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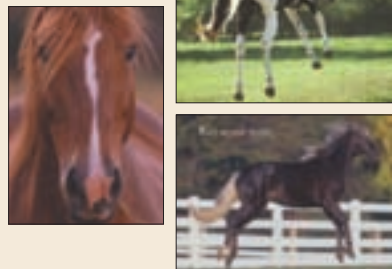


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RETAIL ROUNDUP

By Paul Wahl, Editor



Blog Your Way to Success?

IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE.

Blogging is sweeping the United States, and some business leaders believe you can boost your profits by participating. A blog (Web log) is a Web page usually made up of short, frequently updated posts arranged in chronological order, similar to a journal or diary. Business blogs are popular tools for communicat-

ing with customers and a way to share your knowledge and expertise. For instance, if you know more than anyone else about Western saddles, your blog will attract readers to you and your business. Blogging is simple, no more difficult than sending an E-mail. It's also a low-cost alternative to developing a Web site. Some blog sites allow readers to respond to your postings, thus creating a virtual dialogue on a given topic. "From a business perspective, blogs are no different from marketing channels like video, print, audio or presentations," according to the Web site visionpace.typepad.com. "They all deliver results of varying kind. The kind you can expect from blogs is mainly about stronger relations with target groups important to you."

Rental Car Business Booming

RETAILERS PLANNING TO FLY to fall markets and rent a car can expect brisk bidding for their business. Rental car companies are tossing tourists and business travelers more perks every day, according to *USA Today*. Alamo, for instance, has

developed a system to permit all customers to check in Online and proceed directly to their designated car, bypassing the counter altogether. Budget will give customers \$2 off its daily rate to companies that rent five or more times annually. Hertz offers a free tank of gas and double airline frequent-flier miles for some rentals. Other



companies are offering satellite radio and navigation systems. Enterprise has teamed with Professional Bull Riders to give away 29 trips to the organization's finals in Las Vegas in November. Car rentals are up 10 percent compared to a year ago.

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