



BIZBUDDING INC. PRESENTS

# HOW TO START BLOGGING

Explore this **FREE GUIDE** to take a deep dive  
into how to start blogging to make money





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BY DAVID SCHMELTZLE



1

# HOW TO START BLOGGING

Learn why we think you should start a blog by first understanding content and design.



# HEY THERE!

I'm so glad you are interested in learning how to start a blog. **I'M DAVID**, and I'm eager to share with you as much information as I can about how to get started blogging.

Blogging is a great way to express yourself. It's also an awesome way to start a side-hustle project. You can also build a significant business and make money from blogging.



## I KNOW YOU'RE EAGER TO GET STARTED

and I'll get right to it as soon as I share a bit of background information as to why this **How to Start Blogging** guide is different than others available on the Internet today. This guide is extensive. It's divided into several sections, each of which is its own post.

## YOU CAN COUNT ON US TO START BLOGGING

There are quite a few **How to Start Blogging** guides on the Internet. I'm happy you started reading ours. Let me share with you why we may be a bit different than the other Internet resources who provide guidance on how to start a blog.



**Starting a successful blog takes more than being at the right place at the right time and working hard. We've distilled what it takes to build a remarkable blog, to build an engaging social media following, and to monetize successfully and have broken that into a series of best practices for you throughout this free guide and our two courses.**



## TRYING TO IMPROVE UPON WHAT THE INTERNET CURRENTLY OFFERS YOU

I think much of the standard advice today about how to start blogging is misleading. Almost all of the articles on the Internet today on How to Start Blogging discuss the same five steps.

### THE **WRONG** STEPS TO START A BLOG

- ① Pick a domain name
- ② Register for web hosting
- ③ Pick a free WordPress theme
- ④ Write your first post
- ⑤ Promote and make money

## I THINK THE PROCESS IS WRONG

You are being told to buy infrastructure and a WordPress theme before you even learn how to start blogging, how to write and engage your audience with great content, or the options of how you could make money blogging. Follow steps like that when starting your blog and there's a good chance you'll end up with crufft for a website.

## ANALOGY: WOULD YOU BUY A HOUSE THIS WAY?

Please indulge me for a minute with this analogy about buying a house. Pretend that you are super excited to buy a home for your family. And ready to start now!



## SCARY STEPS TO BUY A HOUSE

- ① Complete a Google search “best real estate agent” to find a real estate agent.
- ② You click on the first-listed real estate agent.
- ③ The agent tells you to buy the house at 1428 Elm Street in Springwood, OH.
- ④ You agree and purchase your new home sight unseen.
- ⑤ You show up to move in and the architectural style isn’t quite what you expected.
- ⑥ You’re excited to meet new people and excitedly prepare your first home-cooked meal.
- ⑦ You then wander the neighborhood looking for people to invite to your table for dinner.

## WHOA, WHAT!?!

Who would do that? You would to want research homes and their locations to learn about the town, you'd want to learn what the schools are like, and you'd want to understand the demographics of your new neighborhood.

Follow steps like those listed above and your new neighbors might think you are Freddy Kreuger wandering around at night.





But I digress. Let's get back to the current state of start blogging articles. Most of those articles sell infrastructure first—making money on the hosting company's affiliate programs.

Now don't misunderstand me, there's nothing wrong with affiliate programs.

**A robust affiliate program is a great way to make money blogging.**

We offer an affiliate program for our blogging products and our courses. And when you start your blog, you might choose to be an affiliate for products you use and want to promote.

Chances are you landed on this free guide about How to Start Blogging because an affiliate partner of ours, who you follow, recommended this guide to you.

# THE **RIGHT** STEPS TO START A BLOG

- ① You articulate the reasons why you want to start a blog.
- ② You learn important success factors and tips to help grow your business.
- ③ You learn about writing blog content and how to engage an audience.
- ④ You learn how creating a content strategy sets a plan for success.
- ⑤ You understand how website design affects your audience's interaction on-site.
- ⑥ You gain a basic understanding of how to make money blogging.
- ⑦ You brainstorm a clever domain name—now that you know who your audience is.
- ⑧ You choose a blogging platform and get your website online.
- ⑨ You learn how to promote your blog and you make money blogging.



**As you are working on your blog, it is no longer just taking a few paragraphs and throwing it up on a website. It's really about getting all these different moving pieces aligned to be able to maximize audience growth, maximize making money, and really take your blog to the next level.**



Most people research their online purchases before hitting the Buy Now button. I want you to do the same. Focus on learning about how to start a successful blog before you make your first purchase. Don't get sucked into buying just because you get a free domain name.

We're not part of an affiliate program selling other people's web products. We sell our own blogging products and services and include help desk services to support you on your journey. We're confident (with a bit of optimism and hopefulness mixed in) that you will enjoy the information we put together and that you will want to start your project or side-hustle with us.

We have experience blogging and building blogs. Our company has focused on helping pro bloggers and businesses grow their business for almost ten years. We've served as a boutique agency to our customers, providing them everything from web hosting

to WordPress development, to content strategy, to lead generation, and monetization. We've put in the hard work helping our clients build successful blogs. And they have rewarded us with great relationships and a wealth of knowledge.

For bloggers who like to do things themselves, we've built a premium theme for WordPress called Mai Theme. At this time, there are several thousand installations of Mai Theme running successful blogs.

For our pro bloggers and aspiring bloggers, we provide a wide array of professional services ranging from Mai Theme customization and content development to membership site and course creation.

We manage our own hosting company, named Mai Hosting, which delivers dozens of millions of page views per month to our clients' audience. We only host clients whose sites run Mai Theme. For new bloggers and aspiring bloggers, we offer Mai Solution—

a unique combination of web hosting, WordPress, a premium theme, plugins, and the BizBudding Academy filled with free guides and extensive courses.

We believe it's your turn to take the amazing technology that is available to us today on the Internet and turn that into a profitable business.

Later in the Setting Up Your WordPress Blog section of the How to Start Blogging guide, I will expand upon our blogging platform called Mai Solution. For now, it's time to jump into the reasons why you might want to start a blog. I hope you can tell we are passionate about helping you start your blog.

You see the ads on social media all the time: you too can create a new blog and make passive income. While those ads may seem enticing new bloggers, they don't really cover everything you need to know about starting a blog and how to make money from blogging.

## ESTABLISH YOUR BLOG FOUNDATION

Could you image starting construction on the first floor of your dream home without having first put a solid foundation into place? The same principle should be applied to planning your new blog.

Establishing a solid business foundation is perhaps the most single most important blogging tip when you begin thinking about starting your side-hustle, launching a new business, or creating your own blog to share your thoughts.

Thinking about the foundations of business is a bit scary when you want to first blog.

I highly recommend a brainstorming session to write your thoughts and answers to the following sections. Doing so will certainly put you on the right path to creating a solid



business foundation to launch a successful blog. This may seem like hard work to you but trust me, it will help people understand your motivations and it will help you set parameters and expectations for how much time and energy you invest in getting started in the blogging world. Best of all, when you are ready to write your “about me” section of your new blog you will have the content readily available.



## FIGURE OUT YOUR REASON WHY

Should you start a blog? I'm sure you've asked yourself that question at least one hundred times as you begin to wonder if the idea is right for you. Perhaps your friends and family are asking you the same question. They may be suggestions you start your own blog. Or perhaps they advise you to stay focused on your full-time job.

A lot of people ask me if I think they should start a blog. The next question they ask is for advice about how to start that blog. Of course, I think they should.

Both the economy and technology are different today than twenty years ago. A few days ago (us older crowd) we were laughing about how excited we were (almost 20) years ago when we could print driving directions from a website. No more maps to read! Now mobile phones have built-in GPS systems.

These technological advances enable you to reach a global focused audience. Your side hustle project can easily reach a select niche worldwide. Twenty years ago, our side hustle projects to earn extra money were based upon you building local community relationships—with projects such as Pampered Chef, Mary Kay, or StampIn' Up.

Back then the term influencer didn't exist. And there wasn't the opportunity to create a WordPress blog and reach new people around the world. With the technology available today, you can easily publish your own podcast.

## **THAT'S WHY I THINK YOU SHOULD START A BLOG TODAY**

It would cost you less than going out to dinner with a friend once a month (less than \$20/month). The rewards can be quite astonishing after a few months of sharing your content with like-minded people.

Before you begin thinking about your plan on how to make money blogging, I think it's important to brainstorm, write down, and review the reasons why you want to start a blog. Do this before you try to choose a domain name or pick a blogging platform. But go ahead, send out a tweet to the world announcing your plan to start a blog.



And then ask your closest friends to support you and encourage you along your journey to blogging. Ask them to be your first blog readers too.

Usually determining why you want to start happens after you've had a few good blog post ideas and then realizing you have heard about others who made a lot of money from their blogs. Then the I can do that too mentality sets in. Realize that you can start a blog, but start it for your own reasons and not just making money. Then your passion will shine through.

## REASONS TO START A BLOG

There are so many different reasons to start a blog. The best reason to start one is that you have a passion for a particular subject and you want to help people.

Don't think that helping people is limited to providing charity work, selling a service, or working as a consultant. You can help people by sharing your know-how to solve a problem they have. You can help people by selling them products and services that will make their life easier.

## UNDERSTAND YOUR FINANCIAL MOTIVATION

Understanding your financial motivation for launching your blog is important. Knowing your motivation can help you set realistic goals for the amount of time it takes to launch and monetize your blog.

My recommendation is to start your side hustle project while still working full-time. I prefer the terminology of starting your passion project. Both are closely related but I feel a passion project has the opportunity to run deeper and provide greater growth for your soul.



**Get started blogging and you may be getting started on your next career move.**



## **CHECK OUT THESE GREAT REASONS TO START A BLOG**

- You have a vision for a better world and want to share your thoughts.
- You seek recognition for the work you've done.
- You love performing and want the fame that comes from an audience.
- You are business-minded and can visualize making money online.
- You want to write a book and shape the chapters from readers' input on your blog.

- You feel alone at your current work, and want to work on a project to drive inclusion.
- You want independence from the structured 40-hour work week.
- You want to promote diversity.
- You want to share your know-how.
- You want the financial freedom that comes from earning passive income.
- You want to foster connections by bringing people together.
- You want to grow your business.
- You want to sell affiliate products on Amazon.
- You want to provide a niche service to someone.
- You have wonderful art that should be shared with the world.



