

The Top 5 Corporate Blogging Mistakes—and How to Avoid Them

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Most business blogging fails to accomplish anything that is really meaningful, or more importantly measurable. That leaves a lot of businesses frustrated with the media as a whole, and a lot of well-intentioned projects abandoned.

Today, we are going to fix that problem by pointing out five common mistakes and how to remedy them.

Corporate Blog Tip #1: No real goal

In business, nothing occurs without goals. The only goals a company should implement are ones that will move the business forward. Many business bloggers consider community, comments and subscribers to be goals. But the fact is, these "goals" are very hard to manage and will not contribute to your bottom line. In a report by Forrester this fall, the question was asked, "What is the nature of success you have achieved with blogging?" Brand awareness was the number one answer at only 24%.

The key value of corporate blogging should be targeted search engine optimization. Blogs are popular with search engines and searchers love landing on content that is relevant to their search with content written by human beings. The biggest mistake most business bloggers make is not making blogging for search one of their top priorities.

Next Tip: Blog Titles

Corporate Blog Tip #2: Blog Titles

When talking about blog titles, SEO expert Steven Bradley said, "By far the most important piece of writing you'll do on any given page is your page title. Search engines consider your page title to be very indicative of what can be found on the page."

A frequent blogging mistake is to go "cute" on a blog title. A good example of this would be a blogger using "Computer Chat" instead of using "Laptop Computer" as the title of their blog. The title is only relevant to search engines and the searchers themselves. When you think about a multiple blog strategy, it is key to title all of your blogs with the specific keywords your prospects may be searching for.

Next Tip: Keyword content

Corporate Blog Tip #3: Keyword Content

Many business blogs are too broad. Businesses make the mistake of writing about the big picture and not sticking with content that engages the reader. Much like titles, keywords play a major role here. Google's Matt Cutts addresses this in saying, "Think about what people are going to type, and talk about that." Keep it simple. Keywords are your guide to what your organization should be writing about. Your visitors are telling you in every search exactly what they are looking for. Ian Lurie, author of "Conversation Marketing" sums it up this way, "Think about the words that people use to find you. Then, as a revolutionary new internet marketing strategy, actually write those words in your copy."

This may be slightly sarcastic, but it is great advice. Also, beware of overstuffing keywords. Use the keyword phrases where they make sense and try to keep them to about 7-10 percent of total content so you don't look like a spammer.

Next Tip: Content volume

Corporate Blog Tip #4: Content Volume

If you have blogs that are titled and focused on a specific keyword term, the next most common mistake is not creating enough content. As a general rule of thumb, it's impossible to write too often. The more frequently your organization posts, the more successful you will be in attracting qualified traffic.

Two mistakes that can be made to hinder content are over thinking each and every post and not utilizing enough people in your organization as bloggers.

When I first started blogging, I asked Seth Godin for some insight. He gave me the best advice I've ever received by simply saying "be more pithy." A blog post is not an article, it's not a whitepaper, it's a *story*. The best blog posts have a picture and tell a quick story about a customer, a situation, a product/service development, or feature. I use the phrase "write for the web" all the time. This means that you use your keywords and you understand that most people are not reading through the entire post, they are scanning it. The goal is to establish credibility. According to a recent Adfuzion study, the most credible online advertising format is the story. Your corporate blog provides you with the opportunity to tell many useful and interesting stories.

The second content volume mistake is not including enough individuals in your blogging strategy. Who are the best people to tell the stories of how others are using your products? The CEO or the folks in sales and customer service? The answer is probably both. Generally speaking, an organization should encourage everyone to participate in their corporate blogging efforts. If they get a phone or a business card, they should be getting a blog interface as well. Encourage everyone to tell the stories that occur every day in your organization. You will not only generate more content with a lot less pressure, you will find that employee content humanizes your organization and is more trusted by readers. Richard Edelman himself says that employee bloggers are five times more credible than CEO bloggers.

Next Tip: Calls to action

Corporate Blog Tip #5: Calls to Action

The greatest values that your blogs can bring to your organization are new customers and prospects. Conversations and comments will come, but this is content you can't control and it's difficult to gauge whether it drives the organization forward. What many business bloggers forget is that the goal is a relationship and there are countless ways to establish relationships (telephone, face to face, e-mail, sales transactions). Every blog in your system is an opportunity to take a searcher to the next step in forming a potential relationship. The primary goal of a marketing department is to treat each blog as an "organic landing page" and continually work to improve conversion. Who knows what a 'comment' is worth, but everyone should know what a conversion is worth and that is where the focus needs to be.

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