

SPECIAL REPORT ON TRAFFIC & GROWTH

START SMALL, *Grow Big*

*6 Steps to Massively
Grow Your Blog*



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Whether you're a professional blogger or you blog to promote your business, you know at the end of the day, your blog has one major purpose:

To engage a GINORMOUS audience.

That's right. Not just big, but *ginormous* – an audience so large that you're guaranteed more customers than you know what to do with.

And yet, most blogs trudge along with an Alexa ranking north of a million, and you hear crickets more than you hear the pings of incoming Web traffic.

What's going on?

You eventually reach the conclusion that you must be missing something. You go looking for help, and you're bombarded with course offers and bombastic claims:

"Make \$500 in one hour with our no-fail system!"

"Beat any competitor to Google's first page in less than a week!"

"How I make \$4,729.19 every week in my pajamas!"

Sure, these claims raise an eyebrow, and at least a few questions. If it's so easy to make \$500 in an hour, then why are they selling it for \$27, instead of

just hiring people to do the work and make *them* the money? What if your competitor buys that same course – how fast will she knock you off of that top spot? And why do they always tell you the amount down to the last penny?

But as skeptical as you might be, you're also hopeful. It seems like everyone but you is out there growing a giant site in no time. What's their secret?

You shell out the cost of the programs, carefully ignoring the “results not typical” disclaimers. You sift through the nonsense and find some good advice, which you diligently put to work. And then...

More crickets. What the hell?!

To Everything There Is a Season: Skyhooks and Cranes

Remember the phrase that goes “to everything there is a season”? (The one that the Beatles copied from the book of Ecclesiastes?)

Well, the same applies to your blog's growth (or anything, for that matter). **You have to start at the beginning** and work your way up – one step at a time. Knockout strategies can work, but they require a foundation that a blog with minimal web traffic just doesn't have. When you try to skip steps, you fall down, and make no progress. I could write a book about the thousands of hours I've invested in my [marketing blog](#). Trust me, it's not easy.

One of the best explanations for this phenomenon comes from Dan Dennett. He introduced the concept of “skyhooks and cranes” in his book *Darwin's Dangerous Idea*. (He uses it to explain evolution by natural selection, but it applies very well here, too).

Here's how it works:

Let's say you want to construct a building. In a perfect, imaginary world, you'd use a skyhook – a big hook in the sky to which you can attach a pulley system to pull things off the ground. The only problem is skyhooks don't exist. There's no way of making a hook just float in the air.

Wikipedia says: "...the term 'skyhook' describe[s] a source of design complexity that does not build on lower, simpler layers—in simple terms, a miracle."

That's exactly what bombastic Internet marketing products promise – to create massive growth that does not build on solid foundations. In simple terms, "a miracle."

So skyhooks are out. Does that mean we can't build anything?

Obviously, the answer is no.

To build our wondrous concrete jungles, we use **cranes**.

Cranes do exactly the same thing as skyhooks, only we build them from the ground up. Here's the really interesting part: The way to build a giant crane that gives you lots of leverage is... *with smaller cranes!*

So if you want to build something huge, you need to start with something small that you can use to get there.

The Tortoise and the Hare (Really?!)

No, this isn't a report about how you should be patient and take things slow and steady, because eventually you'll win the race.

(As Sonia Simone said in a [radio interview](#), “Slow but steady works, but we’ve all had the experience of being beaten to the finish line by a jack rabbit with ADD!”)

The point of this report is that the fastest way to grow a blog is *by using the strategy that fits with your current stage of growth*. The more appropriate your strategy is to your stage of growth, the faster you’ll outgrow it, and be ready for the next one!

If you’re a regular at Mirasee, then you know we’re all about action (and if you’re new, welcome!).

That’s why we’ve mapped out all six stages of blog growth, so that you can figure out where you are, and what you need to do next.