## DETERMINE YOUR TIME INVESTMENT

The time investment to start your passion project directly correlates to your financial motivation. Jumping full-steam into your next career move is going to require you to invest a significant amount of time in writing content and marketing your blog.

Combining a service or product to sell on your site will help you expedite the time to revenue for your blog.

If you are starting a side hustle project, find something that enriches your life. Work on it every week and give it a full year before moving on.

## MY ADVICE - BE INTENTIONAL

Focus on things that make you excited. The energy contained in your excitement will transfer to your writing and your audience (don't worry about not have great writing skills—you can learn those).

Look for local writer groups, WordPress WordCamp meetings, or other meetups where you can meet some new friends to share experiences.



**Be intentional with your choice and choose something that you are passionate about.**

## HOW TO BE SUCCESSFUL BLOGGING

Having a successful blog is an amazing feeling and empowers you to shape and direct the future of your blog. Success isn't measured alone by the size of your email list, your ranking in search engines, or if you make lots of money blogging.

A successful blogger can be someone whose target audience keeps coming back for new content. A successful blogger can be someone who works part-time, earns extra revenue for their family, and is able to take care of their young kids during the day.

The point I'm trying to make is you define what your success will be. Don't let someone else define it for you and don't compare yourself to other bloggers. The same point can be made when determining how to build the best website.

## TAKE BABY STEPS

You don't need to jump into your project full-time. Put together a step-by-step plan to launch your own blog. Take your time while still setting goals for yourself. There are a million reasons to procrastinate. There's only one reason to start writing—and that's to start.



## START SMALL AND DEVELOP YOUR CRAFT

- ✓ Work evenings and weekends
- ✓ Find something that nurtures work-life balance (rather than inhibiting it)
- ✓ Build a positive mindset
- ✓ Do workshops for free to gain the trust of your audience
- ✓ Iterate on your products after starting with a minimum viable product offering
- ✓ Hone in on what makes you excited and what you're great at
- ✓ Consider outsourcing non-essential components such as bookkeeping and social media management
- ✓ Set a growth plan
- ✓ Get feedback from both blogging experts and non-bloggers
- ✓ Stick to the brand identity you put together for yourself



## BE FLEXIBLE

- ✓ Scale-up as needed
- ✓ Scale-down as needed

## PLAN AHEAD

- ✓ Stay organized
- ✓ Be aware of seasonality
- ✓ Budget and plan for 3 months of expenses
- ✓ Unexpected emergencies are never expected

Big projects always seem easier to tackle when they are broken up into small tasks. We break up larger lessons into smaller topics in our blogging courses. You should also break up starting your blog into smaller steps.

## UNDERSTAND YOUR MARKET

A big challenge for new bloggers is defining the market where their customers exist. Understanding your market is more than just knowing customer demographics.

Try to learn the formats in how your customers access information. Does your audience read blog posts from cell phones during the day? If so, readability is key.

Do you provide sensitive information about mental health? Your audience might be more likely to read at night, and not download any ebooks that require an email to collect.

Build your funnels and call-to-actions based upon your best understanding of your market.

A great way to learn more about your market is to ask them for feedback. Surveys promote a connection between you and your audience.

Respect your audiences' time by keeping surveys short. Summarize the results and share them via your email list or blog.

## **BUILD COMMUNITY**

Successful blogging starts with building trust with your community. Create high-quality content to showcase your expertise. Help your audience solve problems to build authority. And gain their trust by sticking by your brand principles.

Google E-A-T stands for Expertise, Authority, and Trust. It's been at the forefront of SEO discussions in the WordPress community for quite a while.

Your online community needs to be developed similar to how you would develop a community around your local business. External links back to your website (from other high-quality trusted blogs) might

provide a signal to search engines that your content can be trusted.

Networking and building links in the online world are similar networking and establishing connections in the real world. When speaking at events, provide a summary of your talk online and ask people to link back to that page. Ask your audience to share your summary on their social media.



## TIPS TO BUILD A COMMUNITY

- Public speaking events
- Webinars
- Social media
- Step out of your comfort zone
- Don't be afraid to meet new people
- Build connections
- Look for opportunities to partner
- Share your knowledge and learn from others

## SUPPORT YOUR AUDEINCE

Providing bad-ass customer support is critical.

- ✓ Training
- ✓ Support
- ✓ Documentation



## FOCUS ON OPERATIONS AS YOU GROW

- ✓ Implementation plans
- ✓ Process management
- ✓ Monitor everything you can



**THANKS!**

BY BRANDI CAPOZZI



2

# HOW TO WRITE YOUR FIRST BLOG POST

Learn all the basics of writing your first blog post including research, writing, SEO, and more.



You've got your WordPress website with a remarkable domain name. Now comes the really hard part, the writing! Your first post may seem especially difficult because the pressure is on to make a good first impression. Don't worry though, after reading this step-by-step guide, you should have a good idea of how to write your first blog post and make it SEO-friendly so future fans can see it. This chapter covers all the basics of writing your first blog post in ten steps:

- ✓ Step 1: Choose a Blog Post Topic
- ✓ Step 2: Pick a Post Type
- ✓ Step 3: Research
- ✓ Step 4: Write Great Content
- ✓ Step 5: Create a Call-to-Action
- ✓ Step 6: Add Visuals
- ✓ Step 7: Assign the Post to a Category
- ✓ Step 8: Optimize for SEO
- ✓ Step 9: Proofread & Review
- ✓ Step 10: Promote Your Post with Email

Whether you're a newbie blogger, a pro, or have some experience under your belt, these tips and the steps outlined in this post are critical to creating high-quality content and a great blog.

## **STEP 1:**

### **CHOOSE A BLOG POST TOPIC**

This goes for all of your blog content, and not just one post, but you should choose a niche subject to write about. The more specific the blog topic the better. This is because you want to appeal to a certain audience that will become a dedicated fanbase. For example, a blog about budgeting is way too broad to find an audience. Narrow it down to budgeting for single moms and you'll find your following. This is because there is a more personal connection between you and your audience since a specific subject makes it seem like you're talking to a specific reader.

A narrow focus will also make your content easier to rank on Google. This is because Google measures topical authority, and the more authority your articles have, the higher they rank. It's easier to establish topical authority with a specific subject than a broad one because it makes research simpler and you can go off of personal experience.





**Whatever topic you choose, make sure you write about it with a unique “voice.” This will be how you establish yourself alongside your expertise.**

Focusing on long-tail search terms (three words or more), also helps you increase conversions because the search intent is much more clear. Using the budgeting example already mentioned, if a user searches that, you really have no idea what they are looking for.

They may have no idea themselves but just want to see what's out there.

However, if someone searches “budgeting apps for couples,” then their search intent is very clear and you can write a really targeted piece of content that answers that query. Don't write in an overly formal manner as you would to an authority figure, but don't try to be funny if humor doesn't come easily to you. It could take anywhere from five to fifty blog posts before you find your voice, and that's okay! As long as it sounds authentic and passionate your readers will respond well and keep coming back for more.

## **STEP 2:**

### **PICK A POST TYPE**

For a first post, it might be tempting to just write an “about me” type post, but unless this is purely a journal-type blog, you want to save that type of content for your about page.

A good question to ask yourself is what’s the first thing someone new to your niche topic needs to know? Focusing on cornerstone content to start is a great way to come up with some first blog post ideas. So if your post is about Broadway then the first article could be something about the best places to buy tickets to shows. Think about what kind of post you want to write. This will help you outline and structure your post.

## SOME OF THE MAIN TYPES OF BLOG POSTS ARE:

✓ **LISTICLES:** Listicle is a mashup word that stands for list-articles. Posts like this are popular because they're easy to read, and they're easy for new bloggers to write. “10 Ingenious Ways to Trellis Cucumbers” would be a listicle post.

✓ **RANKINGS:** Rankings are a form of listicle, the difference is—you guessed it—they rank something. Typically they include words like “top,” “best,” “greatest,” “ultimate,” etc. Something like “Top 10 Shows on Netflix to Binge Right Now” would be a ranking post.

✓ **GUIDES AND TUTORIALS:** How-to posts, like this one, educate readers on a specific topic with in-depth information. Hint: You'll want to use the words “how-to,” “guide,” “tutorial,” “instructional,” or something of the like in your post name.



Steps, screenshots with annotations and/or captions, infographics, and videos lend themselves really well to guide-type posts.

✅ **INTERVIEWS:** These usually include an interview with another expert in your niche or they could be a collection of interviews on a particular topic. They can be pretty easy to write since you're just typing up what your guest said, but make sure you share a few of your own insights as well to tie it all together.

✅ **REVIEWS:** Reviews are also on the easier side of the writing spectrum since you're just talking about your experience with something. Make sure to consider questions others might have on whatever you are reviewing and answer them.

## **STEP 3:** **RESEARCH**

Every piece of content should start with keyword research. Keywords are how people

find your content through a Google search so find out which ones go with your content and use them accordingly. Some good tools to use for this research are Google Keyword Planner and KWfinder.

First compile a list of “seed” words such as “budget,” “theatre,” and “technology.” The aim is to find “long-tail” keywords that contain three or more words. These usually have a low monthly search volume, but they often also have low competition. As a new blog, long-tail keywords are the only ones you’ll be able to rank for on Google. The “seed” words have high levels of competition so steer clear of those.



Make sure to use synonyms and other related keywords. Google understands closely related terms and this approach is a million times better than keyword stuffing.

You should also do research on your topic. Personal expertise is good but if you want to rank on page one of Google then you have to have the most topical authority in your subject. Google measures the depth of any topic so blog posts that cover a topic more will rise to the top.

Good research means reading the top five posts related to your subject and combining all of their information into your post (in your own words of course). You want to be able to incorporate as much expert knowledge, along with your personal knowledge, so that you can become the go-to source in your subject.



**Writing for an online audience is different. If you can keep it simple (simple doesn't necessarily mean short by the way), authentic, and answer the question, then you can write really great blog posts.**

## STEP 4:

### WRITE GREAT CONTENT

If the research didn't make you cringe, I know some of you may be freaking at this point. You might be thinking you have great ideas and a lot of passion for your topic, but your writing skills...well, they need work. Not to worry because you're not writing a novel here.

