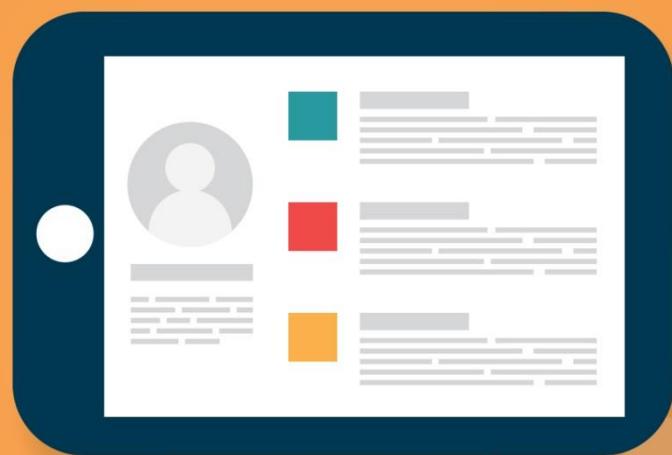


Blogging



BLOGGING
FUNDAMENTALS



Blogging: Blogging Fundamentals

Title: Blogging: Blogging Fundamentals

Course material - knowledge required - for certification

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1

Introduction

1. Introduction

Blogging has completely stirred up the situation on the internet. It has been something that people were getting used to during the 1990s, but as of 2000s, the online world completely changed due to the influence of blogging.

As more and more blogs started to emerge, so did the number of blogging tools. The approaches also began to evolve. We can trace the origin of blogging back to the online diaries published on the internet during the 1990s via dial-up internet. Over time, the topics of blogs started to expand. Personal blogs as a form of online diaries still exist, but many different types of blogs are now part of the blogosphere.

The number of blogs on the internet has been growing rapidly, as increasingly more people were gaining access to the internet and being able to create and manage their own blogs. Once creating a blog was an endeavor for which you would need to hire a professional, and you would also need training on how to manage and upload content. Nowadays, you can seamlessly create a blog within a few minutes without any technical skill whatsoever.

From the introduction of internet and the appearance of blogging to this day, a lot has changed.



Image: <https://www.pexels.com/photo/alphabet-arts-and-crafts-blog-conceptual-459688/>

Nowadays, blogging has become commonplace. It has become mainstream from the 2000s. Now people read blog posts every day. In fact, a large percentage of people own a blog (even if they do not have a habit of blogging regularly).

On the one side, we have the online community which has been relying so much on blogging as a source of information, entertainment, ideas, etc. People start following blogs they love and use them to keep up with the topic of their interest. They also interact with blog owners through comments.

Then, on the other side, we have companies. Most companies have one goal in common - reach online users. Due to the massive popularity of blogging and due to one particular search engine update by Google, called Panda (you can read more information on “Panda” later in this book), they have started to realize that blogging has to be taken to an entirely new level. Benefits of blogging are evident, but the craft (or better yet, art) of blogging is what evolved so much over the past years, that companies are focusing a lot of their efforts creating and managing content marketing strategy through blogging.

Content and Panda update

To understand how we have gotten to this point, where blogging is an inseparable part of our lives, you need to learn about content and Google’s Panda update. These two have influenced blogging to become what we know today.

Content has been around from the beginning of the internet. It has been used to position a website for keywords that are relevant to that site. Numerous techniques have been used for this purpose. One of which included notorious, obsolete practice of keyword stuffing. The gap between a website and a blog was much broader. Brands and companies had their websites, while bloggers managed their blogs.

The number of internet users have been rapidly increasing, and they were all looking for something on the internet. They were looking for information. To do this, people have been using search engines such as Google, Bing and Yahoo, where they would type a search query. These search queries would represent something, which these users have been interested in. Then, the relevant results would come out in the search engine result pages. These caused two things:

Firstly, companies have started to realize that they are unable to compete with blogging content, as they had too little content, making them less likely to appear in the search engine

result pages. This is how blogging has become a part of the business world. Once reserved for journalists, writers and critics, blogging has moved into the business world at full speed. The result of this is still visible to this day. Almost any business wishing to succeed and build a respectable name, will try to do so through blogging.

The second thing that resulted from the rapid expansion of the internet is the fact that content has been starting to pile up. Search engines have been struggling to filter the results, as webmasters were using devious techniques and practices to boost their website to the top of the search results. In many cases search results have become very saturated with keyword stuffed content. The bad thing was that most of that content was actually junk. It was content written with the intention to trick search engines to believe that there is something relevant on that web page, when in reality there was not. It was only a scheme used to reach online users.

It was at this point (back in 2011) that Google rolled out its Panda Update. This was a search engine update that was designed to detect low-quality content pages and banish them from the search engine results pages (SERP). The goal was also to identify high-quality pages and award them with a good ranking. Being able to recognize the quality of the content allows Google to provide better user experience because this way search engine can show really relevant results that can, in fact, provide a meaningful response to a user query. This update has been evolving through the years, but what it ultimately changed is how we perceive website content and blogging in general.

While blogging has become an effective tool for reaching online users, with this update in mind, bloggers are now aware that only quality content can achieve this goal. Tactics such as “keyword stuffing” no longer work. In today’s world the emphasis is on quality content.

Blogging statistics

Knowing about the current situation on the market is very useful. Below please find some interesting results made by different studies. These studies illustrate the state of blogging and online marketing. It helps you understand the importance of blogging as a business tactic and how it can be integrated into an online business.

- Featuring a blog as a key part of your website will give you a 434% better chance of being ranked highly on search engines. ([Tech Client](#))
- B2B marketers are much more likely to use blogging (75%) when compared to B2C marketers (61%). ([Social Media Examiner](#))
- 65% of marketers plan to increase the use of blogging. ([Social Media Examiner](#))

- Companies that published 16+ blog posts per month got almost 3.5X more traffic than companies that published 0-4 monthly posts. ([HubSpot](#))
- Most bloggers (53%) are publishing at least weekly. ([OrbitMedia](#))
- Most bloggers (64%) write for more than one blog. ([OrbitMedia](#))
- The average word count of top ranked content in Google is between 1,140-1285 words ([SearchMetrics](#))
- Over 409 million people view more than 22.2 billion pages each month. ([WordPress](#))
- There are over 4 million blog posts written each day. ([InternetLiveStats](#))
- 85% of B2B marketers contribute their increased success over the last year to content creation. ([Content Marketing Institute](#))
- 52% of B2B marketers say that blogging is a tactic that will be most critical to the overall content marketing success in 2017. ([Content Marketing Institute](#))
- Ninety-two percent of respondents said their organization views content as a business asset. ([Content Marketing Institute](#))
- Most common ways to generate revenue through blogging is using display ads, affiliate marketing links and search ads. ([Tech Client](#))
- There is a general increase in the use of promotion channels. Search, email, paid and influencer marketing are all up. Social media is still by far the most common method for getting the word out. 93% of bloggers share their content on social networks. ([OrbitMedia](#))
- Small businesses with blogs generate 126% more leads. ([Tech Client](#))
- Websites with blogs have 97% more indexed links. ([Tech Client](#))
- After reading recommendations on a blog, 61% of U.S. online consumers made a purchase. ([Content Marketing Institute](#))
- 43% of people admit to skimming blog posts. ([HubSpot](#))
- Three out of four (76%) respondents use email marketing technology to manage content marketing efforts. Other digital content marketing technologies used include CMS, content collaboration/workflow software, marketing automation software, etc. ([Content Marketing Institute](#))

The highlights that can be concluded from all of these statistics are the following:

- The number of blog posts published each day is enormous. Quality has become a necessity to get noticed and reach your audience through blog content.
- Blogging is more popular among B2B companies than among B2C businesses.
- Blogging regularly can significantly help you improve your business objectives.
- Blogging affects buying decisions.

As you continue with reading this ebook, you will see even more benefits of blogging. You will see how this online marketing strategy is slowly becoming the number one method to reach and affect online users.

2

What Is Blogging?

2. What Is Blogging?

What once began as a platform for sharing personal thoughts in online form has now grown into one of the essential and the most effective tools marketers use for online promotion. The way blogging has evolved over the past decade has blown everyone's mind. During the last couple of years we have been witnessing thousands of blogs around the globe, both businesses, and personal, turning into very profitable activities. It's safe to say, that blogging has become "big business".

History of blogging

Today's blogging started with something called weblog. The term was created by Jorn Barger in 1997, and it was used to describe a personal weblog, an online journal or a diary. It was primarily used by journalists and writers as a way to express themselves. To understand this need to share one's thoughts this way, you have to realize that this was the time without forums and social networks, the time before Twitter and Facebook.

The term was shortened to blog by Peter Merholz in 1999, and this term is now used both as a noun (to describe an online platform that is used for blogging) and as a verb (to write or to have a blog).

Having a blog in that period meant that you had the technical know-how to create and set up that blog. Optimization of that blog was not something people gave much thought, because search engine algorithms were just getting started to index the web, and had yet to learn how to interpret online content.

The late 1990s were also the period when blogging started to take off. By 2004 blogging had become completely mainstream. This was largely fueled by the introduction of the well-known content management system called WordPress in 2003. WordPress is a free platform that makes blogging available to everyone. Even to people, who don't have many technical skills. More and more people were starting a blog, and increasingly more were reading those blogs. This trend grew so rapidly over the next few years that we now have a new blog coming up each second.

What has affected this rapid expansion is the following:

- Creating a blog is now much simpler and cheaper than it used to be
- The number of people using the internet is continuously rising, so the online audience is increasing

- Blogging has been recognized as a desirable profession in the 21st century
- Plenty of opportunities for monetization of blogging
- A possibility to expand networking opportunities
- Blogging has become a supporting activity for both online and offline businesses

What is a blog?

A blog is a website or a web page that is regularly updated with new content. Content is displayed as blog articles or posts, which are usually shown in reverse chronological order, so the newest are visible first.



Image: <https://pixabay.com/en/blogging-blog-social-media-428955/>

When blogging was still new in the online community, blogs were usually run by individuals or a small group. Apart from blogs run by individuals, today we also have joint blogging projects which gather multiple authors. Companies have recognized the importance of blogging as well, so many of them have been implementing blogging as a part of their website. Often companies either have employed a full-time blogger or a team of bloggers that are in charge of content creation and blog promotion.

Most blogs allow visitors to leave their comments and to share blog posts on social media. This is what mainly differentiates blog posts from static website pages. It is also one of the reasons

why blogging is considered a type of social networking platform. It enables connection with the author and his or her audience. Blog posts provide that social aspect, which is also why they are such an important asset in engaging online visitors.

Blogosphere

The blogosphere is the term coined to include all blogs and the way these blogs are interconnected. As blogging started to be adopted by the masses and the number of bloggers has gradually been increasing, bloggers began to see themselves as a part of a large community, which is how the term blogosphere was introduced in 2002. It is used to imply that all blogs are connected and comprise a community. This understanding of blogging being part of the blogosphere is another reason why blogging is considered a type of social network.

Unlike website owners, which are usually focused on the interaction between owner and visitors, and only during the last couple of years have been thinking in terms of social media, blogging has had a social aspect from the beginning. Bloggers interact with each other, they share each other's content, they comment, they even have blogrolls (the list of blogs they read and recommend). In general, blogging is more focused on the individual level and on these individuals becoming members of the blogosphere.

Blog vs. website

It is essential to differentiate between a blog and a website as this is something most people find difficult to do. Perhaps the most confusing part is the fact, that both are used for publishing content. However, how this content is presented and the purpose it serves is what makes a distinction between the two.

Frequency of updates

The first significant distinction between a blog and a website is the frequency of updates. Blog content is regularly updated, which means that the pages (also called "blog posts") are more dynamic than website pages. Blog updates can be published at shorter or longer intervals. For example, new blog posts can be published once or twice a week, or even a couple of times during the day. This depends on the type of blog and the author(s).

On the other hand, a website features static pages with content that can occasionally be altered, but it usually stays the same over an extended period.

Engagement level

When it comes to engagement level, website pages hardly generate any engagement. Their main purpose is to provide information, to present a particular concept, etc. This communication is considered a one-to-many type of communication, which means that a page is designed to show the same content to all of the visitors.

Blogs enable better connection between an author and the visitors. It does not matter if the interaction is done through subscribing to RSS, commenting on a blog post, or participating in a poll, the important thing is that blogs encourage this interaction and thus increase the engagement level. The benefits of engagement are numerous, starting from generating interest in your brand, to improving the credibility and online influence.

Search engine friendliness

Blogs are considered to be more search engine friendly due to several reasons.

- Updates

Search engines love new content, and they keep returning new pages to index when they notice that there is a pattern of frequent updates. [Google confirms](#) that 15% of searches have never been searched before, which means that new content updates are always welcome. Updated content enable search engines to extend their database and find genuinely relevant content to show in the search engine result pages. New content is most often provided to the search engines through the use of blogging.

- Traffic

Blog topics are much more diverse and provide a range of topics that can be presented as organic traffic results. For example, when there is a search query "*how to optimize a blog post*," it is more likely that there will be a blog post relevant to this query than a website. The concept of blogging also provides an opportunity to publish content which includes related phrases, synonyms, or to coin different phrases related to that topic. In all, this offers a tremendous potential to grow the amount of organic traffic your blog receives on topics that leverage the use of keywords and relevant phrases, that would attract the audience interested in your brand.

- Links

Another reason for blogs being considered search engine friendly is the link building potential of their blog's content. Content of high quality in a blog post is more likely to generate interest

and links from other websites or blogs (also called “backlinks”) than static web pages. Additionally, blog content usually contains a significant number of links, both internal and external, which makes discovering and indexing new content by search engines through this page much easier.

Types of blogs

Types of blogs can range as much as types of topics can.



There are a lot of blog types you can find online, but some of the most popular are the following:

Personal blog

The entire concept of blogging evolved from the personal blogs created in the 1990s. This content format is still something that persists to this day as one of the most popular blogging types you can find.

The idea with a personal blog is to share your experience and thoughts about a particular topic. Content is published by an individual, who may or may not be an expert on the topic but is certainly someone who has experience and opinions about it. A person could be earning money through this type of blogging, but this is not a general rule. For example, the person could approach blogging as a hobby.

A type of a personal blog can be one about playing the guitar or running. Another example would be a parenting blog featuring insights of a parent raising his/her child. There are lots of travel blogs run by individuals. As you can see, topics can be quite diverse.

Business blog

Blogging for business has become a predominant type of blogs nowadays, and it includes two major concepts.

The business blog could be run by an individual blogger who works for a company and promotes this company through a blog. The second option is for a company to run a business blog and then include multiple writers who contribute with content for that company's blog. In this case, they represent a team of bloggers who blog for the company.

A business blog is usually focused on a particular topic that is related to the company's business strategy in some way. An example is a company that sells software to other companies and agencies. This company can create a blog about running a business, increasing sales, as well as how this particular software can be integrated into a business.

Niche blog

The idea with niche blogging is to focus on a single topic. This approach gives an opportunity to specialize in a specific topic and attract highly targeted visitors. When creating a niche blog, it is essential to choose a topic you are passionate about. A topic, which you know a lot about and which is related to your business (if blogging is a part of a business strategy).

Examples of niche blogs are food blogs, parenting blogs, tech blogs, teacher's blogs, beauty blogs, etc. Different monetization tactics can be a part of this type of blogging.

The greatest advantage of niche blogging is tailored content to the specific target group with better conversion potential.

Affiliate blogs

With this type of blog, the owner focuses blogging activity on an affiliate marketing strategy. This means that the goal is to recommend products or services through affiliate links,

encourage visitors to click on these links, and eventually buy the products. This enables the blogger to earn commission without having to own products or services to sell. Product reviews are typically shared on this type of blog, but other content types such as lists, how-to guides and tutorials can also feature affiliate links.

To maximize the efficiency of an affiliate blog, it is recommended to create a niche affiliate blog. This means that you need to choose a topic to write about and then create an affiliate marketing strategy to combine with this blog and its topic. It is necessary to choose affiliate programs that include products related to the blog niche. One example could be a tennis blog, where you would promote gear for tennis players through affiliate links.

Knowing what blogging is and being aware of the types of blogs out there is helpful to explore the potential of blogging in your situation. Regardless if this is a hobby for you or a career you want to focus on, blogging offers many opportunities to reach online users. Blogging has been evolving throughout the years, and it will continue to do so in the future. This means that it is possible to discover even new opportunities to promote and get promoted in the online world through blogs.

3

Blogging Platforms

3. Blogging Platforms

The first step of creating a blog includes choosing a blogging platform. A blogging platform is a software you use to create a blog and publish content. It is a type of content management system (CMS). Multiple blogging platforms are available online which offer a set of blogging tools and services providing everything you need to set up and run a blog. A platform can be free or paid.

WordPress

Over 15 million websites on the internet use WordPress, which is almost 30% of all websites worldwide, making WordPress the most popular CMS platform. There are over 76 million wordpress.com blogs.

The principal two reasons for such a huge WordPress popularity is that this is a user-friendly and search engine friendly platform. This means that you do not need much experience in coding or web design to create a WordPress blog. Also, the platform supports a lot of plugins and extensions to optimize the blog even more and add features that are not a part of the core platform. As a result, search engines find it easy to index such a website and present them to their users as a response to a search query.

If you are interested in exploring WordPress as a platform, you will have two options to choose from: WordPress.com and WordPress.org. The platform is the same in both cases, but these represent two different solutions for bloggers.



Create a site with WordPress.

Choose the software powering 28% of the internet.

Get Started

Choose WordPress.com for the easiest way to create a website or blog.

Choose a custom WordPress installation for the ultimate control over your website.

Image: <https://wordpress.com/com-vs-org/>

WordPress.org

With this option, you will be hosting your own website or a blog. By visiting [WordPress.org](https://wordpress.org/), you download the free software which needs to be installed on your web server. After this, you will be able to set up and customize your blog.

This solution is a good choice if you want to have more control over your blog and flexibility when it comes to blog design and optimization. However, this comes with an added cost of blog hosting. You will also need technical know-how to install this blogging platform on the server. Even though this is not too complicated, it still can be a bit too much for someone who has no experience with it.

WordPress.com

If you want a blog without having to take care of hosting and web server installation, you will use the [WordPress.com](#) option. To create this blog, you will visit the homepage of WordPress.com and register for an account, which will take a couple of minutes.

The pros of using this blogging platform include a free and quite straightforward setup, which is perfect for beginners. The platform also offers several paid upgrades, such as domain registration (allowing you to remove wordpress.com from your domain name), but in all, this option provides much less ability to customize and control the platform.

Choosing between these two depends on the goals you have with blogging.

If you have a personal blog, the free option without your own hosting can be enough to help you transfer your vision to a blog. Still, you have to be aware that this option comes with lots of limitations. If your plan is blogging for business, earning money through blogging and expanding your blog (by adding new authors, a management team, subscriptions, etc.), you should use WordPress.org from the start.

Some of the reasons why bloggers choose the WordPress platform (both .com and .org) include the following:

- The platform installation, management, and optimization do not require a lot of technical skills
- It integrates well with social networks and other platforms such as marketing automation software, email marketing software, e-commerce website, etc.
- There are lots of plugins to optimize the blog and upgrade its features
- The platform is intuitive and easy to get used to
- It is known to be a very secure platform
- Numerous options for customization and plenty of templates are available
- There is a strong online community which is great for getting help and support

As an open source platform, WordPress is constantly updated which fixes potential bugs and introduces new and improved features.

Blogger

This is another popular blogging platform. It is hosted by Google and allows creating blogs with [blogspot.com](https://www.blogspot.com) used as a part of the domain name. A custom domain can also be registered to remove the blogspot.com from the name and Google allows this for free. To create the blog using this platform, you will need a Google account.

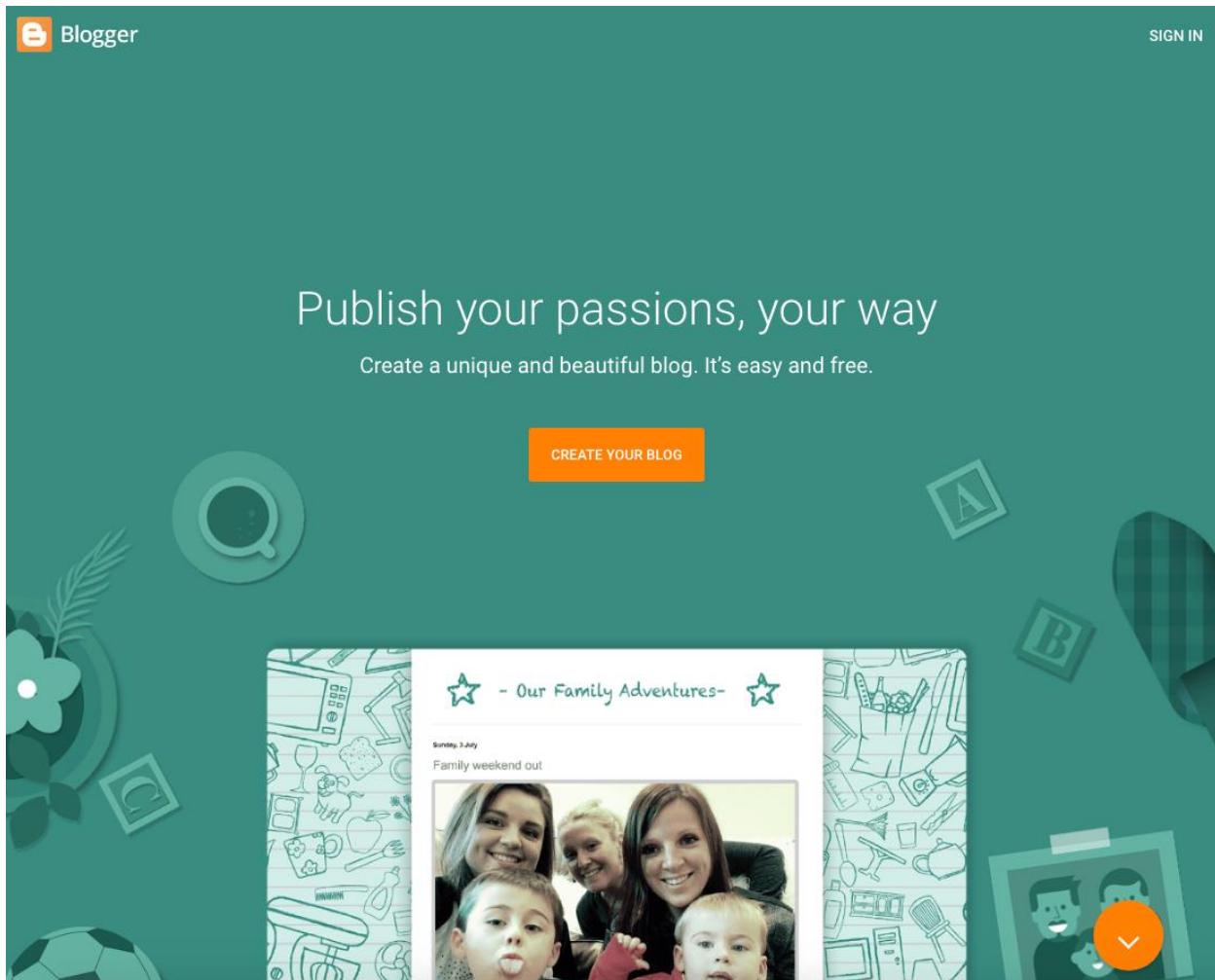


Image: <https://www.blogspot.com/>

An opportunity to create a blog for free and to easily set up the blog are common reasons for choosing this blogging platform. However, this solution offers fewer options for customization with hardly any blog templates to choose from. Blogger provides some of the following features:

- Adding location to posts through geotagging options
- Country-specific extension in the URL

- Blog is hosted on Google servers, which are considered as very reliable (but offers no option to upgrade to self-hosted solution)
- Drag-and-drop templates editing interface
- It supports Google's AdSense service enabling bloggers to generate revenue from blogging
- It can be easily integrated with Google+ encouraging user engagement
- Mobile application is available for blog management
- Blog description is limited to 500 characters (HTML markup is not supported)
- Individual blog pages are limited to 1MB
- Blogger Product Forum offers online support

In general, this blogging platform is used by beginners and those who consider blogging as a hobby. Numerous limitations and poor customization options are the main reasons why professionals and ambitious bloggers, as well as companies, seek a more flexible and upgradable solution.

