

Blogging Success: The Six C's



By

Andrew Rondeau

<http://www.webuildyourblog.com/>

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Introduction

I believe this area is a very important but **often neglected element** of running a [successful small business](#).

What am I referring to?

The Mindset

When people encounter that word, they often shy away from it, as it sounds a bit too fluffy and emotional to be attributed to something as concrete as blogging or business, but without the right mindset we won't succeed in our enterprises.

Our approach to our job is as fundamental as other more concrete skills such as IT literacy or financial acumen, and we need to keep our emotional skills and traits sharp in addition to practicing good business in other more tangible ways.

So, with this in mind, we're going to explore a few of the critical traits which make business owners succeed while their competitors fail.

What Sex Feels Like For A Blog

Creativity?

What's the big deal?

If you think that the act of being creative is something best left to people with art studios and sandals, think again. Having a creative approach to blogging and

business can mark you out as a true entrepreneur, bringing new ideas and a fresh perspective to even the most tired of subjects, in a way that attracts customers and gains you a sound reputation for great products and services.



Since the eighteenth century, creativity has been synonymous with the use of the imagination. In the last century, art was synonymous with creativity, and it is only recently that the idea of turning the imagination and the creative process to business practices has become widely accepted.

Let's look at some examples...

A few years ago, the maker of a shampoo product was growing concerned about sales. Takings were dropping, and the company needed a way of generating more sales for their product. An ingenious marketer considered the problem, and came up with three words which transformed everything: Lather. Rinse. Repeat. By popping this phrase on each bottle of shampoo sold, the firm (and every one subsequently who sold shampoo) were able to double the amount of hair product which their consumers used. Job done!

In 1991, inventor Trevor Bayliss was listening to news reports which stated that safe-sex education wasn't reaching places in Africa where it was really needed. He sat down with a sketch pad and came up with an invention to transform the lives of millions – the wind-up radio. Bayliss was a former professional swimmer and pool salesman, but he managed to come up with an invention that changed the world for the better.

Think about some of the more successful online businesses out there. Ebay is simply the variation on the yard sale theme. Amazon started out as a simple online book store. Craigslist is really just an online

advertising space. Remember the guy who made a million, by selling his site off one pixel at a time? These are all examples of the creative process clicking in to place, making businesses thrive and ideas flourish.

You don't have to be an outright genius to bring a sweetener of creativity in to your business practices. Teresa Amabile, the Harvard business guru, suggests that creativity in business comes from three simple attributes:

- Expertise (technical, procedural and intellectual knowledge)
- Creative thinking skills (how flexibly and imaginatively people approach problems)
- Motivation (especially intrinsic motivation).

With these three elements in place, you can begin to transform the way you think about your business and implement some real changes in the way you work.

What do your customers need?

What do they want?

How can you go about giving it to them in different ways?

It's time to polish off your thinking cap and view things differently, to lend a creative edge to your business.

How To Be The Fearless One Who Never Flinches

Now we move onto the next 'C'...

Confidence

Are you a confident person?



Do you know who you are, what you want to achieve, and how [people perceive you](#)?

Confidence is one of those nebulous character traits which some of us seem naturally born with, and others struggle to develop every day of their lives.

The interesting fact about confidence is that it can be assumed, or put on, foxing your customers in to thinking that you are an authority on your subject even if you are quaking inside at the thought of being perceived as an industry expert.

This is great news, as displaying confidence as a business owner and blogger is a key element of business success, and an indispensable trait for people who want their company to flourish.

Displaying confidence on your site will bring the following benefits:

- Inspire people to trust you, as an expert in your field
- Invite people to follow your blogs as you present an air of knowledge and authority
- Increase your motivation and [passion](#), as confident people tend to enjoy their work more
- Support you to stay committed to your blog even through the tough times, as you understand that things will improve
- Give you the courage to innovate, trying new things on your site and with your product and service suite, as you have the self-belief to expand, nurture your business and develop it.

Can we assume an air of confidence even when we are out of our depth?

It's difficult to be an authority in any field, and a natural instinct for most people to have to [battle self-doubts](#) and insecurities.

I had a friend who worked as a trainee teacher for a year, as she studied for her exams. She was teaching English in secondary school, and was constantly ill before each class. The irony is, she is one of the most talented people I know, and understood her subject inside out.

