

Blueprint For How To Make Money With A Blog*



* Advice From
Successful Bloggers

When starting a blog, figuring out how to make money can be a huge pain. It's a guessing game as to what works, what doesn't, what things you should focus on, and what things are a waste of time.

Most people need help, and I've found that in my experience the best place to find useful feedback is by asking those who have done what you're trying to do – and succeeded.

For this e-book I decided to solicit tips, tricks and general best practices from successful bloggers. These are people who have already enjoyed some level of success with their sites, and are either making a nice second income from their blog, or are blogging full time.

I asked each of these bloggers for their best advice on starting and growing a money making blog. Here are their responses.

How To Make Money With A Blog

Advice From Successful Bloggers

[Jim](#) from [Bargaineering.com](#) talks about making sure you're focusing on the right things when you start (and that's probably not the money):

The key to creating a successful blog has to do with establishing the right goals. When you start, you shouldn't have any revenue related goals and you should be trying to hit traffic, comment, and email goals. How many people are visiting? How many are returning? How many subscribers? How many comments? Those are the important metrics when you first start. When you have only a handful of visitors, don't try to make money off them! Try to build a relationship so that they will contribute to the growth of your site through comments, email, and the flow of ideas. When you focus on money, that's all you'll see. You will be discouraged when it earns \$1 that first month and you'll likely abandon it because there is no money.

[Flexo](#) from Consumerism Commentary says to start with the idea of developing excellent content:

It took six months from the placement of the first ad on Consumerism Commentary until I earned enough to receive the first check. But I prefer to look at this differently. I've been creating online communities since 1990 and the first check I received was in 2004. Even though I'm earning six figures now, it took a long time to get there. I've seen many people start their projects with the goal of making money first, while the goal of creating something useful or wonderful remains farther down on the list if it makes the list of goals at all. This is the wrong approach and will often lead to frustration and abandonment.

Audio technicians talk about "sound vs. noise." A quality signal requires a high signal-to-noise ratio. Please don't start a blog with the sole purpose of earning

money. The internet is already full of mediocre content, designed in bulk, with the hopes of attracting advertising revenue. Any more of the same will only add to the noise, reducing the usefulness of the internet as a whole. **Start with the idea of developing excellent content that people will want to read and once you are on the path to success, consider how you will bring revenue into the picture.**

[FMF](#) from [freemoneyfinance.com](#) writes about the importance of creating a lot of content:

When I wrote “[How to Get Your Blog to 100,000 Visitors and Beyond](#)” four years ago, I ended up with 22 different steps to take. And while all of those are important in some measure, with some more years of experience I’m convinced that developing a successful blog is really simpler than that. As such, here’s the one piece of advice I’d give to bloggers looking to grow their sites and their incomes:

Write good content, write lots of it, and write for a long, long time.

I’m still working on the “good” part myself, but I’ve found that if you write a lot and do it for a long period of time (we’re talking years, not days), you will get more traffic and (eventually) increase your income. Sorry that it’s not an easy thing to do or something that can be completed in a weekend, but my experience shows this to be the one vital tip to success (and if you look at the blogs that are bigger than mine, I believe you’ll see the same principle in action.)

[Jason](#) from [FrugalDad.com](#) says to treat blogging like a business:

Before you put up your first ad, consider why you want to monetize your blog. Are you looking for a second income stream? Are you hoping to use the money to pay off debt? Or are you simply looking for some extra “ice cream” money each month? The answer to this question will help guide your advertising strategy, as someone hoping to use the earnings from a blog to pay down debt may be willing to be more aggressive (more ads, more obvious placement) than someone just out to make a few extra bucks while building a large audience.

If blogging to make money is serious business to you, then treat it like a business. Take some time to define your potential audience, what that audience may be interested in buying from you, and which advertisers may be interested in running ads on your site. And don’t just think linearly – there are many peripheral topics that might draw attention from advertisers. For instance, I write mostly about personal finances, but have had interest from advertisers in real estate, careers, [taxes](#), even the auto industry, because I touch on these topics as part of a larger personal finance discussion.

