

ARTICLES

- Featured Articles
- Accounting/Audit
- Financial Planning
- Payroll/HR
- Practice Development
- Small Business
- Taxation
- Tech. Center



So you want to start blogging. Or more likely, you have just found out that you are expected to start blogging.

This usually happens when someone in marketing decides that your firm needs to add a blog to your website. They ask volunteers to step forward and everyone steps back - except you. Or maybe you have written an article or two on cost segregation or charitable remainder trusts and now there is documented proof that you can form complete sentences. That makes you the best candidate for the role of firm blogger. No matter how you have arrived at your blogging assignment, it probably feels like a chore. You've lived through numerous failed newsletter projects and know how much of a hassle it is to write content even once a quarter. You probably figure blogging will require tons of research and more long nights at the office.

Fortunately, you've got it all wrong. Done properly, blogs should give you an excuse to leave the office, to follow your passion, and to tell your story. They can change your perspective and help you form connections with clients in a way you might not imagine. And rather than requiring hours of technical research, blogs merely require a few minutes of intense curiosity and constant observation. They should be fun to write and interesting to read. Blogs are all about forming a personal connection with an audience. They should reflect your voice. I doubt many clients are going to get so excited by your charitable remainder trust post that they share it with their neighbor. But what Monty Python fan will be able to resist sharing your witty post about Accountants as Lion Tamers with their fellow Monty Python lovers?

The goal of a blog is to create content that makes people hungry for more so they return to your site and share information about you with others. How many links to videos have you received from friends? How many links to IRS Circular E have you gotten from friends? I rest my case.

Here are 5 myths that prevent accountants from blogging:

Myth #1: Blog posts should be written on a regular schedule

Actually, this is a terrifying thing to tell an accountant, but there is no schedule. Good blog posts happen when the spirit moves you and you have something interesting to say. Forced blog posts, written on a regular schedule, are easy to spot and rarely reflect the author's personality.

EXAMPLE: This is a blog written by an aspiring CPA - she only posts when she has time, but she has a huge following
<http://www.thecookingaccountant.com/>

Myth #2: Blog posts should be on official topics like taxes and FASB 107.

If these are your topics of choice, put them in a newsletter or article. Or, better yet, buy one of those subscriptions to a technical newsletter that is ghost written on your behalf. Don't waste your time writing a blog post that no one will read. Blog posts should be about life. And that means you have to actually have a life - one that involves something other than work. They can be about anything that interests you and inspires passion. They could be on subjects like fishing, cycling, jogging, eating, comedy, books, sports, music -- whatever you enjoy enough to talk about is the right subject for a blog. If you have a chance to observe people, places, or events in your local community that is even better.

EXAMPLE: This is a blog written by a CPA with a passion for photography - he just happens to be in the heart of Napa Valley with plenty of photo opportunities <http://blog.bdcocpa.com/>

Myth #3: Blog posts have to be flowery and well written.

If that is what you are like in person, then yes, your posts should reflect your style. If you use exactly the right word and enjoy a philosophical



debate on the meaning of life, then that is what should be on your blog. But if you happen to be a hushpuppy fanatic from Greenville, South Carolina, then your blog should reflect that (mine does). Blog posts should be conversational rather than formal. Descriptive vivid words are best, but long technical sounding expressions and acronyms should be reserved for paid research projects. **Just to be clear, I'm not advocating that you use four letter words and make irresponsible statements, because clearly that is not in your best professional interest. What I'm saying is that your posts should ring true - if you're angry about some crazy tax law change, then express your anger.**

EXAMPLE : This one is well written but not flowery
<http://www.cpamarketingcenter.com/blog/>

Myth #4: Blog posts have to be long or contain a fixed number of words.

They can be short or long. Some great blog posts contain a single sentence, while others just include a photo with a caption. They should be as brief as possible but long enough to convey your message. If they get too long, no one will read them.

EXAMPLE: Here's a short blog post written by a CPA who just happens to be in a Country Western band
<http://blog.rina.com/2009/08/28/>

Myth #5: No one cares about my interest in _____ (insert your favorite subject here.)

Even if you are the only person on earth with a love of the striped mud turtle, your blog post on that subject is likely to spur more interest and conversation than any newsletter article you have submitted in the last 20 years. People will read about interesting subjects - and those subjects can be used to make a point that relates to your accounting services. People will be fascinated (and frankly, shocked) to know that you have an interest in something found in nature. When you write a blog post, you will want to take your observations of the mud turtle and connect them with a service you offer - maybe a mud turtle is as overlooked and misunderstood as the equity section of a balance sheet. Or maybe this turtle's slow pace reminds you of a client who doesn't worry about being the biggest, but steadily works on providing excellent customer service. He doesn't stick his neck out, but he continues to focus on his areas of expertise. Or maybe you start to wonder why a turtle chooses to spend much of his life slogging through the mud and have encountered employees with a similar problem.

EXAMPLE: This blogger builds off of his interest in running and biking to make his points <http://blog.colegavlas.com/>

Now that you know the myths aren't true, it is time to sit down and figure out what subject will excite you enough to write about it. When you start looking for material, you will find it everywhere you go, so rather than being a chore, blogging actually becomes more like a game. And as an added bonus, when you step away from the computer and take time to appreciate the view outside of your office, you will have more energy to apply to your work -blogging is a lot cheaper than therapy.

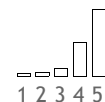
Geni Whitehouse, CPA.CITP, CSPM is the Countess of Communication at Mentor Plus. She is a frequent blogger on a number of different websites, including www.evenanerd.com . She specializes in making boring subjects from Sales Tax to XBRL interesting and is the author of "How to Make a Boring Subject Interesting: 52 ways even a nerd can be heard." She is responsible for helping a number of former nerds find their authentic voice through blogs.
geni@mentorplus.com



How would you rate the quality of this content?

Average rating:
4.4 out of 5.

1 2 3 4 5
 Poor Outstanding



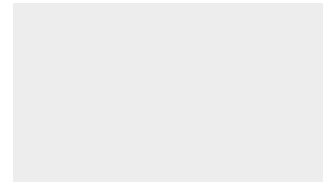
Tell us why you rated the content this way (optional).

55 people have rated this article.

▲

▼

Rate Content



© Copyright 1999-2009 AccountantsWorld, LLC. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission is prohibited.
[Contact Us](#) | [Support](#) | [About AW](#) | [Benefits](#) | [Terms of Use](#) | [Privacy Policy](#)