



## Start a Blog Communicate with Customers, Friends and Family

The term "blog" is a combination of the words "web" and "log" and it provides a method to communicate on a frequent basis through the Internet. A blog is similar to a website, but it's updated more frequently to keep your readers informed. Blogs exist for a variety of business and person reasons: to communicate product news to customers, to inform customers about new services or upcoming corporate events, to communicate with friends and family, to share ideas and tips and to sway social or political opinion.

### Define your Goals

Your blog will be more likely to succeed if you know from the start what you hope to accomplish with it. Are you trying to attract new customers to your business? Are you trying to establish yourself as an expert in your field? Are you trying to simply share your ideas and opinions? Think ahead to what you would hope to gain from your blog in the next year or two, then design the blog to meet those goals.

### Start your Blog

Writing a blog is simple and inexpensive. You can sign up with a free blog hosting service, write a few paragraphs, click post, and your message will appear on the Internet. If you're new to the blogosphere, we'll tell you what you need to know to get started.

There are numerous companies that offer blog hosting services, so be sure to find one that meets your needs. Some aspects to consider are:

Does the site offer technical support?  
Can you easily add photos and links?  
Is it easy to enter data on the blog?

Typically, the newest blog entries appear at the top of the page. Scroll down the page to find the older, previous entries. Does the blog allow you to archive, or store the older posts for future reading and reference?

Does the blog provide readers an opportunity to add comments on the content you have posted? This feature allows you to obtain feedback about your product and services.

Does the blog permit readers to subscribe to your blog, and notify them when you have added new information to the site?

---



Blog hosting companies such as Word Press ([www.wordpress.com](http://www.wordpress.com)) provide free tools and online storage for your blog.

## Maintain your Blog

It's important to update your blog frequently to provide fresh content. Blogs that are not updated frequently are perceived by readers as static web pages. Blogs are useful because they are timely, so it's important that you update your blog frequently. Some bloggers discipline themselves to add something new and relevant each day. When creating new posts, try to find a creative or original way that reflects your personality. Be sure to proofread your message before posting, though you can modify your postings later.

Drive readers to your blog by commenting on other blogs and including a link to your own. Also, include a link to your company's website, and consider linking to Facebook and Twitter. When used properly, a blog can serve as an effective way to communicate with customers, friends and family.

## About the Author

Jennifer Ohl is a maintenance and reliability consultant based in Miami. She was Regional Manager of Consulting Services for a leading maintenance software manufacturer and subsequently founded her own company, Midwest Software Specialists in 2001. For thirteen years, Jennifer has been helping companies implement maintenance systems that reduce costs and increase profits. Jennifer has an MBA in Finance and Operations and a BA in Business.