[Bob](#) from [ChristianPF.com](#) talks about focusing on the big things:

*Just like many bloggers AdSense is the biggest payer for me. I found that by **running detailed tests and comparing results of different ad shapes, colors, and placements you can dramatically increase your earnings**. In fact, in my article I wrote about [how I make money with my blog](#), I explained the 10 things I did to increase my AdSense earnings by \$1500 in 3 months. I had plenty of traffic to make money with AdSense, but I was just doing all the wrong things. I continually test my AdSense ads and there is always room to improve – test, test, and then test again.*

*On another note, it is critically important to **avoid time-wasters and focus on your goals**. If your goal is to [make money by blogging](#), then you shouldn't focus all your energy and time on the things that aren't directly taking you toward your goals. For me, I was getting stressed out when I wasn't getting enough comments or wanted to have more subscribers. Believe it or not, there is very little correlation between these metrics and the amount you make from your blog.*

[Will Chen](#) from [Wisebread.com](#) says to make sure to engage in “targeted networking”:

***The key to making money with blogs is targeted networking.** Instead of trying to network with every blogger out there, develop a game plan to start with the folks with the most influence. You can compile your own list of people to target, or use [this list of top personal finance blogs](#) as a guide. Think of it as the Pareto Principle for blog networking. Go down your list and start offering each influential blogger something of value. Offer to do a guest post, run a project for them, feature their best posts on your blog, etc. For example, Wise Bread has a pretty nifty [guest posting program](#) that gets bloggers a lot of exposure.*

Everyone knows networking will increase traffic, but how does it directly help you make money? Top bloggers get advertising offers all the time. They can't handle all the offers they receive from advertisers, so once in a while they have to refer the opportunities to other bloggers. If you have a great working relationship with these top bloggers, they will feel comfortable referring you to their advertisers. If several top bloggers frequently mention your blog to top ad agencies, the agencies will bookmark you as a go-to blog for their top clients.

[Patrick](#) over at [Cash Money Life](#) and [Military Finance Network](#) talks about how you need to write about your passions, and have patience:

Remember back in high school when your teachers or guidance counselors told you to “do what you love and the money will follow?” Well, it doesn’t always work that way. I know plenty of people who have hobbies that are time and money sinks. Thankfully, [starting a blog](#) can be one of those hobbies that pays for itself and can even be very profitable.

There are dozens of ways to make money from blogging, and I don’t want to focus on listing each one – Pete has many of those topics covered. What I want to talk about is passion. [Write about your passions](#) and people will appreciate your energy and enthusiasm. And hopefully they will link to your blog or share your site with others by e-mailing your links, or by sharing your site via FaceBook, Twitter, or other social media outlets. Why is this important? Because the root of making money online comes from one thing: visitors. Without passion and enthusiasm it will be difficult to maintain the consistent high quality production that is necessary to bring in a steady stream of traffic.

*The final bits of advice I have are these: **blogging is not a get rich quick endeavor. It takes time, patience, hard work, quality content, networking, skill, and sometimes a bit of luck.** Basically, there are no shortcuts. But if you are willing to put in the work you have a chance at making money online. Provide a service or value for your readers and they will appreciate your site. Help people achieve their goals and they will appreciate it even more.*

[Rob](#) from [Ramped Blogging](#) encourages diversification and testing to find the right formula:

***When it comes to making money online through blogging, diversification is key.** If a large part of your blogging income comes from one source, you need to look into other revenue streams to spread out the load and increase your bottom line. I see a lot of people start with AdSense and stop there...or dabble in affiliate marketing and then that’s it. They continually beat into the ground the same methods forgetting to look at other outlets like newsletters, direct advertising, having your own products etc. Ideally, you want to have a lot of revenue streams so that...should the worst happen and one of those goes away...you have other options that pick up the slack.*

If you really want to make money blogging, you do not have to have 100k+ subscribers and “problogging” elite status. Making money through blogging is about having an attentive, targeted audience that you are providing consistent value to on a regular basis. If you focus on accomplishing that...add in some smart monetization methods and business decisions that fit that audience...it really all falls into place. Just remember...testing is key and what works for one successful blogger might not work for your blog. Keep testing until you find a formula that works and then start testing again.

