

## To Blog or Not to Blog

Wall Street Journal - 6-21-09 - A few years ago, experts would tell you that if you didn't have a blog, your career would self-destruct. So, millions started them, even if writing a compelling post each day was their version of waterboarding.

Then, there was a backlash. The same experts said the blogosphere was too crowded and you should only be out there if you are a CEO or have already proven that thousands of people want to read your ideas.

So what's the current story? To blog or not to blog to further your reinvention efforts?

Chris Brogan, the president of New Marketing Labs, has been blogging since 1998 -- when it was still called journaling. Today, 25,000 people subscribe to ChrisBrogan.com to get his thoughts on everything from dynamic online communities to children's books.

### **Become an Expert**

Mr. Brogan began his career in telecommunications and over a period of several years, leveraged his blog to transform himself into an expert in online community building and business strategy. "I evolved my blog from writing about everything that was in my head to zeroing in on what my readers need," he says. "I allow people to come in, pick up my material, and walk away and make it their own."

The advantages of using a blog to jump start your career, says Mr. Brogan, are many.

- "Blogging is flexible and gives you the freedom to set your own agenda and publishing schedule."
- "It's also the Trojan horse into many large companies, because executive level readers see my posts and get an immediate taste of the value I can bring to their businesses."

Blogging isn't for everyone, though. For some, the prospect of drafting original content two or more times a week is undesirable or impractical. And for those who excel at the spoken word rather than the written word, there are better avenues, such as YouTube.

Even people who love to write should understand what they want the blog to achieve in terms of their professional development.

"Not having a focus will dilute your authority and distract people," says Darren Rowse, who runs ProBlogger.net, a site that helps writers add income streams to their Blogs.

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## Explore the Blogosphere

Before you begin the process of using a blog to establish yourself in a new industry, check out the community that already exists there.:

- Learn the culture and the etiquette.
- Look carefully at the other Blogs and assess the holes.
- What are the topics that no one is currently covering?
- What niche can you fill by being yourself and sharing your expertise?"

When I started blogging in 2006, I networked with other bloggers by commenting on their posts and linking out to their sites. It helped me gain traction for my blog, and it also provided critical insights and information about my new career as a business-advice writer.

Over all, I think blogging forces re-inventers to clarify their ideas, build a body of knowledge in a new area and carefully consider their long-term career goals. It's also a valuable way to measure success.

"You can determine if you're really engaging people by looking at traffic, subscribers and comments," says Mr. Rowse.

**(End)**