the reporting of the big publications. After all, just like on a blog, one reporter writes the stories at the big publications. On a blog, it goes through fewer filters and is less susceptible to political bias.

The second thing blogs allow is for you and I to get to our target readers with far more accuracy. I can now get to a group of passionate readers without first pleasing an editor who must please an advertiser who must please a massive group of consumers. Certainly the efficiencies of reaching massive thousands of consumers is gone, but those I reach will be far more passionate and well-targeted to certain advertisers. The importance of this precise targeting of a passionate participant is often underestimated.

Planet Central is a full service advertising agency that has achieved tremendous results for our clients over the last six years.

Sales for one have doubled this year.

Qualified leads for another have gone up 350%.

Still another has grown from one store to over 45.

Our approach is simple - WHATEVER WORKS.

We begin by getting deeply involved in their business. This can lead us to solutions that might have nothing to do with traditional advertising. But they work.

Planet Central executives have the discipline, the experience and the drive to find whatever works to help your company succeed.

NEW YORK



RICHMOND



CHARLOTTE



4 Ways You Can Use Blogging as a Marketing Technique

First, visit other blogs –

Using Blogs as a marketing technique doesn't just involve building blogs. Dig around, other blogs may be discussing your company right now. By signing into them, you can correct misinformation, post news and generally represent your company from the inside.

Build a passion blog –

If your company makes scotch, and you happen to be passionate about single malts, start a blog on the subject. If your posts about your own brand are authentic and not blatantly self-promoting, you'll gain a following. My company, Planet Central, creates unusual advertising and here you are listening to and reading about my passion.

Build a corporate blog –

Corporate blogs aren't right for all companies. Banks may not want to allow an internal view of their companies. But if you're a company that can allow some transparency, then you should allow key employees to blog away. It should be considered marketing but should not necessarily be the purview of the marketing department beyond getting it off the ground. If you're building computer equipment, let the product development guys maintain the blog. They're the ones that should be talking directly to end users. Key is to get product development engineers who are articulate and can write. This can be a challenge. If you've been around them, you know.

Build a purely entertainment site that you sponsor –

We're currently building entertainment blogs that will be available for sponsorship to our clients. One in the computer field, targeted to back office, 20-something computer geeks, will be darkly funny. It will have ads on it from our client. This takes some creativity and should probably be done only by someone as creative as Planet Central. By the way, a bank should do something like this. Given the age group and the tech aspect of blogging, checking accounts should be marketed to younger folks via blogging.

Monitoring market intelligence –

If they're out there talking about you on the web, the best thing you can do is allow the forum. Good or bad, the discussion can help you offer a better product or service. If you've got a customer or an angry ex-employee, they can start their own blog to tarnish your reputation. By starting your own, you can be there to represent the truth from the inside.



A blog is an active communication that must be maintained and nurtured, guided and controlled. Identify the person in your company who's right to do this. Or out-source it to a trusted resource like Planet Central. We see too many companies copying other blogs. "let's start a blog that talks all about our widgets." This is not a blogging strategy.

We'll be talking about blogging in a podcast again very soon. But the best way to learn more is to call Steve St. Clair at (908) 518-5100.

Look for another podcast on alternative marketing techniques here next week.

