All You Need To Know About Blog Hosts

Apart from the chat rooms, instant messengers and electronic mails created for communication and dialogue beyond turf are the emerging innovations that help man build opportunities for interaction. The need for a personalized and human face aspect of building online communities is slowly changing the technological landscape of the Internet.

Blogs / "weblogs" or blogging are the newest gift of Internet technology to people all over the world. These are updated posts, crop up entries or personalized life snippets, of mundane or bizarre in nature. For most, a "blog" is a personal, unedited, and authentic journal meant to be shared in an online community. Blog site is a place where bloggers can publish anything; his thoughts, feelings, photos, special events, experiences, comments on issues and so on. It is more of an online diary with videos, links, documents, newsletters and opinions on just about any topics you are interested.

Blogs are made to welcome the insights and opinions of all and therefore, should not be written to sound intimidating and too formal. This kind of blog is a sure way to put off the readers. In the basics of blogging, conversational tone would be more appropriate to reach the desired audience.

Blogging is all about individuals reaching out to other individuals. Having a blog has its own set of advantages:

?   Freedom of Expression. If you want people to hear you out and give their own opinion, this is the best way to create a line of communication;
?   Networking is at its best. Having a blog is a good platform for exchanging genuine ideas from consumers to you as marketer of a certain product. Sound opinion and point of view is better than just showing the price quote;
?   Excellent advertising platform. Blogging is a new way to advertise products, a refreshing change from the traditional advertising outlets and it is cost-effective.
?   Gauging public opinion on products and services. The key is nice and catchy titles with new ideas presented in your content. This is an assurance of quick and repeated responses from your readers. Blogs is an excellent spot for the exchange of ideas between the seller and the consumer. Good for measuring public opinion regarding services and products, even political and business matters alike.

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?   Useful tool for internal communication. This will help your company to build a knowledge-based community of employees. Also good for harnessing employee relations and identifying human resource issues in advance.
?   Other benefits like search engine optimization (SEO) will help your blogs to be seen often by as many people as you wish. This is very good exposure for your products and services.

Many blog hosting services are available on the Internet. But the basic question is which one of the services will be the best to start off your business blog program? Business people are usually clueless to recent technological innovations which would help them maximize their marketing potentials. For these beginners, it is best to study first the services offered by blog hosts. An ineffective business blogging program may damage marketing opportunities instead of enriching them.

A company may decide to do the following depending on its capacity and needs: 1) Host their own blog service, 2) Pay someone else to host the service, or 3) Setup a "blog aggregator page" and ask the employees to select their blog hosting services individually. There are paid and free services available for individuals.

For business blogs, they are required to have the latest blogging features; if not, this will prevent them from maximizing their marketing, public relations and SEO potentials.

Keep in mind that blogs should have the following basic essentials:

COMMENTS. Welcoming comments provide opportunity for dialogue. In business blogs, they are a good customer feedback mechanism. This helps develop better customer relations based from loyalty and trust. Blogging is an innovative way to converse with your customers.
TRACKBACK. This helps in maximizing company and product exposure. Through this service, consumers can get back to you for more posts and updates without the difficulty of locating you. If your blog is popular in a specific online community chances are links going back to your blog site are everywhere online, other blog sites or even websites.
CATEGORIES AND TAGS. These both help in classifying blog searches for ease of navigation and on site search. Categories act as libraries because it classifies

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posts by subject matter such as business, distance learning, e-commerce, online auctions, etc. Tags, help in the classification, especially in the blog search engine Technorati. Possible customers and new clients locate blogs about certain topics of interest by just clicking the tags.

RSS FEED. Really Simple Syndication is the feed from your blog that is sent out over the internet, and collected through the various newsreaders and aggregators.

If your company is to establish a business blogging program, considerable options should be made available by the hosting companies shortlisted for the services. Free blog hosting services are popular but they are much appropriate for individual online journals. Paid blog hosting services offer unlimited packages best for your company's needs. You may want to suggest checking out some blogs that use the host first, read and examine their layout and design. Another important thing to consider is a reliable technical support the host has.

After, choosing the blog host, a team should be ready to plan the design and structure of the blog: The team should:

? create a style that meets the needs of the audience;
? establish an open, credible tone;
? schedule weekly updating of blog - ideally, a few times a week;
? include weblinks of other website and blogs;
? blog post should be in the "first person;"
? focus on the business blog objective; and,
? maintain an honest, engaging conversational quality.

Remember, whatever the look, style and content found on your blog is a reflection of you and your company.

(990 words)