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# The Business of BLOGS

Marketing and customer service opportunities abound on one of the Web's most popular ways to communicate.

**G**eri Wolf has been posting to her blog, called Eventful Ramblings, at least three times a week for more than two years. In that time, she's seen the number visitors grow, improved her site's search engine rankings, and offered readers her ideas and a new perspective. However, Wolf doesn't write about celebrities, politics, or technology. As owner and senior designer for event-planning company The Style Laboratory, Inc., in Minneapolis, Wolf uses her blog—*stylelaboratory.com*—as a marketing tool.

"The blog covers observations of life in general, experiences from doing my job, trends in food as well as events. It's not all about business, but it's related to business," Wolf says.

Wolf says her blog has given her company exposure and positioned her as an innovative thinker. "We try to influence some of the trends that are happening," Wolf says, especially food trends. Her readers know they can go to her for the inside story on the local

dining scene. One reader who is a fan of Stuart Woodman, the former executive chef at Levain and Five, had heard the buzz about Woodman's new restaurant and turned to Wolf for details on when and where it was opening.

She also wants to be a resource for event-planning colleagues. "There's a pretty high learning curve for this job because you have to know so much about each part of an event: flowers, design, decor, food, wine, safety, security, and entertainment," she says. In April, Wolf blogged about an open house she organized for event planners where she challenged caterers to create finger food that could be served on a napkin.

"[Blogging] is probably the least expensive form of PR," she says. "I think it comes across as a little less self promoting [than traditional public relations]." Wolf says it's increased her credibility with new clients who can get to know her business philosophy and

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