#### **Each blog post has five key elements:**

Hook, introduction, body, transitional phrases, conclusion. The hook is the opener. This is the most important part because it's supposed to "hook" readers into the rest of the post. If your hook is boring then they will exit out of your blog. The hook is often a question because readers try to answer it so you grab their attention easily. Good hooks are short, sometimes shocking or funny, and usually empathetic (the writer seems to know what the reader is feeling).

There are a lot of ways to write an introduction, but a formula that usually works is to present a problem, offer a solution, and make a promise. This works because a lot of people use Google to find solutions to specific problems and people want to know within seconds if your post will be able to help them.

The body is where you present the subtopics of your blog post. Use headings and subheadings to break up the text. Nobody wants to read long blocks of text with no spaces. There are always exceptions to the rules, but generally, short paragraphs with no more than three to four short sentences are ideal.

Transitions between paragraphs are what gives your posts smooth readability.

Some examples are:

- ✓ You may be wondering...
- ✓ Now, here's the interesting part
- ✓ Case in point...
- ✓ You're about to find out...
- ✓ Sounds good, doesn't it?

Finally, your conclusion is where you sum up the article. If it's a long post you would want to summarize your key points as bullet points.



The last thing you should do is actually the first thing that readers will see: the title. You should write the title last because if you spend too much time thinking of the perfect title you could get writer's block for your content.

Your title should be as attention-grabbing as your headline while being prime for SEO. It's a good idea to A/B test a handful of potential headlines on Twitter to see which one performs best.

## **STEP 5:** **CREATE A CALL TO ACTION**

The end of your post should always contain a call to action (CTA). This is where you would tell the reader to share your post on social media, comment on the article, fill out an opt-in form, or download a content upgrade. Every blog post should have a marketing purpose so that your fanbase can keep growing.





Consider that a CTA is the beginning of a marketing funnel. The funnel leads people to a final action that you want to happen. There are often multiple steps in a marketing funnel. For example, the blog post's CTA might promote a free guide or ebook that then leads to a sales funnel to sell a paid course on the topic.

## **STEP 5:** **ADD VISUALS**

Before you publish your blog post, make it visually appealing to the reader. It's boring to just look at text-based content. Add a featured photo at the top of your post that's both striking and relevant to your content. If the post is long then you might want to add some graphics to break up the text.

Some WordPress themes, like Mai Theme and Mai Solution, allow you to add both a featured image and a banner image to the blog post.

## **STEP 7:**

### **ASSIGN THE POST TO A CATEGORY**

WordPress posts where no category is designated will default to the Uncategorized category, so make sure to designate the category when creating your post. If you don't already have a couple of core categories set up, take a moment to do that. When creating categories for your blog content, don't go overboard—4-8 is a good amount. Assign your post to only one category whenever possible to make it easier for users to find exactly what they need.

## **STEP 8:**

### **OPTIMIZE FOR SEO**

Search engine optimization (SEO) is how people find your blog through a Google search. I talked about keywords to obtain SEO but there's actually a lot more to it than that.

There are on-page SEO factors that you should pay special attention to, which I'll be talking about below, and there are overall or technical SEO factors to consider (like page speed, broken links, redirects, etc). As you get further along in your blogging journey, you are going to want to make yourself more familiar with technical SEO and how it affects your site, but our goal right now is to get your first blog post up so we'll be looking at some on-page SEO factors you should pay special attention to. These factors are specific to the page itself and it's ranking as a singular entity.

A great way to optimize your blog posts is to install the free Yoast SEO plugin. (This only works for WordPress blogs.) It's also very easy to use. All you have to do is follow the prompts until the Yoast indicator turns green.

## EMBED A VIDEO

Google measures how much time people spend on your blog pages and uses that data as a ranking factor. A video is a good way to keep someone on your site longer. YouTube is the easiest source to embed videos from. We think it's best for you to create your own video to add to the post.

## ADD AN SEO TITLE (AKA THE TITLE TAG)

When you're optimizing your article for SEO you need to keep the Google snippet in mind. This consists of the SEO title, the URL of the page, and the meta description.

You can customize your SEO title in the Yoast SEO snippet tool. When the Yoast SEO Title indicator turns green, you have the right number of words in your title.

Make sure to include your keyword as close to the beginning of SEO title as you can, to avoid it cutting off if you go over the character limit.



Make sure that your title tag is different than your H1 tag. These two tags are both great opportunities to describe your post for search engines, but the title tag holds more much more SEO weight as it is what shows up in the search engine results page (SERP) when you enter a search query.



## WRITE A GOOD META DESCRIPTION

The meta description is extremely important to your Google ranking. Like your title tag, this is the description that shows up in the search results for your post. You have 160 characters to persuade a Google user that your post is worth clicking on. Include your keyword phrase at the beginning. To create a compelling meta description use basic copywriting rules: use action words, focus on benefits, and offer a solution to a problem.

## USE YOUR KEYWORDS IN THE URL "SLUG"

Don't worry, no actual slugs are harmed in the making of your post. The slug is the part of your URL that comes after your domain name in a Google search. We recommend using a URL structure where the post name is used as the slug. This structure is optimal because it

tells users and search engines what the post is about. Include your keyword (or a variation) when possible. The slug should be as short as possible because Google gives preference to shorter URLs. Before you publish the post, edit out “stop words” that do not contribute to understanding. Often these are articles “a, an, the,” pronouns “he, she, they, them, we, us,” and conjunctions “and, but, or, because, etc.”

## **ADD LINKS TO RELEVANT CONTENT**

Adding internal links within your content is important because it tells search engines what pages are most important and how they are related. Internal links are links to other pages or posts within your site. They also help users find more of the information they really want and need.

External links are links to other websites. When—and better yet, why—would you want



to use an external link? External links are important because like internal links, they help the user find more of what they need. You cannot be an expert on everything. Linking to credible sources builds relationships and makes it more likely that others will link back to you. These are called backlinks and they are really important to how Google perceives your website's authority. The more backlinks you gain from trusted, expert sources, the better your domain will rank. Remember, links should be made to related content. Don't create random links.

## **STEP 9:**

### **PROOFREAD & REVIEW**

I know it can be tempting to edit as you write, but try to save this step for the end. Fixing typos and grammar errors as you write can be really distracting and derail your writing flow. Also, be sure to review the entire post to make sure all links work, images are not linking to

anything, and that all the formatting looks correct. Feel good about the way your post reads and looks? Take the plunge and hit that publish button!

## **STEP 10:**

### **PROMOTE YOUR POST WITH EMAIL**

You've written a great first post, now how do you get people to read it in an email? That's your next step. Every successful blogger knows the importance of content marketing and having an email list. Your list may be small right now or it may just be your inner circle, but that's okay! We all have to start somewhere.

The goal is to make your readers click through your emails instead of letting them go unread in their inbox, deleting them, or unsubscribing. An irresistible email is one that relates directly to a reader's needs. Get to know your target

audience so you can find out what their most pressing questions are and how you can answer them.

The thing you need to deliver in each email is value. If your readers are getting something that they can only get by reading your emails then you're on the right track.

When you're consistent in helping subscribers solve their problems and achieve their goals they'll actually look forward to reading your emails and posts.

Write like a friend, not a stranger who just wants attention and money.

An easy way to get started is to summarize the post in your email. Give your readers enough where they are intrigued and want more, then link to the full post on your website.

If you are on social media you might also want to create a quick Tweet or Facebook post to share your work with the world. Even if that just means starting with friends and family, it's a way to put yourself out there and start building brand recognition, and who knows, people may even share it.



## **BONUS:**

# **14 BLOG POST WRITING TIPS & BEST PRACTICES**

Whoa, you made it all the way to the end! As a reward, you get some really awesome bonus tips. If you like them, you can get all the deets on each one in our course, *How to Build a Remarkable Blog*.

1. Answer one question thoroughly.
2. Create a post outline to organize key points.
3. Stay true to your brand.
4. Write about what you know, what you're passionate about, and what your readers want to know.
5. Use lots of headings for skim readers.
6. Break up text with graphics and visual elements.
7. Provide concise post summaries.

8. Maybe include a video (with captions).
9. Don't forget references, linkbacks, and attributions.
10. Recycle old content a little (but not too much).
11. Research what your competitors are doing and do it better.
12. Create personas and write content specific to helping each of them.
13. Write your "evergreen" and "getting started" topics first.
14. Add social share buttons. (You only need to do this once by installing and enabling a plugin like Shared Counts.)





3

# HOW TO CREATE A CONTENT STRATEGY

Learn how developing a content strategy benefits your monetization, branding, and SEO goals.



Let's face it, there are a lot of blogs out there. Yours has to stand out, and you want your audience to keep coming back to your site. This post discusses why developing a content strategy will help you communicate your brand's message and improve your brand awareness—through creating, posting, and sharing high-quality content—to keep your audience coming back.

I will also share with you all of the steps we take to create content strategies for our blog and our customer projects at the end of this post.

Done correctly, a content marketing strategy will help you improve your sales funnel and increase revenue. “What,” you ask, “content can help me make money from my blog?” It's absolutely true, you need to create remarkable content to effectively move people through the different sales funnel stages.



High-quality content converts prospects into leads and then into paying customers.

Developing a content marketing strategy also increases your operational efficiency because you have a focused plan to work from. It's often easy to second guess the topics you should be writing about. Some topics are harder to write about than others, too.

As humans, we naturally tend to favor easier projects. Working from a content marketing strategy forces you to follow the plan.

Of course, shift gears if needed and re-tune your content strategy (in fact, you should review it monthly). But create a plan and stick to it. Most houses are constructed utilizing building plans, right? There's a reason for that. Most importantly, the right content marketing strategy creates increased loyalty with your audience. It also increases the effectiveness of your digital marketing plan.

Developing a content strategy benefits both your audience and your search engine optimization goals. When you write focused, related content, Google tends to reward you with higher search rankings and that can lead to increased page views.

Don't let yourself and your blog slip into the habit of writing about the latest trend or whatever thoughts come to your mind. Develop your plan and stick to it creating focused content aligned with your brand.





**A content strategy focuses on creating and sharing remarkable content to attract, grow, and retain a loyal audience who trusts you, purchases from you, and shares your content with their friends (more specifically, friends who have the same beliefs—aka their tribe).**

## FORCE YOURSELF TO START PLANNING

The best way to grow your audience is by blogging frequently with quality content. You need to regularly share the content you create on your blogs, on your social media channels, and to your email list. You might be able to increase followers by boosting a social media post, however, that model isn't sustainable. At some point, you'll have too many leads or prospects and not enough sustenance with your content to keep them interested long term. You also can't count on influencers sharing your content and making you an instant success. Create remarkable content following your content strategy and you will be able to obtain external links for your content (great for SEO) and affiliates for your offerings (great for making money).

