

GET BLOGGING RESULTS

Your Step-By-Step Mini Guide To Blogging
Your Way To Financial Freedom



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Introduction

If you have to start from scratch with blogging, it is important that you know the basic things involved in it, such as domain name and hosting, the software to use, how to earn from blogging, and what to write about.

Domain Name And Hosting Solution

You need a domain and a hosting solution for your blog. Wordpress.com and Blogger.com often provide a good introduction to blogging without costing money. Once you're familiar with the basics of blogging, you can confidently spend on your own domain name and web hosting package.

You need your own paid hosting services so you can be assured that the website will not shut down your blog if you ever violate their policies. You will also enjoy more features and flexibility with your own hosting account, so you can use special scripts, content management system, and other features for your blog. Most of all, a domain name of your own will boost your credibility as a blogger.

But how can you choose a domain name and hosting services?

You need to find one with two words and has a .com extension. Find one with your main keyword in the name. However, it might take days for you to find an appropriate domain name that is still available in the market.

As for the web hosting solution, a shared hosting plan that supports Linux and boasts of a cPanel would be a good choice. Ask the hosting company about these features if you're not sure you can find them yourself.

Software

You also need to choose the right software. WordPress might be the best CMS out there. It is available for free as an open source project and it's full of features that you might not even find in other software. For those using a cPanel, just look for "Fantastico" in the dashboard, then install WordPress and other software with just a few clicks.

Blogs: Then And Now

Blogs may have started off as personal diaries, but they have changed into something else over time. People realized blogs could be multi-purpose. Some used their blogs to write articles about their field; others used it to share news; and others used it as an outlet for their creativity.

All in all, blogs have now turned into a platform where people can talk. Instead of merely reading content from major websites, now everyone can talk about the things that they are passionate about and interested in through blogs, and even get people to respond to their content.

The Possibility Of Making Money From Blogging

You can verify the possibility that blogging does make money if you look at how popular blog TechCrunch makes more than \$1,000,000 annually, while Mashable.com, PerezHilton.com, and Huffington Post are earning almost the same amount of money.

Although these popular blogs may operate the same way as mainstream sites do, with their paid writers, sales team, and other elements, these sites were the fruits of labor of a single blogger.

You don't even need to have a blog as popular as these blogs to earn money. An average blogger can still make five to six figures every year, mainly through marketing deals, advertising, and even online projects launched through blogging.

But to make money from blogs, you also need to put in hard work and time. It's just like with making money through other methods.

It would be easier for you to earn money from blogging if you are passionate and knowledgeable about the topic that you are going to write about. You also need to be willing to put in extra hours into your blog, to meet new people in the field, to be flexible enough to work anytime, anywhere, and to start a real business, if necessary.

What To Blog About

It's hard to choose a topic, but you can write about just anything if you just want to blog as a hobby. But if you seriously want to earn money from it, you need to find the right niche for you and avoid a few common mistakes that new bloggers often commit.

Most new bloggers commit blunder by writing too much about themselves. It might not be a good idea to use your name in the domain or write about your personal matters to the extent of making you look vain. While this might have made other bloggers popular, this usually works for those who have already reached a certain level of notoriety before they even started blogging. You can stop with sharing a few personal experiences, but it's best to focus on a certain topic aside from yourself.

Writing about too many topics is another common mistake. Although you might be an individual of many talents and interests, pick the topic that you are most passionate about. That way, you can find a central audience, connect with them, and finally earn money from your blog.

Going for a niche that you're not really interested in is also a wrong move. While other people might have made money from that niche, it won't work for you unless you know the topic or you are genuinely passionate about it. You have to truly love what you're writing about so you can stick to it for a long time until the money starts rolling in.

You need to concentrate on one blog! This way, you can perfect it instead of maintaining several but mediocre blogs.

Chapter 1: Don't Bore Your Audience To Death: How To Write Content That Sells

Good content is the foundation of a great blog. It is what draws the readers and eventually, the money, in.

As a blogger, it is important that you know what features make for great content.

