

The Bloggin' Expert - Become the Go-To-Guy or Gal in Your Market

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Let's face it, blogs are hot. It seems like everyone has a blog, whether it's for fun, business or to speak out on issues. Blogs are also an amazing tool for establishing your expertise in your market and will have people coming to you for thoughts and advice...instead of going elsewhere.

But first...if you're new to the idea of Blogging:

If you don't know what a blog is...it's short for "web log" and it's an online journal of sorts. My blog is located at [InternetMarketingSweetie.com/blog](#), but there are millions others. You see sequential entries I made into my journal and you can even leave comments there.

You can start a blog for free at:

[WordPress.org](#): Is a sophisticated program that you can add all the bells and whistles too. If you aren't technically-minded, just hire a programmer to install everything for you and then it's smoothly sailing with this pretty straightforward program.

[Blogger.com](#): This is a fairly simple blog platform that even technically challenged people (like me) can set up, customize and get going. It doesn't have many optional bells and whistles, but it's simplicity may make up for her. With Blogger, you host your blog on their servers or your own. I recommend hosting your own so you have full ownership of your virtual real estate.

Anyway... let's not worry about technology right now as **what you DO with your blog is most important**. Let's talk about marketing your business with your blog. A blog is the ultimate way for you to become an expert in your field. The concept may be scary, as you may not feel you are an expert in anything (of course, **I know** that is totally untrue!) or you may not know how to effectively convey your expertise. Well, let's cover a few basics before we discuss how blogs can help you become an expert in your field:

Why do you need to be an expert?

- It helps builds trust in you, your knowledge and your products.
- It encourages referrals from those who benefit from your knowledge.
- It builds a long-term relationship with your current and future customers.

Best of all, sharing your knowledge doesn't have to cost anything. It does take time and effort, but your efforts will be worth it the long run. The nice thing is, that you control exactly how much time you do spend on it. Soon you will be the go-to guy or gal in your market.

What kind of expert are you?

It never fails to happen. Almost every time I suggest to someone that they should become an “expert” in their field, they laugh and say, “**I’m not an expert at anything.**” Well, let’s banish that thought from your head right now.

There is a reason you chose to sell your product or service. It’s because you have a passion for it and you know all about that product or service. If you your business bores you.... you may have bigger problems to consider.

Let’s be realistic. To be an “expert” doesn’t mean you have to know more than anyone else in the world on the subject. It just means that you know enough that your target audience comes to you for your perspective. It’s that simple.

Think about what kind of information you can offer people in your target market? Here’s a few examples of what kind of information certain businesses can provide. Obviously, this is a short list...but hopefully it will help you come up with ideas unique to your own business.

Let’s say you are:

- **An Office Cleaning Service Provider:** You can teach business owners how to maintain their offices to reduce their office cleaning bills. You may think, “Geez, I don’t want to make less money from my clients.” You’re right, you want to make more money. So look at it this way... if you can save your client \$1,000 a year in cleaning expenses, you have one happy customer. That happy customer will gladly refer other happy customers to you. It’s a win-win situation.
- **A Retailer of Baby Products:** Become the parenting expert; education expert or product review expert. Parents need all the help they can get. Be there to provide it for them.
- **A Gift Basket Maker:** Corporate gift giving immediately comes to mind. You don’t just have to talk about what kinds of gifts to give, but teach businesses how to establish and maintain customer relationships with giving of all kinds.

Now think about your business product or service. Brainstorm a little about what you do know and you’ll see a need for your expertise.

Why a Blog? There are So Many Other Tools that Can Show My Expertise

Your blog is the ultimate tool in conveying your knowledge and opinions to customers and prospects. Of course, you can use other available online tools, but consider the following drawbacks:

The Message Board Expert: Let’s face it, everyone on a message board sees themselves as an expert and battles ensue when opinions conflict. Of course, that’s not to say you can’t establish yourself as an expert on a message board.... OF COURSE you can. It’s a great place to get exposure, but if you can turn some of those message board members into your regular blog readers, you’ll do even better.

A message board is focused on “community” and most people who visit a forum will probably never see your bits of wisdom. However, if someone visits your blog, the focus is entirely on you. Your visitors are immediately inspired by your bits of wisdom and you can an immediate following. Sounds good to me.

Important Message Board Lesson: If you use a message board to convey your expertise, funnel some of that message board traffic into your blog. Hopefully, you can list your blog in your signature line or can reference your blog when appropriate in a message board posts. You're not trying to "sell" anything to these people, just show them that you are a source of knowledge.