I know that it's hard to develop new content weekly. At times writing can be quite

overwhelming for me. It took our team a few years of discussing content strategies and implementation techniques among ourselves and our customers to finally figure the steps we are sharing in this guide. And we've been remiss in our duty to write and share our experience as much as we should. That ends this year with our focus on delivering remarkable content about how to start blogging and how to make money from your blog.

## **DRIVE BUSINESS GOALS WITH A CONTENT STRATEGY PLAN**

Trust me, taking the time to develop a content strategy will be well worth it. In fact, developing a content strategy might just be the next step you need to take to achieve your business goals.

You don't need to be a business strategist or a content marketer to perfect this plan.

You need patience, excitement, and a willingness to brainstorm content creation while following a plan.

These suggestions are based upon our experience developing content strategies on our site and for our customers' projects. The best part about a content strategy is that it will change your blog and increase your level of success. The worst part is that it takes real work to get it done.

Our content team uses Trello for our content management and our editorial calendar. I'd highly recommend learning to use Trello to manage your editorial calendar workflow. Don't worry if you don't have a team—we didn't when we started as Brandi was our only writer. Start using these tools and these best practices and it will be easier to create a content team in the future. It will also be easier to teach your team how to write as you will already have the best practices in place.

Our plan and best practices definitely helped me. Hey Mom, look at me, I'm a writer now! Thanks Brandi!

This also proves a point that blogging doesn't require you to have formal training as a writer. Or be perfect at spelling. I'm living proof of that. Pick up your pen (um, keyboard) and let your audience know you care via remarkable content.

**Give it your best shot and you will be rewarded.**

## **FOLLOW THESE CONTENT STRATEGY GUIDELINES**

At the end of this chapter, I share the Content Strategy Plan that we use when working on both our website and customer projects. I thought it would be helpful to share my thoughts on a few tasks in the content strategy guideline.

## SURVEY YOURSELF AND DEFINE YOUR MISSION

The first thing you should do is create a content mission statement. This is a bit different than your business mission statement, which should define what your business does and why it exists.

Your content mission statement describes what is important to your audience so you can plan to create focused and effective content.





## STATEMENT OUTLINES:

- ✓ Your target audience, typical buyer personas, and who the ideal customer is
- ✓ What your content will feature to reach that audience
- ✓ How your content will benefit your audience
- ✓ What makes you unique
- ✓ Do you solve any pain points for your audience
- ✓ What great content your marketing team is responsible for

The mission statement is typically located in the “About” section of a website. A good basic template for a mission statement looks like this: “(I, we, this blog) will provide (target audience) with (content) to help them (goal to set, problem to solve, gain knowledge in your field of choice).”

You should also document why you created your blog and business. What do you hope to achieve?

Some answers might be the following:

- ✓ Recognition, fame, money
- ✓ Showcase a vision of a better world, or fight for what you think is right
- ✓ Make a change
- ✓ Drive diversity and inclusion
- ✓ Gain independence, passive income, financial freedom (freedom in other aspects of life)
- ✓ Bring people together, connection
- ✓ Grow your business or promote your skills
- ✓ If you don't have these answers, creating a content strategy becomes really difficult.

## UNDERSTAND YOUR AUDEINCE DEMOGRAPHICS

You have to know who your audience is so you can tailor your content to fit their needs.

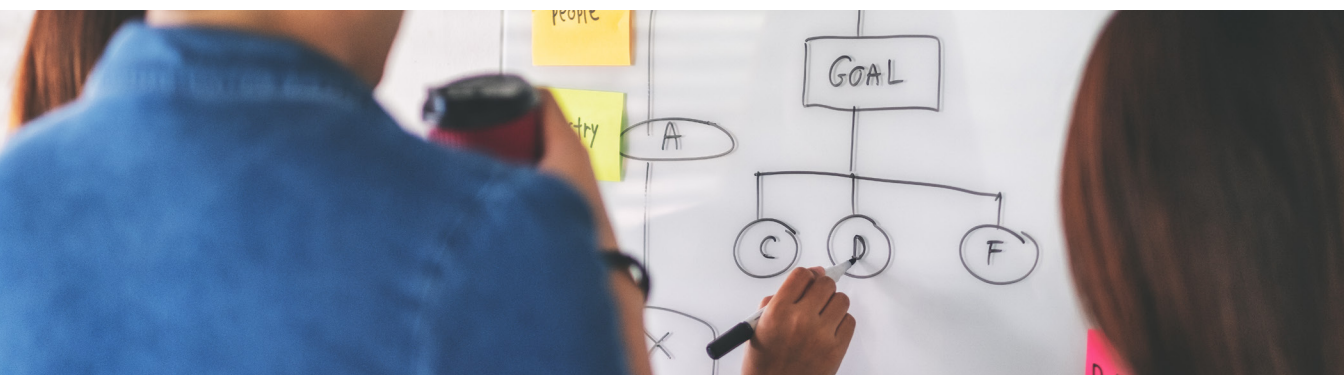
One good way to get to know your audience is by collecting demographic data. Analytics will give you the data you need on your audience's age, gender, race, and income.

The goal is to come up with a plan so that each piece of content caters to that buyer persona.

Google Analytics can also give you information on your audience's key interests. To find this information you would go to audience-interests-overview and a nice graphic showing that information will make it easier to get more specific insight into your followers. Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn have their own insight pages for you to utilize too.

Another way to research your audience is to ask for their feedback. This can get you individual data. Ask them if they enjoy the content you produce, what new content do they want to read more of, and how you can take care of any issues they have with your site. This type of critique from your readers will not only give you successful content ideas, but it will also take you through the customer journey.

After gathering enough information to be able to understand your current audience demographics, ask yourself “Does my current audience match the audience I defined in my Content Mission that I want to reach?”



## ANALYZE YOUR CURRENT TRAFFIC

Dive deep into analytics and take a look at how your audience interacts with your website. How long do they stay on your site? How many pages do they visit during a session? Answers to these questions (along with many more) become baseline factors you need to measure.

Perform a bit of Google research and search | Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for websites. KPIs provide measurement milestones so that you can quantifiably measure the performance of your website.

Review your website traffic monthly and compare it to prior months. Keep a log or journal or annotate within Google Analytics so you can document Wany changes that you observe.

## REVIEW EXISTING CONTENT FOR ENHANCEMENTS

Before you create a ton of new content you should see how the first few posts are performing so that you can adjust accordingly. In all your content marketing efforts, the best way to do this is with a content audit.

This involves logging all content, assessing the success of each post, and identifying the gaps. You should also see how your content is doing against your competitors to see what you could be doing better.

## IDENTIFY CONTENT GAPS

To find any gaps in your content, look for keywords related to your niche that you're not using, questions your audience would like answered, and content that's already ranking on Google.

When looking for content gaps, it helps to think of a content gap as “content” that is missing that would help keep your audience on your site longer. Remember, your content strategy should be designed to help you meet and exceed your marketing goals.

There are quite a few paid tools to help you research how your current content is ranking. There's one spectacular free tool that I think you should set up today. The tools from Google Search Console help you measure your search performance while identifying any search problems you may have on your site.

## CHECK YOUR SITE'S SEARCH TERMS

I think that the WordPress site search function is a bit weak by default. We invested a few bucks in SearchWP because we wanted to be able to see search terms that were entered into our site that didn't match any content on our site.

Reviewing this data helps us determine if our audience is searching for something that doesn't match any of our content. You will find a couple of golden nuggets in those typically hidden search terms if you make that investment.



You'll also want to find out which platforms you're getting the most attention on. As you continue to produce content you'll get a sense of where you have a good social media following and it's best to focus on where you're performing well instead of trying to be perfect across all platforms. It's good to look at this data through Google Analytics so you can see where your content is being shared the most. You can use this data to see which social media platforms you need to expand and focus on.

## **CHOOSE THE RIGHT TYPE OF CONTENT FOR YOUR AUDIENCE SEGMENT**

You may have already decided that you want your blog to just be written blog posts, and that's great! However, to market your blog successfully, you need to utilize additional content types when producing content. Videos tend to perform best with audiences so you should include a video to relate to your

written content. This will keep visitors on your site longer and improve lead generation. Most videos should be on the shorter side, ranging from two to five minutes in length.

Other kinds of content to improve lead generation, and can easily supplement written content, are podcasts, infographics, e-books, webinars, and checklists.



Choose the right types of content to reach your audience:

Support posts

Blog posts

Interviews

Ebooks & Other Free Resources

Free Guides

Webinars

Emails

Email list building should be an important part of your content marketing strategy. Pay close attention to call-to-actions (CTAs) for your website. Does the CTA match the content on the page? You can use CTAs to gather emails, promote products for sale, or lead your audience to another page. One note about email lists, avoid spam compliance issues by making sure you have your full business name and address at the bottom of your email. Also, be sure to always include an unsubscribe link.

Make sure you categorize your articles. This will help shape the path for SEO, information architecture, and the kind of content you write.

## STEPS TO CREATE YOUR CONTENT STRATEGY

I like to think of a content strategy as having several distinct phases. Each of these phases has multiple components. We use this as

a base outline when working on content marketing projects for our customers.

The key takeaway from this post should be that you need to use a content strategy to direct the flow of traffic from your audience through your funnels to convert leads and make money from your blog.



