

Who, ME have a blog?

Presented by Kate Holmes

What is a blog?

An opportunity to nurture a connection with current, future, past & prospective clients.

A way to stand out from your competition.

A method to extend the warmth of your shop beyond your walls and your business hours.

What *is* blogging?

BUY IT TODAY
it may not be here
TOMORROW
especially after we post it
on our blog.

“Blogging is a marketing tactic.

It is one way to educate your prospects and entice them to consider your product.

Look at all of your marketing tactics and decide if a blog will give you more space to tell your story. Think about the benefits of talking with your customers through comments. Want your audience to spread your story on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn & Google+? ...then a blog is definitely the tactic you

should use. “

pushingsocial.com

WIIFM? What will a blog do for MY business?

Blogging personifies your business.

Blogging builds your community and promotes "Shop Local".

Blogging serves as an introduction to your business.

Blogging shows that you are the expert.

Blogging allows your business to be seen as on the cutting edge.

Timely, pertinent posts attract the attention of the media.

Your material *remains* compelling and accessible.

Blogging gives you major bragging/marketing rights

Blogging builds market share.

Blogging is the single best way to improve your ranking with search engines.

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If I have a site why do I need a blog?

Target specific markets as needed with posts & categories.

You can create a target page for events and promotions, yourself, as needed.

Ongoing event? Build buzz and you'll have multiple social media hits.

Your static site is your online brochure. Your blog, though, is your online *magazine*. Your site is frozen in time. Your blog is "just like being there."

People can "subscribe" to get new messages in their email, putting your business right in their in-box.

Isn't FB enough?

ONLY HALF your friends/fans log on to Facebook in any given day. Each user is on Facebook for an average of 31 minutes a day.

IF customers do see your updates in their newsfeeds, they could be missing out on the whole story... unless you're sending them to your blog or site.

Now, that doesn't mean you shouldn't work your FB page: Facebook makes it easy for viewers who like what you just posted to share and to honor your shop with digital word-of-mouth.

BUT: The MOST social media can do for a B&M store is to motivate potential clients to visit. Nothing truly happens until you tempt them to actually, in real life, come into the store (bringing real money with them.)

What can I blog *about*?

Your merchandise: examples, how-tos, education
Your staff, clients, volunteers
Your town and its events and pleasures
Your shop, neighbors, neighborhood
Your recommendations: anything from products to restaurants

Anything that you would talk to a client about in public but *nothing* that you would whisper about: if it's not fit for public consumption, it doesn't belong on your blog.

The aim is to provide value for your readers, give them something to think about, provide solutions to their problems, pose a question to encourage comments: comments are treated as new material too, so getting lots of these is also good for SEO.
-fairyblogmother.co.uk

Rule of thumb: Keep the blatant "buy something from me" messages to one in ten.

How much is this going to *cost* me?

Effort : There is learning to do, but there are innumerable help sources all over the web.



Time : You will be able to get rid of as much as you like: Facebooking, tweeting, writing your emails, producing an e-newsletter.

Money : Basically free. You can add a few options if you want.

<http://en.wordpress.com/products/>

STEP-BY-STEP to a blog

1 Get a Wordpress.com user name. You can use it for as many blogs as you like... even seasonal ones. Steps, illustrated: <http://fairyblogmother.co.uk/com/creating-a-username/>
Don't set up your blog just yet.

2 Get a gravatar at <http://en.gravatar.com/> Here's why:

<http://auntiekate.wordpress.com/2011/07/08/its-like-you-only-better/>

3 Read up on what Wordpress can do for you: <http://en.wordpress.com/features/> Watch wordpress tv for simple how-to's: <http://wordpress.tv/?s=.com>

4 Now you're ready to name your blog. For best SEO, use consignment, resale, thrift in your name, and your location isn't a bad addition. Advanced note: Yes, you CAN use your current URL for your site as your blog name; you can even use your blog, if like, AS your site, keeping it totally under your control (and getting rid of any hosting fees you currently pay.) See a Kate-created and -maintained site at <http://HSoSC.com> . Complete cost? \$18/year

5 The fun part: choosing a theme (which you can easily and even daily change, like a pair of shoes) <http://theme.wordpress.com/> If you don't like any of the 180+ free themes, you can always pay for a premium theme. <http://theme.wordpress.com/themes/> You can filter by features, number of columns, even color and style.

