

Small Business Marketing: 27 Ways to Promote Your Business with a Blog

By Angie Pedersen

Web logs, or “blogs”, have invaded the scrapbooking community and industry. Just search Google for “small business blog”, and you’ll get over 211,000,000 results. Blogs offer an opportunity to communicate in a casual atmosphere with your customers, often for free. Once small business owners are convinced of the promotional power of blogs, they often struggle with the next step: what to write about. Or they don’t blog about the right things to most effectively promote their businesses. Use the following list of topics to help guide your blogging efforts, and never worry about “Blogger’s Block” again!

1. Keep an eye on what other small business owners writers/bloggers are blogging about, and link to related material in your own blog. Include your own thoughts on the topic, agreeing or disagreeing with the original poster.
2. Post excerpts/tips from a book or Special Report you’ve written (then link to where your readers can purchase/download it! That’s a key marketing concept: make the customer aware of a product or service, convince her she wants it, then advise her where to get it. You can do all that on a blog.)
3. Post links to positive reviews and/or media coverage for your book/products/services
4. Yvonne Divita from Lipsticking.com suggests using an Editorial Calendar to combat Blogger’s Block. An editorial calendar can keep your blogging on track throughout the week: pick a topic to cover for each day of the week and stick to it. That way, you always know what topic to write about on a given day. Figure out what works best for you -- choose certain topics for each day of the week, a certain category to post in, or a certain type of post format (interview, top 10 list, etc). Or if you plan to blog only three times a week, decide to blog on upcoming events on Mondays, company news on Wednesdays, and give a project idea on Fridays.
5. Post a review of the latest business book – your “insider insights” can help position you as an expert in your field. Or consider reviewing a book that is not marketed to business owners, but has applications in your industry.
6. Mention mainstream newspaper and magazine articles that relate to your industry. Show how businesses like yours are making an impact on general society. Provide your own commentary, then link to where readers can get more info on your books/products/services.
7. Blog about upcoming book signings, appearances, classes, workshops, seminars, articles, sales/promotions, etc. Describe what you’re excited about, who you expect to see there, what topics you’re going to discuss, and where people can go for more information. If you’re blogging about a class, post a picture of the finished project to lure people in.

8. After an event, blog a recap of how it went, who you met, what was discussed, customers' positive reactions, etc
9. Patsi Krakoff suggests sharing stories that showcase your knowledge and expertise. Explain how you work with clients/customers; describe a typical customer experience. And don't forget to let readers know how to contact you, hire you, buy a product or register for your services.
[http://nextlevelpartner.typepad.com/bbab/2006/01/blog_smart_7_se.html]
10. Write about industry developments -- what do you think? What does it mean to future trends? How does it relate to you and/or your company?
11. Write a description of the product development process, and/or where you found inspiration for your most recent product line. What's the backstory there?
12. Kristy Harris of Far Flung Craft suggests posting pictures of your projects or examples of your products/services in use. You could take it a step further and provide "recipes": step-by-step directions on how to complete the project. A bonus tech tip: In the HTML image "alt" tag, name your picture some relevant, to make it more search-engine-friendly. [<http://www.farflungcraft.com/blogs/farflung/>]
13. Offer a product gallery (often called a photo album in blogs), so sales reps have a resource to offer potential customers. When the reps make sales calls, they can just guide customers to your blog to see the latest product.
14. Blog about projects or creations you find in online galleries or at consumer shows that use your product creatively. Include links to the projects and describe what you like about the project. (Email the creator to get their approval first.)
15. Post an entry describing an anecdote from your daily life, featuring a funny comment your child/staff member/customer made. Describe the situation and what insights you drew from it.
16. Share 3 things you learned from your customers in the past week – these could be funny "life lessons", or tips for improving a skill.
17. Post Top 10 Lists: Top 10 most purchased items in the past week; Top 10 colors of [a certain product], Top 10 Reasons to Attend Our Next Event; Top 10 Ways to Use [a certain product], etc.
18. Host a Scavenger Hunt with clues posted at your retailers'/partnering websites.
19. Host a "Name Our Product Line" or "Name Our Newsletter" contest. Think of other ways you can encourage customers to participate and feel "ownership" of the results.
20. Participate in (and host) a Blog Carnival (I don't think there is a scrapbooking one yet – email me and we can discuss getting one started!)
21. Point out examples of your staff offering good customer service – "catch 'em being good!" Emphasize how important customer service is to you and your business.
22. Introduce a new staff member – why did you hire him or her? What does s/he "bring to the table"?

23. Ask for feedback on proposed product lines or services – would your readers rather buy option A or option B?
24. Address bad PR – if someone receives bad customer service and makes a flaming post on a message board, explain your side of it on your blog. If it was your fault, accept responsibility and make amends. If it wasn't your fault, don't lay blame, but explain what you're going to do differently going forward so it won't happen again (a change in policy, a clarification of information, etc).
25. Highlight a customer – describe their interests, their business, and their favorite thing about your business. Give them a moment in the spotlight, and make sure others know they could be next!
26. Have a product that isn't moving, or has a high learning curve? Post five tips or ways to use it, highlighting its USP (Unique Selling Point).
27. Share your company history. How long have you been involved in your industry or field? What do you love about it? Why did you start your business? What are your business goals? Let your readers connect to you personally, and they'll feel more connected to your business.

Bonus Tips:

1. Keep a little notebook or stack on index cards with you, to jot down notes to blog about later, so you have a list available when Blogger's Block strikes. Note discussions you have with friends, billboards you see, magazine ads – whatever helps inspire thoughts that are blog-worthy.
2. If your blog is separate from your main business website, make sure the two are linked: post a link to your blog on your website, and post a link to your main website on your blog.
3. Ping after every post to notify search engines of new content. Visit www.pingomatic.com for more information.

Now go out there, get blogging, and Get Noticed!

P.S. If you're still unsure about how to blog, what to blog, or how it can help promote your business, let me walk you through the process, step-by-step. I can give you the insider tips I've used on my own blogs, and how I keep my readers coming back for more. Feel free to contact me via LinkedIn [<http://www.linkedin.com/in/angiepedersen>] or angiewrites.com.