

Writing: Long-form Blog Post

Why is your communications pro suggesting that you start a blog?

Your communications pro — in-house, agency or freelance — is right: You need a blog.

We'll get into the reasons why a little farther down the page, but for now, do me a favor: Take whatever vision you have of a blog and bury it for a moment. Scratch the slate clean, and allow me to paint a picture that might be quite different than the one that comes to your mind when you hear the term.

What is a blog, exactly?

In their earliest days, blogs were actually called “weblogs.” It, as it sounds, was a log of some kind that was live on the World Wide Web. Almost exclusively at first, weblogs (eventually shortened to “blogs” as World Wide Web was shortened to “web”) were online diaries or journals people kept and shared. It didn't take long, however, for forward-thinking individuals to realize that a blog can be used for much more than keeping an online journal.

I heard Neil Patrick Harris on “Wait, Wait...Don't Tell Me” the other day refer to his “Doogie Howser, MD” end-of-show journal-writing on the computer as perhaps the first-ever blog. I think he's probably right! The show was on television from 1989 to 1993. Modern blogs are thought to have started around 1994.

Today, they take different forms. Some contain only editorial-style writing. Some contain news. Still some are simply the card-catalog of a long list of frequent, important announcements.



WRITING
Blog Post

CLIENT
CorComm Creative (self-marketing)

This post for the CorComm blog came about after having conversations with several clients about why blogging is beneficial. The resulting article is one we now forward to clients who inquire about blogging, usually after we have first had a short discussion about it. It makes a great follow-up piece.

Blogs serve as an information hub and front door to nonprofit organizations and businesses, and one could argue that they might be even more important than a website.

That brings us to our list of answers to the question: Why is your communications pro suggesting that you start a blog?

1. Because it's the best way people will find you online.

Think about how you, personally, use the internet. Do you open a browser window and just start wandering aimlessly?

Probably not.

More than likely, you jump onto the internet in search of an answer to a question. Most people do. Google reportedly processed approximately 100 billion searches every month back in 2015, and we can presume the number has only risen since then.

If your organization wants to be found online, you have to provide answers to questions your audiences want answered. If you don't, organizations that do will show up higher than you do in search-engine results. The farther down the results list you fall, the less likely people will find your organization organically (meaning, for free, versus some form of paid advertising). A blog gives you a logical place to provide answers (in the form of informational posts) to the questions your audiences seek — questions like:

- “How can I help the victims of domestic violence in Indiana?”

Indiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence's home page, which also features its six most recent blog posts, falls in the No. 3 position in Google rankings. It's the first Indiana result, following two national results.

- “Do Indiana's elected officials care about food insecurity?”

Feeding Indiana's Hungry's blog answers this question and falls in the No. 1 spot on the Google search engine results page when someone asks this question.

- “Is anyone working for the benefit of low-income workers in Indiana?”

The Indiana Institute for Working Families' “Status of Working Families” report falls in the No. 3 spot on the Google search results page, the first non-dot-gov/ governmental website in the list. This is impressive, given the rest of the results on the page are much larger, national organizations and universities who are tackling the same issue. And while the report itself isn't from the Institute's blog, the Institute does blog regularly about the issue, positioning the organization as an authority on the issue and therefore ranking it high in the results.

Other examples of great questions a blog post could answer:

- Who is the speaker for this week's meeting? Why should I spend my time to attend?

- Are there any faith-based organizations that are working to boost racial justice in Indianapolis? (Incidentally, yes.)

- How do I know if I should see a doctor for the pain I'm feeling in my knees?

Being found in search engines is an important act toward building an audience. And your audience is what will drive your organization toward success.

2. After you capture your audience, a blog will help you keep it.

Blogs, by nature, are informative. You're offering something of value to the reader, drawing her to your organization, rather than paying for advertising that intrudes on other activities.

[This is the basis of content marketing. [Read about it in our two-part series: Part 1 and Part 2.](#)]

Once the viewer lands on your blog and finds value in the content of that first article, she is likely to find and read other articles you've posted, download an e-book with more information (giving you her email address in the process) or visit your website to learn more about you.

As the reader consumes more and more information on your blog, she gradually begins to develop an opinion of your organization — a positive one. She'll mentally be aware that your organization is a reputable source of information. She might bookmark the site and come back to visit again soon, sign up to receive notifications of new blog posts or even share the content she finds useful with someone else.

Meanwhile, you're building brand credibility — not only in the reader's eyes, but also in the eyes of Google and other search engines. (See above.)

3. Your audiences might give up on you if they don't find you where they're looking.

Let's say someone attends an event you hold — maybe someone he knows invited him to a networking meeting or fundraising luncheon. He's intrigued and wants to know more. Chances are, he'll Google you. Great!

But if that person lands on a website you haven't updated in two years, and the only information he can find on you is stuff he can read in a brochure he picked up at the event, he's likely to move on. You could miss out on an opportunity to snag a new volunteer, board member or donor.

Even audiences that seem built-in (like members of an association or existing donors) can lose interest if they are

disappointed in the content you provide. In fact, results of Abila's Donor Loyalty Study listed as a key finding that, “Content is NOT just king; it's money. Nearly 75 percent of respondents say they might stop donating to an organization based on poor content, including vague content, dull content, irrelevant content and inconvenient formatting*.”

