

UNEMPLOYED? START BLOGGING!



If you're unemployed right now (or even if you're not), there are some very good reasons for starting your own professional blog. Especially if you are an expert (or an aspiring expert) in your field, you can use a blog to put your name out there as a go-to guru for your industry. It's far better than just putting up a resume site, because the content of your blog will be propagated across the social networking community. Having your own professional blog will show prospective employers and clients that you are a serious, dedicated professional in your field, who has expertise to share with colleagues. **Some advice for your professional blog: Find a reliable web host.** In other words, don't use Google's Blogger, or any other free blog hosting service. You need a host that takes customer support seriously. And using a professional, for-pay hosting service shouldn't cost you more than \$100 a year. Find a host that has an application to automatically install blog software. That will save you a lot of trouble. **You don't need your own domain name.** If you want one, that's perfectly cool, and shouldn't cost you more than \$10 a year. Buy the domain name through your web host -- that simplifies things immensely. But you don't need one. People are going to find your blog through Google or Technorati, where domain names don't matter. **Use WordPress.** It's simply the best blog software available right now. It's easy to use, and it's free (which in this case isn't a bad thing). I've never needed technical support for WordPress in the years I've been using it. If you do end up needing support, however, you'll have to pay for it. **Keep your private life separate.** Don't discuss your personal life on your professional blog. You can start a separate personal blog if you want, and talk all about your children, hobbies, or obscure sexual fetishes. But keep your professional blog on target. And certainly don't write about anything you wouldn't bring up around the water cooler at work. **Post new content every week.** Visitors who like your content will bookmark your blog or add it to their RSS reader. But if there isn't regular, new content, those people will stop checking. At the bare minimum, post once a week. Twice is better -- and several posts per day is best of all! **Link to other blogs in your field.** It may seem odd to link out to sites that are most likely competing with yours. But this is how blog software, and the blog search engines like Technorati, work. The more often you link out to other blogs, the more often they will link back to you, driving up your hits. When you do link to another blog, or add any outbound link, explain to your readers what the link is about, and what you think of it. **Don't embarrass or criticize former or current employers.** This is death for your career. No firm wants to hire someone who will bash their company online, either while an employee or after they leave. Unless you're blowing the whistle on some kind of illegal activity, don't air your dirty laundry in public. If you want to criticize general trends in your industry, without naming names, that may be okay. But if you have a current employer, they still may not approve. It's a fine line -- tread it carefully.