



Entrepreneurship Research

















The International Journal

ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES

ISSN 2345-0282 (online) http://jssidoi.org/jesi/aims-and-scope-of-research/
2015 Volume 2 Number 3 (March)

ENTREPRENEUSHIP AND BLOG MARKETING

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Received 10 November 2014; accepted 5 January 2015

Abstract. Article analyse blog marketing theoreticla aspects. Blogging is no longer just an individual's hobby; it has become an influential tool impacting sustainability of entrepreneurial activity. It has created an even playing field among businesses, allowing to compete with the Fortune 500 companies. You do not need millions of euros to maintain a blog; it simply requires someone educated in your field or even willing to do research in order to consistently update and educate your readers. In the presented paper blog marketing peculiarities are being discussed.

Keywords: entrepreneurship, blogs, blogs marketing, marketing

Reference to this paper should be made as follows: Išoraitė, M. 2015. Entrepreneuship and blog marketing, *Entrepreneurship and Sustainability Issues* 2(3): 171–178.

DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.9770/jesi.2014.2.3(6)

JEL Classifications: M31, M37

1. Introduction

Sustainability of entrepreneurial activity depends on creativity and innovations (Laužikas, Mokšeckienė 2013; Wahl, Prause 2013; Raišienė, Jonušauskas 2013; Tvaronavičienė 2014; Caurkubule, Rubanovskis 2014). (Blogging has been a steadily increasing practice for most companies over the past few years, regardless of size, specialty and location. Blogs are part of a company's owned media. Blog content is owned by your organization and can be integrated into company website. Unlike other third-party and social media outposts, you don't need to worry about whether they'll disappear or go o firm's owned media, blogs offer a branded context for your communications through the use of blog design elements that can be exported with the content. You can extend your brand without paying for third party media. Blogs integrate your brand into your content marketing. Beyond the blog's branded context, blogs create a blog personality with a unique voice. They offer communications transparency and the opportunity to write in a conversational tone that makes your brand feel "human". Just be sure to avoid content that is clearly self-promotional, and ensure your blog personality is integrated with your brand personality across other social media platforms. Objective of this article – blogs marketing. Main purpose of article – analyses blogs marketing theoretical aspects. Research methods – literature study and analyses methods.

2. Blogs theoretical aspects

As stated Neti (2011) social media, today, is among the 'best opportunities available' to a brand for connecting with prospective consumers. Social media is the medium to socialize. These new media win the trust of consumers by connecting with them at a deeper level. Social media marketing is the new mantra for several brands since early last year. As states Rockey (2013) we learned a lot about our constituents' interests and needs through the blog, and we have been able to highlight behind-the-scenes data, actively engage the community in policy-making and provide insight into our decisions. Without public input, effective and impactful policy cannot be created. The logging experience has convinced that using social-media platforms is one effective way for science-funding agencies to successfully support research. Social media includes a variety of applications that, using technical terms, allow consumers to post, tag, digg, blog. This content created by social media is a type of newly generated resource for online information that is created, spread, and used by consumers desiring to educate each other about products, brands, services, and problems (Xiang and Gretzel 2010). Vinerean et al. (2013) noted that social media allows customers and prospects to communicate directly to your brand representative or about your brand with their friends. However, the obvious question is: who are the people interacting online and how engaged are they in online activities? The Internet and especially social media have changed how consumers and marketers communicate. Advantages of internet is that it enables businesses to reach a worldwide customer population and help select, and purchase products and services from businesses around the world (Al Kailani and Kumar 2011).

Since 1998, weblogs (or 'blogs') have gained increasing notice in the cyber space communitybecause even people without programming experience canalso easily update and publish thei rpersonal websites (Blood (2002)). More and more foreign educators have applied this user-friendly technology to classroom instruction and language learning (Campbell (2003); however, it seems that relatively few English teachers have ever used blogs in an EFL writing class here in Taiwan. As stated Wen-shuenn Wu (2008) there are many websites featuring free blog hosting services. Creating a blogat Blogger will be used as an example here to give clear instruction. After you enter Blogger website (http://www.blogger.com), it will take you only about ten minutes to create a personal blog. Blogger offers 3 easy steps to create a blog – (1) create an account, (2) name your blog, and (3) choose a template.I n the first step, you only have to fill in all the basic information such as user name, password, and email, etc. Then, you have to give your blog a title and decide its URL address.