# THE BIZBUDDING CONTENT STRATEGY PLAN

## ONBOARDING AND RESEARCH

- Survey Yourself and Define Your Mission
- Understand Your Current Audience Demographic
- Set Up Relevant Tools
- Complete a Link Risk Analysis
- Analyze Your Current Traffic
- Dive Deep into a Competitive Search Analysis
- Focus on Keyword Research
- Establish a Baseline of How Your Keywords Perform

## TECHNICAL ANALYSIS

- Site Structure Review
- Check On-Page SEO Factors
- Check Your Sitemap Implementation

## **CONTENT ANALYSIS**

- Review Existing Content for Enhancements
- Create an Editorial Content Calendar
- Choose Your Forms of Content
- Identify Content Gaps
- Diagram Your Lead Funnels and Pathways to Sales
- Map Content Groups to your Lead Generation

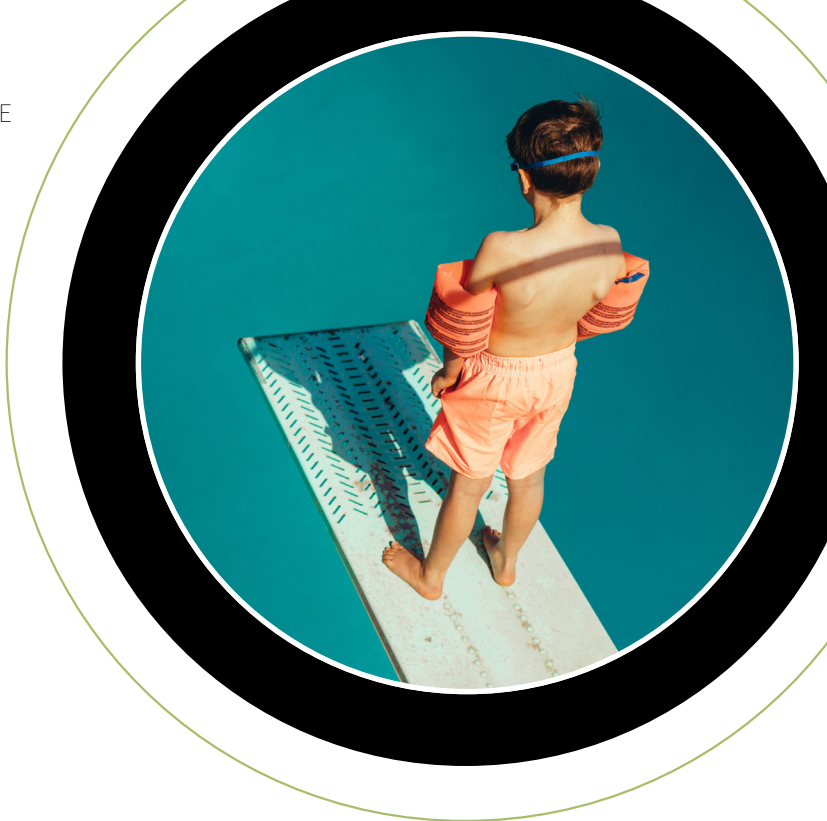
## **CONTENT OPTIMIZATION AND REFRESH**

- Refresh Content Receiving Traffic
- Purge (or Reassemble) Non-Performing or Thin Content
- Update On-Page SEO Factors
- Monitoring and Support
- Monitor Your SEO
- Review Your Performance

Finally, you want to see the results of your content marketing strategy. This involves looking up those KPIs again to see what's improved (hopefully a lot!). Go back to Google Analytics to see what's changed. Google Alerts and Mention are also useful to see how often your content is being shared and mentioned. You'll also want to track the number of email signups through any email marketing software you're using.

It's always a good idea to monitor your marketing results often so you can see where you need to fix or improve your marketing plan. It has to be constantly up to date so that you can gain (or not lose) as many readers as possible.

BY DAVID SCHMELTZLE



# HOW TO CHOOSE A DOMAIN NAME

Learn the essentials for choosing a memorable domain name and securing your name.



If you are uncertain about the steps on how to choose a domain name, it might make you feel anxious—similar to the feeling of standing on a high dive peering down into the deep end of a pool. With a bit of guidance, the process of choosing a domain name becomes easier.

For me, choosing a domain name has become the most exciting part of starting a project. It defines a project and gives it life. But before you begin registering a name and creating your site, there are a few tips and best practices you should follow to choose the best domain name for your blog or website. Here they are (in order):

- ✓ Tips for picking the perfect domain name
- ✓ Brainstorming domain names,
- ✓ Researching domain names, and
- ✓ Registering domain names.

After reading this post, I hope you feel like you have the tools necessary for choosing a great domain name.

## **SOME BACKGROUND ON DOMAIN NAMES**

Often, I put as much effort into the domain name as I do the company name. I did this when creating BizBudding.com. We brainstormed company names and then made sure the domain name and all domain extensions were available. But sometimes, fun domain names just jump out at me, and I have to check and see if they are available as .com domains. For example, in addition to our main domain, our team wanted an additional domain name to create a demo site to showcase the features of our WordPress theme, Mai Theme. So we had some fun and came up with a memorable demo site, [warmfuzzysocks.com](http://warmfuzzysocks.com).

Depending on your level of investment when choosing your blog name, business name, or website domain name, you may want to make sure that you can purchase all available domain extensions. Don't just buy the .com domain name, purchase the .net, .info, .biz, and other domain extensions. Doing so will prevent someone else from purchasing your domain name with a different domain extension than what you purchased. We discuss picking the right top level domain ("TLD") in greater detail later in this article.

You can expect to pay between \$10 and \$15 per year to register a TLD based upon the registrar you use. You might not be able to purchase your dream domain name because someone already owns it. This happens more often than you would think. Check to see if the owner is actively using the domain. If they aren't, you might be able to engage a domain agent or domain broker to help you purchase it.

Some highly brandable domain names are premium domains. These domains become premium domains when someone thinks the names are worth more than average domain names. Be prepared to spend up to a few thousand dollars to purchase a premium domain. But don't worry! Follow our tips, and we're confident you will find the perfect domain name at a reasonable price.

Sometimes website builders combine a domain name with their packages. Be careful if someone is offering you a domain name at no cost. Know that there are some fees elsewhere to recover that cost, or there are limitations on ownership or transferability of the domain.

You can consider your domain name to be your online address and is used to translate the name of your website to the network IP address. But let's not get too technical now.

It's best to think like one of your website visitors to find the name for your online self, blog, or business.

## **TIPS FOR PICKING THE PERFECT DOMAIN NAME**

Keep in mind these do-and-don't key principles:

- Keep it short and simple.
- Keep it memorable.
- Don't keyword stuff your name.
- Don't be too specific.
- Pick the right TLD.

After reviewing these tips, you'll be ready to begin brainstorming, researching, and registering your new domain. Plus we also toss in a shameless plug for our own course on how to start a blog.

## KEEP IT SHORT AND SIMPLE

This is key to making your site easy to find. Keeping it short means 15 characters or less—excluding the TLD (.com, .org, etc). A simple domain name is one without hyphens, underscores, or other characters besides letters (unless it's part of your brand like society6.com). You also want to steer clear of weird spellings (gamerulz) or slang (u instead of you).

A good domain name is also easy to pronounce. Yes, that means not showing off your sophisticated and creative use of vocabulary. If you can easily say it, then your brain remembers the words—and positively associates with them—much more easily. This is due to a cognitive bias called “processing fluency.” (Add that one to your vocabulary!) So if a potential customer can't say the name easily, they won't remember it and any branding opportunity is lost.

## KEEP IT MEMORABLE

This is where your personal brand comes in. A memorable name goes hand in hand with easy brand recognition. One way of making your name memorable is making it relevant to your site's content. For example, [pinchofyum.com](http://pinchofyum.com) is a food blog. Just saying or reading that name makes it easy to figure out what that blog is about.

However, your name doesn't have to relate to your content as long as it's catchy. BizBudding infers business and growth, yet is generic enough to allow us to shape our business by focusing on content that helps people start a blog and then make money from it. Keep in mind, this route does take more branding effort for people to associate your brand with your products or services. But we think it's worth it in the long run. Be bold. Come up with a catchy name with no keyword association at all that you can brand.

## DON'T KEYWORD STUFF YOUR NAME

If a keyword fits your brand or name, use it. But don't cram your name full of keywords because you think you will rank better.

That's called keyword stuffing—it's a horrible practice you should avoid like the plague. As noted in this great article by Moz, Google's ranking algorithm combats keyword stuffed domain names. This is so important that I decided to share a video about how to use keywords from our paid course *How to Build a Remarkable Blog*.

The key takeaway from the video is to focus on good content—integrate keywords into your writing, but don't make it all about the keywords. This holds especially true when writing your first blog post.



## DON'T BE TOO SPECIFIC

Choosing a very specific domain name for your new website narrows your ability to shift your business and content as time progresses. Sometimes, a creative name is catchy and gives you the ability to start with focused content on one subject. As your site gains trust and authority, you can branch out into related content subjects.

## PICK THE RIGHT EXTENSION (TLD)

There are a lot of TLD extension options besides .com (.org, and .net are the other well-known ones). However, .com is still the most widely recognized and trusted TLD. This goes back to the processing fluency concept in which people remember what's easiest and most familiar. We suggest you go with a .com domain name, but if you can't get that then the next best option is .net.

The most common TLDs and their intended purposes are:

- ✓ .com for all commercial sites
- ✓ .org for organizations (often non-profit)
- ✓ .edu for educational organizations
- ✓ .gov for U.S. government sites
- ✓ .net is an all-purpose TLD

There are exceptions to the .com TLD since there are certain extensions you may want to consider based on the kind of site you want to build.



New domain name extensions are popping up all the time, but some have more credibility and trending power than others. There may be cases where the ideal domain for you may use a newer TLD (top-level domain). Trending TLDs worth noting and their purposes are:

- ✓ .io for tech sites, i.e. input/output (originally for the British Indian Ocean Territory)
- ✓ .club for—you guessed it—clubs or other groups, suggests (but does not require) exclusivity
- ✓ .me for bloggers, freelancers, personal brands (technically for Montenegro)
- ✓ .xyz for connecting generations X, Y, and Z and a worldwide audience – This one has gained some cred since Alphabet Inc, Google’s holding company, was an early adopter, using abc.xyz for their domain.

The benefits of newer TLDs are that they are often cheaper and much easier to get than a .com. They can also help set you apart by being very niche-specific. For example, the .eco domain could be a great option for any website dedicated to environmental action.

The drawback is they can carry less memorability and trust. It's up to you to weigh the risks and decide what's best for your brand. If you can, purchase multiple TLDs.

The Beautiful Project was created by artist friends of ours as a movement of inspiration to help humanity live better right now. Their domain is perfect as thebeautifulproject.xyz, but we also purchased the premium domain name, thebeautifulproject.com.

Be sure to redirect your alternate top level domains to a single domain. Also, make sure to redirect all your domains (both www and non-www versions) to your SSL version.

