

# **BLOGGING FOR BUSINESS**

**Best Practices**

# INTRODUCTION

- Jessica Scheider, from:
  - The Writers For Hire – copywriting and ghostwriting
  - Socialot –contact management software with social media engagement tools
- We will discuss:
  - Case studies of small business blogs
  - Best practices
  - Blogger outreach
  - Guest blogging



# WHAT IS A BLOG?

- Easily updatable web page
- Usually organized chronologically
- Contains company updates and articles relevant to company products and culture



# WHY BLOG?

- Increased traffic and SEO
- Brand yourself as an expert or thought leader
- Create a personality behind your brand
- Connect with customers
- Generate leads



# THREE COMMON BLOGGING PLATFORMS

## Wordpress

- Free option and self-hosted version
- Themes have limited editing options unless you pay extra
- Allows multiple pages, categories, tags, and photo galleries
- Set up four types of permissions
- 3 Gigabytes of image storage

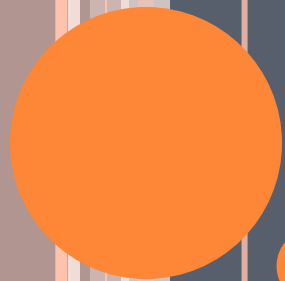
## Blogger

- Can include third party Javascripts for customization
- Set up two types of permissions
- Allows multiple pages, tags, and photo galleries (through a plugin)
- 1 Gigabyte of image storage

## Tumblr

- Image-based.
- Allows for re-blogging of content onto another blog, with automatic credit to original
- One page style with many themes available
- Option to send blogger a direct message





# **CASE STUDIES**

**Four great small business blogs**



# CURE THRIFT SHOP

- Updated multiple times daily
- Each post is a photo with small amount of text
- Showcases items for sale in shop
- Showcases deals and sales
- Creates a personality for the shop and connects with customers

HOME

SHOP ONLINE

FASHION

FURNITURE

VIDEOS



Feeling nostalgic? Come into Cure Thrift Shop for your favorite childhood movies!

1 year ago with 37 notes

Tagged:

[movies](#), [childhood](#), [vhs](#), [video](#), [tapes](#), [nostalgic](#).



# CURE THRIFT SHOP

- Set up to be social through Tumblr
- Demo
- Many of the photos are linked to Cure Thrift Shop's Instagram account
- Demo





# SWEETGREEN

- Blog portrays the company's healthy image
- Focuses on exercise, general nutrition, and community awareness
- Showcase their positive impact in the community
- Features Twitter comments about events ([demo](#))



# STONE BREWING COMPANY

- Post info for people interested in brewing beer
- Good example of how longer blog posts can work
- Show thought leadership and expertise of industry
- Posts include updates on special beer releases, recipes, brewery events, information about special ingredients, and food pairings



## STONE BREWING COMPANY

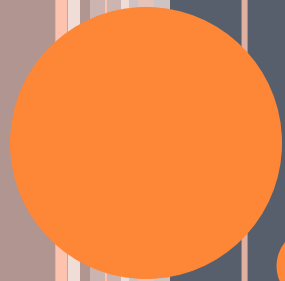
- Good use of social media: Twitter, Facebook, and Google+ buttons on each post
- Facebook Comment plugin: Comments on blog are seen on Facebook and link to blog
- Demo



## RIVER POOLS AND SPAS

- Posts are helpful and well-written
- Lots of information for people who want to buy or build pools: videos and a free e-book
- The blogger does a great job responding to comments
- Demo
- Demo 2
- Posts have Facebook, Twitter, Google+, and LinkedIn buttons





# STARTING YOUR BLOG

Tips and Best Practices



# DEFINE GOALS

- What do you hope to accomplish with your blog?
- Common goals:
  - Increase awareness of product
  - Drive more traffic to website
  - Offer relevant information to customers
  - Showcase images of your work
  - Present yourself as an expert
  - Create more exposure for the owner and other employees



# DEFINE TONE/VOICE

- Blog should reflect company culture
  - Cure Thrift Shop blog has a quirky, fun vibe
  - Sweetgreen blog has an earthy look and showcases a healthy lifestyle
  - The Stone Blog has a lot of information about the product. Likely caters to “beer nerds” with money to spend on a pricier craft beer
  - River Pools and Spas is educational, yet friendly and casual in tone



