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3 CIRCLE MARKETING

Blogger's Blueprint

Everything you need to know to
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Mastery of this information could make you rich!

GEOFF STEPHEN

Blogger's Blueprint

How To Increase Your Business Income With A Blog

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Introduction

Gone are the days when simply having a website of your company was enough to make your presence registered in the World Wide Web. The new mantra for online presence is: "If you've got a business, you better have a blog."

Your business needs a blog. Not because it's 'the thing' to do but because not having a blog is bad business. You're ignoring a very lucrative avenue of income and failing to realize the benefits that you can reap through a simple, inexpensive blog.

By having a blog for your business, you humanize your company. Your customers and target audience relate to you better. It has the potential to form loyalty among your customers and readers. By marketing your blog through social media and other means, you'll be reaching a market that you might not have by traditional means of marketing. Online marketing is also cheaper and a lot more targeted.

Keep in mind that a business blog should be about your business. The key is to not make it promotional. Readers are turned off by a blog that just keeps pushing its products and services at its readers. A blog that attracts and retains readers is educational, personal, informative and fun.

Setting Up A Blog

For a business blog, there's no excuse for using a free service like Blogger or WordPress. At around $10 per month, it is an easy investment to make in your business and if you link your blog to your business website as a sub domain, you won't even have to pay for hosting as sub domains are free in hosting packages.

Setting up a blog is easy. Whether you're buying a new domain and hosting or using a sub domain, all you have to do is look for the proper option in your control panel of your website's account and follow the instructions received in the email from the hosting service.

If you're buying a new domain and hosting it, it is advisable to use separate services for both. For buying a domain, GoDaddy (www.godaddy.com) is very popular but its hosting services have not garnered popular reviews.

There are numerous hosting services to choose from. No matter which one you choose, make sure you research them thoroughly and take user reviews into account. A good place to research hosting companies is Web Hosting Geeks (www.webhostinggeeks.com).

Buying a domain is a once a year cost while hosting is charged per month.

Cost Of Running A Blog

A blog is an investment in your business that can increase your income. This investment requires a lot more than just money. The monetary cost of a blog isn't the only cost involved – though that can become substantive if you let it.

Time

Blogs don't make, maintain and sustain themselves. You have to put a lot of thought into them. Work out the details and figure out a way to make it one of your top priorities in order for it to flourish. All of this takes time. On an average or until you have figured out a content and marketing plan (to be discussed later) for your blog, you're looking at spending at least 2 hours daily on it.

Energy

Devoting time to a blog requires energy. After a long day at work, you may not have the energy to write a blog post. For your blog to succeed, having the energy to meet the demands of maintaining a blog is essential. Reprioritize your schedule to include blogging in it or come up with other options so that the growth of your blog does not suffer.

Passion

Nothing in business succeeds without passion. A business blog is no different. Unless you don't have the passion do what it takes to make your blog succeed, it won't. Passion for blogging is abundant in the beginning. It's a new venture; you're excited and can't wait to get started. After a few weeks, you start to lose momentum. You can't come up with fresh ideas for blog posts, the traffic doesn't increase like you wanted it to and there are barely any comments.

Every blogger goes through it after the initial euphoria of doing something new has faded. This is the time when only passion for your work – and in this case, your blog, carries you through.

If you're not passionate about the blog or don't believe in what it can do for your business, you're not going to move past this stage.

Money

The monetary cost of a blog can vary. It usually costs a few hundred dollars per year. If your blog receives high traffic or if your blog's needs are more than the average business blog then the cost may raise up to a couple hundred dollar per month.

Your blog will cost more if you decide to hire a web designer and get your website designed. But this cost will be a onetime expense.

Once your blog picks up, all costs will be covered as it begins to contribute towards your income.

Emotions

The emotional cost of a blog is perhaps the highest of them all. Getting attached to our blog is natural. Every triumph of the blog feels like a personal victory. Every mean and thoughtless comment thrusts a dagger in the heart. Dismal traffic figures have the power to depress us and a handful of glowing comments land us on the moon.

