

M LOCAL BUSINESS MARKETING

The Marketing Guide for Local Businesses

May 2015

A Complete Beginner's Guide to Business Blogging

**4 Benefits of
Outsourcing
Your Content
Creation**

4 Mistakes to Avoid When Writing a Company Blog

**5 Ways to
Promote Your
Blog on Social
Media**

Infographic:

**Today's
Consumer is
Mobile!**

**The 5 Best
Crowdfunding
Platforms for Small
Businesses**

FREE!

Proudly Provided by LMS Solutions, Inc.

Welcome!

Hard to believe that we're already in our May issue. One third of 2015 is already behind us! We thank you for taking the time to read our magazine. We hope you find it full of interesting articles, and more importantly, that you are able to immediately apply some of our tips, and that they help your business.

This month, our primary focus is on Business Blogging. When done properly, a blog can be not only drive new customers to your website, it can keep your existing customers engaged and loyal.

You will also find new versions of our popular Marketing Calendar and Infographic.

If you're not already receiving this magazine regularly, we suggest you add your email to our subscriber list. We have some exciting articles already in the works for the upcoming issues. Don't miss out!

If you like the magazine, and know other local business owners that could benefit from receiving our magazine each month, please do us (and them) a favor by forwarding a copy to them.

If you have any comments about this issue or would like us to help you with your marketing please do not hesitate to contact us.

Regards,
David Akers
President / CEO
LMS Solutions, Inc.

The content on the Local Business Marketing Magazine is made available on the terms and condition that the publisher, editors, contributors and related parties:

shall have no responsibility for any action or omission by any other contributor, consultant, editor or related party;

disclaim any and all liability and responsibility to any party for any loss, damage, or disruption caused by errors or omissions, whether such errors or omissions result from negligence, accident, or any other cause;

are not responsible in any way for the actions or results taken any person, organization or any party on basis of reading information, or contributions in this publication, website or related product.

Inside This Month's Issue

- 4 Marketing Calendar
- 5 A Complete Beginner's Guide to Business Blogging
- 13 4 Mistakes to Avoid When Writing a Company Blog
- 15 5 Ways to Promote Your Blog on Social Media
- 17 4 Benefits of Outsourcing Your Content Creation
- 20 The 5 Best Crowdfunding Platforms for Small Businesses
- 22 News You Should Know
- 23 Infographic - Today's Consumer is Mobile

A Little About Us

Local Business Marketing Magazine
is proudly provided by
LMS Solutions, Inc.



LMS Solutions was developed to give businesses of all sizes the ability to leverage the same cutting-edge marketing platforms that the Fortune 500 organizations use, at extremely affordable rates.

We offer an extensive catalog of cutting-edge Local Online, Mobile, Social, Pay-Per-Click, Video, Web and Direct Marketing Media Programs. Whether you're a small business, large business or an ad agency, our programs can help you find greater success.

If you are a small advertising agency, or an independent marketing consultant, you're a perfect candidate for our LMS Solutions Partner Program. Find out more by visiting our website.

LMS Solutions is a proud member of:



Did you know that we are a full-service ad agency? Did you also know that we specialize in helping small and medium sized businesses? We customize a program that meets the needs and budgets of each of our clients, and we offer Free Initial Consultations. Give us a call to learn how we've helped businesses like yours grow revenue:

- Mobile Marketing
- Web Services
- Reputation Management
- Video Marketing
- Outdoor Marketing
- Online Marketing
- Social Media Marketing
- Direct Mail
- Email Marketing
- Graphic Design

If you have any questions, or would like to know how we can help you meet and exceed your marketing goals, please contact us.

(484) 893-4055

www.LMSsuccess.com



Marketing Calendar

Plan your marketing messages around these upcoming holidays and proclamations.

May

ALS Awareness Month
Asthma Awareness Month
Celiac Awareness Month
National Pet Month
Foster Care Month
National Barbecue Month
National Bike Month
National Blood Pressure Month
National Hamburger Month

May 1 - May Day
May 5 - Cinco de Mayo (US)
May 8 - Victory in Europe Day (UK)
May 10 - Mother's Day
May 25 - Memorial Day (US)

1st - National Mother Goose Day
1st - National Space Day
3rd - National Two Different Colored Shoes Day
4th - Star Wars Day

5th - National Hoagie Day
6th - National Nurses Day
6th - National Teacher Appreciation Day
8th - National Military Spouse Appreciation Day
10th - National Babysitter's Day
10th - Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive Day
12th - National Fibromyalgia Awareness Day
13th - National Apple Pie Day
13th - National Receptionists Day
15th - National Police Officers Memorial Day
15th - National Pizza Party Day
15th - National Bike to Work Day
15th - NASCAR Day
16th - National Armed Forces Day
18th - National Visit Your Relatives Day
25th - National Missing Children's Day
25th - National Brown-Bag It Day
25th - National Wine Day
27th - National Senior Health & Fitness Day
28th - National Hamburger Day

