Starmark

Best Practices: Business Blogging
CHEAT SHEET

Here are important guidelines required for every business blogger:

Be yourself, truthful & authentic.

All submitted content must be original work.

- Cite or provide links to all sources.
- Plagiarism is a crime. Serious damage can be done for yourself and the brand you're blogging for if found guilty.

Ask questions in your blog and then answer them. The 4 E's — "Educate, Entertain, Engage and Enrich." You must offer real actionable value in your posts.

Create scannable content; especially for content that is long.

- Compartmentalize your content for easier reading.
- Use short sentences. Most online readers just skim the copy. So make yours smart and succinct.
- Include subheads, and make them bold.
- Be creative. If your subheads don't draw your readers in, your content certainly won't.
- Bold or italicize key points you want to make.

Keep self-promotional content to a minimum.

Even business blog posts that are seen as sales pitches are a turnoff.

- Blog about your industry as a whole and where you fit in.
- Blog about things that make your company, product or service different.
- Don't devalue or disrespect your competitors.
- Blog about new offerings and how to integrate them with legacy offerings.
- Blog about the business future and your place in it.
- Blog about what makes a great product, service or offering.

Articles should be kept to 1,000 words in length. It can be more, but the content must support the need. If your article contains a lot of images, reduce the word count. Don't blog on without direction, make your point and stop.

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Find the right balance of keywords and site the links

(e.i. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Keywords) where it should go.

- Link sources. When you refer to a name, a company or quote, include a link to the source. Hotlink the actual words you want linked within MS Word, if possible.
- Use the original link: Don't use affiliate links. Don't use links with the code from your Google reader or other source, and don't use any shortened links such as bit.ly.
- Promotional links to your website, product or service are prohibited.

Try and quote people or metrics to make your case. Expert quotes always add to your work. You can source these from blogs via email or by phone. Be sure to cite the research of any metric that you quote as well.

Try to include imagery with your posts, it makes them more attractive and can entice people to commit to the content.

Include a caption for each image written in sentence form. If you need a stock image, there are many royalty-free sites available.

If you choose to use video in your posts, we recommend it be in a supporting role.

Given the opportunity, be sure to embed the video or presentation directly into your post for more interactive impact.

Always end your article with engaging questions: For example, "What are your thoughts?" "What is your experience?" and "If you like this article, press the retweet/share button at the bottom of the page."

Include your bio

(maximum of 30 words), your website URL (full link), and your email that's registered with a system like "Google Profiles" (https://profiles.google.com/) or "Gravtar" (http://www.Gravatar.com).

Have a clear plan in place for handling criticism and negative comments.

If someone verbally attacks you, or their question is outside of your knowledge, bring it to the attention of a superior immediately.

Make time to respond to all of the comments no later than 24 hours after posted. The sooner the better is righteously encouraged.

branding
advertising
interactive
public relations
custom media