## TONE/VOICE CONT.

- Decide who will be writing the blog. Will they reveal themselves as an employee or be the anonymous voice of the company?
- You can have more than one contributor and more than one style, but they must complement one another





# SET A SCHEDULE

- Decide how often your blog will be updated
- Recommend at least once every two weeks
- One strategy is to schedule them in advance



# COMING UP WITH CONTENT

- Keep a running list: When an idea comes to you, write it down for a future blog post
- Types of posts:
  - Reaction to current events in your industry
  - Lists, such as “Top 10 Social Media Tools for Small Business”
  - Blogger roundups or Twitter roundups
  - Answer questions from clients or potential customers
  - Do summaries of good articles and blog posts in your industry
  - Interview someone in your industry
  - Ask someone to do a guest post



# TIPS FOR BETTER SEO

- Search engine optimization
- Titles should be specific and reflect info inside blog post
- Use keywords, but don't overuse them. Be natural.
- Google Adwords Keyword Tool
- Mix up your links: Link keywords and non-keywords. Link phrases.
- Ex. keyword(s), [www.site.com](http://www.site.com), site.com, Business name, "click here", etc.
- Link to outside authority sites
- Link to relevant content within your website, not just the homepage
- Keep blog regularly updated
- Be active on social networks
- Claim your profile on Yelp, Yahoo Local, etc.



# DISPLAY YOUR CONTENT

- Images are content—Try to use at least one per post
- Graphics, charts, and diagrams are a good way to present information for your readers
- Images help break up blocks of text and make your blog posts easier to read
- Other ways to break up text:
  - Bulleted lists
  - Section headers



# GENERATE LEADS

- Include a call to action on a sidebar, at the top of your blog post, or at the bottom
  - [Demo](#)
- Or, use a text link to a landing page
  - [Demo](#)
- Call to action can be:
  - Free e-book
  - Sign up for newsletter
  - Link to a landing page
  - Anything that gets you the email address or phone number of a potential customer
  - Special deal or offer



# MAKING YOUR BLOG MORE VISIBLE

- Share your blog posts on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, etc.
- Link to your blog in your email marketing
- Set up Google Authorship
- Google Authorship links your Google+ profile to all of your content
- Google gives SEO benefits to verified authors
- We recommend setting up Google Authorship under the company owner's name
- [Link to Google Authorship](#)



## The Simplified Guide to **Social Media for Small Businesses**

[www.blogtyrant.com/social-media-small-business/](http://www.blogtyrant.com/social-media-small-business/)



by Ramsay Taplin - in 492 Google+ circles - More by Ramsay Taplin

It is very important to be seen to be addressing complaints on **social media** sites. 4. Create amazing incentives. One of the **best** ways **small businesses** can use ...

## Which is the **Best Social Media for Small Business?**

[workwithmarkchoo.com/which-is-the-best-social-me...](http://workwithmarkchoo.com/which-is-the-best-social-me...)



by Mark Choo - in 313 Google+ circles - More by Mark Choo

Aug 23, 2012 – productive to target every **social media** platform, that takes too much time so we have worked out the pros and cons of various platforms to ...





# WHAT IS GUEST BLOGGING?

*Writing a blog post for someone else.*



# WHY GUEST BLOGGING?

## Benefits of being a guest blogger

- SEO – Common practice ask for link back to your site in exchange for content
- Branding / exposure / establish industry expertise

## Benefits of accepting guest blogs

- Free content
- Networking
- Swap guest blog posts



# WHO SHOULD YOU TARGET?

*REFERRAL SOURCES / POTENTIAL PARTNER VENDORS / INFLUENCERS*

- Moving company → Realtors
- Patio contractor → Pool contractors
- Storage company → Moving companies
- Copywriter → Website designers
- All → Well-read blogs by industry experts



# WHERE DO YOU FIND BLOGGERS TO TARGET?

1. Blogs you already follow
2. Outsource your list building
3. Search for blogs yourself

- Technorati



- Google Blog Search  
(<http://www.google.com/blogsearch>)



Google Search

I'm Feeling Lucky



# HOW DO YOU GET BLOGGERS TO GUEST BLOG WITH YOU? OPTION ONE: SEND COLD EMAILS

## Pros

- If you outsource overseas this can be fairly turnkey
- Good approach if you have cheap labor or free labor (hey kid wanna send out some emails ...you could make \$20 and you only have to send out 500!)

