

# Improve Communication One Blog at a Time

Communication is a crucial element in the principalship, and technology has opened opportunities for the principal that were not present a generation ago. When communicating with staff, some principals will use paper memos, while others will use the convenience of e-mail. Still others might look to a blog as a simple means of presenting concise information. I believe this third option to be by far the most effective. A principal's blog may be just the thing to take communication in your school to a whole new level.

To illustrate the point, let us rewind the clock a generation and examine the option open to principals in the pre-digital era: memo-writing. John uses a system of memos to present routine announcements to staff members. As a new piece of information occurs to John, he creates a quick memo, photocopies it, and distributes it in faculty mailboxes, often sending multiple memos a day.

While some teachers are good at picking out the true "to-do" items and transferring them to their task lists, others tend to simply stack the memos on the desk. During the week, those teachers shuffle the memos, yet make little progress. Losing the memos is also a problem for many.

Sharon has another idea. When a new piece of information occurs to her, she makes a note of it and then proceeds with other work at hand. At the end of the week, Sharon compiles all of those ideas into a single memo. She finds she can easily condense into a single one-page memo all of the information that her counterpart had scattered among a dozen individual memos. Those who work with Sharon begin to look forward to this weekly memo and trust that everything they will need to know about the upcoming week will be in that one place.



**"Blogs provide a way to make regular communication quick and easy."**

Today's principals have digital options available to them. Brenda composes an e-mail as soon as an idea occurs to her that she wants to communicate to the faculty. Her method is the digital equivalent of John's from a generation ago, who communicated through multiple memos. Her communication is fragmented, spread over multiple e-mails. Each e-mail is composed of part subject

matter and part rhetoric. Furthermore, Brenda's messages are scattered among the deluge of other e-mails her teachers are receiving from various sources.

Martin has a different idea. When a new piece of information occurs to him, he makes a note of it and proceeds with other work at hand. Once each week, Martin compiles all of that information into one well-crafted blog post. He adds a well-chosen photo or graphic. He embeds links to excellent articles to help his teachers hone their craft. Martin includes calendar events for the next couple of weeks as well as a list of upcoming faculty birthdays. The post may even include a motivational quote.

The staff at Martin's school look forward to this weekly post. They trust that everything they will need to know for the upcoming week will be in that one place. They realize these weekly posts will be permanently available. Each post appears in reverse chronological order, giving them a compendium of the year's information in one neat package. The staff can say good-bye to shuffling papers and trying to resurrect lost information. Perhaps best of all, they can view it in the classroom, from home, or from any Internet-accessible computer in the world.

## Getting Started

For several years, I have conducted a workshop titled "Your Own Blog in 10 Minutes or Less" because a blog can be created just that quickly and for no cost. To get started, I suggest visiting <http://yourownblogin10minutesorless.blogspot.com> and read beginning with the most recent post. Here, you will find a short video tutorial that will guide you step by step through the process. The other posts provide ideas that can be incorporated into a principal's blog. Embedding links and posting pictures are easy. Likewise, embedding video from such sources as YouTube or the

### Top 10 Reasons to Blog

**Blogs are free.** Multiple sites allow principals to create and host their blogs at no cost.

**Blogs are easy.** Creating a blog post is no more complicated than composing an e-mail message.

**Blogs are quick.** One click of the mouse makes the message available to the world without photocopying, collating, or mailbox stuffing.

**Blogs save trees (and money).** Because blogs are paperless, the school saves reams of paper.

**Blogs are forever saved.** Every post is retained in reverse chronological order.

**Blogs are 21st century.** They have become a standard part of communication in our culture.

**Blogs unite faculties and the school district.** When communication becomes easy, the volume of communication increases.

**Blogs reach anyone, anytime, anywhere.** Any computer with Internet access can access a blog.

**Blogs keep everyone informed.** A blog provides one single source for information.

**Blogs celebrate excellence in school and the district.** They provide the perfect venue to allow the principal to frame the school's story.

local news channel's Web site can be accomplished in seconds.

After starting blogs at my former school, within two years the central office and every school in the district had created its own. Individual teachers and school organizations began to create blogs to communicate with parents and supporters.

Communication in today's fast-paced world is a challenge for the busy principal. Blogs provide a way to make regular communication quick and easy. 

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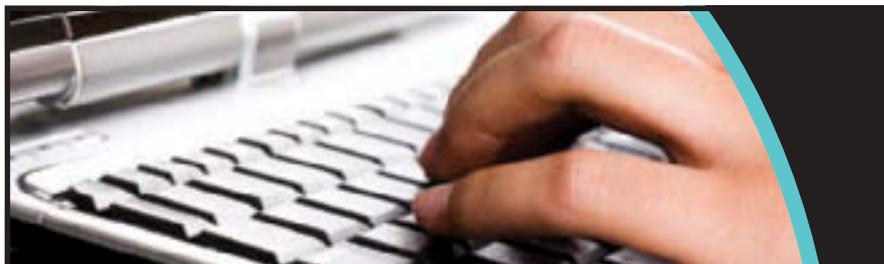
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