

The INTERNET MARKETING NEWSLETTER

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The New Blogger's Manual Everything You Wanted To Know About Blogging But Were Afraid to Ask

If you already have a blog, then you might want to read this just to see if you're getting the full benefit from your blog. Or to find out if your blog... um... sucks.

Because frankly, most blogs do.

If you don't yet have a blog, then you're likely leaving money on the table and you don't even know it. Blogging is a great way to reach your audience, build rapport and get people interested in handing you money for your products and services.

Plus, believe it or not, blogging can be a lot of fun!

Let's get started...

You Already Have Blogging Skills

You might think that blogging takes a great deal of talent, but anyone, with a little coaching, can blog.

Yes, that absolutely does include you. 😊

A Few Tips To Get You Started...

There aren't any right answers or perfect formulas. It's okay to follow your intuition and even experiment.

Don't compare. Don't get bogged down by comparing your blog to other blogs. Someone else will always get more attention and more retweets. Learn from others but stay true to your own unique strengths.

Don't give up. Your blog might take off in 3 weeks, 3 months or 3 years. In the mean time, keep blogging. It's a learn-as-you-go process, and if you're tenacious, you will find your audience and they will find you.

Focus on your passions. It's difficult to blog for years about a topic that bores you to death. Write about what you love and the passion will show.

Be flexible. You might think your blog is about one thing, and 3 months in you realize it's about something entirely different. That's okay. Most new bloggers don't find their footing right away because it takes time.

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Be consistent. Blog at least once a week or more often. Blogging once a month won't get you the search engine traffic, brand awareness or customer connections you're looking for.

Know your 'why.' Focus more on 'why' you're blogging than 'how' to blog. Don't get so bogged down in technical details that you forget why you're blogging.

Why Are You Blogging?

Facebook and Twitter might be less intimidating, but blogging offers a much greater potential to your business. If content is the fuel that runs the social web, then blogs are the engine.

Benefits of blogging include:

Creating brand awareness. Keep in mind that you might very well be your own brand, depending on your business.

Becoming an authority in your field. It doesn't matter how much you know if others don't know that you know it. Share your expertise with the world and let them know you can help them.

Selling stuff. A blog is an excellent platform to show people how to do things, and the best tools to get those things done.

Catching the attention of leaders in your field. Create round-up posts where you ask the movers and shakers in your niche to answer a question or two. It's a great way to introduce yourself to others in your field. Don't forget to link to their sites, too.

Creating partnerships. Do you want to partner with other marketers? A blog showcases your talents and point of view, making it easier to create connections that lead to profitable joint ventures and partnerships.

Search engine traffic. Google loves blogs because they are updated regularly with new information that is helpful to searchers.

Social media traffic. Share your new posts on social media and ask others to share them as well.

Building your email list. This might be the biggest one of all, since a good email list allows you to sell products at the touch of a send button.

Blogging Action Steps

Decide to be committed. Whether you're starting a personal or business blog, be prepared to keep at it for at least 2 years. There are no shortcuts. It takes time to find your following.

Not sure of your passion? Write out 30 different blog post headlines that you would like to write. Now look over the headlines and find the common theme. Is it aligned with your business goals? Adjust and refine as needed.

Conduct an audit. Every six months, ask yourself these questions:

- What posts were the most fun to write? How do you write more of these?
- What posts received the most interaction or feedback? What did you learn from them?
- Are you still enjoying this topic, or do you need to broaden your scope?

Use deadlines. To keep yourself from procrastinating, let your readers know when you'll be making your posts. For example, Monday and Thursday morning, or whatever. Then publish at those times, even if your post isn't perfect.

Stop worrying. Yes, sooner or later a troll will say something harsh. But 99 out of a 100 people will be kind. Don't let one or two negative people keep you from publishing your posts.

Make it personal. When you write a blog post, try to connect the subject matter to your own experiences, your story or your perspective. This creates the personal touch and helps you to connect with your readers.

Stop Thinking Like a Writer and Start Thinking Like a Blogger

Blogging is different than the writing you did in high school or college, because your audience is different.

Your readers are likely mixing business with pleasure when they visit your blog. They want new information, they want to solve a problem, or they're curious. But they're also hoping to be entertained, too.

If you have an easy-going manner that sounds like you're speaking to readers one-on-one, you'll do well. Injecting humor is even better. Be approachable and genuine. In other words, be yourself, or an even better version of yourself.

Tips to Help You Write Like a Blogger

Find your voice. Don't be a carbon copy of other bloggers; be yourself. You have unique experiences and viewpoints that you can bring to your blog and make it different from anything else out there. Think about how you make friends - you show the person who you really are, and they either like you or they don't. It's the same with your blog readers. Be yourself, be genuine, have a personality, and those who connect with you will stay with you and become your biggest fans because of who you are.

