

STARTING YOUR OWN BLOG

A blog can be an excellent way of keeping customers and other interested parties up to date with your business. And, unlike a traditional website, by enabling user comments, you can interact with visitors to your blog, which is useful for building a sense of community.

Blogs are also the cheapest way of getting an online presence. There are usually free, so they cost nothing but your time, and they don't require any technical or programming expertise.

1. Don't worry if you've had no writing experience. That's the advantage of blogs - anyone can do it. The key is to get your opinions, viewpoint and personality across.
2. Choose a topic that you are passionate about. Try to make your blog unique by providing information that is unavailable elsewhere.
3. Write a welcome. If you don't know where else to start, begin with a "welcome to my blog" post. Tell your prospective readers why you have started your blog and what kinds of thing you intend to write about.
4. Aim for shorter, more frequent blog entries. Update at least once a week and make sure the information you include is relevant and up to date. If people like what you write, they will come back. However, if there's nothing new to read, they will eventually lose interest. Try scheduling a time to write each week or fortnight. Regular updates will also improve your search rankings.
5. Focus on layout. Use clear titles, short paragraphs and bullet points to break up the text and make it easier to read. Also, choose categories and keywords that your customers may search on. Think about including images and video clips.
6. Check for typos. Always proofread your postings, not only to check grammar and spelling, but also to check you are not giving away any sensitive information about your business, or casting yourself, or your business, in a bad light. Be honest, but don't be critical or inappropriate about your competitors.
7. Write for your audience. If you're writing a blog on a specialist subject don't just assume that everyone has the same level of knowledge as you. Try to cater for as many different readers as possible to increase the size of your audience.
8. Choose a blog host that allows you to update in different ways. With many blogs, you can update them using a variety of additional methods such as via email or using your smartphone.
9. It need not take as long as you think. A perceived lack of time and knowledge are the two biggest barriers to people starting blogs. However, you can get around this by linking to industry articles or other blogs and using them as discussion points.
10. Always include contact information. The main purpose of your blog is to boost the profile of your business, so don't forget to include all relevant contact information such as your postal address, telephone number and email address, and a link to your main website, if you have one.