Informative, Engaging, And Unique

Quality content must be informative, engaging, and unique.

It must be informative and useful to attract readers. Its importance depends on the blog's niche. A humor blog would be helpful to readers if it always has funny posts. A fashion blog would be valuable to fashionista readers if it posts the latest style and trends in fashion. The bottom line is to always prepare something useful for the readers.

Great content must be engaging. It needs to coax a response from the readers and get comments and shares from them. You can even use those comments as ideas for your next posts.

Great content must be unique to get the readers' attention and hold onto it. If they can find it on other sites and blogs, why would they waste their time on yours?

Killer Content

Killer content is something that the readers find hugely helpful. It usually prompts them to bookmark the article and share it to their friends and followers offline and online right away.

There are killer articles that are long and structured, but there are also short ones that pack everything that you need to say in one go. As long as they contain something that is largely informative to the readers, it can be considered a killer content. It could be about a trick on how to save on grocery shopping, how to cut off on phone bills, or how to curb insane cravings.

Killer articles can further establish your content development strategy because of the traffic, backlinks, and authority that they often bring with them to your blog. Some examples include how-to articles, interviews with experts, lists, resources, rankings, and breaking news.

However, you need to invest a lot of effort and time to create killer articles. The hours you spent brainstorming, researching, writing, and editing these articles would pay off in terms of the traffic that they would attract.

Make sure to post at least one killer article each week. If you can't make time, post at least one every month.

Regular Posts

Although killer articles may bring in a flurry of readers to your blog, you can create a community by frequently posting regular articles. These are the type that will connect you to your readers.

Regular posts are necessary in maintaining your blog, especially since you need a lot of time to create and publish killer articles. Some great examples are quick tips, opinion articles, quick links, polls, questions to the article readers, blog updates, and events.

Headlines

To get your readers' attention, your articles must have great headlines. Remember that the headline is the first thing that people get to read. If it is not compelling enough, your readers won't be encouraged to read the main article.

The headline will determine if people will continue reading your post if they see it on article directories or other sites, or if they will try reading the other posts on your blog. If they find your headlines dull, they would easily assume that the rest of article is uninteresting as well.

A great title uses the right words that speak to the readers. To know the specific words that can speak directly to your target audience, look for the right keywords on Google AdWords Keyword Tool. You can use it for free and it will give you 150 related terms. You can even find the most popular based on their Google search volume.

Another element that makes a great title is its appeal to the readers' emotion. It should stir up an emotion in the readers, pushing them to click on the link that leads to your blog or to the entire article.

FINDING NEW IDEAS

Coming up with new ideas about your future posts is one of the hardest tasks of blogging. But you can overcome this obstacle if you always have a pen and paper on hand so you can write down all of your ideas and thoughts right away. This is just so you won't forget your ideas.

It also helps if you start your possible posts by making drafts in your blogging software. It would be even better if you can prepare a headline and bullet points of all the main ideas. If you're ready to write a full article, you can work on the draft right away.

If you can't still find new ideas using the first two methods, you can go to Google AdWords Keyword Tool. Search for keywords related to your blog's niche and look at the long-tail terms to inspire possible ideas in you.

You can also scour social bookmarking sites to find what's trending and what's hot. You could go to Delicious.com, Reddit.com, Digg.com, or StumbleUpon.com.

Ideas can be found in blogs talking about other niches, mainstream sites, print magazines, newspapers, and TV programs. You can talk to your friends in the field too to brainstorm for new ideas.

WHEN TO POST CONTENT

New bloggers often ask just how frequently they should publish articles on their blog. There is actually no ideal posting frequency. Some popular blogs are updated once a week, while others get new posts more than once every day.

But the most important thing is not the quantity of the posts. It's the quality that counts. Make sure all your posts are useful and relevant to your audience. Not posting anything if you're not sure about its value is a safer option than posting a bad content that might ruin your credibility and discourage your readers.

