HOW TO BECOME AN AUTHORITY BLOGGER

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Chapter 1: An Introduction to Becoming an Authority Blogger

Over the last decade, blogs have morphed from a place for rants against your boss or gripes about the coffee shop down the street into an informative zone attracting a steady stream of new and dedicated followers.

Perhaps one of the most surprising aspects of the blogging world is the fact that even an average blog with a moderate following can generate significant and steady income for the blogger. There are no limits to the types of blogs that can achieve success, once one starts combing the Internet to see what is already out there.

From home breweries to pet care, gardening to wedding planning, satirical geniuses to military experts: countless bloggers are transforming their interests from mere hobbies to small businesses that generate the potential for limitless income.

This book seeks to teach you how to transform your area of interest into a successful blog that will help you build your reputation as an online expert in your niche. You’ll create a site with the potential to set you on the fast track to significant income generation.

Here’s a brief rundown of the essentials of successful blog creation:

1. **Choose the right topic for your blog.** This part might come easily to some people, but for others, there could be a few hurdles to overcome. Being unique and standing out in the blogosphere is essential to success; but what if there are already several very successful blogs in the same niche you are interested in? How do you set your blog apart from the rest, so you can stand out as the best choice in the arena you’ve chosen?

2. **Develop the perfect blog name and brand messaging.** Once you know where you are taking your blog, you’ll need to come up with a name and brand messaging
that will help your potential followers to gain a thorough understanding of what your blog will deliver. There are millions of blogs on the Internet, but that doesn’t mean you can’t come up with a truly incredible blog name. All you need is a bit of creative thinking coupled with a clear direction for your blog.

3. **Design a great-looking blog.** The face of web design is constantly evolving, but it is important to design a blog that appears timeless while effortlessly representing your topic with stellar content. A poorly-designed blog can negatively impact your traffic to a greater extent than you may realize. Subpar design can impart a less-than-professional first impression.

4. **Create outstanding content for your blog.** With your original design underway, you’ll need to ensure that your blog features rich content that will keep visitors coming back for more. This is why it’s so important to create a blog around a topic with which you have some familiarity. If you are passionate about your subject, your enthusiasm will translate into rich, engaging, informative content.

5. **Create your social media strategy.** Setting up a visually-appealing blog with incredibly rich content is a great start, but without the right social media strategy in your corner, you’ll find it difficult to get the traffic you need to propel your blog to the next level of success. You will need to learn a fair bit about social media and how it can work for you and the success of your blog.

6. **Create your launch content.** To attract visitors and keep their interest, your blog must launch from the starting gate with exceptional content. Whether you are offering a giveaway to the first several subscribers to your e-mail list or offering valuable tips and helpful information, your launch content will set the tone for your entire blog. It needs to be rich, relevant, and captivating.

7. **Develop your launch plan.** When working on plans for your blog, it’s easy to get caught up in long-term goals. It is critical, however, to retain a firm focus upon your short-term plans, as well. You should have a firm intention about exactly what you will do to launch your new blog, in addition to what you will do to earn traffic once it

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has been launched. Without a plan, you could find yourself floundering a bit once the site goes live.

8. **Launch your blog.** With the right tips, you’ll learn how to successfully launch your blog so you can make a great impression on the right people. You’ll need to do a fair bit of marketing and networking, and do your utmost to ensure that your blog maintains standards that will help set you apart from the rest.

9. **Start making friends in the blogosphere.** Let’s face it: blogging would be a lot less interesting if we didn’t have fellow bloggers to interact with. Not only can you gain inspiration, make long-lasting friendships, and collaborate with fellow bloggers, you can also tap into the traffic they have on their own sites. This can provide you with thousands of fresh potential visitors to your website—each and every day.

10. **Build a thriving audience for your blog.** Once you’ve got your first visitors hooked, how do you keep their attention while attracting additional visitors to your blog? Attracting and building a thriving audience will ensure that your blog’s success reaches well beyond today. The better your audience, the better your odds of establishing a blog that will be around for many years to come. A key facet of making sure that your audience keeps returning to your blog is to allow yourself to interact with them on a level they will inevitably appreciate.

11. **Strategize when your blog isn’t getting the traffic you were hoping for.** A number of issues can contribute to your blog failing to see the levels of traffic you were anticipating. Even if you’ve already taken the utmost care in the promotion of your blog, sometimes things just need a bit of tweaking in order to set them right.

12. **Expand your reach using multimedia platforms.** With each new social media site you tap into, you’ll have the potential to significantly expand your audience. From LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook to the next level of YouTube and podcasts, you’ll want to make the most out of every available marketing tool.

13. **Make your first dollar blogging.** You’ve taken all of the right steps. Your blog
looks amazing, your content is second-to-none, you’ve built up a solid reputation in the blogging world, and you’ve got great organic traffic hitting up your website each and every day. Now what? How do you convert that web traffic into your first dollar? Several strategies can stand you in good stead, and it is important to analyze each of them to make sure you are employing the right strategy for your goals.

14. **Develop a strategy for taking your blog to the next level.** A blog that does not constantly evolve will soon become stagnant—something you definitely do not want for your venture. With the right strategies in play, you’ll be able to swiftly move your blog to the next level of success.

Starting a new blog is similar, in many ways, to starting any new small business. You need to put distinct plans, strategies, and goals into place if you expect to generate any income from the hard work that goes into the business. Certainly, you want your blog to have an air of casual fun about it—especially if you are dealing with a topic related to something more whimsical and spirited—but you’ll still need to maintain a strict sense of professionalism.

This course serves as a means of guiding you and your blog toward the success and income you have been longing for. It can be an arduous journey, but with the right team on your side, you’ll be assured nothing but the highest levels of success.
Chapter 2: How to Choose Your Blog Topic

Your journey into the realm of successful blogging will begin with the essential aspect of topic selection. This basic and essential step in the creation of your blog may actually represent one of your more challenging hurdles as you go through the process of getting your site up and running.

You may be fortunate enough to have identified the perfect idea for your blog. You may see very little in the way of competition in your niche, and possess a clear vision for your new website venture. On the other hand, many people don’t know which blog topic they should select in order to actualize their goals. How do you avoid making the mistake of selecting the wrong topic? How do you ensure that the topic you select is the one you’ll be able to effortlessly manage while holding the interest of your readers?

Poor topic selection could result not only in loss of potential income, but also in severe setbacks in terms of time and financial investment. While you can certainly change the direction of your blog at a later date based upon the feedback of your friends, family, and site guests, choosing the right topic now (and retaining a generalized concept of what your content is going to include) will help you complete a successful launch.

Here are five common mistakes you should try to avoid while determining the topic of your blog:

1. Avoid choosing a topic simply because you have discovered other successful blogs focused upon that subject, or because you have found several bloggers who are making money with it. They are already established entities in the market, and it could take a significant amount of work (as well as a large investment of time and money) to catch up and find yourself on an equal playing field. This is simply not a good return on your investment.

2. Focus less upon what other bloggers are doing, and more upon what you need to
be doing—the steps that will help you achieve your goals. It’s all too easy to get caught up in what others are doing and neglect our own projects. Certainly, you can feel inspired to your own level of success through admiration of what they have achieved, but plant your focus firmly within the formation of your own ideas.

3. Diversity of subject matter is important, but you will need to carefully select topics that do not encompass an excess of diversity within your range of potential subjects. Your blog should focus upon one good and unique direction, with just enough exploration of similar topics or other related aspects to keep your readers inspired.

4. Avoid creating a blog based upon a subject in which you have very little knowledge or practical experience. It could be that you’ve researched topics, and discovered that something with which you are less than familiar represents a niche market simply waiting to be explored. Give some thought to how much work is going to be needed in order to write your blog with the voice of authority readers are looking for. If you are spending excessive amounts of time researching your blog topic, you’ll experience a really poor return upon your time investment.

5. You’ll definitely want to select a topic that involves one of your passions or hobbies, or a field in which you have extensive practical experience. What you don’t want to do is write about a topic involving a passion few others will share. One of the incredible things about the Internet is that it allows us to become acquainted with people who share our interests off the beaten path—but even with this in mind, you still need to avoid being too eclectic.

Do a fair amount of research into the topics you’re passionate about, and determine the level of interest that potentially exists out there. It is essential to get to know your market. By now, you should have a few ideas for your blog starting to float through your mind.

If you are still struggling to come up with a good, feasible blog idea, what should your next steps be? Individuals who desire a blog but have little in the way of good ideas
should start by making lists.

- Make a list of your hobbies—i.e., model railways, collectibles, running, cooking, crafts, etc.

- Make a list of your passions—i.e., restoring vintage cars, painting, travel, charitable causes, etc. Passions and hobbies can be one in the same, but for the sake of organization, split your interests into fun-filled hobbies vs. subjects that truly hold your passion and result in animated conversations with friends and family members.

- Make a list of your most interesting life experiences: raising children (some of the most successful blogs today are written by so-called “Mommy Bloggers”), backpacking adventures, life in the corporate world, etc.

