



Working the Web

Ellie Becker and Bernadette Nelson | Apr-02-10, 12:30 AM |

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One of the best ways to get found online is to add a blog to your website. Why is adding a blog a key element of inbound marketing success? Let us count the ways.

Content is king

A hallmark of getting found online is creating and sharing content that will be useful to important audiences. Having a blog makes it easy to post a variety of content on an ongoing basis. Articles, whitepapers, surveys, PowerPoint presentations, podcasts and video all make for good blog content.

A great example of success via terrific blog content is wine merchant Gary Vaynerchuk of WineLibraryTV.com. He's parlayed his personality and video blog into appearances on late-night TV talk shows and millions of dollars of revenue for his small, family owned wine shop.

You can also re-package information you've created for other purposes. Pick one kind of content or mix it up. But produce and post content consistently. If you can't do this in-house, there's the option of hiring professionals to produce your blog content.

Conversation is queen

One of the best features of a blog is the ability for visitors to leave comments about your posts. This gets you into dialogue with them and can lead to a real relationship with your brand.

At first blush, commenting makes some companies nervous. "What if visitors say negative things about the blog post or the company?" There are ways to minimize or eliminate this risk. You can moderate comments before posting. Or use the opportunity to reply and set the record straight.

Search engines love blogs

A blog really ups the probability of being found by search engines. The dynamic content attracts search engine spiders looking for new and relevant information in response to searches. If you optimize the content of your posts by including mentions of your key words, you will eventually come up higher in Google and other search engine results pages.

The birthplace of thought leadership

Blogs can feature one blogger in a company – even the CEO – or showcase the knowledge and talent of employees in different areas of the business. For product companies, R&D, customer service and engineering can provide critical insights to your customers and prospects. If you're a service provider – a law firm, for example – blog entries can highlight a variety of expertise.

It's easy to get started

Ideally, you'll have your web designer create a blog page for you that matches the rest of your website. Or you can choose from one of many templates from blog hosting sites like Wordpress or Blogger. Basic hosting can be free, with minimal

annual fees for additional bells and whistles. Make sure that you add sharing functionalities to your blog – like an RSS feed (check out feedburner.google.com) and social media sharing buttons.

When you understand the potential, blogging can be enjoyable – and profitable!

Ellie Becker is president of E.R. Becker Company Inc. in Norwalk, a public relations and inbound marketing consultancy. She is president-elect of PRSA Westchester-Fairfield Chapter. Reach her at ellie@erbeckercompany.com This e-mail address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it or read her blog at www.erbeckercompany.com.

Bernadette Nelson is principal of Studio B/Visual Communication in Norwalk. She has more than 20 years of experience in graphic and web design. Reach her at b@studiob-ct.com This e-mail address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it or www.studiob-ct.com.

Editor's note: We'd like our New Media section to be socially acceptable to all types of business people – from tweeters to technophobes. So, to complement our staff's news stories, we turned to the pros for tips on how businesses can use the web to max. Each month, PR pro Ellie Becker and graphics guru Bernadette Nelson will offer strategies and suggestions on all things web-related. And they want to hear from you – contact them directly at their emails below.