Forming an emotional attachment to your blog is natural. You invest time, energy, money and passion, none of which comes easy. A blog also instills a sense of responsibility – not only to yourself, but also to your readers. That is the reason so many bloggers stress over running out of ideas. Their biggest fear becomes not being able to post as high quality posts as they're publishing now.

Suffice it to say that a blog can take its author sky high or bury them underground with its low. Unfortunately, the highs of blogging have a shorter life span than its lows.

The Benefits Of Having A Business Blog

Marketing & PR

Blogging about your business is a powerful marketing and PR tool. If done right, your blog with gradually gather loyal readers who subscribe to it via RSS and email updates. Every time a post is published, traffic will spike, people will read the posts, be influenced by it and leave comments.

A blog is a great medium through which excellent public relations can be formed. If your business ever faces a problem, you'll be able to present your side of the story.

Establish Expertise

Every business is different and every business owner is an expert in his own way. As you blog about your business, you'll be carving a niche for yourself as an expert in your field. Whatever your business is about, you'll become the authority to go to for people are trying to succeed in areas that are you're flourishing in.

They key is to never shy from competition. Help as many people as you can – even if they're your direct competitors. The more approachable and helpful you are through your blog, the more people will trust you.

Direct Communication

Blogging lets you directly communicate with your targeted audience. Whether it's talking about a particular aspect of your business and what you learned from it to posting about a social cause you feel strongly about. Blogging about it will communicate your thoughts directly to your readers.

Direct communication with your target market has to be two way. If you're communicating with them your thoughts and ideas, invite them to communicate theirs.

They can do that through comments, email, your blog's contact page or any of your social network profiles.

Control Of Information

Sharing information is paramount in blogging. If you don't get personal on a blog, it won't resonate with people. As stated in the "Business Blogging Secrets: How to Avoid Killing Your Blog with These Common Mistakes", not letting your readers get to know the real you is a mistake. So is getting too personal on a blog. Find a balance between the two.

You can also control information you share when launching a new product or service. Build anticipation by releasing information in stages. However, this will only work if your readers trust you to not fool them by just promoting your next product.

Choose what you're promoting wisely. If your readers like what you promoted, the next time you do it, they'll be more open to it. Don't do it too often though! And don't always promote your own products. Promote other products you believe in as well.

When you promote other products, people will reciprocate and promote your own product when it launches. Cross promotion between blogs of any niche is common and considered done in good faith.

Collaboration

Blogging puts you in the unique position of becoming friendly with other businesses and bloggers. Online collaboration on a new product or service is an excellent way to target new audiences and gain more loyal readers.

By launching a product/service in collaboration with another blogger or business, you're pulling in the customers of two businesses rather than just your own. Sales will increase and so will your income.

If the partnership with the other blogger works out great, you'll also be gaining a glowing testimonial.

Collaboration doesn't necessarily have to be about products and services. You can collaborate on hosting competitions and give aways etc by combining both your resources.

Credibility

All of the above quietly establishes your credibility. People realize that there's no flake in you, your blog or your business. They also realize that you know what you're talking about. You become trusted and your readers become loyal. Not to mention, other people in the industry also recognize you.

The 'Real' Work Involved in Blogging

The benefits of blogging for business are all great and do wonders for increasing your income but it's no child's play. There is tons of work involved in business blogging that leads to those benefits.

Content

A blog isn't a blog without content. Regularly published and updated content at that. If you're blogging yourself, after a few weeks or months, you'll feel drained and out of things to blog about. It happens to everyone and this most certainly does not mean that you're a failure at blogging.

Before that happens, chalk out a plan to avoid it.

Frequency Of Posts

In the beginning you'd be blogging every day- sometimes even more than that. Gradually, your enthusiasm will level out and you'll find yourself unable to keep up with the frequency you started out with.

