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WHY HAVE A BLOG AND HOW TO GET TRAFFIC THERE

by Bill Caskey

We've toyed around a lot with "should sales people have blogs and podcasts?" And we've arrived at a temporary conclusion.

Yes, when the creation of one will help you generate more discussions with prospects, help hold you out as an expert or will help you network to get to the right people.

Sales 2.0 is all about being different—being a resource—being an expert.

Here are some other reasons you should have a blog. Then we'll talk about the "how" of blogging.

1. **It holds you out as an expert.** In this age, expert status means something. And one thing that you bring expertise to is the ability to spot and solve problems for customers. If you hold yourself out that way—and you should—then when you're speaking with a prospect who wants to know more about you, you simply send them to your blog.
2. **It Gets You More Engaged.** Sometimes, sales professionals can be seen as a piece of property. "He's the guy that sells and brings in business." In many companies, they don't even think you have a brain and can formulate new thoughts. Yet, there is no one inside the company that has a pulse on the market—and the problems of the market—like you do. Consequently, you become more engaged and grow

personally when you write and create content around your business.

3. **You Become The Media.** With a blog, **you are the media.** You can call that hard-to-reach prospect and say "Can I interview you for my blog? I'm writing an article on 'best in the industry.'"
4. **Forces You To Think.** Each week or several times/week (preferable) you need to come up with content. Your brain is a muscle. The more you use it to write, the more ideas will come to you. You'll start to see blog ideas EVERYWHERE. But it'll take awhile. The best place to begin is a 10 part series on "The Ten Problems Facing Our Industry." That should take you about a month to do those 10. Post one at a time. From that, you'll begin receiving comments—and more ideas.
5. **Helps Get Speaking Events.** As a Sales 2.0 practitioner, you must be in front of audiences. You need to be speaking on problems facing companies in your market. You have more power in front of a room than you do one-on-one. So, get in front of groups. Have handouts. Have worksheets. The blog helps you get there. And you can promote your blog at these events.

HOW

Simple. Find someone who has built many blog sites and tell them you're new and ask them to build it for \$250. It shouldn't cost more than that. You can go to Elance.com and bid it out. Make sure you know exactly what functionality you need. The most important part is the banner. Have a professional designer do that. Have your pic in it if you want. But have it done right.

Here are some thoughts on functionality:

- Typical blog platforms have Categories, Must Reads, and Blogrolls “where you can link to other blogs.” Every blogging platform has those.
- Feedburner. Get a feedburner account so that people can subscribe to your blog either by RSS or email. We prefer email.
- Blogging Platform. We like Wordpress. It’s the industry standard and it’s free. But don’t let Wordpress host it for you. Have your elancer create hosting as well. Costs about \$60/year.
- Wordpress has a function so you can see who else is linking to your00-or writing about you.

TRAFFIC

There are many ways to get traffic to a website, but a few things to understand first, conceptually, so you’ll see why you’re doing what you’re doing.

Getting people to your site is key but CONVERSION is as well. In this document, we’re just going to talk about TRAFFIC.

The facts are hard to refute. 85% of your prospects will go to your website sometime during the sales process. And it’s the way more and more B2B buyers are beginning the sales process. They’re finding you, rather than taking your call.

There is no ONE THING that Google sees. There are many things that go into the pot. Here are some facts/tips.

1. This is not an overnight deal. It takes time. But once you begin to think about things correctly, it will be tough to unseat you in the Google rankings.
2. Google will be the source of most of your search traffic. Yahoo and MSN are other

engines, but most will come from Google. Each engine has slightly different algorithyms but focusing on Google is your best bet.

3. Google only wins in their game if they show RELEVANT and FRESH content when someone searches on a term. They are invested in your success. If your content meets their criteria you win, too. They’ll reward you.
4. Blogs are better for the search engines that static websites, because they are in constant change. You should be blogging 2-3 x per week with good content.
5. You must make sure Google indexes all of your pages on your site. To do this, a SITE MAP helps. But you can check to see how many pages are indexed by going to Google and entering in “site: yoursite.com.” You don’t have to use WWW.
6. You must also make sure Google is sending its spiders often. **The more frequently you post, the more often they’ll come.** Search on a term, find your site and click on CACHE. In the upper portion, you’ll see the last time they came. It’s usually 3-5 days in arrears. If it’s more than one month, you’re not posting enough.
7. There are two methods of getting noticed by Google: OFF PAGE and ON PAGE.
 - a. Off Page are the Meta tags and Meta descriptions that you have assigned to your site. Your web master will do that. Go to VIEW SOURCE when you see a site and you’ll see the META stuff. Make sure it’s high up in the VIEW SOURCE. Think of as many keywords as you can that actually relate to the content you’re posting. Write them all down and make sure that you use these as Meta key words. They are also important for your post titles, topics and Categories.

