

VIRTUAL NEIGHBORHOOD

Using a Blog to Build a Community Around Your Brand

- ✓ Business blogging is one of the best ways to begin establishing an online community because;
 - ❑ It generates organic traffic;
 - ❑ This organic traffic can be converted into sales leads;
 - ❑ It establishes your business and your brand as authority in its field;
 - ❑ It continues to produce positive results over time.
- ✓ Blog commenting is as important as business blogging when it comes to your online community because;
 - ❑ It generates valuable backlinks, especially when commenting on relevant and targeted blogs;
 - ❑ It establishes relationships with others in your field and in related fields;
 - ❑ These relationships create referrals and further cement your reputation as an authority.
- ✓ There are certain best practices that every business blog should follow including;
 - ❑ Using **call to action posts** in order to convert organic traffic into leads;
 - ❑ Integrating the blog into the larger industry it is a part of in order to lead by word and example.
- ✓ There are certain practices all business blogs should avoid at all cost, including;

- Typographic errors and bad grammar;
- Intentionally disrespectful and/or controversial posts or comments.

Using a Forum to Build an Online Community

- ✓ A forum is an excellent way to help build an online community centered around your business and brand;
- ✓ You should start a forum if;
 - You already have an active and recognized business blog;
 - there are no active forums centered around your industry or;
 - if the existing forums are not satisfactory;
- ✓ You should consider starting a forum because;
 - A forum is an excellent way for you and your forum users to communicate;
 - This communication establishes trust between you and the forum users;
 - Forum users who trust your business are more likely to become customers or repeat customers;
 - A forum allows you to “crowdsource” support issues which, in turn, enhances your reputation and builds further trust;
- ✓ When starting a forum remember that the ROI is indirect and long term;
- ✓ When starting a forum choose the best platform based on your users’ needs and expectations.

Build an Online Community with a Facebook Fan Page

- ✓ A Facebook Fan Page is one of the best ways to develop a virtual community around your business due to the enormous popularity of Facebook itself;
- ✓ A Fan Page is specifically designed for business and differs from a personal Profile in significant ways, including;
 - A Fan Page is public by default;
 - An individual can administer as many Fan Pages as they choose;
 - A Fan Page can have an unlimited number of fans;
 - A Fan Page can use 3rd party software to capture traffic;
 - A Fan Page has access to demographic information on its fans.
- ✓ There are many reasons your business should use a Fan Page, including;
 - It offers your business another presence on the web;
 - It is free to use;
 - You can drive traffic from your Fan Page to your other sites;
 - It allows you another way to reach your audience;
 - Your competition is using it.
- ✓ When using your Fan Page remember to complete you profile, post regularly and be visual.

Other Options for Your Virtual Neighborhood

- ✓ Google+ is very similar to Facebook and offers your business the opportunity for another web presence in a user friendly environment;
- ✓ Reddit is a social media platform with elements of a content aggregator added and may be a viable choice for your business as long as you avoid aggressive promotion.