

Digital Marketing Tips



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WWW.ICANN.ORG

Official site of the Internet Corporation For Assigned Names and Numbers.

CLICKTI.ME/GTLD

“Get Ready for the Next Big Thing” concise video explains “gTLD’s for Dummies.”

BLIP.TV

Awesome example of how to use the .tv TLD.

BLOGGER.COM

Want a blog? Get started in two minutes flat.

WORDPRESS.COM

A better way to blog. That’s the claim, anyway.

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Change is the Only Constant

How Will the New gTLDs Affect You?

Move over "dot com."

On June 20th, 2011, the Internet Global Coordinator announced a decision to relax the limitations on Top-Level Domains, or “TLD’s.”

“ICANN has opened the Internet’s naming system to create new Top Level Domains in any language or script,” said Rod Beckstrom, President and CEO of ICANN. The initiative opens the door for “generic” TLD’s, or gTLDs.

If you have ever purchased a domain, such as *yourcompany.com*, you were probably offered the *.net*, *.biz*, *.org*, and many others.

Sometime next year there could be a LOT more choices.

You might be able to register a domain with the TLD of *.restaurant*

or *.dentist*, or just

about anything else you can think of.

Industry experts predict a flood of applications to register new gTLD’s as soon as the process opens. Even though the cost to do so will approach \$200K (US), and the process could take up to a year, to be the registrar of record for your own TLD could be a very lucrative business.

Imagine the value for a New York caterer to own *NY.Catering*, or to a Los Angeles-based law firm to own *LA.Law*. Now imagine the money to be made by the registrar *selling* – or rather, auctioning off – those domains, especially the ultra-short, easy-to-remember 2- and 3-letter domains. Such highly-desirable domain names were claimed long ago in the *.com* and *.net* TLD’s.

So should you register a new domain for your business under a more relevant TLD? Or should you sit tight with your *.com* or *.biz* and see how well the new gTLD’s catch on?

Some speculate the new choices might negatively impact existing *.com* domains in search engine rankings.

But according to Google, there’s nothing to worry about, and all new TLDs will be treated the same as existing ones. A Google spokesperson recently stated, “[we are] experienced in ranking and returning web pages, regardless of

top-level domain (TLD).”

Which may be true, but is the average Internet user ready for more TLD’s?

The TLD *.museum* has been available for almost a decade, but most people don’t know it exists. In fact, the Smithsonian

Institution, owner of *smithsonian.museum*, uses that domain simply to redirect traffic to its home page at *si.edu*. What does that say about the potential of new gTLD’s?

On the other hand, if a sudden influx of new gTLD websites confuses users, this might become a boon for any site, old or new, that relies primarily on search engine traffic.

When *.com* is no longer the expected norm, and your prospects can’t recall if your antique shop’s website is *storename.com*, *storename.antiques*, or something else, they will almost certainly turn to a search engine to find you.

This could make “search engine optimization” a lot more challenging. For now, the choices remain the same. Look for the fun to begin in early 2012.

“[We hope] this decision will unleash the global human imagination . . . and allow the domain name system to better serve all of mankind.”
 -- Rod Beckstrom, ICANN

Google Places Overview

What You Need To Know About Your Google Places Page

Hopefully by now you have claimed the existing (or created a new) Google Places page for your business. This free service is Google’s attempt to make sure every business on earth has at least one page on the web for Googlers to find.

Since people make judgements about your business based on what they find there, it behooves you to make sure your page works for you, not against you.

Basic Details

Make sure all your details are correct, especially your business name, address, contact email, and phone number.

Absolutely critical: Add a link to your company website, and double check to make sure it works!

Map Placement

Google knows their maps aren’t 100% accurate, so they give you the option to drag your “push pin” to the correct location on the map. This helps ensure driving directions are correct.

If your customers come to your location, don’t miss this step!

Photos & Videos

Add up to ten photos for maximum search engine power. Upload them or link to them from other sites, but make sure they relate to your business, your products & services.