June

Aquarium Month
Gay Pride Month
National Adopt a Cat Month
National Fresh Fruit and Vegetables Month
National Candy Month
National Camping Month
National Dairy Month
National Great Outdoors Month

June 14 - Flag Day 2015 (USA)
June 18 - Waterloo Day (UK)
June 21 - Father's Day
June 21 - Summer Solstice
June 24 - St. John's Day

1st - International Children's Day
1st - National Heimlich Maneuver Day
1st - National Go Barefoot Day
1st - National Say Something Nice Day
2nd - National Rocky Road Day
2nd - National Leave The Office Early Day

3rd - National Running Day
4th - Hug Your Cat Day
5th - National Doughnut Day
5th - World Environment Day
6th - National Yo-Yo Day
7th - National Cancer Survivor's Day
8th - World Oceans Day
8th - World Brain Tumor Day
8th - National Best Friends Day
9th - Donald Duck Day
11th - National Corn on the Cob Day
14th - World Blood Donor Day
14th - National Bourbon Day
15th - Nature Photography Day
15th - Global Wind Day
16th - National Fudge Day
18th - Autistic Pride Day
19th - National Flip Flop Day
25th - National Handshake Day
26th - National Chocolate Pudding Day
26th - Take Your Dog to Work Day
30th - National Meteor Watch Day



A Complete Beginner's Guide to Business Blogging

The vast majority of organizations already have a content marketing strategy in place, and blogging is one of the main content formats. Serving as a gateway into the world of social media, blogging allows you to deliver value-adding content to your audience in a conversational tone that helps to encourage engagement, raise brand awareness, and ultimately, generate leads and sales. Although a blog only serves as a part of a greater digital marketing campaign, it is where most companies make get started with content marketing, and it helps to compliment your website by promoting your brand and its products and services.

While blogging can be time-consuming, it presents a cost-effective solution and a centralized digital marketing platform that will work together with your social media and other content

marketing efforts. However, in order for your blog to stand out in the extremely competitive online marketing place, it needs to be educational and/or entertaining rather than directly promotional. This concept is nothing new: content marketing has been around in one form or another since the nineteenth century when, for example, food producers would provide useful recipes on their packaging to help consumers get more out of their products.

This guide, targeted towards complete beginners, will help you to firmly establish your goals, define your target audience, create and publish content and promote your brand through your blog as well as other channels. With a successful strategy in place, you'll be able to clearly establish your brand as an authority in its niche.

Step 1: Establishing Your Goals

As is the case with any business decision, taking up blogging requires that you first define your goals. Corporate blogging, though it is not supposed to be directly promotional in nature, does of course have business goals, be they direct or indirect. Oftentimes, you'll have multiple goals in mind when it comes to business blogging, and it is important that you clearly define these goals so that you know which metrics to attract when it comes to measuring your success, as later described in Step 10. Following are the marketing goals that you might want to achieve:

- Raising brand awareness and expressing your brand identity.
- Providing material to help prospective buyers through the customer journey.
- Engaging specific target audiences through sharable, value-adding content.
- Building relationships with existing and prospective buyers.
- Listening to customer feedback through social elements of blogging.
- Driving traffic to your website by boosting your visibility in Google.
- Establishing yourself as a thought leader in your niche.
- Attracting new talent in the form of marketing partners and employees.

Business blogging offers the potential to fulfill all of the above goals and more, provided that it is conducted in the right way. By keeping your goals in mind whenever crafting new content for your blog and maintaining a publishing schedule, you'll be able to start tracking your success from the outset.

Step 2: Setting Up Your Blog

Setting up your blog couldn't be easier, and you can easily complete this step in a day. Thanks to the increasing popularity of content management systems (CMSs), there's no need to learn about HTML or the various other inner workings of Web design. Although there are many

The image is a vertical advertisement for ZipRecruiter. At the top, the ZipRecruiter logo is displayed in green and black. Below the logo, a large green banner features the text "50+" in white, followed by "job boards with one post" in white. Underneath the banner, a collage of various job board logos is shown, including MyNewJobSearch, flexjobs, ZipRecruiter, TopUSAJobs, twitter, adzuna, Google+, geebo, jobg8, The Ladders, latpro, JobsRadar, careerJET, jobrapiao, JOBDIAGNOSIS.COM, recruit-net, PUREJOBS, trovit, MONSTER, DirectEmployers, Jobinventory, Just Jobs, SimplyHired, JobHati, and DiversityJobs. A prominent orange button with the text "Post Free Now" and a right-pointing arrow is overlaid on the collage.

platforms to choose from, the obvious solution is WordPress. A highly versatile and user-friendly platform, WordPress is open-source and completely free, and it is the platform of choice for more than 15% of all of the websites out there. You can download your copy of WordPress from wordpress.org, and here you will also find a vast database of free plugins

You can find all of the information that you need to install WordPress at the official website, although many hosting companies also provide a simple, one-click installation that will get your blog up and running right away.

