

VIRTUAL TIDBITS

DOCU-TYPE - VIRTUAL ASSISTANCE, WEB DESIGN & HOSTING

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January/February 2008

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Editor's Notes:

Welcome to the first issue of Virtual TidBits for 2008.

To be honest, I almost forgot to do a newsletter for this month. I took some time for myself over the holidays (some much needed time, I might add :-)) and am now playing catch up. Although the email count wasn't as high as normal work weeks, there was still the occasional "emergency" and special requests that needed to be handled but all other requests have had to wait til this week (and so have my own projects, such as this newsletter).

As I typed in "Volume 10" in the left column I felt a tingle in my heart. I can't believe that this year marks the 10th anniversary of Docu-Type. It doesn't officially occur until September so I will put on my thinking cap and try to come up with something to celebrate this milestone.

We hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season and we wish you all a very happy and prosperous New Year!

Sincerely,



Janice D. Byer, CCVA, MVA

Docu-Type Administrative & Web Services

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What's New?

Well, besides it being a New Year, there is one important new project that is now complete... (read on :-)

Before, we get to that, let me first welcome all of our new clients and subscribers. We hope you enjoy all the information we offer in our newsletter and on our website.

Now... for the NEW project... after a year of trying to find the time to write including sitting at the arena while my daughter skates, I have finally finished my latest ebook. Yup... our ebook library now has 8

titles to help you build your business.

The title of my **new ebook**, you ask?

“How to Set-Up and Start Your First Blog”

Yeah! :-)

Blog - it's the latest buzz word on the Internet. It seems everyone is getting a blog to help display their businesses and/or share their ideas. However, it can be quite confusing ... how to set one up; who to use to host it; etc. etc. In this ebook we hope to alleviate some of the anxieties that

you may be encountering when thinking... “should I have a blog and how the heck do I get one?”

For more information on this ebook and the rest of our library (by the way... you get a discount if you buy multiple ebooks) at http://www.docutype.net/business_ebooks.htm.

And, we already have our next ebook in the works :-)

Have a great couple of months everyone! See you in March.

You enjoy reading Virtual TidBits, don't you?

Well... now you can have 7 years of archived issues on 1 CD.

Docu-Type's Virtual TidBits Newsletter Archives 2000-2006 is now available

100 articles relating to small business and over 500 links, resources and tips to help you run your business. We even include a list of each newsletter and what articles are in each issue so you can pick which issue you want to read when you want to read it. No more of the time consuming task of downloading each issue from our website. Find out more - www.docutype.net/news.htm

Spotlight - Adore Flute Studio - www.calgaryflute.com

One of our newest clients is the Adore Flute Studio in Calgary, Alberta.

Whether you are looking for private flute lessons and instruction in Calgary and area, or looking to hire a professional flute player or chamber group for your wedding or special event, Adore's qualified musicians are dedicated to bringing excellence to your individual needs.

Services include flute and piccolo lessons, live wedding music and musicians, reception music, and more. Proudly serving Calgary and area.

They also have an abundance of resources on their site that can help anyone who is interested in more information about flutes and such. In fact, my daughter is playing the flute in her grade 7 music class and

we used some of Adore's flute resources for the project she had to do about her instrument.

We just finished her website and, to be quite frank, it looks so beautiful. The colours Maria Noriega, the owner of Adore, chose are soft and portray the feeling that flute music gives people. Please drop by her website and see all she offers.

www.calgaryflute.com

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- How to Respond to Requests for Proposals
- 25 Cost Effective Marketing Strategies (Plus 10 Tips to Make Them Successful)
- Step-By-Step: Hiring a Web Designer
- Tips for a Successful Trade Show
- Tips for Successful Networking
- Tips to Keep Your Computer Clean and Running Smoothly

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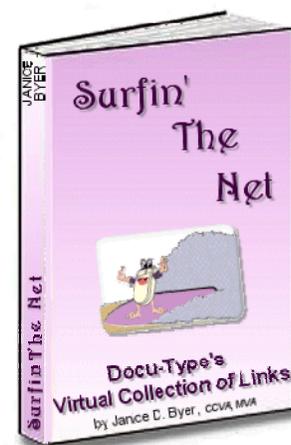
Upcoming Ebooks:

Website Design for Mobile Devices, ...and more

Surfin' The Net - Docu-Type's Virtual Collection of Links

Being a virtual company, I have spent many, many hours on the Internet since opening my company. During that time, I have saved quite a lot of links to sites I have been to many times; have been referred to by others; or just looked like I might need them some-time in the future.

