



Do you blog?

Blogging. Now, who can honestly put their hands up and say that they know not only what “blogging” is but, more importantly, how it can help them to develop their own business?

Web presence. Search Engine Optimisation (SEO). Two terms we are more than familiar with, especially for those of us with home-grown small businesses that we loving tend, keen to develop into thriving money-spinning enterprises. Not of all of us may have a great knowledge on what SEO means, or how to prime our web sites with meta-tags and make them really grab some presence in the Google rankings ... but we can all do blogging and help get our web presence boosted by doing something very simple.

Blogging is a beautiful marketing tool, deceptively simple and the real beauty of it is - anyone can do it! To have, and publish, your own blog is to have your own frequently-updated journal or diary online, filled with whatever you wish to journal.

I stumbled across blogging for small businesses quite by accident. I wrote “travelogs” while travelling in India earlier this year, to my surprise it developed quite a following. It was really easy to update while on very poor - and slow - ‘net connections and great fun to record our experiences in real-time. When I came home, I was keen to see how this could fit into raising my web presence. After all, I made my own web site and it isn’t particularly user-friendly as far as meta-tags and optimisation go.

After a little bit of digging online, I came across the Better Business Blogging site (www.betterbusinessblogging.com). Always after knowledge at a bargain price, I thought I’d sign up for their free e-course on “Business Blogging” on the thinking of “nothing ventured, nothing gained”. I was pleasantly surprised and impressed with what they had to say and, all-importantly, how I could tie the blog-idea in with my new business ventures.

To be perfectly honest, I now spend more time helping proof-read other people’s blogs and newsletters than writing my own. That said, I have definitely noticed an upsurge in Google rankings as the Google spiders just love updated sites and tend to favour those over the “static” or “stagnant” sites that never change their page content, no matter how pretty or interesting it is.

Happily, I also found some new business through my initial attempts so if you haven’t thought about it yet - why not give it a try? RSS feeds and blog directories make life very easy for bloggers that it really requires very little effort, other than a few moments writing about your knowledge and expertise, and will help to gradually propel your website up the rankings and into the lives of many more lovely customers!

Six key blogging facts to remember:

1. Update your blog regularly - not only to remind your avid readers that you are still in business but to keep those search engine spiders worked up into a frenzy!
2. If you have a passion for what you do, then you probably are already an expert on your subject area - show that through **what** you write and **how** you write, you will quickly build on your credibility and trust from your blog-readership and clients/customers.
3. Check for spelling and grammar. If you can’t proof-read, then do get someone else to do it for you. People will not hang around to read your blogs, newsletters or websites if you don’t keep it flowing, fluent and error-free.
4. Although your blog is a useful marketing tool, people won’t appreciate hard-sell tactics - keep it simple, keep it informative and keep it useful.
5. Work that blog! Promote it and market it to get people to notice you.
6. Make sure that you use links and references back to you and your websites at all times. People won’t come looking for you, but they will happily click to you if it’s there right in front of them!

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