Here are the six steps:

Step 1 – Start with Great Content

Step 2 – Tell Everyone you Know

Step 3 – Start Building a Community

Step 4 – Promote Your Blog

Step 5 – Get Viral

Step 6 – Monetize!

Okay, let’s go one by one, and learn exactly what each step looks like, and what you need to do to “graduate” to the next.

Crane Number One – All About Content



You've just finished building your blog – your theme is designed, widgets are installed, and a “welcome to my new blog” post graces the homepage.

It's normal for you to be super-excited, and want to be out there, spreading the word. Resist that urge!

Before telling anyone about your blog, you've got to make sure there's good content for visitors to read when they get there. That's why your #1 priority with a new blog is to write some really great posts.

This is easier said than done – not only do you need to think of good stuff to write, but you've also got to stay motivated, even when your analytics are flat and you know that nobody is reading it. It's hard, but it's really worth it.

Crane Number Two – Telling Everyone

Once you've created great anchor content to impress people who arrive at your blog, it's time to spread the word – this starts with your nearest and dearest.

Reach out to everyone you know in person or via email, Facebook, Twitter, the good old-fashioned telephone, and any other way that you can think of. Tell them how excited you are about the new blog, and what your goals are for it. Ask them for feedback, and tell them how much it would mean to you if they would subscribe and leave a comment on posts to let you know what they think. You can even ask them to help you spread the word, though you shouldn't expect miracles.



This won't give you tons of traffic, but it's a start. Expect to get to about 10–20 unique visitors per day once you're past the initial spike of people who come to look but don't stay.

Crane Number Three – Community



Once you've got that baseline of web traffic, and your nearest and dearest (particularly those in your blog's target market) have given you some feedback, it's time to broaden your circle.

Reach out to other bloggers in your community – but not the big ones, who have no reason to listen to you. I'm talking about the little ones – other blogs that are fairly new, and are getting fewer than 10–15 comments on their posts.

Find the good ones (it's important that they actually be good). Leave comments on their posts, and engage with them. Invite them to write a guest post on your blog. In most cases, they'll be flattered, provide you with a great post, and tell all of their followers to go read it.

Of course, you should do the same for them. Share their good work with your network. The bloggers will thank you for the exposure, and your network will thank you for the good but obscure content you're sending their way.

You should also write guest posts for them and respond to all of the comments that you get. Doing all this will bring you to 50–100 unique visitors per day.

Pay careful attention to what resonates, because you'll need it for the next step in the process.

Crane Number Four – Borrow Authority

Let's look at where you are. You've got great content on your site that your friends and family like, and that has gotten good traffic and reviews from other members of your blogging community.



It's time to take off the training wheels. I'm talking about guest posting on the bigger blogs in your space. This is where you start tapping into bigger traffic numbers.

Here's the short version of how to do it (if you want the long version, check out the resources at the end of this report):

1

First, find the blogs that you want to guest post on. They have to be blogs whose audience would like your stuff, too. They should also be big enough to get you good traction; as a rule of thumb, say, an Alexa ranking of 100,000 or lower.

2

Second, read the blog, and figure out what you could write about that they will like, and to which they will respond well (respond well means that you'll get lots of comments, tweets, and Facebook shares).

3

Third, if you haven't already been active on the blog, read through it, and leave good comments on at least 2-3 posts. This is important – you have to get to know the style of the blog and blogger, and show them that you care.

4

Fourth, send the blogger an email.

Your email should be short and sweet, something like this:

I'm new on your blog, and I really like your stuff. [MAKE SURE YOU MEAN IT!]

I've been thinking about writing a post about [SUBJECT], and it occurred to me that it could be a great fit for your audience. What do you think of me writing it as a guest post? A headline for this post might be [HEADLINE IDEA] (of course, that's just a suggestion).

If you want to see samples of my writing, you can check out [YOUR WEBSITE], or look at my last guest post on [SITE YOU GUEST POSTED ON] – it got [SOME MEASURE OF TRACTION].