Tumblr

Here is another easy-to-use blogging solution which comes with no additional monthly costs. The platform itself is designed as a micro-blogging platform which features short-form blog articles, quotes, images, etc. The opportunity to follow other blogs and get followers gives that social flair, thus increasing the engagement level. In December 2017, [Tumblr](#) reports having over 381 million blogs.

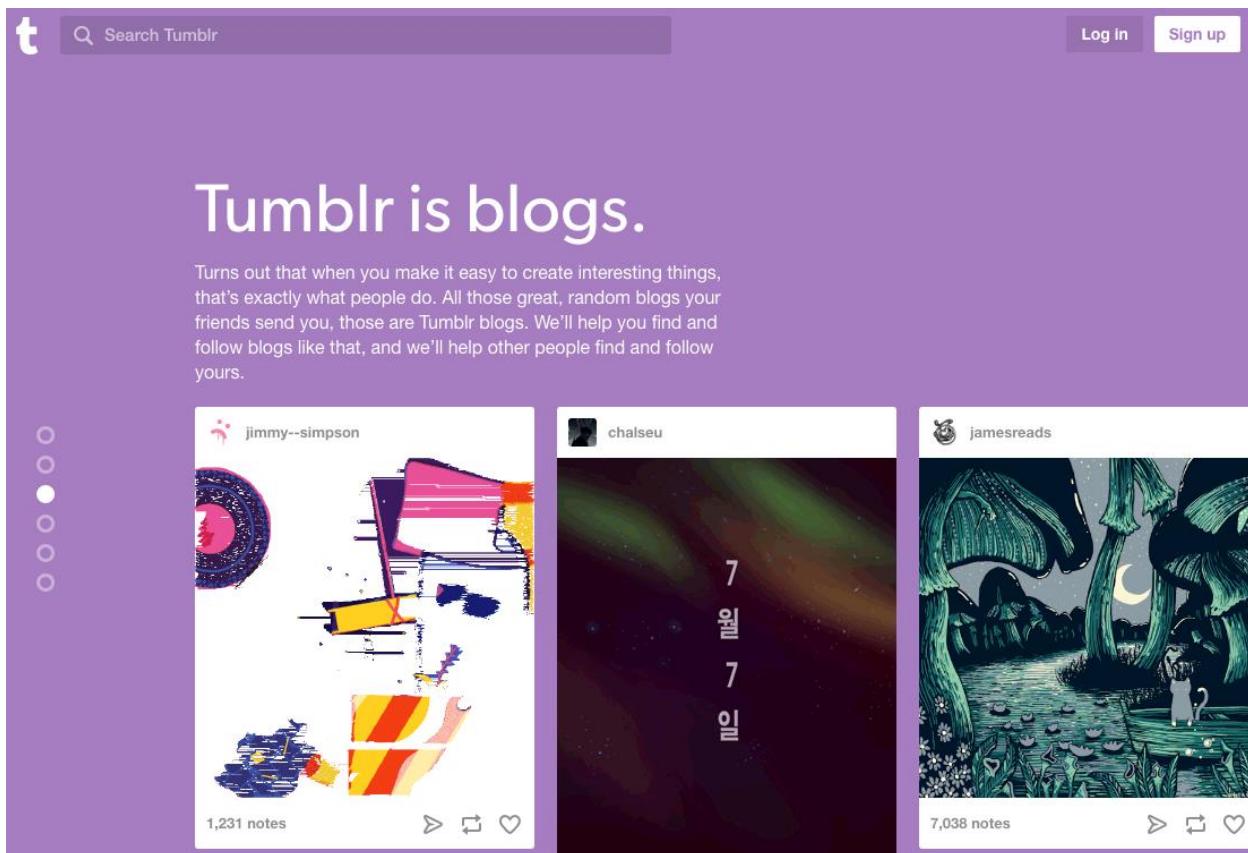


Image: <https://www.tumblr.com/>

When you register to the platform, you get a subdomain of tumblr.com. It is possible to remove this and use your own domain name, but you will have to register the domain name using another online service.

Some of the highlights for choosing Tumblr:

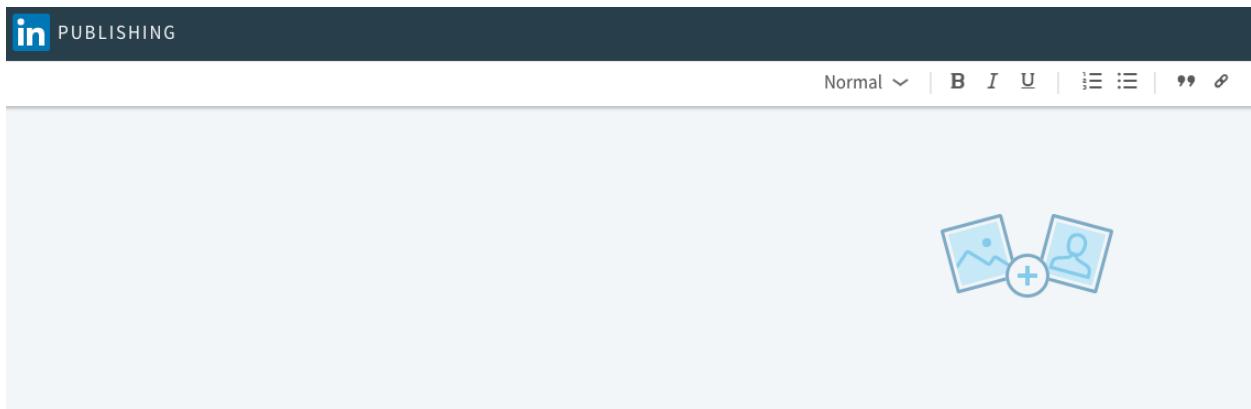
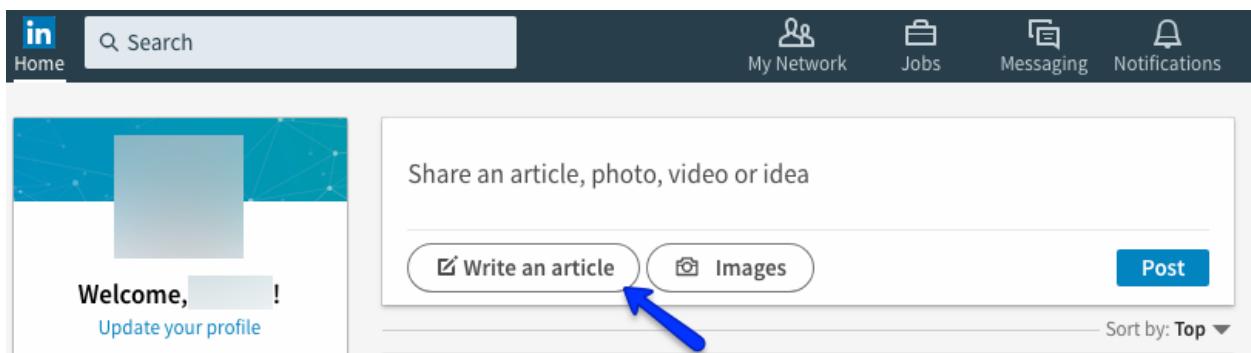
- Great interaction with Twitter and Facebook, so you can automatically republish on Tumblr or vice versa
- It is one of the fastest growing blogging platforms
- Plenty of opportunities for blog customization including a possibility for HTML editing
- Email or text publishing system allowing you to post quickly and easy
- Live feed shows recent blog posts of the users you follow which increases engagement and content visibility
- Tagging content increases the opportunity to get discovered

- Intuitive dashboard which is easy to figure out and use

Tumblr represents a popular blogging solution, but it certainly is not for everybody. Some great companies have positioned themselves highly with Tumblr blog, using its social aspect in particular, but in essence, this platform is mainly used for personal blogs or creative blogs to showcase work online.

LinkedIn blogging

The option to publish blog articles on [LinkedIn](#) opened up with LinkedIn Pulse, but as of the end of 2015, Pulse no longer exists as a separate platform. Instead, its core features and functionalities are integrated into the LinkedIn platform enabling articles and stories to be accessible directly from the news feed of a LinkedIn account.



Headline

Write here. Add images or a video for visual impact.

To start blogging on LinkedIn, all you need is a content idea, and to think how to shape this into an article people are going to read. Also, you will need a LinkedIn account.

You are literally one click away from getting your blog content published, and that is one of the main reasons for choosing such a way to blog. Other features of using the LinkedIn platform for blogging are:

- Huge user base which is your potential audience
- Possibility to reach online users without any direct promotion from your end with social network visibility
- An opportunity to gain influence as a professional on the platform through valuable content
- Enrich your online portfolio with content publicly available on the network
- Extremely beginner-friendly

Still, blogging on LinkedIn has a lot of drawbacks. Starting from the limited control of the platform to inability to collect readers' email addresses, and no direct SEO benefits, it means that you will have to weigh in whether LinkedIn can be a platform that will add up to your blogging efforts and help you with achieving your goals.

Medium

Medium is another free blogging platform enabling people to start blogging almost instantly. All it takes is to create an account and get started writing. The platform has an amazing import tool, supporting different content formats, easy inclusion of visual content and plenty of formatting options. All of this enables you to create very professional looking content and start gaining readers through the platform.

Upgrade

Welcome to Medium, where words matter.



Image: <https://medium.com/>

Some of the reasons why people choose Medium for blogging include:

- A huge base of followers
- It connects with your Facebook and Twitter account helping you find connections from other social networks
- This also helps with increasing the number of social followers
- Strong social aspect with features such as follow the author, bookmark the article, clap to show you like a story, etc.
- Engagement metrics for the articles
- Quite a straightforward platform with many formatting options and instant integration of visual content through a URL

Despite lots of the benefits, like LinkedIn Pulse, Medium is a third-party platform, which means far less control and possibilities for blog customization.

Choosing a platform

As you can see here, the first decision you will have to make when you decide to start blogging, is related to the choice of the platform you will use.

More control and flexibility

On one side there are platforms like WordPress.org, where you get full control over the blog management and customization. You basically have your own CMS platform from which you create a blog. Alternative CMS platforms that could also be used for blogging include Drupal, Joomla, etc.

You will need to create a promotional strategy to disseminate your blog content and reach online readers. Unlike using third-party blogging platforms, managing your own CMS means that you will not have access to an online community which could instantly help you with getting visitors to your blog. However, once you get visitors to your blog, you will have an opportunity to convert those visitors and collect their email addresses through your own blogging platform.

Platforms like these, which offer more control, are usually an ideal choice if you are blogging for business, because they give you more flexibility and more possibility to convert your visitors, into becoming subscribers or clients.

No costs and easy setup

On the other hand, there are online platforms like Medium, that provide everything one needs to start blogging instantly. The main advantage of such platforms is this social aspect which helps you increase your reach. When you publish content through this platform, you immediately get an audience. Even though this audience might be limited (by the number of your followers if you are just starting out), it is more than you would have when starting out blogging independently.

However, when blogging for business or working on brand promotion, these platforms can soon turn out to be too restraining. This means that the choice of which platform to use should be based on the type of blog you want to create. Think about your blogging goals, plans for the future and the roadmap you want to follow.

In the end, it is important to mention that no rule states you should have only one blog. You could start various blogs on several different platforms and explore how each of them contributes to achieving your goals. You have to be aware that such a strategy will require more time to establish a presence on each platform, but it can be done at least on a trial basis. This enables you to try out the platforms first hand, and explore the benefits they can potentially bring.

4

Blogging Essentials

4. Blogging Essentials

There is a list of things to think about before you are ready to start blogging. These include blogging essentials, i.e., everything you will need to set up and create a blog. Having a list like this one is very helpful to keep everything organized from the beginning and planning your blogging strategy with more success.

One of the first things to choose is a blogging platform, after which you will also need the following:

Hosting

Hosting, also called web hosting, is a service that allows individuals and companies to create and make their websites and blogs accessible to the online users. It is an online storage you will use to store your blog data, starting from CMS installation to all the files and images you want to share on your blog.

Platforms like Medium and LinkedIn do not require hosting because you get one when you create an account. It is one of the features these platforms offer to store your data and make it available to the online users. Having access to your own hosting provides much more control and flexibility, which is why a CMS such as WordPress.org could be your choice when choosing a platform. Of course, this hosting comes with an added cost, which can be paid monthly or annually, depending on the hosting provider, and the plan you choose.

The best way to make a choice is to explore hosting providers, the features they include and the prices they offer for their plans. Some of the popular hosting providers for bloggers include:

- [InMotion Hosting](#)
- [SiteGround](#)
- [BlueHost](#)
- [GreenGeeks](#)

Special Offer for WORDPRESS Users

[FREE Domain](#)

[FREE SSL Certificate](#)

[1-Click WordPress Installs](#)

[24/7 Support](#)

Starting at ~~\$7.99~~
\$3.95/month*

[Get Started Now](#)

[shared hosting](#)

[cloud hosting](#)

[WordPress hosting](#)

[WooCommerce hosting](#)

[vps hosting](#)

[dedicated hosting](#)

[domains](#)

Image: <https://www.bluehost.com/special/wordpress>

Domain name

A domain name is a part of the URL which is used to access the blog. It may or may not match the blog name, but it is generally recommended that it matches the blog name. When you create a blog and host it with the hosting provider of your choice, you will need to provide the domain name of your blog.

The complete URL starts with www. and it is followed by the domain name. It ends with a domain extension, which is most commonly .com, but you can choose other extensions such as .org, .blog, .net, etc.

You can use an online tool such as [this one](#) to conduct a domain name search and check if the domain name you want is free.

Find your perfect domain name.

- ✓ 17 million customers trust us with their domains. They must know something.
- ✓ Experts you can call 24/7 make building a business a little less lonely.
- ✓ Low prices and a huge selection. Who doesn't love that?

The screenshot shows a light gray search interface. At the top, the text "Start your domain name search" is displayed in bold. Below it is a search bar containing the placeholder text "Type the one you want here". Underneath the search bar are two blue buttons: "Bulk domain search" and "Transfer domains".

You will also need to register this domain name with an online company, which may or may not be the one where you have your blog hosting registered.

Template

Blog template layout represents predesigned pages that are used to create a blog. You install the template after you install the blogging platform, or you get access to a selection (or sometimes only one layout) if you choose a hosted blogging platform. WordPress is generally known to offer the most extensive selection of blogging templates (also known as themes) including both free and premium templates.

To select a template, you will need to consider the blog layout design. It depends a lot on the type of content you want to create as well as on how you want this content to be presented on the blog. One way you can narrow down the search for a perfect template is by using the filtering feature to sort the results based on:

- Layout - Typically used layouts include grid layout, one-column layout, two-columns layout, etc.)

- Features - You can filter templates by features such as editor style, post formats, microformats, full-width template, custom menu, etc.
- Subject - Since templates are already pre-designed, they are often tagged based on the subject they would be suitable for. The subject you will be most interested in is a blog, but you can explore other categories if you are creating a niche blog.

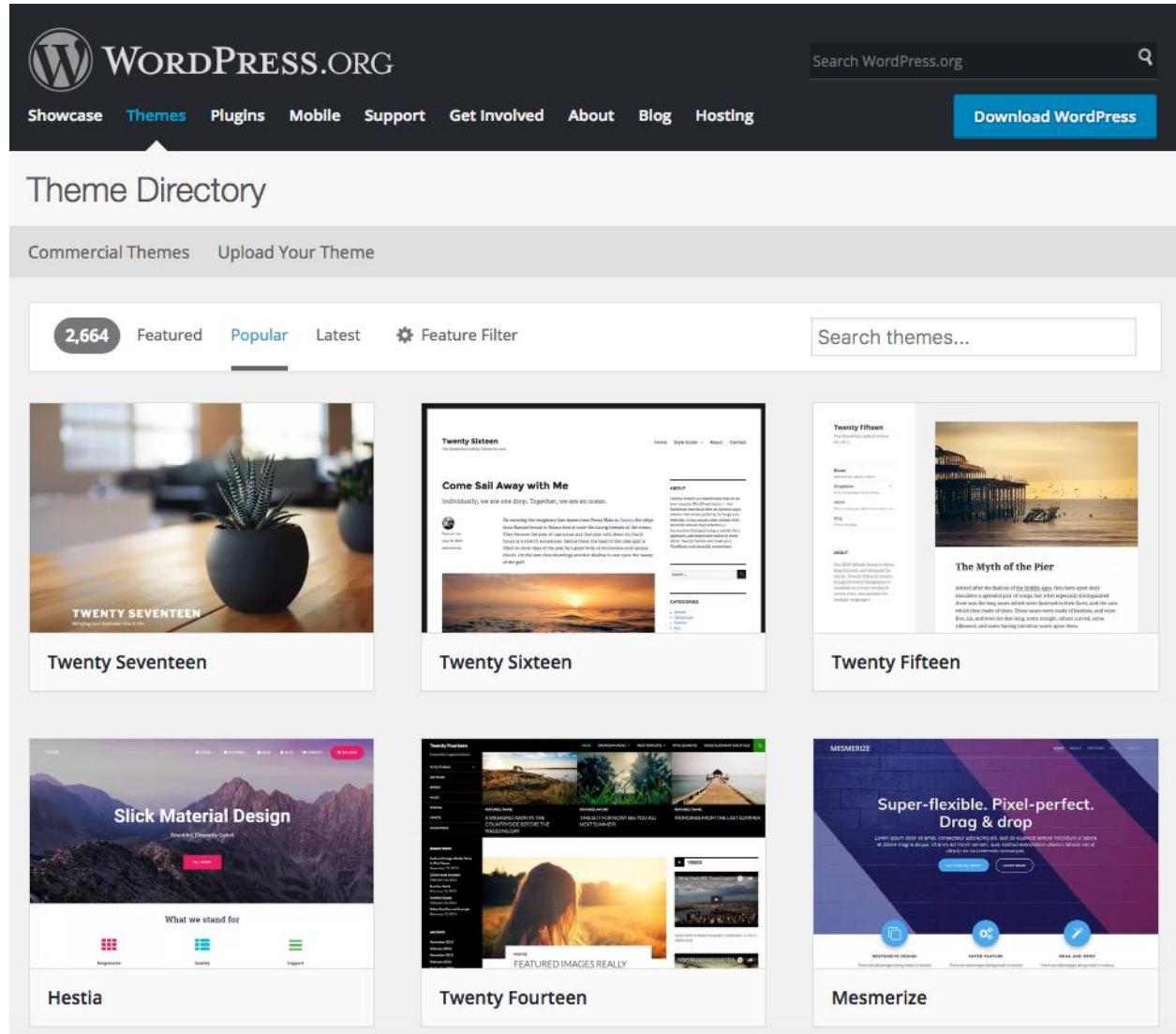


Image: <https://wordpress.org/themes/>

Gravatar image

Gravatar stands for Globally Recognized Avatar. It is an image that represents you online, and it appears when you interact with other WordPress blogs. It is a free service which is included as a

part of WordPress.com. To have Gravatar on a self-hosted blog, you will need to install a plugin that integrates the service.

This option is great for featuring blog authors and enabling them to gain more influence among the blog's readers. Besides the image, a Gravatar profile can also include:

- Name
- Other profiles (such as social networks)
- Short description

The screenshot shows the official Gravatar website at <https://en.gravatar.com/>. The header includes links for "What is Gravatar?", "How to Use Gravatar", and "Help", along with the WordPress logo and a "Sign In" button. The main title "Gravatar A Globally Recognized Avatar" is displayed with a large "G" icon. Below the title, a blue banner explains what a Gravatar is: "Your Gravatar is an image that follows you from site to site appearing beside your name when you do things like comment or post on a blog. Avatars help identify your posts on blogs and web forums, so why not on any site?". To the right, there is a profile card for "Matt" (embarcadero and townsend, sf ca). It features two small profile pictures, Matt's name, his location, and a bio: "In 2002 I started contributing to Open Source software, and life has just gotten better from there. Co-founder of WordPress, founder Automattic.". A "View Complete Profile" button is at the bottom of the card. At the bottom of the page, there are two sections: "Introducing Gravatar" with fields for "NAME" and "EMAIL" and a "Gravatar" button, and "Create Your Own Gravatar" for "FOR SITE OWNERS" with a link to "Example Plugins and Code →".

Image: <https://en.gravatar.com/>

Comments

Comments should also be on the list of blog essentials because they enable you to engage with online readers directly. Some commenting features may already be a part of the core platform, but there are plenty of plugins to enhance the experience and add some new features, such as the option to post a comment with a Facebook account or through a blog commenting hosting service, such as [Disqus](#).

The main benefit of comments is the possibility to increase engagement and encourage visitors to interact with the blog's author through the comment section. This way you can get feedback, positive (or negative) reviews, additional questions or suggestions from your audience, etc. It can help you with improving your overall approach and blogging strategy.

Having comments does mean that you will have to be monitoring this section and moderate it to make sure you prevent any spam from getting publicly posted in the comment section of your blog. You will also need to devote time to answer any questions you might get in the comments. Since the idea is to engage the visitors, you should make sure to answer those questions promptly.

Mailing list

One of the best ways to monetize a blog is through a mailing list, which is why this is essential for bloggers. Think about your subscribers as your asset. When someone decides to subscribe to your blog, it means that the person is interested in getting more news from you and following your future updates. This person values your opinion and wants to hear from you again.

What this means is that you have the power to influence these subscribers. It all starts with generating trust and reputation, but once you do that, you will discover a possibility to convert those visitors.

Among many different monetization tactics and promotions, email marketing stands out as one of the most profitable strategies in online marketing. It is a strategy with the highest conversion rate. As a result, the benefits you can obtain by having a mailing list are numerous.

Social accounts

Bloggers use many different platforms for promoting their content and reaching online users. Social networks are certainly among the top within this group. Therefore, as a blogger, you should create social media accounts which will represent your blog or you as a blogger. You can

also connect social accounts with blogging platform to take advantage of features such as automatic sharing on social media.



Image: <https://www.pexels.com/photo/apps-blur-button-close-up-267350/>

Social accounts provide an outlet for you to share content and reach online users. They also offer an opportunity to connect and further establish your reputation. Besides the obvious benefits, social accounts require regular management and implementation of a social media marketing strategy. Hence, you will need to explore this segment of online marketing and find the best ways to combine it with blogging.

