

“ I would say that 99 per cent of small business owners need to step up and do more marketing
- Ivana Katz



Ivana Katz believes web logs can be an effective tool for attracting potential customers.

Picture PUJ10813:
JOEMURPHY

A chip off the old blog

THE term blogging hadn't even appeared in the Australian press before 2000. Now the phenomenon seems to be sweeping the world.

To many people it still conjures up visions of geeks and self-obsessed teens cluttering up cyberspace with their daily web diaries.

But it may be time for businesses to take a different view. Some of the more forward-thinking among them are already using blogs, or web logs, as a powerful new marketing tool. Some of the advantages are obvious, like having access to an instant channel for two-way communication that



business

Sue Hoban

allows feedback from existing and potential customers.

They are also cheap and easy to use.

Local business blogger and adviser Ivana Katz, founder of Websites 4 Small Business, said anyone who could type an email and press a button could set up and maintain their own blog.

All they have to do is select a blogging tool - many are free - and follow a few simple steps.

Other advantages like search engine optimisation are less obvious. But, in an era when so many customers do their research on the net, the advantage of a more prominent search engine listing can't be understated.

Ms Katz said blogging could be a very effective tool for attracting the volume of

traffic to achieve this. "It's not easy to do it with a website without paying to have your website optimised but the beautiful thing about a blog is that you can very easily optimise each posting by making certain key words prominent in the URL of the blog, in the heading and in the content," she said. "The more you feature your key words in those areas the more prominently you will be listed."

She said businesses should not regard blogs as just another channel for advertising or hard-core selling.