

## **Money-Making...**

# **Blog Operations**

## **Introduction**

The fact that blogs have become an extremely popular marketing and promotion method is no surprise. Not when you consider the advantages they offer over the standard website.

For one thing, if you use an independent online blogging service like Blogger.com (<http://www.blogger.com>) you don't need any web design or programming skills. You simply sign up for a free account, choose the template you want, and then begin posting content.

And since these types of services are maintained on the owner's server, there's no need to acquire independent web hosting or domain names. Whether you operate one blog or several hundred, there's no cost whatsoever.

Another important advantage is being able to get your blog (and subsequently, future blog postings) indexed by search engines in a much shorter period of time.

For the most part, that can be attributed to three factors:

- Search engines such as Google favor blogs, mostly because it's fresh content that's updated on a regular basis.
- Ping capability means you can immediately notify search engines whenever new content has been added.
- Syndicating blog content through RSS feeds increases both the content value and the number of back links.

Just like any other website, you can also incorporate independent advertising in your blog template.

Customized Google AdSense ads, for example, can be quickly and easily added to a Blogger website. You can also sell additional advertising space. These ads can either be placed throughout the overall content or established within designated areas of the template.

Of course, the real money-making potential is the fact that you have a platform for including whatever information or promotions you choose. And the fact that blogs are already accepted as a personal announcement vehicle, they can be the perfect place to offer product testimonials and endorsements.

As long as your blog content provides valuable and interesting information, other

bloggers will come. The only difficulty is providing this type of inviting content on a regular basis.

The reason most blogs fail (other than the fact that so many of them contain nothing worth reading about) is simply because the owner can't keep up the pace. They open their blog, post some good content for a period of time, and then gradually run out of steam.

It doesn't have to go that way...

What you need to understand is that blogs were and always will be a vehicle for venting personal thoughts. That's not to say you can't use them for business. They just need to be geared more toward a private writings than a promotional message.

When you think about the way blogs started out - and what continues to make them so popular - it's obvious that owners use them to "bare their soul", so to speak. They don't labor over their content, constantly revising and editing as though it were some sort of literary masterpiece.

They simply speak opening and honestly about what they feel and what they think. And, if what they write is highly engaging, their blog will not only attract a considerable amount of followers, it will endure over an extended period of time.

In other words, it will last long after thousands of other blogs have bit the cyber dust and disappeared.

If you want your blog to be successful, you need to approach the writing on a casual and personal level. Be yourself. Write honestly and from the heart, without all the hype and polished promotional agenda.

Granted, your goal is to make money. But you won't be able to do that if you use your blog simply to hawk products. You need to entertain people. Maybe not in the extreme sense of some stage performer...

But you do have to give them something that makes them want to keep reading. And not just initially. You need to capture their attention to the degree that they actually look forward to hearing what you have to say next.

One of the best ways to ensure that you'll retain reader attention and support is to choose specific niche topics. The more targeted or specific the niche, the better.

Rather than trying to please scores of individuals with various interests, you can focus on subject areas that have very strong and targeted audience potential.

And writing about specific niche topics will mean your Google AdSense ads will also be highly targeted. A perfect match for your own content.

Another important aspect of operating a blog is allowing readers to add their own comments.

For one thing, it gives them a sense of inclusion, that they're part of the process rather than merely an outsider looking in.

Secondly, it helps build content. Even on those occasions when you're not able to contribute, you can rest assured that your readers are posting their own comments, opinions, and advice.

That's assuming, of course, that you've given them something to talk about. Which addresses yet another blog practice that should be implemented...

It's always a good idea to invite reader participation. Rather than wait around for someone to contribute comments, put something out there that prompts them to take action.

For example...

If your blog is centered around SEO, ask readers to post their best and worse search engine tactics.

If your blog is centered around dogs, ask readers what training methods resulted in the most success (or failure).

Take a poll, take a survey. Conduct a contest. Include a questionnaire form that readers can fill out and submit.

There are all sorts of ways you can get readers involved. If nothing else, just mention something that will prompt them to post comments. Or, at the very least, provide content that makes them want to keep coming back.

Don't just write. Get people fired up. Give them something to think about, to talk about with their friends and associates. The more you get them involved, the more likely they'll spread the word about this great blog they continue to visit.

Of all the advantages a blog can offer, the best one is the fact that people who frequent blogs don't expect them to be literary works of art. Instead, they're looking for a place to be informed, amused, enlightened, and entertained.

