

10 TIPS

FOR MARKETING YOUR BUSINESS WITH A BLOG



The Los Angeles Regional
Small Business
Development Center
Network

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*You've got questions.
We've got answers.*

Do you want to become known as an industry expert, attract traffic to your website and boost sales? Blogging just once a month can deliver all that—and more. More than half of companies that blog at least once a month have acquired customers through their blog, according to HubSpot's The 2012 State of Inbound Marketing. (Sixty-six percent of those who blog weekly, and 78 percent of those who blog daily, have gained new customers.) However much time you choose to invest, here are 10 tips for successful blogging.

- 1 SET A GOAL.** Decide how your blog fits into your overall marketing strategy. Is the goal to promote your expertise, increase website traffic or interact with potential customers? Setting goals helps you measure results and determines what you'll blog about.
- 2 CHOOSE A BLOGGING PLATFORM.** WordPress, TypePad and Movable Type are three popular options that offer a variety of templates and plug-ins, and are simple to use.
- 3 CHOOSE A LEADER.** Whether it's you or an employee, someone must take ownership of planning, obtaining and posting content, as well as managing the blog.
- 4 CREATE A SCHEDULE.** Decide how often you will post, and stick to a regular schedule. Use an online calendar or Excel spreadsheet to plan and track post topics and dates.
- 5 START WRITING.** Your topics are limited only by your imagination and goals. Blog about trends in your industry (what new tax laws mean to clients of your CPA business); seasons (summer lawncare tips for clients of your landscaping business); or holidays (a toy-store owner could blog about the hottest kids' toys for Christmas). Blog about news in your business, such as new products, new hires or upcoming events. Keep up on general news, too: Tying posts to trending topics attracts readers (a hair salon could blog about the best hairstyles at the Academy Awards).
- 6 DON'T STRESS.** If you're not a natural writer, don't worry. Blog posts work best when they're brief (under 500 words) informal and conversational, so just write the way you talk.
- 7 USE SEO.** Optimize your blog for search engines by using keywords related to your business in post titles, in the first paragraphs of posts, and in post tags.
- 8 USE IMAGES.** Photos not only attract readers' eyes, but also boost SEO if you tag the images with keywords. Post only photos that you have the rights to use. Take your own photos, subscribe to a stock photo service like Thinkstock or Getty Images, or search online for "creative commons" photos that you can use by citing the photographer.
- 9 INTERACT.** Allowing readers to post comments enables you to build relationships. To avoid inappropriate comments and spam, adjust your settings so you can approve comments before publication. Respond to every comment, even if just to say, "Thanks!"
- 10 PROMOTE.** Tell customers and prospects about your blog by promoting it on your social media accounts, in your marketing materials, in your email signature and newsletters, and on the home page of your website.

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