
Scribbles & Keystrokes

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Build and maintain customer loyalty with regular blogging

With all the options available to promote business development—including the latest wave, social media—many business people wonder whether there still is a place for blogging. There is, Colin Hutt says, and your firm can benefit from adding the service to your Web site.

Blogs are essentially online diaries, Hutt says, with one big difference: they allow readers to interact by posting replies. Hutt, President of Primum, LLC in Milwaukee, says blogging is an important communications tool and should be integrated into your overall marketing and PR strategy.

According to Hutt, blogging allows you to:

- Engage your customers
- Build trust through these two-way conversations
- Drive traffic to your site
- Improve your search engine rankings
- Generate sales, if your site is set up accordingly

Hutt, whose firm has advised numerous businesses on developing blogs, says that blog copy tends to have a more personal tone, which helps establish credibility and build a relationship with readers.

Sincerity is key, Hutt says. While the purpose of a blog is to share your thoughts, you must also be open to feedback from readers. “That’s how you form a secure connection with people,” he says. It also helps to be engaging, he says. Provide interesting information and insights not found elsewhere, and be funny at times.

Blogging is more common than you think. Hutt points to industry statistics that show approximately 20% of Fortune 500 companies have blogs on their Web sites.

Nearly any department can have a blog. “It would be wrong to think [the

blog] has to be written by a C-level person or somebody from Gen X,” he says.

Successful blogs have been generated by staff in engineering, customer service, product development, and the legal department. As for who should write the columns, Hutt suggests starting with those who typically give presentations, because they often have good material on hand.

Blogging builds trust through engaging communications with your customers and prospects.

Don’t worry about frequency, Hutt says. Concentrate on providing relevant and timely information. A 100- to 200-word column can be very effective in communicating your ideas. On the other hand, longer pieces aid in search engine optimization, even if they appear less frequently.

If you know you’ll be away, write several columns in advance and schedule them to post automatically. Although blogging requires some time commitment, articles will come easier with experience. “It really shouldn’t take too long,” he says.

Hutt stresses that all departments must agree on the goals and expectations for the blogs and bloggers. Decide how frequently blogs will post and how you’ll handle comments. Because timeliness is so critical, Hutt suggests setting standards that minimize the approval process. A time-consuming process will slow down and even discourage some blogging. The firm should always retain the right to edit or pull a column, he says.

He also encourages firms to develop and publish a disclaimer. That can be written by in-house

counsel or, because much of the text is routine, cobbled together from other firms’ Web sites.

Blogging is an effective way to dispense information quickly. This is especially true during crises, but even routine matters can be handled in this manner. “You can see how there is room for [blogs] in every company,” Hutt says.

Tip of the Month

Law of Averages

Recall from your math classes that an average is an absolute number and therefore cannot be a range.

You can see why the following sentence is incorrect.

Products are shipped in an average of five to eight days.

One alternative would be:

Products are typically shipped in five to eight days.

Other examples of this type:

Most customers spend between \$7.00 and \$10.00 on gifts.

Most purchases fall in the \$7.00 to \$10.00 range.

Scribbles & Keystrokes is a regular feature of Supreme Communications, LLC, a marketing communications firm. Feel free to call Tom Fuszard at 262-789-7975, or send your questions and comments to tom@supremecom.biz.

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