- Make a list of your skills, education, and training. If you possess the skills and experience needed to become a landscaper or interior designer, you already have the know-how necessary to run a blog on the topic. If you are considering a topic related to your current job duties, you should first identify any relevant company policies with your employer. If you are a pilot for a major airline, for example, you may find that many do not want their pilots to mention the airline they are flying for (or their real name) in case the blog results in a public image or relationship issue. Don’t put your day job on the line for the sake of a blog.

In almost all situations, it is infinitely easier to start up a blog based upon a field in which you are sincerely interested, so dedicate your focus to this aspect of blogging rather than trying to get too involved in your blog’s potential to generate an income. Income will be generated once you have established yourself as an expert in the field and a leader in your particular niche market. Have faith that your blog will attract a good following, and avoid focusing solely upon the generation of money. The income you could potentially earn will derive from an increase in traffic to your site, so focus your drive upon the production of outstanding content to rein in traffic. Put simply, the more traffic your website is seeing, the greater your opportunities for profit.
If you are truly struggling to make your selection between lists of ideas, simply pick one, and devote a minimum of three months to the project. Sometimes, you just need to dive headfirst into a new venture to see whether or not it will ultimately work out for you.

It is crucial to mention that you may find, after weeks of research, list-making, and reflection upon your skills and passions, you simply don’t have the right answer. It may come down to allowing your market to set the answers for you. You could find yourself needing to simply set the blog up and start adding regular content that is unique and interesting—and just see what kinds of results and responses you receive. This can help you to gain insight into what the market really wants in terms of unique and interesting content. It can also allow you the opportunity to make adjustments to your blog and content as you progress.

Keep in mind that as you start out in the world of serious blogging, it is essential to select one great idea to pursue. You can certainly set up several blogs later on down the road, once your initial project has started to take off; but if you are coming out of the gate with several blogs all at once, you may find yourself faltering in terms of quality somewhere along the way. Focus 100% of your energy on one blog, and work toward perfecting it.

You have to start somewhere, so pick your topic, determine the direction in which you’d like to take your blog, and start writing. Whether you’re interested in sharing your favorite chocolate cake recipes with the world or you’re looking to create a blog centered around the mobile phone industry, the important thing is that you put your all into your new project—for at least a three-month trial period.
Chapter 3: Developing the Perfect Blog Name and Brand Messaging

With your topic established, it will now become easier to develop your blog name and begin to work on your brand messaging. This section will cover the importance of selecting a perfect, memorable name for your blog. We’ll also cover what brand messaging is, and why it should represent an important aspect of your blog’s development.

Whether you’re taking advantage of free blogging services or registering your own domain, these tips for selecting the name of your blog will work well. Here are the top five considerations you’ll need to consider when developing your blog name:

1. **Originality and uniqueness.** You’ll want your blog to stand out among the millions currently floating around out there. You may only have a few other competitors in your niche, but one of the goals of an informative, well-composed blog is its ability to grab the attention of people with little or no knowledge of your topic. Your blog’s name shouldn’t resemble the name of a well-known blog, or you might be accused of being a copycat—which could result in the swift loss of your following before you even get started. Your blog’s name should be original and unique enough to grab attention without being silly. If you are developing a serious blog about a medical condition or military history, for example, you wouldn’t want to name it something cutesy or completely irrelevant, would you?

2. **Descriptive and enticing.** Think of your blog name just as you would the title of a book. You wouldn’t necessarily be in a hurry to pick up a book entitled *Generic Story about Climbing a Mountain*, would you? If the book is called *Thrills, Chills, and Adventures of Mountain Climbers*, on the other hand, you’ll find yourself far more intrigued by the excitement waiting between the covers. Of course, it isn’t reasonable to create such a long name for a blog. You’ll want a descriptive and
enticing name, but you don’t want something that will take too long to actually say, type, or remember.

3. **Conveying the right image.** When considering the blogs you frequent, give some thought as to the visions their names conjure up. What comes to mind when you read the name of your favorite blog about cooking? Ideally, a blog name should be relevant to the topic, and it should convey a positive and upbeat mental image. Cutesy and whimsical names have their place, absolutely; but if you’re looking for a more profound or professional tone for your website, you wouldn’t necessarily name your blog something that can’t be taken seriously.

4. **Making it memorable.** Your content will render your blog truly memorable for your readers, but it all starts with your blog name. If readers enjoy their initial visit to your blog, and its name is something unique, catchy, and relevant to the topic, they are going to be much more likely to keep it in mind the next time they’re looking for entertainment or information.

5. **Simple spelling, easy-to-type.** When selecting a blog name, ensure that you are only considering names that will be easy for your readers to spell and type into a search engine or address bar in their browser. When you think you’ve settled upon a name for your blog, say it out loud. Can you easily spell it after hearing it once? You’ll definitely want a blog name that is unique and memorable, but you won’t want it to be so unique that no one can pronounce or spell it. That would make your blog memorable for all the wrong reasons.

With your blog name in mind, begin to consider your brand messaging. Unless you actively work in marketing, you may not be familiar with the exact nature of what brand messaging entails. Let’s take a look at what brand messaging is not, so you can gain a better understanding of what it is.

Brand messaging is not a magic formula that will result in the instant fame and fortune you’ve been dreaming about as a blogging star. Brand messaging can be considered
more of an adjustable formula, modified to fit your blog and singular goals.

Brand messaging activates the voice you give to your blog. It encompasses the complete package of visual and verbal, and serves as a means of demonstrating how your blog operates. Consider brand messaging as the voice, message, and persona of your business.

One of the biggest mistakes of even the most successful businesses is trying to mold a company into the ultimate solution for every problem experienced by every individual. The old adage “You can’t please everyone, every time” actually has a lot of merit—especially in the world of blogging, where you may not even have much interaction with your target audience over long periods of time.

In order to achieve the level of blogging success you’re looking for, you’ll need to send a clear message about your brand. Consider some of the most iconic businesses in the world: they send an extremely clear message about what sets them apart from other businesses in their industry.

With this in mind, consider what it is about your blog that makes it different from the rest. What makes your site better than others in your niche? Once you’ve come to these answers, you can begin to wrap your entire brand around the characteristics that set your blog apart and make it better.

Without giving clear thought to your blog voice, and without a firm focus upon what makes your site unique, you’ll be sending a muddled message to your readers. After all, if you aren’t entirely sure of your voice, how can you expect your readers to identify it? Avoiding confusion and sending a crystal-clear message will let your readers know what to expect from your blog—and cause them to steer away from your competition.

Remember that branding will define what distinguishes your blog from all of the other sites your readers will encounter.

Another key element to successful brand messaging is the demonstration of the value readers will receive from your blog as opposed to the content, products, or services it
offers. This might seem a bit confusing, but in reality, it is very simple.

- Don’t tell your readers what you can offer them.
- Tell your readers how they can benefit from your blog.

This will turn your blog into a tool that allows your readers to feel as though it has been created just for them. This is actually a basic marketing principle that every business should be aware of. When you go to purchase a new laptop, as the consumer, you are not thinking about the fact that the retailer is offering twenty types of laptops for you to look at. Instead, you are considering how you can benefit from an excellent selection of laptops. You are giving thought to how each laptop can work for you.

Your blog readers should be thinking about the benefits they will receive from reading your content. Whether they’re discovering a knitting pattern you have designed or learning the basics of FOREX, the marketing principles remain the same. Demonstrate to your readers what they will get—not what you can offer.
Chapter 4: Designing a Great-Looking Blog

Web design has evolved dramatically over the last two decades. It has progressed from something that only a handful of web-savvy individuals could do to something that a flower-shop owner can accomplish in a weekend with the help of web-design tools.

The way you arrive at the design of your blog is actually kind of irrelevant.

• You could hire a web designer to design something to your exact specifications.

• You could use any one of the millions of templates available for purchase or free download.

• You could design your own blog, using hundreds of design tools available at your fingertips.

There exist certain web design essentials that every website should follow. These will keep your blog looking as timeless and professional as you need it to be. Keep in mind that a poorly-designed blog will leave your readers with the impression that you are less than professional, and that you are still struggling to determine your blog identity. The design of your site is the first thing your visitors will notice, and it represents the foundation they’ll use to form a lasting impression of your blog.

Here are the essentials you should follow when coming up with a design for your new blog:

1. Your blog should load swiftly. You may have a stunning design selected, but very few readers are actually going to be able to appreciate it if the page takes a long time to load. All in all, your blog should take no more than 15 seconds to load, once your guests arrive. You can accomplish this by keeping images to a reasonable
2. Navigation should be intuitive. There is nothing worse than visiting a website for the specific purpose of locating information, only to realize that navigation is so confusing that it takes forever to track down what you’re actually searching for. Your navigation should be clear, and all of your important links should be easy for your blog readers to locate.

3. Check browser compatibility. Myriad options are available today, so make sure you have checked what your blog looks like in several different browsers. Your blog should look great when loaded in Firefox, IE, Chrome, and Safari.

4. Keep it simple. Your blog readers are going to be a lot less interested in flashy design than in stellar content. Minimize the use of bulky images that only increase the time it takes to load your blog. Don’t clutter your blog with unnecessary images and items. Unless your blog is about web design, you truly don’t want it to offer a ton of flashy design features. Keep it simple, and offer a sense of neatness and organization.

