

Build a wildly popular blog

Use social media links to increase your audience

By Fiona Collie | January 16, 2012 13:30

A blog can be a powerful component of your marketing campaign — and one that ties in with social media.

"The blog is a great foundation for a successful social media strategy," says Loic Jeanjean, director of web marketing with Vancouver-based Advisor Websites.

To create a successful blog, you must have a strong desire to build a community of readers — and have a compelling story share.

Follow these tips to promote your blog and make it a successful part of your marketing campaign:

> Encourage conversation

Keep your readers engaged by responding to their comments.

You must respond to every comment posted on your blog, whether it's good or bad, Jeanjean says. If you ignore comments, people will feel neglected and will stop visiting the blog.

Also make sure your blog has a link to allow visitors to subscribe to it or to your newsletter.

> Make your posts easy to share

Ensure readers can share your work with others through social media.

Include social media widgets on the blog, such as links to Facebook and Twitter, Jeanjean says, so readers can post your writing through these media.

These widgets are generally free of charge and easy to install if you use one of the popular blog platforms such as Wordpress or Blogger. Wordpress, for example, provides the following links to add plugins to blogs:

- The Facebook "Like" button plugin (<http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/facebook-like-button/>);
- The WP "Tweet" button plugin (<http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/wp-tweet-button/>);
- The LinkedIn "Share" button plugin (<http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/linkedin-share-button/>).

> Spread the word

Promote your blog through other aspects of your marketing campaign to get the word out.

Post recent writing from your blog on your LinkedIn wall, Jeanjean says, or "tweet" about it on Twitter. Or you can promote the blog in your e-newsletter by including a list of the most popular articles. Don't forget to include links from the newsletter to your blog.

> Get higher search results

Drive traffic to your blog with "long-tail keyword phrases," says Jeanjean.

There is less competition in search engines for long phrases, he says. Using a wordy keyword in your blog makes it easier for search engines to find your site and gives it a higher ranking in a search result.

For example, a phrase such as "maximizing your mutual fund investments in 2012," he says, will rank higher with search engines than a shorter keyword like "mutual funds."

> Track your web traffic

Use web analytics to help you choose topics that will interest your target market and bring more people to your blog.

Using an analytic solution such as Google analytics, which is free of charge, will allow you to see which are the most popular topics on your blog and which posts are being shared.

You can then use that information to write more blog posts on those topics, he says, which will keep readers interested.