## BRAINSTORMING DOMAIN NAMES

Picking the best domain name and picking your brand name pretty much go hand in hand. Before choosing your domain name and social media handles, it's important to think about what you want your brand to be. If you've already settled on a brand or business name, you need to make sure you can find an exact match (or as close as possible) domain equivalent. If there is no way to get the domain or TLD you want, you may want to rethink your name altogether.

It's a good idea to brainstorm a few potential, brandable names, so have a couple of backups on the burner. A great tool for this is Google's Keyword Planner to create a list of SEO keywords or to just organize your ideas into a spreadsheet.

Another helpful brainstorming tool is a domain name generator. One example is Lean Domain Name where you can just type a word like "coffee" and it will generate multiple .com domains.

To further help with this process, ask yourself these questions:

- ✓ What topics are you writing about?
- ✓ What's the main focus of your site?
- ✓ Who is your audience?

These questions will help you come up with a brandable name that fits your area of focus really well.

## RESEARCHING DOMAIN NAMES

Once you think up some potential domain names, make sure to check and see that they aren't already being used. You don't want to get sued for copyright infringement!

Be sure to search the free U.S. trademark database to see what's already been registered or trademarked. You could also just Google the name you're thinking of using to see if it pops up within the first few SERPs (search engine results pages). A great tool to check domain name ownership is Whois.

It's also a good idea to check social media sites for the name you're thinking of using. You want to have the same name across all social media to avoid any confusion.

A good resource for checking social networks and trademarks for your potential name is Knowem. It shows if the name you want is

available across 25 social media sites and if there are any trademarks already registered.

## REGISTERING DOMAIN NAMES

Once you come up with the perfect name, be sure to register and reserve it ASAP. You would do this with a domain registrar which would be the home for your domain name. Domain registration usually costs only \$8-16 yearly. You can get free domain registration through certain hosting sites, but it's not worth saving a few dollars to not own your own site and brand. Some good and well-known domain name registrars are GoDaddy (note: we only like GoDaddy for domain name registration—nothing else), domains.google.com, and hover.com.

Always look for a domain registrar that is accredited by the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN). And when registering the domain, always



put yourself as the primary contact. Some hosting companies will register a domain on your behalf, in their name. You usually have the ability to change this, but make sure you can before you sign up. You want to be sure you are the owner of your domain.

## **ENABLE DOMAIN ID PROTECTION**

Domain ID protection keeps your personal information safe from being searchable along with your domain. When you register your domain, regulations require that your personal information be entered into a publicly searchable database. The problem is that this database is often used by hackers and spammers. Domain ID protection helps prevent your site and personal information from getting stolen and used. GoDaddy offers dependable personal or personal and business privacy protection to keep your information and domain safe.

## BUY SIMILAR SOUNDING DOMAINS

I've said it couple times already, but just want to drive the point home on this step. Once you build your consumer base, it's a good idea to protect your brand by buying any available domains that sound like yours or are similar (for example: if healingambassadors.com is your primary name, reserve healing-ambassadors.com, healingambassador.com, and thehealingambassadors.com). This is to prevent copycat competitors from capitalizing on your success. It also ensures that anyone who mistypes your domain name will be redirected to your site. You'd also want to buy all of the similar extensions (.net, .co) so that competitors can't piggyback off of your brand.

BY MIKE HEMBERGER



5

# HOW TO DESIGN A BLOG

Learn the pillars of great web design and insights we've gained as a result of designing and developing hundreds of blogs.

You've decided to create your own blog and may have even chosen a domain name, and now you might be wondering how exactly do you design a blog that's great-looking, modern, and accessible? In this post, I summarize the experiences we've learned as a result of designing and developing hundreds of blogs along with our WordPress theme, Mai Theme.

One of the biggest mistakes with new blogs—even with some website refreshes—is that people want to jump right into the fun (and way less mentally taxing) part of creating a website: visual design. The problem with this approach is that many people get “designer's block.” Basically, they get hung up on colors and fonts and all the choices related to how their blog should look, delaying their website actually getting off the ground.

I highly recommend that before you tackle the steps mentioned in this post, you first have a good understanding of your blog's focus and have already created your first blog post.



**Starting a successful blog takes more than being at the right place at the right time and working hard. We've distilled what it takes to build a remarkable blog, to build an engaging social media following, and to monetize successfully and have broken that into a series of best practices for you throughout this free guide and our two courses.**

So presumably by now you have some content and are ready to move forward. If you already have a blog, you can follow these suggestions to refresh your current design.

First, we want to note, there are a lot of blogging platforms out there, but I'm focusing on how to design a WordPress blog, because we believe it's the best, and it's the platform we build all our client websites on. In this post, we'll review the basic concepts of visual web design including choosing your colors, fonts, logo, layout, and setting up core pages.

Keep in mind that your goal is to make it really clear what your site is about to a first-time visitor. Clashing or too many colors, hard to read fonts, or websites with more visual effects than substance can detract from your message and overwhelm the user. You cannot go wrong with a clean blog design that's true to your brand and puts your best content at the forefront.

## BRAND IDENTITY

How do you want your target audience to perceive you, your products, and your business?

Your brand identity is going to be the manifesto for all your marketing materials. It will help shape your message and carve a path for future goals. Your brand identity will become the bucket for colors, typography, logos, blog design, and your overall tone.

Once you've established these key brand identity systems, all your marketing materials are based on that guide, and it's smooth sailing from there. Think of some of the biggest companies out there—Google, Apple, Starbucks, Nike, Yeti—you know these brands, what they look like, and their price point. How? Brand recognition. Whether you have a big or small business, stick to your brand and your customers will remember you.

## CHOOSE YOUR COLORS

A good color scheme is key to capturing your potential audience's attention. You can't just throw random colors you like together on your site or it will look messy and jarring. Choosing the perfect color palette to fit your site's content takes a lot of thought and planning. Not to worry though! Here are a few tips to get started on picking the right colors to wow anyone who visits your site.





## TAKE COLOR PSYCHOLOGY INTO ACCOUNT

Color psychology is the science of how color affects human behavior. For example, bright red can trigger aggression but blue can bring tranquility. Blue is on the “cool” side of the color spectrum along with purple and green. Red is on the “warm” side along with orange and yellow. That’s not to say that any of those colors will cause positive or negative feelings in everyone and that you should never use warm colors. While red can evoke aggression, it can also evoke a sense of power and passion. Color is important, but it’s the way all the elements of your site blend together that paints the full picture. Psychology is just something to consider when choosing a color scheme.

## KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

Use colors that suit your content and consumer base. If you are marketing to parents for children's products you don't want to use dark colors like black and brown, and you also don't want to make it look too business-like with blue and grey. For example, a website that sells custom stuffed animals based on kid's drawings might use bright and fun colors to appeal to children (and their parents).

On the other hand, high-end product businesses use black and white to exude elegance. Professional companies often use blue and white. This is because blue is also considered a "trustworthy" color that exudes confidence. Blue is also a popular color for social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter because it's a color that can keep a person scrolling through content for hours.

But don't think you can use blue for everything. It's not a color you would want to use for anything food-related. Dieters have been known to use blue plates to make them eat less, and there aren't many blue foods to associate with. Green is associated with the outdoors and healthy living, so it's great for promoting anything to do with gardening, nature, and wellness. Red is a good call-to-action color so it's good for campaign and charity sites. Many fast-food industries use vibrant colors to get you in, happy, and out the door quickly.

## **DON'T GO OVERBOARD WITH COLOR**

The primary color for any site should be white. It's easiest on the eyes and any other background color will be a strain, especially for reading text against. The main color for the font should be black, once again, because it's easiest on the eyes. Having a strong color

contrast between your background and text colors is also important for accessibility, and it's also the law.

Colors come in for logos, headings, sub-headings, links, side-bars, borders, and menus. For these, you only want to use one or two colors. Maybe three for a site geared towards children, but no more. Most of the color on the best websites come from photos and graphics. Too much color from anything on your site, including photos and graphics, can cause sensory overload and confusion to consumers. Simple, yet tasteful and aesthetically-pleasing (but still representative of your brand) colors are best for creating a site that people will want to visit frequently.

If you must use additional colors, using a secondary palette for softer tones will help you balance your primary colors. These should be neutral colors, like greys, that are used for information such as text, solid

color backgrounds, and icons. These tones convey callouts without competing with your message or primary brand colors.

Some resources to get you started on choosing a color palette are Coolers and Canva. Both are free-to-use color palette generators so that you can see what would look best for your site.

ColorHexa is also a great tool for coming up with color combinations. Especially if you have one base color (or even better, it's hex code) that you know you already like. Hex codes are defined by the pound/hash symbol, followed by a combination of 6 or 3 letters and/or numbers (example: #00cee6 represents a sky blue color). Once you have a color you like, you can explore shades, tints, triadic colors, complementary colors, and more.

## DECIDE ON YOUR TYPOGRAPHY

Another important visual feature of a blog is the typography or font combinations. You might be tempted to use a pretty swirling font or to use a bunch of different fonts to stand out. Neither of those ideas will get traffic to your site because they would make your content hard to read. A simple font is best for practical and visual purposes. Let your content be the hero; don't use fonts that distract the audience from your message. Here are a few things to consider before choosing a font.

## NOT ALL FONTS ARE CREATED EQUAL

Not every computer has the same fonts installed automatically. This is especially true of Macs and PCs. If you use a font that isn't installed on someone's computer it will default to a font that might not look right on your site. It could shift words and disrupt the entire

arrangement of the page, or it might just look really off-brand. It's best to choose a "web-safe font" such as Lucida Sans, Tahoma, Arial, Verdana, or Microsoft Sans Serif. If you choose to load fonts or icons kits, be sure to check your page speed. Quite often the trade-off for extra special fanciness in your blog design results in a really slow website. Your page load times and site speed could really suffer.

## READABILITY COMES FIRST

The two types of fonts are serif and sans serif. Sans serif fonts are best because they don't have the little "feet" or "hooks" at the ends of each letter. These "hooks" can get blurry depending on the screen's resolution and can make it harder to read the content. However, serif fonts are perfect for material that is meant to be printed such as magazines, journals, or flyer content. This is also true of documents that are meant to be downloaded. No matter what style of font

you use, the main body size should be no bigger or smaller than 12 to 16 points. The main body font makes up the bulk of the copy on your site. This does not include headings, which certainly can (and should) be larger.

Also note that headings should be used as just that, headings or chapters of content on your web page. Don't use headers for strictly stylistic purposes.

