Blog Basics for Internet Marketers

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If you're pursuing an online marketing career, you may be wondering what strategies are necessary or beneficial, versus those that could be a total waste of your time. One thing you won't have to question is whether or not a blog will contribute to your success, because it's one of the most fundamental tools you can leverage for profits.

Most Internet marketers consider their blog their "home on the 'net." While others foolishly put all of their eggs in one basket (social media) that they don't own, bloggers take solace in the fact that if they're ever unfairly banned, which can happen to anyone, they won't lose their business.

Who Is Right for a Blogging Career?

Blogging is one of those strategies that anyone can use effectively. It's something you'll see marketers of all types using – men and women, all age groups, single and married, parents and people all over the world.

It's not just a "mummy blogger" tool. While that's a popular, household term, it doesn't adequately reflect the true demographic of people using blogging to build their business. You have professionals as well as stay at home parents using it.

You'll see senior citizens who feel they lack a lot of technical prowess using a blog, as well as young adults just getting started with their knowledge, but who have mastered online tech skills quickly.

You can blog from the comfort of your own home, or take your blog on the road with you as you travel the world. As long as you have an Internet connection, you can log in, share your thoughts on your blog, and hit the publish button.

Blogging is great for any niche. It's perfect if you're promoting tangibles or digital products, discussing anything from kids' toys to pet training to how to make money online.

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There are many forms of monetization you can put on a blog, too. Many people create blogs to act as their home for affiliate promotions because they can showcase products and link to them.

But you can also promote your own line of information products from your blog. And you can incorporate ad revenue where you're showcasing ads strategically from your blog, too.

You can also offer services from your blog to monetize it. That might be something like content creation, graphics design – or even coaching, depending on the niche that you're in.

Blogging is an endeavour that fits any budget – from those who can only spend a minimal amount on a domain and hosting to those with money to spare. And it reflects a powerful competitive advantage for you over those who don't have a blog and site of their own.

One of the best things about blogging is that you can commit to it on any type of schedule you prefer. If you want to be a part time blogger, you can. If you want to blog several times a day, that's okay, too.

Three-Step Process for Building Your Own Blog

While many things about online marketing can be intimidating – like putting yourself out there on video or asking a big marketer to promote you, blogging is one of the easiest, most harmless tasks you'll do in your business.

It's a very simple process to get started. You only need three things. First, you want to get a domain. Unless you have an idea for a really powerful brand, try to go with a keyword rich domain – as short as you can get it.

Make sure you register a dot com (or a dot uk if you are in the UK), and don't worry about getting all of the other extensions or adding on anything else at checkout. Before you purchase it, look online for a 99-pence coupon for the registrar you're buying from.

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For the second step, you're going to need some hosting for your domain. Many people recommend you buy your hosting from where you get a discount for paying for more months in advance.

If you can afford that, then it's ok to get a multi-month deal for a lower monthly cost, but it's not necessary. If you can't afford to purchase £100 worth of hosting up front for that deal, then just go with a £6.95 or £9.95 plan and pay monthly.

You can always increase hosting or buy a better deal later, but until your blog is turning a profit, you'll have a smart budget set up. Hosting companies vary in what they offer, but don't buy a lot of extras upfront.

They'll always be available later. Just get the basic plan to get started with your blog. Once you get it, you'll need to tackle the third step – installing WordPress. It's a task that will take you less than 60 seconds – more like 30.

When you've installed it from your hosting account's cPanel, you'll be able to log into your blog's dashboard and start getting everything set up just the way you prefer. You get to choose a theme and colouring for your blog's branding, decide how many posts are shown on the page when someone visits your URL, and more.

Make sure you go through each of the settings in the sidebar. Each one has choices you can make, from how your URL appears in the browser to who can comment on your blog.

You may want to either hire a designer on a site like Fiverr or use a template to create a blog header that brands your business for you. Don't spend a lot of money on this, but do make sure it looks professional, since it's going to be the first impression people have of you.

Develop a Writing and Publishing Schedule

Blogging is not like a one-and-done site you might see elsewhere. It's an ever-growing home to lots of information your target audience needs. When they land on your blog, they're expecting fresh content on a regular basis.

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But you may or may not want to commit to a regular influx of content – so you have to learn how to make it work. If your schedule is already packed, think of the minimum frequency your audience would be happy hearing new information from you.

That may be once a week, but usually not less than that. Ideally, you need to be blogging about three times per week or more – daily is even better. And don't think you have to sit down to write a blog post daily, either.

