



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Find out if your organization is ready for a corporate blog

1. How long does it take to create a blog?

We can create the property tailored specifically to your organization in less than a week. Politically, that's another matter. And, as a practical point, blogs are never done because they evolve all the time.

2. How many daily readers can I expect to get?

At first, not very many. More later if your blog is consistent and rich in content – it's not an overnight project, blogging takes time. But don't blog if you're still driven by the old math... the PR, marketing and advertising numbers game in which *how many* people are being reached is a more important question than *who* is being reached and to what effect. Blogging is about people finding you; not about you blanketing the world with a one-way broadcast marketing message.

3. How much does it cost to start a blog?

You can be blogging within an hour for free if you choose to do your own thing. Alternatively it takes us about a week to build a corporate blog and familiarize you and your team with its use and functions. Blogs we build for clients come complete with analytic monitoring, author rights management, blogroll sidebar, search function, archives, sample posts and so forth. In a week, two people here at AgencyNext will spend approximately 30 hours each building your blog, and showing you and others you designate how to use it. If travel is not involved, our average total project cost for making you blog ready is less than \$5,000.

4. Who owns the blogs you create?

Our clients own them. As a convenience we will host them if asked to do so and we can and do manage them as well if required.

5. What would I talk about on a blog?

Anything you feel passionate about. *Everything* that matters most about you and/or your company to the people with which you would most want to have a conversation. *Nothing* overtly promotional; no marketing or PR speak.

6. What if I run out of things to say?

It's not *if*, but *when*. Most people, including those who feel passionate about something, find feeding a blog routinely over the long-term tedious and all-consuming. For anyone in corporate with a full plate of duties already, blogging well is nearly impossible. That's why you see so many blogs on the Internet that have been abandoned. It's better to share. If you and three or four others, for example, take combined responsibility for fresh content, the effort for each individual isn't as arduous. There are many other benefits to this team approach as well: content variety improves for your readers; you're able to add people with an expertise you may not be able to bring to the discussion; others on the team will write things that will ignite ideas in you for the next post.

7. Can AgencyNext sustain the blog for us? Can you write everything and post it for us and as us on our blog?

We could but we don't. However, we do have clients that ask us for subject matter ideas, rough drafts or story concepts for review and possible use. For most, readers and writers alike, blogging is valued as the antithesis of paid, commercial writing. You want a blog that is authentic. Source transparency is a key to authenticity.

8. My boss wants this blog, in her name, but she can't write. What do I do?

Look for a new job? Only kidding. Presumably this boss can read and talk, yes? If she can talk, then someone can write down what she is saying and have her read it for approval. Talkers that can't write make good podcasting candidates, but that's for a later discussion.

9. Can I have a blog within my website... can the two be combined or otherwise integrated?

Yes. This is becoming more and more common. A blog on your website will have an enormous effect regarding search engine optimization and boost your site's rankings.

10. How will I know my blog is working... that it is reaching people?

The analytics will tell you a lot. You know how many visitors you're getting, even in real time if it interests you that much. You'll know how long these visitors stayed on your blog, where on the Internet they came from, you'll know what city in the world they are in or near, which pages of content they read, in the order in which they read them and you'll know if the person is a first-time visitor or a returning reader. Over time, you look for metrics that show an increase in visitors, new and returning, who stay longer, read more, and comment freely. Others linking to your blog is another sign of success.

In addition to your own analysis of your blog's traffic and overall status, sites like Technorati and others provide free, independent blog rankings. You or anyone else can see the ranking of any blog.

11. How often should the blog be refreshed with a new post?

As often or infrequently as you wish. However, if you are trying to draw an audience, three posts a week are necessary in our experience.

12. How long should each post be?

Most bloggers and readers will tell you shorter is better than longer – a paragraph or two – but we've managed blogs with posts that are routinely several pages long and these have done very well. Why? Because the posts are well-written, they are about technical matters that demand length, and the audience has an avid interest in the technical details. Here's the only real rule: if it's boring, it is too long no matter how short it is. Short doesn't make it clever. Ideas do.

13. What's the best software to use for blogging?

In our opinion, for serious bloggers with some technical skill, WordPress is the best, and we've tried them all. WordPress is also free. It is not the most intuitive. If you want to blog right now and want something you can create in about twenty minutes or less with virtually little or no technical skills required, try Google blogger.

14. Can I say anything I want on the blog?

No. Well, yes, but you can be sued for it if it is judged to be libelous, slanderous, or criminally misleading, deceptive, damaging and so on. If you divulge proprietary information on a corporate or personal blog you can be fired. Bloggers who keep a personal blog for their own private musings have been fired in cases where the blog material was deemed inappropriate. When you blog you are effectively publishing something. You can't then say you were writing just for yourself and a few friends since via the Internet everyone can see what you write.

15. What's the best thing to read to learn how to blog well?

One, find and read other blogs you like on subjects that interest you. Just go to Google search, click on more, click on blogs, and type in a subject of interest. Two, get a copy of *Blogging for Dummies*. Seriously, it's a great book. Three, Technorati has a top 100-list of blogs. These blogs are the very best examples of blogs which have achieved massive readership. That may not be your goal, but a review of the top blogs will nevertheless reveal consistent patterns of blog navigability, design, content, frequency and other standards.

16. Will the traditional journalists who cover our company read our blog?

Some may, depending on the content.

17. Can our company have a blog that is just for employees?

Yes, and it is a good idea. But don't think that the content will not spill beyond your employee base.

18. Will our customers and prospects read our blog?

If you're talking about things of interest to customers and prospects, and saying it without a PR or Marketing varnish, and if it is timely and informative, then yes, customers and prospects will read your blog.

19. Does AgencyNext take blog project work?

Absolutely, and you get to define the limits. We'll look at the blog you have now and tell you how and if we think it could be improved. We'll tell you how you can make the improvements yourself if you wish. Alternatively, we'll build a new blog for you, or build one *with you* as well, if that's your preference, and walk away. Or you can elect to have us stay awhile to teach your team how to operate the blog functions and have a kind of "on-call" relationship with us in case something goes awry. Or you can opt for a longer-term relationship in which we help you define and evolve your content, manage the analytics and do all of the other routine care and feeding tasks required of blogs.

20. Can I get a free consult?

Yes, you can [contact us](#) anytime.

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