

THE
Business Blogger's
MANUAL



How To Increase Your
Business Income
With A Blog

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With A Blog

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Introduction

Gone are the days when simply having a website of your company was enough to make your presence registered in the World Wide Web. The new mantra for online presence is: "If you've got a business, you better have a blog."

Your business needs a blog. Not because it's 'the thing' to do but because not having a blog is bad business. You're ignoring a very lucrative avenue of income and failing to realize the benefits that you can reap through a simple, inexpensive blog.

By having a blog for your business, you humanize your company. Your customers and target audience relate to you better. It has the potential to form loyalty among your customers and readers. By marketing your blog through social media and other means, you'll be reaching a market that you might not have by traditional means of marketing. Online marketing is also cheaper and a lot more targeted.

Keep in mind that a business blog should be about your business. The key is to not make it promotional. Readers are turned off by a blog that just keeps pushing its products and services at its readers. A blog that attracts and retains readers is educational, personal, informative and fun.

Setting Up A Blog

For a business blog, there's no excuse for using a free service like Blogger or WordPress. At around \$10 per month, it is an easy investment to make in your business and if you link your blog to your business website as a sub domain, you won't even have to pay for hosting as sub domains are free in hosting packages.

Setting up a blog is easy. Whether you're buying a new domain and hosting or using a sub domain, all you have to do is look for the proper option in your control panel of your website's account and follow the instructions received in the email from the hosting service.

If you're buying a new domain and hosting it, it is advisable to use separate services for both. For buying a domain, GoDaddy (www.godaddy.com) is very popular but its hosting services have not garnered popular reviews.

There are numerous hosting services to choose from. No matter which one you choose, make sure you research them thoroughly and take user reviews into account. A good place to research hosting companies is Web Hosting Geeks (www.webhostinggeeks.com).

Buying a domain is a once a year cost while hosting is charged per month.

Cost Of Running A Blog

A blog is an investment in your business that can increase your income. This investment requires a lot more than just money. The monetary cost of a blog isn't the only cost involved – though that can become substantive if you let it.

Time

Blogs don't make, maintain and sustain themselves. You have to put a lot of thought into them. Work out the details and figure out a way to make it one of your top priorities in order for it to flourish. All of this takes time. On an average or until you have figured out a content and marketing plan (to be discussed later) for your blog, you're looking at spending at least 2 hours daily on it.

Energy

Devoting time to a blog requires energy. After a long day at work, you may not have the energy to write a blog post. For your blog to succeed, having the energy to meet the demands of maintaining a blog is essential. Reprioritize your schedule to include blogging in it or come up with other options so that the growth of your blog does not suffer.

Passion

Nothing in business succeeds without passion. A business blog is no different. Unless you don't have the passion do what it takes to make your blog succeed, it won't. Passion for blogging is abundant in the beginning. It's a new venture; you're excited and can't wait to get started. After a few weeks, you start to lose momentum. You can't come up with fresh ideas for blog posts, the traffic doesn't increase like you wanted it to and there are barely any comments.

Every blogger goes through it after the initial euphoria of doing something new has faded. This is the time when only passion for your work – and in this case, your blog, carries you through.

If you're not passionate about the blog or don't believe in what it can do for your business, you're not going to move past this stage.

Money

The monetary cost of a blog can vary. It usually costs a few hundred dollars per year. If your blog receives high traffic or if your blog's needs are more than the average business blog then the cost may raise up to a couple hundred dollar per month.

Your blog will cost more if you decide to hire a web designer and get your website designed. But this cost will be a onetime expense.

Once your blog picks up, all costs will be covered as it begins to contribute towards your income.

Emotions

The emotional cost of a blog is perhaps the highest of them all. Getting attached to our blog is natural. Every triumph of the blog feels like a personal victory. Every mean and thoughtless comment thrusts a dagger in the heart. Dismal traffic figures have the power to depress us and a handful of glowing comments land us on the moon.

Forming an emotional attachment to your blog is natural. You invest time, energy, money and passion, none of which comes easy. A blog also instills a sense of responsibility – not only to yourself, but also to your readers. That is the reason so many bloggers stress over running out of ideas. Their biggest fear becomes not being able to post as high quality posts as they're publishing now.

Suffice it to say that a blog can take its author sky high or bury them underground with its low. Unfortunately, the highs of blogging have a shorter life span than its lows.

The Benefits Of Having A Business Blog

Marketing & PR

Blogging about your business is a powerful marketing and PR tool. If done right, your blog will gradually gather loyal readers who subscribe to it via RSS and email updates. Every time a post is published, traffic will spike, people will read the posts, be influenced by it and leave comments.

A blog is a great medium through which excellent public relations can be formed. If your business ever faces a problem, you'll be able to present your side of the story.

Establish Expertise

Every business is different and every business owner is an expert in his own way. As you blog about your business, you'll be carving a niche for yourself as an expert in your field. Whatever your business is about, you'll become the authority to go to for people are trying to succeed in areas that are you're flourishing in.

The key is to never shy from competition. Help as many people as you can – even if they're your direct competitors. The more approachable and helpful you are through your blog, the more people will trust you.

Direct Communication

Blogging lets you directly communicate with your targeted audience. Whether it's talking about a particular aspect of your business and what you learned from it to posting about a social cause you feel strongly about. Blogging about it will communicate your thoughts directly to your readers.

Direct communication with your target market has to be two way. If you're communicating with them your thoughts and ideas, invite them to communicate theirs.

They can do that through comments, email, your blog's contact page or any of your social network profiles.

Control Of Information

Sharing information is paramount in blogging. If you don't get personal on a blog, it won't resonate with people. As stated in the "Business Blogging Secrets: How to Avoid Killing Your Blog with These Common Mistakes", not letting your readers get to know the real you is a mistake. So is getting too personal on a blog. Find a balance between the two.

You can also control information you share when launching a new product or service. Build anticipation by releasing information in stages. However, this will only work if your readers trust you to not fool them by just promoting your next product.

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