



THE MARKETING

EXECUTIVE'S GUIDE

[THE FUNDAMENTALS OF BLOGGING]

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CHAPTER 1

THE 5 KEY ELEMENTS OF BLOGGING

Your blog is the central aspect of your social media Initiatives. On social network platforms, you have the ability to engage existing audiences, however you need a place to direct those who want more detailed information than what can be delivered in 280 characters. Your blog is your owned media hub.

Successfully blogging hinges on 5 key elements:

The 5 Key Elements are:

1. Post Type
2. Quality
3. Headline
4. Length
5. Consistency

Let's briefly touch on each of these elements.

Post Type

As you are keenly aware, all your social initiatives must revolve around your audience. Each time you post you must consider what is currently relevant and top of mind for your audience. However, since a blog post has an indefinite life span, you also need to write in a manner that is not quickly outdated. Therefore, it is best to consider the type of post that you are going to be writing. There are 10 different types of business blog posts.

These types are

1. Brand
2. Insight
3. Piggyback
4. Detractor
5. Response
6. Announcement
7. Link or List
8. Review
9. Feature
10. Event

Brand posts are posts about a product or service that you offer. It may also details a specific feature or function of a product or service that you offer.

Insight posts are posts that share original ideas, commentary, or trends on a specific topic.

Piggyback posts are post that are your organization's viewpoint on a current topics that has already been written about and that is currently trending.

Detractor posts are post that takes a negative tact of a product, organization, event, or experience. While detractor blogs have the ability to draw a great deal of attention and buzz. Great care must be taken when writing these types of posts.

Response post are post that address detractor post or PR crisis. A Response post may often times yield better results then calling your lawyers and is much cheaper.

Announcement post break news that was not previously available. You may think of this type of post as the modern day Press Release. When used in conjunction with an official Press Release, is most time more strategic to “leak” the new through an announcement post shortly before dropping the official Press Release.

Link or List posts are posts that outline a collection of list or links for the purpose of serving as a resource for your audience.

Review posts are post that offer expertise or honest assessment of a third party product or service. You would typical write review of products and services that are complimentary to your products or services.

Feature posts are reoccurring posts that offer ongoing thoughts on a specific category.

Event posts provide insights, opinions, and impressions of a seminar, conference, or event.

Quality

When it comes to quality there are there are two elements to consider; design and production. When considering the design quality of your blog you will want to think about the use of fonts, spacing, bullets and numbering, and images. A quality design is readable and uncluttered. Production quality has to do with proofing and accurateness. You may want to have someone proofread your post prior to having them published. Additionally any links within the blog post should work properly.

Headline

Extra, Extra, Read All About It! Your headline is the determining factor of whether of not your blog post gets read or not. It is also a key factor of how the post is shared. So you headline must grab a potential reader’s attention, let them know what the post is about, and entice them to read more. You should also make your blog post more shareable by making the headline easy to tweet. Therefore the headline show is less than 115 characters.

Length

Blog length may vary dependent of the blog post type. However, as a generally rule, is that you should keep your blog post between 3 to 4 paragraphs in length. If you are writing for an establish blog and you already have an established following, you do not have to worry about the length of the blog. Say want you need to say, your audience is hanging on your every word, Congratulations!

Consistency

The most important aspect of a successful blog is consistency. Publishing regularly helps build a following and increase readership. To help with being consistent, we will later discuss creating a content calendar.

CHAPTER 2

BLOGGING PLATFORMS

Now you are aware that the 5 key elements of successful blogging are:

1. Post Type
2. Quality
3. Headline
4. Length
5. Consistency

Next, lets discuss some blogging platforms and tools.

Blogging Platforms

There are many blogging platforms available today and many corporate content management systems have blogging capability built into the platform. There are 3 however that are worthy of special consideration.