- b. On Page is the content itself. The words you write, the images you have, the links that go out and come in, the title of your post and the tags you put on them.
 - i. Every image should have an ALT TAG that describes it. If it's a pic of one of your AE's, then tag it with AE-BillSmith.jpg. See #10
8. Another VERY important part of how high Google ranks are INBOUND LINKS. You can find how many sites link to yours. Go to Google search and put in link: yoursite.com. Those inbound links are VERY important to Google since that shows that other people (sites) recommend you. As in life, the higher the stature of the recommender (more visitors) the more credence Google gives to the link to you. That's called LINK REPUTATION. If you get a link from CNN.COM, it has 'better reputation' than eddieandethel.com (no offense to Uncle Eddie and Aunt Ethel.) Here are some other ways to get in bound links.
- a. Articles: syndication, this includes the many article marketing sites, where you can publish your articles that link back to your site. Some include Ezinearticles.com, articlebase.com, submityourarticles.com and others.
 - b. PR News Wires: If you have frequent news coming out of your company, online press releases that link back to your site are good. PR sites count well in link reputation. www.prweb.com is a good one. You'll pay about \$120 for a release that you can put a jpeg in or even audio/video.
 - c. Media Sites: youtube, podcast, revver, googlevideo. Every time you have a video (and we would suggest you do them often—2-5 minute tutorials are good) you should post it to ALL video sites. There are about 10 major ones. Make sure that each one links back to your site. One tip is to go to TUBEMOGUL.com and get an account there. Then, you upload the video once to them, and they'll distribute it to the other video sites. Quite slick. Plus these can host videos that you insert in your blog posts. We use viddler.com.
 - d. Social Media Sites: Myspace, facebook, squidoo, scribd.com, socialmark.com. These are excellent ways to build links. Srcibd.com is interesting. There, you can upload any document you wish—an article—old email newsletters—chapters of books—and Google will spider it.
 - e. Recommender sites: Technorati, Digg, Delicio.us. Sites where the general public can say "I dig this site" help you. Go to technorati.com and sign up for an account. Put your blog in there. The more blogs you have the better.
 - f. Comments to other blogs: Another way to get links is to post comments on high traffic sites. Make sure you put your website in your comment. Don't just spam them. Say something meaningful. Most bloggers will acknowledge your comment.
 - g. Be on other blogger's Blogrolls. You should have a Blogroll on your site and let people to whom you're linking know. They may return the favor.
9. Competition. You can go to your competitor's site in a market and find out how they are getting traffic. Look at the site size (index) and the inbound links (#8). Don't get too hung up with what they're doing. But it is worth exploring.
10. Content. The best way to get people coming to your site—and have Google recognize you as an **authority site (one worthy of reputation)** is to post frequently. From those posts, Google can recognize the site theme and then spider you accordingly. That's why every blog site should have a theme. Google is smart though. If you want to be recognized in

yellow shovels, don't just do a bunch of posts where you mention 'yellow shovels' a hundred times. It has to be natural. Don't try to game the system. They'll game you back. Post 3x/week. Post 100-300 word posts. Title the posts with a keyword you want to rank for. Make sure to put it in the beginning of the lead paragraph.

- a. Add multi media to your posts. If you see a favorite You Tube video on your topic area, pull the code and post it to your site. And make videos that others will want to post on their site.

11. **Your Action Goal** should be as follows:

- a. Post 3x/week to your own blog with relevant content and key words in title.
- b. **Comment** on 10 blogs/week with a link back to your site.
- c. Submit 5 **articles** per month to article sites. They can be similar to blogs. 500w+. Two good ones are www.submityourarticles.com and www.ezinearticles.com and ideamarketers.com. Make sure all of your contact information is good. After one year, you should have 30-50 articles. You can use blog posts and make modifications to them so they aren't exactly the same. Also, try Alltop.com. It's a site created by Guy Kawasaki.
- d. Submit one **press release** per month to PRWeb. That is, if you have something that's newsworthy.
- e. Publish a **video** once per week. Think of four things that you want to video. Get a camera (\$300) and Sony Movie Maker. And make your own. If it's a video you'll use on the front page of your site, then have someone professional do it. Never spend more than \$1000 on a 2-3 minute video.
- f. Publish a **podcast** once per week. You should also post it to your blog. You can get a podcast host through

Libsyn.com. You'll pay \$10-20/month for that and they'll send your podcasts to iTunes. Then use your podcast as a marketing tool. Interview national experts. Send out emails to your e-list letting them know when you have an interview. Interview clients who have had great experiences with you. Then, take those interviews and compile an audio CD of it so your sales team can hand them out to clients. Begin to think of yourself as THE MEDIA. You are CONTENT PROVIDERS.

- g. Publish a **Video Article** as well. Take an article that you wrote, speak it into a microphone, then line up as a PowerPoint. Some people will learn more by engaging two senses (hearing/seeing) than one. Plus it adds to your credibility.



Our Services

Caskey is a sales development firm in Indianapolis. You might know us as podcasters and bloggers but there's a whole lot more behind the scenes to know. We help organizations specifically in many ways:

- Training Teams, Developing Company Leaders, Creating Messages of Value, Designing Successful Sales Processes, Engaging in High Level Skills Training (Sales, Communication, Process Management).

We do this in the following ways

Speeches and EVENTS. This includes 1q hour speaking gigs to 2 or 3 days Training Events with your team.

Teleseminars. Many of our clients supplement their face to face training with remote work, like teleseminars or webinars.

Personal Coaching. We have an arm of the business totally dedicated to working with people one on one (in person or on phone). This is typically for the high achievers who needs work at a different level than the entry level person.

Ongoing Group Sessions. We believe that adults don't learn well in one time events. Instead, they work best when they have a chance to try new things, new thoughts, new tactics and report back to the group and trainer about their success. Our most effective programs are long term and on going in nature.



Notes