As a way of saying thank you to my clients, contacts, associates, and the business community as a whole, I have managed to go through all of those links in my Favourites (IE) listing (wow... that was a fun job, let me tell you :-)) and have compiled them into categories here just for you.



This Ebook is a compilation of the secret weapons of our success and is a must for all small business professionals!

Also included in this ebook are some of my articles. For many years I have been writing articles that have been published in many online and print publications. I wrote these articles from my experience... they are "been there, done that" articles on a variety of subjects. I wrote them to help others so what better content to include in Surfin The Net?

And... we are even throwing in a **FREE Bonus Ebook** -
Organizing Tips Submitted by Experienced Virtual Assistants.

Find out more and order your copy at

<http://www.docutype.net/SurfinTheNet/linksebook.htm>

A Little Bit of Fun - A couple of funny ones for you

One day my housework-challenged husband decided to wash his sweatshirt. Seconds after he stepped into the laundry room, he shouted to me, "What setting do I use on the washing machine?" "It depends," I replied. "What does it say on your shirt?" He yelled back, "University of Oklahoma"

A couple is lying in bed. The man says, "I am going to make you the happiest woman in the world." The woman replies, "I'll miss you..."

"It's just too hot to wear clothes today," Jack says as he steps out of the shower. "Honey, what do you think the neighbours would think if I mowed the lawn like this?" "Probably that I married you for your money," she replied.

Q: What do you call an intelligent, good looking, sensitive man?

A: A rumour

Q: Why do little boys whine?

A: They are practicing to be men.

Q: What does it mean when a man is in your bed gasping for breath and calling your name?

A: You did not hold the pillow down long enough.

Q: How do you keep your husband from reading your email?

A: Rename the mail folder "Instruction Manual".

"You can achieve anything you want in life if you have the courage to dream it, the intelligence to make a realistic plan, and the will to see that plan through to the end."

Sidney A. Friedman
Entrepreneur, Speaker and Author

Docu-Type is proud to offer Web Hosting for as low as \$9.00/ mth - www.docutype.org

After a couple of years with a server company for our hosting that did not live up to its promises, we have changed to a new, highly recommended and customer service oriented server company. The tech guys are extremely knowledgeable and quick! During the transition, they were there for us in every way. We are overjoyed with the new server company. Not to mention, we have acquired more room so **our hosting plans are now much more value for our customers.** We invite you to see our new plans at www.docutype.org

Dates to Remember (for January & February 2008)

January:

1st - New Year's Day
11th - Int'l Thank You Day
21st - Martin Luther King Jr. Day
26th - Australia Day



February:

2nd - Groundhog Day
14th - Valentine's Day
17th - Random Acts of Kindness Day
29th - Leap Day

(These dates come from a variety of online resources and are correct, to the best of my knowledge)

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Cool Links

Allowance Calculator - Are you wondering how much allowance your children should be getting? This can help you figure that out.

http://pediatrics.about.com/od/toolsandcalculators/l/bl_allcalc.htm

Allowances & Chores - And, do your children have chores they have to do to earn that allowance. This site and the links from it may help.

<http://life.familyeducation.com/allowance/jobs-and->

chores/34438.html

Great kids books filled stories and memories of growing up in Guyana. Written by a grandmother for her granddaughter, these books are colourful and lots of fun.

<http://www.childrensstories.ca>

And finally, here's a little fun brought to you by Dr. Oz & Dr. Roizen.

"What's your real age?"

<http://www.realage.com>

"You only lose energy when life becomes dull in your mind. Your mind gets bored and therefore tired of doing nothing. Get interested in something! Get absolutely enthralled in something! Get out of yourself! Be somebody! Do something! The more you lose yourself in something bigger than yourself, the more energy you will have."

*Norman Vincent Peale
1898-1993, Pastor, Speaker & Author*

New (or not so new) Ideas For The New Year

by Janice D. Byer, CCVA, MVA

Welcome to a New Year and a time for new beginnings.

At the start of every year, most of us make resolutions or have thoughts about making some changes to our lives. From telling ourselves that we need to lose weight or eat healthier, to quitting smoking or any other life-changing task, we all wish we could profess these wishes and then actually stick to them.

Unfortunately, New Year's resolutions are one of the first promises that we make to ourselves that we inevitably seem to break. So we decide to either make tiny resolutions that we know we won't break, or we don't make any at all.

Well, why don't we make a resolution (don't worry, this is an easy one) to make our businesses more efficient, productive, and thus,

more profitable this year?

I know what you are saying to yourself, "But I am already doing that. What can you possibly tell me that I am not already trying?"

