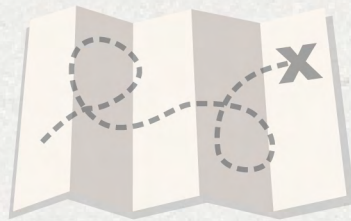


02



BUSINESS BLOGGING

Introduction to Writing & Building Your Audience



HANDBOOK

Helping Marketers Find Their Way

INTRODUCTION

Blogging has become an indispensable part of any serious content strategy. A well-designed and well-executed blog post can help you raise the profile of your company, drive traffic to your site, and rank higher in search engine results. With so much to be gained from blogging, what are you waiting for?

BUSINESS BLOGGING

Creating real value for customers in the form of insightful and engaging content has become one of the most effective ways to create and sustain relationships with consumers. However, the shift to content is not always an easy one. Creating quality content requires time and resources that few overworked marketing departments can spare. Despite the initial challenges, marketing departments can make content creation a part of their daily routines, maximizing impact and minimizing the time and resources required. So where is the best place to start? Your company blog.

Why Start Blogging?

Bloggging is nothing new, but has only begun to pick up steam as a marketing strategy in the past few years. Businesses are catching on to the inherent benefits of blogging and for a company looking to beef up their content reserves, a company blog is the perfect place to start.

Bloggging offers a number of benefits for a company, but let's focus on three to begin with:

1.) It increases your authority. When a customer is doing research about your industry, the more content they find from your company relating to industry topics and trends, the more your company looks like an expert in the area.

2.) It increases your exposure. Search engines love fresh content and a steady supply will keep you ranking high in search results. Also, the more your content is viewed and shared, the more reach your marketing will have.

3.) It gives you a source of content. Your blog is a great proving ground for different topics and forms of content. If a particular idea resonates, you can expand or divide that post into several pieces of related content.



Quick Tip

The easiest way to get blogging ideas is by reading other blogs.

Where to Start

Starting to blog can be intimidating, especially if it is a new skill for you. However, there is no replacement for jumping right in and learning from experience. You will learn very quickly about your unique writing style and voice, along with the topics that will

engage your audience.

The blogging worksheet included in this handbook should give you a jump start on your posts, ensuring that your posts have compelling titles, engaging introductions, and a coherent structure.

Create Content That Breaks Through

Unfortunately, you are not the only one to catch on to the value that blogging can provide. A recent study by eMarketer shows a strong rise in the number of companies entering the blogosphere. Their study estimates 43% of companies started blogging by 2012. How do you go about competing with such a crowded blogosphere?

The good news for you (not so much for consumers) is that a large majority of the content out there isn't great. Few marketers take the time to craft truly breakthrough content, opting for faster and less detailed pieces that flood the marketplace. By keeping your post's most important aspects in mind and focusing on providing value to your readers, you can easily create content that will shine through the rest and reach your customers.

The tip sheet included in this handbook will

walk you through the important areas of your blog posts where you can set yourself apart from the competition and create great content.

Become a Promotional Powerhouse

Even if you are creating exceptional blog posts, you need to be a promotional powerhouse to get them the attention they deserve. As a modern marketer, you own the channels of distribution, both digital and social, and it is your responsibility to put the effort into creating a kick-ass promotional strategy.

The promotional worksheet and checklist included in this workbook will help you identify the channels and strategies you need to maximize your exposure.

Excited to start blogging on your own? Well let's get started!



Quick Tip

A defined promotional process helps save time and resources.

TIP SHEET

There are thousands of pieces of content published each day and cutting through the clutter can be a challenge. These tips can help you create content that truly breaks through.



Provide Takeaways

Writing for the sake of writing just doesn't cut it. Your blog posts need to excite, inspire, and engage your audience. Provide real takeaways, something a reader can put to use, in all of your posts.



Get Your Title Right

With so many pieces of content competing for consumers' attention, the importance of your title can't be understated. Spend some time perfecting your titles so they stand out from the crowd.



Design for Readers

The way we read content has changed. Readers no longer want to read your post from beginning to end. Provide short paragraphs, bold headings, lists, and images wherever possible.



Do Your Research!

Writing on a particular topic will gain the interest of your readers, but truly doing your research and citing relevant sources will add credibility and serious weight to your writing.



Be Passionate

Passion is contagious. If you aren't excited about a blog topic, your audience will never be. Don't be afraid to show your enthusiasm in your writing. Your readers will thank you for it.



Optimize

No matter how the marketing landscape evolves, SEO will always be a key tactic in making your content and company visible. Always take time to research and optimize for the right keywords.

BLOGGING WORK SHEET

Article Title

Keep under 120 characters and place keywords near the beginning.

Title:

Introduction

Include a question, anecdote, imagery, or metaphor (or all four!) to capture attention.

Content:

.....
.....

Body

Keep your body to one main point and a few supporting points. Add relevant links where possible.

Main Point:

.....
.....

Relevant Links:

01
.....
02
.....

Supporting Point:

.....
.....

Relevant Links:

01
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02
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Supporting Point:

.....
.....

Relevant Links:

01
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02
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Call To Action

Always end your posts with a CTA, even if it is just asking for comments.

CTA:


PROMOTION WORKSHEET


Social Media


Getting your blog posts onto social channels should be your first step.


Message:

Did you include relevant keywords?

 Try to keep messages under 100 characters

 Include visuals wherever possible

 Share longer excerpts from your posts

 Keep your message short and to the point

Scheduling

Not everyone will see your initial shares so it is important to schedule future tweets.

Day 1: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤

Day 2-4: ① ② ③

Day 5-14: ① ② ③

Schedule a number of posts on the first day. We suggest 5. Schedule slightly less for the following days. Schedule 3 more over the next week or so.

Expand Your Audience

Sharing your posts on relevant sites and monitoring keywords will help expand your audience.

Submit to StumbleUpon Digg Reddit LinkedIn Groups

Find 3 posts on other blogs to comment on and link to your post:


01
02
03


How will you monitor relevant keywords over the next month?


Google alerts, Tweetdeck, Hootsuite, SocialEngage etc

Visual Content

If your post has visual content like diagrams or infographics, consider the following:

 Pin your blog images to a "Blog Posts" board.

 Share any compelling images and link back to your blog post.

 Consider creating a slide deck if your content resonates strongly

Internal Audience

Is there a department within your organization that could use the content with their clients?

PROMOTION CHECKLIST

Promoting your blog posts can be immensely time consuming without a plan in place. Follow the checklist below to get your posts the visibility they deserve without sacrificing your day!

①

Share to Social Networks

Post to Twitter, Facebook, Google+, LinkedIn, and your other social sites.

②

Schedule Posts

Schedule social posts over the next two weeks to hit multiple audiences.

③

Submit to Sites

Use additional sites like StumbleUpon and Digg to spread your content.

④

Comment on Relevant Blogs

Find blog posts on a similar subject and use your post to add to the conversation.

⑤

Monitor Keywords

Set up monitoring for keywords related to your post to find other opportunities.

⑥

Share to Visual Sites

If your content has visual elements, make sure you are sharing to visual sites.

⑦

Share Internally

Your content can be just as useful within your organization.

⑧

Monitor Comments

Keep tabs on shares and blog comments to keep the conversation going.

ABOUT PARDOT

Pardot offers a best-in-class marketing automation platform, powered by ExactTarget, that manages prospect interactions such as site visits, email, forms, and more. The on-demand suite solves the integration challenges faced by B2B marketers by allowing control of once disparate online and offline marketing tools in one central interface.