



## Blog for brand

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In today's Web 2.0 reality, the old rules and expectations of public relations no longer apply. Gone are the days of sending out a news release and then monitoring print publications for the resulting story. "Push" technologies now send out information on your brand to you and other interested parties in real time from multiple sources.

Considering the wealth of new media outlets to pursue – subscriber newsletters, blogs, podcasts, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, to name a few – it's a virtual renaissance for public relations.

To many companies, all of this media wealth can be an overwhelming reality, especially for public companies that are trying to get their arms around a multitude of sources discussing their brand.

### **Bloggng overview and introduction**

A typical blog combines text, images and links to other blogs, web pages and other media related to its topic. Blogs have the ability for readers to leave comments in an interactive format and, when all these combined factors are viewed as a whole, this is called the "blogosphere."

Having buzz in the blogosphere is a double-edged sword since positive and negative stories tend to persist in the generation of the Internet "long tail."

When pitching a blogger, you can view the opportunity as a foot in the door. Blogging can also get you in front of some reporters who are mandated to blog multiple times a day.

### **To blog or not to blog?**

Corporate blogs can be a great channel to promote company messaging. These can be controlled and monitored closely. Blogs can provide necessary information or a rebuttal to negative attacks.

Blogs are also good thought leadership opportunities; you can mirror the salient points of a byline feature, a presentation at a conference or provide additional information about a press release.

There is no need to reinvent the wheel. If you have good content at your fingertips, such as newsletters or byline articles, then you can certainly repurpose them for the blog and continue to keep the content fresh.

You also do not need to post anything of great length. Sometimes a short pithy comment and a link to the referenced topic work best.

In addition to blogging, you should also consider joining in on the conversation. If you participate in discussions with bloggers and link back to their blog, then you will have more credibility with this audience.

Before undertaking a corporate blog, understand that it takes up time and resources. If your company cannot spare the personnel or the man hours to devote to a blog, then it may

not be the best course of action for your company at this time.

### **Blogger etiquette**

Bloggers need transparency. If you are open and truthful, then they will certainly listen. If you are stretching the truth or not open about who you are and who you are representing, then they can (and will) expose you.

Also, don't expect that regular reporter rules apply. Bloggers are not bound by the same rules of a publication, and they reserve the right to post or NOT post your news on a whim. They may or may not honor embargoes. If you send them swag or product, it may backfire, so use this tactic carefully.

Although you may be reaching out to a blog, public companies still need to follow regular disclosure rules.

For more in-depth information about the rules for engaging with digital communications, the SEC recently put out guidance on the use of websites and blogs, "Commission Guidance on the Use of Company Websites."

### **Conclusion**

Companies should definitely consider blogging or multi-channel campaigns in addition to traditional PR tactics, and evaluate when online PR makes sense for their overall PR efforts. So join in!

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