

## SALUTE TO INDEPENDENT AGENTS PAGE 10

## How a Blog Can Enhance Your Agency's Digital Marketing Strategy and Strengthen Client Relationships

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As an independent insurance agent, you are a valued, trusted resource and advocate for your clients. You are not only intimately familiar with insurance topics they may need help understanding, but your focus is on their needs, not a specific carrier's bottom line. This trust and value you provide should be considered and communicated in your agency's marketing strategy. To further establish your role as an advocate and valuable resource to clients and prospects, consider starting a blog.

### What's a Blog?

A blog is a type of website or online platform where an individual or organization can share their thoughts, ideas, experiences and opinions on a particular topic or range of topics. Typically, blogs feature regularly updated content in the form of articles, posts or entries, and often include multimedia elements such as images, videos and infographics.

### How Can a Blog Help My Agency?

Insurance can sometimes be a confusing

or even intimidating subject for those not in the industry, and in the digital age, many people turn to search engines to answer their questions. This is where a blog can help! As an independent insurance agent, you are a subject matter expert in an industry that's vital to protecting livelihoods: homes, vehicles, businesses and more. By sharing your expertise in the longer-form content a blog provides, you can help internet searchers bridge a knowledge gap about your industry. A blog can help you convey your expertise to your audience, connect with your clients and even reach new prospects.

Imagine an individual planning to open their own small business. As they explore the coverage options they may need to protect their new venture, they may turn to search engines to answer their questions. A contractor forming their own practice needs to know what insurance they'll need to protect their tools and equipment at the job. A bakery looking to offer new delivery options needs to know the value and necessity of commercial auto coverage

and how it differs from their personal auto policy. The owner of a new brick and mortar needs to know how they can protect their business if a customer slips and falls on their property. Your blog can be a valuable information source for these dreamers as they set out to begin their own businesses.

A blog can increase your agency's website traffic, helping relevant prospects land on your page and discover your business. When the bakery owner in the example above searches for information on commercial auto policies for new delivery offerings, their search may lead them to a blog on your website. Blogs can build brand awareness, increasing the local recognition of your brand – which is good for acquisition and retention. It further facilitates the sales funnel, driving users who land on your blog to other areas of your website, such as inquiry forms to contact your agency.

By adding a blog section to your agency's website, you can enhance your agency's digital marketing strategy. These long-form posts establish your credibility by

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showcasing your agency's knowledge, achievements, testimonials, community involvement and general industry thought leadership. They can help you engage with new and existing customers by providing another touchpoint to strengthen relationships and content to share on your social media channels.

## How Do I Get Started?

To get started, ask your website administrator to create a specific blog area on the backend of your website or use a web vendor for assistance. Make sure your blog is easy to locate on your website. This encourages users to not only find your blog but to stick around your page to see what else you offer.

## What Should I Blog About?

Wondering what to write about? Think about the products your agency offers, the carriers you partner with, and the information that you, the subject matter expert on your industry, can provide searchers. Who is your target audience, and what do they want to know? What pain points or problems do they have that you can solve?

Consider frequently asked questions you receive. Your blog provides an opportunity to share your expertise with current and potential clients. What information would you like them to know? What should policyholders know about coverage options you commonly write? What

loss prevention tips can you share?

Blogging may seem like a time-consuming endeavor, but it doesn't have to be. Your agency doesn't need to churn out new blogs each week to take advantage of this digital marketing tactic; in fact, it's better to devote your time and efforts to optimizing a few strong blog posts rather than putting out constant blogs that aren't as good.

Keep your content relevant and simple for readers to understand — and straight to the point. A blog should be written more conversationally, not like a lengthy essay that won't keep readers engaged.

## How Do I Get Readers?

After you've taken the effort to add this new section of your website and to create new, valuable content for your readers, it's time to promote your blog to potential readers.

While you'll ideally (eventually) get readers from search engine results pages, search engine optimization (SEO) is an ongoing, constantly evolving process, and it takes time to see results. It's important to share your blog directly through channels you can control.

When you start a blog, let people know. Share links to your blog posts on your agency's social media. Promote your

blog in your agency's monthly newsletter or email blast — let your policyholders and prospects know about your new blog and what they can expect.

## What's the Ultimate Goal of My Agency's Blog?

Building your library of blog content can't happen overnight, especially when marketing is only one component of your role. Try not to feel pressure to address every topic idea you have at once. It's okay to focus on one blog post at a time as time permits. Start by answering a common question you receive or advice you wish more clients knew!

The purpose of your blog is to share your knowledge and further connect with your audience. While you may not instantly get new leads from blogging, you'll have a platform to provide helpful information to clients and prospects, which can further establish their trust in you and your relationship. ■



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