Images

Images will enhance your blog significantly. Based on many studies, blog posts with images receive far more clicks, shares, and overall engagement. Images are used to:

- Illustrate the most important aspects
- Draw attention of the readers

- Divide content into sections
- Provide more information about the topic

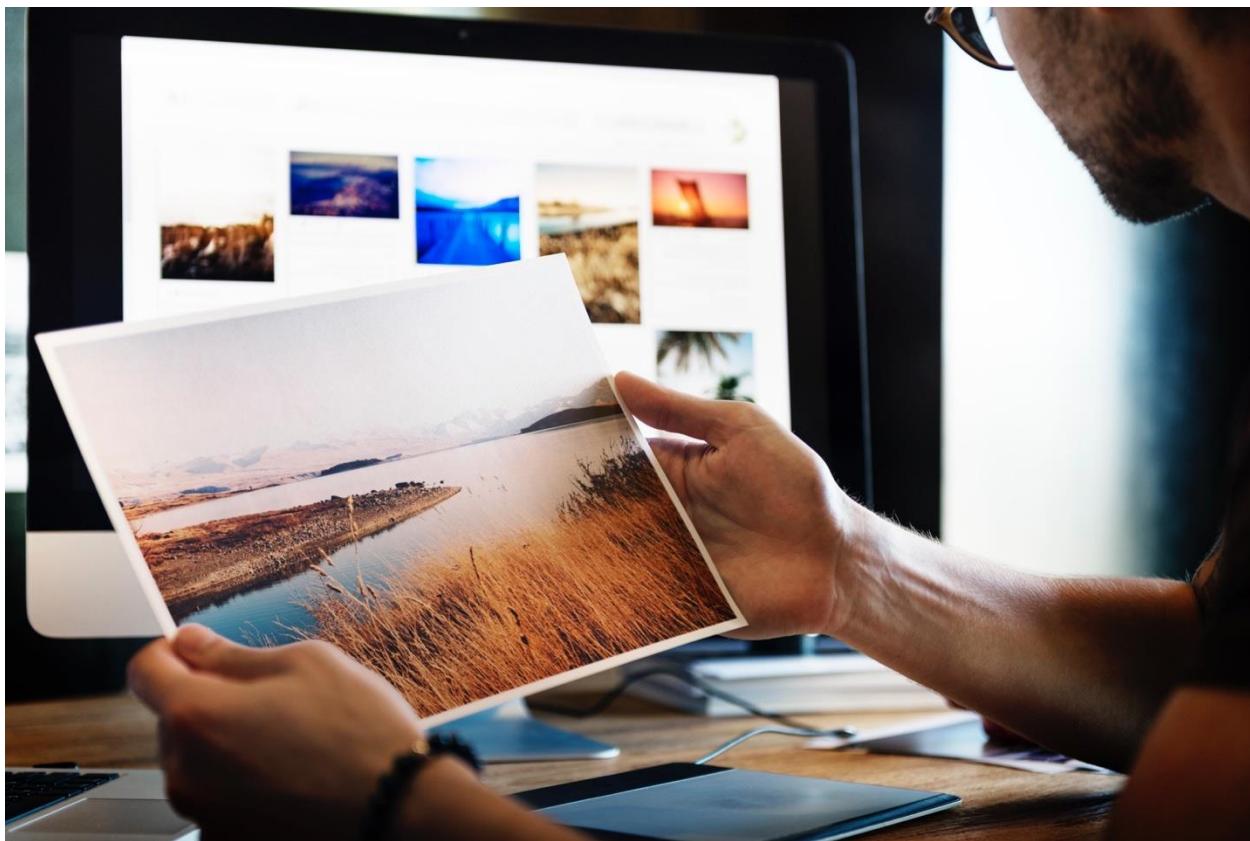


Image: <https://www.pexels.com/photo/adult-art-artist-blur-297648/>

When using images in a blog post, make sure that:

- The images are of high quality
- You use right dimensions when adding them to the post
- The images are relevant to the topic
- You have the permission to use the images to avoid copyright infringements
- Optimize the images enabling the search engines to index them

Plugins

Plugins are installed to the blogging platform, and they add new features which are not a part of the core platform. Among the reasons why WordPress is such a popular platform for blogging, is the fact that the platform offers an extensive number of plugins, both free and

premium. These enable blog owners to improve and optimize their blog with advanced features such as memberships, landing pages, contact forms, content optimization, image optimization, backup, migration, lead generation, editorial workflow, etc.

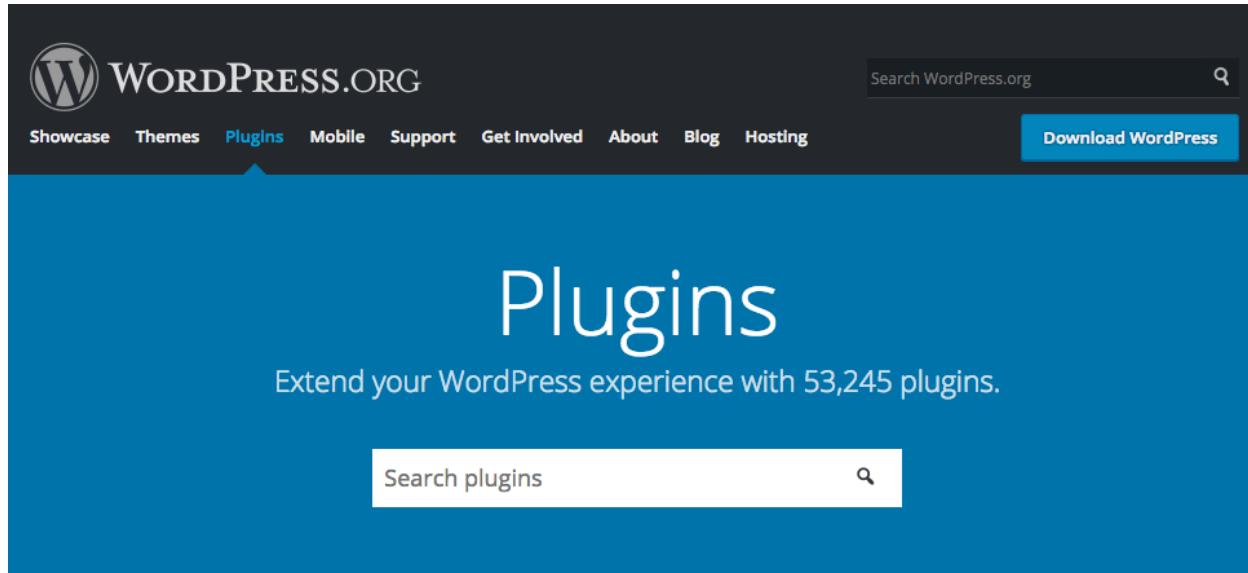


Image: <https://wordpress.org/plugins/>

Despite many benefits they can bring to your blog, plugins have drawbacks as well. Plugins may cause security issues for your blog if there is a problem with the code, which is why you should only install reputable plugins. Additionally, the more plugins you install, the slower your blog will become. It does not matter if all of those are reputable plugins, they are still a burden to your platform and may cause pages to load more slowly. This is why it is important to update plugins regularly and to deactivate the ones you are not using.

Unique content

The highlight of your blog is the content you share. The first characteristic of that content should be uniqueness. Search engines do not like duplicate content. You are also failing at providing value to your readers when you copy content from other blogs.

Instead, your focus should be original content that you create with your target group in mind. Think about how you can explore blogging topics and offer even more value on your blog. This way you will gain loyal readership and increase your influence in the online community. Content is also what is going to help you stand out and leverage the potential of blogging.

Bloggers

Building relationships in the online world might be more challenging than in real life, but it still is an essential part of blogging. As you will see, the blogging community is quite vocal and strong, and it offers great potential for learning, exchanging experience, and finding possible collaborations. This is why relationships with other bloggers should be one of the essentials of blogging.

This list of the blogging essentials includes everything that is necessary for you to focus on when first starting out blogging, regardless the niche and the type of platform you will use. Try to create your unique plan including all of these essentials and how you will implement each into your blogging activity from the start.

5

Creating a Blogging Strategy

5. Creating a Blogging Strategy

One of the most important prerequisites for successful blogging is planning. If you approach blogging with a detailed strategy, this will help you guide your actions and activities when creating, managing, and promoting your blog. With blogging strategy, you design a plan of where you are and where you want blogging to take you. Regardless if you do blogging as a hobby, or you want to discover ways how to make blogging into a full-time job, creating a blogging strategy will help you with reaching your goals and figuring out the right actions that will help you get there.

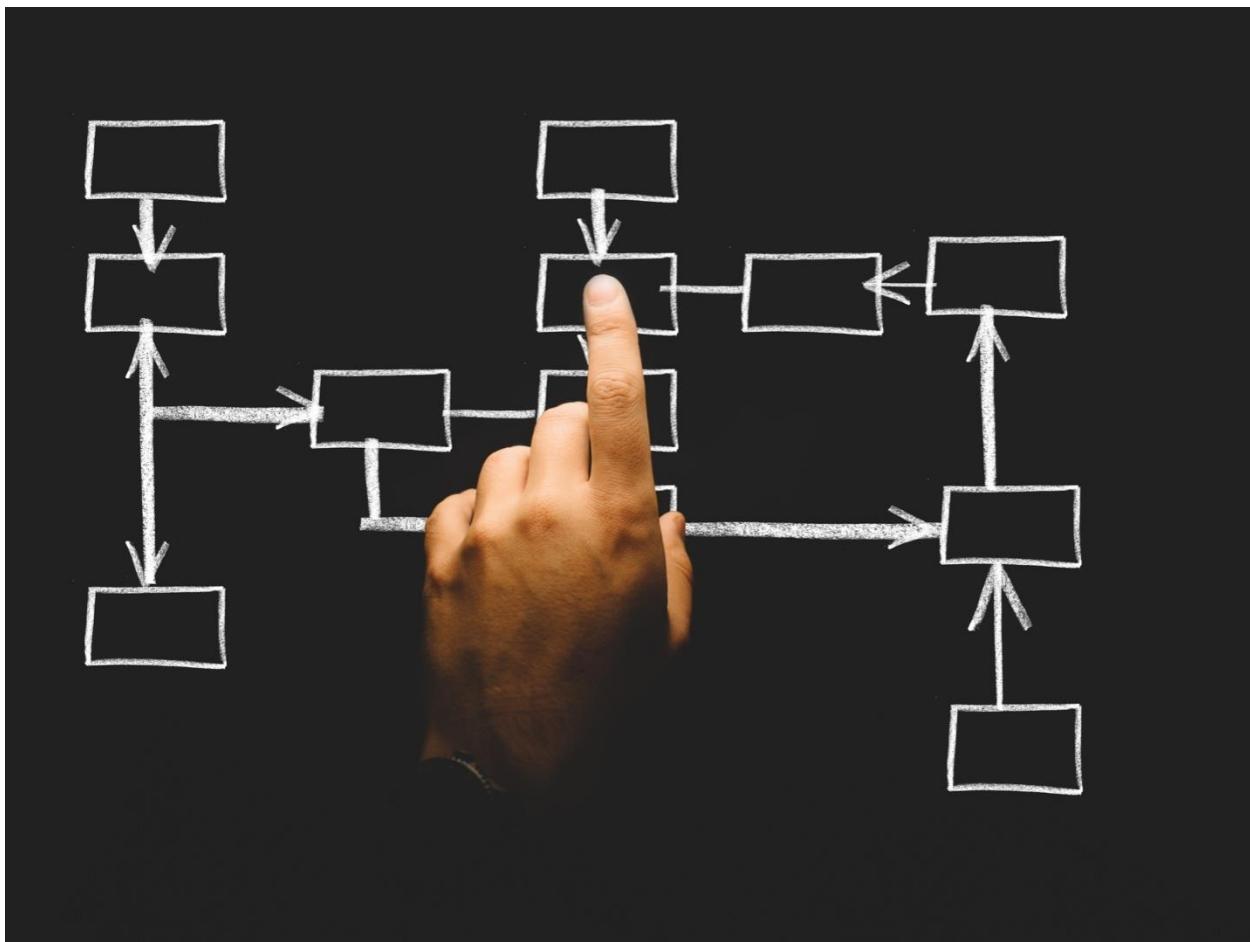


Image: <https://www.pexels.com/photo/arrows-box-business-chalk-533189/>

Goals

Start with goals. Goals are a necessary part of the planning process. Interestingly, a lot of people start blogging without any goals in mind. They start blogging just for the sake of getting

published online, with no plans for the future or any idea on how to implement online marketing to promote this content.

However, goals help you keep everything organized and think about content creation more efficiently. It is crucial that blogging goals are:

- Custom - Define your own goals. Do not follow a pattern or a universal business plan with generic goals. Instead, create goals that are really plausible for your current situation and make sure you can benefit from these goals.
- Achievable - As much as you like for your blog to become an instant hit, there are no guarantees that it will. Instead, be realistic when creating goals. Take into account your current situation, whether you are starting from scratch or you already have a certain number of followers. Think about your competitors and how they are doing. All of this can affect the goals you can potentially achieve.
- Quantifiable - Having goals you can measure gives you an easy option to compare the planned goals and achieved results. These comparisons can help you understand and analyze your performance and find ways to improve your blogging strategy in the future. Numerical quantifiers are an ideal choice. For example, "*increase the number of followers by 20%*", or "*gain 200 new followers*". You could also add time frame for this goal to be achieved. So your goal would be "*gain 200 new followers within four months*".

Goals can also be long-term or short-term, depending on the period you are going to take as a reference. Ideally, you should have both long-term and short-term goals

Planning gives your blog a purpose. It helps you determine what you want to achieve, and this enables you to define your story, your content, and find your voice.

Target group

One of the goals of blogging is gaining trust and influence among your blog visitors. You want to establish yourself as an influencer in the industry and create a base of followers. What is going to help with this is defining your target group. You should be as detailed as possible when doing this. Try to narrow down the group of people you are addressing with your content.

As a result, you can create content that is better tailored to your target group. Not only is such content more effective with online users, but it also helps with achieving your goals.

Defining your target group also helps you:

- Plan the blog topics
- Identify ways to monetize your blog
- Determine content distribution channel
- Explore opportunities for online promotion

Budget

The next step in your strategy is determining the budget. Depending on your blogging goals, depending on how you want your blog to grow, you will need a budget. The amazing thing about blogging is that you virtually need no investment to start doing it, except for your own time. You have free blogging platforms, you can use royalty free photos, joining social media is also free, there are plenty of free tools for bloggers, etc.

However, if you want to get your blog up to speed, it is advisable to consider it an investment.

The cost related to blogging which you should plan in your budget include the following:

- Hosting and domain name
- Premium templates, paid plugins, and other tools
- Budget for advertising (search engines, social media, etc.)
- Budget for content creation (it is always possible to hire help for proofreading, editing, creation of visual content, etc.)

Content ideas

When you create a strategy, it is advisable to think about content ideas for your blog. This will give you a glimpse into what kind of content you could post on your blog. Since you will also be thinking about your target group, it will help you define content that is tailored based on their interest and expectations.

Start by thinking about content formats first. Here are a few ideas:

- How-to articles
- Case studies

- Ebooks
- Guides
- Guest posts
- Interviews
- Lists
- Podcasts
- Company news
- Videos

Take a look at the image below to find even more ideas when it comes to different content formats that are available to you when blogging:



Image: <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/content-marketing-plan>

Also, try to think about topic ideas and try to list at least twenty or even more of them. The best way to get content topic ideas is to do brainstorming.

Start by focusing on the keyword(s) relevant to your blog. Expand the list using synonyms or related keywords. Then try to add other phrases to start creating topics. Some ideas are the following:

- Top 5 [keyword]
- How to [keyword]
- 5 Things You Didn't Know About [keyword]
- How [keyword] Are Like [other keyword or phrase]
- Why [keyword] Are The New Black
- How [keyword] Can Help You [Succeed/Understand Something/Get Better Results, etc.]
- 10 Ways to Use [keyword]

You could even use [Content Idea Generator](#) or [Portent's Content Idea Generator](#) to help you with new content ideas.

The screenshot shows a dark-themed web application titled "PORTENT'S Content Idea Generator". The main title is in a stylized font with "Content" being the largest word. Below the title are two blue speech bubbles containing text: "Strong verbs make for interesting sentences with rich backstories." and "What TV shows did your readers watch as kids? Reference them.". At the bottom of the page, there is a footer with the text "Did the Content Idea Generator fail English? That's unpossible! See below for tips on how to make it work better." and a "Tweet This" button.

Image: <https://www.portent.com/tools/title-maker>

The main benefit of defining content ideas are these opportunities:

- Create editorial calendar
- Plan promotional and other activities in advance
- Start working on blog monetization ideas
- Determine if you will be needing assistance with content creation and hire someone on time

Metrics

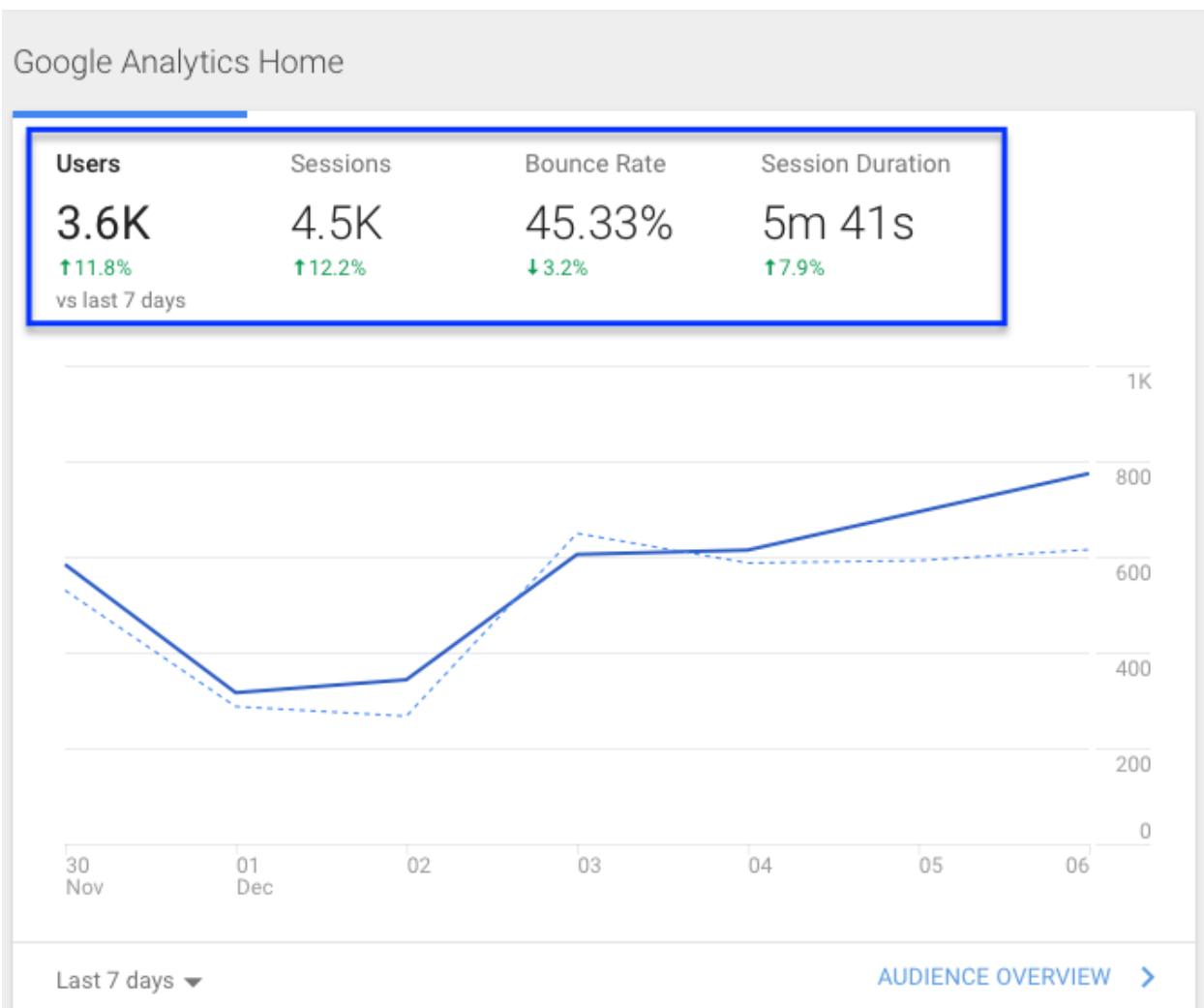
The final step of your blogging strategy should be the choice of metrics you want to track and monitor. These metrics help you evaluate the success of your blogging strategy, which is why they are an essential asset in a strategy.

When you have metrics to monitor, you have the opportunity to see if you can achieve them and if not, how you can improve your strategy.

Metrics you should define within blogging strategy should include some (or even all) of the following:

Engagement

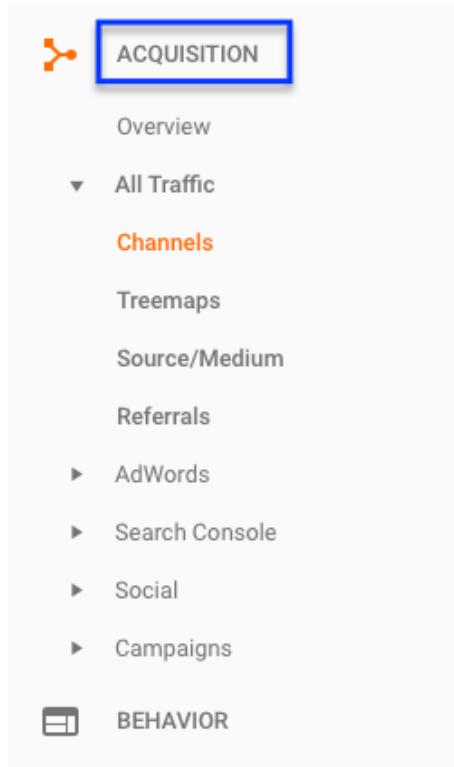
Engagement is a metric that shows you how successful you are at engaging your followers. It can be analyzed through a variety of analytics data which include likes, shares, bounce rate, the average session duration, page views, signups, etc.



What this metric helps you conclude is how efficient you are in reaching your audience. It shows you success (or failure) at engaging the audience which helps you redefine your blogging strategy. It might be that you are targeting the wrong audience. You might need better content ideas, or your blog might need a revamp.

Acquisition

This metric includes the data about who is sharing your content and where. Use the blog statistics to see the details about the number of clicks. Which articles are being shared the most? Where does this traffic originate from? Is it organic or social media driven traffic?



The goal of these metrics is to show you where your content is shared and how you are reaching your online users. This can help you find new (and better) ways to promote your content. It can also provide ideas about using paid advertising or expanding your influence on other content distribution platforms.

Conversions

Finally, the last metric you want to focus on is conversions. A conversion is a desired action. While it is most commonly the case that a sale is considered a conversion, with blogging, it might be something different. For example, signing up for a newsletter or downloading free materials can be considered a conversion.

This metric should show a potential to grow as your blog grows. The ability to convert your visitors directly proves your influence thus shows you a growing power to persuade online visitors. This is an indicator of success, which is why conversions is the metric you should focus on as well.

CONVERSIONS

▼ Goals

Overview

Goal URLs

Reverse Goal Path

Funnel Visualization

Goal Flow

- ▶ Ecommerce
- ▶ Multi-Channel Funnels
- ▶ Attribution

DISCOVER

ADMIN

Together, all of these metrics help you calculate ROI and directly measure the profitability of your blogging strategy. Use a free tool such as [Google Analytics](#), to access your blog statistics and get the information about these and other metrics that help you evaluate the performance of your blog.

6

Integrating Blogging
into a Business
Strategy

6. Integrating Blogging into a Business Strategy

If you already have an online business or a website, this is a chapter that will show you how and why you should implement blogging into your business strategy.

What is business blogging?

Business blogging is a strategy used in online marketing where the goal is to use blogging to improve your online business. In this case, a blog becomes an online marketing tool for a company that uses it to support its business growth.