6 Set up your framework:

a) Set 3-5 broad topics you'll be posting about, such as Shop News, New Arrivals. Make these your categories <http://blog.straightnorth.com/blog-faq-selecting-blog-categories/>

b) Choose your widgets <http://en.support.wordpress.com/widgets/> now or later. Easily changed at any time. You can even install a widget to show your Tweets!

c) If you like, create a page or two that will help visitors understand your business better. I recommend an "About" page at the least. Other informational pages can tell them more. <http://en.support.wordpress.com/pages/> You can add pages at any time, so if it intimidates you, leave it be for the time being.

7 Set your blog's title (which can be different from your URL) and your tagline. It's in dashboard> settings> general

8 Set your blog up to post automatically to your FB and Twitter accounts <http://en.support.wordpress.com/publicize/>

9 DELETE the beginning post that comes with your new blog. Or use it to practice your editing skills. WRITE several entries and schedule them.

10 Announce your blog, often and everywhere.

Using your blog to build audience and market share

Keywords: what would your target audience type in the box at search engines?

Use good photos to add to your specific branding and shop image.

Create content that people will share.

Comment, adding value, on other blogs, Facebook, and so on to draw people to your site.

Be sure to feature your blog on your web site, your Facebook "About" page, within FB posts and tweets, in your email signature, on your business card and collateral material.

Keeping it up

Use "schedule" to stock pile entries to posted when you want. (I also use a calendar to note when I have scheduled them.) You can write ahead, or when you feel moved to do so, and pick a future date. Use draft posts to store ideas. Stockpile simple entries for busy times: quotes, 10 best informational sites/ lists

Unsure if you'll be able to keep it up, or if you will want to? Dip a toe in first! Try it for a limited time. Maybe for a special event coming up like <http://kateatnarts.wordpress.com/>, a store remodeling log, even a holiday like <http://recycledholidays.wordpress.com/>

So, Are you READY to blog?

If you don't yet have your own little space online, I highly encourage you to get one... as things become more and more digital, this will be one of the primary ways we connect. Think of it as **one place that you can call "home" online** from which you can organize and centralize all your other online activities. ---<http://bloggingwithamy.com>

Your Blog is Your Social Media Hub: It is a piece of social media real-estate that you own; a place to call home, if you would. Engage away on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn, but reel them in to your home base. Because this is where it all can converge and shape something larger than what each of these can individually do. Your blog is where you can control the context, where you convert followers into believers.
-- <http://www.elitegrup.com/corporate-blog-vs-social-sites/>

Bloggng Sharpens Your Sword [When I started a blog for my business] I was forced to stay up to date with every new technology in the industry. I became much better at explaining things in a way the consumer could clearly understand. Simply put, writing a blog post is like practicing for a game. The more one practices, the better their skills, timing and overall play—which ultimately leads to more victories, or in this case, sales.
-<http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/5-reasons-your-business-should-be-blogging/>

Other blogging platforms include Blogger, Posterous, Joomla, Jux, Blog, Ning, Blogetery

More inspirational examples, resources, and useful sites are listed at <http://TGtbT.com/blog>

This handout is available for free download as a PDF file at <http://TGtbT.com/blog> All URLs are easily clickable from there for your ease and enjoyment.

Notes: This handout is in Spanq eco sans, a font which saves 20% in ink when printing. It can be downloaded for free at <http://www.fonts2u.com/spranq-eco-sans.font>