

WHITEPAPER

GUIDE TO B2B BLOGGING

By: ActiveConversion

Introduction

B2B Marketers have increasingly turned to the online phenomenon of blogging to extend their marketing efforts. A contraction of the words “web” and “log”, blogging is a form of social media that enables B2B companies to connect personally, frequently and cost effectively with their customers and potential customers.

Blogging evolved from personal online diaries of “posts,” that were self-styled journals that often contained information about other points of interest on the rapidly changing World Wide Web. These blogs gradually created a following of readers and communities were formed. Businesses followed suit and blogging is now a growing element in the B2B marketing communications repertoire.

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Blogs are primarily textual but increasingly they contain images and video. A number of vendors now offer blogging software that make it relatively easy for individuals and businesses to start their own blog.

All blogs are based on the concept that the followers of a blog form a community with common interests and issues. In B2B marketing, businesses seek to leverage the phenomenon that members of a community tend to reference each other when making a purchase decision. By developing audiences interested in their organizations, blogging has immediate and long-term benefits for B2B companies.

In the longer term, B2B Blogging can be a key element of thought leadership marketing. Thought leaders are respected and recognized as deeply understanding their business, the needs of their customers and the wider economic environment in which the company operates.

Blogging can humanize an organization, building credibility and enhancing its reputation. Thought leaders can leverage their reputation to further their business goals.

Thought leadership marketing has established a firm following with marketers of services, especially professional services since customers cannot directly examine the product. A vendor's reputation influences purchase decisions because buyers choose vendors based on real or perceived expertise. Indeed, 78% of purchases are influenced by peer recommendations.

In the short term, B2B Blogging can be a significant channel for lead generation. Every post is a potential conduit for hyperlinks that refer readers back to pages on the corporate website. Readers who are attracted by the content, whether it's advice, insight or guidance into their business issues and problems, are tempted to click on these hyperlinks in their quest for further knowledge.

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Weaving unobtrusive but compelling hyperlinks into the text of a blog can be an art form. But once the reader has landed on the targeted page, the online marketing automation system can take over, generating the lead, nurturing it and distributing it to the appropriate sales rep as soon as it is sales ready.

Tips for the Executive

Although many blogging platforms are user-friendly and setting up a blog is relatively easy, there are structural issues for which you should seek technical advice. Search engines do index blogs so the benefits of search engine optimization (SEO) will be credited to blogs in a similar way as for websites. But something as basic as selecting a URL from the choices of corporate domain, subdomain or a separate domain will have different SEO results. An expert will help you align your blog fundamentals with your marketing objectives.

In emerging markets, companies often have an evangelist for their product or service. In all cases the evangelist can be the CEO, CTO, a product designer, engineer, marketing manager or anyone with passion and ideas who can represent your company effectively. This person is the ideal agent for your blogging efforts. On the other hand some B2B blogs work well with multiple contributors. Ultimately selecting contributors may likely be determined by personal commitment and time availability.

Align your blog fundamentals with your marketing objectives

B2B blogs are more successful when readers connect with an organization that appears open and transparent. This increases credibility, an understanding that the reader can trust the blog contents and, by extension, the organization.

An aspect of B2B blogging transparency is allowing comments from readers. To do this the organization must be open to criticism. This is a significant editorial choice that will require resources to manage. Fortunately most blogging platforms allow for comments to be moderated.

Tips on Really Simple Syndication (RSS)

It is important to understand the function of RSS to maximize the effectiveness of your blog. Readers can choose to navigate to the URL (i.e. b2b-marketingblog.activeconversion.com) of the blog or they can have the posts pushed out to their newsreader immediately upon publication. Although newsreaders like Newsgator have been available for years, RSS popularity accelerated when portals like Yahoo and Google made it easy for readers to set up their own personal pages with only the specific content they wish to read.

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Here are three essential recommendations that make the most of RSS:

Create headlines that will capture your subscriber's attention. The best headlines speak to your audience's interest and issues. You can also use blog posts to announce commonplace announcements such as site updates but you risk losing your audience if your posts are frequently mundane.

A key reason people prefer subscribing to a blog via RSS is immediacy. Avoid stale news. Your most valued audience are the readers of your blog. Ensure that blog posts receive priority in the marketing communications mix.

Establish a posting schedule. B2B blogs should be updated regularly. Once per week is the standard. More frequently is better.

Tips on Blogging Style

Write conversationally to develop a personal connection with your audience. A video presentation can be very personal. By offering video of the same topic in addition to text, you extend your audience.

Moderate your self-promotion. Blog readers are unmoved by blog posts that sound like warmed-over product brochures. Blog about subjects that interest your audience and stay focused on them.

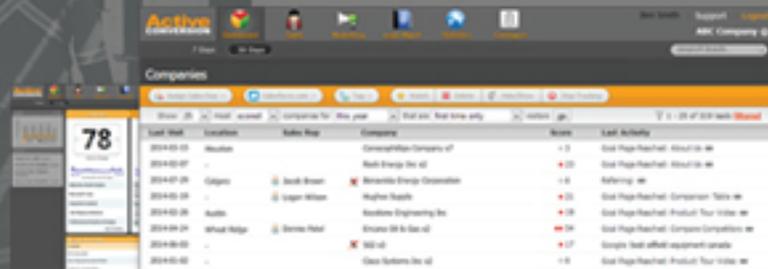
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Endeavor to be original to demonstrate thought leadership. This will establish corporate and personal credibility. An exclusive point of view will differentiate your company from your competitors.

Create a style guide if you have multiple contributors. A consistent tone will aid thought leadership in the same way a consistent look and feel aids branding. As part of the style guide develop a profile of your target audience. B2B blog posts will intrinsically contain keywords relevant to the industry and your business proposition.

A RESULTS-DRIVEN SALES AND MARKETING SYSTEM

UNIQUELY ENGINEERED
FOR YOUR INDUSTRY



Lead ID	Location	Subs. Rep.	Company	Score	Last Activity
20140101	Houston		ConocoPhillips Company of	-1.0	Get Page Reached About Us de
20140101			Next Energy (de id)	+2.0	Get Page Reached About Us de
20140128	Chicago	Jack Brown	Shenandoah Energy Generation	-1.6	Referring de
20140128		Logan Wilson	Hughes Supply	+2.0	Get Page Reached Company Site de
20140128	Austin		Rockwell Engineering Inc	+2.0	Get Page Reached Product Tour Video de
20140121	Wheat Ridge	Shirley Reed	Emerson Oil & Gas (de id)	+2.0	Get Page Reached Company Comparison de
20140101			MSI (de id)	+2.7	Simple Get off-Call equipment (Canada
20140101			Case Systems (de id)	-1.6	Get Page Reached Product Tour Video de

About ActiveConversion

ActiveConversion specializes in developing repeatable online sales and marketing systems for industrial companies. Our technology-based system employs best practices in online marketing and lead generation, and delivers measurable results to our customers. Since 2004, we have completed more than 500 successful projects to help companies succeed online. For more information, visit activeconversion.com or call 1-877-872-2ROI.