

# The Blog Plan

## Getting Started

<p><b>Your online presence</b></p> <p>If you already have an online presence, you may just want to add a blog to it. For instance, to add a blog to <a href="http://www.example.com">http://www.example.com</a> you could create it at <a href="http://blog.example.com">http://blog.example.com</a> or <a href="http://www.example.com/blog">http://www.example.com/blog</a> - either way; it comes directly off your site.</p> <p>If you have a tired looking site, you have the option to overhaul it (often times this means big bucks), or just replace it with a blog. Some blog software lets you set up a static page for your home page, meaning it never changes.</p> <p>If you have an established site, It is best to keep your domain name, especially if you've had the site long enough to gather some PageRank from Google – you don't want to lose it.</p> <p>Regardless of whether or not you have a site, the best choice would be to use your own domain name.</p>	<p><b>Do you have an online presence?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Web site (current)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Web site (tired)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
--	--

<p><b>Why blog?</b></p> <p>There are many reasons to blog, the most common being:</p> <p><b>Establish an online presence:</b></p> <p>You or your business are not on the Web, and in this day and age you know you need to be. Take a look at this post: <a href="#">How to use the Web to Build a Powerful Reputation In any Industry.</a></p> <p><b>Cheap alternative to traditional website:</b></p> <p>It is a lot more cost effective to build a blog than a Web site. If you haven't already, take a look at the first article in this series: <a href="#">Should Small Businesses Blog? Hell Yes!</a></p> <p><b>Update Customers:</b></p> <p>Do you need an easy way to let customers know about what's new with you? A new range, new products, cool news from your industry. There is no better way to let them "opt in" to news from you instead of get bombarded with news. They can visit your site – if they want, they can subscribe to e-mail or RSS at your site – if they want to.</p> <p><b>Establish yourself as an expert:</b></p> <p>So there are 10 businesses that sell clothing in your area. Why not stand apart from them? Let the Internet bring customers to you instead of to your competitors.</p> <p><b>Make money online:</b></p> <p>This is important to determine up front because if you want a blog that includes advertising, there are some blog platforms that don't allow it, like WordPress.com. WordPress.org does.</p>	<p><b>Why do you want to blog?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Establish an online presence</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Cheap alternative to traditional website</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Update customers</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Establish yourself as an expert</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Make money online</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Other</li></ul> <hr/>
---	---

<p><b>Defining your Audience</b></p> <p>Defining your audience before you start is important. It means every time you post, you know exactly who you are writing for and as a result makes choosing topics to write about so much easier.</p> <p>A really great article about what to write and audience is available at Skelliewag, titled: <a href="#">What should I write about? Well, who are you writing for?</a></p> <p>If you are particularly interested in writing a blog to get into search results, you need to understand and make use of keywords. A great explanation about keywords can be found at Court's Internet Marketing School, titled: <a href="#">Introduction to keyword sniping</a>.</p>	<p><b>Who is your Audience?</b></p> <p><i>Who do you want to attract?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Current Customers</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> New Customers</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Search Engines</li></ul>
<p><b>Customer/Visitor interaction</b></p> <p>Allowing comments is a brilliant way to interact with your visitors and customers.</p> <p>It is important to remember however, that if you enable comments, you need to comment back.</p> <p>Most blogging software will send you an e-mail when someone has commented on your site – follow the link and reply directly; it only takes a few moments of your time, but shows your visitors that you are interested in engaging with them. This is very important in the world of the Web.</p>	<p><b>Do you want to allow people to respond to entries you post?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> No</li></ul> <p><i>I recommend allowing people to respond to your entries (called commenting).</i></p>

<p><b>Really Simple Syndication</b></p> <p>You can set your site up so that every time you post a new entry, people [that sign up] can get notified via e-mail. This automatically generated e-mail usually contains the title and post with a link to the original.</p> <p>RSS is another way visitors can view your entries, if you are unfamiliar with feeds and RSS, check out this article titled: <a href="#">What is RSS?</a></p>	<p><b>RSS and E-mail Updates</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> RSS</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> E-mail Updates</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Both</li></ul> <p><i>The best advice here is do both – let your visitors choose how they get your content.</i></p>
<p><b>Techie or not?</b></p> <p>Whether or not you have coding skills will make a difference when it comes to choosing the software that you blog with. Some software is easier for the novice; other software is made for the tech inclined.</p> <p><i>More about choosing your software in part three of this series – stay tuned.</i></p>	<p><b>Do you have coding skills?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, but don't want to code this</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> No</li></ul>

## Define Your Site

<p><b>Write a couple of paragraphs that define what you would like your site to accomplish.</b></p> <p>For instance:</p> <p><i>“Blogwell is a blog dedicated to helping small businesses and non-profits make better use of the Web.</i></p> <p><i>Advances in technology have made it easy for every business to create and maintain their own sites, establish a sound online reputation, and appear in search engine results. It’s not difficult; it’s simply a matter of understanding the basics.</i></p> <p><i>We aspire to be the greatest online resource for small businesses and non profits by providing tips, ideas, and explanations that are easy to understand, and are written in plain English.”</i></p>	<p><b>Your Turn - Keep it Under 100 Words</b></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
---	---

