



Business Blogging: The Cost of DIY Blogs

Overview

Many social media experts insist that corporations must write their own blogs. The advice is given with the best intentions, but doesn't consider your staff's time limits and the financial constraints. Very often, an organization can save 50 – 70% by outsourcing their blogging to professional bloggers versus writing and maintaining their blog in house.

We looked at four different scenarios and compared the costs of companies maintaining their in-house blog versus outsourcing to a professional blogging agency. It's based on average salaries and writing four or eight blog articles each month (i.e., publishing once or twice per week).

What Goes Into a Blog?

Before we look at the figures, let's look at what it takes to write blog articles 4 or 8 times per month:

1. You need to enjoy writing. (Many people do not.)
2. You need to have time to write. (Again, many people do not; one article takes 2 – 3 hours.)
3. You need an expert grasp of the English language. Or at least a copy of Grammarly Pro.
4. You need access to the information. (Bloggers and journalists get this through interviewing.)
5. You need to know basic search engine optimization (SEO) techniques.
6. You need to know the latest trends in your industry or field.
7. You need to write 1,000 – 2,000 words per blog article.

Yes, everyone can write, but not everyone is a writer. Just like not everyone is an accountant, a human resources expert, an engineer, or a mechanic. We hear over and over, "I'm not a writer, I'm a _____." When you need an expert, you hire the expert. That includes blog writers.

So what do you get when you hire professional bloggers? For one thing, you get professional writers who have written thousands of articles for a variety of clients in a variety of industries. For another, you don't have to worry about hourly rates because most bloggers work on a flat, predictable fee schedule, which won't fluctuate or change from month to month.

Analysis

We broke down the costs of writing your blog articles versus hiring professional blog writers. We analyzed the labor and opportunity costs by having your employees write your company's blog. All costs were rounded to the nearest dollar. We covered three scenarios:

1. A company where technical experts (engineers, accountants, lawyers, sales managers, marketing managers, or executives) write their own blog articles.
2. A company that uses lower-level employees (clerical or entry-level staff) to write articles.
3. A small business where the owner or one of the principals writes their own posts.
4. Attorneys and corporate consultants who bill an hourly rate between \$150 – \$300.

Let's look at the figures.

Scenario One: Technical Experts

This is the most common situation we encounter: companies with knowledge workers writing their own blog articles. Compared to our high-quality blog articles, using your own people may cost three or four times as much annually and offers little or no comparative advantage.

In this case, there's a cost savings of roughly \$45,000 per year to create eight articles per month or \$18,000 per year for four.

Knowledge Worker		Pro Blog Service Platinum	
Assumptions		Assumptions	
Annual salary	\$85,000.00	Annual salary	n/a
18% benefits & tax load	\$15,300.00	18% benefits & tax load	n/a
Annual loaded salary	\$100,300.00	Annual loaded salary	n/a
Hourly rate	\$48.22	Hourly rate	n/a
Company income/hour	\$144.66	Company income/hour	n/a
Blog Post Costs		Blog Post Costs	
3 hrs labor to write & edit article	\$144.66	Costs to write & post blog	n/a
Lost income on 3 hours labor	\$433.99	Lost income	n/a
Cost per blog post	\$578.65		
Monthly cost @ 4 posts	\$2,314.62	Cost of 4 posts/month	\$800.00
Annual cost of blog	\$27,775.38	Annual cost of blog	\$9,600.00
Monthly cost @ 8 posts	\$4,629.23	Cost of 8 posts/month	\$1,600.00
Annual cost of blog	\$64,809.23	Annual cost of blog	\$19,200.00

Scenario 2: Clerical/Creative Staff

Smarter companies utilize internal resources better, so instead of having expensive knowledge workers do the writing, they use lower cost clerical or creative staff, sometimes entry-level employees. In these cases, the costs may be lower, but the quality of writing may not be there. Also, blog articles take a lower priority because these people have their regular responsibilities, plus often attend several meetings per week.

In this case, there is a savings of over \$10,000 versus Pro Blog Service's eight posts/month offering, or \$5,000 for four posts per month.