For bloggers who want to monetize their blog, there should be a balance between the quality and quantity of posts. Even if you can't update your blog every day, at least do it regularly. Follow a schedule to the day and even the hour of the posting to assure your readers that they will find new

posts at that certain time of the week and visit your blog during at that specific hour.

Chapter 2: Maximizing Your Blog Design and Usability

New bloggers have to focus on the design and usability of their blog. This chapter will help in this aspect of blogging.

Free Themes

Designing your blog does not have to be expensive. In fact, you can do it for free, especially if you're using WordPress. It has a lot of free and excellent themes that you can use. Just go to the Themes Directory and you'll find a wide range of choices in there.

These themes can be customized. If you want to add personality to your blog, just tweak your chosen theme a little and you'll get a unique blog design.

It would help if you have a working knowledge of CSS and HTML to help you design your new blog. You could go to HTML.net or w3Schools.com to find tutorials on designing blogs.

Blog Logo

To increase readers' awareness of your blog, you need an identifying logo. Invest in one to increase the uniqueness of your blog and promote your brand further.

You can try websites like 99designs.com to find great logos for your blog. It allows you to hold a contest as to who can design the best logo for you. You can talk to the designers, wait for a week, then choose from several entries. This might even save you money since you can find great logos as cheap as \$150.

Designing Based On What You Want Your Visitors To Do

There are many things that you might ask of your readers when they visit your blog, such as the following:

- Read at least one article
- Read the most read posts
- Subscribe to your newsletter
- Subscribe to your RSS feed
- Click on ads
- Share your post to a social bookmarking site
- Leave comments

- Buy from you
- Click on the link to your social networks
- Share your posts on the social networks
- Share your post to friends through email
- Check as many articles as they can
- Download your eBook

However, you cannot design your blog to motivate your readers to do all of these things. That is, if you don't want to make a mess out of your blog.

What you can do is to choose your priorities among the actions that you want your readers to do. Then, create a design to trigger those actions among your readers. The bottom line is that the fewer actions you want your readers to do, the more likely it is that they will get your message and execute those actions.

Convincing Subscribers

One of the critical actions that you should ask of your readers is to subscribe to your blog. The more subscribers you have, the bigger your guaranteed audience will be. Moreover, it is easier to forge relationships with subscribers, who might turn into regular readers.

Aside from asking people to subscribe to your RSS feed, you can also use Twitter and email to notify subscribers of new posts to your blog.

In designing your blog, make way for your subscription calls. Put one above the fold, either on the sidebar or in the header. You can also put one at the bottom of each post, with a call-to-action for a subscription.

Showcasing The Best Content

Aside from getting readers to do what you need them to do and to get more subscribers, you also need to think about how to hold onto your readers.

First, you can create an exclusive section for your “Most Read Posts” in the blog layout. This is usually delegated in the sidebar, although some blogs also put this section in the footer or header, depending on what works for the blogger. You can choose the most popular articles manually or automate the selection using tools such as the WordPress Popular Posts plugin.

Second, you can start an internal page that will automatically list the most visited posts. You can prepare them by month or any other category. To avoid disrupting your layout, you can link to this internal page from the main menu. Instead of a text link, you can use an image to get the readers’ attention and lead them to the best content of your blog.

Common Usability Blunders To Avoid

There are several blunders committed when it comes to the usability of a blog, such as the following:

- **Not putting a search box.** The search box is useful when readers want to find specific posts on your blog. It might frustrate them and discourage them from using your blog if you miss this important usability feature.
- **No contact page.** It is important for readers to be able to contact you if they want to talk about or ask you about something. Treat the contact box as your connection to your readers, who might have some helpful feedback for you.
- **Lack of archives.** Your blog should have a page compiling all your posts. It does not only improve user experience, but it also serves as a sitemap that search engines value in ranking websites.
- **Bad font.** Your readers must not only love your content, but your posts' typography as well. Use the right font, font size, and line spacing that make for comfortable reading.
- **Complex navigation.** You can simplify your website navigation by putting a link to your home page on all your internal pages, having a navigation bar, and not using drop-down menus, among others.
- **Using invisible links.** Make sure to identify your hyperlinks by underlining them, or using a different font color for the anchor keywords. You can also use them to simplify navigation.

