

## The 10 Best Corporate Blogs in the World (Jan 11)



My reaction to most company blogs: “Blah, Blah and Double Blah!”

I recently taught a class on corporate blogging at the amazing [social media marketing graduate program](#) at Rutgers University. In my research for the class, I pored through hundreds of websites looking for examples of the **best company blogs in the world**.

Amid the coal pile that is the state of corporate blogging today, I did manage to find a few diamonds that don't bore to tears with pronouncements, promotions and product announcements (the Killer P's).

Before I provide my view of the best of the best, here are a few general observations about the state of corporate blogging:

**1) The best blogs are dominated by the tech sector.** In fact, they are so far ahead of the rest of the corporate world that I found it unfair to rank the professionals with the amateurs! **IBM, SAP and Oracle** are examples of innovative and remarkable blogs. Nearly every hardware, software and services company “gets it.” I thought it would be more interesting here to focus only on the non-tech sector. I also excluded any reference to Zappos simply because I am sick of Zappos and it's my blog dammit.

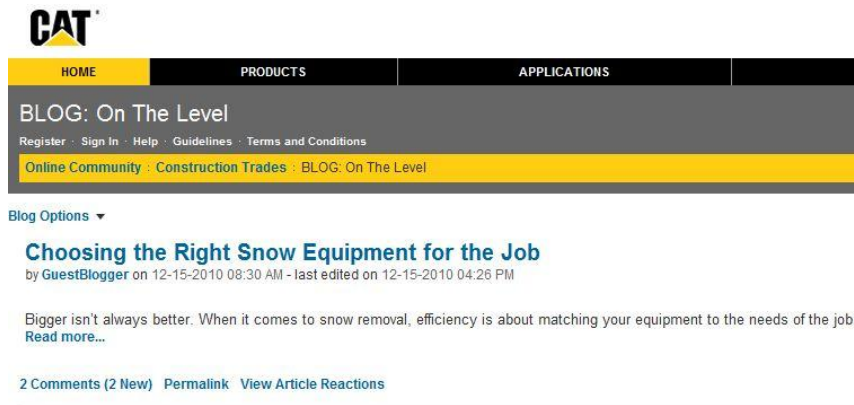
**2) Corporate blogging has evolved** far beyond the idea of personal journaling. Think of any company goal and there is likely to be an example of a company blog supporting it. You may be surprised at the diversity of blogs in these examples.

**3) There is a chasm between the adoption of blogs at large companies** versus the rest of the world. The [Center for Marketing Research](#) at the University of Massachusetts showed in a [study](#) that just 22% of the Fortune 500's blog compared to 45% of the Inc 500's and about 80% of non-profits. And even when some companies claimed to have a blog, I couldn't find it. Corporate blogging is still a wide-open area for

marketing channel development since there are [so many proven benefits of blogging!](#) And many of these blogs are U.S.-based because the adoption of corporate blogging is even lower So you in the rest of the world.

In no particular order, here are ten examples of exceptional non-high-tech blogs:

## [Caterpillar](#)

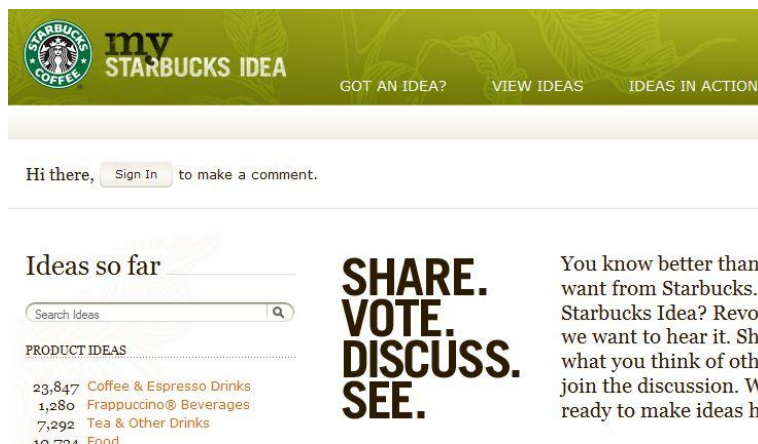


### **Goals: Problem-solving, community-building, loyalty**

So you don't think blogs have a place in the B2B world? Can't imagine somebody from a road construction crew logging in to read a blog? Think again.

Caterpillar established separate blogs based on industry (construction, electrical, marine) with sub-categories under each industry (products, safety, problem-solving). This company does a wonderful job engaging customers, using the community to solve problems, and rewarding customer ideas.

## [Starbucks](#)



### **Goals: New product development, engagement**

Well-managed companies usually excel at many things and Starbucks is no exception. They are leading the way in social media marketing but the unexpected aspect of their blog is that it only tangentially has anything to do with coffee. Instead, Starbucks employs its blog as a global brainstorming platform.

Customers submit ideas for new drinks, food items, packages, even store designs. The company blogs about the ideas (about 100,000 so far!) and readers build on the ideas through comments and ratings. The idea is brilliant.

## [Marriott](#)



**Marriott**  
*on the move*



**Featured Post**

**More Than 300 Hotels Visited in 2010**

Posted: 12/30/2010 11:31 AM

I've blogged many times about my travels and the many visits I make to our hotels around the world. Every year, I try to make it to about 250 hotels, but this year, I worked extra hard and got past the 300 mark.



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**Goals: Customer satisfaction, sales, crisis management**

Bill Marriott is one of the most famous corporate bloggers in the world. Yes, the company chairman actually does his own posts, dictating them on a weekly basis. This personal involvement has won the site loyal fans since they know they are getting the word from a real executive — a powerful point of differentiation. The company has reported generating millions in direct sales from this blog and has also used this as a platform to set the record straight in the event of a bombing or hostage situation involving one of their properties. Another “personal journal” blog I’ll submit as a runner-up in this category is [Randy’s Journal](#) from Boeing.