Don't bury the lead. Most blog readers are short on time and want their info NOW. If you wait until the end of your post to give them the good stuff, they'll never see it. You have to start out with the big benefit first and let them know right away why this post is going to make a difference in their day or their life.

Keep it short. Most blog posts could benefit greatly from going under the knife. If a sentence doesn't move the post forward, then delete it. The same goes for entire paragraphs. Shorter posts tend to work best, especially when you're new to blogging. Authority posts - those long 3,000+ word posts - are something you can work up to as your reputation builds. In the beginning, keep posts short with one main idea in each post.

Become a headline pro. There is NO getting around this - you're going to need to become an expert at headlines. Without a compelling, tweetable headline, your work will never be read. Consider writing the headline first and tailoring the post to the headline, rather than working the other way around.

Screw up. That's right; make mistakes. Be imperfect. Be human. The best bloggers are real life people who let you know they make mistakes. If you try to get every single blog post just peachy-keen perfect, you'll never publish anything. Write it, edit it, post it and move on. When you make a big enough mistake, correct it. If you make a whopper, let your readers know you goofed. They'll love you for it.

Rewrite. We said it's okay to screw up, but that doesn't mean you don't want to put your best foot forward. Write and then rewrite, because people will spend more time reading your posts if they enjoy them. Go over your writing and find the places that don't quite make sense or are downright confusing, and then fix them. You might read your post aloud, since this can help you find the bits that need fixing.

Be honest. Are you sad? Depressed? Angry? Stressed? Disappointed? Worried? There is awesome power in authenticity. Write about it. You'll find some of your readers are going through the exact same thing you are. Plus, it's therapeutic for you and for them to get it out there.

Entertain. Yes, you might be writing about business or some other serious topic, but that doesn't mean you can't entertain, too. Use stories, humor and the element of surprise to turn even dry material into something fun and interesting.

Mix it up. Use videos, photos, interviews, infographics, reviews, humor, cartoons and anything else you can think of. Be innovative.

Bring in other authors. Once your blog has a following, bring in other writers to spice up the conversation. You might consider asking a provocative question, taking one side yourself, and having another writer take the opposing point of view.

Blogging Skills 101

As a blogger, you need to bring one or more skills to the blogging table. Of course, any and all of these skills could be learned. But I'll bet you've got at least two of these 6 skills already tucked into your own person blogging arsenal - you just didn't realize how valuable they are.

Skill #1: Story Telling

Humans are wired to pay attention stories, which is why the best bloggers tap into their natural ability to tell a great tale. Whether you're telling the story of how you failed before you found success, what you did when confronted with an obstacle, how you faced a fear or simply what you did this morning, telling stories is a great way to connect with and entertain your audience.

Skill #2: Teaching

Why do you see so many blog posts that begin with, "How to,Ä¶?" It's because people are looking for answers to their questions and solutions to their problems. If you can explain how to do something, then you can teach. And in teaching, you can make a real difference in the lives of your readers, too.

Skill #3: Persuasion

Do you have a point of view that you would like to get across? For that matter, do you enjoy being somewhat controversial? Posts that take a definite stand, especially on a hot topic, tend to get shared on social media a LOT. And if you're skilled in

persuasion, you might even be able to change minds and bring people around to your way of thinking.

Skill #4: Curation

Assembling and organizing information is a skill you almost certainly have already. Huffington Post started out as a curation site, and even today they still pull media from different sources while also creating their own original content.

Skill #5: Self-Expression

You have dreams, goals and desires. You also have fears, challenges and doubts. By describing the world inside your mind, you're giving others the gift of knowing they're not the only one who feels or thinks the way they do. And you can help them to overcome their challenges by showing them how you're able to conquer yours, too.

Skill #6: Reporting

This is accessible to almost anyone. Even if, at this moment, you know very little about your chosen topic, you can still act as a reporter for your readers. Find out how things are done, who are the experts and what they know, and report back on your blog. A great example of this is brand new make money online people, who write about their journey as they progress. They report on what works and what doesn't, as well as what others are successfully doing to make money online.

The Blog Itself

There's really no need to overcomplicate your blog. Here are a few tips for getting your blog up and running quickly and easily:

WordPress. You can use WordPress to build your blog as a stand-alone site or integrate into your current website. Pay for a quality premium theme - it's worth the extra money. Pick something professional looking and easy to use.

Track. Use tracking analytics to know where your traffic is coming from and which posts are resonating with readers.

Publish fast. Don't spend weeks on one blogpost. Instead, create a diverse publishing calendar, determine which posts are a hit with readers, and let these popular themes dominate your blog. Publish often and fast to get plenty of feedback that helps guide your next blog topic selections.

Variety. Test a variety of posts to understand which topics and formats resonate with your readers.