The Limitations of an Email Newsletter: Don't get me wrong, you need to have a way to follow-up with your prospects and customers by email. Despite the fact that spam filters are shutting out email and people experience email volume overload... email will still be one of your most valuable marketing weapons.

When a visitor comes to your site the first time, the chances that she'll buy from you are pretty minimal. You need to establish a relationship with that person. Don't rely on someone "bookmarking" your site for later reference and coming back. Let's be serious, we all have so many bookmarks, we couldn't possibly get back to all of them. Therefore, you must attempt to collect the email addresses of every visitor that comes to your website. A sign up box and a compelling reason to sign up for your mailing list on EVERY single page of your website is a MUST.

The same goes for your blog. Sure, some people will prefer to sign up for your RSS feed... but many people will not know what an RSS feed, let alone know how to use one. Place a mailing list subscription box on EVERY page of your blog too.

So if you have an email mailing list, why do you need a blog? It's simple, to make that *personal connection*. With a blog, you give your subscribers and visitors an opportunity to interact with you. You can also publish on a moment's notice or every day, if you'd like. You probably can't "bug" people via email like that. But those who are really interested in what you have to say will be checking your blog very frequently. You can also publish your email newsletter on your blog and invite feedback.

Important Email Newsletter Lesson: Continue building that mailing list---it is incredibly important---but be sure to increase that connection with a blog that shows you as a "touchable" individual with lots of information to share.

The Ignored Press Release: If you don't already know, press releases are newsworthy stories (usually one or at most, two pages) that you send out to various media outlets, in the hopes that they'll interview or just publish your release as is. Press releases are AWESOME to gain exposure, increase your credibility and elevate your profile as an expert... if they get picked up by the media.

Of course, if you create a great publicity campaign, you will likely get some decent publicity. Nobody is disputing that. But now there is no need to get discouraged when a few of your press releases end up in the editors trash can.

Why?

Because you are your own media outlet --- your own "online newspaper." You can publish all your press release stories on your own blog. You can share your news with the world, within seconds. Of course, if you're trying to stay "personal and touchable" to your blog readers, you'll want to edit your press release into a less formal document... but you get the picture, right?

Important Press Release Lesson: Publish all your news worthy events on your blog. If the traditional newspapers and TV programs don't want to share your story --- with a couple clicks of your mouse, you can share your story with the world.

Immediately Capture Your Audience with Your Intelligence & Knowledge

Although your blog is a "sales tool," it is not the place to ads every single day. People get pretty tired of a constant sales pitch and will see little value in your blog. Combine information with promotions, use your blog to build your mailing list and your blog WILL grow your business.

Your posts should enlighten your reader and provide them with new information. The posts don't need to be long... and really, if you want to keep their attention, keep it short, sweet and to the point! They just need to contain a little nugget that will make your reader say, "Boy, I'm glad I read this entry today."

But hey... you are here to make money so you need your readers to know that you have something to sell too. You could set up your blog with your own personal "blogroll" that shows all your websites and offerings on the left or right-hand side. But consider that most people will read the content of your entry and then move on. They often don't even look at the navigation on the sides or bottom. They're in a hurry and once they have your info, they'll be clicking off somewhere else.

Here's What To Do:

- **Always encourage your visitors to sign up for your mailing list.** Then you can deliver offers to them via email, intermixed with good tidbits of information. This way you'll stay in touch with your blog readers who don't use an RSS feed or those who prefer email. But that said...

- **Always offer an RSS feed subscription.** Even though email is likely to be your targeted audience's preferred method, more people are getting on board with RSS. It's easy to set up a user-friendly RSS feed with a service like FeedBurner.com.

- **Next, always mention your products or services in your blog posts, where appropriate.** Of course, this is really soft sell... but that's okay. A blog is not always about the hard sell. People are there to be informed and when they see a link to another resource in a "news story" (i.e. your blog entry), they are very likely to click on it. They aren't suspicious that it's an ad. It's just extra information.

- **Formulate your blog topics around your products for sale.** If you're about to launch an information product on a certain topic, start warming up your audience on that topic. Do the same for products you already have out there for sale. Educating your prospects is one of the best ways to get them to buy.

What if You Run Out of Ideas?

It happens to all of us, but the good news is the more you blog...the easier it becomes to come up with new ideas. Still, if you do get stuck, be sure you pick up a copy of Lynette Chandlers [31 Quick Blogging Ideas](#) if you haven't already.

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from Your Blogging...
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