What do you think? Shall I write up a draft?

If you do your homework and only pitch ideas that fit well with the blog, then most people will be happy to receive a draft. Once they say yes, send them the draft within a few days, and when it runs on the blog, be active and gracious in the comments.

Do this for a handful of blogs – until you get up to about 200–400 unique visitors per day.

In parallel with doing this, use your growing traffic numbers to optimize conversions. Get your site to the point that your opt-in rates are good, and if you've got something to sell, people are buying with some regularity. Make

sure everything is optimized before progressing to the next step in the process.

Crane Number Five – Let's Get Viral



Once you've got more than 200 unique visitors per day, you can kick it up a notch. It's time for your traffic to get viral. In other words, you need to find ways to multiply that traffic.

There are lots of ways to do this, and I'll share two – but first, a warning. If your blog doesn't have a good amount of traffic, and the process isn't optimized, don't skip ahead to this step!

This is important, because virality requires a critical mass. If you create an awesome piece of viral content and release it to your audience of seven readers, then sure, you might get lucky and someone might share it with someone who eventually shares it a lot... but that probably won't happen. You have to make sure your content is getting enough exposure so that, when you produce something worthy of getting past the tipping point, it will be able to tip!

Here are two ways that you can go viral (see resources at the end of this report for more ideas):

Idea #1: Viral Content Contest

Run a series of posts about your subject, and make sure these posts are all share-worthy (read: *really good*). Then, add an incentive for sharing. For example, run a contest and enter people into a draw if they share.

This is exactly what we did with our FIRE-PROOF Selling series back in the day. Our blog was pretty new then, and our hottest post before the series was getting fewer than 10 comments. The hottest post in the contest series got 35. 'Nuff said.

Idea #2: Bonus for Sharing

Create an awesome piece of content and give it away for free in exchange for sharing on Twitter or Facebook. (You can do this with a free service like [Cloud:flood](#) or [Pay With A Tweet](#)).

Innovative Thunder did this to launch their book, *Oh My God What Happened And What Should I Do?*, and got over 150,000 people to tweet about their book.

This is when your traffic grows a lot. Just a couple of these campaigns, properly executed, should bring you up to 500-1,000+ unique daily visitors... that's as much as 30,000 a month. Now we're talking!

Crane Number Six – Cha-ching!

Most blogs falter because they're busy trying to sell something when they should still be building an audience. Once you have an audience who loves your stuff, selling is easy. This is the part where you can parlay your audience into big sales numbers.



I'm not going to go into all of the different ways that you can make money with a blog (selling a product, selling a service, selling advertising, affiliate products, speaking fees, etc.) – that's beyond the scope of this report.

What I do want to stress, though, is that you should focus on building the audience first, and selling second. Too often, when people ask why their site isn't making money, the answer is because nobody is visiting it. Growing your audience first, and selling after that, is how you solve that problem.

Going Off-Road? Take a Map!

Having shared these stages with you, am I saying that this is the one and only way to grow a blog, period? No, not really....

There are many paths up the proverbial mountain. This isn't the only path, or even the only good path. It is, however, a good path, a safe path, and a path that will get you there quicker than most of the others – especially the ones that promise to teleport you to the top, but really just lead you off a cliff.

Here's the beauty of this path – it works even if you veer off of it from time to time. And you *will* veer off from time to time; you'll have ideas that you'll want to try, or opportunities will present themselves that you won't want to lose while waiting for the next step in the process.

No problem. Veer off path. Do what you've got to do. And if it works, so much the better.

But when you're done exploring, work your way back to the path and pick up where you left off.

Now you have the road map to growing your blog. Go and do it!

Resources

[How to Get Traffic to Your Blog \(How I Became the Freddy Krueger of Blogging\)](#)

[Rock Band Marketing, or Field of Dreams – What's your approach to business?](#)

[Go Viral: 6 Strategies for Viral Exposure and Growth](#)

[How to Make Money Blogging](#)