Even for technology experts, statistics on blogging may be somewhat surprising. Theblogosphere, which is the term for the collection of all blogs on the Internet, is made up of more than 60 million individual blogs, and the number is growing daily (Tanuja Singh *et al.* (2008). There are approximately 50,000 - 70,000 blogs launched every day, with 29,100 updates every hour (Martin (2005). Approximately 90% are U.S.-based (Martin (2005), although blogs are also gaining momentum in the UK, across Europe, and in Asia, particularly in China despite recent attempts to regulate content.

As state Pal and Kapur (2010) corporate blogs present a more human face to the organization and its business and provide an opportunity for interaction with stakeholders, employees and consumers. Blogs have been successfully used in mature markets and present new opportunities and challenges for their adoption and efficient use by companies operating in emerging markets. Schmidt (2007) stated, that "in order to fully explain aspects of social life, one has to connect the micro-level of individual action and the macro-level of social structures by explaining the mechanisms of how the macro-level structures are framing the micro-level actions, and how the micro-level actions are in turn (re)producing the macro-level structures". Applied to the of blogs, this approach follows to the idea of blogging practices, which in the most general sense consist of individual episodes in which a blogger uses specific software to attain specific communicative goals.

Exist differences in writing style between male and female bloggers (Schler *et al.* 2006), and Herring and Paolillo (2006) have shown that these differences can mainly be explained by differing blog genres. Schmidt (2007) stated that speaking in one's own personal voice and being open for dialogue rather than engaging in one-way-communication are core elements readers have come to expect from blog communication, be it in private online journals, corporate blogs, or political blogs. As Pedersen and Macafee (2007) stated, that "is now possible

to make money from blogging by selling advertising space on one's blog, the perception that women's blogs are less popular than men's puts women bloggers at an economic, as well as a social, disadvantage". There was the establishment of the BlogHer movement in the U.S. (http://blogher.org/), with the mission to create opportunities for women bloggers to gain exposure, pursue education, and create community. As Eltantawy (2013) stated that the final paper, Courtney C. Radsch and Sahar Khamis's "In their own voice: technologically mediated empowerment and transformation among young Arab women", offers up the findings from a qualitative feminist study of Arab female activists. The paper presented in-depth interviews with over twenty Arab female bloggers, citizen journalists, and activists to argue that these female activists utilize social media to make their voices heard and create new forms of leadership and empowerment. Arab women's cyberactivism has proved to be a valuable alternative source of news for journalists around the world who are interested in more nuanced insights into the Arab Spring uprisings.

The blogs can be divided in three large categories, depending on their subject daily (Tanuja Singha et al. 2008):

- personal where subjects of personal interest are debated (approximately 80% of all blogs are included here);
- occupational -centred upon subjects relating to a profession and to professional training, but without being written from the stand of an official spokesman of a company (many times the occupational and personal blogs are mixed when it comes to the chosen subject):
- corporate —blogs officially maintained and supported by the company the blogger is a part of (approximately 12% of bloggers blog in an official capacity for their company).

Blogs assigned to specialized websites or general areas of the site which are posted frequently appear in publications, arranged in chronological order, which the authors of the so-called bloggers (blogger) express their thoughts, describe events, sightings, spread their ideas and opinions. Blogs mostly commented on the chosen topic content such as music, movies, food, politics, or news, and many bloggers act as personal diaries. A typical blog consists of text, images and links to other blogs, web pages or other blog with topics relevant information. Blog posts consist of name, the main part link - the full article or blog URL address, date - record the date and time. Additional parts – comments. A person who regularly makes out a blog called blogger (called blogger). All blogs consist of the so-called blogosphere (blogosphere). It may consist of various elements. Generally blogosphere is a relatively new web subculture phenomenon satisfies the social, psychological and informational communication needs of second generation web component.

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In 1994 Justin Hall first created a blog. Later, a similar form of magazines began to fill many of the other companies in the IT sector workers, journalists and writers. The blogs became popular very bad appearance of automated systems such as LiveJournal, Blogger, Open Diary. The greatest role in the formation of the Lithuanian blogosphere has Blog.hardcore.lt and Blogas.lt blog hosting service. Most blogs are text, but popular and PHOTOBLOG and other forms of evil. Blogs are one of the social, civil, popular journalism part.

