

Branding Your Blog

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Establishing your brand with your blog visitors is critically important in setting yourself apart in the online marketplace. Making a good impression begins with viewers being able to clearly identify the source of the information that they are being presented. It is the first step in establishing trust and loyalty. If you are selling a product or service, these are key components in building a customer base of folks who purchase what you have to offer. More importantly, if they like your product, they are much more likely to give you word-of-mouth referrals.

There are two main places on your blog page where you can show your brand. The first is in the header section. You have several choices here. The simplest way to create a header is to choose a background color and then input your slogan text in a complementary color. With this standard setup, two text entries can be shown. One is the blog's title and the other is its description.

Branding begins with the blog's title. Because it is indexed by Google, you will want to ensure that it contains your company or product name. Even though you will likely want to keep the title short, the description can be several sentences long. You can input just your slogan or a more complete description of your blog. Before you get too verbose with this option, keep in mind that the information in the description will also appear to search engines, so you'll want to load it up front with keywords that will entice folks to visit your blog.

You can also create an image to use in the header. You have two choices with this option. Your image can be behind the title and description text or the image can take the place of them. For instance, if you want a textured background of a certain color in your header, you can use a .jpg or .gif image behind the title and description text. You could also include an image of your logo to go behind the text. This is a bit tricky because you don't have absolute control over where the text is displayed and it can vary quite a bit depending on the viewer's screen size and browser settings. If you intend to combine an image with text, it might be best to make a full image containing both the logo and text for the header. It can be any height, but Blogger does have a restriction on length. Depending on your template, the size could be limited to anywhere from 600 to 760 pixels. If your image is bigger, Blogger offers an option to resize it to fit the space. The exact size limit for your template is stated just below the checkbox for shrinking the image. Be careful with this option. If your image has to be shrunk too much, some distortion or loss of quality could result.

The other place you can display your brand image is in the side bar, preferably at the top. Depending on your template, placing your logo or product image in the side bar could actually be more appealing than making a custom header graphic. It works especially well on templates that look like a single page, such as the parchment template.

Of course, you won't likely display your logo or product image in more than a couple of places on your blog. However, you can augment your brand visibility by placing your company or product name in several places along the side bar. For instance, if you have a Web site, invite viewers to visit it by listing your brand name twice, like this: "Please visit the XYZ Company at www.XYZcompany.com." Another way to include your brand name is to post links to any social media sites in which you participate. For example: "Follow the XYZ Company on Twitter."

Statistics show that viewers have to be exposed to a brand up to seven times before it becomes fixed in their memory. The examples above give you at least four ways to display your brand. Using your company or product name in your blog post titles is another way to gain exposure. Adding lists or widgets to your site that have a title such as: "Recommend by XYZ" is another option. Be creative and sneak your brand name and image into the nooks and crannies of your blog. It will make a lasting impression on your viewers.