

In the old days of several years ago, having a website was a big deal. Today *it is required* if you want to do business, especially if, your business is your avocation, such as someone with a wild bird store, a needlepoint, rock climbing, or sailing business etc. Why? Because it is a sure fire way to find and draw in others who share your passion.

At this point let me say, that *not* having a website for your practice or small company in a world defined by Google search is like trying to promote your business by sitting in a closet and closing the door – and as effective. No ifs ands or buts about it. Small businesses need to have a website.

The best known and most widely used of the new word-of-mouth tools is blogging. A blog is a personal web site with posts typically displayed in reverse order with the newest post first, making it easy to see what is the most current. A company blog is a website that supports objectives of its business, such as to raise the visibility of the business or to draw new customers in.

Posts are the opinions of the author – not an anonymous “corporate voice”. One of the best known bloggers in the corporate world is Jonathan Schwartz, CEO of Sun Microsystems, a Fortune 500 company, who uses [his blog](#) as a fine musician might his violin, to express to customers, partners, press and anyone else who is interested, what he has to say. A blog gives Schwartz his own private pulpit, a place to tell the Sun story in his own way – direct to the reader.

If there is a difficult or problematic issue, Schwartz can address it head on. For example, a bug in a recent software release or [bad news in last quarter's](#)

before any action is taken. Suddenly the customer is not dealing with a large impersonal company, but interacting with a real person – *and they like it*. Schwartz has single handedly turned around public opinion on his company.

But blogging is not just for big companies. Indeed, a blog can do magic for the small business owner, consultant, or person with a passion.

In a fiercely competitive market, blogs can raise the individual firm above the rest. [Here](#), is an excellent example of a real estate agent's blog in the hotly competitive Los Angeles market. Kira Gould, the agent, uses her blog to provide resources to prospective home buyers in L.A.: [where to eat](#), where to find the most adorable [children's shoes](#), etc. After you read her blog, you know a great deal more about the neighborhoods she covers, AND you know something about Kira, and probably you appreciate her helpful advice. Out of the thousands of real estate folks in the area, she is someone you know and trust.

Note that the focus of the blog is not Kira or why she is such a good agent, but information an L.A. homebuyer looking in the Westwood neighborhood might really want to know.

Business blogs can strengthen your relationship with key customers or market segments and build awareness and credibility for your

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Some Examples

- Albany [Lawyer](#), a lawyer in upstate New York, who uses his site to promote his law practice.
- [An artist](#) in Biloxi Mississippi who uses her site to create interest in her art.
- A [Des Moines, Iowa tax blogger](#) in who has been steadily building his blog following (and his practice).
- And [Chicknits](#), a knit design shop based in Chicago, Illinois.

[results](#). If there is good news, he can frame it in his own way. And, if there is a new concept he would like to test, he can float it out and get feedback