

Keep Your Site Content Fresh

By Jay A. Moore, Managing Editor

A lot of small business owners are guilty of putting up a webpage just so they have that golden little URL to slap on their business cards or in their Yellow Page ad. In today's business world, an online presence is a must and a lot of small business owners are guilty of not updating the content on their websites as frequently as they should. Many websites go two or more years without having an overhaul, and that's not good for business. Without frequent updates, your site probably doesn't engage your customers with current, relevant information. Would you want to eat a piece of rock-hard, stale, moldy bread? Why force feed stale content to your potential customers? *WordPress* is one of the best solutions for small business owners to keep their site up to date without having to pay a website designer a lot of money.



It's less expensive than you think.

WordPress is an open source solution that has been around for over five years now. It is a stable, easy to use content management system, and its primary use is to create personal or business blogs. Since it's an open source solution, there are a plethora of options that you can add to your site, and the flexibility in customizing your webpage is outstanding for a free solution.

Yes, I said free. Chances are you may need to pay a web designer to customize the site, but there are hundreds of templates available to choose from – at no cost – to help minimize the expense. Depending on the level of customization you need, you should be able to get your site transformed for far less than you paid for the original site. And since it is a blog format, you won't have to pay for those small periodic product updates or employee info changes.

You're an expert, flaunt it.

Why choose a blog format for your new site overhaul? You are an expert; whatever your business is, you can provide expert advice on that subject, and a blog is the best way to demonstrate that fact to your potential customers. Your online presence is a forum for you to showcase your abilities. Once a week, or once every few weeks depending on how current you think your content should be for your industry, you should post a new article on your site. It doesn't take an expert long to crank out a half a page about something they know intimately, so the time investment is minimal.

It's easier than you think.

With *WordPress*, you also have easy access to all of the information that doesn't change often like general product or company information. These behind-the-scenes features let you make simple updates without knowing HTML, CSS, PHP or other complex coding languages. *WordPress* has a sizeable community of developers that are continually adding functionality to the program through widgets. Widgets are tools that you can add to your site and provide

anything from information tracking with Google Analytics, to contact forms, to picture slideshows. There are thousands of different modules that you can add to your site and more are being released daily.

This may sound complicated and there is a slight learning curve – just as there is with any new software. The first time you checked your email, you had to learn which button to click to reply, or to reply all, or to forward. Once you have posted a few blogs, you'll be an old hat, and you'll find that blogging isn't that intimidating. In fact, most people like showing that they're an expert once they get used to it.

Information = Money

Here's an example of how *WordPress* might work for a small business. A small charter fishing operation in Hilton Head, South Carolina, has had a website for several years, but the content has not been updated – ever. The captain of the charter boat decides to start a blog on his website to demonstrate that he's the expert on taking people to where the fish are biting. Once a week he posts a blog about his most successful outing. He includes a picture slideshow, and he puts in relevant key word tags for search engine optimization. His business starts to pick up, and using the Google Analytics plug-in, he can see that a lot of his new business is coming from the New York area. He has had several clients featured on his blog from the Big Apple so they must be spreading some positive word-of-mouth for his business. This basic information provides the captain with ample marketing opportunities to increase his business even further.

There are a number of other blog applications available including *Blogger* from Google and *TypePad*, however, *WordPress* seems to be the current, dominant tool for business blogs. *WordPress* itself is free, it's relatively inexpensive to have a template customized for your business, and there are a lot of widgets to give your site interactive functionality. These are just a few of the reasons that transforming your website into a blog can have a positive impact on your business.

The website indysmallbiz.com is based on a *WordPress* blog and was customized by Jay A. Moore, our Managing Editor and freelance designer and copywriter. For more details, feel free to send us an email or visit <http://wordpress.org/>.