## [Wegman’s](#)



**Wegman's**

**Fresh Stories**

Holiday Traditions



**New Year’s Resolutions... Cheers to Your Health!**



Written by Krystal Register on December 28th, 2010.  
Filed under: How-to Holidays

15

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**Goals: Direct sales, loyalty**

In a hotly-competitive, low-margin business, this regional grocery chain is trying to stand out with a fun, easy-to-navigate site. The blog design changes every few weeks to reflect colorful seasonal themes. The company has managed to attract a loyal and engaged audience through posts from president Danny Wegman and other store employees on ideas for entertaining at home, recipes and nutrition. I saw one post where the deli chef was responding to questions by telling customers which aisle to find ingredients for some tasty muffins. I love the fun, down-home and authentic engagement on this site!

**Manpower**

Welcome to Manpowerblogs.com  
Our blogs offer a unique perspective on the changing world of work

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**Featured Blogs**



**Mark Toth's Employment Blawg**

When we asked visitors to the Manpower US web site what information they wanted most, the answer was employment law. This bLAWg is an attempt to meet that demand and engaging and educational content.

**Recent Posts**

January Employee AM  
As part of our new latest developer  
Happy New Year!

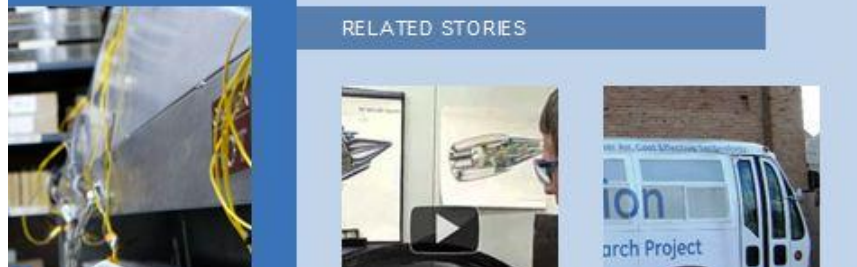
**Goal: Thought leadership**

Here's how blogger Mark Toth describes the mission of the blog: "When we asked visitors to the Manpower US website what information they wanted most, the answer was employment law. This bLAWg is an attempt to meet that demand and engaging and educational content." You mean they actually listened to customers and created a blog around their information needs? Seems like such a simple idea but unfortunately ignored by most companies.

**General Electric**

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### **Goal: Brand Awareness**

When I use the GE blog as an example in my classes there is usually a comment like “Oh ... I thought they were only lightbulbs.”

This blog is aimed squarely at breaking this image through wonderful story-telling. If you want to see a blog that is doing a good job spinning some entertaining stories, look no further. It's not uncommon to see wonderful photography, video, and even art and music used in a blog post to illustrate a point. The one area that needs to be improved — I think they are trying to hit too many diverse customers with one blog. It's time to segment with multiple blogs.

### **Fiskars**



### **Goal: Customer engagement, brand awareness**

How in the world do you create passion for scissors? Fiskars has done it in one of the most creative blogs in the corporate world. The company solicited help from four scrapbook fanatics who demonstrate their love of crafting — and the tools they use — with this customer-generated content. One of the greatest marketing applications for blogging I have seen.

### **Southwest Airlines**



**Goal: Enhance corporate image and integrate with traditional media**

This is one of the world's best-known corporate blogs but I would remiss if I didn't include it here. People generally hate airlines but somehow Southwest has risen above this with a quirky, honest blog about travel and the people who make it happen. This is the anti-corporate-press-release blog. They also wisely use this as a way to connect with employees. Smart business.

**Patagonia**



**The Cleanest Line**

*Weblog for the employees, friends and customers of the outdoor clothing company Patagonia. Visit*

**Dirtbag Diaries: What We Had**

Happy New Year. We're starting 2011 off right with the first-ever fly



**Goal: Compliment brand image, engage community**

Patagonia is a company that sells high-end adventure gear and this no-frills site does a marvelous job featuring reader stories of what else ... high-end adventure! You have to love a corporate blog that features a post called "Waking up puking."

The magic of social media is finding a way to enable your customers to carry your brand promise through to their stories and this site is a best practice.

**Whole Foods Market**

The image is a screenshot of a blog post from Whole Foods Market. At the top, the words 'WHOLE STORY' are written in large, white, hand-drawn letters on a dark green background. Below this, the text 'the official whole foods market® blog' is written in a smaller, green font. The main title of the post is 'Healthy Whole Body Cleansing' in white. Below the title, it says 'by Dr. Gaetano Morello, January 4, 2011 | Permalink | Email this'. At the bottom, there is a partial view of a person's face and the beginning of a paragraph: 'The New Year is a natural time to think about giving the body a much-needed vacation.'

***Goal: Compliment brand image, direct sales***

Like Starbucks and Zappos, Whole Foods is a social media darling, and for good reason. They do great work! This popular blog is full of how-to's, best practices and exciting product ideas.

Of course it would be impossible for me — or anybody for that matter — to do a comprehensive evaluation of every corporate blog in the world but these are some that demonstrate the use of compelling content to align with tangible business objectives.

I would value your comments on these wonderfully diverse blogs. What company blogs should I consider for my next class? I'm especially interested in any small businesses that are effectively working the blogging channel.

About the Author: Mark Schaefer is a consultant, author, and college educator who blogs at [www.businessesgrow.com/blog](http://www.businessesgrow.com/blog).

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