However, whenever she was faced with a class of pupils, she'd simply fall apart. She stammered, lost her thought processes, and doubted her ability to be authoritative. As a result, she used to stay awake for most of the night panicking before a school day, is physically sick before her classes, and ultimately ended up dropping out six weeks before obtaining her qualifications.

Another person I know is what is loosely termed in England, 'a blagger'.

A blagger is someone who can walk the walk, talk the talk, and make people inherently trust them and their judgment.

Have you ever met someone who can sound like an expert on most subjects, through their language and self-confidence?

It's amazing to watch.

My friend was made redundant, and researched the market to find the most lucrative industry to focus upon for his business. He entered the IT world at the beginning of the dot com boom, and thrived. He knew less about programming, software or hardware than anyone I had ever met, and yet he managed to convey an impression of expertise in everything which he did.

So, this just goes to show that confidence does not need to be based in anything concrete, when it comes to how we are perceived by our customers. If we stay just one page ahead of the people we are supporting, but do it confidently, we can be successful at inspiring trust and respect in others.

What does that mean for us, as small business owners?

Self-confident people not only know what reasonable goals are for themselves but, because of their [confidence](#), are able to reach those goals, understand when they've reached them, and appreciate the success.

If you are finding yourself plagued by self doubts and insecurities when it comes to [running your business](#), remember that you are an expert in your field. No-one is waiting on the sidelines to trip you up – you have all of the skills, knowledge and ability which you need to make a thriving and lucrative company.

Admittedly, we all need to learn new skills to stay ahead of the industry we are operating within, but developing your sense of confidence will go a long, long way towards supporting you to achieve your business goals.

The Little Blogging Secret Nobody Wants To Talk About

Now let's talk about communication.

How effective are you at communicating?

Great, you may assume, as you have been talking for years and as a veteran blogger you obviously have a great command of the English language and know how to use it to gain readers.



Detrimental To Your Success

However, the majority of [small business owners](#) who spend most of their time online often fail to factor effective communications in to their [business strategy](#), and this could be detrimental to your success as a blogger and entrepreneur.

The term 'communication' is derived from the Latin word 'communis' – this literally translates as 'common'. This means that the phrase "to communicate" means 'to make common' or 'to make known'.

Often regarded as a peripheral skill in comparison to more tangible attributes such as a sound business knowledge or good financial acumen, communication skills are at risk of being sidelined, despite the fact that they are fundamental for anyone wanting to make a success of their online venture.

Single Most Important Factor

The University of Pittsburgh's Katz Business School conducted a survey in to the importance of communications, researching recruiters from companies with more than 50,000 employees. In the study, they found that communication skills were cited as the single most important decisive factor in choosing managers.

This shows that communication skills, whether you have no staff, one or many, is one of the single most important factor which contributes to the success of your business.

Despite the growing acknowledgement that communication skills are critical for us as small business owners, many individuals continue to struggle, unable to communicate their thoughts and ideas effectively, whether in verbal or written format.

This inability makes it nearly impossible for people to compete effectively online, hampering progress and preventing the engagement of stakeholders and the development of strong and fruitful relationships with suppliers and customers.

Facing Your Communications Demons

Communicating is not as tough as you may first imagine.

We do it instinctively, every day.

Each time you log on to your PC you are initiating communication online whether by commenting on other people's blog, posting articles upon your own, or responding to queries and questions relating to your [products and services](#).

The good news is that it just takes a few simple steps to establish yourself as an expert communicator, opening up two-way channels online between yourself and your clients.

Understanding The Nature And Form Of Effective Communications Skills

Great communications depend upon a number of elements:

- Understand what your key messages are
- Know your audience – what they expect from you, how you should be communicating to them
- How your communications will be perceived by your audience
- Situational circumstances – time of year, what is going on externally and within your chosen industry

We are bombarded with different messages every day.

The average person in America spends fifty-two minutes each day reading the newspaper. This means that in a seventy year lifetime

(subtracting the first fifteen years as non-newspaper reading time), a little less than two years, are spent absorbing news.

According to the American Telephone and Telegraph Company, there are 24.5 telephone calls made for every 100 people in the entire world, and in every hour that an American listens to the radio in the US, there are over ten thousand words spoken.

All this means one simple thing to you as a small business owner, communicating on line.

