



# Why every business needs a blog

By Rob Arkell

There are a number of myths and misconceptions that surround business blogs. Many perceive them as a worthless dalliance. A concept that works in theory but rarely delivers in practice. This is a nonsense.

As with most things in business, it is fair to say that you only ever get out what you are prepared to put in. A blog requires dedicated management and the regular addition of quality content. In return though, it can deliver heightened traffic levels, natural links and provide your business with a major reputational boost.

When you create content that is unique and provokes interest or discussion, you attract attention and visitors will be far more inclined to return time and time again. Over time this temporary brand exposure can lead to long-term brand awareness amongst consumers and competitors within your industry.

## Developing an audience and brand awareness

The benefits don't stop there either. Not only can you increase exposure, site traffic and enhance your SEO, but all this can be achieved with very little effort. A blog is incredibly cost effective and can be integrated within the fabric of your site with minimal disruption. So even if you're a small business with limited resources, there's no reason why you can't host one.

Once it's created and you've developed a theme, you're in total control. You can post the latest industry goings on, new products or services and promote other company news.

Just make sure you keep it on message.

As with any content your business creates, it is important to develop a recognisable voice and maintain the highest standards at all times. The articles you post on a blog are representative of your company as a whole; so whilst the benefits are clearly obvious, so too are the potential pitfalls. Just as excellence may be rewarded, foolhardiness can also be punished.

## Become an authority within your industry

A blog should become a mouthpiece for your business. It should show off your achievements, celebrate the developments within your niche and allow you to highlight expertise. This builds trust as well as awareness amongst an audience.

There is no guarantee that this exposure will convert into anything more meaningful, just like any other marketing platform in fact. However what you can do is give yourself an opportunity to reap the rewards.

A blog gives you something new to promote. It will tie in excellently with any social media or Search Engine Optimisation work you have done. It's fresh content and perfect link bait.

## So how does it work in practice?

The effectiveness of a blog will be largely dependent on your industry. Small niches are unlikely to command the same interest as those with a larger natural audience. However, on the flip side you should benefit from

reduced competition. Regardless of your reach, it is important that your blog gets noticed.

Let's take a small online fashion boutique, specialising in antique clothes as an example. I think it would be fair to say that this was targeting a reasonably niche audience. Whilst fashion itself is a huge industry, commanding millions of searches worldwide each and every day, this boutique is far more focussed on a particular consumer base.

Now if this online store were to integrate a blog within their site, there may be a temptation to generalise in order to pursue the high volumes of traffic available in the wider fashion community. However, the likelihood is that they would struggle.

First of all it's a saturated market. Thousands of brands and bloggers are already competing for visibility, attempting to glean just a small fraction of the available market share – developing their own reputations and custom at the same time.

## Carve out your own niche

The next issue relates to specialism and knowledge base. Why move away from your area of expertise or what you actually offer? If you're a provider of antique fashion (or anything else for that matter), this is what you need to be posting about.

Therefore you could use your blog to promote new items within the store, provide fashion advice or create a general style guide – your opportunities are endless. Regular features can encourage visitors to return time and time again, whilst new and exciting posts can

attract a whole new audience. By focussing on creating quality content that your customers (both new and existing) will love, you can achieve fantastic success.

By maintaining this focus, you will only attract those users who are genuinely interested in what you have to say and offer. This might not be a huge audience, but it is the one where you can have most influence and can achieve the greatest benefit.

This is where it's important to remember that the success of a blog isn't simply defined by the number of reads it receives. You need to look beyond traffic and consider the other potential benefits and effects; these include:

- Increasing sales
- Boosting brand awareness
- Becoming an authority within your niche
- Encouraging return visit
- Gaining links to build site strength

For a business, particularly one as driven by sales as a fashion boutique, Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) can be pretty far down its list of priorities. However, this shouldn't mean that it should be overlooked entirely.

With unique content and inbound links at the very core of SEO, a blog can be a fantastic way of developing strength right across the site. By using your posts to link to product pages and other areas of your site, not only will you be able to direct visitors to the most important pages of your site you can get some real traction within the search engines and dominate keywords within your niche.

This advice is transferable to almost any industry. As long as you are committed to creating posts that will resonate with your target audience and ensure that standards are met at all times, a business blog isn't just important for modern online companies, it is actually essential.

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Rob Arkell is Sales & Marketing Director at Koozai (<http://www.koozai.com>)

His positive attitude and work ethic combined with years of online marketing experience and a general passion for the Internet ensure Koozai's clients always get the very best service advice for their needs.

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“When you're really trying to make serious change, you don't want people to get caught up in emotion because change isn't emotion. Its real work and organisation and strategy.. that's just the truth of it. I mean, you pull people in with inspiration, but then you have to roll up your sleeves and you've got to make sacrifices and you have got to have structure.”

Michelle Obama

Don't worry if you don't know what the words **Command, Control and Coordination** mean, here's an explanation:

Command, Control and Coordination - A Crisis Management process: Command means the authority for an organisation or part of an organisation to direct the actions of its own resources (both personnel and equipment). Control means the authority to direct strategic, tactical and operational operations in order to complete an assigned function and includes the ability to direct the activities of others engaged in the completion of that function i.e. the crisis as a whole or a function within the crisis management process. The control of an assigned function also carries with it the responsibility for the health and safety of those involved Co-ordination means the harmonious integration of the expertise of all the agencies/ roles involved with the objective of effectively and efficiently bringing the crisis to a successful conclusion. See: Level 1 Control: Strategic Control: Gold Control: Tactical Control: Level 2 Control: Silver Control: Level 3 Control: Operational Control: Bronze Control.

**Source:** Bizezia's Glossary of Business Continuity Management Terms is available through Bizezia's Online Business Library the UK's leading online business library with 750+ publications.

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