

## Marketing Minute ~ A Blogging Primer ~ Great Way to Start Marketing in 2010!

When used correctly, blogs can be an excellent tool for engaging prospects and customers—especially in today's more technical environment. So when I create a blog, I do the following three things:

1. make it as human as possible
2. Make it as interactive and engaging as possible; and
3. Have it add value to the customer experience as a whole.

### A Few Guidelines to Do That

Some of the things you can add to your blog to achieve this include the following:

1. Have your blog be the voice of your company. A blog should embody your company's culture, values and personality. Invite key employees to participate. But, always have someone monitor this activity to keep it on strategy.
2. Provoke response. End a blog post with a question or request for comments. People love to voice their opinions; give them an opening to do that.
3. Be provocative. Post controversial items from time to time to get your readers involved and make it interesting.
4. Use video. Video is an excellent engagement device. You can create a relatively high-quality video and have it up on your site in hours, not weeks. You could hire people to do this, or do it yourself with some fairly inexpensive tools.
5. Go behind the scenes. Give people real insights into the day-to-day activities of your company. I've seen company's Facebook pages or websites with employees on the phone in its call center, or even videos of photo shoots in progress. Interview your employees, catch them impromptu. It all works to cement your readers to your brand.
6. Have your customers speak. Nothing says more about a brand than its customers. Written testimonials, video testimonials, even links to blogs where people are discussing your products are perfect for posting on blogs.
7. Demonstrate your products. If your company's products lend themselves to photography or video, add them to YouTube and post them on your blog.
8. Hold a contest. You can have a contest about anything, even name a new product. Make sure when you choose the winner, you trumpet up the 'ceremony' on your blog.
9. Get press and link to it. Post links to media coverage on your blog. People love to know that the companies they buy from are 'famous.'
10. Other relevant information. Content on your blog doesn't necessarily have to be your own. If there's an article, video or something else that adds value to your prospects and readership, add a link to it.

Here's some more ideas (as heard on my Be a Better Blogger seminars, available at [www.hartfordgrapevine.com](http://www.hartfordgrapevine.com))

1. Figure LinkedIn prominently in your strategy. Link your blog to your LinkedIn profile page. This is very easy to do via the blog publishing platform WordPress and LinkedIn's Blog Link application.
2. Join as many LinkedIn groups as you can. Try joining groups that complement your skills. Once you join the groups, use LinkedIn's news feature to add your blog posts. The maximum number of groups an individual can join is 50, according to LinkedIn.
3. Use the LinkedIn discussions feature. This enables you to comment on other posts in the LinkedIn groups to which you belong, adds value to your groups. When posting a comment, always add your blog's URL. Make sure your answers are relevant and not spammy.
4. Use LinkedIn's Q&A feature. When you start, use the Q&A function to ask people to check out your blog and tell you what they think. You'd be surprised how many people do. Ask people to do the same for your blog, as well as critique it and offer advice on design, content and marketing. Also, answer questions that you have a good feel for, always add your blog URL and be relevant.
5. Add the appropriate links to your LinkedIn profile page. You can add up to three links, according to LinkedIn.
6. Make sure your blog has RSS, and it's in a prominent position on all pages. People will subscribe to your blog.
7. Use Twitter to tweet your blog posts. There is also FriendFeed, Biznik and Plaxo, that allow you to join groups and use similar tactics to LinkedIn.
8. Use LinkedIn's status feature. This enables you to update people on your blog posts.
9. Send your blog posts to your Facebook connections. Join Facebook groups, and push out there too.
10. Use feeds such as Technorati and Delicious. This blog search engine (Technorati) and social bookmarking web service (Delicious) will help you distribute your blog to the masses.

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There is so much more to blogging, which has become (and will continue to be) the most effective, fastest, and cheapest way to market yourself, your company, your brand. By the way, using LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, etc. is actually considered microblogging, but could be very effective to promote your blog.

If you are serious about learning how to blog the right, effective way, go to [www.hartfordgrapevine.com](http://www.hartfordgrapevine.com) and order your copy (either transcripts or CD) of my 4 part series on Blogging, to learn exactly how to get started or to make your current blog more effective.

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Many thanks for Jim Gilbert, of Gilbert Direct Marketing Inc. for his additional insights on blogging/microblogging. I have learned the correct blogging methods from many who are blogging experts, and he is one of them.

Information provided for you by ~

**Marilyn K. Dayton, Business/Marketing Specialist**

<http://www.marketingandbizpro.com> ~ [marilyn@marketingandbizpro.com](mailto:marilyn@marketingandbizpro.com)

**860-389-2521**