Your messages need to be clear, accessible and concise. If you haven't already done so, it could be time to assess your communications strategy and make sure it delivers all of these attributes, in order to keep your customers happy and engaged.

Two Words That Work Like Magic For Your Business

Now let's move onto Clear thinking.

Have you ever watched The Apprentice on TV?

This hugely popular show follows a group of young aspiring entrepreneurs as they battle each week to become Lord Alan Sugar's (UK version) latest protégé.



Apart from the entertainment generated from listening to people telling the world how successful they are and then going on to mess up again and again, the programme is also notable for the way in which it highlights the attribute of clear thinking in the workplace.

Lord Sugar is famously down to Earth, and comes out with a huge number of funny comments relating to business which make the programme one of the most quotable on television today.

One of the things the mogul is notorious for is the ability to cut through the obscure issues which business sometimes throws up, and get straight to the point in any given situation. Sugar is a classic example of clear thinking in practice – someone who sat down with an idea when he was much younger, worked hard at it, and devised a number of additional enterprises to supplement his business empire as he progressed.

Why do we need clear thinking, as small business owners?

When we run our own online enterprise, we seem to be beset from all sides by people wanting to sell us things, give us advice, work with us or ask us to work for them.

The minute our business becomes registered and recognized, the onslaught of sales calls, persuasive promotions and unscrupulous scams come our way.

Having the ability to step back from the deluge and understand what we are aiming to achieve, and how we will get there, safeguards us against

potentially investing in poor products, or agreeing to certain ploys such as expensive marketing campaigns or fruitless advertising, unnecessarily.

When we go about our daily tasks as business owners, it can be easy to get sidetracked by different activities.

Our 'things to do' list expands each day, and we often don't get the chance to take a little time out and assess our situation. However, it is this very distance and space which affords us a chance to cut through the 'noise' or our everyday tasks and remember where we are headed as entrepreneurs.

What techniques aid clarity of thinking?

The ability to achieve the relevant detachment to see our business in perspective and make sound decisions about our strategic approach isn't a natural trait in most business owners.

In fact, we are far more likely to resort to intuitive decisions than analytical ones, responding to situations and people because we like them rather than because we have carefully evaluated them for the return on investment which they can offer.

The following techniques will support you to manage the decision-making process for your business with detachment, sound judgment and logic.

Consider the following:

- Does the decision I am about to make fit in with my overall business direction?
- Before I make a financial investment, have I shopped around, compared equivalent products or services, and chosen the one which makes the most sense from a delivery and financial perspective?
- Have I taken time out to objectively evaluate my business, to ascertain whether or not I am progressing according to my strategic approach?
- What can I do to make processes more efficient? Are all of my activities each day supporting me to achieve my goals?

- What would Alan Sugar do?!

OK, so the last one may not be as useful to you as the previous tactics, but it may support you to cut through the many business calls you have to deal with, and field unwanted approaches from companies trying to sell you unnecessary products.

If all else fails, and a service provider lets you down, you could always quote the Amstrad owner himself – “You’re a loser. It’s a shambles. You’re fired.”

The Blogging Trait Bloggers IGNORE Everyday

In this section we explore one of the **fundamental traits** that many business owners ignore and that is **'CHANGE'**.



I was in a meeting with a customer recently, and he surprised me by stating with absolute confidence: "I don't like change."

Don't like change?

Is that possible?

I paused for a moment and then queried his statement.

If he bought a winning lottery ticket, would that make him happy or sad?

There is the potential for change, on a mammoth scale.

If he was invited to pick up an award as a leader in his field of small business ownership, would he turn it down, preferring for things to stay the same?

My client thought about it for a while, and finally decided that winning the lottery or being nominated for an award would be fine. It wasn't that he didn't like positive change, he decided. It was just that he has always associated the word change with bad things.

Why do we need to accept change as business bloggers?

The ability to embrace change is fundamental for anyone who runs their own business.

Customers often commission work and then decide they want something different half way through. Service providers may leave us in the lurch after agreeing to deliver certain products, and industry rules and regulations may shift and alter half way through us deciding to work in a certain way, leaving us heading back to the proverbial drawing board to revise our approach.

Whichever way you look at it, working for ourselves still involves engaging a number of stakeholders and suppliers, and working with customers every day either face to face or online.

