

# Better Business Blogging eCourse

## Better Business Blogging

eMail:6

“Successfully writing your Business Blog”

This eCourse and associated documents are protected under the Creative Commons license. No commercial use and no changes are allowed. You can, if you wish, share it, post it or print it so long as it is done in its entirety with the copyright and link information intact.

This eCourse is available for free by visiting <http://www.betterbusinessblogging.com> - you will find it at <http://www.betterbusinessblogging.com/free-business-blogging-course/>

In return, I would consider it a mutual favour if you would subscribe to the RSS feed of my blog at: <http://feeds.feedburner.com/BetterBusinessBlogging> so you can then receive the latest articles from the Better Business Blogging site and keep up to date with developments and ideas in Blogging.

For more info on RSS, check out <http://www.betterbusinessblogging.com/category/rss-information/>

This eCourse was originally created by Mark White, an emarketing expert and blogging specialist. All efforts have been made to make the information contained in this eCourse correct. Mark White and Rosetta Alba Services Ltd are not liable for any actions that may result from the information contained in this eCourse.

Copyright © Rosetta Alba Services Ltd 2006

## SUCCESSFULLY WRITING YOUR BUSINESS BLOG

One of the critical factors about writing a Business Blog is being able to maintain the frequency of the posts and of course to ensure that they are of a consistent quality which will maintain its success.

This is important from the point of view of the writer because you need to be able to keep the interest going and the readers coming back on a regular basis in order to retain the attractiveness of the Blog. It is just as important from the readers perspective because it is the range and depth of information that they contain which will make them return and recommend the blog to others, hence developing the reach and success of the blog.

However, we all have moments when it is difficult to keep up a consistent flow of quality posts. So what we are going to look at is some ways in which you can both maintain a regular posting, find ways to keep the interest levels going and methods to help overcome writers' (or should that be blogger's) block.

### General Advice

While hardly revolutionary, one of the key pieces of advice and one which will help in so many of the blogging dilemmas we face, is to **keep a notebook with you** at all times. Anytime you think of an idea related to your blog or read something that is worthy of comment, then make a note of it, ideally where you were when you thought of it (to give it context) and any immediate thoughts around it.

There are some basic elements that you should make sure that you try to stick to:

#### **i) Keep updating**

Make sure that you keep things updated and where possible on a regular basis - this will ensure that your readers know when to come back for your latest instalment and also means that you have a schedule to keep to which will help most people.

#### **ii) Try to stay on the topic**

Remember that we started off by looking at what our focus was for the blog - try to keep to this. There is no problem in expanding its remit perhaps as your business grows in certain directions but make sure that you avoid going off into totally different and unrelated areas. Your readership will have found you because of what you were writing about so look to maintain that as much as possible. Give them what they want!

#### **iii) Find your style and try to keep to it**

You will develop your own style of writing as you also develop your Blog and the way that you express yourselves in your posts. Once you have found it, try to maintain it in your posts rather than jumping about - again, if your readers are coming to read what you are writing then keep it consistent and give them what they are looking for.

## *iv) Suggestions for the posts themselves*

There are some good general rules as you are writing your blog if you want to get them read. These are some rules which were originally written regarding writing for busy people but I believe are equally relevant when you are blogging - let's face it, people have a limited attention span when they arrive at your Business Blog for the first time, so grab their attention.

When you are writing your posts:

- Try to make your important points early on in your post;
- Don't worry about using headings as often as required - it helps to clarify what each part is about;
- Write as clearly and as succinctly as possible;
- Avoid long paragraphs and particularly ones which just look like a single piece of text;
- Try to use bullet points to break up the page and use clear points to paragraphs;
- Use 'bold' and 'italic' in your formatting to help to highlight important things;
- Think about adding images to your post, though do make them relevant and don't add them just for the sake of it.

## **Keeping your Business Blog fresh**

Sometimes there are moments when you don't feel that you have anything to write about and that you are at a loss for something to add a little bit of spice to what you are writing - don't worry, it happens to us all. All you need is to have a few ideas as to what you can do in these circumstances.

A few of the concepts that I have used successfully include:

### *i) Use ideas from your Notebook*

As was suggested at the start, keep a book with you so that you can note down ideas that come to you during the course of the day. They might be triggered by any event, something that you see or a comment that somebody makes to you, or simply something that comes to you. Note down the idea and any associated thoughts that come with it and then you can then dip into these ideas as and when you need to, as well as planning them into your general post schedule if appropriate.

### *ii) Write about current events*

Hopefully, you are already keeping an eye on what is being written about your industry through whichever news medium you prefer and ideally through the use of RSS feeds which gets you the news ultra quickly. Select an event or piece of

information and give your comments on it and perhaps its implications while referencing the article where appropriate.

### *iii) Read other blogs*

As well as ideas that come to you from news and current affairs, don't forget to make sure that you keep an eye on other people's blogs and the subject areas that they are talking about. You may find subjects there that you wish to develop further, ones that you wish to comment on in your own blog (don't forget to use a [trackback](#)) or ones that simply spark new ideas that you can write about. Other blogs are great sources of up to date thinking and potential new ideas.

### *iv) Write a series*

Just as I suggested in the early stages of writing your blog, select a topic and write a series of posts around it. It would be good to plan out the series in advance (at least the titles) and then write them as you need them. Alternatively, if this inspires you as a topic then write two or three posts at once and, using the 'post time' feature, set them to appear on certain days at intervals in the future.