<p><b>Naming Your Blog</b></p> <p><b>URL:</b> the Universal Resource Locator tells the world your address on the Web. It is how people can find your site, and each page has a unique URL.</p> <p><i>E.g. <a href="http://blog-well.com">http://blog-well.com</a></i></p> <p>Your best option is to try for a URL that has your business name in it – something easy to remember. If your business name is taken, try to include it using dashes, or additional words.</p> <p>For instance <a href="http://www.blogwell.com">www.blogwell.com</a> was taken, so I went for <a href="http://blog-well.com">http://blog-well.com</a></p> <p><b>Title:</b> The title of your site</p> <p>Choose a title that reflects your business – preferably your business name.</p> <p><i>E.g. My title is BlogWell</i></p> <p><b>Tagline:</b> Most blog software offers you the ability to write a tagline (a few words that describe your site), which is displayed directly below the title on your site.</p> <p><i>E.g. My tagline is: Business Blogging, Web Strategy, Internet Stuff et al...</i></p>	<p><b>Your Turn!</b></p> <p><b>URL:</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Title:</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Tagline:</b></p> <hr/> <p>Note: Once you have set up a blog, you can change your title and taglines; you can't change your URL</p>
---	---

## Determine Content

<p><b>Your home page</b></p> <p>Your home page is the page that people see first when they visit your site.</p> <p>At a minimum, it needs to include your business name and contact details.</p> <p>WordPress (blogging) software allows you to choose whether you want your home page to be static, meaning it never changes, and therefore looks like a traditional Web site; or dynamic, meaning it changes each time you write an article (known as a post).</p> <p>If you decide to have a blog, your most recent post will appear at the top of the home page, older entries will appear below that in reverse chronological order.</p> <p>Regardless of whether you have a static or dynamic page, you should include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ A Greeting</li><li>▪ A brief overview of your business</li><li>▪ The aim of your blog</li><li>▪ A request for feedback and suggestions</li><li>▪ Anything else you consider relevant</li></ul>	<p><b>Do you want a blog or Web site?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Blog</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Web site</p> <p>Jot down ideas what you would like to include on your home page</p>
---	--



<b>Your Categories</b>	<b>Jot down categories you'd like to include</b>
<p>When you write a post, you need to categorize it. It is much easier if you have your categories worked out before you start. You can certainly add more as you go.</p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>For instance, on BlogWell, some of the categories I use are:</p>	<hr/> <hr/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Better site design</li><li>▪ Business blogging</li><li>▪ Fun</li><li>▪ General</li><li>▪ Marketing</li><li>▪ Social Media</li><li>▪ Tech tips</li><li>▪ WordPress</li><li>▪ Your online rights</li></ul>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>At a glance, visitors can see what subjects interest them and get to them quickly.</p>	<hr/> <hr/>
<p>Say your small business sells stuff for kids, your categories could be:</p>	<hr/> <hr/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Clothing</li><li>▪ Shoes</li><li>▪ Toys (0-5 yo)</li><li>▪ Toys (5-10 yo)</li><li>▪ Books</li><li>▪ Fun Excursions</li><li>▪ Online kids resources</li></ul>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>Suddenly, you have lots to write about. A new book just out for kids? Write a review. A new indoor park has opened up in your neighborhood? Great – Tell people about it and point to it with Google Maps.</p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>Your audience is parents – give them more than just your products to read about. Web users are loyal – they will come back.</p>	<hr/> <hr/>



<b>Your Blogroll</b>	<b>List who you would like to link to</b>
<p>A blogroll is just another name for a list of links to other sites.</p>	
<p>You can have as many blogrolls as you want, and it is better to replace the word blogroll with a more descriptive title.</p>	
<p>On BlogWell, I have several categories for my blogroll: Blogging, Marketing, SEO 2.0, Social Media, Working Online, and Writing. Each contains links that I consider are useful for that category.</p>	
<p>I recommend you keep your blogroll business focused, rather than just links to sites you like. If you do want a blogroll that holds your personal favorites, label it that way. Personal favorites, guilty pleasures, anything really.</p>	
<p>Ideas for your blogroll:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Sites that complement your products</li><li>▪ Industry standards</li><li>▪ Laws surrounding your industry</li><li>▪ Companies you deal with</li><li>▪ Products you use</li></ul>	

<p><b>Maintaining your blog</b></p> <p>If you don't have the time or inclination to put together and maintain your site, you might want to consider asking a friend or professional to update it for you – all you need to do is give them the content.</p> <p>Alternatively, you can consider hiring a copywriter. Most copywriters on the Web will charge anything from \$50 – 100 per post, and the better ones have an idea about basic SEO so will be able to optimize the copy for you too.</p> <p>Some will give you a discounted rate for a long term project – it's worth thinking about if you don't think you are up for it.</p> <p>Content developers include:</p> <p><a href="http://www.skelliewag.org">http://www.skelliewag.org</a></p> <p><a href="http://blog-well.com">http://blog-well.com</a></p> <p><a href="http://ittybiz.com">http://ittybiz.com</a></p>	<p><b>Who will update your blog?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> You</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Friend/Family member</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Consultant</li></ul>
---	---

---

Please feel free to copy, enhance, and pass this document on. Do what you like with it – just make sure you help others ☺

**blogwell**

A MadLid creation

<http://blog-well.com>