Those three blogging platforms are:

1. HubSpot
2. Blogger
3. WordPress
4. Tumblr



Lets discuss each of these four

HubSpot

The platform that many businesses turn to is the blogging tool built into HubSpot. It allows you to publish content that converts. Your blog views, traffic, and conversions are all stored in HubSpot for you to make SMART marketing goals. This tool is fully integrated, you get keyword suggestions and on-page SEO advice so you can outrank your competitors for the keywords that matter. HubSpot is truly a one stop shop for blogging.

Blogger

Blogger is less customizable then most other blogging platforms. Blogger is limited in its design capability, and blogger has fewer features then a lot of blogs. But blogger does have one thing going for it, Google! Yes, Blogger is Google's free blogging platform, and as such, Google give preferential treatment to its platform when it comes to integration with other Google products and Search Engine Optimization. Take a few minutes to watch the Blogger getting started video.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rA4s3wN_vK8

Wordpress

The number one blogging platform is WordPress. Most blog today use the WordPress platform. WordPress is highly customizable, easy to use, and it as a community of developer who are constantly feature new "widgets" that extend the functionality of WordPress. WordPress gives you complete control over your blog.

Tumblr

The finally blogging platform that we will mention is Tumble. Tumblr is a blogging social network. It does not have the capability of being a standalone content management system like WordPress, but it does have a built in networking that can help you can a follow for your blog. Blogger is best suited for short graphic oriented posts.

CHAPTER 3

THE MECHANICS OF A BLOG

The Mechanics of a Blog

So how do you get started? You first need a blogging platform for creating your blog posts. While there are numerous free blogging platforms, you should check with your IT department for guidance on the standard blogging software that should be used. Regardless of the blogging platform that is selected, they all have a few fundamental elements in common.

Blog Title

To start each blog post has a title and the title is one of the most important elements of your blog. If your title does not stand out, the chances are that people will not read your content. So make sure that your title is brief, descriptive, and compelling.

Blog Entry

The core of a block is the post or blog entry. This is the actual content that appears in your blog. The blog entry can be a combination of text, images, audio, and video.

Blog category: each blog posts can be categorized using a number of keywords to help readers find the blog post that are most relevant to their needs

Blog Archives

Since blogs are frequently updated many blogs are sorted in chronological order and archived in a way that allows readers to find older information simply.

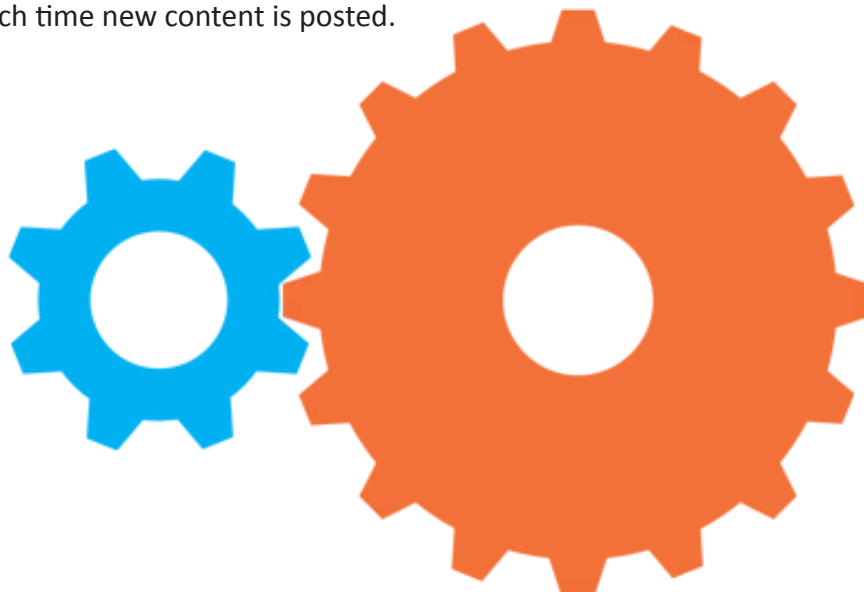
Blog Comments

Blogs are more than a one-way communication platform. They are social. Blogs have functionality that allows readers to post comments in reaction to each blog entry. Most blogging platforms give you the option to turn on or off the ability to comment. In addition, blogging platforms give you a way to moderate comments.

