

Readers won't have a perception that the newcomer is an engineer or customer service representative first and a conduit for dialogue second.

- ✔ If you're using the blog to heal a business *faux pas*, hiring an outsider to write the blog shows a willingness to be introspective and to change, and your blogger won't be defensive when trying to patch things up with the public.

Some bloggers started such compelling and well-written personal sites that they were then hired by news organizations and other businesses to blog professionally. On the other hand, a person who is an outsider to the company may lack familiarity with people and events, and may not understand the company culture well enough to convey it effectively.

Turning customers into bloggers

One key goal of buzz marketing is to find users of your product or service who can spread the message for you. Hiring an existing customer to be your blogger has some advantages:

- ✔ **Sometimes customers can be better advocates and experts on services that the company provides than the company can.** This concept is especially true in the technical world, where users of a software product may have better expertise than its engineers because they use the product on a daily basis.
- ✔ **You send a great message to your customer base.** "We pay attention to who is using our products — and reward them for it."
- ✔ **You get someone who doesn't have a huge vested interest in the success of the company but who is highly invested in the success of a product.** Who better to address consumer concerns than a consumer, after all?

Microsoft's most famous blogger, Robert Scoble, is a prominent example of this kind of recruiting. Scoble's personal blog was noticed by Microsoft, which then hired him to write the blog as a Microsoft employee. Today, Scoble is a technical evangelist for Microsoft, and the blog Scobleizer (shown in Figure 10-5) has almost singlehandedly decreased industry ire at the software giant. Microsoft doesn't edit Scoble's blog, nor should his postings be taken as official Microsoft positions. Still, Scoble's mix of technical expertise, simple information, kudos to competitors, well-timed criticism (yes, also of Microsoft), and the occasional personal post is a potent concoction read by fans and critics alike. You can read Scobleizer scoble.weblogs.com.