## Cons

- 2 to 6 percent response rate
- You have to send a lot of email
- You typically have to send the emails one by one (labor intensive)
- MailChimp/Constant Contact usually can't be used



# EXAMPLE EMAIL

Hi [name],

I recently visited your blog and was wondering if you were open to writing guest posts for other blogs. I work for XX, a XXX company in Houston, Texas, and we are trying to build up expert content on our bog. Our blog is here: <http://www.abettertripp.com/blog/>.

If you agree to write a guest post for us, we will link to the URL of your choice (provided that it is an appropriate site). Contributing a guest post along with a link will help your own SEO – and maybe even result in more traffic to your website.

If you're interested, please let me know the topic of your blog post. We prefer topics that relate to XXX, such as:

- Suggestion 1
- Suggestion 2
- Suggestion 3

Let me know if you're interested.

Looking forward to hearing from you,



# HOW DO YOU GET BLOGGERS TO GUEST BLOG WITH YOU? OPTION TWO: BLOGGER OUTREACH

## Pros

- Much higher response: 95 percent or more
- You learn from others in your industry
- You develop true relationships for your company that are helpful in the long run

## Cons

- Requires more time per blogger
- Requires more creativity and thought than Option 1





# WHAT IS BLOGGER OUTREACH?

*Making friends with bloggers*

# HOW DO YOU MAKE FRIENDS WITH A BLOGGER?

**Rule #1:** Give first, then get

**Rule #2:** Use common sense: If it doesn't feel natural don't do it.

**Rule #3:** Think: "I'm building relationships." NOT, "I'm advertising my business."





# HOW DO YOU “GIVE” TO A BLOGGER?

## COMMENT ON THEIR BLOGS

### OK

- Using a signature with your website name or business name
- Making thoughtful, original, and helpful comments relating to the topic at hand

### NOT OK

- Using a keyword instead of your name
- Writing “Great blog!” or other useless commentary
- Blatantly advertising your business



# HOW DO YOU “GIVE” TO A BLOGGER? LINK TO THEM FROM YOUR BLOG

- Blogger Round Up
- Cliff Notes
- Commentary Blog
- Quote or Cite Them

Remember: Tell them that you linked to them!



# HOW DO YOU “GIVE” TO A BLOGGER?

## COMMENT ON THEIR SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

- Follow/comment on Twitter
- Like their Facebook Page / Comment on Page
- Connect with them on LinkedIn
- Consider finding them on Google+, Pinterest, Flickr, YouTube – or anyplace they are most active



# HOW DO YOU “GIVE” TO A BLOGGERS?

## OFFER TO INTERVIEW THEM ON YOUR BLOG

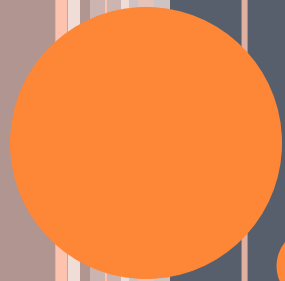
We've had a good response rate to this. Over 50%.

Hi XXX,

I write for a blog called XXX ([www.websiteurl.com](http://www.websiteurl.com)), and we're looking for YYY experts to interview. We'd love to interview you on TOPIC, then post the interview on our blog with a link to your site. If you're interested, I can either call you and interview you on the phone, or email you questions to fill out. It's up to you.

Let me know what you think. Thanks!





**REMEMBER**

*Be Natural. Be Yourself.*





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social media for small business  
by small business

## SHAMELESS PROMOTION SLIDE

Socialot helps you keep track of your blogger contacts in one place. It helps you find all their social media profiles and interact with these profiles from one interface.

We can also develop custom blogger lists for your outreach campaign.

Call Wintress 713-498-9642 if you are interested in learning more.