



White Paper

The Importance of Connecting Brands with Bloggers

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Overview

With bloggers rapidly overtaking the Internet, they are quickly becoming part of our media landscape. With more and more newspapers shutting their doors, blogs have become the default for many consumers to learn about news, opinions and products.

Unfortunately, companies are slow to realize the power blogs have. But with over **94 million blogs** in existence (Emarketer, 2008), it's a hard number to ignore. At Egg Marketing & Public Relations (<http://www.eggmarketingpr.com>), we strive to educate corporate brands to help them understand the value that bloggers hold for them.

Bloggers share their opinions with their readers, and readers listen. If a blogger recommends a brand, you can be sure that readers will visit the company website if not *buy the product*. The power bloggers hold in this regard is worth far more than traditional advertising methods. A banner ad on a website just says, "This company wants you to buy their products." A blog review says, "I don't care if you buy it or not, but I thought this product was great." **Customers react MORE to referrals than advertising.**

Key Findings

Blogs are an effective tool to expand a brand's reach. By interacting with bloggers and working with them to conduct product reviews and giveaways, a company can increase website visits and sales.

In comparison to traditional advertising methods, including banner ads, billboards and telephone advertisements, which use the shotgun method to ineffectively scatter a non-trackable message to the masses, blogger outreach provides a quantifiable, traceable method for reaching a targeted audience. Through website analytics and an ongoing relationship with a blogger, a company can easily trace its ROI on blog outreach campaigns and see which visits and sales were a result of a given review or giveaway post.

The cost of blogger outreach as a marketing tool is more cost effective in general than traditional methods. A marketing budget of \$100,000 will cover perhaps a television commercial, billboard ad for several months, and a year's prominent placement in the Yellow Pages, **or** more than cover a detailed internet marketing and social media marketing strategy, including blog outreach.

Recommendations

Include blog outreach in your overall marketing strategy. Engage your audience by identifying key blogs that your audience frequents and developing relationships with bloggers who can become brand evangelists for your company.

Chapter 1

Bridging the Gap Between Brands and Bloggers



Many brands simply do not know how to reach bloggers. Marketing Directors know how to work in the areas they're familiar with, including press releases, advertising and direct mail. Connecting to individual bloggers may seem too complicated and time-consuming to bother with.

On the contrary. Blogs can have audiences of several thousand, and these are several thousand people you can reach by partnering with bloggers. A product review on a relevant blog can garner ongoing interest long

after the blog post is published. A giveaway or contest can build excitement as entrants buzz about the possibility of winning a prize.

Case Study: FuzziBunz Pocket Diapers



In 2009, Egg Marketing & Public Relations helped FuzziBunz Pocket Diapers (<http://www.fuzzibunz.com>) garner more attention for its popular cloth diapers. While the company was occasionally contacted to participate in blog giveaways, the company had not implemented a blogger outreach strategy before this point. Egg researched blogs written by mothers of young children. Some wrote specifically about cloth diapers, others occasionally reviewed products, while others strictly offered reviews and giveaways of products.

Within a short period, Egg was able to secure more than a dozen written and video reviews as well as giveaways. Mom bloggers (those who write about parenting, lifestyle and children) were eager to work with FuzziBunz, as it is a well-known brand among women who cloth diaper their children. They also

appreciated the fact that FuzziBunz reached out to them in a climate that was reluctant to treat bloggers on an equal plane with journalists.

Egg helped FuzziBunz develop long-term, meaningful relationships with bloggers of influence in its demographic.

Chapter 2

Reaching New Markets

For a mid-size company, getting the word out about its products can be a challenge. Commercials, billboards and print advertising prove difficult to track results on, but blogs provide ROI tracking that will satisfy any VP or CEO. Clicks from a blog are trackable through tools like Google Analytics.

Bloggers enjoy trying new or lesser-known products (this separates them from the bloggers that write about the “same old products.”) Discovering a new jewelry line or food product can help not only the brand find new customers, but it also helps the blogger as more people turn to her for her respected opinion and her traffic increases.



How it Works

Bloggers have readers. This can vary from 100 readers a month to 200,000 or more per month. Readers follow a particular blogger because they find her a reasonable source of news and opinion. When a blogger writes about a particular brand, her readers pay attention. When readers pay attention, brands win by getting more traffic to their websites and an increase in sales.

Giveaways

There are two primary ways to work with a blog. The first is conducting giveaways. By giving away your product to blog readers, you increase the excitement surrounding your product, and get people to visit your website to learn more about you.

The cost of your product probably isn't that much, especially in comparison to the ROI you can get through strategic blog giveaways. Look at it like this: if your product costs you \$3 to make and you get 50 entries for a blog giveaway for that product (assume each one clicked on your link), you paid \$3 for 50 clicks. That's \$.06 per visitor to your site. You can't get Google AdWords clicks for that cheap. And of those 30, let's say 10% (3 people) decide to go ahead and buy your product when they don't win the contest. \$3 for 3 sales and 50 clicks? Not a bad ROI.

