



GUIDE TO BLOGGING



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#BLOGGING
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#CONTENT



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GUIDE TO BLOGGING

WHY BLOG?

That's a great question so, first, consider that the answer depends on what you are hoping to achieve...

If you are a business owner, you likely have very specific reasons for wanting to start a blog. Almost every business out there these days has a blog. Blogging is a great way to communicate, share and market to your customers and clients.

In contrast, if you are an individual person starting a blog, there are dozens of possible motives. You may simply want to share experiences, post photos and have fun. For example, the success of "Mommy blogs" is due largely to their relatability to other moms. If you are looking to simply enjoy yourself, then the process is quite simple because you won't have to think about marketing, etc. However, if you are hoping to build a

personal brand or to make any real kind of money with your site, then your work will be slightly more challenging.

WHAT IS BLOGGING?

Blogging is whatever you want it to be. They are almost completely unrestricted and anyone with access to the internet can start one. Here are some things that blogging includes:

1. Online journals.
2. Places to share photos, art and ideas.
3. Venues for public discussion.
4. Professional and personal communication and marketing tools.
5. Fun and easy to read. They are not typically filled with extremely in-depth or challenging content.

“NO MATTER what your reason or how big and fancy your site is, **BLOGS** are the **EASIEST WAY** to get your voice **HEARD.**”

No matter what your reason or how big and fancy your site is, blogs are the easiest way to get your voice heard. If you have a large blog, you can advertise, market and even charge fees. If you have a smaller blog, then you might only have a few family members that read it. The point of blogging is not so much what you are doing or why, but that you are creating a forum for expression.

REASONS FOR BLOGS

MARKETING OR PROMOTION

Blogs are an ideal vehicle for advertising and marketing. Most companies these days have a blog on their website where they can share information about their products and provide useful and helpful content, all at once. This is the best way in the world to drive traffic to your site and get the general population talking about your products, services or ideas.

HELP OTHERS

Blogs can also be used to help others, promote causes or teach new skills. For example, teachers often share tips, lessons

and printables on blogs. That way their fellow teachers have a resource that they can use. Another way in which blogs help people is by sharing experiences and connecting people who may feel alone. These types of blogs might be about fitness, parenting, finances or faith.

SHARE THOUGHTS

You can share your thoughts simply because you want to get them off of your chest or because you think they may resonate with others. You can also share thoughts and opinions about current events or compose op-ed pieces.

ESTABLISH SELF

If you are hoping to become a professional writer, a blog is an unbelievably easy place to start. You can also use a blog to create a brand, introduce your band or business or new idea. The possibilities are really endless.

CONNECT WITH OTHERS

Read back through all of the first points and you will see that pretty much all that blogs do is connect people. If you aren't connecting to people, then you shouldn't even bother maintaining a blog.



STAY ACTIVE IN AN INDUSTRY

You can get your name out, share your accomplishments or stay in contact with other professionals in your field. This is a way to brainstorm, work together and bounce ideas off of other professionals as well.

MAKE MONEY

While we may not always want to admit it, money makes the world go round and most of us want to make some. You can start a very elaborate blog and sell advertising on it as well as write blogs to promote products or services. You can also become a Google or Amazon affiliate and make money by reviewing and providing links to products. Moreover, you may simply make money in that your blog drives people to your site or promotes your business. You can read more about the money to be made in blogging later in this article.

HAVE FUN

Blogging is a lot of fun! If you love to write and share with others, then start one. It is also a lot of work and requires a great deal of commitment. But, those who enjoy writing, sharing, reading and communicating will love a job as a blogger.

BENEFITS OF BLOGS

If you are a business owner, then you will want to have a blog because they are phenomenal way to grow your business... here are some ways that they do so:

IMPROVE SEO

Stale content gets tossed down the list for Google. Constant, updated, fresh content is the easiest and best way to keep your site ranking high. If you learn anything from this article, please know that you need to post high quality content regularly and that quality is far more important than quantity.

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

You can communicate with customers and clients in a very special and unique way through a blog. However, you can also ask people to talk to you, as well. You can ask questions, request feedback or simply converse with your site visitors in a way that makes your relationship more real. You can use your blog for market research or to test the waters with a new product. The more that your users trust and respect you, the easier all of that will be. So always be honest, real and sincere.

“Constant, UPDATED, fresh content is the EASIEST and best way to keep your site RANKING HIGH”

ESTABLISH BUSINESS AS AN INDUSTRY LEADER

Having a blog with lots of expert opinions, advice and information will establish your business as an important leader in the business world. For example, if you are a small clothing business, posting blogs about fashion news, insider style tips or interviews with models and designers will all give your business a more reputable and credible online reputation.

CONNECT PEOPLE WITH YOUR BRAND

This is an ideal way to show people the more “human” side of the business. Blogs can be informative and don’t always have to be personal, at all. However, some lighthearted posts or a more personal anecdote can make people feel like they know the heart of the business. This is a whole new perspective for your clients.

CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SHARING

People LOVE sharing blog posts to social media like Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest. The more buzz that surrounds your post and the more it gets passed around the internet, the more likely people are to visit your site and buy your product, of course.

HOW TO START A BLOG DOMAIN AND HOSTING

The first step is finding a domain and hosting provider. There are lots of easy to use and inexpensive hosting sites out there. You can use BlueHost or GoDaddy or another. Often, they are already all set up for Wordpress for you, as well. This step may sound intimidating but it is really a piece of cake.

THEME

There are so many choices. This decision is a biggie and it is not easy with the vast options out there. However, it does matter a great deal because it will be a big part of the first impression that people will get of the blog. So take your time and really think it through. You can check out the Wordpress frameworks and then use one of their themes or try another site to find one that you feel represents your blog well. They are often free and are super easy to use. The most important part of this step is choosing a theme that you really feel represents your blog’s message.

PLUGINS

Installing plugins is easy and often free. The most important plugins to have on your site are the buttons that readers can click to share content. There is nothing

“When creating CONTENT, there are some GUIDELINES to follow.”

more that a person wants to do once they have read something great, than to share it.

CONTENT

Start writing and posting blogs. Now. Yep, that’s it. Write something.

CONSISTENCY

Keep it up. Just keep posting quality content and sharing and garnering likes, clicks and visitors’ attention. Over time, you will build a reputation. Your audience will learn to trust and like you and your readership will grow. Please, no matter what, don’t expect all of that to happen overnight. Keep at it. Keep at it. Keep at it.

CONTENT

CREATION TIPS

When creating content, there are some guidelines to follow. Here are a few tips:

BE ORIGINAL

Tired, used up, reworded and regurgitated content will NOT drive traffic to your site. It will lower your SEO rankings and make your site less credible. Think about some new, fresh and important content to share. Write some quality content that people will find refreshing, interesting and fun. If you don’t, Google will punish you and people will stop reading.

CREATE A GREAT HEADLINE

Headlines are first impressions so make sure that you write great ones. A person will very rarely read an article, if the headline is not enticing. Think about whether the headline would stop you in your tracks. If it wouldn’t, keep thinking and brainstorming.

ACTIONABLE

People love blogs that make their lives easier. They love recipes, instructions, fitness ideas and anything that else that they can step away from the computer and put into action in their lives. Give your readers tips, tricks and knowledge. Provide infographs, photos, step by step instructions and useful guidelines. Never talk down to your readers. They will not respond well to a blogger who condescends to them. Always make your articles useful enough that people can read them and then go make a change- but never make them feel lectured.

PROVIDE ANSWERS

If your article poses questions, provide answers whenever possible. Of course, there cannot be answers to everything, but whatever can be explained, do so. Remember, your readers are looking to you as an expert and a guide. The big exception to this rule is questions that you might pose to the reader. We’ll talk more about that later, though.



CHECK YOUR FACTS

Never write anything that you are not sure is true. Period. In addition, always provide readers with access to your resources and references. If you want to be seen as credible, trustworthy and “in the know” then make sure what you are saying is true and that you can back it up. Providing links within your posts will also help with your SEO as they will aid Google in categorizing your site.

BE ENGAGING

Do you want to read boring articles? No. So don't write them, either. Write about things that matter to you and that you think will matter to other people. Typically, you should use a conversational tone that makes your reader feel that they know and LIKE you.

BE THOUGHT PROVOKING

Here are a few ways to get people intrigued:

- ✓ Pose a lot of questions. Make people think and challenge their previous notions or conceptions about topics. Thought provoking content is very likely to be shared on social media and in other mediums, as well.

- ✓ Provide new and exciting information that they have probably never read before. Stop talking about everything that they already know and start talking about the latest and most current events, trends, phenomena, etc.
- ✓ Write intriguing headlines. Again, remember, you only get one chance for a first impression.
- ✓ Create a strong and compelling introduction. If you can get them past the headline, then keep them hooked with a great introduction.
- ✓ Share stories and anecdotes. It's no secret that people LOVE a great story!
 - These things will all likely garner comments and the more comments that you are able to get, the higher your SEO ranking will be.

BE CONCISE

When people get online to check their favorite blogs, they are not looking for hours of heavy, challenging reading. They are looking for something different. People don't typically want to read lengthy, redundant or verbose blogs. They want something short, simple and to the point.

“There are COUNTLESS TOOLS available out there for all the PEOPLE and businesses who are BLOGGING”

A longer blog post does not equate to a better blog post. A well-written, engaging blog can be as short as a couple of hundred words. Word count matters much less than writing something worth reading.

BE CONSISTENT

Post often and keep your topics consistent. Don't write about parenting one day and then workplace dynamics the following week... unless you can explain how they are tied to one another. In addition, post often and keep people updated and engaged with the topics that seem to matter the most to them. If you noticed, for example, that your blog about a specific event got a ton of hits, write another article that is either similar in structure or related to the same topic.