As a marketing tactic, business blogging brings many benefits to online businesses. The first, and the most prominent one, is generating traffic. Various studies have confirmed that companies that blog regularly generate more traffic and more visibility. Every time you publish a new blog post, you create more material for search engines to index, and you increase chances of these pages being shown in the search results. You also create an extra material to share on social media, in a newsletter, etc. Each new content material represents more value to your audience, and it helps you increase your online influence.

Once you have traffic, you also get an opportunity to convert that traffic into leads. One way to do so is by providing lead generation CTA within each blog post.

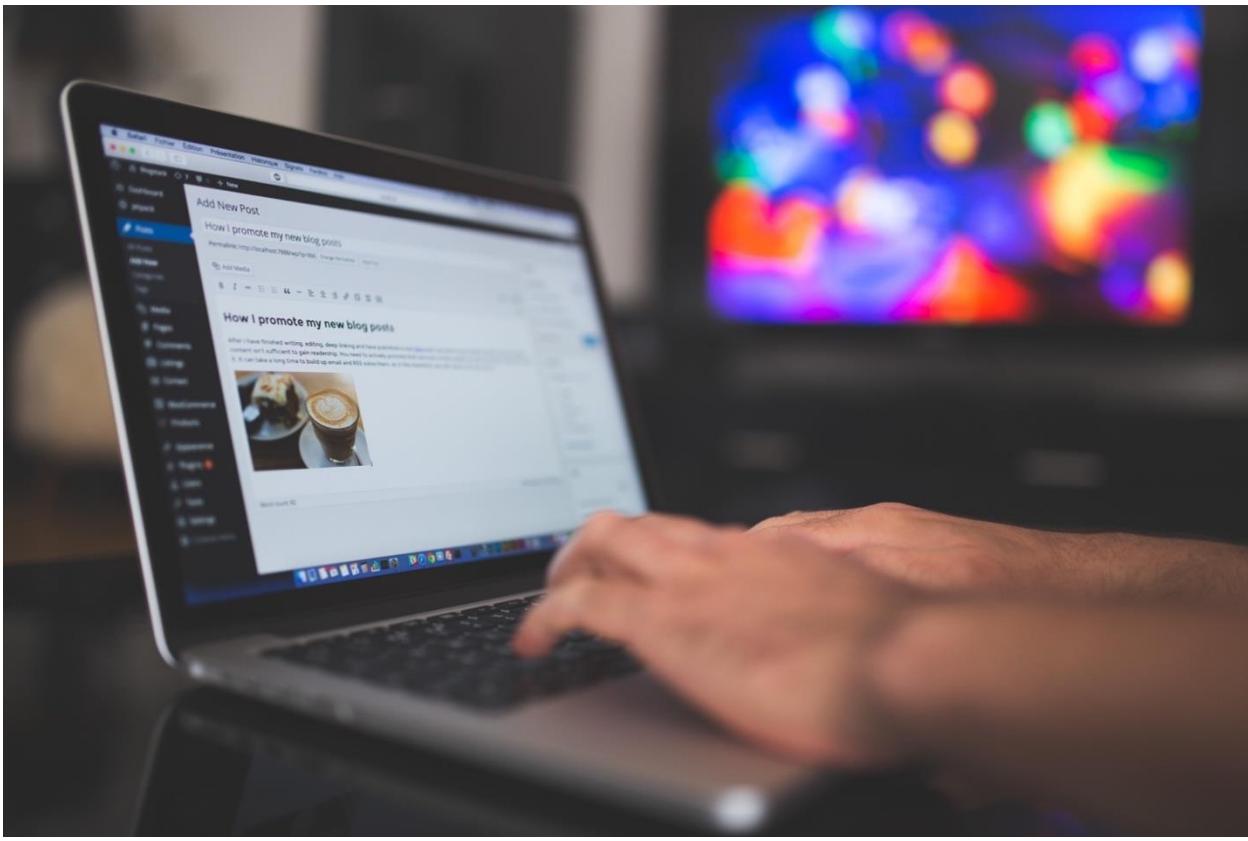


Image: <https://pixabay.com/en/wordpress-blogging-writing-typing-923188/>

Creating online presence

Blogging helps you create your online presence in multiple ways. To begin with, it helps you develop materials that can get your links in the search engine results. Increasing search engine visibility is one of the best ways to ensure more traffic and new potential leads. It also helps with increasing brand awareness.

The process of creating online presence includes presenting your company on multiple platforms, such as social media. In this sense, blogging becomes another media where you can present your company. Not only does this online presence help with providing more details about your company, but it also becomes a tool you can use to interact with your audience.

A self-hosted blog is an online presence that you can fully control. Unlike social networks or hosted blogging platforms such as Medium, where your presentation depends on the features and the layout provided by the network, with a self-hosted blog you can create a custom layout and install features you find relevant. This is very important to have in mind when designing a business presentation through a blog.

To create a blogging presence, start by having a blog that is an extension of your company website. Ideally, the URL should be www.yourcompanywebsite.com/blog.

The next thing you need to consider is blog design. Since one of the purposes of the company blog is to provide more information about your brand, the blog design should match the company website.

How to blog as your business

Business blogging is somewhat different from individual blogging. Regardless if you are only starting out your online business and thinking about implementing blogging, or you already have an online business, but you are just beginning to consider blogging as another strategy, you should explore the following aspects as crucial things for your business blogging.

Authorship

What is typical about blogging is the status of an author that may or may not be highlighted. The main reason for this is the goal of building an influencer figure. Bloggers who become respected and trusted by their audience gain this status of being influencers. Their activity is promoted through building a brand around their name.

When it comes to a business, there are several options to approach this authorship issue.

Individual blogging

The first approach relies on using a status of an individual in blogging. One of the members of your team (or one expert guest writer) can become a figure which will carry this task of creating a connection with the readers and promoting your brand through his or her own influence.

The main advantage of this strategy is the fact that an individual has an opportunity of becoming an expert, an influencer who will gain loyalty among the readers and thus increase the trust in your brand. The person can interact with the audience in the comments, through emails, etc. Another benefit is the fact that people are more likely to relate to a person, which increases the engagement level, trust, and credibility.

The main drawback of this individual blogging is the fact that the reputation is based on a single team member who may or may not be with your company long-term. This can cause issues when and if the blogger decides to leave the team.

Team blogging

The other approach companies use is team blogging. With this approach, the focus is on the content and company's team is signed as the author. In this case, the company decides not to focus on building the influence through personal brand, but instead, it is trying to benefit from the sole content.

The great thing about this strategy is the possibility to offer a lot of high-quality content which can be created by multiple authors. You can even completely outsource content creation and hire writers or agencies helping you with it.

This strategy lacks the personal character which might reduce its efficiency to connect with the audience and engage with them.

Both strategies have pros and cons. The choice should be based on your company's goals and objectives. As a general rule, small-sized companies are more prone to choose the team blogging approach, while large companies usually have a full-time employee who can focus on the task of individual blogging. Again, the choice is only based on your business and how you plan on integrating blogging with it.

Voice

Once you have the authorship all sorted out, it is time to focus on your blog's voice. As a business, you have to define what kind of an approach you want to use when addressing your target group. You might want to be formal, you might want to use a more colloquial language. You might want to share your own experience (helps with enabling the audience to identify with you more easily) or you might want to use statistic details and case studies for reference. It completely depends on your business and the type of audience you are trying to reach.

Always have in mind that your blog and its content represent your business. Your potential and current customers will read this content, so you want to give them something that they can understand, they can relate to. You need to write in a way to gain interest, deserve respect and credibility while fulfilling the need to provide useful information about the topic.

Purpose

To achieve success with blogging, you have to define goals that will affect blog setup, content creation, and content distribution. You need to determine a purpose to figure out how to implement blogging with your business.

Why do you start business blogging? Do you want to increase traffic visits? Do you want to use blogging to generate emails and increase sales through email marketing? Perhaps you want to create content that will help with social media promotion? Have you already tried blogging and have some first-hand experience?

Answering these questions will help you focus on concrete goals and explore ways you can reach them most effectively. Furthermore, having a purpose with blogging will also help incorporate it into overall business strategy.

Blogging strategy

Since successful blogging needs purpose and specific goals, a blogging strategy also becomes a necessity. Creating a strategy on how to use blogging in business helps you create a plan of actions, that will guide you through content creation and content promotion. This will help you tailor your content to the specific goals you want to achieve and think about blogging as a part of your business.

Like with setting up your own business, consider blogging as a project that you want to realize during a particular period with specific goals in mind. Planning business blogging should include everything related to blogging and how to shape your approach into a strategy that integrates well with your business.

Promotion strategy

Another aspect typical of blogging as a business is a promotion strategy. This includes planning blog promotion through various online channels, such as social media, search engine ads, etc. The main reason why promotion is important is the fact that it helps you increase the reach of your content.

At the moment you start blogging for business, you might or might not have certain traffic on your blog, or even a certain number of subscribers. Still, the number of visits is probably rather limited.

Your promotion strategy is going to help you increase these numbers from which your business will directly benefit. The primary goal of promotion strategy is to increase reach, but other goals can also be achieved this way, such as gaining new readers, lead generation, increasing sales or even brand awareness.

A promotion strategy for your blog should include:

- The channels you will use for promotion (both free and paid)

- The approach used in the promotion (language, style, etc.)
- The type of content you will promote (for example, you might use free promotion for all blog articles, while a selected few might be promoted through paid promotion)
- How you are going to promote content (some ideas include giveaways, coupons, organizing online contests, etc.)
- The promotion goals (these will help you evaluate the performance of the promotion strategy)
- The promotion budget (if you will be using paid channels to promote content, you can determine a budget you are comfortable allocating to this activity)

Evaluation

Finally, you need to monitor and evaluate the performance of your blog. Despite the fact that blogging is a strategy used by many businesses with numerous studies proving its efficiency, sometimes blogging might not bring the results you expect. Perhaps your goals were too ambitious to begin with, so you consistently fail at achieving them. Perhaps the content might not be performing well, or you have problems with the content promotion.

Even if you are successful at completing your goals, and you see benefits from blogging, evaluation of your approach to blogging is still a good way to find out how you can improve this strategy further.

When evaluating the performance of blogging as your business, you should focus on several aspects:

- Compare the metrics (Achieved vs. planned)
- Analyze the performance of a particular type of content (Is there any type of content that performs exceptionally well? Can you identify content that has the worst results regarding user engagement, social shares, click-through rate, etc.?)
- Determine which kind of content brings the highest performance and why (Does it have visual elements, does it include a free download or a coupon, is it promoted through paid promotion, etc.)

- Analyze the performance of channels used for content promotion (Explore engagement metrics, and focus on click-through rate to find out which channel brings the most traffic, or conversions.)
- Obtain feedback from your audience about content you share

All of this can help you determine which content performs best and why. It can also show you how promoting content in different ways can help with increasing its reach. The overall impression of this evaluation should be to detect what works best for your business. Find out which approach is the most effective one when it comes to blogging as your business.

How can a blog complement your website

As you will find out later on, blogging brings many benefits to a business. One of the main reasons for blogging as a business is to provide more information to your potential customers.

The company website provides information to all of the visitors, but this content is more static and general. Therefore, a blog is a perfect way to complement your website with more information and content that is more dynamic, which means it is regularly updated. A blog also allows you to implement an abundance of keyword-rich materials which is an ideal way to attract relevant search engine queries and position your blog among the top search engine results.

The content that can complement your website include:

- How-to articles
- Guides
- Product details and specification
- Product introduction
- Product comparison
- Demonstration of product features
- Information about the events you are organizing/participating in
- Company news and updates

Besides more information about products and product usage, the main distinction a blog can bring to your website is personalization. While website content is more across-the-board, blogging can bring that level of personalization necessary to create a bond with your visitors.

Using the status of an individual as a blog author can help you create content which is more individualized and targeted at specific visitors within your target group.

The bottom line is that blogging is a part of your business and it has a specific role in online marketing. As you will discover later on in this ebook, it is essential that blogging becomes a part of the overall planning, to be incorporated and coordinated with other segments of your business, to ensure the highest performance.

7

The Benefits of Blogging

7. The Benefits of Blogging

People often wonder if blogging is a necessary part of online business. Does it really make such a difference for a business to have or not to have a blog?

The main reason why blogging is highly recommended is the fact that it brings so many benefits for both individuals and companies. Also, numerous statistics and industry reports keep confirming the fact that companies that blog see a lot of benefits from this activity, regardless if they generate leads, increase traffic, or boost sales.



Image: <https://unsplash.com/photos/npxXWgQ33ZQ>

Why is blogging so popular?

With 91.8 million new posts published each month on WordPress alone, there is no doubt that blogging has become mainstream. It is an ideal outlet for everyone to have their voice heard. Apart from many benefits blogging can bring, there are three principal reasons why blogging has been growing in popularity over the past years.

Reach

Blogging gives you an opportunity to reach online users. It is an amazing asset for search engine optimization. With blogging you create content, and search engines love new content. This directly increases the reach of your blog and expands the influence of your brand on the internet.

Possibilities

With so many possibilities blogging provides, it is no wonder so many people blog. Starting from growing your traffic and reach, to building an entire career and becoming an influencer, blogging offers so many exciting possibilities. Exploring these possibilities is based on your goals and the vision of how you want to grow your blog and which directions are perfect for your development as a blogger (or blog owner).

Ease of use

Apart from an idea and the internet connection, you do not need anything else to start blogging today. The online blogging platforms and tools are incredibly user-friendly, enabling everyone to take up blogging as a hobby or start their new career. Additionally, you will find lots of online tutorials, guides, and courses to explore possibilities of blogging further.

Benefits of blogging

When talking about benefits of blogging, it is essential to differentiate between individuals who blog and companies. A lot of these benefits do overlap for both cases, but due to particular characteristics of blogging in both of these situations, some distinctions exist.

Benefits of blogging for individuals

Share your experience

Development of blogging has brought a unique opportunity for individuals to share their experience. Individuals can share insights on the topic or circumstances they have personally experienced. Not only does this become a great outlet for them to share knowledge, about both good and bad, but this kind of blogging is a way to truly make a difference. You get to affect people and help them with what they are going through, by sharing your own thoughts about the topic.

Share your knowledge

Besides experience, knowledge can be shared through blogging as well. If you are educated on a particular topic, and you believe some people are interested in learning, you can take up blogging and create your personal brand. You can become an expert on the topic. Apart from growing your influence as a blogger, this can open many additional opportunities for you, such as being invited to workshops, to speak at conferences, etc.

Become a better (published) author

The best way to improve as a writer is to write every day and to work on developing this skill consistently. Blogging can help you with growing as an author and improving your skills with every new post.

Additionally, you get to publish your works, without much effort. You do not need an editor or a publishing house. Your writing can instantly be available to all the online users when you start blogging. Of course, writers have an opportunity of growing their career through blogging and eventually being offered book deals, or other interesting collaborations with the people from their industry.

Start a business

A large percentage of well-known bloggers and influencers nowadays started their blog as a hobby. Blogging is a hobby that offers so many ways to grow and turn your hobby into a business. You can become a speaker, you can advertise your services through a blog, or you can even open up your online shop. There are plenty of opportunities to monetize your blog (as you will see in one of the following chapters).

Gain influence

As a blogger, you get a massive online audience you can reach through your content. Blogging enables you to gain trust and respect from the blog visitors. This influence opens up so many doors for you. Collaborations with brands, interviews with celebrities, or even books deals are only some of the opportunities that you can have as an established blogger.

Create an online community

A blog has that social aspect, allowing you to establish yourself as an author, but giving you an opportunity to chat with the readers at the same time. Encourage visitors to participate with engaging questions, ask them for their feedback, or to leave a comment. As your blog reach grows, so will the online community. Many readers will be eager to join the discussion and start

interacting with you, as well as with the other readers. Earning respect from this community is possible through quality content. Over time, this free community can grow into a premium club, which is another way you can start earning from your blog.

Benefits of blogging for businesses

Increase traffic

A blog provides content for your website. Ideally, this content is optimized to use keywords related to your business. The more content you have, the more indexed pages you will get. This results in improved organic search visibility because search engines will have more of your links stored in their database, which are then shown as a response to a particular search query. If you manage to get your website to come up as a result for many queries, you will increase website traffic. However, it is essential that those search queries are related to your content and your business.

Improve SEO

Blogging is beneficial for website optimization in multiple ways:

- Keywords - Having a blog gives you more content which you can optimize for the keywords that are relevant to your business.
- Relevancy - The more relevant visits you have, the more likely the search engines are to see your website as relevant for the specific topic. This will give your website a high-rank status and help with gaining reputation.
- Off-site SEO - Content of exceptional quality generate links, which is one of the most relevant metrics used to assess website's reputation through off-site SEO elements.
- Freshness - This is another factor that will help you with search engines because they love seeing new content added and the old being updated.

The improved SEO rank also includes long-tail search queries. There are fewer long-tail searches than single keyword searches. Still, long-tail keywords are considered to be higher-converting, which is why they are better for your overall website performance.

Build influence in the industry

Blogging helps you increase your influence by establishing yourself as an expert in the industry. A blog is a platform where you can share industry-related information, study reports, insights,

and guides your audience will find helpful. Building influence helps you increase trust. Online users start to identify your brand with a particular industry, they associate the brand with high quality. This way you already have an established connection with potential consumers, which can have a significant impact on their buying decision.

Create a personalized approach

Even amazingly presented website content (on the homepage or about us page) cannot give your business that personal touch that a blog can. Companies use blogs to add a personal side to their business, by sharing stories about the production process, about employees, events, etc. This approach is guaranteed to increase trust in your brand and enable visitors to relate to your brand.

Generate inbound links

Without a blog, you will have a hard time generating inbound links. Other blogs and influencers are less likely to link to a homepage of a business. On the other hand, if you have a useful guide for the industry you are in (for example a guide for starting a blog), you can expect many relevant web pages to link to this content. Many blogs that focus on the related topic will include such a link as a recommendation for their readers if they find it helpful and valuable. Not only are these links an important source of traffic, but they are also good for your website optimization.

Collect emails

More content increases the opportunity to collect emails. Increasing your audience is going to encourage more interest in your brand, allowing you an opportunity to collect emails and further develop this business-to-customer relationship through email marketing. You should make sure you use engaging CTAs and high-converting landing pages to collect more email addresses.

Increase sales

Finally, all of these benefits companies see through blogging accumulate to an increase in sales. More collected emails, better search engine visibility, increasing traffic, and gaining more influence are all factors that directly increase sales. This is how blogging becomes an asset in sales strategy of your company, helping you generate sales through blog content.

Are there any obstacles?

While the positive influence of blogging cannot be denied, there can be some obstacles to this strategy as well. Take a look at the three most common obstacles you will encounter and how you can overcome them.

Time-consuming

One of the biggest obstacles companies face is the lack of time to devote to blogging. A blog post takes a lot of time to write, edit, proofread, optimize, and publish. Blog management also requires time.

To prevent the lack of time becoming an issue that prevents you from blogging and exploring its potential, you could use several strategies to save/optimize your time:

- Hire freelance writers - Someone from outside the company can help you create content for your blog. It is essential that the person is knowledgeable about the industry, and that you still check content submitted by the writers.
- Guest blogging - Guest blogging is another way to obtain new content for your blog and keep up with the pace of regular publishing. You will have to make sure that you accept only relevant topics and content that will be beneficial for your audience. Guest blogging can help you diversify the topics and writing style on your blog while bringing fresh content on a regular basis.
- Create a plan and to-do list - Try to organize your writing more effectively. Plan your topics well and make sure you create a publishing calendar that you can regularly update. If you are unable to produce a new blog post each day, that is ok, just make sure you have some schedule for publishing.
- Learning with time - Writing will become easier and faster in time. As you get more experienced with the topic and the particular blog format, you will be able to produce more content in less time.

Challenging

Blogging can become a true challenge for companies that want to use this strategy. Besides the lack of time, companies might also lack the expertise to create high-quality content. They might

face difficulties when optimizing content, or they might simply fail at understanding what the customers need.

To help fight these challenges, it is important to recognize them on time and explore ways to solve them efficiently. Try to detect the obstacles that might be holding you back and preventing you from publishing content on your blog. You do not want to give up blogging at the sign of an obstacle. Instead, make sure you think about ways your company can overcome these obstacles.

Budget

This is a difficulty mostly associated with smaller companies that are unable to allocate a significant budget to blogging. Beside blog hosting, the budget can also include writers' fees, editors' fees, content creators' fee for visual content, paid content promotion and distribution, paid blogging tools and applications, etc. All of this can be a big burden for companies starting out and being unable to invest into blogging, before seeing any financial gain from blogging.

You can overcome this challenge by optimizing your blogging activity so that you can provide at least some content for your visitors. Even one blog post per week, or a guide once a month is better than no content at all. Also, try to accept guest bloggers who might want to create content for free (with a link back to their blog).

Although challenges do exist with blogging, one thing is for sure - benefits of blogging are numerous. As every beginning, starting out blogging can be quite difficult, stressful and there will be plenty of those moments when you are full of self-doubt. However, it is helpful to have a plan, a blogging strategy in place. With this strategy showing you the goals you want to work for and benefits you could eventually earn, you will feel more motivated to pursue your vision and shape this vision into a successful blog.

8

**Blogger Outreach and
Guest Blogging**

8. Blogger Outreach and Guest Blogging

Search engines play a major part in online user experience. Essentially, it is the search engines and their algorithms that decide which content to show in the result pages, and in which order. What this means is that bloggers have been looking for tactics and approaches that will help them create content that will improve their visibility and enable them to reach more online users.

Among many strategies to help them achieve this goal, blogger outreach and guest blogging are strategies that have shown great potential and enabled many blogs to expand their reach tremendously.



Image: <https://unsplash.com/photos/zlwAchjDirM>

What is blogger outreach?

Blogger outreach is a type of marketing campaign where you reach out to other bloggers to suggest a specific collaboration. For a business, blogging outreach is an opportunity to reach

bloggers with a proposal for collaboration. The goals can be promoting a product or service, sending out free examples hoping to get reviews, etc.

The goal of blogger outreach is to increase exposure. Working with bloggers enables you to reach their community and people who still might not have heard of your brand. It also gives you a chance to increase trust, because the new audience will get a recommendation from a person they follow. Successful bloggers are influencers, which means they have the power to influence their followers and their buying habits.

Benefits of blogger outreach

Your business can benefit from blogger outreach in multiple ways. Here are a couple of direct benefits you will notice after a blogger outreach campaign:

Expanding reach - Being promoted by an influential blogger, you get instant access to blogger's community and followers. This way, you expand the online reach, as more people will hear about you.

Increase brand interest - Regardless if people you are targeting have never heard of your brand, or they have, but still have not made a purchase, getting a recommendation from a blogger will undoubtedly spark some interest in your brand. Bloggers enjoy trust from their audience, and this audience is certainly going to be curious about the product they have chosen to feature.

Product promotion - Blogger outreach campaign is ideal for introducing new products or promoting a particular product from the existing range. In this case, the focus of your campaign is a particular product which will probably be featured on a single product page, which is promoted.

Boost sales - As you generate new visits and get more people looking you up, you will notice the sales going up as well. The main aspect you should focus on here is to have landing pages that convert well, as most visitors will arrive through the link posted by the blogger you are collaborating with.

What is guest blogging?

Guest blogging is another method for increasing traffic and exposure. Unlike blogger outreach, a method which is often used by companies and focused on collaborating, guest blogging is focused on bloggers and content creation.

If you are a guest blogger, you create content which will be shared on another blog or website, instead of yours. You will be credited for this work as the web page where the guest blog is posted will contain your name as the author, and probably a short bio section with a link to your blog.

