



To Blog, Or Not to Blog?

By Suzanne Bates



If you don't yet have a blog of your own, here are some factors to consider.

Many executives and thought leaders are immersed in blogging, and they love it. But to many who grew up B.I. (Before Internet), blogging seems like a chore. Most are baffled by it. They can't imagine keeping a "diary" online, yet they also feel a little concerned they're going to be left behind.

Why Leaders Don't Blog

The reluctance of many nonprofit leaders to go "social" is driven by concerns about releasing sensitive information inadvertently. There's a general feeling that it simply isn't necessary, and could be harmful.

And if you're a nonprofit leader, you're already extremely busy. You may wonder if blogging is the best use of your time.

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On the other hand, there are many reasons to blog. You can use a blog to reach your markets and extend your brands. With blogging, you can start a conversation, show thought leadership, and stand out quickly with a good strategy and rich content in a forum that you control.

Blogs are also reputation management tools. A blog can build goodwill and counter negative press.

The thing to remember is that the conversation is going on. People are

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talking about you. In the context of brand management, you want to be sure you—or at least the people who can help your brand—are in on the conversation.

What will people find when they Google you? Feature articles? Bylines? Op eds? Videos from your interviews? Speeches on YouTube? Someone in your organization must be in charge of creating your public profile in the "social" world. They need to manage it, infuse it with positive news, and monitor negative press. If you're smart, you're already thinking about the best way to communicate in the online world

How to Get Started

If you decide to give blogging a try but aren't sure where to begin, try "writing out loud." Turn on a tape recorder, have someone ask you questions, and just talk. Have them transcribe and edit what you've said. Readers have a sixth sense about whether a leader's blog is really coming from them. This is a way to ensure it does.

As to how often to blog (or use any social media), you need to be a regular or you won't gain a following. You have to do what's realistic for your busy schedule. Think about posting a blog once a week, or twice a month. Set up a system for capturing your ideas quickly. You can also

People are talking about you. Are you in on the conversation?

leverage your blog posts into other communications, like employee newsletters and internal communications.

Is Now the Right Time?

Now is the time if you see a compelling reason to jump in. Perhaps you'd like to use your blog as a research tool. Perhaps you want to establish thought leadership in a certain area. Maybe you've always enjoyed writing and see it as an outlet.

Don't feel you need to do it all yourself. Even if you're in a small organization, you can set up systems for developing your blog's ideas, for editing, and for posting, if you don't want to do those things yourself. Be sure you have someone monitoring comments as well. Blogs are still a new medium, so don't be afraid to experiment with what works for you!

Suzanne Bates is the author of *Discover Your CEO Brand: Secrets to Embracing and Maximizing Your Unique Brand as a Leader* (McGraw-Hill). Founding CEO of Bates Communications (www.batescommunications.com), a firm that transforms leaders into powerful communicators who get results, Suzanne is also author of www.thepowerspeakerblog.com and two other books from McGraw-Hill: *Speak Like a CEO* and *Motivate Like a CEO*.

More on Social Media

For more on making the most of blogging and a variety of social media, see the webinar "Fundraising and the Next Generation," instructed by Emily Davis (available at www.snpo.org/lino). You can contact Emily at emily@edaconulting.org.