Clerical/Creative Staff		Pro Blog Service	
Assumptions		Assumptions	
Annual salary	\$45,000.00	Annual salary	n/a
18% benefits & tax load	\$8,100.00	18% benefits & tax load	n/a
Annual loaded salary	\$53,100.00	Annual loaded salary	n/a
Hourly rate	\$25.53	Hourly rate	n/a
Company income/hour	\$76.59	Company income/hour	n/a
Blog Post Costs		Blog Post Costs	
3 hrs labor to write & edit article	\$76.59	Costs to write & post blog	n/a
Lost income on 3 hours labor	\$229.76	Lost income	n/a
Cost per blog post	\$306.35		
Monthly cost @ 4 posts	\$1,225.38	Cost of 4 posts/month	\$800.00
Annual cost of blog	\$14,704.62	Annual cost of blog	\$9,600.00
Monthly cost @ 8 posts	\$2,450.77	Cost of 8 posts/month	\$1,600.00
Annual cost of blog	\$29,409.23	Annual cost of blog	\$19,200.00

Scenario Three: Small Business Owners

When a small business owner works inside her business, the labor is often viewed as having no direct costs, but it does have an opportunity cost. What are you *not* doing when you're working on something other than your business? Whatever you normally do to make money, you're not doing it when you do your own accounting, file your own paperwork, manage your own inventory, or write your own blog articles.

Even if writing your own blog articles is "free," a small business owner would have made more money by outsourcing your blog writing at 4 articles per month. (We recommend either 4 or 8 articles per month; the former option is usually more attractive to small businesses, but the latter leads to faster SEO improvements and increased lead generation.)

In this case, there's a savings of \$16,500 per year for four articles per month, \$33,000 for eight.

Small Business Owner		Pro Blog Service	
Assumptions		Assumptions	
Annual salary	\$80,000.00	Annual salary	n/a
18% benefits & tax load	\$14,400.00	18% benefits & tax load	n/a
Annual loaded salary	\$94,400.00	Annual loaded salary	n/a
Hourly rate	\$45.38	Hourly rate	n/a
Company income/hour	\$136.15	Company income/hour	n/a
Blog Post Costs		Blog Post Costs	
3 hrs labor to write & edit article	\$136.15	Costs to write & post blog	n/a
Lost income on 3 hours labor	\$408.46	Lost income	n/a
Cost per blog post	\$544.62		
Monthly cost @ 4 posts	\$2,178.46	Cost of 4 posts/month	\$800.00
Annual cost of blog	\$26,141.54	Annual cost of blog	\$9,600.00
Monthly cost @ 8 posts	\$4,356.92	Cost of 8 posts/month	\$1,600.00
Annual cost of blog	\$52,283.08	Annual cost of blog	\$19,200.00

Scenario Four: Attorneys and Consultants

Attorneys and hourly consultants often have to do their own marketing, including their blog. But if anyone doesn't have the time, it's these people! They bill anywhere from \$150 – \$300 or more per hour. Writing a decent blog article will take you 3 hours per post, which costs you \$450 - \$900 per blog article (not including benefits and taxes).

And you need to do that at least four times per month, which is \$1,800 – \$3,600 in lost billable time (double that for eight times per month). Or you could talk to Pro Blog Service for one hour per month, and we'll do all the writing for you.

In this case, there's a savings of nearly \$100,000 in lost billable time by outsourcing four blog articles per month, leaving you free to produce more billable hours.

Small Business Owner		Pro Blog Service	
Assumptions		Assumptions	
Hourly billing rate	\$250		
Annual salary (40 hrs/week)	\$520,000	Annual salary	n/a
18% benefits & tax load	\$93,600.00	18% benefits & tax load	n/a
Annual loaded salary	\$613,600.00	Annual loaded salary	n/a
Hourly rate	\$295.00	Hourly rate	n/a
Company income/hour	\$885.00	Company income/hour	n/a
Blog Post Costs		Blog Post Costs	
3 hrs labor to write & edit article	\$885.00	Costs to write & post blog	n/a
Lost income on 3 hours labor	\$2,655.00	Lost income	n/a
Cost per blog post	\$3,540.00		
Monthly cost @ 4 posts	\$14,160.00	Cost of 4 posts/month	\$800.00
Annual cost of blog	\$169,920.00	Annual cost of blog	\$9,600.00
Monthly cost @ 8 posts	\$28,320.00	Cost of 8 posts/month	\$1,600.00
Annual cost of blog	\$339,840.00	Annual cost of blog	\$19,200.00

Conclusion

Business blogging is much more costly than most people realize. They may think they're saving money by doing it in-house, but they're actually costing themselves so much more than they realize.

There's little comparative advantage in having an employee write a blog post versus a professional ghostwriter, someone who writes blog articles every day for a wide variety of clients. Both achieve the same business results, but hiring an outside blogging service gets you expert-level work that's well-written, interesting, and optimized for search, all at a fraction of the cost of doing it in-house.

In fact, outsourcing your blog writing can cost anywhere from 50% to even 5% versus the cost of doing it yourself.

If you would like to learn more, please contact Erik Deckers at erik@problogservice.com or call us at (317) 674-3745.