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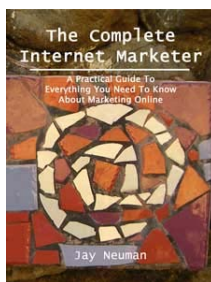


The Complete  
Internet Marketer

# The ABCs *of* Business Blogging

Jay Neuman

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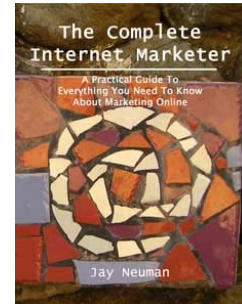
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## Getting Started With Business Blogging

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Blogging has become an important part of the Internet Marketing strategy for businesses of all sizes. You will find blogs from the largest Fortune 500 corporation down to an individual artist or craftsman selling their work online. A well-executed blog can build positive word of mouth for your business. If need be, it lets you communicate directly with your customers to counteract negative word of mouth already being spread. By being conscientious about your business blog, you will become a valued member of a virtual community interested in the same needs and wants your business exists to satisfy.

Additionally, doing these things allows your business blog to become a powerful means to reach your target market and attract qualified traffic to your website. Many of these people will become loyal customers of your business.

Your business blog can do all of these things, and more, but only if you are genuinely contributing something of value to the communities of interest your blog reaches out to.

The keys to understanding what business blogs are all about are presented in the pages that follow.



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## The ABC's Of Business Blogging

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To understand what blogs are all about, it is helpful to change our terminology. Do not ask, "Should I have a blog?" Instead, ask, "Should I participate in social media?" One way to think of the Internet is as a collection of overlapping communities. Each community is a network of people connected by common interests. Blogs are one way people in these communities communicate with each other.

The best way to describe what blogs are all about is to walk through the steps followed by a successful business blogger. You can be the star of this story.

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## Participating in a Virtual Community of Interest

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Let us say, as an example, that you have an interest in photographing wildflowers. This is a pretty specific interest. Nevertheless, you can be assured there are thousands of other people with the same interest. Many, if not most of them are going online searching for information about wildflower photography. This is a naturally occurring community of interest. The Internet acts as a social medium that allows members of this community to find each other. It is not a formal community, although these do exist online. Rather, it is just people who have a similar interest, and they cover the same virtual ground when they go online. Most may not even be aware they are part of a community. They just have an interest and realize there are others online with the same interest.

Some members of this virtual community probably have information they want to share with the rest. Maybe they have advice on the best cameras or lenses to use. Maybe they know good spots to find rare species of flower.

***A business  
blog is more  
than PR. It is  
participating  
in an online  
community of  
interest***





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Maybe they just have interesting or funny stories about their experiences in “the field.” There is a very good chance members of this virtual community will appreciate the information. They will want to keep coming back to see what new tidbit has been posted. *This is a potential blog that should happen.*

## Creating a Business Blog

Now, let us also say you do not only have an interest in wildflower photography. You also have a business selling your artwork. Is there any reason why you should be disqualified from posting to your community just because you make money from your common interest? No! Of course not! As long as you are honestly contributing something of value or interest, the community will not think so either. In fact, if they like your blog, they will be glad to buy from you. They would rather buy from you than someone who has no connection to them at all. If your blog postings are interesting or useful, they will also forward them on to others who might share your mutual interest. Word about your blog, and your artwork for sale will keep spreading.

Now, let us pick up the story with Bob, an amateur photographer. Bob loves the tips you post. He reads them regularly. When he sees especially good tips, he forwards them on to his friends, Mary and Rosa. Bob loved your story about falling in the creek while trying to get a good shot so much, he sent it to all his friends and family. He even sent it to the ones who do not own a camera.

Then, one day, Bob’s boss says she is looking for some new artwork to hang in the reception area at the office. Bob scores some points with the boss by recommending your website. Now you have a new business client for your art.

***If your blog is contributing something of value, you will be trusted as a valued contributor***





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## Getting Linked into the “Blogosphere”

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Eventually, Bob decides to start his own blog. He is so happy with your “Tip of the Day” that he includes a link to it on his own daily blog. Now all of Bob’s friends and fellow photographers are being linked to your blog.

You should be getting the picture of how this blog thing works (pun only slightly intended). Before you started your blog, you were just another photographer out there selling your artwork online. Now, you are a trusted and valued member of an online community who are passionate about the very thing you specialize in. You have built goodwill. You have contributed that goodwill to the online community. As long as you continue to earn their trust, they will take it from there. People will spread your message of goodwill around the Internet. As a result, you will gain a large and loyal readership. This can convert into a growing number of loyal customers.

Blogs do not stand on their own. They are part of a social network of blogs that are all linked to each other. This is how word spreads so fast and reaches so many people. Bloggers refer to the universe of all blogs as the *blogosphere*.