5. Keep it professional. Avoid the impulse to use fancy fonts or bright colors that appeal to your personal sense of style. Certainly, you want to inject a bit of your personality into your blog’s design; but don’t allow it to be dominated by bright pinks and greens and curvy fonts if you are striving for a more professional image. If your blog is about cupcakes or dollhouses, you could access a bit more flexibility in terms of design creativity.

Before your blog goes live, consider having some of your friends and family members browse it for you. Ask them for their honest input about the overall design, and use them to help uncover any flaws in design, layout, or navigation. They’ll also be able to help you find any slow-loading images or broken links you may have missed. The more help you get from people you trust, the more confidence you will have in your blog when it launches.

Keep in mind that while it is important to design a blog that is effortlessly timeless, it
can also be fun to change up your design and give your blog a whole new look every six months or so. There exist a number of design templates that can help you to refresh the appearance of your blog without risking the loss of your content.
Chapter 5: Creating Outstanding Blog Content

When it comes to generating blog content that will bring your readers back day after day, you’ll need to keep a number of things in mind to ensure that your content is fresh, informative, and richly engaging. The blogosphere already contains more than enough blogs filled with fluff designed simply to attract readers, without actually offering them anything to keep them engaged.

Where do you start? How do you ensure that you are providing your readers with content that will prove valuable to them?

It is essential that you create a blog based upon a topic with which you already have a fair amount of familiarity. If you are well-informed and knowledgeable about the topic, you will be able to ensure that your content isn’t just bland and technical; instead, it will be infused with your personal opinions and passion.

Developing Your Content

Your blog content needs to be relevant, interesting, and engaging; and above all, it needs to be filled with content that people actually want to read and take the time to share with their social networks. The more you are emotionally invested in your topic, the more you’ll enjoy writing about it. We all have our own process for writing, so it is important to develop the one that will help you turn out good blog posts in a timely manner.

Here are some great tips to help get you started with the content of your blog.

Start off by creating a list of the topics you would like to cover. If certain topics could potentially run long, consider breaking them up into an engaging series of blog posts that will keep readers coming back for more. Only you know which content will truly work for your blog. Read other posts about tools related to your particular niche, and
consider some of the questions surrounding your subject matter. What information are blog readers seeking about the topic? What solutions can you potentially offer them? Start a list of possible topics to work from as you progress with your blog.

Work on an outline for your blog post. Break down the primary points of interest you want to include, and place them in order of importance. This type of outline will help you organize your thoughts and ensure a nice, smooth flow to your blog post.

With your outline in place, you can begin to flesh out your topic. Create a great starting line, and just write. Add any links that could support your point of view, and include examples and images relevant to your blog post. The important thing is to ensure that you are getting the words out.

Thoroughly proofread and edit your blog post before you upload it live to your website. It can prove helpful to read the post out loud, as this can assist you in spotting any fragmented sentences or other aspects of your writing that are keeping it from being the best it can be.

Add an attention-grabbing title that effectively describes the content within your blog posts and gives your readers an idea about what they can expect when they read your blog.

**Publishing Checklist**

There are a number of things that every good blogger should do after they have published an article to their blog. This simple but effective checklist will ensure that your blog not only maintains professional standards, but also instills a sense of confidence in your knowledge on the part of your readers.

✓ Even though you have already edited your work for any spelling or grammatical issues before publishing, seeing it published live on your site has a way of making additional errors practically jump off the page. This will make you pay just a little bit more attention to detail, and can help you spot some of the mistakes you missed
during proofreading.

✓ Check for any formatting and spacing errors that may not have been readily visible when you were previewing the post. Once the post has been published you will be in a better position to determine whether your graphics are aligned correctly, whether line breaks are in the right place, and whether any stray pieces of code are resulting in a skewed appearance of the blog.

No one is expecting perfection from any blog. The informal nature of the blog medium itself makes it seem silly to hold yourself to exceptionally high standards; but you can still maintain a sense of professionalism with regard to your blog’s appearance and the content you produce.

Should You Hire a Content Writer?

Even if you possess expert knowledge about your topic, you may still want to consider the value of hiring a content writer. Here are some of the distinct benefits:

• A content writer can help you build out the content of your blog so your launch offers plenty of good information right from the get-go.

• A huge time-saving factor can result from using the services of a content writer to get your blog fleshed out.

• A good content writer will have worked on blogs before—including their own blog—and can offer valuable insight for someone just getting started in the blogging world.

It is not hard to find content writers, but it can be challenging to find the right writer for your writing needs. When vetting potential content writers, there are a number of things you should consider to increase your chances of finding the right person straight away. It can be a huge waste of your time and money to simply go with the business offering the cheapest services and promising you the world for under $5.

• Determine the type of content you are looking for. Provide clear instructions so that
the writer can understand your needs and tell you how he or she will meet your requirements for content.

• Ensure that deadline expectations are fully understood.

• As with any vendor, ask to see a portfolio of previous work. You wouldn’t hire someone to build a pool in your backyard without first seeing some of their previous work, would you? The same is true for someone who will have access to your blog.

Hiring a professional copy writer to help you build up your blog is a great way to get things moving along at a rapid clip, especially if you are finding it challenging to dedicate the necessary time to getting your blog up and running. However, it is not always the ideal choice for every new blog. It certainly can help in many ways, but it can also prove frustrating when you aren’t able to get your voice and message across effectively.

At the very least, consider investing in the services of a web editor who can edit your content, keep it looking professional, and upload it to your blog so it is released in a timely manner.

Unless your blog is dedicated to photography or features an art gallery where words will get in the way, ensure that your blog posts amount to a minimum of 250 words. Posts stretching beyond 800 words can be tedious and boring for your readers, simply because we live in an age in which people prefer to get their information in short, informational blasts.

If you feel that your blog posts are going to be rather lengthy, consider breaking them up and creating a series that will entice readers back. It is often recommended that bloggers stay away from fixation on word count, instead focusing upon solid content that will give readers what they are looking for.
Chapter 6: Creating Your Social Media Strategy

In today’s world, social media permeates practically every aspect of our lives. This makes it absolutely essential to create a social media strategy to help you bring in the necessary traffic and ensure that your blog rises to the top in as little time as possible. Let’s start with the basics of social media, and move on to how you can develop your social media strategy to create an effortless increase in traffic.

The Basics of Social Media

Social media applications allow users to create, share, and exchange information across the virtual networks and communities they have created. Social media allows for dramatically increased flexibility in the sharing of user-generated content, and takes advantage of both web-based and mobility technologies in order to build interactive networks that permit users to share, create, discuss, and edit content generated by others.

Some of the most popular social media platforms include the following:

- YouTube
- Facebook
- Wikipedia
- Blogger
- WordPress
- Twitter
- LinkedIn

http://www.blogbasics.com
• Pinterest

• Second Life

Some key differences exist between social media and traditional media services:

➢ Quality control is naturally going to be drastically diminished when the average user, without formal education in the world of journalism, is able to create any type of web content without much help.

➢ The permanence of social media is something we should all be acutely aware of when posting content. The bottom line is: if you don’t want what you post today to negatively impact your audience a year from now, you should not post it. Even deleting a thread on your blog doesn’t completely remove it from web archives.

➢ The reach of social media often stretches a lot further than traditional media services, and the majority of people under the age of 40 now claim to get their news updates from one or more social media applications.

While it can be a flawed system, to be sure, the ability to advertise your blog without spending a small fortune is absolutely priceless.

**How it Could Work for You**

Just about everyone who considers themselves Internet-savvy is familiar with the term *going viral*. This refers to the idea that your blog content resonates so deeply and enormously that it virtually lights up the Internet with a fire that becomes the latest big thing. It happens when your content is liked or shared on Facebook, retweeted on Twitter, republished on other blogs, commented upon, blogged about by other bloggers, or talked about in offices around the water cooler. Sometimes, blog posts even make it to the front page of CNN or appear as the cheery end-story on the 6 o’clock news.

This type of attention can earn your humble little blog millions of views and a greatly
varied audience—more than you ever could have imagined.

Such a powerful result for your blog’s content and your overall brand reputation is something that no money can buy in today’s world of social media—but let’s be realistic for a second. It may be out of reach to assume you’ll find the secret key to make your content go viral, as no one can truly put their finger on the magic ingredient that causes something to explode online.

What you can do is set out to create blog content that is interesting, fascinating, engaging, and provides your target audience with laughs, thoughtful moments, and a truly positive online experience. The better your site and content, the better your chances of achieving a much-desired viral outcome.

You must accept that a fair amount of going viral is simply about having the right kind of content, plenty of good luck, and hitting the right audience at just the right time. You should also build a solid understanding of what going viral could impact, and recognize the degrees of effectiveness it could bring to your website and overall brand.