## **SIMPLICITY IS USUALLY BEST**

Keep the pretty designer fonts in the logo (and possibly a header or two). It's also important to be consistent with your font. Don't use different fonts on different blog posts or pages. Pick one font for headings and one font for body text, and stick with them for all marketing materials. Use this [free font generator](#) to see what looks best. Check out some font combinations to achieve a memorable header and body font contrast.



## MAI STYLES PLUGINS

For bloggers who don't want to spend a lot of time coding CSS, or need assistance with their blog's design, we've built premium plugins designed to work seamlessly with Mai Theme so you can launch and grow your website quickly. Adjusting fonts and colors on your site might be the most fun and personal part of the customization process, and it's so easy with Mai Styles. With our Mai Styles plugin, set your website fonts and colors with ease from the WordPress Customizer. Choose from the best-looking web fonts Google has to offer.

## DESIGN YOUR LOGO

Your logo is what's going to define your brand so this is where you can really get creative with colors and typography. This is what you want to stand out more than anything. Think of how many companies that come to mind instantly just by looking at their logo, it's very important for your logo to be memorable. Here are some of the best ways to make sure your logo, and brand, stands out to customers (in a good way).

## RESEARCH TRENDS

You want your logo to stand out as much as possible, so you don't want to use a design that a lot of others are using. Look at what the design trends are either online or by paying attention to the signs outside of businesses and companies in your area. You should also research design trends to see exactly what works and what doesn't. You also want to

know what's being overused lately so you don't end up copying what everybody else is doing. There are a few specific logo design cliches that you may want to avoid. "Trends" are just that, trendy. They're cool for those who are advanced, but the ability to customize brings more value and supports long-term growth. If it's not unique it can't be brandable.

## IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE ELABORATE

Simplicity can work for a standout logo as much as bright colors and a custom font. Take the Apple logo, for example, it's just a black or white apple with a bite taken out of it. That one detail of the bite (or byte, because it's a tech company) makes it memorable. The Nike swoosh is also a very simple logo design but they have a catchphrase "Just Do It" that everyone remembers, and it goes hand-in-hand with the logo to make their brand iconic. The YETI logo is simply their name. The thick,

bold font and fact that it's all caps are enough to express that their brand is all about strength and toughness. It's all in the details with a minimalist logo. Sometimes less is more.

## MAYBE USE A VISUAL DOUBLE ENTENDRE

These can be very clever and aesthetically pleasing. This is the look of having two images wrapped into one through an interpretation of the site's or business's name. A good example of a conceptual logo design comes from a restaurant called the Swan & Mallard. The swan creates an ampersand shape, while the duck lives in the negative space of the sign.

The FedEx logo is also super famous for having the arrow inside the letters. It's subtle, but once you notice it, it's so obvious, and the meaning it carries (speed and transport) is also really significant to their brand identity.

## MAKE IT MEAN SOMETHING

Give your logo meaning that's relevant to your content or brand. Making it look nice is always a good thing, but if you want to go that extra mile to make it memorable it should tie into what your brand is about. Apple has the “byte” in its logo, and Amazon has the arrow that looks like a smile pointing from the A to the Z because they deliver “everything from A to Z with a smile.” Meaning is a great way to make your logo design brandable.

You should also think about how it will look on printed materials like t-shirts, hats, water bottles, etc. Be sure to consider color contrast and embroidery. For example, a black logo won't turn out well on a black t-shirt. And a rainbow gradient is not easy to embroider, not to mention the more colors you have, the more expensive it is to print. Envision possible marketing materials and design for them, or be willing to compromise when the time comes.

## CHOOSE A LAYOUT

A great website layout is the difference between easily consumed content and an ugly, confusing mess. The layout is key to making your site both aesthetically pleasing and organized to create a lasting impression that will entice potential customers. It's meant to improve overall visual readability and maintains a rhythm throughout your site. Different WordPress themes are going to provide different layout options, so make sure this is something you consider when choosing a theme. Premium themes typically offer many more layout options than free themes.

The ultimate goal is a layout that keeps your readers engaged and allows them to easily navigate through your site. Your layout should create cohesion. If people can't find what they're looking for, they're going to get frustrated and bounce. We like to keep it simple when it comes to website layouts,

and this holds true to our themes, which are minimal, to the point, and are performant and fast.

## WHEN IN DOUBT, USE A GRID

The grid system is the easiest way to make an organized design. There's a reason it's been used by newspapers, magazines, and just about every online publication. A grid provides consistency across all screens that content would be viewed on. The grid design also leaves plenty of white space for the best readability.

We believe less is more. Grids help keep content aligned and consistent with minimal effort. Moreover, refrain from going crazy with your design, you might unintentionally lose that precious grid system. Mai Theme uses a 12-unit grid that behaves responsively on all platforms from desktop to smartphone.

## USE A CARD LAYOUT

The grid is your layout's base. After you make your base, you have to make the surface of your site's design. This could look like a card (think a trading card). This design is organized and easy on the eyes so it's easy to see why it's so widely used. It should be vertical with a few key elements to draw consumers in. This is so your site is optimized for mobile platforms while still looking good on a computer.

The key elements for posts are a featured image, blog title, blog author, post date, an excerpt of the post, social media share links, and a read more link. The key here is a hierarchy, which can be easily achieved with HTML. What do you want your audience to read first? The title and featured image should be the attention grabbers and the



excerpt should highlight the key point of the post while making the reader want to know more.

## HIGHLIGHT YOUR BEST CONTENT

You need to highlight specific content that draws traffic better than most and it should be on your homepage. This could be due to SEO, high ranking keywords, or a lot of social shares. Regardless, this content showcases your expertise best. The most popular content should be at the forefront of your new blog. Your homepage and core pages should have both static and dynamic content. The static content will be the concrete pieces that describe your blog. Remember to periodically add new dynamic content, like popular posts, upcoming events, and calls-to-action. This ensures that your blog remains engaging to both new and loyal readers.

## MAKE CONTENT EASY TO SHARE

Social media shares are how the word about your blog gets out. Links to Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, and email are the most vital. Add a share button at the bottom corner that follows as you read, or share links at the top or bottom of the post. The key is that they are visible so that you can use social media to drive traffic to your website to enable your great content can reach as many people as possible.

## CORE PAGES

There are several pages on your site that are critical for presenting the basic information about who you are, how you (or your products and services) help people, and how to get in touch with you. These are your core pages.

## HOMEPAGE

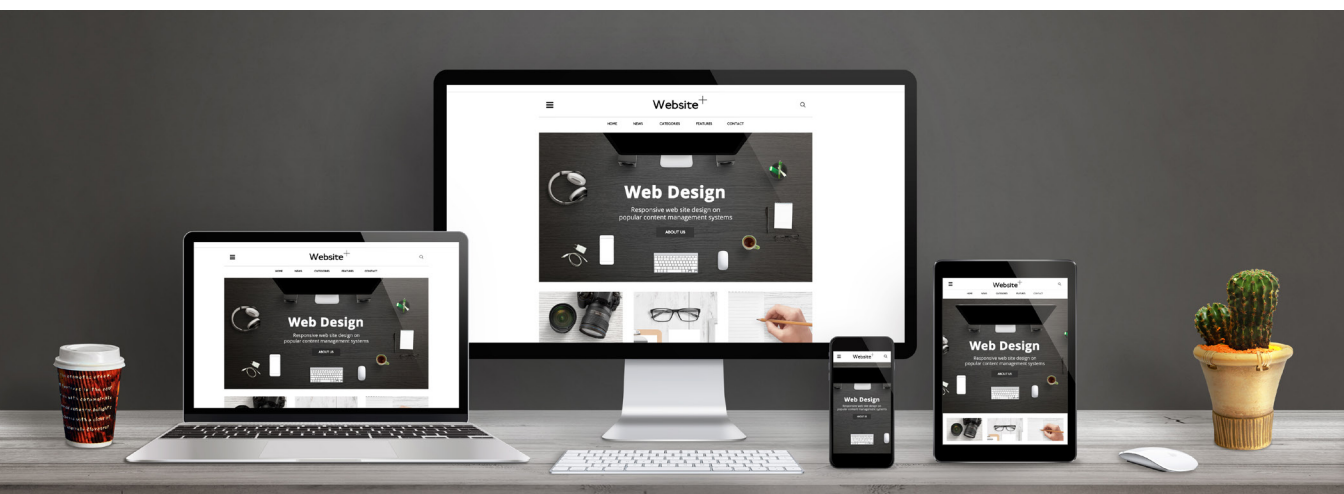
Your homepage is actually typically your second (or even third) touchpoint with a new visitor. That's because most visitors organically reach you from another page/post first because they are typically looking searching for something specific.

For example, they may search “how to choose a domain name” and be brought to a blog post of yours on that topic. Once they read the post, then they may decide to click over to your homepage to learn what you're about.

Regardless of when exactly in their visit people are seeing your homepage, it still needs to make a stellar impression. The homepage should be your “best of” content and it should lead to where you want your potential customers to explore on your site.

## The homepage should include:

- ✓ A clear, but attention-grabbing tagline that describes your blog in one or two sentences
- ✓ A little about you and why visitors should care about what you have to say
- ✓ Links to your best content or most popular posts
- ✓ Links to your most recent posts
- ✓ Testimonials or brands you've worked with
- ✓ An email opt-in for visitors to sign up for the latest news about your site.



## OTHER IMPORTANT PAGES

These pages are also essential to helping visitors learn more about what you have to offer. They should appear within your main menus (except maybe landing pages).

✓ **About:** This is where you will tell readers about yourself and your background.

✓ **Contact:** Use a business number, email, and physical address for this information. You can also include a contact form so your readers can message you, ask questions, and request more information

✓ **Legal Pages:** Boring, but necessary. This is where all the terms of service, privacy policy, etc. would go.

✓ **Services:** Showcase what you do, what services or programs you provide, and how people can learn more.

✓ **Blog page:** Post archive = blog page. Enable your new posts to dynamically populate at the top to emphasis that you keep your blog current.

✓ **Landing pages:** Removes all navigation and widget areas—useful for pages where you want to discourage users from leaving. For example, an upcoming event or program with a signup form.



## **CLOSING STATEMENTS**

Starting a new blog website can be overwhelming, but it doesn't have to be frustrating. Stick to the basic color, font, logo, and layout concepts to establish a really solid website.