3. Blog marketing

As noticed Assaad and Gómez (2011) "a blog (a blend of the term "web log") is a type of website or a part of a website. Blogs are usually maintained by an individual with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video." When you know a blog, you should think about blog marketing. According Filimon *et al.* (2010) the relation between blogs and marketing are closely related:

1. the role of blog/blogs in the marketing policy promoted by the company (the blog is seen here as being an instrument used to promote the products/services of a company/organization);

2. the role of the marketing in promoting blogs (the blog is seen here as a product that must be promoted through different marketing tools).

Blog marketing means implementing a marketing strategy to grow and scale the impact of your blog. Your blog becomes a more effective individual marketing asset within your business. Blog marketing' meant "using a blog to market your business." Your business was the center of your galaxy, and your various marketing assets – email, social media, landing pages. Among the top business blog goals are to:

- Build the brand by providing content to support your offering. This information should engage prospective customers.
- Expand reach by offering prospective buyers solutions to their product needs though a variety of content forms such as checklists and how-to videos.
- Support sales by giving potential buyers useful information. The specifics depend on your products. It can be a 360-degree video to show clothing details and fit or a list of technology specifications.
- Position senior executive(s) by spotlighting their thought leadership. This can be important for firms that are strongly associated with their founders. It requires buy-in and commitment from executives to actively post.

There are three critical steps in blog marketing that will teach you:

- 1) Get Your Blog, discovered, attract brand new readers and traffic to your blog.
- 2) Converting visitors into subscribers convert visitors into subscribers who stick around and keep coming back.
- 3) Leveraging evangelists, tap into the networks of your current subscribers and evangelists to share your content and attract a brand new audience.

Some companies use blog for tactical task. Companies that use blogs as a marketing tool to specifically drive traffic to their site, or as a promotional tactic, can be classified as tactical use companies. This category includes companies such as Budget Rent A Car, Honda, and Guinness. For example, the Budget Rent A Car company blog enables users to post stories of travels and adventures while also offering them the ability to register for gifts and other promotional offerings. This type of blog clearly uses the medium in an integrative manner, but also links customers with specific promotional events. More and more people are building blogs, and that means there are lots of blogs competing for the same eyeballs and your blog is just one of many. Try finding accurate figures on how many blogs there are and you will know it's impossible to find a verifiable number because bloggers and their blogs come and go. Look around. It's certainly a disheartened moment when you see blogs with quality articles that have been abandoned by their creators.

Important thins in blogs marketing are:

- 1. Target your content to a specific readership. Unless you want to throw all of your marketing budget and precious time on people who could care less about your blog, then you must pay attention to determine the preferred audiences to whom you would like to target. Before posting any piece, determine if it hits the sweet spot of your demographic.
- 2. Be original, be honest. Don't follow the herd within your sphere of interest. Followers aren't innovators and innovation keeps readers reading. So, don't simply spin the same old post. Take an original slant on a common topic. Be honest. Verify your facts and provide links to additional verification. Readers trust you to be a good reporter, instructor, mentor or inspiration so keep it honest at all times.
- 3. Don't be afraid of a little controversy. Controversy sells. You and I know that. If it is a part of your business model, be prepared to engage others with differing opinions because, guaranteed, lots of readers will disagree, and you may even encounter a few trolls and haters who frequent blogs for no other purpose than to post inflammatory garbage.
- 4. Post as a guest blogger. Don't post to just any blog within your realm. Submit your best pieces to the prestigious blogs the ones that already have a substantial following. For example, Hongkiat.com is considered by industry insiders to be one of the best blogs for designers, marketers and freelancers. Getting one of your posts published on a top of the line blog is a great way to drive traffic to your blog where readers can find tons of content all your archives just waiting for a bookmark.