Naturally, if you're on a more serious level, talking about a professional subject such as SEO or internet marketing or financial investment, you'll need to be careful about your writing, spelling, and grammar.

In those types of instances, you want people to respect your advice and view you as an expert in your field. You won't be able to pull that off if your blog posts are riddled with misspelled words and grammatical errors.

But in most areas of writing, it's not that critical. Not like it would be on your typical "business" website. When frequenting blogs, people are generally more interested in what's posted there than how eloquently it's written (just like discussion boards).

Your blog has the potential to generate a good deal of revenue. But your first and primary objective should be to create and maintain content that keeps your readership alive and well. Once you've accomplished that, financial success will automatically follow.

## Blog Techniques and Strategies

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### Blog Software and Services

With blogs, you have two basic choices... you can open an account with a service like Blogger.com or download and install your own blogging software.

Which one you choose depends primarily on what purpose the content of your blog will serve. Also, you have to determine what type of audience you want to reach and how you intend to reach them.

If you plan to promote and operate your blog independently, like you would any other website, you would be better off installing software on your own server. That would give you much more capability (and most likely benefit) with regard to search engine optimization.

If, on the other hand, it's more important that you become part of a "community" of blogs that already exist, it would be wise to consider setting up an account with a service like Blogger.com.

Of course, the main advantage of using a remotely hosted service is the fact that you won't be responsible for keeping the blog running. Everything behind the scenes is taken care of by someone else.

Using your own blog software means you'll either have to install and maintain it yourself or hire someone qualified to do it for you.

On the plus side, you'll have a great deal of freedom when it comes to how you implement design, layout, advertising, and anything else associated with the workings of a standard website.

### Blog Services

Blogger (free)

<http://www.blogger.com>

Owned by Google (<http://www.google.com>), Blogger is the most widely used blog service. It's totally free and offers push-button convenience for choosing templates and various options which include things like RSS feeds and ping capability. One of the biggest assets - from an SEO perspective - is the fact that Blogger pages do quite well in search engine listings.

Typepad (3 paid versions, free 30-day trial)

<http://www.typepad.com>

Since Typepad is much more technical than Blogger, it helps if you're familiar with independent HTML coding. With that ability, you'll be able to customize your blog pages to look however you like (you're not restricted to using pre-determined templates). You can also easily add books, music, and other media which take

thumbnail images from retailers like Amazon and displays them on your blog pages.

WordPress (free)

<http://www.wordpress.com>

This is the online version of the WordPress software (which you download and install on your own server). Although it offers less flexibility than what you can do with the software, you'll have most everything you need for the average successful blog operation. And of course, like all online services, it makes it extremely quick and easy to get up and running.

### **Blog Self-Hosting Software**

WordPress (free)

<http://www.wordpress.org>

In addition to its online blog service, WordPress offers the software version that can be downloaded and installed on your own server. Currently, it's the largest self-hosted blogging tool and has many desirable features which include ping support, management of non-blog pages, private and password protected posts, and automatic spam protection.

Movable Type (priced by number of user licenses - personal or commercial)

<http://www.sixapart.com/movabletype/>

Movable Type software is the core engine for the online service Typepad. It's not as easy to install as WordPress so you'll need to be somewhat familiar with Perl and the overall basics of software installation. It comes with strong documentation and a technical forum that's user supported. Features include support for unlimited blogs, both static and dynamic PHP publishing, comprehensive community management, and automatic syndication through RSS feeds.

### **Niche Blogs**

One of the most important aspects of any blog is the topic or subject matter. The more popular it is, the more readers and loyal fans it will enjoy.

How do you choose the best topic or subject matter? There's no definitive or easy answer to that question. It depends on your own knowledge and/or passion for any given topic or area of interest.

For the most part, however, you'll want to pick a topic that is not only popular but lends itself well to promoting related products and/or services.

If you have a blog that is focused on dog training, for example, you can easily promote any and all products that are associated with either the training itself or dog supplies in general.

Plus, the type of content you write will determine what type of Google AdSense ads

are displayed. As long as you're dealing in a specific niche, you can easily and completely control the keywords that are used throughout the content.

Looking at it from a broader perspective, a niche blog will attract much more targeted readers. And in most instances, much more loyal supporters. They're interested in the topic, they like what you're writing about, and they return on a regular and ongoing basis.

These types of niche-oriented viewers are also more likely to contribute comments and thoughts of their own. And that's exactly what you want... people who not only follow your blog postings but get involved as well.