Although this guide focuses primarily on the content marketing elements of

platforms such as Google AdWords and other more traditional forms of marketing.

Whoever your audience is, they will be searching for value-adding content that they actually find useful or entertaining in some way.

Hundreds of millions of people turn to the search engines every



and themes.

Assuming you already have a business website, you'll want to install WordPress in a subdirectory of your server so that your blog's Web address will look something like this: yourwebsite.com/blog.

Don't install WordPress into a subdomain unless it serves content that is completely unrelated to your website, since doing so will prevent your blog from helping to increase your main website's visibility on Google.

blogging, you'll also want to choose a suitable theme and any plugins that you need for your blog. As far as the theme is concerned, be sure to choose a responsive one so that your blog will remain easily viewable on mobile devices.

Step 3: Learning what Your Audience Wants

Business blogging is all about defining your target audience and delivering the content that they crave. It is no place for direct promotion: this is the realm of paid online advertising

day to find answers to their questions, and the purpose of your blog is to provide these answers in such a way that you can fulfill your aforementioned goals.

Corporate blogging is all about using content to establish meaningful relationships with your readers, and it is for this reason that your readers are ultimately the ones in charge. You'll find that the best blogs are those written by people who you can relate to in some way. The sort of content that your audience wants will, of course, be extensively dictated

by your niche. For example, if you run a travel agency that provides upmarket safari tours in southern Africa, your audience would likely be most interested in content such as destination overviews, tips for getting the most out of specific places as well as more general articles on luxury travel.

If you've already been in business for quite some time, it's probably safe to assume that you know your target audience very well already, but in the case of content marketing, you'll need to have a clear definition, based on demographical characteristics and more, in order to customize your content specifically for them.

Step 4: Defining Your Style

Any good content strategy takes branding into account when developing and publishing content. Your brand's voice,

which is defined by its distinct style, needs to be consistent across the board. Since you likely won't be the only one writing content for your blog, you'll need to firmly establish some editorial guidelines that your content team will follow. Having such a style guide is particularly important if, as a lot of companies do, you decide to outsource your content creation to freelancers.

After all, it will be your style that differentiates you from your competitors and helps to humanize your brand by showing off the personality behind it. Following are the most important editorial guidelines that any business blog should have:

- An explanation of your blog's purpose as well as individual pieces of content.
- A description of your target audience.
- An overview of content formats and topics for your

blog.

- An explanation of your linking policy.
- Some examples of successful blog posts as reference material.
- Style guidelines detailing things like subheadings and paragraphs.
- Any search engine optimization guidelines, such as keyword usage and meta tags.

Your guidelines need to be fairly strict, although there is nothing wrong (and it is actually advisable) to offer your writers some creative license, particularly when you occasionally want to reboot your content strategy with a slightly new perspective.

Step 5: Seeking Out Ideas

Every writer faces the dreaded writer's block on occasion, and new ideas are worth a lot. Being a business blogger is no



priceline.com
EXPRESS DEALS
SAVE BIG ON HOTELS! UP TO 55% OFF
no bidding required
BOOK NOW!

exception, and in order to keep your blog alive, you'll need to have a practically endless flow of ideas. If you have a fairly large writing team, whether in-house, outsourced or a combination of the two, you'll be able to draw ideas from multiple people, but it will ultimately be you and your audience who has the final say.

Fortunately, living in the information age, there is a wealth of media to draw inspiration from and, in many cases, your audience will provide insights into what sort of content to publish. Consider the following content ideas for drawing in new visitors as well as keeping existing ones happy:

- Customer success stories in the form of case studies.
- A fresh, and perhaps even controversial, look at a popular opinion.
- A roundup of popular content published previously.
- Answers to common questions and concerns among your audience.
- Questions that you ask yourself in order to engage readers directly.
- Visual content including image slideshows, infographics and video.
- How-to guides and cheat sheets.
- A behind-the-scenes look into the inner workings of your company.
- Series and columns dealing with more specific subject matter.
- A story about your brand's origins, past successes and even past mistakes.
- Humorous content that entertains your target audience.

