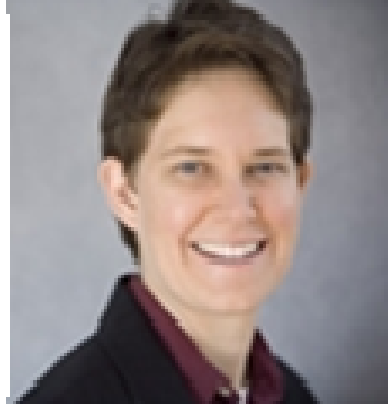


5 Tips to promote your blog

By
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It's your ticket to brand domination—create a blog, produce killer content that showcases your expertise, and watch it go viral. But the sad reality is that most blogs go unnoticed by everyone except your mom. You're spending significant time reading other news sources, doing independent studies or reporting, and producing thoughtful analysis. You don't want your efforts to be the proverbial tree falling in the forest. So how do you get people to read your blog? Here are five strategies to juice the return on your blogging investment.

Spread the word.

Ensure your website has a prominent link to your blog, and mention it frequently in your e-newsletter and Twitter feed, if you have them. You should also include a link to your blog in your email tagline. And don't forget to send a heads-up to targeted reporters who follow your industry, who will begin to regard you as an "expert source" as you comment regularly on topical issues.

Optimize your website.

Search engine optimization, or "SEO," has developed a cult-like mystique. But the principles are fairly basic: make it easy for people to find you. Think about what keywords people will use in searching for you (marketing? shoes? insurance?), and include them regularly in the title and content of your blog posts. This should go without saying, but efforts to bolster hits by sneaking phrases like "nude Jessica Simpson" into your content won't fly.

Love to link.

Google and its search engine brethren determine a large portion of your rank based on how many links you have from your site to other sites (illustrating that you're providing valuable information to your readers), and especially how many others sites link to yours (essentially, the "wisdom of crowds" voting that you're worth reading). Spending time on link-trading schemes (link to my site and I'll link to yours!) is passé. Instead, create great content and spur other influential bloggers to start reading it by using Tip #4 below.

Post comments on other people's blogs.

It can be a big time investment, but the potential payoff is worth it: make a list of the most influential bloggers in your field, and start reading them religiously. Get involved in the conversation and post your (thoughtful and informative) reactions to their work. You'll include your name and, just below it, a subtle link to your blog. That way, other interested readers who are impressed with your style can go check you out—and the blogging kahuna may even be prompted to give you a shout-out one day, introducing you to his or her followers.

Tap guest bloggers.

Finally, a great way to make friends with other bloggers and luminaries in your field is to ask them to write a guest post on your blog. This is obviously a more attractive proposition if you've built up a decent number of followers already, so work hard on the other aspects first. Guest posts from notable figures can bolster your credibility, and connect you to your guest's fans, particularly if you encourage them to publicize the post via Twitter and their own blog or e-newsletter.

Life is too short to write thought-provoking material no one ever reads. Follow these steps and ensure your voice gets heard.

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