For even better results, post some videos to YouTube and add them here.

Categories

Select up to five categories for your business that will help people find you.

These categories have a direct bearing on your search results, so choose terms your customers search on when they Google your business. Check your GP Dashboard for “Top search queries” providing the most impressions.

Ratings

This is where Google users get to rate your business (up to 5 stars). Nothing says you can’t rate your own business!

Hint: tell your friends, family, and best clients to visit this page and give you five stars the next time they’re online.

Below the Fold

Truly interested researchers will scroll down to read every available detail about your business. Give them something good to find there.

What People Are Saying

This section pulls in quotes from other online review sites. Each citation linking to your GP page increases your chances of appearing in a Google search.

Ask your clients to visit those *other sites* too, and add reviews for you there.

Reviews by Google Users

When Google users add their comments, excerpts will show up here – both good and bad. Everyone gets bad reviews.

In your GP Dashboard you can respond directly to specific complaints from unhappy customers.

Related Places

Yes, your competition could very well show up on your page. There’s nothing you can do about it, but take heart: you probably show up on their page as well.

Blogging 101: Tips For The New Business Blogger

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All of these goals are worthwhile, but each may require a different game plan. For example, if your goal is to generate leads, you would probably write to the reader who knows nothing about your industry.

On the other hand, if your goal is to enhance your reputation to “guru” status, your writing should probably be directed at a more experienced readership already very familiar with your topic.

There are no right answers. Each blog on the web is different in some way. Make yours unique and right for you, and you are much more likely to get the results you desire.

Plan Your Posts In Advance

How often should you post? Your topic area and writing skills play a huge role in this decision.

If you write fast and your blog will cover tech stocks, you might plan to post every day, or at least a few times a week. But if your topic is not quite as volatile – like, say, home construction materials – a more realistic plan might be to post weekly, bi-weekly, or even monthly.

Regardless of frequency, make a list of the first 10 to 15 blog posts you plan to write. First make a list of possible headlines, then after each headline, write a few lines describing the post. Maybe it’s a single point, or maybe it’s a “top ten” list of related points.

If you can do this for 12 articles, and you expect to blog once a week, you’ve just outlined your first three months’ worth of blog posts. If you’re going to post once a month, you’ve covered your first year.

This shouldn’t lock you in. It’s a plan. Plans can change, but begin with a plan.

Start Writing!

Now that you know what you will write about in your first few days or weeks on your blog, go ahead and flesh out your first few pieces. Do this even if the blog isn’t technically ready for you to post yet.

Don’t worry about finishing them now, just get them started. Crank out as many rough drafts as you can. Cover all the main points, and flesh them out quickly. You can do the fine-tuning later, right before you post them.

You will find that having a few articles in the bag will boost your confidence when it comes time to launch. You will also find that letting an article sit for a few days helps crystalize your thoughts. Each finished piece will be that much stronger.

Add Spontaneity

With your plans in hand and a few detailed articles on your blog, add interest for your reader by throwing in an off-the-cuff, personal, and/or time-sensitive post once in a while.

Give kudos to a customer or colleague on a recent success. Offer your thoughts on the coming holiday. Or simply add a personal note about your cat.

In other words, show

your softer side. Let the world know you’re not strictly business.

Invite Other Voices

You don’t have to do it all yourself. The most popular blogs on the web are the work of several people. Enlist colleagues, co-workers, and industry peers to contribute their expertise on occasion. Having multiple voices not only adds value

for readers, it can actually add readers. Guest posters bring their own followings!

Include Multi-Media

Graphics go hand in hand with writing. Figure out what pictures will go well with your topics, and get them lined up ahead of time. You can use photographs, illustrations, cartoons, scanned documents, even screen grabs. Make sure any image you use complements the writing and contributes to the topic.

Depending on your business, your resources, and your skills, getting great images may require hiring a photographer, creating them yourself, buying stock images online, or simply referencing existing web images.