Reviews

The other way to reach readers is by offering targeted bloggers the opportunity to review your product. Protocol says you should give the blogger the product to keep, and many companies offer some form of payment (although to be clear: they are not paying for a positive review but rather for the blogger's time to try out the product and write about it). A strong review on a popular blog might get you 1000 or more clicks to your website, as well as better placement on the search engines.

Case Study: ioSafe



Egg worked with ioSafe (<http://www.iosafe.com>), a company that manufactures durable external hard drives. The company wished to saturate the technology blog market with reviews of its product: and succeeded. Egg worked with leading tech product review blogs to facilitate shipping a unit, answering questions during testing and promoting the reviews once they were posted. Egg was part of a PR team that successfully increased traffic to ioSafe's website by 300%.

Technology changes constantly, and tech bloggers are unable to research every product that is available. In working with Egg, the bloggers were grateful that a relevant product was presented to them, and they quickly turned around product reviews that boosted traffic to ioSafe's site.

Chapter 3

Why Blogs



A marketing or PR employee may ask “why blogs? When I have an armory of tools like press releases, social media, and email, why add blogs to the mix?”

The great thing about blogs is that they work in conjunction with all the other efforts. A press release may, in fact, be the pitch that results in the blog review. The review can be promoted on social media sites like Twitter, with 6 million users (Compete.com Feb. 2009) and Facebook, with more than 65 million active users (Facebook.com Oct. 2009). Brand loyalists can receive an email regarding new product reviews.

At a cost of approximately \$30,000 to \$50,000 a year, blog outreach seems the logical choice for companies looking to better connect with their audiences.

There’s no denying that media and the whole model of customer engagement is changing from a broadcast model to a narrowcast/niche model with a tighter feedback cycle. Those companies that can adapt as they change are the ones that will find greater successes and more loyal brand evangelists. Those that refuse to bend will be left in the dust.

Adding Blogs to Your Arsenal

No matter what your product or service, you want more customers, right? Blogs provide a greater reach for your products when you add blogger outreach to your overall marketing mix, and nothing beats a well-respected blogger’s endorsement.

It's important to carefully analyze what types of blogs would be a good fit for your product. You want to reach your target market, so research the types of blogs this segment reads. You may find several niches can help you reach a wider span of that market.

Case Study: GiveDaddy



In response to the successes that Egg has seen in its blogger outreach efforts, the company decided to launch its own giveaway and review blog: <http://GiveDaddy.com>. The website has seen tremendous growth in the short period since its launch.

The site was designed to showcase some of the great brands Egg has worked with. Visitors to the site can read a review on the product and enter to win a different item each day. Egg promotes the giveaways through its GiveDaddy Twitter (<http://www.twitter.com/givedaddy>) and Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/home.php#/pages/GiveDaddycom/129375407559?ref=ts>) channels.

Through GiveDaddy, Egg has successfully developed relationships with brands like True Lemon (<http://www.truelemon.com>), FuzziBunz (<http://www.fuzzibunz.com>), XShot (<http://www.xshot.com>) and Boiron (<http://www.boironusa.com>) and has helped them reach their target audience of women and mothers aged 25-35.

Chapter 4

Resources

If you are interested in connecting your brand with influential bloggers who can grow your reach, visit Egg Marketing & Public Relations' website at <http://www.eggmarketingpr.com>, email us at susan@eggmarketingpr.com or call us at 501.318.825.

Here are additional resources on blogger outreach:

From The Marketing Eggspert Blog:

- Creating PR Through Blogs: <http://www.sparkplugging.com/marketing/how-to-tuesday-creating-pr-through-blogs/>
- How Bloggers Create PR: <http://www.sparkplugging.com/marketing/how-bloggers-create-pr/>
- Blogs and PR: A Winning Combination: <http://www.sparkplugging.com/marketing/blogs-and-pr/>
- Blogs are a Force to be Reckoned With: <http://www.sparkplugging.com/marketing/blogs-are-a-force-to-be-reckoned-with/>

From Other Blogs:

- Marketing for NonProfits: Blogger Outreach: Tread Lightly: <http://www.marketingfornonprofits.org/2009/05/blogger-outreach-tread-lightly.html>
- TechnoMarketer: 5 Keys to Successful Blogger Outreach: <http://technomarketer.typepad.com/technomarketer/2008/02/five-keys-to-su.html>
- BizGrowthNews: Guidelines for Blogger Outreach: Gary Vaynerchuck Case Study: <http://www.krishnade.com/blog/2009/guidelines-for-blogger-outreach/>

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