### *v) Look back at posts you have previously written*

Check back over some of your old posts and see if there are ones that you believe warrant a new post to explore more fully some of the ideas that they contain. You may also feel that there are now updates or new information that you would like to add to them, so do so in a new post which references back to the original one and then develops the ideas further.

### *vi) Get a guest blogger in*

You do not need to write all of the posts yourself, many Business Blogs will in fact have two or even more people working on them. However, if you don't have people who post regularly, you can still have a "guest blogger" who might come in to post on a particular subject where they have a specialist knowledge.

### *vii) Answer Questions*

You have no doubt had contact from people who have requested additional information or have asked questions which have expanded on your original post and opened up in turn new areas or topics. Take these questions or the points that they raise and develop the answers into new posts. You could alternatively just create a new Category for your Business Blog, perhaps called "Q & A", and deal with them there.

### *viii) Add additional features*

You could also consider adding additional features within your blog such as a survey (which obviously would develop further as you later detail the results and conclusions) or perhaps something like a podcast or even a videocast. While doing this all the time

would ultimately prove counterproductive, using them astutely can really add an additional dimension to your Blog and the topics you are covering.

Don't forget that by reading back through your own posts or those of others, you can summarise the points raised and add to them or summarise them and present them in a slightly different way. Good blogs can be considered to be built in the same way as conversations and so listening to conversations and talking about the ideas is a great way of passing them on but with your own personality injected into them.

## Ideas to help overcome writer's block

Occasionally you will arrive at a point where you just do not know what to write, the so called Writer's Block - or maybe that should be called the Blogger's Block in this instance.

To help overcome this, I thought it would be appropriate if we look for inspiration from writers in other media - here are some ideas from we which we can identify methods which should help us to overcome this potential block in our blogging activities.

- **Work on several posts at the same time:** sometimes, if the content is not coming freely to you on one subject then leave it for the time being and change to another one. Not only does this allow you to get down some ideas on this new topic, but that in turn may inspire other ideas that you can develop in the first one. In any case, it gives you a break and will allow you to return to it later with a clearer mind.
- **Talk about it:** if you're having trouble actually getting your idea down in writing, then try talking about it instead. You can either do this to yourself or you can do so to a friend or colleague. When you do this, it should help the ideas to start to flow and enable you to start to get a new flow down in writing. An alternative would be to imagine that you only have two minutes to explain the main concepts in the post to a potential customer. Use a recorder and time yourself - this should help you to dictate the main points that you want to bring out as quickly and completely as possible.

If you want to develop this idea further then you could indeed work with someone to ask you certain questions and then get them to ask further questions on the basis of your answers. You may find that not only does this help with your post but that it could form the basis of a podcast which could accompany the post on your blog.

- **Mind Maps:** used religiously by many people, this is a great way to take your central idea and encourage you to brainstorm and explore all of the different ideas which it sparks. To start with, write the title of the post in the middle of a piece of paper and add branches with the names of the main topics that you

## Better Business Blogging course

want to cover - you then continue by adding secondary level for the sub topics and so on, developing ideas as you go. This will help you to identify as many of the ideas related to the topic as possible and, in the process, many help to show links between the different topics which you hadn't previously envisaged. *(Comment: if you are not familiar with mindmapping there are many excellent books and online sites on the subject.)*

- **Start in the middle:** try to write some of the ideas that will form the middle of the post and don't worry about writing the introduction until after you have written the body of the text. We often get stopped because we try to get the first part of a post just right before moving on to what is really the meat of the post. So, switch it round and you should find that not only is the post easier to write but that the start will flow more naturally later on from what you have written.
- **Freewrite:** I suppose that you could call this a stream of consciousness. The idea is simply to start writing and continue to do so until a certain period of time has elapsed. The idea is just to generate thoughts, ideally on a specific topic although you can also do so in a way which is totally unfocused. Use this as a way to get a first draft or a series of ideas down on something and then take it from there.
- **Reread and Notate:** get all of the information together that you are basing your post on and/or relevant research and background material, and have all of these by your side. Then simply read through this information and, as you read, type your reaction to it - this might be to expand on what you are reading, to explain a particular idea or disagree with another part, to add further information or to link to other articles. What you are doing is exploring ideas or thoughts that the material provokes. This will give you a pile of new text and will have made you think about the material in different ways, and should have give you new impetus to get writing.
- **Write Dialogue:** try to imagine that you are having a conversation with someone who is talking to you and asking you about the subject matter of your post. Ideally this person should be someone that you do not react well to and is perhaps asking potentially difficult or contrary questions. As you answer the questions that are being posed, you will be outlining very clearly all of the reasons why you believe so strongly in your position or the subject and so have the perfect start point for your post.

Hopefully some of these ideas will have helped to get the posts flowing a little bit more easily and will help you to overcome blocks in your writing should they occur. In fact, even if the posts are coming easily, you might like to try some of the techniques in any case to see how they work for you.

## What's next?

Once we have a Business Blog that has sufficient content on it and is working well, then we clearly will want to spread the word as widely as possible that it exists, that is to say promote the Blog and its content to the relevant target audience and beyond.

Some of the elements will be:

- blog specific promotion
- online marketing and promotion
- offline promotional activities

This is what we will be looking in the next part of the course.

## WORKBOOK ELEMENTS

It is always going to be a good idea to keep a separate notebook for all of the ideas that come to you so that you can develop them at a later stage. In addition, you should note here potential ideas for the series that you wish to write and RSS sources you want to use.

### Ideas for Possible Series

1) .....

2) .....

3) .....

### Blogs to add to my RSS Reader

1) .....

2) .....

3) .....