1. **Appreciate that there are varying degrees of viral.** Just about any aspect of your online presence can go viral. This means that your photos, blog content, videos, tweets, and even your Facebook page and/or group can receive viral attention. Any type of content that you have created and shared via electronic means could blow up online. This provides amazing potential for you, because you won’t have to worry about limiting yourself to your excellent blog content. You could create a compelling story or game associated with your overall brand, or design an app for Android and iPad users alike. Your creativity is only as limited as your imagination and talents. Imagine inventing the next great game—in connection with the incredible content on your website. Imagine capturing the most perfect image of nature’s splendor, and watching as it is shared across the Internet and ultimately linked back to your blog.

2. **Recognize the limits of viral content.** It is essential to understand that you cannot force your content to go viral. No amount of spamming or tirelessly pushing your

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content onto your friends and family is going to get you the viral outcome you’re hoping for. You can have great hope for viral results, position your blog content as the best and most engaging content, and feature great videos or images that are miles better than any other viral content you’ve seen—but you cannot make it go viral. The truth is, going viral is, by and large, a happy accident for content creators and bloggers. The best viral content is going to be natural and interesting to your audience. Instead of trying to buck the system in some way, focus on making your content as compelling as is possible. Make it funny, moving, and something that will resonate with your audience. It will ultimately be your audience that determines when your content is worthy of going viral. When that happens, you will be able to focus exclusively upon the creation of outstanding viral content.

3. **Feel the flow of viral content.** One of the key factors to anything that goes viral is that it resonates with people in one way or another. Think about what is most likely to affect the emotions of people who are Internet- and business-savvy: stay-at-home moms, career dynamos, and everyone else in between. You may be surprised that success most often comes from pieces that are uplifting, happy, or otherwise make us feel great about ourselves and others around us. Posts that truly touch upon human nature provide the greatest impact. Content that is able to trigger any type of emotional response is going to have the deepest and most lasting effect. Content that features a positive and uplifting message, opens the minds of your readers, and imparts good feelings about oneself and others—all of these qualify as positive emotional responses that will contribute to going viral.

You may be tempted to keep some of your content short, simply because you think it would better serve to hold the attention of your readers. There is some merit to this line of thinking, but when the content is really excellent and carries a clear and positive message, you’ll find that your readers will yearn to learn more about it. Just make sure that longer blog articles translate into more valuable information and more engaging content—and by all means, avoid becoming long-winded and boring!

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4. **Viral Value!** Whether your content offers real value or not, the point is that it needs to be worthy of going viral. Think about cute videos of laughing babies or dogs jumping on trampolines. They certainly have gone viral, but they don’t offer any sort of monetary value. What they do offer is a chance for a good giggle, and an escape from the hum-drum monotony of the workday. Think about instructional content or how-to articles. Consider editorials on breaking news stories. Think about freebies and other types of contests—these are huge in the blogging world, and they serve the purpose of increasing your audience. Warnings about the latest scams, phishing attempts, or other dangers will also offer value, and make it useful for your audience to share the content.

5. **A mentality of abundance.** In days gone by, people used to hoard information like there was no tomorrow. Today’s social-media-linked world doesn’t just encourage the sharing of information—it actually thrives on it. With this in mind, do your utmost to provide quality information that is useful and offers plenty of helpful details to your target audience. The individual or company willing to share information in order to help make the lives of others easier—without looking to fulfill a hidden agenda—is going to be the one more likely to gain respect from their audience and see their content going viral. A fine line exists between putting out material just for the sake of it, and offering actual value to your audience. Keep it relevant, and avoid the urge to flood their inboxes or news feeds.

6. **Put yourself out there!** While we’ve established that it is impossible to artificially create a viral outcome for your content, it is possible to put yourself in a position that will encourage your potential for going viral. Publicizing your content through social media channels represents a very important method of self-promotion, and will provide you with the opportunity to be seen and potentially picked up upon by others who resonate with your content. You’ll need to make it as easy as possible for them to see that your content is there, and available to be shared. This can be accomplished through a few key steps.

   a. Ensure that your content is placed onto multiple social media platforms. It
needs to be on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and RSS feeds; linked to your profile pages on other types of interactive websites, like forums; and on micro-blogging platforms like Tumblr, Plurk, Jaiku, Google+, LinkedIn, and XING. Do your research into the many micro-blogging platforms out there, and take full advantage of them. They’re free…and free is always a good thing!

b. Be sure that you are using a working link back to your content. A fair number of viral pages that are shared or retweeted include links, and when it comes to viral blog pages or videos, your links function as the most crucial part of the whole viral effort.

c. Send links to your content to everyone you know, including friends, family members, and even co-workers who won’t be upset about receiving them. Be sure to remember the fine line between sharing and spamming.

While it is essential to promote your content using several social media platforms, you don’t want to overdo it in terms of promotion. Be selective about the type of content you are encouraging your target audience to take a look at. You don’t want to be in the position of convincing them that each and every piece of content you put out there is going to be the latest and greatest thing. This can lead to the impression that you are overselling yourself, and that you are essentially the social media version of the boy (or girl) who cried wolf. This can also, ultimately, lead to a loss of interest in your work—which is the exact opposite of the reaction you’re looking for.

Be sure that you are only putting out the very best content, and only promoting what you believe to be worthy of viral status. Remember, it’s less about placing pressure on your social media circle to share the content, and more about ensuring that you are creating high-quality material worthy of being shared.

The Importance of Momentum

Not only should you create incredible content and take steps to publicize it via your
blog, you should also offer a message that encourages your readers and overall audience to take action with regard to the content they are reading. It simply isn’t enough to create content, put it out there, and sit back waiting for something to happen.

Plant the seeds of suggested momentum into the minds of your audience, and allow them to make the decision as to whether or not they will follow through and help you to achieve your desired results. Here are some simple ways to encourage your social media networks to share your blog with others:

- Include icons to the most popular social networks on your blog. This makes it a simple, one-click process for your blog to be shared. At the very least, you should have Twitter, Facebook, and Google+ icons on each page of your website, and at the end of each of your blog posts.

- Ask your social network friends and family members to help you out. Tell them what you’re hoping to achieve in terms of increasing readership and spreading the message about your blog.

- Use targeted phrases like “Check out my latest blog post…” or “Please take a look at my blog post; it means a lot to me.” Asking questions can often get your audience to interact with you. Questions like “What are your thoughts about…?” or “What would you do if this happened to you…?” work well.

- Invite your target audience to interact with you on your social media platforms and in your blog’s comments.

Social media platforms can ultimately function as an extremely powerful tool for helping to promote your blog. Do your research, and take the necessary steps to create an engaging presence on as many networks as you have time for. They are ultimately going to form your target audience, so do your utmost to build a strong presence on the sites they use each and every day.

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CHAPTER ONE

Great Reviews Are Very Helpful!

If you find the content within this book helpful, please leave a positive review.

Please go to favorite social network (ex. Facebook, Twitter) and let others know what you think about the book. If would be helpful if you shared the following link with them:

http://blogbasics.com/welcome

This will give me the opportunity to send them a copy of the book and personally help me with their blog.
Chapter 7: Creating Your Launch Content

Your launch content will offer your blog readers the very first and most important impression of your website. The content they see when they first land on your blog will be what gives them an idea about what they can expect in the future. Keep in mind that your blogging website should have a bit more information on it than your very first blog post. You should include, at the very minimum, some of the following details on your blog:

- **About**: Give your new readers an understanding of what your blog is truly about.
- **Contact details**: Include links to your social media presence.
- **Informative nuggets**: Provide instructional videos, links to other how-to websites, and bits of relevant information to help flesh out an otherwise barren website.

When your blog launches, you should have, at the very minimum, three to five blog posts that are informative, high-quality, and indicative of the types of entries you will be releasing as your blog continues. You’ll need to make a superb first impression on your readers, so publish some of your greatest ideas in your first set of posts. You may even wish to consider the idea of a miniseries of articles addressing your core topics in minute detail.

Keep in mind that the posts you create prior to launch day also help to get you into the rhythm of updating your blog, and can work to iron out any wrinkles before you throw the virtual doors wide open.

You already know that your content is crucial to attracting and keeping the interest of your blog guests. Here are the top five reasons you need to be creating killer content for your launch date:

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1. Your launch content will create and define your credibility within the blogging community. When you are producing blog material that is fresh, original, well-researched, and well-written, you will begin to establish yourself as a leader in your niche market and build your own credibility. Positioning yourself as a credible source of information on your selected topic will get people reading your blog, talking about your posts, and sharing your content.

2. When you create stellar blog content, it creates a sort of reader boomerang effect. Content offering valuable information or significant entertainment value will keep your readers returning for more. This can create a foundation of readers who will ultimately become your constant followers.

3. Once you have used your content to establish credibility, you’ll have an audience that is enjoying your blog—and they won’t be able to wait to read more of it. They’ll sign up for your RSS feed and/or newsletters just to get more of the information you provide. Creating incredibly engaging blog content is perhaps the single best method of attracting an audience and growing your contact list of faithful readers.

4. If your blog content is truly sensational, it effectively carries the same impact as the season finale of your favorite TV cop drama. It will leave your audience on the edge of their seats while they’re waiting for the next installment. Killer content keeps them engaged and eagerly anticipating what you will say next.

5. Amazing content will also encourage your audience to engage with you. Engaged readers will want to learn more about you and your blog, and will ultimately keep returning to see what else you can offer them. When something strikes an emotional chord with your audience, you’ll find they will want some way of interacting with you so they can ask questions or share their own personal experiences.