- **Overloading blog with ads.** Although you make money from ads, don't overdo it if you don't want to turn off readers. Start small and expand your ads, but always prioritize user experience.
- **Using too many widgets, buttons, and badges.** These might look crowded in the sidebar, making your blog look cluttered. Choose only the buttons and widgets that you really need.

Chapter 3: How To Forge Relationships With Your Audience, and Why Do You Need To

In any field, building relationship is always important. It holds true even in blogging. Your relationships with other website owners and bloggers will help bring new readers and buyers to your blog. This is how important networking is and this chapter will teach you tricks on how to build a network online.

The most important thing that you need to remember is to forge genuine relationships. Don't befriend people because they are famous or important in your field. Instead, connect with them because you like their work, respect them, and believe that they can help you broaden your connections.

Real networking is about finding mutual relationships. You get help from other people as you lend them help too!

The first step in networking should be about making a list of relevant, active and popular blogs. The number of blogs you might find depends on your niche. For instance, a popular niche, such as technology and fashion, might have many blogs that you can connect to, while a less popular topic might have fewer blogs to network with.

You can start your list by looking into these websites to find relevant blogs for you:

- AllTop
- BlogCatalog
- Technorati
- BlogRank
- Wikio Top Blogs

After making a list, prepare to talk to these bloggers. Introduce yourself first. You can contact them via the email address listed on their site or contact form.

When you create your introductory message, be direct to the point and state who you are. Talk about how your blog shares a niche with theirs. You can even include the URL to your blog in the message or in your signature. If you like the other bloggers' post, ask for permission to link to it.

Before you even ask other bloggers to help you by linking their site to yours, make the first move. You can find appropriate posts to link to if you subscribe to all the blogs that you listed. If you find one that you like, write a relevant post, share your opinion about the topic, and provide a link to the other blogger's post.

Always remember that links to quality, relevant posts will help your readers and your ranking. It's wrong to assume that doing so will ruin your Google PageRank or traffic. On the contrary, your readers will surely love you for pointing them to other valuable articles through the external links.

Aside from linking to the other bloggers in your network, you can also help them by referring other people to their site or blog, nominating them for an award, recommending them for an interview, or sharing their posts on social media. These actions will prove that you are their friend, hence the start of a good relationship.

Now, taking care of good relationships will surely pay off in terms of getting them to do a favor for you. For one, you can ask them to share your best content to their audience. Choose your killer articles for this purpose.

However, it's wrong to beg them for a link. Just casually mention that you have an article that they might like. With a straight forward message, the other bloggers might read your article. If they like it, they won't hesitate to link to it. But if they don't, it means that you need to put in more work to create compelling articles that will easily earn the links of the other bloggers in your network.

Chapter 4: Don't Let It Just Sit There, Promote Your Blog!

It is not enough that you write great content. You have to promote them to increase their exposure and you can use several methods to do that.

Exchange Links

Link exchanges, contrary to popular belief among bloggers, are still effective. If you can do them right, they can drive traffic to your blog and increase your search engine ranking.

However, you need to be careful not to break any of the search engine's policies regarding exchanging links.

Make sure to exchange links only with blogs that are relevant to your niche and that will be helpful to the readers for a broader understanding of your topic.

It is also important not to prioritize optimization in choosing the anchor text. Make it natural by using the name of the blog that you will link to.

If you want to avoid being penalized, choose the rel="nofollow" attribute on the links and ask the other blogger in the exchange to do the same. This will assure the search engines that you're not exchanging links to share search engine juice, but you will still get traffic.

You can put the exchange links under "Recommended Blogs" or "Friends," for instance. Some blogs put them in the RSS feed, with a message.

Write Blog Comments

You can promote your blog through blog commenting.

Choose blogs that are relevant to yours and leave helpful, funny, or even controversial comments to pique the interest of the audience of that blog. Make sure to leave your link in that comment, so when these readers click on it, it will lead them to your blog. These readers will likely be interested in your content too, since they found you after reading a blog relevant to yours in the first place.