- 5. Simplify subscriptions. Don't hide your RSS button down the page together with your WordPress theme credit links, make them visible & clear for your reader's eyeballs.
- 6. Social Media Marketing. The expansion of social media and the evolution of multi-generational media apps are only going to pick up steam. Social media sites have taken off, providing bloggers with an arsenal of tools based on the guerrilla-marketing axiom: Use the resources of others to your advantage. A few years back, Twitter didn't exist. Today, not only is it ubiquitous, it spawned a whole new level of web innovation and interactivity. Follow the rules & open accounts at Facebook, LinkedIn & Twitter. Every time you make a new post to your blog, let your readers know about it by posting to these popular sites. Update your status with interesting & latest news that fascinates your readers.
- 7. Create different profiles for each social media site. On LinkedIn, you want to be all about business. On Facebook, show a little of your personality the carbon-based life form behind the blog. On Twitter, shine the spotlight on your blog. Each profile should be designed to show a different facet of you and your expertise.
- 8. Don't oversell. Teach, too. If you post to social media sites all day long, flogging your latest blog post, it won't be long before your Facebook friends hit the hide button next to your name. It can't be all selling and no sizzle. Instead, post information on a new blog piece, but also post news from other sites that you think will benefit your readers. Know when to stop pushing for a larger readership and when to start giving away information to drive more readers to your blog.
- 9. Long tail keywords get you found. If you maintain a book review blog, a broad keyword like books will keep you buried in the backwash of Google's SERPs. Instead, narrow the focus of a search engine search through the use of terms and phrases, broadly referred to as long tail keywords. So, instead of using "books" as a primary keyword, use a long-tail keyword like "independent book reviews" or "book reviews of current bestsellers." Sure, not as many people will use these long tails when conducting a search but those who do will discover your blog at the top of page 1. And that's just where you want to be.
- 10. Optimize your blog Both for readers & bots.Cut the clutter of 23 affiliate banners, animated adverts and other distractions. Remember, your site should be attractive to human sensibilities. Indeed, it's important to look good to readers who follow you. It's just as important to look good to search engine spiders. Conduct keyword research using tools like Google's keyword generator that provides keywords used by actual Google users over the past 30 days. Place those keywords in headlines, sub heads and a few of them in your blog posts. If you don't know much about SEO, grab yourself a cup of coffee & start reading the comprehensive list of search engine ranking factor provided by Seomoz. The pace of innovation is only going to increase in this new decade so, if you're standing still you're losing ground to competitor bloggers. Stay current, use all the new tools and follow all the new rules.

Blog marketing also deals with promotion. As noticed According Filimon *et al.* (2010) the promotion of a blog can be do ne through methods such as:

- posting comments on other blogs relevant for the topic of your own blog;
- by optimizing the blog's content in order to have a better position in the results given by search engines when certain key words are looked for;
- taking into consideration the major role that search engines grant to the number of links made for a certain blog/post in assessing the rank of that certain blog.;
- promoting the blog on socialization networks, such as: Facebook, My Space, Twitter;
- promoting it with the help of short videos (exciting, interesting, fun) posted on YouTube, Google Video or other sites of video hosting; carefully monitoring and studying the traffic generated by the blog by using specialized tools, such as

Google Analytics, StatCounter, SiteMeter.

According Onalytica (2006) data on table 1 shows the 20 most influential authorities on the topic "blog marketing". The table also shows their popularity.

Table 1. The most influential authorities on the topic "blog marketing"

Name	Website	Influence	Popularity
NY Times	www.nytimes.com	10.45	10.45
Hyku	www.hyku.com	8.79	2.28
Seth Godin	sethgodin.typepad.com	8.62	8.89
Micropersuasion	www.micropersuasion.com	7.22	10.21
Businessweek	www.businessweek.com	7.03	9.13
Clickz	www.clickz.com	7.01	7.68
Wired News	www.wired.com	6.66	7.32
Next Level Biz Tips	nextlevelpartner.typepad.com	6.31	2.76
WebPro News	www.webpronews.com	5.83	6.84
Search Engine Watch	blog.searchenginewatch.com	5.76	5.52
Fast Company	www.fastcompany.com	5.23	4.44
Top Rank Results	www.toprankresults.com	5.17	4.80
Marketing Sherpa	www.marketingsherpa.com	4.72	5.04
ProBlogger	www.problogger.net	4.66	5.40
AllBusiness	www.allbusiness.com	4.42	1.68
Gaping Void	www.gapingvoid.com	4.08	4.20
Buzzmachine	www.buzzmachine.com	3.95	5.04
Church Of The Customer Blog	customerevangelists.typepad.com	3.94	3.84
Twist Image	www.twistimage.com	3.81	1.20
Adrants	www.adrants.com	3.81	5.28

Source: Onalytica (2006)

The table shows that New York Times is the most influential authority on "blog marketing". Interestingly enough it is also the most popular.