The way this incredible tool is designed, you can spend time writing multiple blog posts on one day and queue them up to go live on your blog so that they drip out to your audience over time.

The publishing part isn't time consuming. You'll choose when you want the blog to go live, or publish it immediately. The prep work for the blog takes longer. You'll need to brainstorm ideas for your posts.

Then you'll need to map out what you want to teach your readers about that idea. You'll research the concept to ensure you have cutting edge information and then sit down to write it all out.

Your blog posts should have an image in them, if possible. While you can also embed other media formats, like video, an image helps your blog post stand out when you share it on social media sites, or someone else shares it in theirs.

So part of your time will be spent making those images. You can use a template on a site like Canva to help your process move along more quickly. You can also just use stock photos – but it's always best if you can brand the image with your URL.

You want to publish more frequently and beef up the content on your site so that when people land on it, they see it as a highly valuable resource for them. Make sure you map out categories for your blog and that you're alternating the topics you talk about on it.

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For example, if you're building a weight loss blog and your categories are low carb diet, calorie-based diets, and fasting, you don't want to have 20 blog posts about fasting and just 1 each for the other two.

You want it to be balanced so that there's something for everyone under the umbrella of your main subject matter. It's a good idea to publish on a rotation schedule for these topics, but don't be afraid to break out of that if you have important niche news that needs to be covered.

Always Build a List from Your Blog

Blogs are the perfect tool for building a list, more so than even a lead magnet page is. That's because they showcase your ability to convey your message. If someone lands on your blog post, reads it and is impressed, they're going to want to find a way to see what else you have in store for them.

There are certainly ways that you can build a list on your site using a lead magnet page, highlighting an opt in free gift they'll want to get their hands on. But you can also build your list on the blog side of your site, too.

Strategically, you need to make sure they're aware of the option to opt into your list when they're on the blog side of your site. Using your sidebar is an effective way to do this.

In your sidebar, you can paste the code for your opt in box and add some text or an image of your free offer. Try to position this at or near the top of your sidebar, so that people who visit see it instantly.

However, there's a chance someone will land on your blog and immediately begin reading your post. As they near the end of it, they've scrolled out of view of the opt in box in the sidebar.

What you want to do in this case is add the opt in offer at the bottom of every blog post. That way, as soon as they've seen the value in your niche leadership, they have the opportunity to sign up and see more.

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Make sure that on your blog, you include a call to action for them to join your list. It's best if you have a free gift where you can use your call to action for that. But even if you don't, word it so that it sounds enticing.

For example, people would rather "sign up for more free tips" than "sign up for updates." The wording of your call to action is important. Just make sure that you follow through with whatever it is you're offering them.

As you have people on your list, make sure you notify them whenever you have a new blog post. You don't want to just email them the same text that was in the blog. Especially if your blog is monetized, sending them there will serve you better than just sending text.

Optimize Your Posts for Both Search Engines and Readers

Blog posts should never be text that you just add to say you're a blogger. You want this to represent your expertise, so it needs to be carefully crafted for both humans and bots.

With search engine bots which crawl your site, you want to serve them the specific data they need to decide who sees your blog posts in their search engine results pages. This is where things like keyword tags, categories and image labelling (captions) can help.

Keep in mind that search engines crawl periodically to get to know how fresh your site is. The more often you post, the more often they'll crawl and the faster your post has a shot at ranking online.

If you don't post often and it takes the bots weeks to return to your site, your blog can't compete as effectively as one where the bots arrive on their site within hours to index their content.

When it comes to humans, remember your blog is not a professional dissertation. This is not a stuffy paper you're used to writing in school or college – or even in a professional workplace.

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Blogs are usually more casual. There are rare exceptions where you might have a more formal approach, but typically, it's conversational in nature – as if you were writing an email to a friend.

There's no set length for a blog post, but there are some things to keep in mind when writing your content. You can write a broad piece, or a narrow one. Don't create a blog post that takes hours to read, though.

It's best to break up extremely long blog topics into a series on your blog, with a part 1, part 2, and so on. Within each post, make sure you format it so that the text is broken up with subtitles and images.

As far as content is concerned, while you want the keywords indexed for search bots, humans need the content to be reader-friendly, so don't insert awkward keyword phrases into your post just to try to get it to rank on Google.

Blogging is a fantastic tool for marketers to use to put their knowledge on display. But it also gives you a chance to engage with your readers and step up to serve their needs. Before taking the first step and buying a domain, sit down and brainstorm your process, including a month's worth of content ideas – so you can hit the ground running once you begin.