To ensure that you will hook readers to follow your comments to your site, be patient in posting comments on as many relevant blogs as possible and do it several times per day.

However, don't write useless comments. Every comment must add information or raise big questions about the topic being discussed.

Make sure not to optimize your comment with your keywords or blatantly use your blog's name to avoid being categorized as spam.

You can use the name of your blog, but use it with your name. This will make your comment more personal and you need that to connect with people.

Guest Blog

This is a popular practice in the blogging world, wherein you write an article for another blogger. The other blogger gets a free article, while you, the guest blogger, get more exposure. You can also gain traffic for your blog by including your link in the byline of your guest blogs.

Use Social Networks

Social networking sites are great tools to connect with your audience and gain new visitors.

You can try Twitter, given its massive population. Create an account and use it to update your followers whenever you publish new content or find relevant links from other sites or blogs. Each tweet should be valuable to your followers.

You can also use Facebook. Create an account for your blog and take advantage of all its features by posting articles, photos, and videos. You can even start a community in it.

There are more than 400 social networks that you can explore. Consider which networks have great ties to your target audience and use them to promote your blog.

Use Social Bookmarking Sites

Social bookmarking sites let you save and share bookmarks of web pages. These sites often rank popular submissions and bookmarks. The most popular ones are often shown on the front page.

Some of the popular bookmarking sites that you can use are Digg.com and StumbleUpon.com. Blogs and websites that are featured on Digg.com often get 20,000 to as many as 100,000 visitors within 24 hours. However, there are lower chances of getting to the front page because of the stiff competition among web pages.

StumbleUpon.com, on the other hand, requires users to install its toolbar on their browsers. Its biggest advantage is that even a few votes will boost your website traffic for several days.

You may also want to try Delicious.com, Reddit.com, Buzz.Yahoo.com, Fark.com, Mixx.com, Faves.com, Propeller.com, Newsvine.com, and Shoutwire.com.

Promote Killer Content

You can capitalize on your killer articles to further promote your blog. You can follow these tips to promote your blog as it is and your killer articles:

- Inform other bloggers and website owners about your killer articles through email.
- Ask friends for help in submitting your killer articles to relevant social bookmarking sites.
- Post about your killer articles in your social media accounts.
- Ask your friends to vote for your articles on the social bookmarking sites.
- Link to the article from your other sites or blogs with a relevant topic.

Invest in link building efforts for your killer articles.

Chapter 5: Now, Here's How You Make Sure Money From Your Blog

Making money out of your blog should be the last step and not the other way around. If you have a great blog that received proper promotional treatment, it will likely give you the income that you need.

Establish Authority First

Before you even start focusing on earning money out of your blogs, make sure to establish the following things first:

- Great content
- Good traffic
- An authority figure in your niche
- A loyal following
- A blog design suitable for ads

Many bloggers often ask whether to start with zero ads or to introduce some to their audience right at the start. But the decision is entirely up to you.

If you keep your blog ads-free at first, you might turn off some readers when you introduce them later.

If you also choose to post ads right from the start, this will show your audience that you intend to monetize your blog. This will also help you explore your revenue sources. However, this might limit your traffic since

there are readers who don't want to see ads cluttered on the blogs that they're going to read.

But the bottom line is to establish your authority as an expert in your niche first by posting great content. You can worry about money later.

Earn From CPM Ads

CPM is cost per mille, wherein you can earn for every 1,000 impressions left on the ads.

Some popular CPM networks include Burst Media, Tribal Fusion, Casale Media, Technorati Media, and ValueClick.

Most CPM banners found in blogs are the 300x250 rectangle ads, the 728x90 leaderboard, and the 160x600 large skyscraper.

To make the most money out of CPM ads, design your blog to accommodate all types of banners above your blog's fold. This is the position that will earn you premium rates.

Use Google AdSense

If you want to earn from Google AdSense, you need to drive high traffic to your blog. Make sure that at least 70% of that traffic is search engine traffic.

