

The benefits of blogging

By: Fevi Yu

There are many Cayman-themed blogs online. Some are politically inclined, some are geared towards advertising while others are reviews, rants and raves. Whatever the subject, it is always best to write for a large online readership base.

You can predict your readership base from the amount of searches for a given keyword on a daily basis. Based on the keywords from the month of December 2008, the top industries which would benefit most from an online blog would be:

- Offshore banking
- Real estate
- Jobs and recruitment
- Flights and travel
- Tours
- Weather in the Cayman Islands
- Cayman food

If you or anyone you know belongs to any of these industries – tell them to blog and tell them to make their blog specifically about these industries.

In that way, they can increase their online presence and their customer base without increasing advertising costs. In the current economy, we all need a little help.

Blog do's and don'ts

Just like any medium, there are certain standards and protocols that will make (or break) the credibility of your online blog as a resource for your industry. Here is a list of helpful tips.

Blog using facts – don't make them up because, unlike your diary that only a jealous boyfriend would bother reading, your blog is a resource for potential customers.

Blog regularly – search engine crawlers/robots like it when content is updated frequently (this holds true even for websites) so after writing your first blog, don't just stop and give up even when you haven't received any hits.

Do not bore your audience – it would be useless to write about things that are not interesting. Find an angle in every subject you are going to tackle.

Give assertions – the most popular online blogs are those that take a chance and stand out from all the other blogs. But always assert it in good faith – believe in what you are trying to sell.

Always allow your readers to leave a comment – even when comments are rude,



enabling your readers to leave a comment allows them to communicate with you on the same level.

Link to reference material – this is standard on any medium.

Do not write condescendingly to your audience – this is self-explanatory and should be addressed by your writing style. It's always great reading a blog when it is written using the dialogue style.

Be polite – whether you are writing a blog or commenting on someone else's blog, it is always best to be polite. This holds true in real life as well as online.

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Getting started

There are many free blogging services available. Here's a list of some of the more popular ones.

www.blogger.com

This Google-owned and operated free site hosts the largest blog members. What's nice about this site is that if you already have a gmail address, you can use that for the blogger ID as well. I use blogger.com because I like things to be simple.

www.wordpress.com

It's free, though there are charges for extra storage and unlimited users – but who needs more than 3GB? This site has more template choices than blogger.com. Some of its more famous bloggers include: CNN's Political Ticker, Time Inc.'s The Page, Om Malik, Robert Scoble and flickr blogs.

www.livejournal.com

A friend of mine swears by this online blog. It's easy and even the technologically-challenged can figure it out.

www.webs.com (formerly www.freewebs.com)

I started my first blog here and have committed it to my website, although I am currently in the process of migrating my site to a Joomla template.

www.typepad.com

It costs US\$4.95 per month for a basic blog. This site has more template choices than wordpress.com. It's interesting to note that you can make money from your blogs through its advertising programme.

www.squarespace.com

It costs US\$8 per month for a basic blog. If you can afford it, then go for it. Watch the video and learn.

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