

Five Ways to Create Content for Your Business Blog

By Stephanie Diamond

You can find lots of information on the Internet about how to create a blog. There are recommendations about which tool to use and how to design something that's reader-friendly. But what happens once your blog is constructed? The cold blank page stares back at you on a daily basis.

Not as much has been written about creating content for your blog. As the "expert", it is assumed that you know what to write. Well, yes and no. Obviously, if you have a passion for your topic, you may be bursting with a never-ending source of ideas.

But what about the business-related blog? Even if you love your business, you may feel too close to the subject to decide what information would benefit your customers on a daily basis. You'll also have restrictions based on what is appropriate for a wider audience.

Here are 5 ways to help you develop content for your blog:

1. Read other blogs with an eye towards seeing how bloggers develop their 'voice.'

You need to make sure your blog content reflects YOU and how you communicate. When you prepare a post, it should sound like a conversation you would have with a good customer. I keep a little notebook and jot down ideas after I've spoken with a client, read a book or heard something that I think will make a good post.

2. Create a "Mind Map" that spells out the strategy for your blog.

A Mind Map lets you develop the big picture and the details of your strategy at the same time. I use Mind Maps to develop strategies of all kinds for my clients. (See 'Digimaps' on my website for more information about how to create one.) Understand what the overall message of your blog will be and what your reader will find each time they read a post. You need a unified message, so think carefully about your blog's subtitle or description. Refer back to that each time you start a post.

3. Start with 10 categories that support your blog's strategy.

You can add or subtract later, this is just an easy way to focus your thoughts. When you are staring at that blank page, a look at your category list may help spur your thoughts.

4. Decide whether you are going to monetize your site.

There are lots of ways to monetize your site. You can sell products, display Google ads and build your mailing list with free information that requires an email address. Some people prefer to keep their blog an expression of their thoughts without commerce-related activity. If you are growing your business, an e-commerce model will probably suit you. Give some thought as to what makes sense for you so that your design and content supports your model. Also, make sure that if you are selling a product or service, you put a picture of it just as you would on your website.

5. Look out for new blog tools as they are developed.

Great new tools are being developed daily. I find the best tools by reading blogs and being curious about what tools others are using.

Stephanie Diamond is a 25+ year marketing professional experienced in building profits for a broad range of online businesses. As Marketing Director for AOL she created a line of multimedia software products that generated millions of dollars in incremental revenue. In 2002, she founded Digital Media Works, Inc. <http://www.DigMediaWorks.com/> an interactive marketing and design firm which offers a complete line of solutions for online businesses. She helps companies figure out how to make their products easy to buy! Checkout her blog at <http://www.MarketingMessageBlog.com/>