Benefits of guest blogging

The benefits you can get as a guest blogger include:

- Increasing reach
- Getting inbound links
- Getting social media shares
- Being paid to write a guest blog
- Promoting yourself as an author
- Increasing your personal influence
- Expanding your reach to new audience
- Gaining new followers

If you are a blog accepting guest blogger, your goal is to find bloggers interested in writing for you. While you can pay bloggers to write a guest blog for your blog, you can also have guest bloggers submitting free articles, in which case all you need to do is to credit the author. The reasons, why accepting guest blogs is good, include the following:

- Diversifying your content
- Increasing the amount of content
- Featuring high-quality content written by experts
- Increasing the online exposure (as guest bloggers will share the post with their followers)

How to invite bloggers?

If you decide this is the strategy you wish to pursue, if you want to invite guest bloggers to create content for your blog, here is how the process works.

Identify the influencers

Start by identifying the influencers who would be a perfect match for your blog. This means that they have to be able to offer content that is really relevant to your blog. Explore their influence in the online world and to which extent you can benefit from working with such influencers. Take into account the number of social followers, the number of blog visitors (if available), the number of subscribers, etc. to assess how influential a blogger is and to compare several influencers.

Set up goals

Inviting guest bloggers is usually a part of a particular campaign. You want to set up goals, in terms of how many guest bloggers you want to accept. More importantly, you want to set up goals regarding the content they produce. For example, you define planned metrics about the post performance, such as social media shares, inbound links, etc. Evaluating the post performance and comparing the planned metrics with the results is going to help you identify the guest bloggers you want to work with again, as well as those collaborations you might want to skip next time the opportunity comes up.

Create an offer

When you know who you want to reach out to, create an offer they would be interested in. Use a personalized approach to create a custom message that is designed for a specific influencer. Sometimes a link back to their blog is good enough reason for them to accept guest blogging opportunity, but some bloggers (usually those with a greater following and thus more influence) might require this to be a paid post.

Start building a relationship

When you find influencers you want to have as guest bloggers, you can start building a relationship with them. Start following them on social media, comment on their blog post or offer feedback. The goal of this approach is to get to know the influencer first and then increase the chance of them accepting the offer. You could also skip this part and go straight to getting in touch.

Get in touch

Once you have the offer and you know exactly the person you want to get in touch with, it is time to send an email. When emailing a potential guest blogger, you should:

- Create a custom email and avoid using template messages

- Be well-informed about the person (for example, if they have just shared the news about signing a book deal, congratulate them)
- Provide more information about your business (they might not have heard about your business yet)
- Highlight the benefits for the guest blogger to increase their interest in the collaboration
- Send from your own domain
- Offer multiple ways for the person to contact you

How to get invited?

If you are a blogger looking for guest blogging opportunities or a company that wants one of the writers from the company team to be featured as a guest blogger, there are several things you should have in mind:

Do the research

Regardless if you are looking for guest blogging opportunities or you have just received an invitation to submit a guest blog for another blog, you should start by doing the research. Follow these steps to get all of the information necessary for guest blogging opportunities:

- Identify blogs where you want your article (and link) to be published
- Explore the guest blogging links of your competitors
- Find out about the guest blogging terms (topic, word count, style, etc.) for the blogs you want to work with
- Compile a list of topic ideas you would like to write for a guest blog

All of this is a foundation for discovering and leveraging guest blogging. Once you do the research, you will have more success at finding new opportunities to submit a guest blog.

Stick to your niche

Even though a guest blog will be published on a third-party blog, it still has to be your own work, something that your audience can recognize. Sticking to your niche enables you to create influence and authority for a specific topic, and this is something that reflects on guest blogging as well.

With guest blogging, you are trying to promote your content to the new audience, but it is essential that they are interested in the content you have to offer. This is why it is crucial that guest blogging is focused on your niche or something that is closely related because this ensures that the target group will be the same.

Focus on quality

Quality content should consistently be your goal. It does not matter where the content will be published, whether it will be featured on the homepage or promoted through an email campaign. Each blog post should deserve your full attention and the ability to deliver your best work. This is the way to build authority in the online world. Eventually, online readers will start to identify quality with your blog, as that is what they have been accustomed to see and expect from you. Building influence and authority through exceptional quality will help you with being accepted as a guest blogger later on.

Promote yourself as a guest blogger

Finally, one of the ways you can get invited to be a guest blogger is by promoting yourself. Besides good reputation and discovering new guest blogging opportunities, there are other ways you can promote yourself as a guest blogger:

- Have a page or a widget with information that you are interested in guest blogging opportunities
- Use an email campaign to reach potential blog owners who are accepting guest bloggers
- Join blogging communities to promote yourself as a guest blogger
- Use social networks to either include this information in the bio or share a status update with relevant hashtags

Blogger outreach and guest blogging platforms

If you want to explore opportunities these two tactics provide, you could join communities which feature these offers and an opportunity for bloggers and companies to connect.

[MyBlogGuest](#) - This is a free community offering blog owners and guest bloggers access to a network that connects them and helps them to increase exposure.

[BlogDash](#) - Specialized in blogger outreach, BlogDash is a platform that connects businesses with over 200,000 bloggers, helping them to build a relationship and work together on different projects.

[GroupHigh](#) - With blog search engine, list building, and segment tools, this platform provides an opportunity to find bloggers, influencers, and new content.

[PostJoint](#) - Connecting marketers who are trying to identify quality blogs, improve their content marketing and reach the new audience, with bloggers who offer fresh content, and are in pursue of a content monetization strategy, this platform represents an easy way for them to meet online.

[Blog Engage](#) - Blog Engage is a blogging community where bloggers can submit their blog posts to increase exposure and gain traffic. Building relationships with other bloggers on the platform helps with reaching more people inside the community. There are groups for the members with common interests.

9

What Is Vlogging?

9. What Is Vlogging?

Everyone is witnessing the remarkable growth of video on the internet. Just to illustrate this omnipresence of video, it is reported that 500 million people are watching videos on Facebook every day ([Source](#)). It is also important to add YouTube statistics. As the most popular video sharing platform, YouTube reports that one billion hours of videos are watched daily on this platform alone.

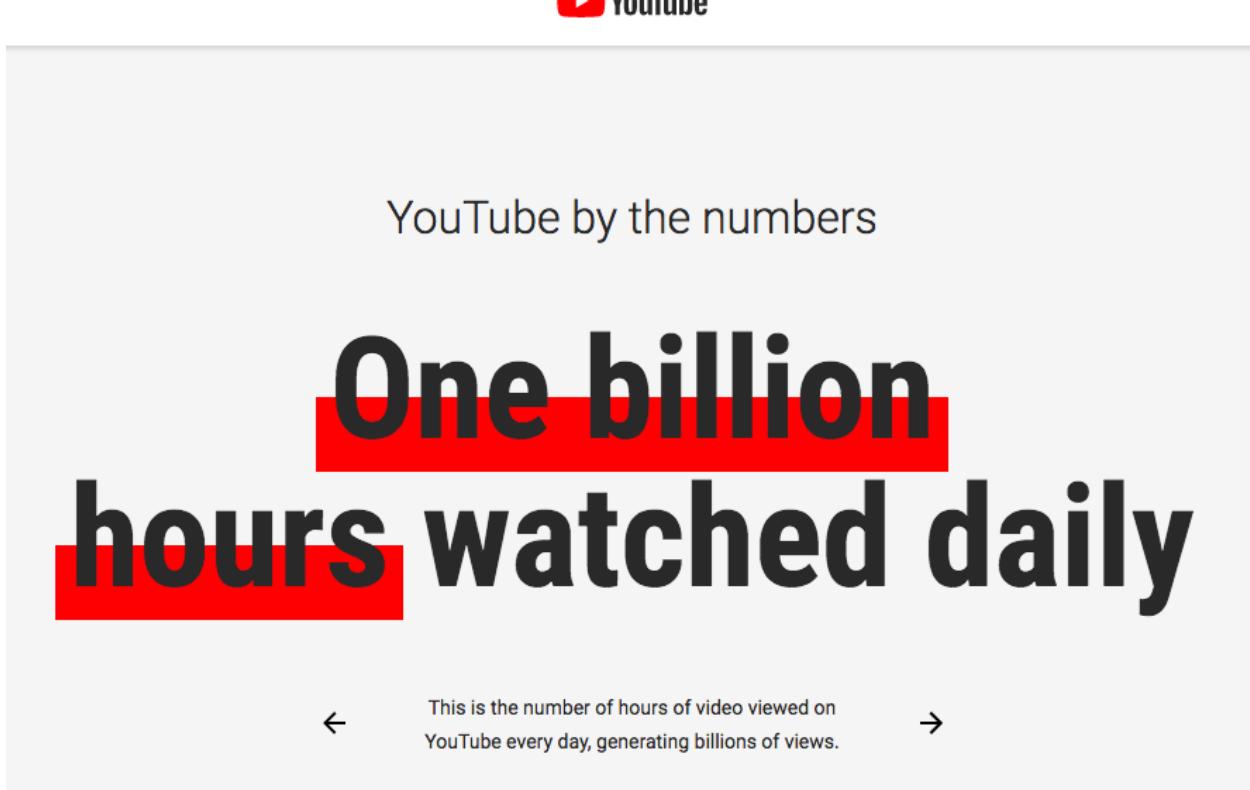


Image: <https://www.youtube.com/yt/about/press/>

Like with blogging, vlogging is a content format that has been affected by technology development. As soon as the technology necessary for video content production became widely available, video as a content format became increasingly used.



Image: <https://pixabay.com/en/phone-cell-cell-phone-cellphone-690091/>

What is a vlog?

Vlog is short for a video blog. It is a content format which uses video as the medium. Even though vlogging started in the early 2000s, it was not until the introduction of YouTube that vlogs became increasingly popular. Apart from YouTube, many CMS platforms have started integrating a video format enabling vloggers to publish their content easily.

Vlogging is quite similar to blogging in many aspects. In fact, many bloggers have become vloggers, and many vloggers also have a blog. The main distinction is the presentation of content. Although blogging has a lot of benefits and presents an amazing opportunity for creators to express themselves, vlogging gives an extra dimension to this presentation. Using video enables a more interactive experience and possibility to connect with the vlogger more deeply.

There is a variety of vlog topics and styles. We can differentiate between two main types of vlogs.

Recorded videos

These are the videos that are recorded by the vlogger, usually in a setting that is prepared. This kind of video can also be recorded in public, during events, performances, i.e., in the situation where the vlogger does not prepare the set. The topic and the style of this type of vlog can vary, so there can be many subtypes of recorded videos. Still, the main characteristic and the main advantage of such videos is the full control the vlogger has over the content that is created. Once the content is recorded, the vlogger has the time to edit the video before it is made public.

Live broadcasting

Live broadcasting vlogs are more spontaneous as they are not edited before publishing. Instead, they are broadcast in the moment of recording. A huge benefit of such vlogs is a possibility to broadcast events in real time. Live streaming also supports community interaction through live chat that allows an opportunity to involve the viewers in the moment of broadcasting. This could also be a drawback because there is no room for errors. The content cannot be edited later on, like with recorded videos.

Why is vlogging popular?

Many reasons have contributed to such massive popularity of vlogging.

Easy to create - Depending on the content idea and presentation, videos can be quite easy to create, especially live broadcasting vlogs. All you need is your phone, and you are ready to start. Of course, vlogs can involve a more complex setting than that, so extra lights or props can be used. If the video is recorded, video editing software is used to edit the material. Even though the video production can get advanced and complex, vlogging is essentially an easy-to-create type of content. Hence, its popularity and the number of vloggers which is continuously on the rise.

Vlogging is affordable - With no other equipment than your phone and no other software than YouTube, vlogging is a very affordable type of content. You can start vlogging with no budget at all. Just like with blogging, starting with a budget or investment can make a difference later on.

People love videos - Over 70 000 videos are viewed in 1 second on YouTube ([Source](#)). The video format is easy to digest, it is easy to view on the go, and it attracts more attention than written content. This is why people love videos.

Visual content performs better - Exploring blogging statistics, you will soon discover that visual content performs better. While most bloggers leverage the use of photos and use them to complement their written content, vlogs can do the same job, if not even better. Vlogs can be an excellent addition to your blog in the form of engaging content, while at the same time blogs can be a useful platform to promote your vlogs. This is how the two complement.

How to use vlogging in business?

Vlogging, like blogging, has opened up so many opportunities for people looking to build an online career. A lot of successful vloggers nowadays started this as a hobby, but have managed to turn this hobby into international fame, career, or online business.

However, if you are a business looking for ways to leverage vlogging in your business, here are some helpful ideas on how you can do so.

Vlog as your company

One way to use this format is to take up vlogging yourself. A couple of things you will have to think about are the following:

- Decide who the vlogger will be - Preferably, it should be one of the founders or team members who have been with the company the longest.
- Type of content you want to feature - Create a content strategy defining exactly what kind of content you want to create for your audience. This will help you coordinate vlogging with overall company goals.
- Vlog consistently - Vlogging helps you create an audience who will follow your activities through vlogs. To make sure you keep your audience engaged and for them to know what to expect, try to vlog consistently.

Benefits of vlogging as your company

This kind of an approach helps you make a connection with the audience. Unlike other ways to interact, such as email or social media profiles, vlogging provides a deeper connection with the audience. They can get to know you personally. You can also include them in the creative process, thus increasing the trust in your brand. Vlogging can help with highlighting your qualities and promoting your business to the online users. Furthermore, you have complete control over the content that is created and shared through a vlog.

Vlogging ideas for a business

If you are all out of ideas on how to use vlogging to promote your business, here are a couple of suggestions:

- Day-in-the-life video
- Follow-me-around video
- Broadcast of a live event (such as store opening, a meeting, a conference that you are hosting, etc.)
- Instructional (how-to) vlog
- An interview vlog
- Q&A video
- Behind the scene vlog

Work with vloggers

The alternative approach is to collaborate with vloggers on projects. The main advantage of this approach is that it requires much less involvement from you in the creative process. You do not need a vlogger, a strategy or equipment to record a vlog. Instead, you find a vlogger who can promote your business on your behalf.

In this case, either you can contact the vlogger to send the details about a possible collaborative project, or you can send products (provide free service) hoping to get the attention of the vlogger and being featured in one of the vlogs. The first method offers more control over the content and how the product/service is integrated into a vlog. As you discuss the project details, payment can also be one of the points you should focus on. On the other hand, the second method is a more spontaneous. You do not set any conditions, you simply send your products and hope to get a positive review.

Benefits of working with vloggers

The most evident advantage of this kind of vlogging is that you can work with popular vloggers and instantly get noticed by their followers. When starting on your own, you will have to work hard to get that many views. Being promoted by the vloggers can help you a lot with expanding your reach and establishing your brand on the market. To get this kind of recognition, you will have to offer a high-quality product. Since vloggers often enjoy respect among their followers, they will not promote just about anything. Also, some vloggers will feature brands only as part

of a paid promotion, which is something you should plan with your budget when implementing video format in your online marketing.

It is safe to say that vlogging is a format that gives so many opportunities for businesses. From involving the viewers in the creative process to showing a more personalized image of your brand, vlogging is an incredible strategy to use in the online promotion of your business. Explore how it can be implemented, find vloggers you could work with, and make sure you analyze the performance of vlogs to evaluate their role in an overall content marketing strategy.

10

Making a Living
Through Blogging

10. Making a Living Through Blogging

From a hobby popularized during the early 2000s to one of the most desirable careers of the 2010s, blogging has opened up so many opportunities for people to earn money online. Today, a lot of blogs are created as businesses, with making money through blogging being one of the goals from the start. The opportunities depend on the type of blog, the language you write in and the audience you are targeting. However, there are a couple of commonly used tactics to make a living through blogging, which are the ones you should explore first.



Image: <https://pixabay.com/en/hand-type-keyboard-money-finance-2722104/>

Blog monetization tactics

Blog monetization tactics enable you to cash in on your blog popularity in multiple ways. When you first start blogging, these might not seem as profitable, but the number of visits is crucial for the success of these tactics. The more visitors you can attract, the more likely you are to earn money from these tactics.

Affiliate marketing

Affiliate marketing is a very popular monetization tactic for bloggers who do not have products of their own to sell. Instead, they recommend and link to the products on third-party websites in exchange for a percentage of the sale.

In affiliate marketing, there are two roles. Merchants, i.e., those who own the product or service that is promoted and affiliates, who promote those products or services. Bloggers are affiliates. They join an affiliate program, obtain affiliate links and promote them through the blog content. Once the blog visitor clicks on the affiliate link, this is recorded using cookies. This way, the blogger is attributed the conversion, and the merchant then pays out the agreed commission, which is a percentage of the sale price. In this case, the blog visitors do not have any additional cost. The blogger's income is based on the profit shared by the merchant in exchange for the promotion.

When you decide to use affiliate marketing to monetize your blog, these are the aspects you should have in mind:

- Promote the products/services that your audience will be interested in to maximize the number of conversions
- Promote the products/services you can vouch for (i.e., high-quality is a norm)
- Join affiliate programs that offer the best terms (the highest commission, the longest cookie life, etc.)

WHAT ARE THE BEST TRAVEL BACKPACKS FOR EASY TRAVELING?

BY CRAIG | JUNE 23, 2017 THIS POST CONTAINS AFFILIATE LINKS



List of the best travel backpacks

Image: <https://www.ytravelblog.com/travel-backpacks-for-traveling/>

Sponsored posts

The idea with this blog monetization tactic is to create a blog post which will promote a particular business, product, or service. You as a blogger will receive an agreed commission for this post. Bloggers usually choose to include a disclaimer within the post notifying the readers that the content is paid by a specific brand featured in the post. However, this is not obligatory.

There are a lot of opportunities when it comes to blog monetization through sponsored posts. Bloggers usually have fixed rates for a sponsored post, and they often prefer writing the content themselves. Still, the blogger and the brand can agree on different terms. For example, the brand might provide content or have a say in the content created by the blogger. Or instead of monetary compensation, the blogger can be given the product or granted free access to the service.

This type of post is very popular among travel bloggers who receive free accommodation in exchange for a post on their blog about the accommodation in question.

Each sponsored post has a link back to the website where the product (or service) can be bought. Unlike affiliate marketing, where the clicks on the links are tracked, based on which the commission is paid out, with sponsored post it is irrelevant whether the readers will click the link or not. The blogger is paid for the actual post with the link and the content about the product (or service) that is promoted, regardless of the number of visits and conversions.

The screenshot shows a blog post from 'Ordinary Traveler'. The header features the blog's name in a stylized red font with palm trees on either side, and a subtitle 'Travel Advice & Photography for the Adventurer in Everyone'. Below the header is a large, light gray rectangular area containing the main content. The title of the post is 'How to Automatically Back Up Your iPhone When Traveling', written in a large, bold, black serif font. Below the title, the author is listed as 'By CHRISTY WOODROW'. A large, vertical photograph occupies most of the center of the content area. It depicts a person with long, wavy hair, seen from behind, sitting in a blue hammock. They are looking out over a tropical beach at sunset, with palm trees and a small boat visible in the distance. At the bottom of the content area, there are four small colored squares with social media icons: a blue square with a white 'f' for Facebook, a cyan square with a white bird for Twitter, a red square with a white 'G+' for Google+, and a pink square with a white 'P' for Pinterest. Below the content area is a blue-bordered box containing a quote: *"This is a sponsored conversation written by me on behalf of SanDisk. As always, the opinions and text are 100% mine."*

Image: <https://ordinarytraveler.com/automatically-back-up-iphone>

AdSense

Once a commonly used way to earn passive income through blogging, AdSense is not the most profitable strategy at the moment, but still offers a chance to monetize your visits by including ad space on your blog. It is a service offered by Google, which means that companies that want to advertise with Google AdWords program are the advertisers who will bid for the space on your blog. The ads are displayed for both desktop and mobile users.

Google uses complex algorithms to determine which ads will appear to your blog visitors and when. Since the system is designed to maximize profit, it will automatically select ads that are most relevant to your visitors, ensuring the highest conversion rate. You do not have a direct say in which ads will be posted on your blog and which will not, however you have the option of selecting and deselecting ads based on categories (more on this later).

Joining the AdSense program allows you a certain level of control. You choose where the ads appear on your blog, and you format the style of the ad to match your blog. You can choose categories of ads you want to allow on your blog. You can even block the ads you do not want your visitors to see. You earn money when the ads are seen or clicked, depending on the type of campaign.

To get started with AdSense, you will need:

- A Google account
- Blog with original content that complies with the [program policies](#)
- A phone number and a mailing address, so you can get paid

Payments are sent once you [reach a minimum amount](#), which is determined by the reporting currency. You can monitor earnings through an app which includes alerts, performance reports, etc.

SEO • TOOLS & ANALYTICS | 5 hours ago

10 Easy Ways to Use Google Trends for Better SEO



Chuck Price



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Banners

Another way to use blog space to earn money is to offer a banner space for sale. In this case, you get contacted by companies interested in having their banner placed on your blog in exchange for payment. This type of advertising is similar to AdSense visually. Both have a banner displayed on your blog.

The main difference is that AdSense offers dynamic ads which constantly change. Also, the amount of profit earned this way is cumulative. On the other hand, when you sell banner space on your blog, you will have the same banner displayed all the time during the period the contract between you and the company is active. The same banner will be shown to all the users at any moment they visit the blog. The banner can be featured on the home page, on specific blog pages, or even on all blog pages.

In terms of income, you earn a fixed income from the company interested in advertising this way, usually paid in advance.

Another alternative is to have a banner which will also feature an affiliate link. In this case, you would earn through affiliate marketing, but instead of a text link, you will attach the link to the image.

DRIVEN BY DECOR

home about house tour projects advertise contact shop

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decked + styled christmas tour: my 2017 holiday home

LAST UPDATED: DECEMBER 11, 2017 BY KRIS JARRETT



It's my favorite time of year to tour you around my home – there's nothing like having it all decked out for the holidays! There's a lot going on at our house right now (more on that at the end...) so I kept things a little simpler than previous years but no less cozy and festive! I'm excited to join the talented Decked + Styled crew led by our host Bree of ZDesign at Home and have several gorgeous homes I'll be sending you on to so settle in and take a break from the holiday madness to enjoy it [...]



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get new posts by email

CLICK HERE TO SIGN UP!

shop my favorites!



style.me/A-n/ctcBrm7wbe_

Image: <https://www.drivenbydecor.com/>

With both Google AdSense and banner advertising, it is helpful to place the ad in a position that will attract the most views/clicks. This is why banners are usually placed strategically, often below the main menu and before the blog content. You can always experiment with placing the banner in different locations on your website, to see, which position converts the best.

Email marketing

Email marketing as a strategy in online marketing is known to have the highest conversion rate. What this means is that you are more likely to earn income through email marketing than through other types of online promotion. Of course, there are a couple of conditions that need to be met for an email campaign to be successful:

- Have a relevant mailing list
- Segment the mailing list
- Create a good reputation as a sender
- Write an email that is convincing and trustworthy
- Promote high-quality and relevant products

This is how you can earn with email marketing. It all starts with your blog.

You will need some original content of high quality that will attract your readers. They will then sign up for your newsletter. Besides a signup button, you can use other lead generation strategies, such as free download, organizing a giveaway, etc. Once you have the email addresses of your blog visitors, this gives you a chance to create a more personalized approach with them through emails. Becoming a respectable sender means that your blog readers are likely to open and read your emails. This means that you can reach them. Have in mind that each person sends and receives more than 200 emails per day ([Source](#)). It is difficult to reach email recipients. The more success you have at this, the more profitable your email marketing strategy will be.