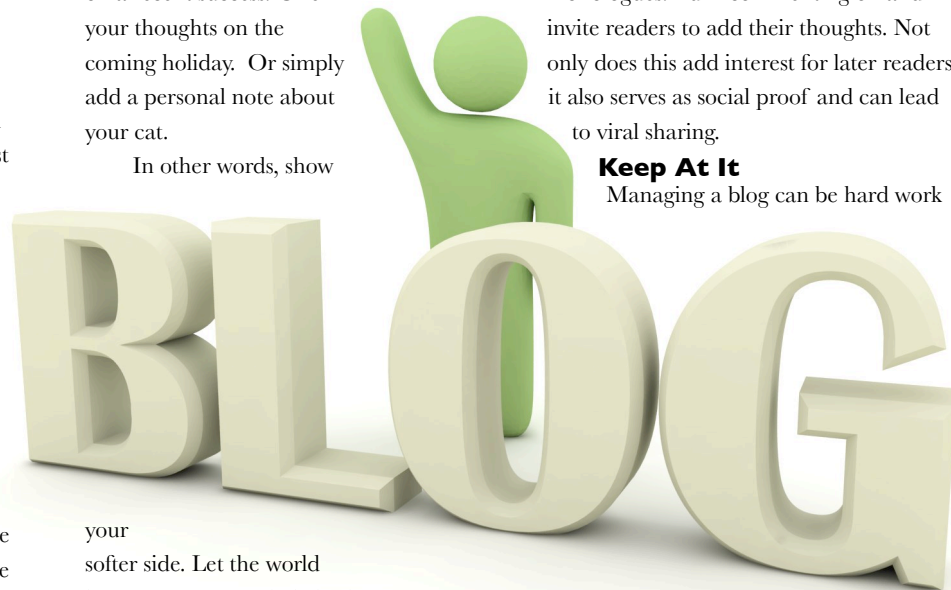
Blog readers love variety, so go the extra mile and include video whenever feasible. The more you change things up the more interest you’ll create, and the larger your readership will grow.

Invite Feedback

The best blogs are conversations, not monologues. Turn commenting on and invite readers to add their thoughts. Not only does this add interest for later readers, it also serves as social proof and can lead to viral sharing.

Keep At It

Managing a blog can be hard work



and time consuming, especially in the beginning as you set out to establish your blog as an authority destination.

But with a little goal setting, careful planning and some creative thinking, you could soon be well on your way to becoming the “go-to” site in your market.



INSIDE

COMING SOON: GENERIC TOP LEVEL DOMAINS

Will 2012 be the beginning of the end of the “dot-com” age?

KNOW YOUR GOOGLE PLACE

Food for thought concerning your Google Places listing.

Blogging 101

Tips For The New Business Blogger

Starting a business blog? Great idea! Having a blog can help you build rapport with your customers, establish your company as an industry leader or yourself as an expert, and best of all, attract search engine traffic to your website.

Google loves blogs because regularly updated content is deemed more relevant, useful and valuable for its searchers.

But blogging isn't for everyone, and it may not be as easy as it appears. Here are some things to keep in mind as you chart your new course as a business blogger.

Hub Blog or Authority Blog?

Most blogs fall into one of two broad categories. An “authority” blogs publishes mostly original content. The posts are longer than average, detailed, and link to other sites primarily to back up editorial points or establish background.

Authority bloggers take more time between posts to research their articles, because the quality of each piece is more

important than the quantity of posts published. The blogger is seeking to establish authority in their field.

The primary purpose of a “hub” blog, on the other hand, is to direct readers to other sites. Post are shorter and more frequent – daily or several times daily – and include mostly content pulled directly from the authority sites the hub is linking to.

If you want the blog everyone else links to – you want an authority blog.

Set Goals

What is the primary reason you want to to have a blog?

Is it to attract new leads for your business? Do you need a way to educate current customers about your products?

Or perhaps you want to establish yourself as an expert in your industry so you can increase your fees or launch your next career as a motivational speaker on the national stage?

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