[* Side note: Design matters, too! CorComm Creative can help you take boring content and make it visually compelling. Contact us to get started!]

4. A blog becomes a valuable resource over time.

The content you develop for your blog is content you own. You can decide what you share, how you share it and when you'll publish it.

You can also decide how long you want to leave it on the web. Over time, the more content you post, the deeper the resource you become to your audiences. The more content your audience finds, the more it will return to your site.

Having a lot of resourceful content on your blog begins to compound the number of times you will show up in results to Google queries. If you've blogged 10 times about a single subject, Google's algorithms will reflect this with its ranking. You're establishing yourself as an authority on this topic in the online space.

Also, if you have posted 10 articles on a single topic, when someone Googles that topic, the reader is 10 times more likely to find one of your articles in the search results.

5. People will learn to expect and look for your content.

If your readers find value in your posts on a regular basis and know you're posting often, they will begin to expect new posts from you. Some will actively seek your posts without any prompting.

Let's say you're an association of members, and you have a lot of information to share on a weekly basis. Some are short announcements. Some are links to resources. Some are longer articles. You've tried sending out newsletters by email, but they largely go unread.

Then, you try a blog. You divide the content by topics (keywords) and post all news related to a single topic on a single page. You tag each page with the name of the topic. Now, a reader knows he can go to your blog, search for the topic that interests him, and pull up a list of recent posts, in chronological order and grouped by like material.

It's fast, easy and organized. You've provided valuable content in a predictable format.

If you publish that information every Wednesday, for example, the reader will begin to expect to find new information every Wednesday. By then, you're not having to rely on your efforts to prompt the readers to find the information; they're actively looking for it themselves.

6. Your blog becomes the front door to your organization.

Websites are still valuable and have a place in establishing your organization as an important figure in the online space. If people don't find a website for your organization, they might assume the organization is hopelessly outdated and therefore not worth the time or money to pursue it any longer.

But if your organization has a great blog, it will almost certainly become the gateway for the majority of new interactions with your audiences.

Why?

- This section of your website is updated most frequently and has the most informational content for your audiences — both of which will establish a higher presence in Google search results. If your blog is a native part of your website, your entire website will get the credit with Google. If it's a separate site that is linked to your website, the blog portion will almost always appear higher in results than the website itself.

- People are likely to share the kinds of content that will be housed on a blog more frequently than content that fits more naturally on a traditional website. While the information on a website is often brochure-like in nature, information on a blog is more useful to a reader. Those are the pages that your readers will want to share with friends. Those friends are going to visit the pages that were shared with them, and that will be their entryway into your website (your entire brand, maybe!) as a whole.

- You should promote your blog posts on your organization's social media channels, linking readers to the blog (not to the home page of your website). Much like in the prior bullet point, this will be the readers' entryway into your website and blog — and perhaps the readers' first introduction to your brand.

7. No one can rely on just one form of communication anymore.

Communicating well with any audience — whether it be an established audience, like members of an organization, or a desired audience, such as people you would love to get involved in your organization — is changing.

No longer can you publish a newsletter and know that the majority of your established audiences will read it — or earn a

mention in the city's largest newspaper and know that much of the city will be informed.

The number of sources for gathering information today is essentially endless. And because our smartphones and other technology allow us to selectively consume information based on our own personal preferences, each of us has a different set of go-to resources we use to stay informed about what's important to us.

The key to communicating well in today's culture is to be present in multiple channels (digital and print), to be there as frequently as you can be and to establish yourself as a knowledgeable, predictable resource that draws people back to you time and time again.

A blog has the power to be that resource and to be a hub where all other communications efforts point. It's worth the time and effort it takes to produce — and it's quickly becoming an indisputable necessity for reaching the people you serve.

CorComm Creative can help your organization begin or maintain a blog. Our writers, designers and photographers are well-equipped to produce the kind of content that will draw people back to your blog time and time again. Contact us today to learn more about how we can help.

Learn more:

- [CONTENT MARKETING 101: Understanding this modern marketing tactic](#) [Part 1]

- [CONTENT MARKETING 201: Your nonprofit should be using content marketing. It's no longer an option.](#) [Part 2]

- [The Ultimate List of Marketing Statistics for 2018](#) (Hubspot)

The Buzz
Casual Conversations with the Worker Bees at CorComm Creative

Why is your communications pro suggesting you start a blog?
Posted by Corie Farnsley on June 20, 2018

Find me on: [f](#) [in](#) [t](#) [v](#) [p](#) [e](#) [s](#) [s](#) [y](#) [+](#)

Recent Posts

- 6 benefits of hiring a full-service, virtual agency
- 8 brutally honest facts about freelancing and owning a small business
- 2019 Communications Planning: 10 sections to include in a successful communications plan
- Reel your audience in with a good story: 7 elements of a truly unique blog post
- CLIENT PROFILE: Nonprofit director says CorComm-designed tools have helped low-income family data resonate with changemakers
- SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT about our business
- Stock Images vs Real Images
- 8 reasons nonprofits should consider e-newsletters

Your communications pro — in-house, agency or freelance — is right: You need a blog.

We'll get into the reasons why a little farther down the page, but for now, do me a favor: Take

How to choose a web host