**What do you think is an essential part of designing your blog?**



# 6

## HOW TO MAKE MONEY BLOGGING

Learn which monetization methods best fit your brand or business and level of time commitment.



I'm often asked by people who don't blog if you can make money blogging. The answer is yes, you can create a full-time job for yourself growing your own blog. But like any profession, it takes effort to earn a paycheck. It's not as simple as choosing the perfect domain name expecting to hit the SEO lottery.

I think it very important for new bloggers to set financial expectations and goals. Are you working on a blog as a side hustle project? Are you simply trying to recoup your blogging expenses? Or are you trying to create a thriving multi-million-dollar business from your blog? Honestly answering these questions will help you choose the best income streams to focus on.

We've helped successful bloggers capitalize on their efforts to make money. You shouldn't wait until your brand is defined, your fully-optimized blog is up and running, and you're building and nurturing your audience to start

thinking about how to get paid. Start thinking about which monetization strategy works best for you as you are planning your blog, and tie that strategy into how you produce great content.

There are plenty of ways to go about monetizing your blogging efforts, and you should explore all of them to find out which methods best fit your brand or business and level of time commitment.

Don't fall for articles or posts that promise a step-by-step path to get rich quick. The likeliness of being in the right place at the right time without putting in hard work is very rare. Growing a blog is a lot of work and takes a lot of time. Create great content, build your audience, create trust and deliver value—and you will be able to make money blogging. Here are a few of the more popular ways to make money online.

## JOIN AN AFFILIATE MARKETING PROGRAM

You can use affiliate marketing to boost your income. Joining an affiliate marketing program is the easiest way to make money off of your blog. This is because you can choose from a wide variety of affiliate products to promote. Many major companies and successful bloggers have affiliate programs that you can join.

Being an affiliate means you're affiliated with another company to promote its products. The most common programs are:

- ✓ Amazon
- ✓ Ebay
- ✓ Commission Junction
- ✓ ShareASale
- ✓ Clickbank
- ✓ Shopify
- ✓ Rakuten

Affiliate marketing works by recommending a product or service to your readers by using special tracking links. You get a referral commission each time somebody buys the promoted product after clicking the link. Most affiliate programs payout monthly for referrals, however, some do quarterly. Good affiliate programs will provide you with monthly income reports that detail site visits, conversation ratios, and how much money you've made.

A common example of affiliate marketing (unrelated to blogging) is referring people to apply for a credit card. If someone applies for a credit card based on your referral you would get a cashback bonus. Just make sure to only be an affiliate for products and services that are related to your content. Remember, as an influencer, your goal is to help people with your recommendations. Don't promote sugary snacks if you run a blog about healthy eating. Don't promote a

friend's service if it's unrelated to your blog just to make some extra money.

Once you know what products you want to promote, you can use a WordPress plugin to manage your affiliate links. These types of plugins allow you to create links and products on your blog that “link out” to the products and services you are recommending. Some plugins allow you to attach photos and descriptions to your affiliate products. It's important to remember that search engines don't index links that redirect. Therefore, you want to have as much original great content on your site as possible to ensure you rank with SEO.

Two of our favorite plugins are Pretty Links and SimpleURLs. Bloggers using the Mai Solution platform are able to create affiliate links using the Mai Favorites feature.

Affiliate Programs often have terms and conditions associated with them. Don't forget to read the fine print when it comes to affiliate companies. Each company has different terms when it comes to how they want blogs to promote their products. For example, certain Amazon affiliate programs won't let you share your affiliate links in email lists, only on your website and social media.

It's also legally required to be transparent with your audience when you share an affiliate link. Be sure to have a disclaimer in the footer of your site and add an "(affiliate link)" parenthetical to all social media posts with affiliate links.

## WRITING REVIEWS

Similar to affiliate marketing, writing paid product reviews is another way to make money with your blog. This is where you try out products related to your content and then

write about it. Sometimes, companies will send you their products for free so you could test them out.

You can reach out to the companies whose physical products and services you like and use to ask them about doing paid reviews. Websites like PayPerPost can connect you with companies interested in paid reviews.

Remember, transparency is important as well as giving an unbiased review. Even the best products have flaws. If you don't paint the full picture, you risk hurting your audience's trust in you. List out the pros and cons and include a section that sums things up at the end. If it's a product you'd recommend, this is also a great place for an affiliate link.

Don't plan on writing a review the first time you use a product. Build up some history with the product. Your review should include personal experience and recommendations.

Solid reviews with quality content become highly influential posts that affect people's purchasing decisions. You should share your personal experience with tweets and within your Facebook groups. You can also promote your reviews with email marketing and podcasts.

## DISPLAY ADVERTISING

Display advertisements are a very common way for bloggers to earn revenue on their websites. The way that this works is you select and sign up with an ad network. They provide scripts you install on your website to deliver ads to your viewers. Your website viewers see ads. It's your responsibility to carefully select the display locations of those ads. Putting too many ads on a page can overwhelm your visitors and create a terrible browsing experience.



Google AdSense is one of the most popular ad networks. It's an easy way to make money from your blog because all you need to do is add a script from Google to your WordPress blog. Some ad networks set minimum requirements for the number of pageviews you need in order to partner with them. You might need to grow your audience and site visits to participate in those programs.

### **So how do you get started then, you ask?**

If you have fairly low traffic numbers you can do what is called curated ads where you work one-on-one with companies that you know and love to sell them ad space on your website.

Curated ads are a little bit different than pure affiliate commissions. You are selling space in your sidebar or the top of every blog post. You can charge a flat money fee, a fee for impressions, or a fee when visitors click through. Small businesses are a great

target for you to pitch your site and ad space. When approaching small businesses, show them your great articles or product reviews and the amount of traffic to related content on your website. The goal is to show them that you can get their product or service showcased in front of potential new customers.

The nice part about curated ads is that you can display them on your website, send them via emails, and talk about them in your podcats.

## **SPONSORED BLOG POSTS**

Sponsored blog posts are a partnership between you and a business where you get paid to represent, talk about, and promote a company or product.

Sponsorships can be great if the business links back to your website too. In addition to providing search engine benefits, it creates authority for you to represent the product and service.

Before you approach businesses to negotiate about potential sponsorships you should put together a promotional kit for your blog.

It should only be a page long with your traffic stats, social media following, and audience demographics.

## **SPONSORED EMAILS**

Email marketing is definitely an important aspect of growing your blog. Leverage your email list to share your blog topics with your audience.

## PREMIUM CONTENT

Another option is to charge for access to certain sections of your site or for exclusive “Premium” content. For instance, Spotify is free with ads but charges \$10 a month for ad-free listening and better functionality on the app.

You can only do this once your blog gains an established following because new readers aren’t going to pay extra if they don’t know who you are and how your content can help yet. However, your most loyal fans will likely want to read more from you and they will pay for more access to you and your site.

You could create a paid subscriber (members-only) section of your site with more in depth posts, video/audio content, downloads, a private forum where you answer questions, or a job board (if relevant to your site).

Having users pay for premium content does put more pressure on you to keep up with production though. This is because you need to deliver something amazing if you're charging fans for it. You also need to keep producing your free content without any dip in quality or you'll lose readers.

You can create a premium membership site using WordPress membership plugins.



## DIGITAL PRODUCTS

An extension of premium content is selling digital products. This is a fairly low maintenance way to make money once the content has been created. Some examples of digital products that have been popular with users are:

✅ E-Books: These are pretty easy to write and produce. A lot of e-books from bloggers are just a condensed collection of their most popular posts with some more in-depth information. Once the book is written you can use Canva to design a cover and then you just convert it into a PDF and it's ready to sell.

✅ Online Courses: These pull in more money than e-books. Bloggers usually charge, and get paid, hundreds of dollars for each online course. You would need to plan a lesson with downloads, slides, templates, etc so that it looks good and is easy for users to follow.

✔ Webinars: These are similar to online courses except they're live and usually have a q&a session at the end. It's easy to host a paid webinar on WordPress. You can host the webinar on WordPress or just advertise it to your users and register participants.

## CREATE YOUR OWN AFFILIATE PROGRAM

Now that you have your own products and services to sell, you can set up an affiliate marketing products that others can recommend your products...

## MARKET YOUR EXPERTISE

If you're an expert in whatever you're blogging about, there's a good chance your readers will pay for your expertise outside of your website.

This is another method, however, where you need to have an established fanbase who know that you know what you're talking about. You're going to need to pay your dues and earn authority on a subject before you can get paid for your presence, name, or brand.

There are plenty of ways you can sell your expertise to go more in-depth in areas of your knowledge. Some are in-person, some online, and some through other forms of media. Here are some further ways to share your know-how and get paid.

✅ Publishing a book: This can be a print or e-book, but there are plenty of bloggers who have gotten book deals. One such blogger is Kevin Perjerer of the Defunctland site and YouTube channel. He talks about the history of theme park attractions that have been closed for a while as well as TV shows that aren't on anymore and businesses that haven't been around in years. Basically he



talks about anything that used to exist in a lot of people's childhoods and has an audience based on nostalgia along with his in-depth research. He wrote a book that he sold in digital and print formats about the history of the Magic Kingdom park at Disney World and the print version sold out.

✅ **Public Speaking events:** These can be booked at a seminar or conference with others in your field or for you individually. These are hard to get so you should start out at smaller, more casual free community events or meetups. Local libraries are good places to begin your public speaking career. You can announce availability over social media or by reaching out to event organizers in person.

✅ **Freelancing services:** As an expert in your field, you should be able to offer your services to users, other bloggers, or small and large companies to make money. There's no startup investment so it's a low-risk method. Just offer your services on your site, possibly

under your “contact” section or create a separate “Available for Hire” section with your marketable skills.

## ACCEPT DONATIONS

One additional way you can make money on your blog is to set up a link to accept donations from readers. It’s easy to set up a PayPal button to your WordPress or you could create a donation form on your site. This is probably the least effective method of monetization because you would have to depend on your reader’s generosity without offering them anything they’re not already getting for free.

The practice of it asking for donations is common among WordPress plug-in and theme developers.

## GET STARTED

It's very possible to make money blogging, but like anything, it takes a lot of hard work and persistence. Try all of the methods listed in this article to find out what works best for you and your readers. Don't stick to just one either, most bloggers make money by doing at least three of the things listed. Just don't be a pest about it. Get started on your blog!



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