

BLOGGING Starts with a Good Story

By Matthew A. Perosi

There is a story to tell about everything; you just need to understand how to tell the story that's both interesting and creates sales. The in-person telling of captivating stories to customers is a common sales technique. The same storytelling sales technique is also available to you online; that's what we call it a website log, or blog for short.

Several years ago, prior to the creation of social media, people were more inclined to set up blogging accounts to tell stories about the simple events of their day. Back then instead of simply "liking" these stories, friends would often time leave insightful comments.

Today blogging has turned into a method of attracting customers to your website and to your brick and mortar store. To get started with blogging you first need to choose which blogging software or service you will use. Popular services for beginners include blogger.com and tumblr.com, more advanced users might prefer WordPress since it has more options. There are many different blogging systems from which to choose, and you will have to figure out which is best for you.

When it comes to choosing between blogging software that runs on your website (like WordPress) or software that doesn't (like blogger) I recommend the former type for a very specific reason. When someone visits a blog installed on your retail store's website, you have a chance to transact business. However, if they are reading a separate blog then you still need to get them to click another link before you even have a chance at making a sale.

Therefore, it's much better to have readers arriving at your business website where they can immediately interact with, and navigate through other areas of your website. In this scenario you blog becomes your primary method of inbound marketing.

"Inbound Marketing" is the opposite of traditional marketing in that, instead of paying for advertising that might be seen by prospective customers, it's those prospective customers who discover your blog writing in search results. Traditional advertising is only effective while you are paying for it, whereas the success rates of inbound marketing through blogging grow every time you publish a new story.

Regardless if you have an onsite or offsite blog, each individual blog post should include links within the story to lead readers to other related pages within your business site. Those related

pages are where you will introduce your paid services or jewelry that you sell. Many blog readers will not aware consciously if their story reading will result in a purchase. It's up to your story telling and strategic linking that will lead readers to your selling pages on your website.

The actual text of the hyperlink is called "Anchor Text." Years ago, the most common anchor text words were "Click Here." During the early days of the Internet many people didn't understand that words written in blue and underlined were hyperlinks to other pages. You literally had to tell people where to click in order to get them to navigate around the web.

Although people are more internet savvy today, you still need to be very clear about where and why you want readers to click. You can get more clicks to those "selling pages" of your website if your topic and the anchor text are chosen carefully.

Here is an example:

Let's say you wrote a story about a recent custom made 3-stone engagement ring which had 2 blue sapphires and a center diamond. Now let's say that this custom made ring was a modification of a similar ring you have in your product catalog. As you describe that custom engagement ring in your blog you would hyperlink the words "engagement ring with blue sapphires" to the product detail page for that similar item.

Using that 5 word phrase as the anchor text tells the reader what they should expect to see if they click the link. This is a very user friendly method of linking from your blog to a product page on your website.

Notice how I'm suggesting a 5-word link, and you should always try to link 3 to 5 words in your blog. Along with the storytelling that attracts potential new customers, this multi-word linking method will eventually associate a very large collection of keywords with your website, which is exactly the point of blogging.



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