Track traffic. Know where your traffic is coming from. At first it might only come from your website and email list. But after 30 to 60 days, you might see traffic from search engines. Pay attention to how many times your posts are shared via social media, too.

Hot phrases. Pay close attention to which search phrases contribute the most traffic, track these search phrases to specific posts, and study which parts of the post trigger the search engine rankings. Then quickly follow up on any success by writing posts that target these well-performing keywords.

Pop-ups. Use a pop-up to gather subscribers. Offer something awesome in return for their email address. Your free gift should ideally be something your ideal reader would PAY to get, because that's how valuable it is to them. For example, a report or video that solves their biggest problem or gives them the benefit they most want would be ideal.

Types of Blog Posts

News. Odds are you're not going to be breaking news, but you can do something called newsjacking. Newsjacking is simply mixing your own opinions into an existing news story. You start by finding a current event that is either relevant to your business, or one that can serve as a segue into a point you want to make.

Instructional. This is perhaps the most common type of post. It teaches the reader how to do something, either step-by-step or in general. These are great for SEO because they contain the sort of language that matches search queries. For example, "How to make lasagna."

Your own interest. When you find something that you find interesting, tie it to your main theme and write about it.

Summary. When you read an article or watch a video that is particularly interesting, write a summary of it in relation to your main topic with proper attribution.

Round up. Write a fascinating question that your readers will appreciate, such as, "What one thing can you do to greatly improve your memory?" or "Starting from scratch with no connections, how can you make \$10,000 in 30 days?" Then contact leaders in your niche and ask them to answer that question. Put all the answers together in one post, along with a link to each expert's website.

Tools. Whatever your niche, what are the tools or resources that will help your readers accomplish their goal? (HINT: It's okay to use affiliate links here as long as you reveal you might be earning commissions if they purchase.)

Spotlight. Write a post about somebody in your industry, or even on one of your customers. Engage readers emotionally with this person's story. Bonus points if it's a recognizable name.

Attracting Readers

To attract readers to your blog and convert them into subscribers and customers, here are a few tips:

Give away your best content. It sounds counter-intuitive but giving away the best information possible can induce people to subscribe and purchase.

Advertise. Add your blog to your current marketing efforts, including adding a link from your main website, letting your email list and social media know about new posts and so forth.

Guest post. Writing guest posts for other blogs with a link back to your own blog can send anything from a trickle to a ton of traffic.

Use simple SEO. Get a simple course on basic SEO to learn how to do this or hire someone to show you. It's not as difficult as you might imagine to do things like

optimizing blog titles, optimizing content, targeting certain keywords and so forth.

Host Guest Bloggers. Open the door to other bloggers. This lightens your workload while providing new voices and perspectives. And it brings in new traffic, as the guest posters promote their posts to their audiences on social media.

Making Your Blog Pay

Turn your readers into customers by:

Building an email list. Offer something enticing and free for your blog readers. All they have to do is give you their email address, and they get the free item, whether it's a video series, report, book, e-course and so forth. Nurture your list and promote products on a regular basis.

Accept advertising. You can sell advertising on your blog with pay-per-click or CPM (Cost per thousand impressions.) Google AdSense is the popular pay-per-click method, and ad networks use the CPM method. You could also sell advertising on your own, without using a network. You'll make more money, but there is more work involved, too. Most bloggers prefer not to place any advertising on their blogs, except for their own ads.

Sell affiliate products. You can join an affiliate network and place your affiliate links on your site. This can work well if the links are in context with teaching something. For example, a blog post on how to set up a website could easily include a link to a premium WordPress theme, to a web host, and to an autoresponder company.

Sell your own products. This is perhaps the very best way to monetize your blog. Sell your own products and services and keep all of the profits for yourself. You won't need huge amounts of traffic as you would if you were selling advertising. All you need is a core group of enthusiast fans who know, like and trust you.

"Wait! This is starting to sound like a lot of work. Tell me again why I should be blogging??"

Because blogging allows you to:

- Attract an audience
- Establish authority in your niche
- Build rapport and engagement with your audience
- Create opportunities, both personally and professionally
- Organize your thoughts and learn more about your niche
- Tell your own story the way you want it told
- Meet new people and build your professional network
- Stand apart from the crowd
- Refine your writing skills
- Share your knowledge
- Validate your expertise

- Build your email list
- Make money

Even if you're feeling intimidated at the prospect of blogging, don't let that be your excuse not to get started.

You can always create a throw away blog. Simply use a free blogging platform, write a new blog post every day for 30 days, and then start over with your real blog.

The experience you gain with the free blog will be priceless. Plus, since it's anonymous, you are free to make mistakes without worry. I guarantee, after 30 blogposts in 30 days, you will be ready to start blogging for real.