From a marketing standpoint, you have the ability to promote very specific products to a very specific audience. Assuming you've captured their trust and respect, they'll be inclined to seriously entertain any offer you put out there.

From an SEO standpoint, you'll be attracting viewers through the use of targeted and highly searched keywords. That means they'll arrive on the pages of your blog already interested in the topic (and most often, the product or products that are associated with that particular topic).

The only difference between blogs and the average website is the degree to which you pitch an offer. On your basic website, hard-hitting sales copy is totally acceptable, mainly because it's expected.

With a blog, however, you need to find the right balance between sales pitch and subtle recommendation. It's basically the same way you would promote something within the content of an article. You make a recommendation without the entire article seeming like a paid advertisement.

The blog is the perfect vehicle for letting people get to know you and your business. But it needs to be a gradual process. Allow the relationship to happen naturally and through good quality posts that will prompt viewers to keep coming back.

## **Blogger.com**

Blogger.com (<http://www.blogger.com>) is by far the most popular blog service, especially among marketers.



The primary reason for the popularity is the fact that Blogger is already set up to achieve most of the tasks associated with marketing and promotion success...

- involves an entire network of niche-oriented blogs that can be linked to one another
- has an established user base that understands and utilizes the marketing potential
- allows you to easily incorporate AdSense ads that can bring in additional revenue automatically
- a new web page can be automatically created for each new post, giving additional search engine benefit
- has the capability to ping Weblogs (<http://www.weblogs.com>) whenever new blog content is added
- allows you to syndicate your content through RSS feeds to anyone who subscribes
- includes user profiles that allows you to find people and blogs of similar interest

When signing up for a Blogger account, it mentions three easy steps...

1. create your account
2. name your blog
3. choose a template

While those might get you “up and running”, there’s one additional step you’ll want to take right away...

Put your AdSense code on your blog template. That way, there’s no delay in having the capability of gaining income from any traffic you receive.

If you don’t yet have an AdSense account, you can sign up for one right there within Blogger. If you already have an account, just go ahead and sign in.

From there you’ll see a special preview of your blog template which shows how it will look with the AdSense ads displayed. Use the menu above the template to customize the ads however you like (color, size, shape).

Although the basic Blogger templates have a pre-determined location for AdSense, you can further customize so that the ads will appear in a sidebar (rather than the top of the page default location).

You can also take advantage of having your blog content automatically syndicated through Atom site feeds. That means your blog content has the capability of being widely circulated.

With regard to the blog itself, you can either host it with Blogger, in which case your blog URL address will be configured as follows...

[yourblogname](#).blogspot.com

Or, you can acquire your own domain name and host your blog independently. All you need to do is change the settings so that publishing will be switched from [blogspot.com](#) to your own host...

### **You're Publishing on [blogspot.com](#)**

Switch to: [FTP](#) (publishing on your ISP's server) Or [SFTP](#) (secure)



Be aware, however, that if you publish your blog to an external server, the original blog name you chose will be up for grabs. If you want to prevent someone from acquiring and using that name, create a new blog with the same name (after you switch the publishing settings). That will keep the name associated with your account and prevent anyone else from using it.

## **Get Traffic**

Having a blog is all well and good. But you won’t experience much marketing benefit if you don’t receive a considerable amount of visitors.

It’s never too soon to start. As soon as you’ve established your blog (which means

you've written some compelling content that will capture viewer attention), you need to begin implementing traffic methods.

Following are several strategies that can be most effective in generating viewer activity.

1. Above everything else, make certain your blog content is search engine friendly. That would include the following things.

- Place keywords in all the headings (titles) of your posts.
- Place keywords in your links. For example, if you're sending viewers to a page where there is more information about optimizing their websites for better search engine position, don't say "click here" but rather hyperlink the words "search engine optimization".
- Place a primary keyword in the name of your blog.

2. Submit your site to all the major search engines as well as the following blog directories and websites.

Blog Search

<http://www.blog-search.com/blogclicker-submission.html>

Bloggernity

<http://www.bloggernity.com>

Technorati

<http://www.technorati.com/>

Bloglines

<http://www.bloglines.com/>

Blogwise

<http://www.blogwise.com/>

WeBlogALot

<http://www.weblogalot.com/>

Globe of Blogs

<http://www.globeofblogs.com/>

BlogHop

<http://www.bloghop.com/>

3. Make certain you ping whenever you add new content to your blog. If your blog doesn't come equipped with this capability, it can be accomplished through websites like Ping-O-Matic at <http://pingomatic.com>.