When it comes to seeking out inspiration, you'll need to know who you're talking to by putting yourself in the shoes of a typical member among your target audience. You'll also want to take environmental factors into account so that you can set the mood in such a way that you can optimize your workplace.

Are You Playing Hide-N-Seek With Your Potential Customers?

If they can't find you...
They will find your
competition



Be Easily Found!

Call Us Today!

(484) 893-4055

Step 6: Developing a Content Schedule

As is the case with any form of content or social media marketing, blogging requires a long-term, consistent level of commitment. In other words, you need to have a fairly rigid content schedule in place, and although there's nothing wrong with a small degree of flexibility, your blog will quickly die if regular readers suddenly find that new content is becoming a rarity.

There's no such thing as a successful blogger who sporadically posts content, and although you might not always be in a particularly creative mood, it is wise to have a backlog of content so that you have something to post during those downtimes.

Your editorial calendar will help you to keep track of content ideas and streamline your publication schedule so that you always have something new to offer your readers.

By creating a spreadsheet, you can list these ideas, along with things like proposed dates for posting, authors, article titles, related keywords and, where applicable, any call to action that the post might contain. You should also maintain a calendar that details your promotional efforts, which you can read more about in Step 8.

A good editorial calendar should take the following key factors into account:

- The habits of your target audience.
- Preparation for content gaps throughout the year.
- Planning for special themes for different times of the year.

Step 7: Creating Content

With your blog up and running, a content schedule in place and plenty of ideas at hand, you'll be

ready to start creating and publishing content. When it comes down to crafting a perfect blog post, it all starts with the title. Typically the first experience that readers have with your content, the title should capture their interest within the first couple of seconds. The title is really just a call to action, albeit perhaps not a direct one: it determines the level of engagement and sharing of the post. The best headlines may either take a direct approach by delving straight into the heart of the subject matter or an indirect approach designed to raise curiosity. Popular titles formats include questions, lists, news headlines or commands.



Although the majority of the content on your blog will come in the form of short posts of around 500-1000 words, you'll want to diversify your content depending on your audience. Different content formats work for different companies. For example, those in business-to-business (B2B) industries tend to favor more in-depth content written in a professional tone, such as whitepapers and case studies, while those catering towards consumers will generally favor a more conversational tone. However, regardless of your situation, it is wise to keep everyday blog posts presented in a Web-friendly manner. The online audience tends to prefer content delivered in the form of bite-size chunks

of information that they can scan through quickly rather than reading from beginning to end. This type of content typically consists of plenty of subheadings, shorter sentences and paragraphs and bulleted or numbered lists.

Be sure to include images in your blog posts, even if you only include one for the sole reason of visually representing the content of a particular post, even if the subject matter itself is not particularly visually orientated. Great images, that does not include clichéd stock photos, help you to get your message across, and they make for much more memorable and sharable content. Video content, which you can embed into your blog from sites like YouTube rather than using your own disk space and bandwidth, can also be extremely effective.

Step 8: Promoting Your Blog

Promoting your blog is perhaps the most time-consuming part of business blogging, and while a great blog that delivers excellent content on a regular, consistent basis, should market itself to a degree, there will still be things that you can do to further increase its exposure. As you've

already seen, your blog should act as an integral part of your overall digital marketing strategy by working together with your website, your social media profiles and various other online resources. You'll also need to take search engine optimization (SEO) into account to increase your blog's visibility in the search engines. Consider the following key ways to promote your blog:

- Optimize your content for the search engines by including relevant key words and phrases into your titles and meta tags. Additionally, make sure that your content is accessible to the search engine robots by using a clean, SEO-friendly theme and design. Avoid Flash and Java and any other content that is invisible to the search engines.
- Share your own blog posts on your social media pages. Provided that you also engage in social interaction by responding to people's comments, sharing your own blog posts on Facebook, Twitter and any other networks you use can be an effective way to raise awareness. Social bookmarking services, such as Digg, Delicious and StumbleUpon can also be useful.
- Offer to write posts for other blogs on occasion. Although guest blogging has received a great deal of criticism in recent years, it can still be



priceline.com[®]

EXPRESS DEALS[®]

SAVE UP TO **60% OFF**
your Las Vegas Hotel!
No bidding required

[SEARCH HOTELS](#)

highly effective when done correctly. Just make certain that you choose quality, relevant blogs rather than poor-quality content farms where the emphasis tends to be clearly placed on quantity rather than quality.

Step 9: Engaging Your Audience

A successful blog is one that promotes itself to a degree. Appreciative readers will share your content with others to the extent that they effectively become ambassadors and advocates for your brand, and this is exactly what makes the social element of blogging so important. You'll need to engage your audience in such a way that you encourage and participate in conversations both internally via on-site comments and externally via social media. Pay close attention to your comments feed, and be sure to remain present by responding to people's queries and thanking them for their feedback. Occasionally, you'll see negative feedback, in which case you'll want to reply in order to address the concern. After all, the way you handle criticism reflects enormously on your brand's image.

