



## Tips for Blogging for an International Trade Show Audience

By Michelle Bruno



**I**t may be slightly premature to offer tips for blogging for an international audience—exhibitors and attendees—when blogging in general is still getting off the ground in the exhibition industry. Nevertheless, blogs can be a great way to stimulate the interest of international prospects in a U.S. trade show. After all, would-be exhibitors and attendees receive most of the information about trade shows from the Web. A blog targeted at international participants is a good way to gain the attention of search engines and build a global community. Here are some tips for building a blog that “speaks” the language of an international trade show audience.

### 1. Develop an international persona

“Personas” help bloggers write posts that appeal to the specific interests of the intended readers. Although it’s difficult to create a profile of the typical reader when multiple nationalities are involved, it can be helpful to create a list of common attributes that many in the target audience possess, for example:

- Aged 35-55 years old
- Senior-level executives
- Experienced travelers
- Represent large corporations
- Data-intensive (prefer market reports, articles and statistics)
- Male
- English speaking
- Prefer formality

### 2. Use plain language and avoid idioms

Bloggers can easily create misunderstandings by using slang or idiomatic expressions such as “build a better mousetrap,” or “take a load off.” When writing for an international audience, it’s better to write in plain language erring on the side of formality. Keeping the verbiage simple can also help translators—both human and mechanical—from misreading the post.

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### 3. Create a list of topic resources

There are a couple of very productive ways to determine what blog topics an audience of prospective readers would be interested in reading:

- Set up a system of Google alerts based on the most popular search terms that international visitors have used to find the show's website. Platforms such as Google Analytics can identify the search terms being used and the visitors' countries of origin.
- Survey existing international exhibitors and attendees about industry topics they would like to see addressed.
- Communicate regularly with overseas sales representatives to understand the types of inquiries they are receiving from prospective exhibitors.
- Develop a library of U.S. Government reports, industry statistics and surveys highlighting, for example, the market potential for certain products in the U.S.
- Search LinkedIn groups for questions coming from international companies.

### 4. Use search engine optimization tactics

It is important to write good posts that are relevant to the international audience, but it's also important to attract the attention of search engines, such as Google, so that the posts rank highly on the search engine results pages. One of the main ways to boost the rankings of posts is to use popular keywords—those being used by international prospects to find the show website—in the post.

### 5. Optimize for international search engines

Liz Elting, co-founder and co-CEO of TransPerfect, a provider of language and business translation services,



warns that search engine optimization tactics differ with each search engine. “No two search engines use the exact same algorithm to produce organic results. The techniques required to optimize for Chinese search engine Baidu, for example, may be vastly different from those needed to

optimize for Google,” she writes. Bloggers trying to reach a specific group of constituents may benefit from the help of outside experts to optimize for popular international search engines.

### 6. Translate some or all of the posts into the most popular languages

The subject of translation is a tricky one. Automated translation tools aren't always accurate, but human translation by native speakers can be time-consuming and expensive. Providing translated blog posts demonstrates the organization's willingness to appeal to an international audience. Blog posts in foreign languages can also attract the attention of international search engines.

### 7. Invite international guest bloggers to post articles

Another way to provide interesting content for an international audience is to invite guest bloggers—current international exhibitors or attendees, international speakers, experts on selling international products in the U.S., etc.—to contribute articles to the blog (even articles in other languages).

Blogs help organizations demonstrate thought leadership, extend their brand and attract new customers. When a blog is well written, relevant, updated regularly, optimized for popular search engines (including international platforms) and targeted to a specific audience, it can be a powerful tool for sharing information and growing a community of loyal international customers.

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