

Chapter 17

Blogging

Blogging so easy to do, even my father is doing it. With no or very little web knowledge, anyone can create a blog and post online. Some companies have abandoned traditional websites to use a blog as their main web presence.

Why would someone prefer to write a blog as opposed to a website? Blogs often show up higher in search engines since they are updated regularly. Many companies use blogs as a way to provide regular updates about their products. Here is a little article about blogging covered by San Francisco journalist and (new mother) Lorraine Sanders, explaining the basics of this popular medium.



A Little Blog Know-How

By Lorraine Sanders

Don't think of your company's blog and accompanying social media as just an online journal or series of status updates. Instead, look at them as a dynamic catalog, public relations maven, branding pro, marketing diva, and never-ending networking event that's working 24-7 to get your voice, your products, and your message out into the world. Better yet, they're free—and you are in complete control of them.

Whether you chronicle the trials and tribulations of a hectic production cycle, post images of fabric swatches and sketches to preview upcoming collections, or highlight your company's latest news and events, maintaining a blog and using social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter allow you to show fellow bloggers, fashion journalists, shop owners, and customers a side of your company that would otherwise remain hidden.

The beauty of blogging, tweeting and Facebooking is that they work both ways. Not only do they allow you to broadcast your message outward, but they also pull people in, and that, in turn, increases your chances of being discovered by even more people.

When you blog and use social media, you create an ever-growing series of pathways for people to find you through search engine results, RSS subscriptions, other blogs and their blogrolls, favorite links lists and via their friends and followers. Of course, building relationships online doesn't happen overnight – or without an ongoing effort to reach out. But over time, you're likely to find that your company's blogging and social media efforts have paved the way for new relationships with fellow designers, journalists, retail buyers, and everyday customers.

Ready to get started? You can easily set up a free blog using platforms such as Tumblr.com, Blogger.com or WordPress.com. If you want a look that's integrated with your company's existing web site, and you don't know how to do that on your own, save yourself the headache and hire a professional to do it for you. Don't forget to look at other blogs for inspiration, and add your favorites to your blogroll (don't forget to ask them to reciprocate). You're ready to start posting. See you in the blogosphere.

Five Habits of Successful Bloggers

- Blog often.
- Use social media such as Facebook and Twitter to grow readership.
- Have a consistent point of view.
- Know the power of a good photograph or image.
- Network like mad, online and off.

Five Social Media Tools Every Blogger Can Use to Grow Readership

- Twitter
- Facebook
- StumbleUpon
- BlogLovin'
- Blogged

What Does That Mean?! Weird Blogging Words Defined

Blogroll: A blogroll is really just a list of links to other blogs and web sites. Think of it as a list of favorites or friends. You can fill your blogroll with any site you choose, but most bloggers populate their blogrolls with blogs they read or want to endorse.

Blogrolls will help you grow readership if you make a habit of asking other bloggers to reciprocate whenever you add a new blog to your blogroll.

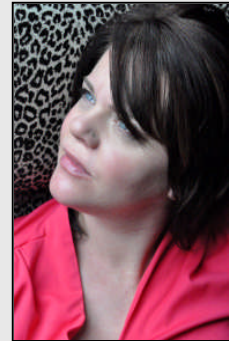
Pinging: When your blog pings another site or service, it is simply saying, in tech-speak, "Hey, I've updated my content." Most blogging platforms have pinging capabilities built in and notify blog search engines and blog directories every time you create new content.

RSS: Formally known as Really Simple Syndication, RSS technology allows anyone with a web site to syndicate content. In a nutshell, it allows you to make your blog posts available to anyone who subscribes to your feed using a program like Google Reader. In turn, you can use these programs to subscribe to other blogs. It's an easy, convenient way to receive content from all your favorite blogs in one place—instead of having to check multiple sites daily or wade through a slew of emails.

Tags: Tags are simply relevant keywords you choose and attach to your posts in order to help more readers find your blog and locate specific content once they're there. Tags can appear in "tag clouds", which are basically groups of keywords. Use a tag often, and the keyword in your

tag cloud will grow larger in size relative to other tags you've used less often. Sites that monitor and search blogs – like Technorati –group blog posts from many blogs according to their tags in huge tag clouds. Tag a post with the word “fashion,” for example, and your post will appear alongside other posts tagged with that word.

LORRAINE SANDERS is a San Francisco-based writer, blogger and media consultant. She is the founder of SF Indie Fashion, a web site and resource covering the San Francisco Bay Area's wealth of independently-run fashion labels, local designers and independent retailers. She writes for 7x7's Glamwatch, the San Francisco Chronicle, Daily Candy, NBC Bay Area, KQED and many others. Ms. Saunders is a part-time fashion journalism instructor at the Academy of Art University. She freelances as a copy writer and media consultant and works in developing online content and social media strategies.
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Using Blogs Even Further

Not only is blogging great for you to do, but it is also great to be mentioned by one— especially if the blog has industry clout. Bloggers are the new journalists of our time. If a respected blogger mentions or recommends a product, that product can become highly sought after overnight. How might you get mentioned on someone's blog? Send your pitch and make sure it is applicable to their blog. If they show interest, they may request a product to evaluate first hand.