To avoid that, decide of the number of posts you'd do in a week. Remember, infrequency is not an option.

If you have employees or business partners, you can pitch the idea to them and co-blog so that the burden of blogging frequently is shared. This way you will also be able to brainstorm ideas for posts. Decide on the number of posts per week for each and also the days.

If you're blogging alone, you could either choose to blog every weekday, twice a week, every alternate day or even just once a week.

Decide what would be most convenient for you and then stick to it. If you feel that your head is drowning in ideas to blog, then write those posts up and schedule them.

Types of Posts

Sometimes, doing different types of blog posts can also help break the monotony. Here's a list of types of posts you can publish on your blog.

- List posts
- Link posts
- Hot topic post
- Q&A post
- Solve a problem
- Debate an issue
- Interviews
- Reviews
- Advice
- Tips

- How-to posts etc

Blogging Yourself

The most common ways to write content for a blog is by writing it yourself. You use your own ideas, your own voice and people respond to that.

Your name is associated with the blog and you're known as the sole authority of it.

Ongoing Contributors

Another way to produce content is to have regular contributors for your blog. They can be either paid or voluntary. With regular contributors, you don't have to worry about your blog being published infrequently. Set up a schedule for each contributor to follow. This lessens the work and creative load of maintaining a blog.

PLR

PLR (private label rights) content is a great way to keep your blog from taking over your life. You can purchase PLR content to use as blog posts for a lot less than you could hire a ghostwriter and it saves you a ton of time.

The thing with PLR is that other people have the same content to use that you do. Therefore, it's imperative that you edit the PLR so that it fits your needs, your perspectives, your reader, etc. You must make it your own. Do not, I repeat do NOT post PLR as is if you want to make the most of it.

You can find PLR in the form of articles, reports, blog posts, and more on almost any topic you can think of. That being said, it's not recommended that you use only PLR on your blog.

Guest Posts

Another popular way of having fresh content on your blog is by having guest posts. You invite other bloggers to write posts on your blog. This works two ways. Not only do you have fresh content for your blog, the guest blogger has the chance to showcase his knowledge and expertise on another blog, thereby increasing his credibility and increasing readers for his own blog.

Ghost Writers/Bloggers

Another option is to hire ghost bloggers who will write posts for you for a fee and you will publish them under your name.

Ghost blogging is the perfect solution to your content woes if you want to maintain the blog under your name and do not want to hire writers or regular contributors.

You can either leave the topic of the blog post on the ghost writer or ask them to submit their post ideas to you before writing them. You can also dictate the topics you want covered in your blog and can assign articles to them yourself.

Marketing

Once your blog is set up and publishing, you'll need to start establishing your blog's presence on the web. Just because you have a blog doesn't mean people will visit. How will they know?

This is where marketing your blog comes in. It doesn't have to involve spending money – not if you don't want to.

Commenting

The most common form of marketing your blog is through commenting on other blogs. Commenting lets other bloggers know about your presence. Leaving a comment on a blog is an invitation to come check out yours.

A few things to take note of when leaving comments:

- Always leave thoughtful and insightful comments that add to the discussion or post. Don't ever leave a comment that just says 'Great post!' or a similar variation.
- Use the comment as a medium to pitch yourself by leaving a relevant. Convince people to click on your link by showing your understanding of the topic being discussed in the blog post. Bloggers appreciate commenters - especially ones that leave good comments.
- Never promote yourself in your comments on other blogs.
- Never bad mouth anyone or anything and always mind your manners. If you're disagreeing, do so respectfully and as non-confrontationally as possible.

Social Media

Social media is another great way to promote your blog and let your presence known. Depending on whether you want to brand your name or your business, make social media profiles on various websites accordingly and use them extensively before promoting your blog on them.