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## Setting Up an RSS Feed

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Well, you saw how popular your tip of the day was with Bob’s readers. Now you want to get those tips out to more people. You decide to syndicate your tip of the day using RSS. RSS stands for “Rich Site Summary” or more commonly known as “Really Simple Syndication.” It is a fairly simple technology to use. You publish a part of your content in an *RSS feed*. This is basically a headline that gets pushed out to people who subscribe to your feed. They read your RSS feed with an *RSS Reader*. You allow people to subscribe to your “Wildflower Photography Tip of the

***Disappointed  
readers can  
become  
disappointed  
customers***





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Day” feed by putting a button next to your tip of the day post in your blog. Once people have subscribed to your feed, they will get your headline pushed to their RSS reader every day. If they want to read more, they just click on the link and will be sent to your blog. Then you make your tips even more available by including a “Forward-to-a-friend” link with each daily tip. Traffic to your blog increases dramatically.

## Monetizing Your Blog

Now we will move one step farther. Your wildflower photography blog, with its loyal readers, has become a highly targeted source of traffic. As an additional revenue stream, you may decide to place ads on your blog. People have come to trust you. If you put ads on your site for products, services or other websites that you honestly believe in, then your readers will be glad for the recommendation; just like people were glad when Bob placed your tip of the day on his blog. As long as the links you post take your readers to someplace worthy of your recommendation, they will not have a problem with it. They will actually be more likely to become loyal customers of those businesses than people who click thru from less targeted sites.

*However, if you post an ad for something unrelated to your topic or for an inferior product or service, then you risk losing the goodwill you were so careful to build. You will turn off your readers. More than that, you will turn off a group of readers who are passionate about your mutual interest. They will spread that bad news about you to others in the community.*

## Advertising on Social Media

There is just one more part to the blog story we must tell. You may determine that your website has something of





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value to contribute to a certain niche within the blogosphere. However, you do not want to invest in creating your own blog. There is a good chance bloggers are already out there reaching your target community. It is likely they are looking for revenue. If you contact them, they may be willing to post your ad in their blogs. If you are genuinely offering a significant value to the community, they may even write about your business in their blogs.

Again, here is a place for caution. If you do not offer a significant benefit, they may still write about your business. But, you may not like what they write. The same could happen if you just approach a blogger in a way that offends them.

## Considerations for Business Blogs

In the example above, you have seen what a blog is and how it can help a very small business. But what about larger businesses? Can a blog help a corporation with over a hundred employees? Over 10,000 employees? The answer is yes. However, there are some considerations you must be aware of if you are planning to have a blog for your larger business.

First of all, if you have something to contribute to the communities you serve, then by all means create a blog. The same rules apply as for small blogs. However, you must remember that your blog represents your business just like any other published public relations material.

Content on your blog must go through the same scrutiny. Do not be fooled into thinking that blogs are supposed to be informal, so you can just let your employees make postings to the blog. It is worth remembering that anything posted on the Internet is there for everyone to see and will stay there forever. This is especially true of the

***Don't be  
fooled by the  
definition. A  
business blog  
is more than  
an online  
diary***



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Blogosphere where people love to spread gossip and love a good joke. You do not want your company to be the brunt of either. To avoid this, you simply need to set up official guidelines for blog postings, appoint qualified personnel to write your blog entries and involve both your Legal and Public Relations departments in the project.

A blog is a strategic outreach to a community of customers, investors and possibly the press. In the best case, they will be passionately supportive of your products and services. As such, they will value the content on your blog postings and share it with others. In the worst case, they will be critical of your company. Still, if you do a good job of it, they will see your blog as an attempt to reach out an olive branch as a good community citizen. In either case, a blog well done will help your company.

Even if you do not intend to publish your own company blog, still it is important to keep tabs on what is going on in the blogosphere. People are talking about your company. If your company reaches a significant number of people, then there is a good chance someone is writing about your business in a blog. News travels fast on the Internet. If you find that a particular story is being circulated that hurts the image of your company in some way, you will be able to respond quickly to it.

## Conclusion

This eBook is an excerpt from Chapter 11 of [The Complete Internet Marketer, A Practical Guide to Everything You Need to Know About Marketing Online](#).

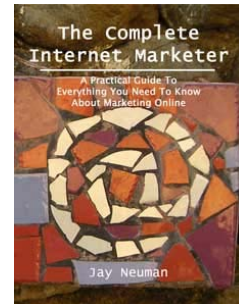
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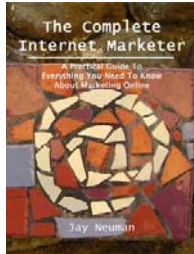


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