[NCN](#) from [No Credit Needed](#) says you should focus on the 3 C's to succeed:

Content: *If you want a quality flow of traffic, you need to create quality content. For me, that means staying true to the nature of my own blog, remaining true to my “own voice”, and focusing on those articles that speak to my audience.*

Community: *If you want to grow your traffic, and thus create more opportunities to generate income, you need to engage in community. Find other bloggers who are in your niche, connect with them, network when appropriate, and support their efforts. A rising tide definitely lifts all ships.*

Consistency: *If you want to move beyond traffic “spurts” and have steadily increasing traffic numbers, keep posting! I have found that one or two posts per day, for a site my size, result in increased traffic. Anything less, and my numbers decrease. Anything more, and readers are overwhelmed, and numbers remain relatively the same. Each site will have its own “type” of reader, and each blogger should post at a frequency equal to the fervency of his / her audience.*

[David](#) from [MoneyNing.com](#) talks about measuring results, and adjusting to change:

Much has been said about creating a blog on a topic you love because you can then write interesting content, but making money from blogging is so much more than that. Only an owner who is obsessed with changes and measuring results can turn a mediocre site into a money making machine.

Great content will attract traffic, but making money as a result of it is another arena all together. Be genuinely interested in your topic, but be passionate about trying to make record breaking profits every single day if you truly want to maximize your monetary gains from your time spent.

[Erica](#) from [Erica.biz](#), in her [Blog Success Manifesto](#) (30 tactical tips to help you grow your blog faster) writes about the importance of an email list:

Set up an email service to email your subscribers. Feedburner is great, but Aweber takes the cake. Why? Simple: With Feedburner, you can only send out emails every time you write a blog post, and those emails can't contain any other information other than what is in your blog post.

Aweber, on the other hand, allows you to send out not only emails that contain your blog posts, but whatever you want to your list. I use my Aweber list to send out special invitations to events I'm speaking at, free teleconferences where you can call in and ask me a business question, videos I don't feel like writing a whole blog post about, and much more. Aweber lists are also great for sending out time-sensitive communications such as reminders. Finally, you can promote products to your list (though I prefer writing blog posts to do promotions.)

I find my email subscribers are more “sticky” because they are getting information that is not available publicly on my blog. They are also more likely to purchase products I recommend than RSS subscribers. An email list in Aweber is an asset; you can promote products using only your email list. Typically, depending on the product and the way you promote it, you can expect 0.5-3% of your list subscribers to buy the product. Considering many products have decent affiliate commissions, this is a substantial income stream.

[Jeff Rose](#) from [GoodFinancialCents.com](#) talks about the importance of doing your homework:

As big as the internet is, when you first start blogging you feel completely alone. Take the time and do some research on how to truly get a blog off the ground. Subscribe to some of the big time blogs in your niche and start taking notes on how they do it. Start conversing with other bloggers and when you are brave enough start commenting on their blogs. Share some link love here and there (by linking out) and really focus on writing stuff that people actually like to read (work in process for me, too). Keep at it and you’ll instantly make some great contacts and soon have a network more reliable than Verizon.

Be consistent with your writing (as best you can) and prove to your readers and your niche that you are for real and you’re here to stay. Participate in carnivals, chat via Twitter, and soon you’ll have hundreds of new people visiting your blog daily. **It takes time, so don’t get discouraged.** It was well over 6 months before I had over 100 people visit my site in one day and I was pumped! Now that’s a snap.

Fred from [OneProjectCloser.com](#) talks about four pillars you should focus on:

*I think there are four pillars to a great money-making blog. They are (listed in order of importance): **(1) Write Great Content.** There is absolutely no substitute for well-written, interesting, unique content. On our home improvement blog, we think great content is a combination of “how-to” articles, tool and service reviews, home improvement news, and personal experiences. **(2) Network, Network, Network!** You can write the best content in the world, but if you aren’t good at getting the word out about yourself, you’ll have no success. Introduce yourself to others. Let them know about your content. Ask for links to your content from relevant, related sites and be willing to give links to others’ good writing. **(3) Build an Attractive Site.** Invest in your site design. A well-designed site will help attract both readers and advertisers. This isn’t as important when you are a smaller site, but can really help boost your reputation and presence as you grow. **(4) Monetize.** Figure out what advertisers best convert with your content. There’s a reason that financial programs on television frequently have finance-related ads. It’s because people watching financial shows are, on average, more interested in buying financial products. Consider using a mix of PPC, affiliate, and paid-placement advertising on your site.*

If you really do these four things and you persevere, you will make money online.

For all of us on One Project Closer, the key has been to steadily work on the site as we have time and to view it as an evolving hobby business.

One question we frequently receive is how to get started with the monetization process. I think that AdSense is the best service for new bloggers. It's relatively simple to set up and easy to use. There's a wealth of information online about the best way to use AdSense on a site, so it's one of the simplest methods to get started with monetization.