USE IMAGES

Use them because...

- ✓ They can communicate complex topics in a way that words can't always accomplish.
- ✓ They can be funny and provide comic relief.
- ✓ People just plain like them.
- ✓ They are useful in creating a flow to your piece.

USE SUBHEADINGS TO BREAK UP THE CONTENT

Subheadings are an important part of blogs. They make the articles easier to read and consume and will help you to organize your thoughts, as well.

PROOFREAD!

Edit, proofread, check it over. Then repeat. Remember to remove any unnecessary fluff and create interesting and consumable content. People are coming to you read and grammar, spelling or punctuation mistakes are annoying and make a bad impression.

TYPES OF BLOG POSTS

There are several routes you can take when planning what to post on your blog. Check out these content ideas for inspiration.

NEWS

Write news or opinion pieces about news. The more factual information that you share, the more credible and trusted that you will become. It is also great to share your company's stance on a recent issue. You will build a rapport with your readers that way.

INSTRUCTIONAL

These posts provide value to the reader who is looking to learn something. They



are also easily searchable because they typically use the same type of natural language that would be typed into a search engine.

Example: "How to change a lightbulb"

PERSONAL SPOTLIGHT

People love to read about other people. That's no surprise. Try and write profiles, interviews and other personal pieces about employees, customers and more.

CHEAT SHEET

These types of posts are the highly readable "Top 5 reasons to..." articles that we see everywhere these days. They often condense a huge amount of information into a pretty short and concise article.

MEDIA POST

High quality media gets shared constantly. If you come across videos or photos that you think people will like, then share them. Better yet, make your own.

ENTERTAINING POST

These types of posts are meant to bring about an emotional reaction in a reader. They may laugh, cry or feel disturbed by what is in the post. The more they FEEL as they read, the more they will like the piece. The more that they like the piece, the more likely that they will be to share it on Facebook or e-mail it to friends.

BLOGGING TOOLS

There are countless tools available out there for all the people and businesses who are blogging, and here are some of the highly recommended ones.

BRAINSTORMING WITH BUZZSUMO

This is an easy and simple way to see what is trending on the web and a great way to find a name for your blog.

STAY ON TASK WITH WEBSITE BLOCKING APPS LIKE STAYFOCUSD

Block sites or apps that suck up your time and energy so that you can get work done and not spend all day surfing YouTube or commenting on Facebook.

EASY TWEET EMBED

This app takes all of the guesswork out of how your users can share your article on Twitter. It even crafts a little tweet for them to send out, if they choose.

ADD FROM SERVER

With this app, you can share media from anywhere with ease.

PRICING TABLES

This is an easy way to add pricing tables for memberships. Users can compare plans and rates and choose the one that is best for them.



INTERNET ARCHIVE

You can store audio files here at no charge. Pretty great!

MONETIZATION

Of course, you can make money with your blog if it is a marketing tool for your business. It can also be a great way to create a personal brand, promote a book or event or market a new idea. Those are all indirect types of income in the sense that you won't get paid per click and it might be difficult to pinpoint exactly how much money the blog is making you. However, there are also some much more direct ways to make money with your blog...

BE A MERCHANT

If you play your cards right and build an audience, then you can sell your own products or services via the blog. This is certainly not "easy money" and will require some work on your part, but is also the best way to make some serious profit off of your blog.

AFFILIATE MARKETING

Affiliate marketing has to do with creating links to products on your blog. Many major retailers and online stores will pay you to get people to visit their product pages. To make that happen you need to be aware of the fact that people are not

going to trust you and buy things simply because you say so. This will require an audience that trusts you. Try to review and talk about products that you actually use and don't let them catch you just trying to shove a product down their throats. If you can make money marketing a bad product short term, you may be tempted to write some false reviews. However, in doing so, you lose the trust and respect of your readership and they won't care to listen to your advice ever again.

ADS

Ads are the obvious answer to making money with blogging, right? There are plenty of easy to use programs that will allow you to put ads on your site. The problem, however, is that for your advertising revenue to be more than a drop in the bucket, you need to know what you are doing. You have to have a large readership and be able to design and redesign the site over and over to optimize for ad placement and other factors. In short, it is not easy but it can be quite lucrative.

MEMBERSHIPS

This is simple enough. If you can create something really special and get people interested and hooked, then you can start charging membership fees. Of course, this is not something that will happen overnight.

“If you want to **MAKE MONEY** doing it, then you will have to **COMMIT** and take it **SERIOUSLY.**”

Blogging is fun, easy and can be a great way to make money. It can also be a great way to share your stories and opinions. While at the same time, it is not as easy as some may make it seem. If you want to make money doing it, then you will have to commit and take it seriously. To be clear, though, it is certainly something that can be done and that plenty of people have had success with. Follow the advice in this article and you will be on the road to blogging success.





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