

High Octane Blogging Bootcamp Course Project

This High Octane Blogging Bootcamp is being taught as part of BA650: Small and Medium Enterprises (SME). This document describes the blogging/Web 2.0 part of the overall SME course project and indicates the criteria that distinguish quality projects. Succeeding in this part of the SME course is actually quite straightforward, simply asking that you: (1) master various blogging/Web 2.0 technologies; (2) explore; and (3) execute. I think once you get into it, you will find it quite enjoyable and fun.

My experience though is that there is a bit of a hump to get over in the initial stages of any project such as this. You will, by necessity, spend some part of your time on things that just don't pay out. Sometimes, things will not work because of immature technology. Most of the time, getting things to work will boil down to the usual need to expend shoe leather finding web and other information sources and then remembering new skills you have learned to make effective use of them in our blogging platform.

In my professional and academic experience, the trick for this type of project is always to just try a bunch of things until you get something that gives you results. Therefore, my emphasis in this part of the course will be to get you to find things that work as quickly as possible and over time trying things that are harder to get working. One of my major criteria in judging these projects will be the extent to which you get a variety of high value adding activities to work.

Project Overview

The goal of the High Octane Blogging Bootcamp is to show you practically how a suite of technologies collectively referred to as Web 2.0 can provide real value to a firm. The sources of business value are two-fold: (1) Information harvested from the Internet that can provide business intelligence; (2) Information your company provides through various Internet publishing platforms (e.g., blogging) that can influence the buzz around your brand, product, and services.

Therefore, in this project, you will use our blogging platform provided by The Port Network to: (1) gather together and monitor information sources; (2) publish a minimum of five blog posts per week based on these information sources. Your posts need to be on point, link to other web resources (such as other teams' blog posts), and attempt to attract the attention of opinion makers in the cleaning and restoration industry.

Project Specifics

As just described, the project boils down to information gathering and publishing, making use of Web 2.0 technologies. Here are details for each:

Information Gathering

Relevant questions here are:

- Have you discovered web resources beyond the ones I gave you in class?
Specifically:

- <http://ascr.org>
 - <http://iicrc.org>
 - <http://cleanfax.com>
 - <http://imacc.net>
 - <http://aaorc.com>
 - <http://www.isct.com/>
- Are you making effective use of social bookmarking and tagging as supported by your The Port Network site?
 - Are you making effective use of non-web material such as interviews with people in the industry? Are you using internal blogs to document them for additional uses?

Publishing

The key issues here are:

- Is your team doing five or more blog posts per week?
- Are you linking to industry sources in your posts? This should occur every post.
- Are you linking to other teams' posts in your posts? This should occur a few times a week at least, if not in every post.
- Have you managed to attract the attention of industry sources via comments or links back to your web articles? Feel free to use standard methods such as email, telephone calls, and interviews to attract their attention.
- Are your posts showing up in technorati? This implies that you have registered your blog and that you are pinging technorati after each post. The need to manually ping technorati will end after the first week when The Port Network upgrades its platform.
- Are you starting to attract search engine attention? When someone searches for your post title on Google, where does it appear in the rankings? Is your technorati authority climbing?
- Are you registered with pubsub? Do you show up in my pubsub filters? Can you suggest a pubsub filter I should be using, if not?

Blog Topic

I'm going to leave it to you what the exact topics of your blogs need to be. It should be something related to cleaning and restoration that will be useful for Coach's. That covers a lot of ground. You can see examples of how other bloggers do it at <http://highoctane.portspaces.com>.

Once you choose a topic or related family of topics, the key thing is to stick near it in your posts. This will help you gain visibility both with search engines and potential readers.

What makes a good blog post?

An effective blog post should be focused on a topic and have a title that reflects the topic. You only need to write one or two paragraphs but should definitely feel free to write more. Blog posts should almost always link to some web resource. You should also link to other teams' blogs.

In a nutshell, you should write briefly on topic with links. There are exceptions to this nutshell rule, in particular longer posts with the key message up front are very acceptable, but it's a good start.