A quick and easy way to help encourage sharing is simply to make it easier for your audience. There are numerous

add-ons available for WordPress and other popular CMSs that can automatically add social sharing buttons to posts, allowing readers to share content that they like on their own social media profiles at the click of a button. Other ways to increase engagement includes reducing page loading times, making your website more easily navigable and accessible and making your content more mobile-friendly.

Step 10: Measuring for Success

Every business blogger needs to define some success metrics that they'll start tracking as soon as they start publishing content. By tracking these metrics, you'll garner invaluable insights into what your audience wants, and you'll be able to use this information to develop and improve your blogging strategy over time.

The metrics that you should track will, of course, vary depending on your goals and whether you are primarily blogging for commercial reasons, blogging to build up a community around your brand or blogging to drive more traffic to your main website from the search engines and other sources.

Following, in no particular order, are some of the most important metrics to track:

- The total number of visits to your blog.
- The average length of your visits.
- The bounce rate (i.e.: the number of visitors who leave immediately).
- The percentage of new visitors.
- Where visitors are coming from (e.g.: search engines, social networks etc.).
- The number of repeat visitors.
- The number of pages viewed per visit.
- The number of comments and shares (important engagement metrics)
- The number of visitors who go on to become customers (conversion rate).
- The number of RSS and email newsletter subscribers.

The above examples take into account important metrics regarding content, engagement levels and conversion rates. By tracking these metrics, you'll be able to determine which factors are driving your blog forward and which ones are holding it back.

Blogging, while time-consuming, can definitely be an effective way to promote your brand and increase your reach in a highly competitive world. However, it is also important to realize that business blogging is a slow march towards success: results will not come overnight.



4 Mistakes to Avoid When Writing a Company Blog

Your company's blog is one of the most important aspects of your company's online presence. In essence, your blog is the ambassador of your brand to anyone who visits your site.

As such, it is crucial that your blog not only says what you want it to say, but that it also conveys your brand's voice and message.

Gone are the days when simply having a blog on your site was impressive. Today, the online

corporate blogging world is more competitive than ever, and it's crucial to make sure your company's blog stands out. In order to achieve this goal, make sure to avoid the following four mistakes that business owners often make when creating and curating content for their company blog.

Poor Writing

It stands to reason that if you're creating a blog for your company's website it should

be professional and speak well of your brand. For this reason, poor writing is the number one turn-off to customers.

If you have sloppy writing, bad grammar, misspelled words, typos, and other errors in your writing, there's a good chance your prospects won't return to your site.

Always ensure your writing is top notch, and if writing isn't your strong suit, hire a professional.

Lecturing Instead of Conversing

Your pamphlets and informational brochures are the places where you can make a presentation of your products or services.

On your company blog, however, you should avoid presenting and lecturing at all costs. This is the area of your company's site where you're conversing with and engaging your customer. Instead of telling them how wonderful your services are or simply talking about a new product, ask the customer questions, show them videos of how you make different things, and post engaging and interactive quizzes and games.

Your customers can find out about what your company does in many other places, but on your blog they should find out who your company is.

Lacking a Vision

A common mistake is to start a company blog with no idea where you're going with it, what the theme of it is, or how you intend to use it.

If you've ever listened to a child speak uninterrupted, you've likely noticed that they will start talking about their day at school and somehow wind up talking about their idea of what

a spaceship should look like.

That's exactly how your prospects and customers will feel reading your company's blog if you don't have a vision and a strategy. Make sure you know what you're trying to accomplish with your blog, and ensure that your readers can have a reasonable idea of what to expect when they visit. Variety is good, but make sure the overall blog is cohesive and focused.

Failing to Leverage Experience

What makes you stand out in your field? Why is your company so successful? Why should your customers trust you over the competition? If you don't answer these questions but simply regurgitate information that is already common knowledge, your blog loses its value. Make sure your customers know that you and your partners have a combined 50 years of experience in law, or that your company has provided over 2

million widgets to customers in 10 countries. Any experience you have in your field makes you and your company unique, so use that to gain your reader's trust.

Remember that your goal is to establish yourself as a thought leader in your field and as a trusted and helpful advisor. Your company blog is a great place to show you care about your prospects and customers by providing helpful, non-promotional information related to your field. If you sell insurance, for instance, put articles on your blog that tell your readers how to protect their homes from a fire. Write posts about what to expect during the bail bonds process if you're an attorney. If you sell baby toys, offer tips to help moms save time. These types of posts don't "hard sell" your product, but they provide valuable and useful information related to your business that will set you apart from your competition.