This is because this traffic is often composed of people who are likely to click on ads.

Once you are assured of these requirements, you need to pick the right AdSense units. The most profitable ones are the 300x250 rectangle, the 336x280 large rectangle, and the 160x600 large skyscraper.

In choosing a position, you have to prepare for a possible reduction in user experience. Your readers might not like it if you have to blend the ads with the content instead of putting them in the sidebar.

Profit From Sponsorships And Direct Advertising

Once you have established a good following for your blog, you can sell ads directly to your audience and earn more from it.

You need to clearly tell advertisers that you're ready for their ads by putting an "Advertise with us" page.

The pro of this method is that you can determine how and where the ads will be placed and you can earn more by not using a middleman. However, the con is that you need to put in more work to manage all the ads and transactions with the advertisers by yourself.

So, should you go to the advertisers or will you wait for them to come to you?

If you are just starting with direct ads, you have to find and contact the advertisers first. Start with creating a list of relevant advertisers, the ones that have already made use of online ads and are selling products or services that your readers use.

You can find such advertisers by looking the advertisers on the other blogs in your field, by searching Google using your keywords and looking at the companies in the “Sponsored Links,” and by signing up for advertising networks, such as BuySellAds.com or SponsoredReviews.com.

You can then contact these potential advertisers. Make sure to introduce your blog and yourself, talk about how you are willing to accommodate their ads on your website and how their product/service is appropriate for your readers, show them some basic stats about your blog, especially subscribers and traffic, and highlight the advertising features that you can offer, such as the banner formats, position, and rates.

In calculating advertising rates, it might be a good idea to start with charging \$0.50 CPM for advertising 125x125 banners on the sidebar. If you get 200,000 views per month, you can charge these banners in this position \$100 per month. Use this calculation as a rule of thumb for calculating the rates of other ads in different positions.

Check your blog’s real page views to calculate your rates. Use Google Analytics to do this.

Try Affiliate Marketing

Affiliate marketing can complement your earnings from your blog.

First, check all the products and services that you're using and find possible affiliate programs related to them. You can write reviews about them and put in your affiliate links.

Write honest reviews about the product or service to establish your credibility. This will help you earn your readers' trust and confidence in your posts.

Keep track of the latest products and services that your readers might be interested in. If you find one, contact the product/service provider and ask if they offer an affiliate program.

You can also sign up for affiliate marketing networks such as ClickBank.com or CommissionJunction.com.

Bank On Email Marketing

You can connect to your audience better through emails and forge relationships with them. The bigger your email list is, the more advantageous it will be to you, especially if you decide to do email marketing.

If you don't want your emails to be classified as spam, use email marketing services. The most reliable ones are iContact, Aweber, and ConstantContact.

Explore all the methods that will encourage people to subscribe to your email newsletters and to respond to you.

Establish a steady email relationship with them by sending at least one email every week, or every two weeks. Don't forget to include valuable information in each email.

CONCLUSION: Make The Most Out Of Your Blog

You can make money out of your blog using all the strategies discussed above. These tips were also used by bloggers, who are now living comfortably from the money that they earned from their blogs. However, you have to put in a lot of hard work, time and patience while preparing to monetize your blog.

It is a common mistake to treat your blog merely as a source of advertising money.

Remember that a blog is more than just a website with dollar signs posted in the header, footer or sidebar. Its biggest function will always be to connect you to the rest of the world.

Aside from making money out of your blog, you should also use it to make new friends, build a community of readers, and establish relationships with people that can help your blog and your readers. Use your blog to establish your authority in the field and to explore new ideas that will drive traffic to your blog. Don't waste the opportunities that your blog brings to find partners and to start useful projects that will benefit you, your audience, and your network.

While you should focus on making money using your blog, don't be blinded by all the benefits that you can get out of it.

The best thing about blogging is that you don't even need to think far ahead into the future. If your blog becomes popular with a top position in your niche, you can use it for just about any venture. It can be a great platform to publish a book, to get your dream job, or to launch a product.