[Lazy](#) from [LazyManAndMoney.com](#) stresses the importance of content and promotion:

*If you want to make money from your blog, nothing beats eyeballs. In today's busy world, having people's attention is a very valuable commodity. To get that attention you typically need two things: **Content and Promotion**. I always say that **content is King, but promotion is Queen**. I can't help you improve your content for your blog, but I can give you a couple of tips on promoting it.*

Perhaps the biggest key to my success was joining a blogging network, [The Money Writers](#). Me and 10 other personal finance bloggers bounce ideas off each other. Also their success translates in part to my success as they promote my content (and I promote theirs). Beyond all those obvious benefits, there's the mental aspect as well. I think each of The Money Writers at one point or another said that they'd likely have quit blogging a long time if not for the blogging network. We are our own support group.

[Kerry](#) over at [SquawkFox.com](#) talks about using a blog to get a book deal:

There are endless ways to make money blogging. Some bloggers find success displaying ads while others make big bucks selling their own products. When I started blogging at Squawkfox in January 2008, I never imagined I would land a book deal with a major publisher in just one year. But I did. My first book, [397 Ways To Save Money](#) hit the Amazon Canada Top 100 Bestsellers List within weeks, and I have blogging to thank for my new found income. If you've ever wanted to turn your blog into a book, here are a few smart tactics you can employ to help you land a deal.

- **Use your own voice.** Don't be afraid to be yourself and write posts your way. Authors share stories with others using their unique style and are not afraid to [ruffle a few feathers](#) with their voice. Forget about blogging schedules, post lengths, and SEO keywords by focusing on what makes you tick and writing until your story is done. By going beyond the usual, finding what makes you unique, and showing your skills, your blog may just become a publisher's paradise.
- **Tell a story.** Did a funny thing happen to you on the way to the post office?

Then share it! Readers love a good story they can relate too, so find the human interest element and get blogging. In [The Best Things in Life are Free](#) I shared a very short story about a very long bike ride, and my readers responded.

- **Write timeless content.** Forget about chasing the latest fad and stick to topics that stand the test of time. Sure, the odd up-to-date news flash is fun, but publishers want books that can be sold for years, not months. Aim for eternity when you post, and your blog will never go stale.

Blogging for bucks is not always easy. But writing with honesty and a passion for your subject may just improve your blog and help you get noticed by a publisher.

[David](#) from [MyTwoDollars.com](#) and [TheGoodHuman.com](#) talks about having patience with your growing blog:

I have been blogging “for money” full time for almost 4 years now, and while I make enough to cover my expenses and have replaced my old corporate income, it took the first 1.5 years to even see any money at all. If I could offer a few pieces of advice to those looking to make an income by writing, I say there are 3 key things I would pay attention to:

Have patience. Many people think they can start a blog and start making 4 figures the next month, but let me tell you – it isn’t going to happen. So have patience and work at it for at least 12 months before expecting to see any major returns.

*In addition to patience, **content is king**. You see this mantra almost everywhere and in every “How To Blog” book, and it is the absolute truth. **Without content, you don’t have anything**. Don’t just regurgitate what everyone else has already said – be original, be ruthless, be honest, stick to your opinions. I would rather read post after post with an opinion I disagree with than read post after post without heart, passion, or opinion. Don’t bore your readers, and your readers will always come back for more.*

Don’t write for search engines, write for people. Too many bloggers only write to get good rankings in the search engines, but to be honest – I don’t have much interest in reading their stuff. You need to pay attention to the keywords and content of your posts, but don’t just write mechanically so you can rank for certain words while ignoring that humans want to read your stuff. That’s your audience; not some bot over at Google.

It’s been quite a ride, blogging for money. Month to month income is different, sometimes up and sometimes down, and once in a while you have a very bad month. But I wouldn’t trade it for the world.

[Madison](#) from [MyDollarPlan.com](#) says to focus on doing the things that you are best at, and making sure you appeal to a broad audience:

Focus on what you are best at. For me, that meant devoting my time early on to writing finance and tax articles about topics that I love. I had my husband help with the technical work so that I was spending my time in the right places. Instead of spending hours trying to figure out how to make modifications to my site, I could focus on writing a tax article that many people need help with like, [How Much Money Do I Have to Make to File Taxes?](#)

Picking topics with a broad audience also helps. While [taxes](#) aren't that exciting for most people, they are something everyone has to deal with. The result is that you have information that people are looking for. But you have to make sure you are interested in the topic. I couldn't write about taxes if I didn't love them!