5 Ways to Promote Your Blog on Social Media

Whether you're blogging for business or just as a hobby in the hope of making a little extra money from on-site advertising, using up-to-date methods to promote it to ensure that it is reaching its intended audience is a large part of the battle, and this is where content marketing and social media come into play.

Millions of people share content on their favorite social networks every day, and the popularity of a piece of content, such as a blog post, on social media, also has a significant influence on its standing in the search results. Consider the following five key

tips for expanding the reach of your blog using the enormous potential of social media:

1 - Integrate Social Media

Social media and content now go hand-in-hand, and the line between them has become increasingly blurry in recent years.

Both components of the online marketing mix should work closely together, and you should integrate social media into your blog by providing sharing buttons along with your posts so that people can share

the content they like quickly and easily.

However, it is important not to use too many buttons, since doing so can confuse your readers: for most blogs, sharing buttons for Twitter, Facebook and Google+ are enough, plus an additional two or three for social networks that are more relevant to your particular audience.

2 - Share Your Posts

One of the first things that you should do once you have published a new blog post is

share it on your own social media profiles while encouraging others to do the same.

However, it is wise to avoid liking your own posts on Facebook, and while there's nothing wrong with sharing your own content, you should abide by the 20/80 rule whereby only 20% of the content that you post on social media is your own.

You should also share relevant content from other authors and become an active part of the community. Remember above all, that social media is not a platform only for speaking, but also for listening and participating.



3 - Publish Sharable Content

Most important is the actual content itself. There is great content that is sharable because it is useful, insightful or simply thoroughly entertaining in some way. On the other hand, there is content that provides so little value to its readers that no one is likely to share it.

Starting with an intriguing title that excites would-be readers through the clever use of an active tone, the content itself should be carefully researched, void of any errors and written in a scannable, Web-friendly format. Visual content tends to be among the most sharable of formats, and any blog can take advantage of images, infographics and videos as well as simple posts.

4 - Know Your Audience

The most important part of any form of promotion is knowing your audience in such a way that you know how, when and to whom to target your content. By knowing your audience, you'll have a better idea of what sort of content they want, which social networks they use and when they are most likely to be

active online.

For example, if you're a B2B business blogger, you'll likely find LinkedIn to be your most valuable social network, while a food or travel blogger can profit from making use of the visually orientated social networks such as Pinterest and Instagram. You should base your social media promotion schedule on your typical audience persona.

5 - Be Wary of Automation

While technology is making people's lives easier every year, an increasing dependence on it can quickly take away the human voice, and a perfect example of this is when Internet marketers lose their voice to automation.

If your social sharing strategy is entirely automated, people will start to notice, and they'll stop following you in droves. Social media marketing requires a consistent and ongoing human presence, and this means responding to people's replies instead of just relying on an automated post-scheduling tool that completely takes away the personality behind the blog that you are trying to market.

[BOOK YOUR STAY NOW](#)

Booking.com
PLANET EARTH'S #1 ACCOMMODATION SITE

4 Benefits of Outsourcing Your Content Creation



According to the Content Marketing Institute, some 93% of marketers already had a content marketing strategy in place by 2013, and this figure continues to grow as more companies come to recognize the benefits of providing value-adding content to their target audiences.

A report by the same organization also found that 72% of large companies outsourced their content creation, compared to 33% of small companies. However, many companies and entrepreneurs still approach outsourcing with a degree of hesitancy, fearing that it may cause them to lose their voice and compromise on quality.

In reality, outsourcing presents a great deal of advantages, provided that it is approached in the right manner.

Too many companies consider outsourcing to be nothing more than a cost-effective shortcut, often hoping for tangible results in return for very little money.

Others fail to maintain a clear line of communication with their freelance writers or content platforms, thus leading to disappointing results.

Ultimately, outsourcing presents a number of major advantages over in-house content creation, as you'll find out in this article.

1 - Save Money

According to payscale.com, the average salary of an in-house content writer is \$40,278 per year in the United States, though this figure is far higher for more experienced technical writers. By contrast, outsourcing your content creation allows you to pay for content on an as-needed basis, rather than having to fill a permanent job placement that you will still have to pay for even during periods of decreased demand.

Since outsourcing provides you with the opportunity to tap into a global writer's pool, you'll often be able to work with freelancers who are willing

to work for significantly less than in-house content writers sourced locally.

People living in countries with lower costs of living often charge less, although quality quickly gets compromised if you set your budget too low.

2 - Faster Turnaround

There are thousands of great writers out there, many of whom write full-time for a living. Outsourcing is highly scalable, and this allows you to get more done, particularly when there's a sudden spike in demand.