Two of the most popular strategies you can use to monetize your email marketing campaign:

- Promote a product (and get paid to do so)
- Affiliate links

Email marketing is connected with blogging in the sense that you generate email addresses through your blog. Blogging helps you create a base of subscribers, and this is where the blogging strategy ends, and email marketing begins as another segment of marketing allowing you to reach and convert online users.

How to turn your blog into a business

All of the previous monetization tactics rely on the promotion of other businesses. While this type of income collection offers a lot of benefits as you do not need to have any investment or be involved in the production process, it comes with some drawbacks as well. Firstly, you depend on other businesses. Once they stop selling, you stop earning. The income you can make is also pretty limited. You will need thousands and thousands of visitors to see any income from AdSense for example. This can become a real obstacle for blogs that are starting out.

An alternative is to try to turn your blog into a business. This can be implemented from the first day your blog is live, but it can also be something that you will eventually introduce, once you gain reputation and determine that blogging is a career that you want to focus on.

Creating a product/software

The first idea is to create a product (or software) on your own. Even though it is not a strategy doable for every blog, it is something that can offer a potential to earn a decent income through blogging. The product you decide to create should be relevant to your target group. The main obstacle could be an investment needed for creating the product. The possibility to

fully control the production process and sales strategy, without profit sharing is a motivation for many blog owners to consider this strategy.

Offering a service

If you cannot create a product and you are in a niche where that would not be profitable, you can think about a type of service you can provide. It is usually something related to consulting, offering professional assistance, such as legal or medical advice, etc. Again, having complete control over the service is something that ensures that the blogger maintains independence while having an opportunity to earn from his or her online influence. Unlike creating a product, offering a paid service on your blog does not require a monetary investment. What it does require is detailed planning about the service you will offer, the terms for the users and the schedule of your availability (or an employee who would do the tasks for you).

Produce merchandise

The third alternative would be creating merchandise. This is a strategy commonly used by influencers who have a significant following. It is also rather popular among young online users. A good thing about this strategy is that you offer creative input on the merchandise design, but you do not have to be responsible for the actual production. Instead, you hire a company who will manufacture the actual products for you with your logo or brand name displayed. Of course, in this case, it would be necessary to share the profit with the manufacturer.

Write an ebook

Having in mind that you are a blogger, it is safe to say that you are a writer as well. You write on your blog which means writing an ebook (or an actual book) can be an option you can pursue to earn money from your blog. Publishing an ebook is much easier because you do not need to seek official publishers. Also, an ebook is offered as a digital download, which means that the location is not a barrier. Publishing a book involves a more complicated process, starting with having a publisher. Still, both options are great ways for bloggers to turn their skill and love for writing into a product that they can sell through the blog.

Open a store

Your blog can gradually evolve into an online store. Here you can sell your own products, merchandise, or even products from other manufacturers. It is a strategy that offers a lot of options for many different types of bloggers to earn by selling products. However, running and managing an online store involves a lot of work, requires extensive knowledge about e-

commerce and requires constant online promotion, which are all the tasks that can distract you from your primary focus, i.e., blogging.

Create an online course

If you are a blogger, expert in a certain field, creating an online course is another strategy to monetize your expertise and online influence. The topic of the course needs to be something that your audience will find relevant and can benefit from. It is a form of passive income because you will invest time into creating a course and then you can profit from it in the years to come. However, some topics might require the course to be updated from time to time. You will also need to work on promoting the course, most commonly using other online marketing strategies, such as search engine marketing or social media promotion.

Tips to help you boost the profit from blogging

The strategies above offer multiple ideas to turn blogging into a business and earn from it. Still, there are a couple of tips to help you boost your income, regardless of the strategy you choose for blog monetization.

Consider a long-term strategy

When you think about the best way to monetize your blog, think in the long run. Consider how you want your blog to grow and evolve, to make sure that this monetization tactic is really the way to go forward. For example, you should not use a sponsored post strategy to promote an ebook about your niche if your long-term goal is to write an ebook yourself. Additionally, expecting a windfall, months after you start a blog, is usually unrealistic. As you probably already know: "Rome wasn't built in a day". Bloggers often need time to generate visits, to gain influence and to eventually turn that influence into income. Hence the need to consider your long-term strategy.

Use multiple monetization tactics

There is no rule saying that you can only use one monetization tactic. Instead, consider all of the strategies you can benefit from. What is crucial when selecting a monetization tactic is profitability. If you realize that several monetization tactics can be profitable, test them all and select those, which give the best results for maximizing your income through blogging.

Focus on your niche

Just like with creating blogging content, choosing a niche of the products you promote is very important. It gives you a better chance of tailoring your content to your target group. When

you use monetization tactics, make sure you only use those that enable you to stay in your niche and keep targeting your blog audience. Relevant products or services you are promoting have more chance of converting your visitors and thus earning you profit.

Build a community

Building a community is a very important step in defining your online influence. A community is more than just blog readers. Those are the readers that are genuinely interested in your content, they respect you, and they take the time to participate in the community. They are also the highest-converting visitors, helping you increase your profit through different monetization tactics. Building a community starts with your blog, but other platforms can be used for interaction as well, such as a comment plugin, Facebook groups, emails, live chat sessions, etc. Community access can be free, with an option to promote content and products to members.

Another way to monetize the community is to create a premium club. The users will have to pay a membership fee to join, after which they get access to specific perks, such as consultation, exclusive materials, downloadable content, discounts, etc.

It is important to have in mind that each of these monetization strategies requires time to plan and implement. Although this is a necessary step, it is not something that should disrupt your blogging strategy. Also, you should not overwhelm your readers with selling all sort of things and a ton of promotional content. They are your blog readers (and supporters) first, and then your customers.

Still, monetization tactics are an essential part of blogging because they enable bloggers to earn their living through blogging and focus all of their time on their blog. They can quit their job that was supporting them as soon as the blog's monetization tactics can replace this income. This gives more freedom to bloggers and an opportunity to turn blogging into a full-time, profitable career.

11

Tips to Help You Run a
Successful Blog

11. Tips to Help You Run a Successful Blog

There are over 100 million blogs online, and they cannot all be successful. Some of the blogs have a good start, and then they simply can no longer cope with their competitors. Some bloggers give up when they face obstacles or might get discouraged by a slow start.



Image: <https://www.pexels.com/photo/accomplishment-action-adult-adventure-372098/>

To make sure you stay motivated and you continue optimizing your blog like successful bloggers do, follow these tips:

Have a responsive blog

Almost half of your blog visitors will arrive from mobile devices nowadays. The percentage will increase in the coming years. What it means is that responsive blog design is a must if you want your blog to be successful. You have to publish content that is mobile-friendly, to make sure you offer the same user experience to both desktop and mobile users.

Blog responsiveness is often associated with blog speed as well. A responsive blog is the one that loads fast, so this is another aspect to take into account when thinking about blog responsiveness. Things that might be slowing your blog speed include:

- Image size
- Image format
- Slow server
- Too many plugins
- Coding issues
- Not using browser caching

Publish consistently

Consistency in publishing a blog is necessary to maintain your readership. Blogs now have the status newspapers once did. They provide a daily dose of entertainment, fun, news, latest updates, industry news, creative ideas, etc. If someone becomes your regular visitor, that person expects the blog to be regularly updated. After all, why would they visit again if it were not for the new content?

Most marketing experts agree that consistency in publishing is important, but what they do not agree upon is the pace at which you should publish. There is no official recommendation on an ideal publishing pace. However, it is worth reflecting upon one statistic from this book's chapter 1, where it is stated that companies that publish more content (16+ blog posts per month) get more traffic (3.5x more).

Try to create and publish as frequently as you can. However, try to maintain a bit of predictability so the readers can expect your post. For example, if you go for one post a week, choose a specific day when you publish.

Work on building influence

If you want to become a blogger who is also an influencer, you will need to develop a personalized approach and find new ways to connect with your audience. For starters, create author profiles for each author on your blog. Each author profile should have a picture and additional information.

Other factors that can help you build your influence include:

- Gaining trust among online users

- Providing accurate and up-to-date information
- Publishing regularly and sticking to your niche
- Extending your influence to the social networks

Make contacts

Making contacts is another way to help you run a successful blog. These connections help you find new collaboration opportunities, new ideas or simply get someone to exchange experience about blogging and pitfalls you might come across. Although contacts from your niche are the people you want to focus on, always try to extend your influence. You never know how lucrative these connections might turn out to be.

Start a newsletter

One of the most powerful tools of every blogger is his or her mailing list. This is why you should start a newsletter. It can help you encourage people to apply and stay in touch with you through emails. Offering some exclusive materials and insights is a helpful way to encourage more sign-ups.

Additionally, email marketing can become another medium to monetize your blog, especially if you have a great reputation and influence among your subscribers.

Engage through social networks

Social networks are one of the ways you can increase traffic to your blog. Start by sharing your blog posts on the social media accounts you manage. Each social media post should have text added to it, as well as an image (or a video). These will help you engage your users and encourage them to click on the link to read the full article, which they can find on your blog.

Unlike search engines, where you are likely to reach users who look for specific terms that take them to your content, social networks help with reaching users without them initiating the search. While organic reach on social media has its limitations, and sometimes even those who follow you might not receive your status updates in their news feed, paid reach on social media can always be used as an alternative. With advanced targeting options and engaging CTAs (CTA = Call To Action), boosting the reach of your status updates through paid campaigns can significantly help you increase engagement on social networks and bring traffic to your blog.

Optimize your blog with the right plugins

Plugins are an absolute necessity of any successful blog, as they enhance its performance and add useful features that are not a part of the basic blogging platform. This is why you should explore the plugins available for your blogging platform and install those you will find most helpful for your type of blog.

One thing is important to have in mind. Plugins can, and often do, slow down your blog. Still, they provide some features you cannot live without. The ideal solution is to install only those plugins that you genuinely use. Also, make sure you install new, updated versions of those plugins as soon as they are available.

Consider security before it is too late

Security is an important part of having a blog. You want your content to stay secure and available to online users. The possibility of your blog being hacked always exists, but there are a few things you can do to increase security before that happens.

- Secure the login details
- Hide the information about the version of the CMS you are using
- Backup your website regularly
- Be cautious when installing plugins
- Keep your CMS platform and all the plugins updated
- Get an SSL certificate for your blog

Use catchy titles

Titles can help you a lot with getting organic traffic from the search engines. You should do some research before you decide on a title.

- Determine the focus keyword you want to use
- Explore the search engines to avoid using a title that already exists
- Use online tools to get title ideas and optimize your title

Besides their effect on search engines, blog titles are also the most prominent part when sharing a blog post on social media.

The main purpose of the title is to draw attention, to encourage people to click on the link and start reading the article. Therefore, think about these goals when choosing a title for your next blog article.

Format to enhance readability

How the blog content looks is just as important as the message you convey with it. When the users click on a link to read your article, they will first quickly skim through the text. For them, it is essential that the article is readable. You will achieve this with:

- Headings
- Bold and italic text
- Bullets
- Short paragraphs

When they skim the text, they can get the gist. In fact, some visitors will be happy with the gist and will not even bother reading the whole thing. However, presenting the content in a reader-friendly way, you increase the chance of people reading it. When you organize information in logical units, i.e., paragraphs, and highlight the most important things, you provide an organized message and provide better reader experience. Those who are reading will be able to keep up with the flow of the text and to remember the key aspects of it.

Proofread all your posts over and over again

Proofreading is an absolute must for all your content, including the about us page, contact page, etc. You want to present content of high quality to your readers, which also means that this content should be free of typos and any mistakes. Errors leave a negative impression because the article might seem written in haste. This kind of attitude does not work well for you and your credibility, because it will seem that you do not care too much about the content you have published, nor do you see it valuable. And if you see it that way, your readers might start too.

You should proofread the content yourself, or hire someone to do that for you. You can even use software that detects minor errors and typos.

Avoid cluttering your blog

Think about how each blog page looks like. First, there is a top part which usually features the main menu, or featured articles. Then there is the article page. You might also have content in

the sidebar, in the footer, etc. You can also have a pop-up window, usually with a CTA (CTA = Call To Action).

Although these are all possible places to show off content or even promote some ads, try to avoid cluttering your blog. You want the focus of your readers to be the article they are about to read. Limit the design of the page to only the content that is the most relevant to the readers. For example, you might keep the pop-up that helps you generate emails, but you might want to lose the sidebar ad that hardly gets any clicks. You can test different approaches, and see what works best for you.

Get to know your readers to create better content

When starting out, you will focus on the content you think your audience will find most helpful and most interesting. As you start getting visitors, you will get a chance to know them better which will enable you to create better content. For you to succeed in this, try using several methods:

- Ask your readers how useful that content is. Can it be applied to their business? To their life? Etc. These kind of questions are usually added at the end of the article
- Start interaction with your readers in the comments section, which is usually found below the article, to find out their opinion
- Conduct a survey asking questions that will help you get to know your readers
- Send an email asking subscribers questions directly or asking them to participate in a survey
- Analyze the statistics and detect the articles with the best statistics (the highest conversion rate, the longest session duration, etc.)

The content you create is designed for your readers and for that content to achieve the best performance, it needs to be tailored to appeal to your audience. As much as you think you know what useful content is for your audience, you might be surprised by the results. Also, this is a handy way to get some new ideas, when you have trouble finding new topics to write about. Listening and learning from your target audience is never a bad thing.

Be patient and realistic when setting up goals

You want your blog to be successful. Each blogger does. But not everyone makes it. Not everyone manages to turn blogging into a profitable career. This is why you have to be realistic

when starting out. You should not get carried away by examples of bloggers, who made it really fast. Also, do not get discouraged by a slow start.

Instead, when you start a blog, set up goals. Try to be as realistic as possible. Even though it might be difficult for you to foresee what you can expect in a month or two, try to determine some achievements you want to reach. This should all be a part of your blogging strategy. The goals you want to achieve should then be used as a guideline to develop your strategy and use the methods that will help you achieve your goals.

Also, have in mind that it takes time for a blog to start off. Once you hit that live button, there might be days before you see any visits. It takes time for search engines to index the new pages, and even more time to reach page 1 in Google, Bing or one of the other search engines. It takes time for those pages to reach your online users.

Implementing different promotional strategies will help you with spreading the word about your blog and achieving your goals.

Keep an eye on the statistics

Blog statistics provide a glimpse into how your readers are interacting with the content. The information you get this way include the following:

- Data about the readers (location, demographics, etc.)
- Data about the visit (session duration, page viewed per visit, etc.)
- How the visitors interact with the content (which pages they click on, which content they share, download, etc.)

All of these details are helpful to determine what kind of content performs best, as well as how the readers are consuming the content. You might notice that longer posts get more visits, or that shorter posts generate more leads. The idea is to find out more about your blog through the statistics and to use that knowledge to create even better-performing content.

12

Mistakes to Avoid When Blogging

12. Mistakes to Avoid When Blogging

As content marketing is taking over and blogging has become a strategy used by almost every company nowadays, big or small, the amount of content published online gets larger by the minute. And in that massive pool of blogs, it does take a lot of work to get to the top.

However, there are a few mistakes that might destine your blog to fail even before you get any chance of succeeding. Try to detect those mistakes before it is too late.



Image: <https://unsplash.com/photos/-Cmz06-0btw>

Writing without thinking about your target group

Bloggers who do not have some basic knowledge about internet marketing and the digital world in general, often make this oversight. They mistakenly believe that trying to reach everyone online is the best way to maximize the reach of their blog. So instead of having a target group, they write content for everyone.

This will lead to absolute chaos on your blog. One day you might have an article about blogging, the other about fitness gear, and the next one you might end up with giving tips on how to get organized.

The main question you should ask yourself is what kind of a goal you want to achieve with this kind of content? What kind of visitors will you attract with this content? How will you be able to turn your blogging strategy into a profitable blog, when you do not even know who you are addressing it to?

Solution:

Determining the target group should be one of the first tasks when you start a blog. Ask yourself a question “Who do I want to reach?” Try to be as specific as possible. For example, if you say that your target group is men, that is still too broad. *“Men between 30 and 50”*, *“Men who play recreational tennis”*, or *“Men who work in marketing”* are much better definitions of your target group. Narrowing down the group of people you address gives you more possibility to create a personalized approach and tailor your blog content with this audience in mind.

Neglecting online promotion and content distribution

Being a blogger does not mean that your job is complete once you publish your blog post. Another trap that beginner bloggers can fall into, is writing content without any promotion. A blogger is not only a writer. A successful blogger is also a marketer (at least a rookie marketer, with some understanding of online marketing).

If you publish content without any promotion from your end, you solely depend on organic traffic and accidental visits. You hope for SEO and social media to bring you traffic without any work on your part. This kind of blogging can seriously harm your chances of succeeding as a blogger. Not only will you see low results from this, but it will probably have a negative influence on you. You will feel discouraged, and this might jeopardize your future blogging plans.

Solution:

To prevent this from happening to you, explore online promotion and content distribution strategies from day one. Once your first article is live, share it on your social media accounts. That is a start. As you grow your audience and traffic, you will use other channels to share your content:

- Search engine advertising (such as Google AdWords)

- Social media advertising
- Social media promotions (competitions, giveaways, etc.)
- Newsletter
- Blogger outreach

This kind of approach will help you increase the reach of your content and thus help you with achieving your goals.

Not creating a mailing list

Most bloggers look for ways to monetize their blog. One of the most profitable strategies that can help them with that is email marketing. This is why it is essential to start creating a mailing list from day one.

Some bloggers believe that they first need to have a strong influence and reputation before they can start collecting emails from their audience. This is not true, and this kind of thinking can only cause a massive amount of traffic to go by without any benefits.

Solution:

The first step is adding a subscribe button to your website. Along with this, try to create a regular schedule for your newsletter and offer exclusive content sent in emails as a way to motivate visitors to subscribe.

The second strategy that is also very effective is having lead magnets on your blog pages. These are usually featured in the blog post, as an offer for the readers. A lead magnet is something the readers will benefit from, something they will see valuable enough to leave their email address.

To make the best out of your mailing list, explore the opportunities of email marketing, create engaging campaigns and newsletters, and segment your subscribers to increase the performance of your emails.

Blogging without any goal or strategy

Blogging without any goals or strategy can doom you to fail from the beginning. Writing is a creative process, and as such, it should deserve a certain freedom for you to develop the topic. Still, you have a specific purpose to fulfill with that content. You have specific readers you are trying to reach.

Solution:

When you start blogging, creating a strategy with concrete goals is a recommended step. Then, as you start writing each blog post, you have this guideline that will help you define your voice, shape your approach and maintain the attitude that your content is truly relevant to your audience.

It will help you discipline yourself to create each blog post with a purpose, and it will bring you one step closer to fulfilling your blogging goals.

Being afraid of criticism

Most bloggers are nervous anticipating the feedback. They are afraid they will be criticized. This is something that can hold back a lot of bloggers from succeeding. The idea of being criticized publicly can be too overwhelming for some even to start blogging. Or even if they do, they do it under a pseudonym or without revealing too much information about themselves in the about us section.

There will always be people who are quick to judge. You will always come across people who spread negativity online hiding behind their social profiles. As a blogger, there is not much you can do about that.

Solution:

What you can do is to stop being afraid. Yes, a certain part of those providing feedback will be criticizing you and your content. However, try to listen to this criticism. Not all of the negative comments are those spread by haters. Consider that the person criticizing you might have a point. It might help you redefine your approach or pay attention to some specific aspects of your content.

As for the haters (or so-called trolls), just ignore these comments, and don't take them personally, as they are not constructive nor are they based on any real ground.

Finally, remember that most comments and interaction, which bloggers receive is usually positive. Those who do not like your content do not bother visiting or leaving a comment. Knowing this increases the level of motivation and helps with staying focused on your blogging goals.

Choosing a free blog to avoid technical issues

As you have seen, there are many opportunities to start a blog. Those who are only starting blogging often choose free versions and hosted blogging platforms. It is true that blogging this way is much easier, and it is stress-free. You can have your blog up and running literally within minutes. You will not need anyone's help because everything is so straight-forward.

Still, you have to be aware that free blogging platforms come with lots of limitations. Despite all of their benefits, the major issue, that blogging platforms have, are limited opportunities for blog monetization. And if you are serious about blogging, you have to think about this from the start. You should not choose a platform that will limit your success or prevent from growing your blog, just because it was an easy way out at first.

Solution:

Think about your long-term strategy and in which way you want to develop your blogging. Although it is impossible to set up long-term goals with precision, nor will you be able to predict exactly if you will make it or break it, you can still think about the future and have a long-term plan for your blog.

You should not let a technical issue be an obstacle that will make you choose a solution you know is not an ideal one for you. Instead, look for help. Hire someone who can help you with setting up your blog.

Alternatively, explore the internet and find tutorials and guides that can help you set up your own blog using the blogging platform of your choice. Besides the multitude of free content about these topics, you will also find premium content, usually in the form of an ebook or an online course, that can be of assistance when setting up a blogging platform and publishing your first blog post.

Not investing in your blog

Another mistake bloggers make is not spending anything on blogging (apart from their time to create content). The thinking behind this is the following. Until they see any profit from their blog, bloggers are reluctant to invest. They are afraid that the money they spend will be sent down the drain.

Most bloggers choose to limit their budget and spend only on what is the necessary. This is usually a blog hosting. Then, they only use free tools, without even considering the paid alternatives. This approach can severely limit your possibilities to succeed.

Solution:

Think about investing in your blog from the beginning. If you are serious about blogging and you want to grow your business through blogging, paid tools can help you a lot with this. There is no need to go overboard and hire a team of developers, but an expert that could optimize your server or install some add-ons might be worth considering. You should also think about blogging tools that could be useful and consider paid versions as they often include more advanced features than the free ones.

Forgetting about the importance of interlinking

Interlinking is the process of making links within your blog. Interlinks connect two pages of the same blog. Unlike inbound links, also referred to as backlinks, which come from external resources, these links originate on your blog and take the visitors to other pieces of content on your blog.

There are two principal reasons to include interlinking in your blogging activity. Firstly, there is that SEO aspect. Search engines discover new pages through links. Once they crawl a page to index it, they will follow the links featured on that page. Unless there is a link to a specific blog page, it would be impossible for the search engines to find it.

Additionally, when you feature a link, you can optimize the anchor text. Avoid using phrases like “click here” or “this article”. Instead, use the anchor text that describes the content of the pages you are linking to. Ideally, it should also include a keyword relevant to the linking page.

The second aspect that benefits from interlinking is the user experience. With relevant interlinks you advertise more of your content to the blog visitors, encouraging them to spend more time on your blog, browsing through the existing content.

Solution:

This might be difficult to do when starting out and when you literally have a handful of blog posts. But as you increase the amount of content, go back to the old articles and include an interlink with a new article, and vice versa. Each new blog post should link to one (or several) older ones.

An alternative could be a sidebar menu that features the latest or the most popular articles. You could also use the feature “related posts” which would show the related articles at the end of each article, inviting the visitors to explore more content on your blog which is related to the topic they are reading about.

Conclusion

Being aware of these common mistakes bloggers make, especially when starting out, is helpful because then you will make an effort to avoid them. Since all of them can harm your blog performance and prevent you from succeeding as a blogger, it is also helpful to know how to deal with them and how to face the problems that might occur along the way.

Ultimately, blogging takes time and patience, so arm yourself with those and do not expect anything to happen overnight. Have in mind both the opportunities and the problems that might pop up to always be ready to make the most out of blogging.

13

The Most Popular Tools for Bloggers

13. The Most Popular Tools for Bloggers

Bloggers need a variety of tools if they want to turn blogging into a profitable career. It is important to start with the essentials, to set up a blog, including hosting and a blogging platform, but once all of that is completed, there are a lot of tools to be explored offering additional features and possibilities for a blog to grow and develop.