Remember that all social media and blogging gurus out there make the claim that content is king. Creating truly fantastic content will ensure that your blog reigns...
Here are some tips to help you create irresistible content for your first set of readers to encounter:

• Keep your content easy-to-skim. This doesn’t necessarily mean that it needs to be really short, but it should be easy to read. Avoid large paragraph blocks and rambling just for the sake of rambling. Keep things as precise as possible while providing all of the relevant content and information to grab the attention of your readers.

• Create a compelling headline. This can be just as important as the content itself, because the headline is what is going to be most visible in RSS readers, newsletters, search engines, and shares across social network platforms. Your headline should allow your readers to surmise what the blog is about, and it should lure them into opening the blog post to read further.

• Use subheadings and bullet lists to emphasize the most important points of your blog post. If need be, use *italics* or **bold** words in order to get your point across.

• Consider the addition of relevant images to help break up the content a bit, and draw the eye to images that relate well to the content.

• Try to avoid local jargon or slang—unless, of course, your blog is about local jargon or slang! Something considered amusing in your part of the world may actually come across as offensive in another. If you are writing for a global demographic, you risk alienating some of your target audience if they become offended by the most benign of words.

• Give some thought to the questions you would ask if you were in the shoes of your readers. For example, if your website offers reviews of local restaurants, you may want to ask questions about the menu, pricing, types of drinks available, or ambience. Do your utmost to answer these types of questions within your content, so you will be offering your followers value in the words they read. Your goal should
be to create a blog post that stands as the ultimate resource on the web for your particular topic.

• If you are using facts within your content, consider citing credible sources to demonstrate that you are not simply making up random facts and figures. This will also serve to reinforce your credibility as a source of knowledge.

There is perhaps no blog post more important than the very first one your readers will see when they land on your website. Ensure that you have created content that will grab and hold their attention—and keep them coming back for more. This may seem like a lot of pressure for one blog post (or set of preliminary posts), but the truth is, if you don’t like a book after the first few pages, you’re probably going to put it down. The same holds true for your blog and the content you offer to your readers.

If you are truly knowledgeable and passionate about your topic, you won’t have much of a problem creating the engaging and interesting content your readers are looking for.
Chapter 8: How to Develop Your Launch Plan

Think about the steps a brick-and-mortar business takes to launch their new business on opening day. For most, it becomes a fun-filled party, bursting onto the scene to tell potential customers how great the business is and about the kinds of products or services they sell. Often, the opening celebration offers free samples or other giveaways to entice customers to stop the car and pop into the store.

This same method can work exceptionally well for the launch of your new blog. Your blog needs to be fired out of the cannon with an incredible amount of value—and the all-important wow factor that will determine the level of excellence you’ll maintain throughout the life of your blog. Your initial launch content will need to offer incredible momentum that ultimately proves unstoppable.

Think of your blog launch just as you would the launch of any other type of new project or small business. It is an event opportunity that should not be wasted. When handled correctly, your well-executed launch can propel your blog in the right direction, and set it directly onto an essentially limitless path of growth. There are a number of things you will need to consider prior to the writing of your first blog article.

**Give thought to your launch goals.** Think about what you actually want to achieve with the launch of your new blog. The majority of bloggers tend to opt for an approach that goes something like this: “Let’s write a post, publish it, and see what kind of reaction we get.” This is fine if you’re blogging about your shoe obsession or an angst-filled week at work; after all, your target audience probably consists only of your close friends and family members. If you have lofty goals for your blog, however, you will need to push yourself in the direction of planning a careful and precise execution for its launch.
Ask yourself a few key questions:

• Do you want to attract a lot of readers all at once?
• Do you want to attract readers who will prove to be reliable audience members?
• Do you want to get the attention of other companies and advertisers?
• Do you simply want to share your blog and passion with your social circles?

Once you have identified your goals for your launch, you’ll be in a good position to continue planning.

The launch of a new blog is a one-time event. You can certainly do a re-launch at some point down the road, if you change your content and direction significantly. The initial launch of your blog is a big event that, if done right, can net your website a significant amount of attention. It is essential to avoid squandering the opportunity to make a big splash and create a positive impression.

It’s all too easy to believe that a successful blog launch will require unlimited resources and a significant amount of time. While this would certainly help in the execution of a perfect blog launch and significant success, the truth is, you don’t need to rely on the right resources to get it done. You will need to be resourceful—and that is the key to success in any new venture.

There exists a simple blog launch formula you can use to send your new blog into the world:

1. Create a solid foundation upon which you can continue building your blog.
2. Create blog content that offers unmistakable value for your target audience.
3. Create a plan for getting your blog in front of your target audience.
4. Interact with visitors to your blog, and form a connection with them so they’ll be enticed to come back.

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This may seem overly simplistic, but sometimes, the simplest of methods are the most effective. Let’s delve further into these strategies so you can see how to implement them in your own real-life situations.

1. Create a solid foundation. The foundation of your blog will include everything we’ve already discussed:
   
   a. Your topic
   
   b. Your brand
   
   c. Setting yourself apart from other blogs written on the same topic
   
   d. The ways you choose to relate to your target audience
   
   e. Your web design
   
   f. Your foundational content
   
   g. Your strategy for producing ongoing content.

   With the right focus on your topic, a perfected brand, outstanding foundational material, and a strong strategy, your launch can become exponentially more effective.

   Do your utmost to set each of these initial elements firmly in place prior to your blog’s launch. This will ensure that you make an outstanding first impression upon the readers you are working so hard to attract. A blog with an incomplete or otherwise unprepared appearance could just turn your guests away—on day one!

**Build Blog Buzz Early.** With the launch of any new product, store, or blog, one of the worst marketing tactics you can employ is to wait until the day before (or even the day of) your launch to spread the word about your new venture. In an ideal world, the new bakery opening up down the road will have a small group of curious people waiting to check out their pastries and muffins on opening day. The same concept applies to your
blog: in an ideal world, you’ll have a group of curious people waiting to see what you have to offer on day one.

How can you accomplish this? Build buzz about your blog at least one month out from launch day, and let people know it is in the developmental stage. Offer tidbits of information about just how awesome your blog is going to be.

If you are active on social media networks, you’ll find they represent the best places to promote and talk up your new blog. Social media platforms can also help you to begin to establish your audience, even before you hit “publish” on your first blog post. Tweeting or posting status updates about the kind of information you will be sharing is sure to create buzz amongst friends, family members, co-workers, and others interested in your topic.

If you maintain another website, or even a blog on another topic, both of these can offer alternative options for the promotion of your new venture. Don’t be afraid to create blog posts about the progress of your new blog—this will help promote interest in your new work. It will also serve as a great way to ask your current audience for feedback, without coming off as too self-promotional.

You should already have a good idea about who the other bloggers in your niche are. In reaching out to them, you can start to build good rapport. Don’t e-mail them to ask for help, or just to say, “Hi, love the blog!” Contact them with a significant contribution: advice, answers to questions they have posed on their blogs, or breaking news stories or ideas relevant to your niche. While it may feel as though you are giving away your secrets to the competition, remember that other bloggers in your niche can become your biggest allies in building your reputation and brand.

Offer to do guest posts on their already-established blogs. This is perfectly acceptable, even if you don’t already have an established blog up and running. It offers their readers a new voice to pay attention to, gives the established blogger a break from writing blog posts, and, most importantly, serves as a means of establishing your name as a credible source of information within your unique niche. If you get lucky and high-
traffic blogs are happy to let you write a guest post, then you should do your utmost to put your best blogging foot forward. Make this post outstanding. Make it count. All of these steps may seem like a lot of work to accomplish before your blog is even launched; but the reality is, any new launch is going to be a fair amount of work. When managed correctly, it can represent an incredible opportunity for you to lay the groundwork for a blog that could just change your life.
Chapter 9: How to Launch Your Blog

We’ve established just how valuable social media platforms can be for your blog and overall brand. You’ll find that come launch day, they will prove immensely beneficial for getting your name out there and helping you make a flawless first impression.

Simply hitting the “publish” button on your blog post and sitting back to wait won’t get you the readers you’re looking for. You may find that you receive several spam comments on your blog post within a few weeks, but that’s about all you can expect unless you actively work to launch your blog with a virtual *bang*. You’ll need to do a lot of marketing and networking while doing your utmost to ensure that your blog maintains the necessary standards to help to set you apart from the rest.

Before launch week, you should be heavily promoting your blog, using every option available to you. This holds true whether you’re promoting it on Facebook, Twitter, or another social media platform—or if you plan to guest-post on other relevant blogs, to get your name out there and build your reputation as a subject-matter expert and reliable source of information.

**Finding Relevant Blogs**

By guest-posting on other blogs already established in your niche (or one similar to your own), you’ll be able to grab the attention of their audience and give your fledgling blog the right type of exposure. Do a bit of research about which established blogs get a fair amount of traffic, and narrow your list down to the top five blogs. Imagine if you could capture their audience (or even just a fraction of it) and convert a high number of people into newly-dedicated readers of your blog!