4. Create your own RSS feed to distribute your blog directly to readers. If your blog

isn't located at Blogger.com or your blog doesn't have the option of running site feeds, you can use Feed Craft (<http://www.feedcraft.com>). This is a web-based service that allows you to create, manage, deliver, and track RSS feeds.

5. Contact the owners of websites whose topic is relevant to what you write about in your blog. Tell them you have free content available in exchange for a link back. Or you can simply exchange links by including a mention of their website within your blog content.

Web Log Empire (<http://www.weblogempire.com>) helps bloggers to swap links. Or, you can buy a link back to your blog at Text-Link-Ads (<http://www.text-link-ads.com>).

6. Visit blogs that you like, preferably ones that have content similar or complimentary to yours. Post quality and informative comments (along with your own blog URL address) as often as you can - on average, around three times a week.

7. Write great content in your blog. The better the content, the more people will visit and the more word-of-mouth advertising you'll receive. Plus, other blogs and websites will be more likely to provide links to a blog that includes quality, relevant content.

8. Write content in your blog frequently (at least two to three times a week). That way, search engines will take notice and assign it more relevance and importance, primarily because it's active and constantly building.

## Checklist



- With a service like Blogger.com you don't need any web design or programming skills. You simply sign up for a free account, choose the template you want, and then begin posting content.
- Customized AdSense ads can be quickly and easily added to a Blogger website.
- As long as your blog content provides valuable and interesting information, other bloggers will come.
- The reason most blogs fail (other than the fact that so many of them contain nothing worth reading about) is simply because the owner couldn't keep up the writing pace.
- If you want your blog to be successful, you need to approach the writing on a casual and personal level. Be yourself. Write honestly and from the heart, without all the hype and polished promotional agenda.
- One of the best ways to ensure that you'll retain reader attention and support is to choose specific niche topics. Rather than try to please scores

of individuals with various interest, focus on subject areas that have targeted audience potential.

- Your blog has the potential to generate a good deal of income. But your first and primary objective should be to create and maintain content that keeps your readership alive and well. Once you've accomplished that, financial success will automatically follow.
- For the most part, you need to pick a blog topic that is not only popular but lends itself to promoting related products.
- A niche blog will attract much more targeted readers and loyal supporters. They're interested in the topic, they like what you're writing about, and they return on a regular and ongoing basis.
- On your basic website, hard-hitting sales copy is totally acceptable, mainly because it's expected. With a blog, you need to find the right balance between sales pitch and subtle recommendation.
- Put your Adsense code on your blog template right away so there's no delay in gaining income from any traffic you receive.

### **Traffic Strategies**

- Make certain your blog content is search engine friendly by placing keywords in the name of your blog, your post headings, and your links.
- Ping whenever you add new content to your blog.
- Distribute your blog content directly to readers through RSS feeds.
- Contact owners of websites whose topic is related to what you write about and let them know you have free content available in exchange for a link back to your blog.
- Visit blogs that you like with similar content and post quality and informative comments on a regular frequent basis.
- Write great content. The better the content, the more people will visit and the more word-of-mouth advertising you'll receive.
- Write content in your blog frequently - at least two or three times a week. Because it's active and constantly building, search engines will take notice and assign it more importance.

### **Resources**

Blogger

<http://www.blogger.com>

Typepad

<http://www.typepad.com>

WordPress (service)

<http://www.wordpress.com>

WordPress (software)

<http://www.wordpress.org>

Movable Type

<http://www.sixapart.com/movabletype/>

Weblogs

<http://www.weblogs.com>

Feed Burner

<http://www.feedburner.com>

Blog Search

<http://www.blog-search.com/blogclicker-submission.html>

Bloggernity

<http://www.bloggernity.com>

Technorati

<http://www.technorati.com>

Bloglines

<http://www.bloglines.com>

Blogwise

<http://www.blogwise.com>

WeBlogALot

<http://www.weblogalot.com>

Globe of Blogs

<http://www.globeofblogs.com>

BlogHop

<http://www.bloghop.com>

Ping-O-Matic

<http://pingomatic.com>

Feedcraft

<http://www.feedcraft.com>

Web Log Empire

<http://www.weblogempire.com>

Text-Link-Ads

<http://www.text-link-ads.com>

Backlinks Ninja

<http://www.backlinksninja.com>