

Blogs can boost marketing plans, bottom line as interest and ease of use increases

BY JAMIE APPLING

Attorney Greg Siskind was a blogger before the term blog — a contraction for Web-log — had been invented.

The founder of Siskind Susser Bland PC and a blogger since 1997, Siskind's blogs have had days with up to 250,000

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views, he says. He does advocacy work through blogs and writes about immigration bills moving through Congress.

Siskind says the growing allure of the blogosphere for businesses has been boosted by the ease in blog upkeep.

"When I first started, I was having to send all my content to a Web expert and the site wouldn't get updated that often, but now I just do it myself," he says. "It is almost instantaneous from when I type to when it goes on the page."

Blogs are an effective tool for businesses because they are an effective way for businesses to communicate with customers, Siskind says.

Joe Spake, a Realtor with Crye-Leike Realtors, Inc., started blogging about six months ago and has seen a dramatic increase in the number of clients contacting him. His blog is not making any money from advertisers but he is getting a rise in his business.

"I can measure the success of the blog by marketing — not in dollars," he says. "I use it as a tool to generate interest in me."

Spake talks in his blog about the Memphis housing market and other hot button issues Realtors face. His blog gives him credibility with customers as well as other Realtors, he says.

"I try to only write when I feel like I have something to say," he says. "I don't post every day because one of the drawbacks of the blogging world is the tendencies for people to write too often. They don't write anything worth reading."

A blogger can become an "expert" on a subject just because they wrote about it first, Siskind says.

"I was one of the first lawyers to have a blog," Siskind says. "I not only got my name out there, but it also allowed for my company to become one of the most known immigration firms in the country."

Blogs have become more successful because of search engines, says Angie Vandenberg, Crye-Leike Webmaster. She contributes to the real estate industry's blogging site activerain.com.

"Blogs are fresher and updated more frequently than outdated Web sites," she says.

Blogs likely will become more popular as business tools once people see

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Greg Siskind
Siskind Susser Bland PC

how easy it is to keep up with one and how beneficial it is to have one, Vandenberg says.

Even the Memphis Grizzlies are joining the blogosphere. Some of the team members, a fan and a public relations representative working with the team will write blogs throughout the upcoming season.

But Memphis still has a long way to go in the blogosphere world, Vandenberg says.

"I haven't seen many businesses in Memphis catching on to blogs right now because certain groups of people adopt technology at different levels, and Memphis may not see how beneficial it is to blog yet," she says.

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