A few social media services to sign up for are:

- Twitter (www.twitter.com)
- Facebook (www.facebook.com)
- Digg (www.digg.com)
- Delicious (www.delicious.com)
- Stumble Upon (www.stumbleupon.com)
- Linked In (www.linkedin.com)
- Technorati (www.technorati.com)
- FriendFeed (www.friendfeed.com)

These websites are a great way to network and spread the word about your business blog. The more you interact with people on these sites, the more beneficial it will be for your business.

Advertising

There are numerous ways to advertise your blog on the internet. From renting ad space on other blogs, to advertising through Google's Adwords, advertising on the internet is a whole new avenue.

Ad Space On Other Blogs

Most blogs host a few sponsor ads on their blogs. They can be placed on the sidebars, header, blog post footer etc. The prices for these vary depending on the size of these ads. Typically, a 125 x 125 ad would cost around $20. It could cost more on a high traffic website or less on a relatively low traffic one.

Adwords

Google came out with its own advertising option. To advertise through Adwords, you have to buy an ad based on their rates which will then be shown on the Google search engine when people search for related things.

For e.g., if you have a skin care business and you place an ad through Adwords, every time (depending on how much you've paid for the ad) someone searches for 'skin care' or other related searches, your ad will be displayed.

Text Links

In some cases, text links have proven to be more effective than ads. A text link is exactly that. It is a word or phrase of text linking to your product, website or blog. In most cases, text links are also cheaper than ads.

Text link ads are usually placed in the side bar of a blog. It is important to note that text link ads were black listed by Google and blog running text link ads were penalized by being stripped of their Google page rank.

While most bloggers removed the ads in order to gain back their page rank, many decided to not do so as page rank to them was not as important.

If you're thinking of using this option to earn money from your blog, research this option thoroughly before putting them up and decide what is more important to your blog in the long run.

Paid Reviews

Paying someone for reviewing your business, blog or product is also a marketing practice. If you're paying someone to do a review of your blog, the reviewer will evaluate your content and all aspects of your blog's web design.

If a business is being reviewed, it is important to make sure that those reviews cover the positive as well as the negative. No one trusts a glowing review. Many bloggers offer the services of doing paid reviews and pride themselves in being objective in their reviews.

By getting a review done by a respected blogger, you get a stamp of approval from the blogger's readers as well as your own. Make sure you choose a blogger who is known for doing honest and unbiased reviews.

Give-Away(s)

Hosting give away on your blog is a great way to build interest in your blog and product. Giving away a product gives you a reason to list its benefits and how it will make your reader's lives easy and solve their problems. It is also great advertising. Word of a giveaway being hosted on a blog spreads fast and a people participate even if they've never read your blog before.

Giveaways are social media friendly and word of them spreads fast. As long as the giveaway is something that people want, it will be a success and your blog will see a spike in traffic and over all interest in your business will grow as well.

Competitions

Competitions are a great way to popularize your blog. They encourage interaction, help spread word and the promise of a prize entices people to come again and again. You can either keep a prize as one of your own products or service or give away gift vouchers or even books.

Increasing page views is also possible through competition. Simply ask questions about things on your blog that people have to search for to answer. This is a great way to encourage people to read through your blog and become aware of your business in the process.

Mailing list

A lot of blogs have mailing lists. These are different from email updates of your blog. The author/owner of the blog interacts directly with those readers that subscribe to the mailing list. You can use the mailing list to tell your readers news or information about your product before you put it up on your blog.

A mailing list is like a marketing list. If you visit a lot of blogs, you'll come across some who will have a window pop up asking you to sign up for the website's newsletter. To entice people to sign up, most bloggers offer a few freebies that are available for free after signing up.

It is a good tactic to build up your mailing list and can be used to further publicize your business through the freebies offered.

Getting Traffic

Traffic only comes by marketing your blog. If you don't market your blog, the only traffic you'll get is through search engines. While search engine traffic is important, it isn't solely responsible for a blog's success. In addition to all the marketing tactics stated above, you can also do the following.