We will give you some pointers on how to moderate a blog later.

RSS Feed

Stands for real simple syndication, makes it easy for your blog to be distributed. RSS feeds allow readers to keep up with new content that is published from your blog by subscribing and getting a notification each time new content is posted.



CHAPTER 4

BLOGGING STEP BY STEP

Blogging Fundamentals Step-by-Step

Even if you don't put up a new blog post every day, to successfully run a company blog you should maintain it on a regular basis. Following are procedural steps for setting up and managing a company blog.

1. Familiarize Yourself with HubSpot

Growing your blog requires a content management platform that allows for easy writing and posting as well as embedding images and sharing posts on social media. HubSpot is Manobyte's preferred business blog software. If you're not ready to dive into HubSpot just yet, WordPress is also extremely customizable for business blogging. While HubSpot and Wordpress are pretty self-explanatory there are many tutorials online that can help you to learn exactly what they're capable of doing for your blogging practices.

2. Decide Where to Host the Blog

All of the blogging platforms listed allow you host a blog on your own domain. For a company blog, the best choice is to have your blog hosted as a subdomain of your main company site.

3. Determine the Blog's Audience

Before you begin writing your company blog, you will want to determine who your audience will be. Unlike personal blogs, for which your audience may be people known the blogger, company blogs need to have a broader reach and be able to appeal to various demographics. However, one brand may benefit most from business-to-business (B2B) blogging while another brand may be more consumer-focused. Determining your audience beforehand will make it easier to direct the editorial content of the blog as well as to identify, connect with and compel new reader-followers.

4. Recruit Blog Writers

Some companies have the luxury of a full time blogger. Some companies' CEOs write their blog entries. The majority of companies cobble together a team of bloggers from various divisions who may or may not be professional writers. Every good blog should have an editor who maintains quality and prevents inaccuracies from being posted. Including a variety of voices and perspectives can make for more interesting content and greater readership. Recruit writers who want to write for the blog, to avoid having to chase people down and hound them for their posts, and increase the energy and interest level of the content.

5. Develop a Content Schedule

Magazines, newsletters and e-periodicals have editorial calendars, and while blogs do not have to conform to the same types of deadlines required for periodic publishing, having a content schedule improves your blog. If you have ten ideas for blog entries and five of them could fall under the same category, by creating a schedule you will be able to see use visual representation and space those posts out over a few weeks. Scheduling also keeps you from scrambling for post ideas last minute.

It is, however, important to be flexible with a blog schedule. One of the great advantages of blogging over print media is that blogs can be instantly responsive to breaking news and controversy. If there is a revelation or big story in your industry, you should have a writer at the ready that can dash off a quick post in order to keep your blog relevant.

CHAPTER 5

CONNECTING WITH OTHER BLOGGERS

6. Promote the Blog Through Digital Communications Channels

A blog is only as good as its volume of engaged reader-followers and no one will read your blog if they don't know it exists! That is why it is important to promote your blog across digital communications channels in order to drive traffic to your posts by advertising their content and value. This can be your website, email and social media. Even your business card can promote your blog.



Connecting with Other Blogs

One of the most efficient ways to drive traffic to any blog is by reaching out to other bloggers that write in a similar space. No matter the topic of a blog, there is likely already a network of blogs with the same or similar topics. Leveraging the fan base of these blogs as well as becoming a trusted colleague of these other bloggers is an effective readership growth strategy.

In order to best connect with other blogs, you first need to find them. Consider the topics of your blog and develop a list of keywords central to your blog's theme; use them to run searches for similar blogs, visit them, and evaluate the value of connecting with them.