4. Blog Marketing Strategies

Regardless of your product, blogs can be an integral part of a marketing strategy. This doesn't necessarily mean running out to start one. There are other ways to harness this fast-growing medium's power:

- Gather market intelligence. Monitor public buzz to determine how your brand and close competitors are faring. Knowing where, why, and how you're being trashed (or praised) in a public forum allows you to respond appropriately -- and quickly. Any angry customer or disgruntled former employee can launch a blog at no cost. They may even get higher search rankings than your brand.
- Engage bloggers by commenting on key business topics. Read blogs related to your product or company to understand the blogger's perspective and audience. Strategically respond to postings to initiate dialogue. More genuine that a PR pitch, this approach can also help correct misinformation.
- Advertise on blogs to reach influencials, target a niche audience, or extend a media buy's reach. Though only about 25 percent of Internet users (about 32 million) currently read blogs, they tend to influence other's thinking. Bloglines readers check an average of 20 blogs daily. Informal BlogAds research shows blog readers are high consumers of expensive, well-researched content, such as *The Economist* and *The New Yorker*. Blogs vary in size, approach, and ad opportunities. You can advertise directly on a blog that reaches your target market or through an advertising network such as BlogAds or Pheedo. Banners and text copy must be contextually relevant. As users visit often, it's important to change ad content frequently to prevent impression fatigue. One option is create a dialogue with a series of related ads.
- Humanize your company with corporate blogs. One or more employees, the CEO included, may blog.
 Corporate blogs require a level of transparency. As a result, they may not work for all types of companies. Corporate bloggers must have access to, and support from, senior management, PR, and legal.
- Build business or brand by connecting with consumers. Both small businesses and major corporations can use blogs to build closer relationships with their customers. Best Buy created the entertaining Slothmore Institute. The only connection to Best Buy is the sponsored ads.

Blogs help in brand building for the company by employee bloggers & co-branding by consumers/ online audience. There are many companies where employee bloggers attract attention by posting fresh and interesting information that in turn improves the image and reputation of the company daily (Tanuja Singha *et al.* (2008)).

There is some blogs marketing steps:

- 1) Define your business goals. Get specific about it. Maybe you want to double your income. Maybe you want to double your email list.
- 2) Define your existing audience and your ideal audience. Now that you've defined what you're going to do, define who you're doing it for. I.e.: Who's your ideal customer, client, or reader?
- 3) Determine what's worked best in the past. Basically, this means doing a content audit. Now don't panic. Content audits are not like tax audits.
- 4) Determine what content marketing tactics might work that you haven't tried yet.
- 5) Determine how much time and resources it will take to create the content you want, given the results you've been getting thus far.
- 6) Trim your plan down to fit the hours you actually have.
- 7) Plan out what your progress will look like, day by day, for the next three months.

Conclusions

Blogging was initially used as a unique platform to share a person's thoughts, feelings, opinions or experiences – an online journal or diary with a minimal following. Today it has grown into a platform used by millions, everyone from individuals to businesses. The simplicity of a blog makes it easy for anyone to launch a blog and become a self-proclaimed "expert." But how is it important in the business world?

A company blog can:

- Improve Your Website's SEO (search engine optimization)
- Increase Traffic to Your Website via inbound links
- Enforce Your Brand as an Expert in a Particular Field

One of the most recently recognized benefits of blogging as a business is a blog's ability **to** improve your website's SEO. As discussed in "Google's Love for Content," Google has recently improved their algorithm to heavily focus on a website's content and frequency of posts/updates. Therefore if a blog is well-managed, meaning regularly updated and based on relevant topics to your business, it will increase your website's SEO. A company blog will also allow you to increase the number of relevant inbound links that will direct readers to the main parts of your website. This, along with SEO, will allow you to increase traffic to your website and the length of time that visitors spend on your site. Another benefit to having a company blog is that it's content gives your customers or readers the confidence to trust in you and your brand as an expert in your particular field. Many times this benefit is overlooked. There are readers at the other end of your blog, whether or not this is your main reason for building one. Keeping this in mind, you will be able to enforce a stronger brand connection with your readers and hopefully encourage those readers to return to your site for other relevant information or even purchases.

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