

COMMENT

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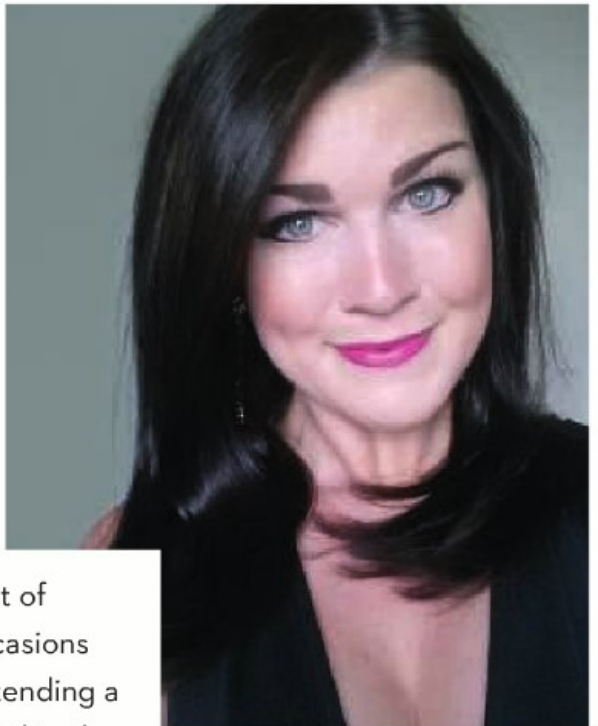
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I've written about the subject of blogging on a number of occasions before in MWB, but after attending a great seminar on blogging within the fashion industry at the recent edition of fashion tradeshow Moda, it seems this online platform really can be key to engaging customers, building brand loyalty and, more importantly, securing sales.

The seminar, which was presented by SEO and e-commerce specialist Jon Tromans, started with the basics – firstly, to not in fact call your blog a blog. If you have a blog integrated within your online store, Tromans suggests calling it something such as The Edit, Showcase, Lookbook, Journal or even Magazine. Marks & Spencer, for example, have gone with the term Inspire Me, whereas Ways & Means is the editorial section of menswear indie The Hip Store's website.

Looking at why it's essential for retailers to develop a blog, Tromans highlights four key points. One; to generate sales from products featured. Two; to build customer loyalty and repeat sales. Three; to create in-depth content for search engines and lastly, to have content to share across your social media channels to create conversation.

One of the main queries raised when people look at starting a blog is 'what do I write about?' There are so many avenues you could take – introducing new labels, writing a post on street style trends or answering questions. What outerwear should I wear over my work suit? What colour shoes should I wear with a navy suit? All the questions you've been asked in-store, use them to create content to engage, inform and attract readers.

Perhaps you could create a lookbook, and take some photographs of a member of staff wearing your latest collections? You must not, however, use this to directly sell to your reader. Yes, link back to relevant products, but don't go in at full throttle about everything you have in store. That's not what blogging is about. It's about creating a lifestyle destination which embodies the personality of your store and, hopefully, your customer.

Starting a blog can seem like one more, maybe unnecessary, task to take on when running the online arm of your business, but it really does have so many advantages and with online becoming a necessity rather than an option for many independent retailers, it's definitely something I'd recommend considering.

Victoria Jackson
Editor



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