Well, these ideas may not all be 'new' ideas, but they may be ones that you haven't had a chance to implement yet. So let's get started....

Most of us sent our holiday sentiments to our clients and contacts in the form of greeting cards or gifts. But, how often throughout the remainder of the year do you make an attempt to keep in touch with these valuable business associates? This is one resolution that you should make this year to help increase your business. After all, these professionals have seen your work and know that you are worth recommending to others.

Try sending a monthly or semi-monthly newsletter to them and fill it with news about your company, any new product or service you are offering, short helpful articles that they will find useful, and plugs for your clients (they will love that!).

We at Docu-Type send out this newsletter every other month (read our archives and sign up at www.docu-type.net/news.htm). It is usually an 8-page PDF filled with information to help build small businesses. It is laid out with an Index on the front, along with an introduction section. Throughout the newsletter, we include articles, links and helpful tips that may help our small business clients. And, we also include a little bit fun to help break up the monotony of a busy entrepreneur's day.

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New (or not so new) Ideas For The New Year

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Somewhere in amongst all this useful information, we try to plug at least one of our clients or associates. It is either to announce a new client's website, announce an associates open house, or to rave about an association we belong to, we try to include our clients in our newsletter. When they read it, you just know they will be happy. Actually, we did a piece on our local Brampton Board of Trade in a previous issue and, a few days after it was mailed out, we got a call from the President to thank us for the mention.

If you are unsure as to how to set up your newsletter and what to include, it might be best to contact a professional who can guide you through the process.

Another new (or maybe not so new) idea to help boost your business is to try gaining free exposure. And, one of the most common ways to do this is to write articles. Write about what you know and submit it to online ezines that are related to the topic and printed publications as well. It may take a while to get noticed by those that you want to be your future clients, but this form of marketing will help you to be recognized as an expert in your field and, in turn, trusted by your audience and potential clients.

One word of caution, be sure to read and reread what you have written. If possible, have someone else read it to see if there are any errors that you may have missed. Also, if you are going to use statistics in your articles, be sure to include where you received your information (in the form of a bibliography or footnotes) and that it is from a reliable and accurate source.

Press Releases are another terrific way to gain exposure through the media. When you start your business, add a new product or service, win an award, or have any other newsworthy happening, be sure to let the media know and they in turn will let their readers (your potential clients) know.

And again, a word of caution with regards to Press Releases, make sure that it is newsworthy and does not come out sounding like an ad. Editors are very particular as to what is included in their publications. If you want to advertise, you will have to buy the space. But, if you truly have something worthwhile to say to the readers, then there is a much better chance of it being published.

Now, the final idea that we have (for today anyway) is to try to alleviate some of your workload. As small business owners, we wear all the hats when it comes to running a company. Unfortunately, some of those hats take us away from the tasks that actually generate revenue. We need to get back to the important aspects of our business... its success!

To accomplish this we need to be able to have an extra pair of hands when the workload gets to be too much. So, why not outsource some of your administrative tasks to a Virtual Assistant? These highly experienced professionals specialize in everything from general word processing to website design and can handle the more time-consuming tasks that take you away from building your business and increasing your profits.

These are just a few ideas that don't cost a fortune and can contribute to the success of your small business. I hope you will implement some of these ideas (if you haven't already done so). They are all wonderful ways of increasing the productivity of your business.

Janice Byer, CCVA, MVA, owner of Docu-Type Administrative & Web Design Services (<http://www.docutype.net>) provides professional, creative and affordable virtual office assistance and small business website design. She is also the author of several Business Building Ebooks - http://www.docutype.net/business_ebooks.htm

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How to Start Your First Blog

by Janice D. Byer, CCVA, MVA

The term “blog” is a noun that is a short form for the word Weblog.

A blog is similar to a website but generally includes journal-like entries in chronological order. These entries can be anything from your thoughts to a personal diary of what is happening in your business or life to articles and informational posts on a particular subject.

Many people feel intimidated about having a blog. The thought of having to keep it up to date with fresh content can be frightening.

The following are just some of the reasons you can and should be blogging:

1. **You don't need any web design experience** to set up and maintain a blog. Using some of the blogging software available out there, you can set up a blog in minutes.
2. Blogging can **help you establish your reputation as an expert in your field.**
3. Blogging, and the ease of using blog software, can give you the benefit of **updating your information whenever you have the urge** and from any computer that has an Internet connection.
4. Blogs can be a **stand alone means of showcasing your business** or can be in addition to your company website. A blog can **help you stay in touch with your clients.**

There are many other reasons but the list above are some of what I feel are the key reasons why it is a good idea to have a blog.