Not all of the tools are necessary for everyone, nor will everyone find them useful, but the reason why the tools you will see featured in this list are here is that they are the most common tools used by bloggers.



Image: <https://pixabay.com/en/ipad-tablet-online-app-ios-1758353/>

Since blogging is an activity that surpasses content creation, the tools you will discover on this list also go beyond content creation and optimization tools. You will need them in your blogging strategy as those will help you manage your work more efficiently, as well as to promote your blog with more success. Ultimately, blogging tools extend to other platforms as well, because blogging is an activity that should be integrated with all of your online marketing efforts, especially social media marketing, email marketing, and link building.

Writing tools

[Google Docs](#) - If you want to create and manage your documents online, instead of offline, use a tool such as Google Docs. It allows you to access your files from any computer, and from any location. All you need is to log in to your Google account. Sharing documents enables you to work with a team online.

[Apple Dictation](#) - This built-in option on your Mac can help you optimize your work as it converts spoken words into text. The software also supports punctuation and other characters. There is a similar software if you are using Windows (Windows Speech Recognition) or if you prefer an online tool, [Google Docs Voice Typing](#) can be a useful alternative.

[Bear writer](#) - This is a writing app enabling you to integrate your work on your iPhone, iPad, and Mac. An interface comes with editing tools as well as the option to convert the text into PDF or Word document. Other features include cross-note links, adding to-dos, hashtags, rich previews, etc.

[Paragraphs](#) – The Paragraphs app comes in a simplified form without any menus or widgets that typically are a part of a text editing app.

[BlankPage](#) - Writers sometimes find it challenging to stay organized, which is when this service can be helpful. It offers a tool to track your writing progress, set up goals, and stay focused on your writing.

[CoSchedule Headline Analyzer](#) - Try boosting your blog performance with better titles. Use a tool such as this one to optimize your blog titles based on suggestions or use them to get even more ideas.

[Hemingway App](#) - Get useful ideas on how to optimize your blog post style. This tool highlights complex sentences, and it also shows alternative solutions.

[Copyscape](#) - Double-check your content before you publish it, or use the tool to look for copies of your pages on the internet.

Organization tools

[Toggl](#) - Toggl is a time logging tool enabling you to track your time spent writing. It also allows adding team members so you can increase productivity and optimize your time.

[Evernote](#) - Use Evernote to organize your work and ideas, share the notes and sync everything in one place.

[Todoist](#) - Manage tasks and projects using this tool to enhance productivity and standards organized. You can access the tasks everywhere because the tool comes with apps and extensions for more than ten platforms.

[DropBox](#) - DropBox is a very popular tool for storing files online, as well as sharing them with other DropBox users, which is very helpful when you collaborate on projects. Another option for managing files is [Google Drive](#).

[Trello](#) - This is a platform that allows you to integrate the apps you are already using to manage your team and optimize your workflow. Boards, lists, and cards help you organize your projects and productively collaborate with your team.

[Checklist](#) - A simple interface offers a variety of handy features such as checklists templates, reminders, attachments, cloud sync, etc. Use it to keep track of your daily tasks, to stay organized and productive.

Content tools

[Readability Test Tool](#) - Use this tool to check the readability level of your articles quickly. It evaluates the text based on the most used readability indicators and gives it a score. You can test by URL if the page is already published on your blog, or you can type the text directly into the interface.

[Recite](#) - Use this tool to create graphics with a quote. All you need to do is to enter the quote, select the style, and click on “Create”.

[Pablo](#) - Pablo is one of the easiest ways to create graphics in a couple of minutes. You do not even need an account. Simply visit the website, choose templates, images (or upload your own), select the file size and finally, share or download your design.

[Canva](#) - One of the most popular design tools, Canva offers a variety of templates, free and paid image library, and a lot of editing tools enabling you to create stunning designs without any experience as a designer.

[Easelly](#) - This tool can be used for creating engaging infographics through a simple design tool and library of more than 100,000 images and infographics templates.

[BeFunky](#) - BeFunky offers three major sections for photo editing and graphic design, which include a photo editor, collage maker, and designer toolset. Besides the tools, you can find a lot of useful resources with tutorials and creative tips.

[Iconfinder](#) - The collection of SVG icons offers over 2 million of icons you can browse and use in your designs.

[The Noun Project](#) - Here is another collection of curated icons to use for creating visual content for your blog.

[Embed Code Generator](#) - This tool is handy if you are creating original visual content such as infographics. It allows you to create a code that can easily be copied by the blogs or websites that want to share your content. The good thing is that when they copy the code, it automatically links back to your blog.

Social media tools

[Buffer](#) - Buffer is a social management platform, helping you unify your social media activity and successfully track it from one place. Features such as post scheduling, link shortening, social analytics, calendar, etc. are all very helpful for bloggers to promote content on social networks.

[Social Image Resizer Tool](#) - If you look for a simple editor tool for cropping and resizing photos and graphics, this one is going to be very helpful. When managing social media, you will often need the same image available in multiple sizes, for each social network, which is why a tool like this one will prove to be quite handy. It does cropping and resizing for you, so there is no need to do it manually.

[IFTTT](#) - Short for *If this then that*, IFTTT is a free platform that helps you enhance the options of your apps and devices. The platform offers a variety of features that integrate the apps to automate a lot of repetitive tasks, one of which is publishing on social media. The platform functions through triggers which you set up from your account.

[MeetEdgar](#) - This tool allows you to create your own content library and to categorize the content inside it. You then schedule content by category, and the tool publishes content automatically, recycling old updates based on the publishing schedule. It works on Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn.

Research tools for bloggers

[Pocket](#) - When you come across an interesting article, a video or any content, but you do not have the time to focus on it at that moment, just use this app to save it. A great thing about this app is that once you save it, the content is available even when you are offline.

[Instapaper](#) - This is an alternative tool that helps you save content for later reading. The tool also allows creating notes, highlighting, and commenting on the articles you save.

[BuzzSumo](#) - This tool can help you get ideas for your blog. It shows the best-performing content related to the search term you enter. It is also great for looking for bloggers and influencers who would be interested in sharing your content.

[Quora](#) - Quora is a question and answers platform which can provide a lot of ideas for your blog topics. Simply look up the phrases relevant to your blog and check if any of these could be used as an idea for a blog post.

[Google Trends](#) - Find out what is popular right now using this tool. Filter your search to a specific category or country, or use the search bar to focus on a particular topic. You can find lots of content ideas, especially about the trending topics.

Email marketing tools

[HubSpot Marketing Free](#) - This is a tool that helps you convert visitors into leads, using contact forms and pop-ups. The tool also comes with detailed reporting about your visitors helping you increase conversions.

[MailChimp](#) - You will need an app to handle your email campaigns and newsletter, and this one is very popular. It helps you create, customize, and monitor email marketing campaigns with lots of email template designs, and automation features.

Alternatives to this tool include:

- [GetResponse](#)
- [TinyLetter](#)
- [ActiveCampaign](#)
- [AWeber](#)

[Convert Kit](#) - This tool helps you create and manage your mailing list, with lots of handy features such as customizable forms, automation rules, sequences and plenty of reporting tools. The tool is particularly designed for bloggers, and it includes features that help them grow their business through the mailing list.

The goal with these tools is to help you with the blogging tasks, to optimize your work and save you time along the way. Tasks such as looking for content ideas, creating content, both visual and written, and sharing on social media will become part of your blogging routine. The more

time you invest in blogging, the easier will it become for you to determine which ones of these tools are really effective and helpful, while others might not be worth the time.

The final recommendation is to choose and focus your time on only selected tools. A lot of tools are available for bloggers, but try to focus on the ones that work best for your own blog.

14

Blogging as a Part of
Online Marketing

14. Blogging as a Part of Online Marketing

It has been mentioned on several occasions that blogging is part of online marketing. Essentially, it is a strategy that is closely linked to many other segments that together make what we know as online marketing, i.e., the promotion of a brand or business using online resources and media. Regardless if you are blogging as a company or an individual, regardless your niche and blog popularity, blogging should always be connected with other segments of online promotion. They complement each other in multiple ways, allowing you an opportunity to make the most out of all of them.



Image: <https://www.pexels.com/photo/business-close-up-commerce-computer-266176/>

Your task is to explore how blogging relates to online marketing segments and then to maximize your efficiency through a unified strategy.

Blogging and content marketing

Content marketing is a part of online marketing that focuses on the usage of content to promote a brand or business online. Since blogging involves content creation for a blog, it means that blogging is actually a part of content marketing. In fact, blogging usually makes the essential part of content marketing since a blog is the central platform bloggers use to share their content.

Content marketing also includes any type of content creation that is used for online promotion. Besides blog content, it can also include social media content and graphics, content shared in email marketing campaigns, content created for the search engine or social media ads, etc.

Other segments which are included in content marketing, and yet they are relevant for blogging include content optimization and distribution.

Content optimization

Content optimization refers to the process of adjusting the content published online, in this case, blog content, so that the search engines can easily find and index such content. Applying content optimization techniques to blogging means that you should optimize each blog article based on the general recommendations to make it SEO friendly. These include optimization of the following elements of blog content:

Title

The title holds the highest level of relevancy as to what the content is related to. It should include a keyword (or keyword phrases), and it should be optimized to encourage clicks from online users. Besides the search engine result pages, this title is also visible in social media posts, in email messages, instant messaging apps, etc.

Headings

Using headings helps readers to glimpse through the text easily. It is also helpful for the search engines, because headings highlight the most important parts of the text, providing the search engines with the context bigger than the one provided by the title. Ideally, headings should use keywords, keywords variations, or related phrases.

Bold and italic

Just like headings, these highlighting options are helpful ways to mark the most important parts of the text, for both the readers and the search engines. They are usually used within paragraphs to emphasize words or even sentences.

- [Home](#)
- [Free Courses](#)
- [Free Ebooks](#)
- [About](#)
- [My Account](#)

Why Content Marketing Really Matters

Why Content Marketing Really Matters?

August 3, 2016 / in Digital Marketing / by Zorana Radovic

The internet has become a number one source of information for us. Regardless if you want to know how long should you cook broccoli, where the nearest Italian restaurant is, or which movie you should watch this evening, the information is easily found on the internet. With over 3.5 billion searches per day on Google alone ([Source](#)), we see that the internet actually represents a giant pool of information retrieved from huge amount of content uploaded online each day.

Since search engines strive to be reliable and provide trustworthy information, the importance of content has never been greater. There is only one first page of search engine results, and search engines get to decide which websites will take this honorable place. One of the main criteria in selecting the chosen few is content, but not just any content. It needs to be relevant, of high quality, reliable and trustworthy. Hence we have content marketing that emerged as a part of online marketing focused on creating content that will achieve that ultimate purpose – rank your website high up in the search engine result pages.

Even Bill Gates predicted [the importance of content](#) back in 1996, but when it comes to modern [online marketing](#) and strategies that are available to you, here is why content marketing really matters.

Content marketing and SEO

If your business is oriented towards online promotion and connection with online users, you're already familiar with the concept of SEO, as the process of optimizing your website in the purpose of being positioned high up in the search engine result pages. The concept of search engine optimization has been evolving as the amount of content and active internet users grew. Search engines needed to adapt to this changing environment and develop an approach that would filter the results in a way that benefits online users.

When you create a website, it's natural to wish for it to be shown first, when relevant keywords are entered in the search field, but this has never been more difficult than nowadays, as search engines filter the results using complex algorithms. In order to reach this goal, you need content, which ultimately helps search engines to identify your website with a specific keyword(s). Therefore, positioning as a part of SEO has become closely related to content creation as a strategy. In fact, "*creating relevant content is the most effective tactic used by 72% of SEO marketers*".

Heading

What are the MOST EFFECTIVE SEO TACTICS used?

Tactic	Percentage
Relevant content creation	72%
... (other tactics listed)	... (percentage values)

Italic

WE ARE ON FACEBOOK!

Popular

- [Dos and Don'ts of Sharing on Social Media](#)
October 31, 2017 - 12:27 pm
- [Characteristics of a Successful SEO Strategy](#)
July 15, 2016 - 8:12 am
- [7 SEO Metrics to Watch](#)
July 15, 2016 - 8:35 am
- [Why Content Marketing Really Matters?](#)
August 3, 2016 - 12:10 pm

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- [October 2016](#)
- [August 2016](#)
- [July 2016](#)

Image: <https://www.emarketinginstitute.org/why-content-marketing-really-matters/>

Image optimization

If you are using images in the blog article, optimize them through the usage of Alt tags, to provide context for the search engines to understand the image content. Also, make sure you use images of a suitable size (smaller image files are going to load faster).

Image Details

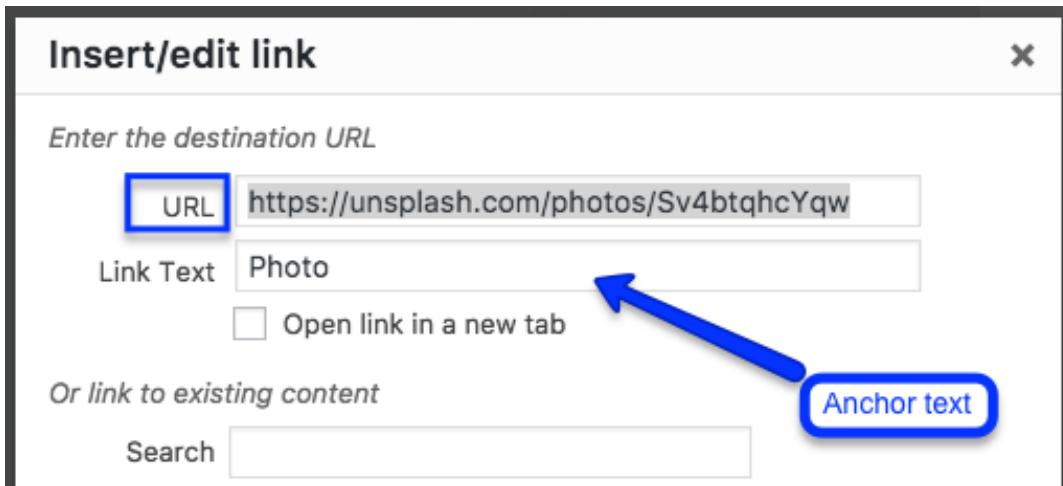
The screenshot shows the 'Image Details' settings interface. At the top, there is a 'Caption' input field and an 'Alternative Text' input field containing 'House in winter'. Below this is a 'DISPLAY SETTINGS' section with 'Align' options (Left, Center, Right, None) and a 'Size' dropdown set to 'Full Size - 2448 x 3060'. The 'Link To' field is set to 'Media File' with the URL 'https://files.wordpress.com/2017/12/house-snow.jpg'. Under 'ADVANCED OPTIONS', there are fields for 'Image Title Attribute', 'Image CSS Class', 'Image Border' (Width and Color), and 'Image Margins' (Top, Bottom, Left, Right).

Meta description

Meta descriptions also have an affects on search engine optimization. It is therefore advised, if you want more visibility in the search engines, to write a search engine optimized meta description for your blog article. The text featured here is what is going to be displayed in the search engines preview (below the title) and what the online users will see when they browse through the search engine result pages.

Links and anchor text

Optimizing links and the anchor text featured in these links is also a part of the content optimization of the blog article. If you include links, both external and internal, make sure you choose the adequate anchor text. The anchor text should be relevant to the resource you are linking to, preferably with the use of relevant keywords. You should also use different link tags (index, no-index, do-follow, no-follow, canonical, etc.) to instruct search engines how to treat that link.



Content distribution

Content distribution is the process of sharing content with online users. This way, a blogger makes the content available by distributing it to multiple platforms. Distribution is done through content distribution channels which include:

- Email campaign
- Social networks
- Influencers
- Paid advertising
- Online communities and forums

Any online platform that supports content sharing can be used by bloggers to distribute their content. The higher reach of distributed content increases the potential of that content, maximizing views, interaction, and conversions.

Bloggers should explore content distribution in order to optimize the online promotion of their content. What is important to focus on when choosing content distribution channels is the following:

- Target group - The goal of content distribution is to help you reach your target group, not online users in general. Therefore, when choosing a distribution channel, make sure you can target the content for the audience that will have interest in such content. For example, even though collaborating with an influencer might be an interesting opportunity, if the target group of that influencer is not also your target group, such content distribution will have poor results.
- Cost-efficiency - Content distribution should be a profitable activity for you, regardless if you use free or paid reach. Even if there is no monetary investment with free reach, this kind of content distribution still requires investing time to distribute content. It is also recommended that, if possible, you calculate the costs necessary for content distribution, and compare them with the profit from conversions achieved through this distribution.
- Statistics - You should evaluate the performance of content distributed through each channel to determine the most effective ways you can promote your content. Using trackable URLs and website analytics you can examine, where the content is shared, when, and other relevant data that can help you organize future campaigns more efficiently.

Blogging and SEO

To understand the relationship between blogging and SEO (search engine optimization), you have to understand the basics of SEO. Search engine optimization is the process of optimizing and improving the website (or the blog) to increase its rank in the search engine result pages for the relevant search queries. So you have a specific keyword or several keywords that are relevant for your business. Online users who look for these keywords are likely to be interested in your business. Your goal with SEO is to improve your online presence, so these users can find your website when they search relevant keywords.

Regarding SEO, *when* you appear in the search engine result pages is very important. It is so-called visibility, the likelihood of being visible to the online users. You probably know that when

you type a specific term into a search engine, you get a list of results, which spans over many pages. The websites with the highest visibility level appear at the top of the first search engine result page. Online users are more likely to click on the results that appear at the top of the list. So for a website to increase its chances of reaching the users, it has to appear high up for the relevant keyword(s).

Optimizing a website helps with increasing its search engine visibility, which has a positive influence on multiple areas, such as an increase in traffic, lead generation, and finally sales (or conversions).

Blogging, allows you to create content that has the chance of being ranked in the search engines. In fact, companies that blog have consistently been showing better results than those that do not. The main reason for this is that a blog provides a large quantity of content to be ranked. It allows you an opportunity to use a variety of keywords to optimize the content, as well as to use relevant keyword variations that could also bring visitors who are interested in your brand.

Think about it this way. Without a blog, your website would consist of a couple of pages. You would have a home page, about us page, contact page, and perhaps extra pages such as services or products you offer, pricing, etc. Essentially, this is a small amount of content. It provides a few resources to be optimized, which reduces the chance of increasing visibility and being discovered through organic search engine results.

Blogging combats this issue and provides indexable content that helps with generating more organic visits. This is also beneficial for the online users, who might discover your brand through your content.

Besides visibility, search engine optimization includes two more important aspects that affect your blog performance. The first one is on-site optimization. Apart from the content optimization, which is its essential part, on-site optimization also includes:

- Blog speed
- Server optimization
- URL structure
- Mobile friendliness

The second aspect is off-site optimization. Off-site optimization includes elements that are not on the blog, but instead it focuses on the optimization through different kinds of links, which can include:

- Inbound links
- Social media links
- Guest blogging links
- Influencer links

These links help search engines because they convey a lot of information related to the pages they are linking to:

- Link popularity - If a page gets lots of links, it means it is popular. Hence the search engines will consider it valuable.
- Relevancy - Search engine consider the relationship between two pages to conclude how these topics are relevant to each other.
- Freshness - If a new website page links to a blog page that is a couple of months or even years old, it means that the blog page features evergreen content. This kind of content has a positive influence on page visibility.
- Trustworthiness - A page that links to your blog page, passes on so-called link juice, which means that trustworthiness of a website that links to you will transfer to your blog as well. Linking domain or a page with high authority is a factor that helps you improve your SEO.

Blogging and social media marketing

This segment of online marketing includes business promotion through social networks. It starts with creating social media profiles, and then it includes many social media marketing techniques, such as content promotion and engagement, hosting competitions and giveaways, interaction with the social media users, social media advertising, etc.

Blogging is sometimes defined as a part of social media marketing. The reason for this statement relies on the fact that blogging provides more dynamic content than website pages. It also encourages the interaction between the author and the readers. Both of these, regular updates and online interaction are the characteristics of social networking websites. Hence the reasoning that considers blogging as additional channel used for social media marketing.

In terms of social media marketing, blogging is a strategy that creates content to be used for social promotion. While a lot of content shared on social networks will be created for the

specific social network, a certain part of content shared will include blog links. There are several reasons why companies do so:

Diversify content shared on social networks

Sharing blog content provides more material for the users, offering a variety of content the users would find helpful. Unlike social media status updates, blog content is longer and more elaborate, so the online users can find more information about the topic they are interested in.

Improve content distribution

Without social media reach, blogging would mostly depend on organic traffic and inbound links. However, employing social networks for content distribution helps with delivering your blog content to the audience following you on social networks. This increases the reach and visibility of your blog content among the online users.

Increase visibility

Sharing on social networks increases the visibility of blog content as you have all those social media users that you can potentially reach. Furthermore, the influence of social networks on search engine visibility has been a topic of many debates among marketers. There is no clear data on how the search engines see social media links, but there is a common belief that search engines do see these links in some way. Additionally, social media links are often featured in the search engine result pages, which means that it is possible to increase visibility, especially for branded keywords.

Get traffic

Social networks help you bring traffic to your blog. The amount of that traffic can range anywhere from a couple of clicks to thousands of social media visits, but what it mainly depends on is the how popular your social media accounts are and how viral your post is.

Interact with social media users

Growing popularity and adoption of social networks among the people worldwide have led to more opportunities to interact with them through these platforms. For a business, this represents a chance to improve the business-to-customer relationship, to provide customer support and to ask for reviews. For people, social networks represent a convenient way to follow the news about the business they are interested in (including promotions, new product releases, etc.), as well as an opportunity to get their questions answered, to provide feedback, etc.

Blogging and lead generation

Lead generation includes collecting email addresses of the online users who are most likely to become your customers, based on specific conditions they fulfill, such as being from a certain location, within a certain age group, having bought a similar product before, having visited a page on your blog, etc. Leads are also often called potential sales contacts. Unlike regular subscribers, leads hold more value for a business, because they are more likely to be converted. It is possible to segment your mailing list to separate regular subscribers from leads.

What blogging helps you do is collect leads. Blogging helps you create content of high quality that will attract relevant visitors. When you achieve this task, when you have visitors on your blog page, the next goal will be to generate the leads through the usage of lead magnets.

Lead magnets are offers that require visitors to leave their email address to get something in return. They could get some downloadable material, templates, resources, access to a restricted area, coupons, an ebook, etc. The offer has to include something they will find value in, to encourage clicks. The offer also has to be related to the content of the blog page that features the lead magnet. For example, if you have a page about social media marketing, the relevant offer could include a report with social media statistics, an ebook guide for optimizing social media updates, etc.

Blogging contributes to lead generation with its success. The more visits the blog pages have, the more leads can they generate.

Blogging to improve your business

When you explore all of these aspects of online marketing, and how those and blogging mutually complement, this gives you a possibility to maximize your success.

Being a blogger is not about being a writer only. You need this basic knowledge of online marketing because it helps you enhance the performance of your blog. It helps you build influence and turn blogging into a profitable career.

Your main goal is to consider blogging a part of online marketing, and to explore how different segments can help you create better-performing content. Explore social media performance and see what kind of posts go viral. Use an online SEO checker to see if content optimization is really working out for you or you need to consider improvements.

For a business striving to succeed in the world of online marketing, blogging is so much more than a collection of nicely-written articles. A blog is a resource that helps you generate traffic,

visits, leads and eventually sales. It helps you promote your business and persuade people to become your customers through the credibility and trust you gain as a blogger.