Give some thought to how you could get your blog in front of these other audiences. Would they be receptive to a guest post, or perhaps even an interview, as you discuss
the core values of your blog? How could you garner a simple mention?

When you reach out to other bloggers, use your creativity to inform them of just what makes your blog so interesting and unique within your niche. Sell your blog, and the value it can potentially offer, to their readers. Bloggers are often receptive to the idea of guest posts because this gives their readers new information and a new voice to listen to while helping them to make a new ally in the blogging world.

Accept that you may initially be rejected by the first few blogs you reach out to, but don’t allow that to deter you from your mission. Aim for well-established blogs with hefty audiences. While you shouldn’t rule out the idea of writing for smaller blogs with lesser audiences, do your utmost to land a guest spot on a larger blog. Many bloggers feel intimidated by larger and better-established blogs, and this leads them to simply avoid guest-blogging. In reality, not only could you be pleasantly surprised if you are asked, but a larger website could potentially send hundreds more visitors to your site than the sum total of several smaller blogs.

Try to ensure that your guest posts will be published on your launch day, or shortly thereafter. This will ensure that the new audience clicking over to your blog is greeted by lots of relevant content, adding to the success of launch day!

Make plenty of noise on social media platforms, and consider looking into websites that publish press releases. Don’t underestimate the value of a well-written press release.

Consider throwing a launch party for your blog! It doesn’t have to be a big, fancy, over-the-top event, unless you have the funds and the desire to do something like that. It can simply be a group of friends, or new blogger acquaintances you’ve met virtually, getting together for drinks or a nice dinner at a casual restaurant. Hand out business cards featuring your blog so your friends and family members can do their part to spread the word of your wonderful new venture.

If you have done your share of research and groundwork before launch day, you’ll find that launching your new blog can become an effortless task that provides immense
rewards.
Chapter 10: Making Friends in the Blogging World

The blogging world is expansive, and it seems that almost everyone has a blog these days. While there are millions of blogs out there, you’ll likely find that your own blogging niche is somewhat small. What this means for you and your fledgling blog is that it is essential to befriend other blogs in your niche—and also in niches that relate to your subject. Remember that if you treat your blog like any other small business, you will need to follow some of the marketing principles of smaller business. One essential marketing principle relates to networking—but in the world of blogging, it is a little less sterile than what you may consider traditional networking to be.

There exist a number of reasons why it is essential for you to at least be on friendly terms with other bloggers, and specific methods you can use to accomplish this.

The Whys of Making Blogging Friends

When you have worked hard on your blog and spent hours upon hours perfecting your design and content, you need honest and raw feedback on the results of all of your blood, sweat, and (probably) tears—if you’ve been using one of the more complex blogging platforms. Getting feedback from members of your family and your close friends can certainly prove immensely helpful, but keep in mind that they care about you, and may be a little bit hesitant to say anything that could potentially hurt your feelings.

While it is nice to have friends and family members who consider your feelings, it simply won’t do you much good to have only positive feedback on your blog. There is a huge difference between positive feedback and constructive feedback.

Positive feedback is glowing and filled with praise—which, of course, you do need to hear, because you’ve worked really hard on building your blog. Constructive feedback,
on the other hand, will highlight any design features that don’t work, and may also help you develop your writing style by pointing out where you could have expanded upon a topic or minimized the attention you gave to a particular issue.

Established bloggers will know what works. They will have already gone through the trial and error of setting up a new blog, and will have muddled their way through the growing pains of a new blog and established an audience for their thoughts and ideas. While what works for them may not necessarily prove successful for your own blog, it can be incredibly helpful to learn from their mistakes and experiences.

Perhaps the most important reason why it is important for you to befriend other bloggers is that it gives you the opportunity to tap into their audience. While you might be tempted to think of this as stealing their audience, if your blog offers great information and becomes a credible resource, you won’t be stealing it at all. You will simply be offering an additional source of much-needed information to readers.

Other bloggers, especially those who have stumbled across the winning formula for blogging success, can provide you with incredible inspiration for your own blog’s content. They can also become collaborators on projects or the development of eBooks and other types of materials that could serve as a source of income as you provide your readers with an important source of information.

Think about some of the most successful blogs. Many of them receive hundreds of thousands of hits a day from readers, all looking to see what new and exciting things they have to say today. Imagine if you could tap into that audience and direct even a small percentage of their traffic to your blog via their site, Twitter, or other social media channels. This could be life-changing for your humble little blog.

Don’t rule out befriending bloggers in niches related to your own. If your blog is all about the pastry delights you whip up in the kitchen, you may want to consider reaching out to other cooking-related blogs in areas indirectly related to pastries. You may also want to consider expanding your reach to bloggers who are stay-at-home moms, always looking for new and exciting recipes. In fact, your reach is only as
limited as your ability to search out bloggers.

**How to Connect**

Now you know why it can be critical to connect with other bloggers in your niche, and even those in related niches. How do you reach out to bloggers when they aren’t necessarily forthcoming with contact details? How do you reach out to someone and make an all-important connection when you don’t have the ability to look them in the eye and shake their hand?

- Leave great comments on their blog. It doesn’t matter how big it has grown—you can be assured that most bloggers read each of their comments. If you are consistently saying great, productive, and helpful things about the content of their blog posts, they are sure to begin to remember your name. Of course, it goes without saying that some of their posts will not necessarily represent a good fit for your positive commentary; but do try to leave impressive and memorable comments on thought-provoking posts, especially those actively seeking feedback and ideas.

- If their blog enables it, ensure that the icon showing up on your comments is a match for your blog logo or headshot. This way, they’ll be able to quickly recognize your comments when you leave them.

- Follow your favorite bloggers on Twitter. This gives you a great method of interacting with them outside of their blog. Respond to their Tweets, answer any questions they pose, ask your own questions, and send them interesting links. Make them an interactive part of your Twitter social circle.

- If you stumble across something you think a particular blogger would be interested in, send links or share the information with them. When you become familiar with a blogger and the things they find interesting, you’ll be able to quickly recognize links to products or services they would be helpful or even amusing.

- Link back to their website or share their updates on social platforms within your

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own network. Bloggers love any bit of attention they can get, so if you are consistently sharing their work, they will remember you, and return the favor when your blog is established and producing exceptional content.

There are a number of things you should naturally avoid doing when reaching out to other bloggers. Use common sense and good manners.

First, make sure they are receptive to your information. A large number of bloggers are not at all receptive to guest posts, giveaways, product reviews, or even interacting with other bloggers. It would be a huge waste of your time to craft the perfect e-mail, only to find out that they are seriously against everything you are attempting to do.

Here are five things you should absolutely avoid when reaching out to other bloggers:

1. Misspelling their name or the name of their blog. This comes across as sloppy, and demonstrates a lack interest in the blog or individual.

2. Sending a template e-mail. This can also come across as lazy, and it becomes all too evident that you are sending out templates without taking the time to craft a perfectly-focused email.

3. Asking silly questions. Believe it or not, there is such a thing as a silly question—especially when you are sending an e-mail to ask a blogger a question you could simply Google the answer to. Don’t come across as dense. This type of pandering to their expertise is extremely transparent, and won’t do you a lick of good.

4. Asking for information that is already on their blog. If you have done your due diligence, you won’t need to ask bloggers to locate information or provide answers to issues already covered on their blog.

5. Writing mini-novels instead of concise e-mails. As a blogger, you likely enjoy a bit of lengthy writing. While this may serve you well when it comes to crafting your own blog posts, it won’t do you a bit of good when you are reaching out to other bloggers. Your e-mails should be concise, straight to the point, and easy for the
Other bloggers can truly become your biggest allies, helping to ensure that your blog is launched on the right virtual foot. This, in turn, will lead to a fair amount of relevant traffic.

Don’t be overly clinical about becoming friends with other bloggers. The friendlier your relationship with them, the better it will ultimately turn out for your blog. Having the drive of a business professional is one thing, but enjoying a good rapport with other bloggers is much more important than the sterile networking of a business professional.
Chapter 11: How to Build a Thriving Audience for Your Blog

Hooking your first blog visitors represents a huge achievement, and it is something you should be immensely proud of accomplishing. Once you’ve got them, though, how do you keep their attention? How do you continue to grow your audience and attract new visitors to your blog each and every day?

By taking the time to attract and build a thriving audience for your blog, you’ll ensure that your blog reaches entirely new levels of success. The better the audience you are able to establish, the better the odds of your blog sticking around for many years to come.

Let’s take a look at some really great ways to keep your audience engaged while consistently increasing their numbers as time marches on.

**Content, Content, Content!**

It cannot be stressed enough that your content needs to remain at the high level of quality your first readers saw on day one. Certainly, you must launch your blog with phenomenal content to grab your audience’s attention; but you also need to consistently provide them with fascinating content in the days, weeks, and months to come. If your quality slips, you’ll likely find that your readership will start to slip, as well. Keep the content flowing, keep it informative, and keep it engaging. Above all, make sure it offers something your readers will find helpful, funny, or otherwise a good use of their time.

