

Be a Riveting Resource with a Focused Blog



By Walt Denny

Successful business blogs make a profound difference. They drive profit-enhancing website traffic, boost search engine results and showcase leadership and credibility. But blogs come and go. Many business bloggers start off with a bang and then quickly fade, even after just a handful of entries. A well-directed, focused blog, however, can achieve must-read status with influential industry heavyweights, customers and prospects.

Maintaining an interesting & profitable corporate blog

The right mix of tactics boosts readership, builds and sustains momentum and enhances leadership. Think of an effective blog as a digital soapbox that provides credibility, insight and meaningful discourse.

A business blog needs to answer the question, “What is interesting?” To consider this for your company and audience, build a subset of questions: What is a recurring theme or burgeoning trend? How are you helping others succeed? What in your organization’s experience can be applied to the broader industry?

One way to create and sustain interest is by posting a series of commentaries on a particular topic. By announcing the blog series to readers and telling them the series schedule, they can check back for each installment. With a compelling series, you can attract followers and even convert them to “super fan” status to become an avid blog reader and active participant in your network.

These super followers are engaged and they regularly read, comment on and link or share your content. This is a terrific role for current customers who

use your products and services. Reach out to these contacts to create more super fans. When you write for your super group, you will be presenting valuable knowledge to a known entity. Continued two-way communication gives you a sense of what they deeply care about and what dialogue will be useful to them, triggering them to keep responding through their interests.

An under-used content strategy is to post excerpts from articles or other blogs. By using excerpts versus linking away in the middle of your post, you can keep readers on your blog site while showing them that you are well-versed in the water treatment industry. At the same time, you can complement the excerpt with your own take on the facts or opinions that you introduced. This keeps readers locked in to your analysis of news and events.

Another way to keep blog readers interested is to give them a roadmap to all the interesting posts on your blog. Ensure easy navigation with several categories for posts. Everyone will be able to see how many posts are in each category and you can subsequently gauge which posts are

proving most popular. For example, you could have categories including latest projects, water safety, tips to improve water quality, customer service and more. Your archives will demonstrate how you explore timely questions, trends and specific high-interest topics.

To ensure your blog delivers results, we have highlighted the top business blogging mistakes to avoid.

Stay Consistent

A familiar, reliable schedule is key, so maintain a consistent posting volume. For some companies it may be daily, for others twice a month. Blog readers will come to know and rely on your knowledge-sharing. You will not be seen as a reliable source if you never show up. Research from IBM found that about 80% of business bloggers never post more than five entries. By regularly filling the needs of your blog readers, they will look for your next posts.

Don't Cut It Short

When you operate a blog, you have grounds to expound. While social media outlets like Twitter limit the amount of text you can enter and center around what you are doing at the moment, a blog allows deeper conversation. It is where you can focus on your customers’ interests and industry issues. You can illustrate specifically how you can help others and how your knowledge, research and experience is significant and always expanding. As an example of both a hard-hitting and high-post-volume blog, “Daily 5 Remodel” (www.daily5remodel.com), a recently launched online remodeling

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blog, attracted almost 2,500 unique blog visitors in February. This community knows meaningful, detailed content will always be up, with several new posts each day.

Remember Your Manners

Blogs are about dialogue, so help generate comments by asking questions and soliciting answers. Are readers surprised by your statistics or assessments? Do they agree with your opinion on industry developments or tradeshow happenings? A simple, effective formula is to share new topical insight and information and then ask readers if they have relevant experiences. Once replies come in, keep up the two-way thread with at least a brief comment that includes "thanks."

Show Your Personality

Think of a blog as a stage. Be encouraged to talk in a compelling, exciting fashion about what is important to your business, your customers and your prospects. That means including personality. Blogs are not white papers or statistics packets, even though they can certainly include that information. They should be conversational, especially because you are promoting dialogue and knowledge-sharing.

Avoid Hide-and-Seek

Feature your blog prominently, especially because it is likely one of your site's most dynamic, frequently updated pages. It is also a natural spot to highlight new products or services, which you want readers to learn about and share. Include an RSS feed so readers can automatically get a scheduled blog update. After all, a successful blog is a great read and generates lively dialogue among your customers and prospects. *wqp*

Walt Denny is president of Walt Denny Inc. Denny can be reached at walt@waltdenny.com or 630.323.0555.

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