Content marketing requires persistence and long-term commitment as well as a great deal of effort, and oftentimes it simply isn't practical to have everything taken care of by an in-house team.

When you are managing multiple projects at the same time, outsourcing allows you to more evenly distribute the required work among multiple writers rather than overloading your own team.

Any reputable freelance writer or content platform takes deadlines very seriously, and you can easily lay your concerns regarding turnaround times to rest by doing a bit of research

before reaching out to new freelancers, either directly or via a content creation agency.

3 - Find the Expertise You Need

Outsourcing your content allows you to tap into an enormous, global writer's pool in such a way that you can take advantage of knowledge, abilities and experience that go beyond the capabilities of any in-house team.

Since you'll be able to work with writers from all over the world, you won't be restricted by the relatively limited human resources that are available in your area. By tapping into the skills of others, you'll be better equipped to ensure that you're getting quality results.

There are many people who have the business acumen to start a successful online business: they might be financial wizards, excellent Web designers, social media geniuses or a combination of these and much more.

However, not everyone can write great content, and even if they can, many companies and busy entrepreneurs simply don't have the time. By taking advantage of external content creation, you'll be

able to establish the thought leadership that your brand needs.

4 - Change Your Focus

As you already know, content creation takes a great deal of time and, while it is an important part of any modern digital marketing strategy, your in-house team, as well as yourself, will often be more productive and useful to your company if their efforts are focussed on something else.

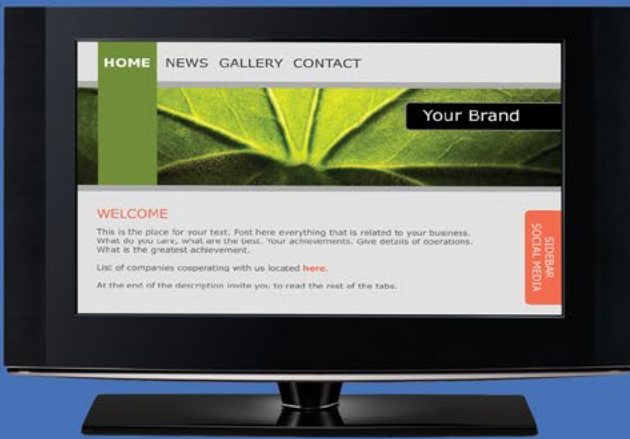
By outsourcing your content creation, you'll be able to focus more on your business itself as well as its products and services. You'll still have the final say over what gets published, particularly if you retain an in-house editorial team, but you will be able to free up your time for more important tasks.

Outsourcing all or part of your content creation will give your business breathing room to grow by freeing up in-house human resources and allowing you to focus on more important company goals and priorities.

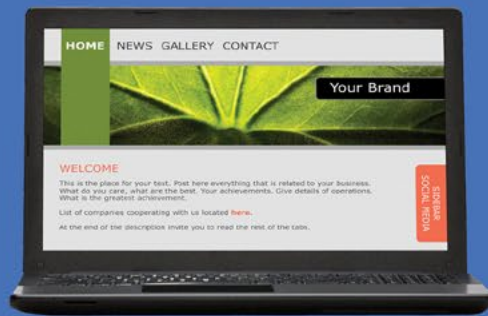
It might take time to build a reliable external team of writers, but the return on investment in the longer term can be extremely beneficial for your business.

Incredible Websites

Responsive - Effective - Affordable



Desktop



Laptop



Tablet



Phone

Need a new website? Let our talented team of designers develop a new, responsive website that will not only provide you with a professional representation of your company, but also be easily viewable and navigated on today's portable devices.

Get a free quote by calling us today.

(484) 893-4055



The 5 Best Crowdfunding Platforms for Small Businesses

Crowdfunding via online platforms is a relatively new concept, but it has the potential to be a powerful tool for any small business. With the help of strangers who are interested in your company or your products, a clever entrepreneur can take advantage of the opportunity that crowdfunding offers to generate funds for new ventures.

Below are some of the most promising and well-regarded crowdfunding platforms that every small business should pay attention to.

Kickstarter:

Kickstarter is nearly synonymous with crowdfunding, and for good reason. Kickstarter offers the largest audience, the most potential exposure for your project, and the highest chance of successful funding.

However, there are some caveats. The approval process

is much stricter than other crowdfunding platforms, meaning that your campaign is likely to be rejected if it doesn't fall within specific guidelines.

As well, Kickstarter can't be used to fund a business in the broadest sense; instead, it can be used as a way to fund research and development related to specific products or technologies.

Finally, funding is not awarded unless the project meets its funding goal, regardless of how close you get, which makes Kickstarter a riskier prospect for some projects.