**Continued Blog Promotion**

All of the hard work you put into launching your blog should not slide off into the abyss once your site has been established within your niche. In order to continue receiving positive attention from other bloggers and social media platforms, you’ll need keep up
your promotional efforts, and continue to get word out about your blog.

• Offer to do guest posts on other blogs.
• Invite other bloggers to guest-post on your blog.
• Use social media platforms to promote your blog.
• Include your blog’s details in your e-mail and online forum signatures.
• Continually link to other blogs, and do your utmost to establish friendships with other bloggers.

Continued promotion of your blog at the same level may not secure you the influx of visitors it once did, but it will establish you and your blog as a credible resource for the knowledge and information sought by your readers.

Mailing Lists

A mailing list can function as an exceptionally effective method of keeping in contact with your readers. You may not be able to get each of your guests to sign up for your mailing list, but if you can capture even a small percentage of them, you’ll be in a good position to remind them of new posts and other site updates. Of course, it is crucial not to spam your readers every single time you update your blog. A biweekly (or even monthly) e-mail should provide them with sufficient updates of what has been happening on your blog, and encourage them to click on over to explore for themselves.

Contests

Running a contest or other type of giveaway represents a classic method of gaining attention for your blog. This kind of strategy helps you successfully retain the attention of your current audience while effectively working to bring a whole new set of blog visitors to your front door.

You don’t have to offer exceptionally costly giveaways, but they do need to be
something that will be enjoyed and make it worth sticking around.

As part of your contest requirements, you could have your guests sign up for your newsletter, follow you on social media networks, and share the contest within their own social networks in order to qualify for entry. You will find these techniques hugely effective at garnering hundreds of new followers for your blog.

If you have an established rapport with other bloggers in your niche, you could consider partnering with them to offer a much larger prize as incentive for readers to follow all of your blogs and social media outlets. While you may be able to only afford a $20 gift card on your own, imagine the awesome prize you could offer if you joined forces with just four other bloggers. Your $20 gift card could jump to a $100 gift card—a far more alluring prize for contest entrants!
Chapter 12: Why You Aren’t Getting the Traffic You’d Hoped For

Despite your best efforts, perhaps your blog simply isn’t generating the type of traffic you had hoped for. Now what? You’ve gone through all the steps and done your due diligence, but you’re not getting results. The answers may not be clearly defined—or they may actually be as simple as one or two minor changes to your website.

Here are some great things to check on:

• Make sure you are giving out the right address. It happens! It’s easier than you might think to make typos when giving out your blog’s address. Double-check that you have given everyone the correct URL when sharing your blog’s details.

• Perhaps your content wasn’t exactly what visitors were expecting. Despite your best intentions, you may find that your content is being directed at the wrong audience.

• Make sure your blog titles are carefully crafted, so they convey the right idea about the type of content your blog contains. Online content often needs to be very literal if it is going to be indexed correctly by every possible search engine.

• Ensure that you are creating fresh content, and not simply rewriting content that others have written on their own blogs. You can’t publish rehashed content and expect your blog’s audience to remain engaged.

• Don’t use misleading titles and information on Facebook or Twitter. All too many blogs make the mistake of using misleading information, which essentially tricks their audience into visiting their blog. This serves no purpose but annoying your target audience, and you could find them simply ignoring you from now on. It could
also gravely impact your overall credibility.

• Is your blog bogged down with too many advertisements and affiliate placements?

• Do you have too widgets and other types of distractions on your blog that may be keeping your readers from finding the content they had hoped to find?

• Is it easy to get to your blog from your homepage? Many bloggers have a splash page that needs to be clicked first, before they can make their way to the main page of the site. From there, they must try to locate your blog. That’s just too much work for the average blog reader, and you’ll quickly lose readership this way. Make the pathway to your blog a straight shot from your front door.

• Is your content poorly-written? You may have lured your audience in with an exciting hook about the article, then failed to deliver because your content is rife with errors.

• Ensure that you are providing great links to information related to your blog posts. This will provide your visitors with additional, compelling reading material, and further solidify your blog as a credible source of information.

• Is your website well-designed? Don’t underestimate the power of a really well-designed blog. It should look professional and readily convey your overall brand.

• Is your font too small? This oversight can make a huge difference with your target audience—and it’s a simple fix.

• Is your blog all talk and no photos or diagrams? Giant blocks of text can be hard on the eyes, so be sure to break things up with relevant images, diagrams, or videos.

• Have you included share buttons on your blog? Make it easy for your audience to share your content with their friends and family members.

• Is it too hard for guests to comment on your blog? Even the most popular blogging platforms can make it a rather time-consuming process to simply place a comment
on a blog.

- Does your blog take a long time to load? Test it using different browsers, and have your friends and family members check on their end, as well.

- How frequently are you posting? If you are not sticking to a regular posting schedule, your visitors will simply forget to swing on by.

- Are you making sure to share your content on social media sites? If you’re not doing your part to get your blog out there, how are others going to know to visit it—and, in turn, share it?

Encouraging sustainable traffic to visit your blog is part art, part science—and a bit of good luck. It can take some time to develop the right methods and approach for your blog. Just be sure to stay true to your brand as you proceed with the evolution of your blog.
Chapter 13: How to Expand Your Reach Using Multimedia Platforms

There should be no doubt in your mind that social media and other multimedia platforms have forever changed the way we communicate with one another. If you can expand your reach to take full advantage of the power of Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, YouTube, and podcasts, you’ll find yourself with an entirely new audience to tap into.

Before you get excited and start creating podcasts and videos to post on YouTube, you’ll need to consider the inherent truth about any form of communication. It doesn’t matter what the topic of your blog is, how much you have to say on the topic, or that you could easily create hours upon hours of videos for YouTube. What really matters is that you have a message that is tailored to the interests of your target audience. Your material needs to be sticky—it needs to attract new people and keep them glued to the podcast, video, or blog update, and compel them to keep coming back for more.

Curate Social Media Presences

Setting up your accounts across various social media platforms is typically very easy, but the real concern arises when you start to wonder how you can effectively generate activity on your social media accounts.

The heavy blog promotion we have already covered should help you boost your following and provide you with ready access to your target audience. Once this has been established, you’ll need to start engaging the people who are following. Use a fun and engaging tone to provide your readers with great material and feedback for their suggestions or comments.

You should have a vibrant, outgoing social media presence. The more people enjoy engaging with you, the more likely they will be to follow your blog and encourage their
own social circles to follow you, as well. The key is to make sure they interact with you as a warm and engaging person, not just a faceless blogger.

A good rule of thumb is to ensure that all of the content and updates posted on your social media platforms are not exclusively about you and your blog. For every photo, blog post, podcast clip, or status update you post, you should post at least three other items that aren’t exclusively about you and your blog. This serves to keep the attention of your readers, and also gives them additional reasons to engage with you.

**Developing Podcasts**

Podcasts represent a wonderful way to get your message across to your target audience. They offer a versatile format, and give you the freedom to express yourself as creatively as you like. Whether in audio or video format, podcasts allow you to connect with your audience in a brand-new way, and also provide you with the opportunity to establish yourself as a credible expert in your own particular niche.

Creating your own podcast is relatively easy, and won’t require any sort of specialized or professional-level equipment. You will need the following tools for creating your own podcast:

- Your computer
- A webcam or camcorder, if you are creating a video podcast
- A microphone
- Recording software

Simple, right? Well, it really can be. There is nothing all that challenging about creating your own podcast, and it can truly represent one of the better methods to help you reach out to a whole new audience while keeping your current audience engaged.

Here are some great tips for producing a stellar podcast:

- Write out a script, unless you are skilled at talking on the fly. A script can help you
cover all of your topics without stumbling or getting off-track.

- Make sure you are using a quality microphone and camera. You don’t want to produce subpar podcasts due to skimping on the quality of your equipment.

- Ensure that you save audio files in MP3 format, so your audience will be able to open files easily.

- Consider engaging a co-host. He or she could even be one of the more established bloggers you have developed a rapport with. Just be sure that you both follow clear guidelines about what you will be covering in your podcast. Otherwise, it may end up sounding scattered and chaotic.

- Avoid the use of music in your podcast unless you have the rights to it. While it is difficult for artists to protest against every blogger using their music in podcasts, certain individual artists do go on crusades to sue those who are using their music without permission. Odds are, it will never be an issue for you; but sometimes it’s best to remove the potential for a problem from the equation.

YouTube stands as one of the better marketing channels, if you have a video podcast to share. On any given day, YouTube users view over two billion videos. That is an astounding number to comprehend. YouTube can host your video and provide you with the potential to tap into the millions of users surfing the site each and every day. YouTube also makes it effortless to share your content across various social media platforms. If you have already established a good following on several social media platforms, it’s as simple as sharing the video podcast and waiting for positive feedback.

If your video podcast is truly exceptional, you may just find it capable of helping you attain viral status. The number of videos that go viral every day is shocking. You could be the next big thing…or, at the very least, the next big thing within your niche and target audience.

Either way, you cannot overlook the power of using multimedia platforms to help
launch your blog to new levels of fame.
Chapter 14: How to Make Your First Dollar Blogging

You’ve done it! You’ve created an incredible blog, secured a great following, and established a solid reputation in the blogging world. A large number of dedicated visitors pop in each day—and you’ve got plenty of organic traffic hitting up your blog from web searches, or from coming across your links on other blogs and social media platforms.