This means that we are always going to be at the mercy of other people's demands and wishes, leaving us at times wondering how to stay ahead of the changes which our various relationships may send our way.

The ability to keep up with shifting demands will arm us against business failure, by giving us the techniques necessary to 'go with the flow', adapting and transforming our approach in line with external influences.

People who fail to adapt and change find themselves being left behind, as competitors innovate and alter to anticipate shifts in their industry, and static businesses fall by the wayside.

How to learn to embrace change as a small business owner

Becoming acceptance of change doesn't involve a huge shift in mindset in order to radically alter your personality.

If you're inherently a cautious person, there are still a number of things you can do to run with change with a positive outlook.

The following steps will support you to adapt to changes easily, without feeling insecure about heading off in new directions...

Understand the reason behind the change

Change happens for a reason, whether it is to adapt to industry regulations, gain more customers or increase your revenue. Knowing why you are making changes will help you to accept them.

Be proactive

Thinking of ways to change ahead of demand will support you to accept it, as you remain in control and have an active role in instigating it.

Watch the industry you work in

As circumstances and situations evolve around you, keep aware of what is taking place. This will make it easy for you to anticipate new directions for your business and meet the requirements of your customers without feeling as if you are falling out of your comfort zone.

Accept that change is inevitable

As a business blogger, you will always come in to situations that require shifts in thinking to improve your strategy and support evolution and growth, in a positive direction. Over time, you will get more accustomed

to moving with the changes which come your way, understanding that it is part of running a successful business.

Do Not Be Too Hard On Yourself

In today's fast-paced world, while so much is going on around us... **we need to stay calm.**

And in this post we are going to discuss *Calmness*.

Keep calm and carry on!

Have you seen the recent flood of posters which are hitting the UK high street, which have been reproduced from the Second World War?

These posters, mugs and t-shirts all replicate the slogan which was first commissioned in 1939, stating '**Keep Calm and Carry On**'. The slogan was initially commissioned in order to enhance morale as Britain was invaded, but never really took off at the time.

In 2000, the poster was rediscovered and somehow worked its way on to the shelf of every gift shop and department store in the UK, used as a theme for a number of products. Even though there are only two surviving original posters from the first publication, the slogan has captured the imagination of people everywhere, raising smiles and spawning millions of sales.

There's a reason why the slogan has become so popular, decades after it was first developed.

Although we no longer operate in times of stress which people experienced during war time, modern living, and especially our working lives, are riddled with stress from all sides.

With pressure coming from tight deadlines, the expectation to juggle work and family life with expert accuracy and the need to constantly perform harder, smarter and better than those around us, we're living in a more stressful time than ever before.

Both men and women are expected to succeed, and the world of online business operation is no different. We are constantly reminded that there is less money available for retirement, told that we have to continue



working for longer, and battered from all sides with cautionary tales of people who have failed in business.

Having said all that, it's still more than possible to live a happy and fruitful life, carving a niche in the world wide web to make a successful living.

The trick here, to achieve a satisfactory balance between work and life, is to keep calm.

And carry on.

Exercising our ability to manage stress and remain level-headed when the proverbial hits the fan can go a long, long way to supporting business success, keeping us at peace in the face of adversity, and achieving our goals.

If you're currently struggling to apply the adage from WW2 to your own life, try out the following ways of thinking and get back to a calm, stress-free and productive way of being...

- Accept the situation. Whatever happens, you can only do what you can do to change it. After that, if things are beyond your control, accept it and move on
- Get a solution together. In most situations, you can develop an action plan to deal with things and move towards a successful resolution
- Become comfortable with the outcomes of your actions. Once you have made a decision, remember that there was never any other way you could have behaved. Don't spend time berating yourself and leveling recriminations
- Say no. This is one of the most powerful words in the world to use, in order to bring calmness back in to your life as a business owner
- Stop. Slow down, and give yourself time to deal with situations as they arise. You can't do everything all at once, and you're not expected to. By pausing you will gain perspective and recharge for the next challenge.

This is a great piece of advice...

There's a great quote to bear in mind, by Natalie Goldberg which states: "Stress is basically a disconnection from the earth, a forgetting of the breath. Stress is an ignorant state. It believes that everything is an emergency. Nothing is that important. Just lie down."

When you've regained your perspective and remembered to draw breath, you will be in an ideal position to...carry on.

To your Blogging success,



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