There are a number of criteria to evaluate. You can use sites like , Technorati, or compete.com to determine each blog's traffic. Examine the comments section and find out if they have a robust community. And most importantly, read the posts:

- Are they well written and researched?
- Do they court controversy in a smart way or for the sake of attention?
- Do they interact with their readers in a sophisticated and respectful way?
- Is the blogger someone your business would engage in a professional relationship?
- Is the blog's content complimentary to your positioning? Not just on one topic, but all.

CHAPTER 6

WRITING BLOG POSTS

Once you have found a few blogs that could be useful, begin developing a relationship with them. A good first step is to post thoughtful comments on their content under a username that connects directly to your blog; this way your name will become familiar to them and they will see that you have dedicated time and energy to learning about their blog and reading their posts.

Also, you can add the blogger that you are interested in to your blogroll. A blogroll is a list of links to blogs that you find valuable. It is good blogging etiquette to reciprocate by adding a link back to the site that added you to their blogroll.

While there is no definitive time you must spend on this first step, you will have more success reaching out to bloggers directly if you dedicate at least a couple of weeks to the process. At this point, consider sending an email to the blogger to introduce yourself and ask them to check out your blog. It may be appropriate to disclose whether or not your blog is affiliated with a brand or company.

If the blogger is receptive and responsive to your introductory email, suggest guest posting; this is when the blogger writes a post for your blog. Not only does this give your blog a new and different voice, it means that the blogger will promote their post on your blog to their community. Offer to write a guest post for them as well.

Over time, as your blog becomes established, you will gain more followers, more comments, and more blogger connections. This is the best way to drive regular traffic to your blog and reap the benefits that a blog has to offer.

Writing Blog Posts



Even for seasoned professionals, blogging can seem intimidating, but it doesn't need to! It is easy to follow some simple guides to create great, shareable blog posts over and over. Once you start to get the hang of the process, it will only become easier.

readers find your posts when they are browsing through and tagging your post will help new certain tags. Some blogging platforms have backend functionality that suggests relevant tags to you based on your post, but it is simple to add them on your own as well.

Using categories is a helpful way to start brainstorming ideas for your blogs. Be flexible with the types of posts your blog includes but have a set of categories as a starting point to help you to organize your thoughts and topics.

In addition to putting your blog entries into the correct categories, be sure to tag your posts. Tagging is the act of assigning keywords or terms to a piece of content to organize it both for people and search engines. Since blogs are displayed chronically, categorizing

It cannot be stressed enough that your blog should be updated regularly. This does not mean you have to post every day, but once per week should be a minimum. If you post with any less frequency, it will be much more difficult to develop a base of followers. Sticking to a regular schedule will give your readers something to look forward to and keep the coming back. Keep in mind that not every blog post needs to be an opus. Just a short commentary or note to your readers can be enough to keep your blog fresh and relevant.

Writing is a creative process and not all bloggers are going to follow the same rules or develop the same habits. However, most writers can agree that having an outline of a post before you start is a good way to ensure that you include everything that you intended to once you start writing. An outline can also serve as a good reminder that every post should have an introduction and a conclusion, even if each is just one sentence.

The format of your blog is critical. You want you make your blog so that it is scannable. A reader should be able to scan your blog and get the main points. This will let them decide quickly if they want to read your blog post in detail. One way of making your blog posts scannable is to break major concepts up into headlines. By making your headlines bold, capital, italics, or underlined, this will help your readers to quickly find the main points.

Another tip and keeping your blog post readable and scannable is to not be too wordy. You should try to keep your blog post 3 to 5 paragraphs in length.

In writing content, it is important that you respect copyright, fair use, and the principles that we outlined earlier in our discussion on careful communication. As a reminder, when quoting material from others, make sure that you quote only short excerpts and that you make reference to the source.

Pictures also serve a valuable purpose in your blog. Not only do they grab the reader's attention, they can also help to explain key points. When adding pictures or other multimedia content, it is best to place them towards the beginning of your blog post.

Not only do you want to make your blog post scannable, your blog posts also should be shareable. One of the easiest ways to make your blog post shareable is to format your title as a tweet. Therefore, keep your titles under 120 characters.

