

## ***Leveraging Blogs To Grow a Lesser-Known Brand***

**An Excerpt from My Introduction to Social Media Marketing**

September 23, 2010

### **Introduction: Using Blogs—Your Own and Others’—to Extend Your Reach**

As I mentioned in my report [\*Social Media Marketing Strategy in General\*](#), the key to increasing your visibility and achieving success online is to leverage the vast *reach* of social media: The *frequency* of your blogging or posting in social media sites is free and within your control (You don’t, say, have to buy column-inches in periodicals or airtime in radio or television programs) and the *quality* of your content—in terms of its appeal to your *target market*—is also within your control.

In terms of blogging, how do you increase your reach? That is, you can write the best blog post ever written on a subject (whatever subject is the focus of your business or other concern); but if no one knows it’s online—if there are zero visitors to your blog—then it’s like the tree that falls in a forest: Does it really make a sound? More to the point, does anyone really care, other than you? They should, if your material is worth reading (and even during “down times” you always need to keep your confidence up to keep the quality of your writing up); so it is in the best interest not only of yourself but also of your target market to get your blog, your writing, you

and your company known—and your value appreciated—among the hundred million or more blogs in the “blogosphere.”

The conventional way of extending your reach is to purchase text ads or display (including multimedia) advertising online. That is the strategy behind [\*Google AdWords\*](#) or [\*Facebook Ads\*](#), each bringing your target market to you in its own way. AdWords catches people in a more fleeting way, showing your ads alongside someone’s search of the moment, for related content; whereas Facebook Ads reach potential customers or clients in a presumably more profound way, showing your ads to those whose self-described characteristics (those they are willing to share) match your target demographics. ...

If bringing your target market *to you*, via ads, is the more conventional way of marketing online—mirroring traditional, offline advertising—then bringing your content *to your target market* is the more novel approach, yet precisely the strategy that lesser-known brands, organizations, and individuals need to execute in order to become better known online.

Tactically, if you want more people to visit your

infrequently visited blog, in order to grow your lesser-known brand, then the best advice is to:

- First, “prime” your blog with some substantial original content, and any replies you can get, to establish your seriousness of purpose and expertise in the subject matter.
- Next, find other blogs that discuss the same or related topics and that bring in similar or (preferably but more difficult to orchestrate) larger numbers of your target market.
- Then—carefully and respectfully—put yourself “in their spotlight,” through your writing, allowing you and your brand to become known and respected by a (much) wider audience.

In terms of blogging, that first and foremost means posting comments and replies to posts on better-known blogs ... with links back to your own blog or Web site, where your purely promotional material resides. Let me be clear: I emphasized “carefully and respectfully” when talking about putting yourself in someone else’s “spotlight,” above, because the last thing you want to do is come off as purely self-promoting in someone else’s better-known blog; the popularity they enjoy is undoubtedly the result of a long, hard slog and countless blog posts—and maybe even considerable advertising expense—so they will undoubtedly resent its being exploited by somebody else. ...

The bottom line is if you want your target market to find you, you need to reach out and find them, and let them see for themselves how valuable you and your content/brand are; that

can in effect “funnel” potential customers or clients back to your own Web site or blog, where you can then “seal the deal.” Never forget, though, that in your comments and posts in other people’s blogs, your best bet is to follow [the best marketing advice for Twitter tweets](#): Be informational and conversational but, ironically, “don’t sell”!

Overall, the recommendations this report will make for the best practices in growing a blog, and thus a brand, will be remarkably similar to the advice consultants give for the “search engine optimization” of any Web site (SEO, *per se*, will be considered in some detail [below](#)):

- **Create excellent content, rich in keywords**, key to your particular subject, naturally presented within context (i.e., without “keyword stuffing”)—to increase your blog’s ranking in search results for those keywords and to hold readers’ attention and gain their respect once they’ve found you.
- **Increase the number of incoming links** to your site from other respected sites (i.e., not “link farms”)—to increase your chance of being found by readers directly, while visiting those popular sites, and indirectly, because Google and other search engines put a high priority in their rankings not only on keywords but also on the quantity and quality of inbound hyperlinks (which they associate with “authority”)—which naturally leads to ...
- **Build relationships online!** After all, this is *social* media marketing.