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Blogs for Dummies
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Businesses find the power of buzz in blogs

"Blogs," or Web logs, are spreading quickly beyond their roots as a pastime for teen diary-scribblers and pajama-clad muckrakers. In "**Buzz Marketing With Blogs for Dummies**" (Wiley, \$24.99), Web-publishing expert Susannah Gardner reveals how businesses, too, are breaking new marketing ground with this powerful communication tool.

What kind of business would spend energy and money to blog?

A successful one. From large corporations such as GM and Microsoft to vanguard entrepreneurs such as Mark Cuban, businesspeople of all kinds are using blogs as a tool to connect with customers and internal audiences in new ways, says Gardner. Along the way, they're generating unprecedented "buzz," exponentially amplifying "word of mouth" marketing: A single successful blog can attract tens or even hundreds of thousands of visitors.

From the book:

The power of blogs is buzz, or conversations and Web links that bounce from blog to blog and gather mass and impact. Companies that use blogs as buzz building tools are finding they can command substantial readerships of people who avidly want to know about what the blogger has to say, and respond with comments to every new posting. The best part is they often spread that message to others within their sphere of influence through blogs, instant messenger, or e-mail.

"Blogs are really on the cusp of a transition today," says Gardner. "Like many previous Internet technologies, they're now making this transition to the business world. The timing has just

worked out so that, right now, businesses are picking up on the tools and getting immediate benefit from them. In 2005, you're going to see a lot more business blogs very quickly, and the first ones will have a clear advantage in the long run."

Blogs can help lend a human face to large companies that are perceived as monolithic, or can be used to help the smaller company or individual businessperson establish expertise, says Gardner. "For a smaller company, or for the progressive and savvy large company, this is a great tool to reach people."

"Buzz Marketing With Blogs For Dummies" is the first book to give a businessperson's introduction to blogging, offering advice on every facet of creating a business blog – from designing, writing and maintenance, to considerations such as how to protect proprietary information and how to write staff blogging guidelines. The book also introduces newcomers to the basic rules to keep from being laughed out of the "blogosphere." In addition to a step-by-step guide, Buzz Marketing with Blogs for Dummies includes nine detailed case studies, including interviews with top bloggers such as Microsoft's Robert Scoble and Blog Maverick's Mark Cuban, as well as numerous other examples of business blogs.

True to her book's message, Gardner has already launched a popular companion Web site for the book at <http://www.buzzmarketingwithblogs.com/>.

Gardner is the co-founder and creative director of Hop Studios Internet Consultants (www.hopstudios.com), a Web design company specializing in custom Web solutions for content publishers. A former online journalism instructor at the University of Southern California School for Communication, Gardner is also co-author of "Dreamweaver MX 2004 for Dummies" and "Teach Yourself Visually: Dreamweaver MX 2004," also from Wiley Publishing. She was previously senior editor of the Online Journalism Review, the media industry's only Internet-focused journalism publication, and spent four years at The Los Angeles Times, where she was one of six editors responsible for launching that newspaper's Web site.

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