If you want to create a community on your blog, rather than just provide information, you may want to consider soliciting comments at the end of your blog posts. A simple question that is relevant to your post can encourage readers to give their take on the issue and spark discussion and debate.

However, when inviting comments, make sure you have a risk mitigation plan as commenters may have things to say that are not aligned with our goals.

CHAPTER 7

MANAGING COMMENTS

Managing Comments

Receiving comments on your blog can be a good thing because it means your readers are engaging with your content. However, in order to keep your company blog civil and appropriate, it is necessary to monitor the comment section for spam and other inappropriate “contributions.”

There are a couple of ways to make sure spam comments are not posted on your blog. First, require that a human administrator approve all comments before they are posted. While this ensures that spam comments don’t, it can also hinder a lively debate that keeps people coming back to a blog again and again because those commenters will be forced to wait until their comments are approved.

Another method of filtering spam includes a backend spam filter that looks for suspicious messages and holds them in an approval queue while letting through those messages that appear legitimate. With this solution, you may still have to delete the occasional spam comment, but allowing comments appear instantaneously can satisfy active, engaged followers.

Encourage wanted comments by responding to them personally. Even a short “thank you!” inspires people to come back and comment again and again.

Create a purpose statement for the blog so that visitors are aware of the topics that the blog is designed to discuss. This helps justify keeping off-topic posts off the blog.



Negative Comments

At times, individuals may post comments on your blog anonymously. Some post comments anonymously because they want to have a say, but are leery of any repercussions that could come their way if their identity was exposed. However, there will be times that people will anonymously post comments that are critical and negative.

It is important to understand that part of allowing comments on any blog is getting the bad along with the good. It may be tempting to simply delete negative comments, but this may not always be the most appropriate approach. There are two considerations for determining if you should delete a negative comment. You should first consider if the negative statement is factual. Next you should consider if the comment is appropriate.

The comment by providing background information and our side of the story. If the comment is not factual, the best approach is to not delete the comment but clarify the facts. If the comment is clearly inappropriate, then the comment should be deleted. To prevent any backlash that may occur from deleting inappropriate comments, it is best to have a commenting policy outlined on the blog. The commenting policy should clearly state what we would consider as an inappropriate comment and the steps that will be taken when a comment is flagged as being inappropriate. If the comment is factual and is not inappropriate, then it may be best not to delete the post but address

It is also important to have an escalation plan in the process for managing negative comments. You should consider managing comments through an approved social media management system such as Sprinklr. You should have a question and answers prepared for your blog that will address negative feedback is posted in enabling you to respond more effectively. A key to responding effectively is to respond once and respond completely. This means that you should not be quick to respond, but allow sufficient time for the community to self-correct. By responding effectively you will avoid igniting comment flames or a back and forth comment debate.

CHAPTER 8

ANALYZING BLOG IMPACT

Analyzing Blog Impact

When you are writing a personal blog, the far-reaching impact may never even cross your mind. But when you are writing a company blog, there will almost certainly come a time when you are asked to justify its existence and any man-hours spent creating and maintaining it. This is when you need to delve into your blog's analytics.

As with your websites, analyzing visitor data to your blog is important. Find out how people are getting to your blog. This information should be available in the analytics tools you use. You should be able to view a graph of your traffic sources. Some percentages will likely come from organic search results, others will come from social media sites, and others will be "direct" meaning that someone typed the URL of your blog into their browser and went directly to it. These analytics can also be a good way to find out if there are other blogs talking about your posts. You can visit these blogs and see if they may be appropriate to add to your blog network, to engage for guest posts, or to otherwise affiliate.

If you post diligently and work to reach out to other bloggers and the online community, you will begin to see an increase in traffic. You can also check your analytics and see how many visits to your main site are coming in through your blog, which can be a direct measure of the blog's impact.

It is important to keep in mind that no matter how hard you work on your blog, building an extensive readership will take time. It can take months or even years to generate followers and a commenting community, but do not be discouraged! With perseverance will come influence and impact.



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