



Chris Baggott's Top 10 Blogging Trends for 2008

By Melissa Campanelli, Editor-in-Chief, *eM+C*

Chris Baggott, an award-winning blogger and co-founder of blogging software firm Compendium Blogware, advised organizations in a Jan. 31 webinar on "Top 10 Trends in Corporate Blogs" to carefully consider the following Top 10 blogging trends during 2008:

- 1. ROI based on search engine optimization.** With organic search becoming a critical channel for customer acquisition, blogs are the perfect way to achieve high rankings on a broad range of targeted keywords. Blogs play up many of the factors that search engines take into consideration when determining how to rank a Web page.
- 2. Widespread employee blogging.** At the end of the day, search engines are looking for good, targeted content. For an SEO strategy to work, the organization needs to have a variety of search terms, topics and voices. The easiest way to create an abundance of this kind of content is by freeing up employees to write it.
- 3. Control is OK.** The reality is that, in spite of what most "traditional" bloggers say, it is mandatory for organizations to have control over their content. As an organization, you have an obligation to control the content generated under your brand. Corporate blogging is not a free-for-all, and there are blogging platforms that help organizations find a balance between complete freedom and control.
- 4. Conversion goals.** Most organizations have specific conversion goals for their Web traffic and need to have the same conversion standards for their blogs. This means that blog templates need to have specific call-to-actions just like any other site.

Additionally, blogs are unique in that organizations often will see higher conversions with their blogs than with their company Web site. Fresh content, a conversational tone and clean navigation all play a role.

5. Social conversion. Social conversion is based on the theory that customers trust other human beings more than they trust brands.

6. Marketing democracy. Corporate blogging is a great democratizer. No one can buy his or her way up to the top of the organic search pages.

7. Localization. Corporate blogging introduces the idea of geo-specificity, which benefits both local businesses as well as large enterprises that want to "act locally." Localization tends to lead to higher content relevancy and better search engine results.

8. Spaghetti. A discredited strategy for any kind of marketing has been, "Let's throw the spaghetti against the wall and see what sticks." With blogging, here's your chance. Corporate blogging is largely based on content and volume. By throwing a lot of content at the wall, you'll get to see what makes the biggest impact. You also can experiment with targeting a wide variety of search terms.

9. Video. Nothing tells a story like video. As quality goes up and the cost and challenges of production falls, video will be an assumed component of every corporate blog.

10. Data-driven blogging. Today in the journalism and corporate worlds, blogging consists of disparate content based on individual authors. Collectively, however, those authors within an organization probably have a lot of overlap on all kinds of topics and categories. Readers who care about topics versus individuals will read the topical blog regardless of the author.

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