IndieGoGo:

Unlike Kickstarter, IndieGoGo can be used to fund anything and everything, and there is no formal review process required to set up a campaign.

This makes IndieGoGo one of the most versatile

crowdfunding options for any small business, since it can be used for anything from startup capital to production costs.

However, this also means that IndieGoGo campaigns stand a much higher chance of being unsuccessful, since the audience is much smaller and more spread out.

IndieGoGo is available worldwide, making it ideal for international businesses, and the platform also eliminates the stress and frustration involved with an all-or-nothing funding system.

RocketHub:

RocketHub is an interesting crowdfunding alternative that offers several unique benefits.

Through a partnership with A&E Project Start Up, RocketHub has the potential to offer increased visibility and extra support, and the platform's Success School

provides resources to help you optimize your campaign.

The downside of RocketHub is that traffic is significantly lower than most of the other top crowdfunding platforms. While this means that there are less campaigns to compete with, it also means there are fewer people willing to help fund your project.

Patreon:

Patreon is unique in that it operates on a subscription-based funding model--in other words, supporters pay a small set amount each month instead of donating a single lump sum. This also means that many small businesses aren't going to

be well-suited to Patreon.

However, if your business involves consistent, long-term content output, it may be worth considering Patreon for your crowdfunding needs. Entrepreneurs involved in the arts, such as fledgling music labels, independent presses, or visual artists, are ideal candidates for the kind of funding that Patreon provides.

Crowdfunder:

Unlike other reward-based crowdfunding platforms, Crowdfunder operates on an investment model. This means that funds for your business are raised in exchange for equity or promise of future return.

Currently, only accredited investors are able to provide funding through Crowdfunder, making it the most restrictive option, but it also means that it has enormous potential for any small business project with high funding goals.

While some platforms are more suitable than others for certain projects, virtually any small business can use crowdfunding as a way to generate funds.

Whether your goal is to launch a startup, raise money for research and development, or increase production, the crowdfunding platforms above are a great place to find supporters.

Is Your Website Mobile Friendly?

Over 50% of all online searches are now performed on a mobile device.



With Google's Recent Algorithm change, having a mobile-friendly website is more important than ever!

**Call Us for a Free Evaluation
of your Current Site
(484) 893-4055**



News You Should Know

Ransomware Attacks Increasing

Small businesses around the world are falling victim to “ransomware,” which occurs when malicious code locks up computer files and cybercriminals demand a ransom to release access to them. As with many computer viruses, ransomware often begins with a fraudulent email. Once the attachment is opened, the computer and the business’ network is attacked. The files are encrypted, and access to the files is denied.

A ransom note will pop up on the infected computer, requiring payment within a certain time period, in exchange for the data being unlocked.

While upsetting, business owners will often pay the fine to gain access to their files instead of trying to fight it. The ransom payment is normally a few hundred dollars, making it a difficult decision between fighting back and simply paying them off.

Small businesses can be particularly vulnerable because they often have less sophisticated computer defenses. Bitcoin is a preferred method of payment, because the use of bitcoin makes payments difficult to track.

YouTube To Offer Paid, Ad-Free, Service

Within the next few months, YouTube will be offering a paid subscription program, which will offer ad-free videos and other subscriber benefits.

Subscribers will have access to all videos on YouTube, shown ad-free, as well as the ability to store videos offline on their mobile devices, for a price expected to be around \$10 a month. It will also let creators put their videos behind a paywall so that only subscribers to the premium version can view them, sources said.

Google is alerting content creators because it wants them to agree to new terms that would let it include clips in the subscription product.

LOCAL BUSINESS
MARKETING

***Coming in Next
Month's Issue:***

***Paid Online
Advertising***

- *How to leverage online marketing platforms to grow your business.*

Subscribe today by visiting our website

<http://LMSsuccess.com>

Today's Consumer is Mobile

2 Billion number of smartphones worldwide.



63% adult smartphone owners don't go an hour without checking their phone



73% of people say they text, email and check social media during meals with family and friends.

200 On average, people engage with their mobile device 200 times a day

46% of people say they text, email and check social media during meals with family and friends.



90% get dressed, brush their teeth and check their smartphones as part of their morning routine.

75% of Millennials are disconnected for an hour or less per day.

75% people use smartphones in bed.



>33% of people use smartphones in the bathroom.



22% of digital purchases are made on a mobile device

85% say that their mobile device is a central part of their everyday life



20% admit to texting while driving

\$68 Billion will be spent on mobile advertising in 2015

***Is Your Marketing
Missing
Something?***

***We Might Be The
Missing Piece!***



***Call Today For A
FREE Consultation!***



(484) 893-4055

www.LMSsuccess.com