What is your next step? How do you convert your blog’s success into income-generating success? Even if you initially embarked upon your blogging journey just to get your name and knowledge out there, without any thought to generating an income, you can’t overlook the position you are now in to do just that. You may not make enough to pay off the mortgage and quit your day job, though the potential for that level of success is often there for dedicated bloggers. With the right strategy in place, you can swiftly convert your blog into an income-generating vehicle that could, at the very least, help to keep the lights on or pay for your family’s next vacation.

Remember that blogging should never be considered just another get-rich-quick scheme, and it would be foolish to believe the hype that so many are trying to sell about it. Blogging can, however, turn out to be very profitable for those who are able to hook the right programs and see their traffic convert into sales, advertising revenue, and more.

**Affiliate Programs**

A large number of companies offer affiliate programs with the potential for huge profits. Think of it this way: if you wrote an article about baking cakes using specific ingredients and baking trays, you could then link to those same products on Amazon using your Amazon affiliate links. If your readers clicked through your link and

http://www.blogbasics.com
purchased the products, Amazon would reward you with a percentage of the sale.

The long-term implications of this type of marketing can result in a fairly decent side income for you. A large number of coupon and frugal-living websites earn their money doing just that. Each and every day, they scour numerous online retailers for sales. They then update their blogs with information about the products they’ve located, include their affiliate links in the post, and start sharing the details of the sales across all of the social media platforms they have a strong presence on.

While they may not make enough to pay off the mortgage, with high readership and a strong online presence, they can earn enough to supplement their household income and contribute toward paying off the car or putting their kids through college.

**Product Reviews**

When your blog begins to attain a reputation as a credible source of information in your niche market, you will start to slowly see pitches from various companies appearing in your inbox. Some of them may not be entirely relevant to your target audience, but if you do find products and services that could be of benefit, you’ll be in a good position to serve the interests of your audience, the company pitching the products, AND your own interests.

Consider how much it could mean for your blog’s reputation if a big-name company like Kitchen Aid picked up on you as a credible source of information about baking, and offered to send you free products and compensate you for your time. All you would have to do would be to provide honest insights about the products and share them with your audience. The company could even provide you with an item that you could offer as a contest prize to your audience, thereby furthering your incentive to accept their pitch.

You may be wondering why a big name like Kitchen Aid or Brother would reach out to your humble blog and offer to use you as a part of their overall marketing scheme. After all, people are already very much aware of these companies, right? Well, yes; but what
they are hoping to do is tap into your market share and present their products as items that could appeal to every individual—for reasons they may not yet have considered.

Let’s go back to the Kitchen Aid example. Your blog may focus upon creating the most divine pastries, pies, and cakes. It makes sense, then, that Kitchen Aid would reach out to you, given their extensive lineup of baking and other kitchen appliances. If their marketing contact suggested that you take the time to whip up homemade pasta or create homemade ice cream, you could then present this feature to your audience, who might respond by saying, “Well I never! Who knew you could do that?”

Be sure to carefully read all of the fine print when you do begin to receive promotional offers. Some may not necessarily be in the best interests of your blog—or, ultimately, in the best interests of your readers.

**Direct Ad Sales**

For over a decade, selling advertising space on one’s blog has been a fantastic means of income generation for bloggers. This might not necessarily translate as the most effective method of generating income for your blog, but with a bit of careful analysis and reaching out to the right companies, you could find that space is very much in demand on your blog. Once your blog becomes truly established as the go-to source for information relating to your topic, you’ll likely find that e-mails from companies start to flow into your inbox—all from organizations interested in getting their business name on your blog and in front of your readers.

**Cost-per-Click Advertising**

The cost-per-click (CPC) method of advertising can also prove lucrative for you and your blog. A number of companies offer CPC advertising, but it is important that you do your due diligence before engaging in any sort of contract. Google’s AdSense program is one of the better choices, so it’s worth taking the time to research their requirements.

They essentially work by placing targeted ads on your website. If today’s blog post has
been about incorporating marshmallows into your baked goods, then targeted ads would revolve around the best places to shop for marshmallows, vegan marshmallow options, and perhaps even books relating to marshmallows. This may seem like a silly thing to think about, but it serves the purpose of helping you recognize the great incoming-generating potential of this type of advertising. Make sure your content is exceptionally rich, engaging, and informative for your readers.

Don’t underestimate the value of selling your own products. With sufficient reader response to your blog, you’re sure to net a fair bit of interest. You may choose to offer an eBook relevant to your topic. There are a number of ways to generate income from your blog—including websites that allow you to create, design, and sell your own t-shirts, coffee cups, and handy totes!

Explore every avenue available to you. Once your blog takes off, take advantage of each opportunity that presents itself as a chance to generate income.
Chapter 15: How to Develop Your Strategy for Taking Your Blog to the Next Level

Today, your blog is doing exceptionally well—perhaps even exceeding your initial expectations! You feature exceptional content, host frequent guest bloggers, and offer podcasts that are a huge hit. You’re even generating a great little income from your blog. In the midst of this abundance, don’t allow yourself to become complacent and rest on the laurels of your current success.

By its very nature, the Internet is constantly evolving. This can be an incredibly good thing for your blog, but only if you are allowing it to evolve at approximately the same rate. If your blog doesn’t keep up with the world around you, it could become stagnant in the blink of an eye. No one wants a static blog, because inactivity will rapidly cause you to lose readers—and, ultimately, advertisers.

Developing a strategy to take your blog to an entirely new level will prevent it from becoming stagnant while ensuring that you are maximizing your potential to generate extra supplemental income.

Set a clear strategy in place for your updates. Your blog doesn’t necessarily need to have new material added to it every single day, but make a point of adding fresh content on a regular basis. Make sure you aren’t simply rehashing issues you’ve already written about. Your content needs to be consistently fresh and engaging while offering some sort of value to your audience.

Naturally, you should do your utmost to keep your content relevant to your overall blog theme; but there is nothing wrong with adding a bit of variety to your blog. Diversity in choice of topic will encourage audience interaction and promote web traffic. Keep in mind that your blog should not be all about getting more traffic and building
relationships with other bloggers, your audience, and advertisers. It should also offer your readers a broad selection of material, encouraging them to think, experience a gamut of emotional responses, and learn something new each and every time.

**Give your blog a facelift.** Don’t overlook the benefits of giving your blog a fresh coat of paint every so often. Be sure not to completely shift things around, especially if the changes could potentially tamper with the ease of navigation you worked so hard to develop. In general, people who spend time on the Internet don’t like drastic changes, but they can definitely appreciate a fresh new look and feel to a website, just so long as the essential functionality remains the same. Update your “About Me” page and any of the little features of your site that could use a bit of a refresher.

**Consider new ways to interact with your readers.** If a large number of your readers are local to you, consider hosting a dinner or even an outdoor picnic to encourage everyone to get together and discuss their thoughts. This type of real-life forum can add a whole new dimension to your blog, and allow you to meet some of your friends in the blogging world face-to-face.

To keep your blog moving forward at the speed of technology and society, create an interactive forum on your website. This allows your audience to freely share their thoughts about any number of topics while establishing their own little community. The blogging world can be a large and overwhelming place. With a public forum, you’ll allow your loyal readers to establish stronger connections with one another while inspiring deeper loyalty to your website.

**Continue—constantly—to expand your blog’s reach and market strategy.** Whether you are inviting additional guest bloggers, writing your own guest posts on other blogs, promoting heavily via social media platforms, or expanding your podcasts into syndicated streams, it is essential not to let up on marketing your overall brand.

It is possible to expand upon your brand, and, as already mentioned, create your own line of products. Imagine having your very own line of cookware, or a clothing line—all inspired and fueled by the success of your blog. A large number of bloggers go on to
write successful books and become life coaches or web marketing gurus in their own right.

If you have the opportunity to attend blogging seminars, don’t hesitate to jump at the chance. Not only will this fill your head with a new world of ideas for your own blog, it will also allow you to spend time with other bloggers, who may just inspire you to great new ventures within your own brand.

Defining Your Audience

With your blog currently at the top of its game, what is your next step? Can you even define your audience right now? In order to properly market to your audience, you need to know who it includes. Here are five questions to ask yourself as you move forward from launch time to higher levels of success:

1. Who are your readers?
2. What information are they looking for?
3. What problems are you solving with your blog content?
4. What kind of content appears to be most engaging for your readers?
5. How can you continue to encourage your readers to engage with your content?

The more you know about your target audience, the better you can continue to serve their needs for information. Whether you are creating podcasts about fun gardening tips or the latest web-marketing methods, the better you know your audience, the higher-quality content you will be able to produce for them. The better the content they find, the more likely they’ll be to stick around and share your blog with others.

Creating a blog is easy. Establishing a blog that stands as a true reflection of who you are—a brand all your own—is something entirely different. It can certainly be a lot of work to create the ultimate blogging resource within your particular niche, but it can also prove hugely rewarding in ways not yet imagined.
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