For individual bloggers, online marketing is also necessary for their blogging endeavor because it can significantly improve the potential blogging, on its own, has.

15

Blogging Glossary

15. Blogging Glossary

1. Affiliate link – An affiliate link is a URL that contains an affiliate's ID or username. This enables merchants to track the traffic obtained through these links and contribute the conversion to the right affiliate.
2. Affiliate marketing – Affiliate marketing is a part of online marketing that is focused on the promotion of products through affiliate links. It is performance-based marketing where affiliates are paid by merchants for each conversion they achieve through affiliate links.
3. Alt tag – Alt tag, also called alt attribute, is a tag used to optimize images by providing the alternative text that will be shown if the image cannot be loaded. This text also enables search engines to understand the content of the image.
4. Anchor text – This is a clickable text in the hyperlink, which is usually formatted differently from the rest of the text (most commonly it is underlined text in blue color).
5. Automation – Automation refers to the use of software and applications to automate different tasks in online marketing, which include email sending, post publishing, social media updates, etc.
6. B2B – Business-to-business (B2B) is the process of exchange of information and transaction from one business to another.
7. B2C – Business-to-customer (B2C) is the process of exchange of information or transactions between a business and the customers.
8. Blog optimization – It includes optimization of blog content to enhance its performance in the search engine result pages.
9. Branded keywords – Branded keywords are used in the searches that include the name of the brand. Branded keywords also include typos of the brand name, as it is obvious they refer to a specific brand.
10. Canonical tag – It is an HTML tag used to tell search engines that the page is a copy (or partial copy) of another page. It is used to solve the duplicate content issue.

11. CMS – CMS is short for Content Management System, and it signifies the application that is used for creating and managing digital content. A blog is hosted on a CMS platform.
12. Content marketing – Content marketing is a part of online marketing which includes creation and promotion of content in different formats (text, video, audio, image, etc.). The content created this way is used to increase interest in a brand or promote a business to the online users.
13. Conversion – A conversion is a desirable action. It is a goal that a blog owner wants to achieve, regardless if that is a click on the CTA, sign up for the newsletter, click on an affiliate link, etc.
14. Conversion rate – A conversion rate is the rate at which conversions are achieved. It is calculated by comparing the number of conversions with the total number of blog visitors.
15. Convert – When you convert a blog visitor, it means that you persuade or influence that person to complete the desired action, i.e., conversion.
16. Cookie life – It is a period during which the cookies in the user's browser are active.
17. Cookies – Pieces of data from a website that are stored in the internet browser of the online users.
18. CTA – Call to action (CTA) is a clickable button that is shared in a blog post (or in an email, a web page, etc.). The blog owner wants to encourage clicks on the CTA because most often this increases conversions.
19. Do-follow – This is a tag used to mark links and to instruct search engines to follow those links. In this case, the authority of that page (i.e., link juice) transfers to the other page.
20. Domain extension – It is an internet category added to the domain name after the dot. Some examples include .com, .org, .net, .edu, etc.
21. Duplicate content – Duplicate content is the content that appears in more than one place on the internet. The main problem with the duplicate content is the fact that search engines cannot conclude which content is more relevant.

22. E-commerce – E-commerce (short for electronic commerce) is the process of buying and selling online.
23. Email marketing – Email marketing involves promotion of a business through email campaigns.
24. Engagement – Engagement refers to the ability to encourage online users to do a particular action, inspiring them to get involved and interact through online channels, including blog comments, social media updates, etc.
25. Evergreen content – Evergreen content is the content that is considered to be relevant always. It does not become outdated, and it is not time sensitive. Instead, evergreen content generates visits even years after it has been published.
26. Google AdWords – It is the program provided by Google used for creating and managing search engine ads.
27. HTML – Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) is a standardized system for tagging text files on web pages.
28. Inbound link – An inbound link is a link published on another website or blog that links to your blog.
29. Index – To index a blog means to collect information about the blog and its pages and make those available to the online users. Search engine crawlers need to index a blog page first before it can appear in the search results.
30. Influencer – An influencer is a person who enjoys authority, respect and popularity among its followers.
31. Influencer marketing – Influencer marketing is a form of online marketing where the focus is the collaboration with influential people through which you get to promote your content or business.
32. Keyword – A keyword is a word or a phrase that has significance for your blog. It describes your blog topic or niche, and it is used as a search term that will bring relevant visitors to your blog.
33. Keyword stuffing – This is an obsolete SEO technique which includes overusing a keyword to attempt to rank the page higher in the search engine result pages.

Nowadays, this technique can cause a blog or a website using it to be penalized, which means its pages will not be shown in the search results.

34. Landing page – A landing page is a page, where the users first arrive when they click on the link. It is also called an entry page.
35. Lead – Leads are contacts (usually email addresses) that you are more likely to convert into customers than regular subscribers.
36. Lead generation – It is the process of attracting online users who are interested in becoming your customers through various tactics which often involve the use of lead magnets.
37. Link building – As a part of off-site optimization, link building includes activities that help earn links from other resources.
38. Link juice – Link juice is the term used to describe the strength or reputation that transfers from one web page to the page, where it is linking to. It is used in relation to SEO.
39. Mailing list – It is a list of email addresses of blog subscribers who sign up to follow your blog and receive your email newsletter.
40. Mobile friendliness – This term is used for a blog (or website) design that is properly displayed and accessible on mobile devices, as well as on the desktop computer.
41. Niche – In blogging, a niche is a term used to describe a specific topic the blog is about.
42. No-follow – It is a tag used to instruct search engines not to follow a link published on a blog page.
43. No-index – This is a tag used to instruct the search engines not to index a blog or website page.
44. Online marketing – Online marketing, also called “internet marketing”, “emarketing” or “digital marketing”, is the process of advertising on the internet using online channels which include a blog, website, search engine advertising, social media, email, etc.
45. Organic traffic – It includes traffic obtained in a free or organic way, without using paid promotion to increase reach.

46. Personalization – Personalization in marketing is the process of tailoring the approach to create a more customized experience for online users.
47. Pop-up – It is a window that appears over the blog content. It can feature advertisements, lead magnets, sign up button, etc.
48. Ranking – In online marketing, ranking refers to the position a blog has in the search engine result pages.
49. Reach – In online marketing, reach signifies the number of online users who are exposed to a particular content at least once. Different types of content can reach online users, including status updates, blog updates, search engine ads, etc. Reach can be paid and organic.
50. Rich preview – Rich preview includes the data about a blog that shows up when the blog URL is displayed or shared. For example, if you share a blog URL in a social network post, the rich preview fetches the data which often include the image, blog author, description, etc.
51. ROI – Return on investment (ROI) is a metric used to compare the profitability of a strategy. It is done by comparing the profit and the investment.
52. RSS – RSS (Rich Site Summary) is a type of system for content distribution which enables online users to follow blog updates without signing up for a newsletter.
53. Search engine marketing – Search engine marketing (SEM) is a part of online marketing that includes the promotion through search engines. It includes paid reach (search engine advertising) and organic reach (search engine optimization).
54. Search engine update – Search engines perform actions based on the special algorithm which is continuously updated to improve the work of the search engines and provide better, more relevant results to online users.
55. SEO – Search engine optimization (SEO) is the process of optimizing and improving the website or blog elements that will help increase its rank in the search engine result pages.

56. SERP – Search engine result page (SERP) is the list of results that appear in the search engine as a response to a search query. SERP contains both organic and paid search results.
57. Social media marketing – Social media marketing (SMM) is a segment of online marketing which includes promotion through social networks, using both organic and paid reach.
58. Spam – Spam is an irrelevant or unsolicited message. Although it is commonly used to describe an email message, the term can also be used in a more general context, to signify any type of irrelevant or poor-quality content.
59. SSL certificate – SSL certificate includes pieces of data that create a cryptographic key and protect the data transferred from the web server to the browser. It is used to secure credit card details, login details, etc.
60. Strategy – Strategy is a plan or a design that includes the goals you want to achieve as well as the actions that will help achieve those goals.
61. Subscriber – A subscriber is a person who willingly decides to follow somebody via a newsletter and provides an email address to receive that newsletter.
62. SVG – SVG is a type of image content designed in XML format. The main advantage of this format is that it does not lose quality when it is zoomed in or resized.
63. Target group – In blogging, a target group is a group of people you are trying to reach with your blog, due to their interest and other criteria.
64. Trackable URL – A trackable URL is a URL which is possible to track and monitor its performance. Trackable URLs are designed with the use of special tools that then offer statistics related to the clicks on each URL.
65. URL – Uniform Resource Locator (URL) is the web address of an online resource. It points to a web page.
66. URL structure – This term refers to the process of creating blog URLs. A good URL structure includes creating logical structures, using meaningful words and making URLs easy to remember. These URLs are SEO friendly, which has a positive influence on indexing and ranking.

67. Webmaster – It is a person who creates and manages a website (or blog) and its content, additional applications, and software, including the computer server. A blog owner can also be a webmaster.
68. Website analytics – Website analytics includes all of the data about the website visits. It includes relevant information to analyze the behavior of the visitors and how they interact with the content in the purpose of improving website performance and providing a better user experience.

16

Questionnaire

16. Questionnaire

Questions

1. What are the characteristics that define a blog as opposed to a website?

- a) Blogs are frequently updated unlike static web pages
- b) There is low level of engagement on blog pages
- c) Blogs have only a couple of pages of content
- d) Websites are considered more search engine friendly

2. Which of these are the benefits of accepting guest bloggers on your blog?

- a) Increasing brand interest and product promotion
- b) Boosting sales through affiliate links
- c) Email marketing campaigns
- d) Diversifying blog content

3. What is a blogging platform?

- a) It is a software used to create a blog and publish content
- b) It is a blogging strategy
- c) It is a part of blogosphere
- d) It is a blog optimization tactic

4. Which of these can help you increase the security of your blog?

- a) Optimizing the blog with plugins

- b) Keeping your CMS platform and all the plugins updated
- c) Determining the focus keyword you want to use
- d) Extending your influence to the social networks

5. Why is interlinking important?

- a) Because the search engines discover and index new content through links
- b) Because of a long-term strategy
- c) It affects the use of keywords in the title
- d) It helps with creating a mailing list

6. Which of these are the characteristics of search engine friendliness?

- a) Blogs and blogosphere
- b) Google
- c) Website and web pages
- d) Frequent updates and links

7. What is blogosphere?

- a) The term used to describe when a company shares content on its blog
- b) The term used to recognize blogs as a part of the online community
- c) The blogging project with multiple authors
- d) The first blog created on the internet

8. What is the reason that affected such expansion of blogging nowadays?

- a) Blogging is very expensive and complicated

- b) Blogging requires many technical skills
- c) Creating a blog is much simpler than it used to be, and there are many opportunities to monetize a blog
- d) There is a new blog published each second

9. How can you save/optimize time when blogging?

- a) Generating inbound links and increasing sales
- b) Using both free and paid reach
- c) Hiring freelance writers or inviting guest bloggers to write for you
- d) Using plugins to optimize blog pages

10. What is blogger outreach?

- a) It is a strategy used in online marketing to reach out to other bloggers and suggest a collaboration
- b) It is a strategy used in online marketing to explore guest blogging opportunities
- c) It is a method used in email marketing to increase conversions
- d) It is a method used in affiliate marketing to increase sales

11. When you analyze the benefits of blogging and how it contributes to your business, you should focus on exploring:

- a) Product details and features
- b) The channels you will use for blog promotion
- c) Which content brings the highest performance and most conversions
- d) Affiliate links and affiliate marketing

12. How can you build influence through blogging?

- a) Neglecting online promotion and content distribution
- b) Publishing regularly and sticking to your niche
- c) Optimizing the blog with plugins
- d) Writing without thinking about your target group

13. Which of these blogging platforms requires installation to your web server?

- a) Wordpress.org
- b) Wordpress.com
- c) Medium
- d) Tumblr

14. What is the drawback of having too many plugins installed on your blog?

- a) There are no drawbacks
- b) They can confuse the visitors
- c) They might slow down the load time of your blog
- d) They are too expensive

15. What is a vlog?

- a) Content format which uses video to present content
- b) Content shared on a vlog
- c) Content format which uses different types of written content
- d) Visual content such as images

16. Which of these are blogging essentials?

- a) Blogosphere and blogging community
- b) Template, mailing list, and social accounts
- c) Affiliate links and affiliate marketing
- d) Engagement and influence

17. When using images on your blog, you should make sure:

- a) To add a subscribe button to your blog
- b) You engage the visitors through images
- c) To enable commenting on your blog posts
- d) You use images of high-quality which are optimized

18. Which of these are the benefits of blogger outreach?

- a) Increasing brand interest and product promotion
- b) Being paid to write a guest blog
- c) Featuring guest bloggers
- d) Diversifying blog content

19. Which of the monetization tactics enables the blogger to earn income through profit sharing?

- a) AdSense
- b) Affiliate marketing
- c) Sponsored post
- d) Email marketing

20. The idea with niche blogging is to focus on:

- a) Affiliate marketing strategy
- b) Monetization tactics
- c) A single topic
- d) Promotion of a business through a blog

21. Which of these is an advantage of working with vloggers?

- a) Behind the scene vlog
- b) Personalized approach
- c) The possibility to involve the viewers in the creative process
- d) Exposure to the vlogger's followers

22. What are the reasons for choosing an independent blogging platform?

- a) Social aspect of this platform
- b) No costs of hosting or domain
- c) More flexibility and customization options
- d) No direct SEO benefits

23. Which of these is an idea for vlogging as your business?

- a) An interview vlog
- b) No involvement in the creative process
- c) Being featured in someone's vlog
- d) Exposure to the vlogger's followers

24. Which of these is a type of blog?

- a) Blogging
- b) Blogosphere
- c) Business blog
- d) Blog monetization

25. To invite guest bloggers, you should:

- a) Identify the influencers you want to work with
- b) Identify the influencers you want to work with and get in touch with them
- c) Increase the number of subscribers
- d) Increase the number of subscribers and send newsletter regularly

26. What is business blogging?

- a) A strategy using blogging in online marketing to improve an online business
- b) One of the benefits of team blogging
- c) A tactic used by influencers to increase the number of followers
- d) A promotion goal

27. What are the obstacles one might face when blogging?

- a) Starting an online business
- b) There are no obstacles
- c) Generate inbound links and increase sales
- d) Blogging is time-consuming and writing at a specific pace can become a challenge

28. Which of these are the benefits of blogging for individuals?

- a) A possibility to increase sales and conversions
- b) Using both free and paid reach
- c) Being active on social networks
- d) A possibility to share your experience and knowledge

29. What is a blog template?

- a) It is an article that is published on several blogs
- b) It is a type of blog
- c) It is a blog layout of predesigned pages used to create a blog
- d) It is content used in a newsletter

30. Which of these are ideas to turn a blog into a business?

- a) Use AdSense and Google AdWords
- b) Email marketing
- c) Create a product, open an online store, or write an ebook
- d) Consider the long-term strategy

31. How can you maximize the profit from blogging?

- a) Use multiple monetization tactics
- b) Focus on one tactic only
- c) Place as many banners as possible
- d) Promoting products that are not directly related to your niche

32. Blogging goals should be:

- a) Original and unique
- b) Custom and achievable
- c) Short-term
- d) Custom, achievable, and quantifiable

33. Which of these is a way to promote yourself as a guest blogger?

- a) Identifying the influencers you want to work with
- b) Joining blogging communities
- c) Increasing the number of subscribers
- d) Featuring guest bloggers

34. How do bloggers earn from affiliate marketing?

- a) They publish sponsored posts
- b) They have banners on all blog pages
- c) They use AdSense
- d) They share affiliate links in their blog posts

35. Which of these are content format ideas:

- a) Short-term and long-term goals
- b) Guides, lists, how-to articles, and videos
- c) Editorial calendar and monetization ideas
- d) Engagement, acquisition, and conversions

36. Which of these are the most important metrics to monitor on your blog?

- a) Mailing list and social networks
- b) Guides, lists, how-to articles, and videos
- c) Engagement, acquisition, and conversions
- d) Editorial calendar and monetization ideas

37. Many studies confirm that:

- a) Companies that blog regularly generate more traffic
- b) Companies that blog do not see any benefits from blogging
- c) There is no connection between blogging and lead generation
- d) There is no connection between blogging and SEO

38. How can a blog complement your business?

- a) It can be used in affiliate marketing
- b) It reflects website analytics negatively
- c) It can provide product details and features, company news and updates
- d) It shows product pricing information

39. Which of these is possible with team blogging?

- a) Personalization and individualization
- b) The promotion goals
- c) Evaluating blog performance
- d) Outsourcing content creation

40. Which of these are types of vlogs?

- a) YouTube and CMS platform
- b) Recorded videos and live broadcasting
- c) Vlogging as your company
- d) Personalized approach and tailored content

41. Which of the monetization tactics includes ads that are not published by the blogger?

- a) Affiliate marketing
- b) AdSense
- c) Sponsored post
- d) Email marketing

42. What are the strategies to monetize an email campaign?

- a) AdSense and Google AdWords
- b) Sponsored posts and conversions
- c) Promoting a product and affiliate links
- d) Reach a minimum amount of clicks

43. What can slow down your blog load time?

- a) Image size and coding issues
- b) Publishing calendar
- c) Formatting of the content
- d) Titles that do not have a keyword

44. Which of these is a mistake that bloggers should avoid?

- a) Getting to know the readers
- b) Proofreading all your posts
- c) Optimizing the blog with plugins
- d) Neglecting online promotion and content distribution

45. Which of these is going to help with improving the success of your blog?

- a) Publishing consistently
- b) Writing without thinking about your target group
- c) Not creating a mailing list
- d) Neglecting online promotion and content distribution

46. What is guest blogging?

- a) It is a strategy used in online marketing to promote a blog through affiliate links
- b) It is a strategy used in online marketing to explore guest blogging opportunities
- c) It is a method used in email marketing to increase conversions
- d) It is a method used in affiliate marketing to increase sales

47. What does content optimization include?

- a) Off-site optimization
- b) Optimization of the titles, headings, and image optimization
- c) Content distribution
- d) Inbound links and link popularity

48. Which of these is a part of on-site optimization?

- a) URL structure and mobile friendliness
- b) Inbound links and link popularity
- c) Target group
- d) Paid advertising and influencers

49. What are lead magnets?

- a) Optimization strategy that includes content and image optimization
- b) A type of campaign in email marketing
- c) Offers that require visitors to leave their email address to get something in return
- d) Inbound links and social media links

50. How can blogging complement social media marketing?

- a) It increases visibility and diversifies content shared on social networks
- b) It includes offers that require visitors to leave their email address to get something in return
- c) It helps with mobile friendliness and URL structure
- d) It increases the benefits of paid advertising and email campaigns

Answers

- | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. a | 18. a | 35. b |
| 2. d | 19. b | 36. c |
| 3. a | 20. c | 37. a |
| 4. b | 21. d | 38. c |
| 5. a | 22. c | 39. d |
| 6. d | 23. a | 40. b |
| 7. b | 24. c | 41. b |
| 8. c | 25. b | 42. c |
| 9. c | 26. a | 43. a |
| 10. a | 27. d | 44. d |
| 11. c | 28. d | 45. a |
| 12. b | 29. c | 46. b |
| 13. a | 30. c | 47. b |
| 14. c | 31. a | 48. a |
| 15. a | 32. d | 49. c |
| 16. b | 33. b | 50. a |
| 17. d | 34. d | |

17

Conclusion

17. Conclusion

As a business strategy, blogging is beneficial for many different businesses. It does not matter how they differ regarding the niche, the scope of production or the number of employees. What is universal for everyone is the fact that blogging remains an effective strategy to reach online consumers. Even if your business is not online, your consumers probably are.

Having explained the essence of blogging and how this strategy can be implemented to be profitable and sustainable, we will highlight what makes blogging different depending on the type of business you run. Three main groups can be formed:

Blogging to build influence

Firstly, we see blogging to build influence which is something individuals do. These individuals may or may not have their products or any strategy to monetize their influence at the beginning. What is typical is that they start small, but this in no way stops them from growing big. The budget needed to start blogging like this is rather minimal.

Blogging like this is focused on an individual on one side and the audience on the other. The type of relationship is much closer than with larger blogs. Primarily, due to the limited audience. In a situation like this, a blogger has more time to pay attention to the audience, their feedback, chat with them, etc. The blogger usually knows the audience extremely well, up to the point of knowing their names, favorite hobbies, and similar details. This kind of closeness within the community is still possible, but it is not that common for blogs with a lot of followers or blogs with multiple authors.

As said, starting small does not mean that there is no place for thinking big. Just focus on what you can do at the given moment and how you want your career as a blogger to grow. This will provide better insights and help you create a roadmap of the activities to follow, regardless if those are aiming to publish every day, hiring an assistant, or creating your own product.

It is also important to have in mind that providing quality (both in terms of content and product) and working on building your influence are the necessary components of becoming a successful blogger and turning your blog into an online (or offline) business.

Blogging to power up your small business

Starting out a business has never seemed easier, but still, there are so many challenges, that we can see numerous businesses starting and failing just as quick. This refers to both offline and online businesses, which are competing in the market that seem saturated enough. Even without additional challenges small business owners face, such as gaining visibility, reaching and converting customers, etc. positioning on the market can be an obstacle impossible to overcome.

Among many strategies businesses use to launch their brand in the online world, blogging seems to be one of the most used tactics. Being simple and quick to implement, blogging represents that special fuel a small business needs to start boosting traffic, exposure, and finally sales. Content has been a very efficient medium that connects a business and customers, and it will remain to be a commonly used resource in a business strategy.

Even though new trends might be redefining content marketing as a whole, with focusing on visual content (primarily video), and new lead generation strategies, blogging will remain a platform to disseminate the content in any format, and to make sure you make yourself reachable to your customers. This represents a great way to improve your business, because content and connection with the readers together are the most powerful ways to promote your business in the online world.

The main characteristic of a successful small business is that they usually blog with more passion and they focus on the consumers. Despite the fact that they might be lacking the budget for super high quality video production or to hire professional writers, a good analysis of a buyer persona and keyword research will provide enough details to start planning blog content with more success.

Corporate blogging

Finally, the third group is so-called corporate bloggers who provide content for large companies. The one edge they have is a larger budget allowing them to invest more in content creation. Still, not every company uses blogging as their tool, nor do they do it completely right.

With corporate blogging, there is a big challenge of engagement, as companies sometimes focus on content only, without trying to encourage discussion or focus on their customers. This can sometimes lead to creating content that is dull or without any practical information.

To combat these potential issues, companies that have success with corporate blogging try to maintain a conversational voice, to keep listening and responding to the customers, publish regularly and share advice relevant to the target group. Not every post should be about promoting your brand or showcasing your products. Sometimes, it is helpful to create content that is simply insightful, worth reading, entertaining, and offers value.

What to learn from the world's most popular blogs

If done right, blogging can offer a huge potential for your business to grow, which is why it is worth exploring it and keep learning about the state of blogging from those who do it best. Here are the most useful things to learn from the world's most popular blogs:

- Be timely and relatable
- Help people find answers and solutions
- Know your audience and give them what they want/need
- Leverage the power of niche topics
- Consistency and persistence are necessary
- Explore the value of being a leader and an expert
- Publish extraordinary content

Marketing experts predict the further growth of blogging, but following these recommendations is what is going to help you make sure you grow your blog as well. Publishing an article every week or every day is unlikely to bring you the success you are hoping for. It might grow your database, but what you need to increase are your visitors, followers, and your influence.

Consider blogging a part of a bigger picture, immerse yourself in the world of online marketing, and explore ways how blogging can be a strategy that supports your growth.