There are a variety of different types of blog services and software that can be used to produce your blog. Some are available for the user to download and install on their own systems while others are hosted on someone else's server. Some you have to pay for while others may be part of a web hosting package or obtained online. And all fall under one of two types, hosted and self-hosted.

A blog can take on any appearance that your heart desires and with most blogging software it is easy to layout and design your blog so it will look like and incorporate into your existing

website, if you have one.

The following are typical areas and aspects of a blog designed and displayed with Wordpress, a very popular blogging software that we use for our blog at www.docutype.org/blog.

The **homepage** includes the following:

Title Area: this can be just the name of your blog in your choice of font or it can include a banner or image that is inserted into the page coding.

Tag Line: if you use Wordpress and have a plain text title, you also have the option to include a tagline or one sentence description that is displayed in a smaller font than the title.

The next area of a blog is usually split into two columns: the body and the sidebar.

The *body of your homepage* is where tidbits of each article/post will be displayed. The settings you choose in your blog system will determine how many posts are included on this page. Some choose to have entire articles displayed on their homepage but this can make the page rather long. Another option is to have just the first paragraph of the article displayed on the homepage with a link to the entire article.

As with any website, your blog needs to include navigation to help your visitors make their way around. The *sidebar* is where you will include this.

Other aspects of your sidebar can include

- a Welcome note
- Links to main pages of your blog
- a Picture of yourself or your Logo
- Categories
- Blogroll
- Archives
- a Search Box
- Links, Resources and an RSS feed link

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How to Start Your First Blog

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The layout of the **secondary pages** is generally the same as that of your homepage. You can have just a page of information that is displayed in its entirety or you can have multiple posts that link to further information on subsequent pages.

Article/Post pages are generally the pages that are linked from the teasers on your homepage and in your category pages. They are similar to the rest of the pages of your blog in terms of layout except they will usually not include the sidebar.

Similar to a website, keywords play an important part in optimizing your blog. Keywords are the words or phrases that describe what you offer on your blog and those words that you think others may use when searching online for what you have to offer.

The following are some areas of your blog where you need to use keywords to help in optimizing your blog... title, tagline, category names, headline of your article/post, and the body/content of your article/post.

When you write your posts, you can include images to enhance the content. To do this (again, we are referring to working in a Wordpress blog), you click on the Insert/Edit Image icon in the 'Post' box on the Write Post page.

For most personal bloggers, they don't feel the necessity to promote their blog. However, those that have a business or other blog that they want the world to see need to promote it to get the word out.

1. When you sign up for a blog account (i.e. Wordpress), you may be asked if you want your blog available for search engine spiders to have access to. If your blog is one that you want to use to help promote your business, you should choose yes.
2. Set your posts to allow pings and trackbacks.
3. Submit your site to blog directories

4. Update your content and add new posts regularly.
5. Include the name and url of your blog in your email signature line.
6. Ensure you include a Blogroll on your blog. A Blogroll is a list of links to blogs that you recommend to others.
7. As an added note to the Blogroll info above, exchange Blogroll links with other Bloggers.

Again, there are many more ways to promote your blog. The above are just a few.

The following are just a few blog directories and RSS sites that you should consider submitting your blog to.

Blog Catalog - <http://www.blogcatalog.com>

Blog Hub - <http://www.bloghub.com>

Blog Top List - <http://www.blogtoplist.com>

Best Blogs - <http://www.bestblogs.com>

More Blog Directories can be found at: http://dir.yahoo.com/News_and_Media/Blogs/Blog_Directories/ and <http://www.google.com>

Blogs are becoming more popular and the choice for a lot of people to get a presence on the Internet. It doesn't have to be as complex as a website and still tell others what you want to say. More information & blog resources, including a comparison of blog software, can be found at http://www.docuType.net/business_ebooks.htm

Janice Byer, owner of Docu-Type Administrative & Web Design Services (www.docuType.net) is a Certified Canadian Virtual Assistant (CCVA) and a Master Virtual Assistant (MVA) and author of a library of ebooks to help you build your business, including How to Set Up & Start Your First Blog. More information, including a comparison of blog software, can be found at http://www.docuType.net/business_ebooks.htm.

We want to hear from you!

Now I would like to ask for more feedback and details. What do you like about the newsletter and what would like to see changed? Are the

fonts good? Do the articles meet your needs? Does the newsletter, on a whole, help you and your business? What would you like to

see more of? Etc. Send your comments to

TidBits_Feedback@docuType.net

Now It's Your Turn!

Send us your article ideas, tips, links, and special events!

Email: jbyer@docuType.net