Types Of Blog Posts That Attract Website Traffic

There are certain types of blog posts that attract more traffic than others. These kinds of posts are loved by social media websites. Readers bookmark them, Digg them, Stumble Upon them and tweet them.

List posts, best-of posts, link posts, etc are all very popular. A quick look at the front page of Digg at any time would show that the most popular type of posts is list posts. This is because list posts are easy to read and remember.

Directory Submission

Submitting your blog to directories aimed specially at blogs is a great way to gain exposure. They may not send throngs of traffic your way but in the long run they send a steady stream. Not to mention the basic link building that's essential for a blog!

Some of the most popular blog directories are:

- Blog Top Sites (www.blogtopsites.com)
- Blog Catalog (www.blogcatalog.com)
- Blog Explosion (www.blogexplosion.com)
- Blog Listing (www.bloglisting.net)
- Bloggapedia (www.bloggapedia.com)

To get the targeted traffic you're after, submit your blog to the right categories in these directories and make sure you visit the blogs in the category of your choice. Leave a comment, let them know which directory you found them through and then interact regularly with the new blog and its blogger.

Search Engine Friendly Posts

While Google and other search engines will pick up your post on their own, they won't necessarily show up in relevant searches. By identifying and using keywords in your blog and posts, you direct targeted search engine traffic to your blog.

Keywords

Identify keywords that describe your blog and business. To begin with, come up with 5 single key words and at least 3 key phrases that you want your blog and/or business to be associated with. Once you've done that, start using them in your headlines and posts.

Don't fill up your posts with them. Use 1 to 2 keywords or key phrases in your first sentence and paragraph then spread them out throughout the post. It is not necessary or advised to use all your key words and phrases within a single post.

Keywords help you be found in search engines. When people search for your keywords, you'll show up in their searches and that would lead more targeted traffic to your blog.

Search Engine Optimization

SEO or Search Engine Optimization is relatively more technical than other blog marketing related practices. It is the process of optimizing a blog for search engines. It involves the basic knowledge of HTML and CSS. You can not only optimize your own blog posts for search engines but also entire web pages.

The main aim of SEO is to place your website at the top of the search engines. Typically, an individual searching the web through Google or Yahoo! will click on the first search result that's displayed. Fewer will move down to the 2nd and 3rd and the number of web searchers who click on lower search results decreases accordingly. A very small amount of searchers even click to go to the next page of the search results.

This is why SEO is important for your blog. Through SEO you can come up in the first page of the search results of your chosen keywords and phrases. This will direct the most targeted traffic to your blog.

If you're using a blogging platform like WordPress, it's no longer necessary for a blogger to have knowledge of HTML or CSS. WordPress plug-ins like the All-in-one SEO pack lets you make all the necessary changes from within your text editing page.

Guest Posting

We've already talked about hosting guest bloggers on your blog. On the flip side of the coin is the practice of guest posting on other blogs. Find other blogs in your niche and offer to guest post on them.

Not all would agree but some will. Blogs can either ask for already written blog posts or they can have an entire list of instruction to follow for writing and formatting those posts. Some may also tell you which topic to write on.

The practice of guest posting is great for attracting more readers when your blog is new. Guest posting establishes you as a serious blogger and enables you to display your expertise to a bigger audience than your own.

Press Releases

As a business blog, publishing a press release will also get you traffic. A press release can work wonders if it gets picked up by a major newspaper or website.

There are lots of free press release directories on the web where you can submit them to.

This is a debatable topic and different people have different views. Experiment with submitting to free press release directories and if you find that it is not very helpful, don't waste time on it.

Instead of submitting your press release to countless directories, try these tips.

- Submit your press release to one or two directories
- Send your press release to Associated Press
- Send it to local newspapers
- Send it to industry/niche outlets
- Put it up on your own website.

Blog Interviews

Many bloggers host blog interviews and Q&A's of other bloggers in their niche. Doing this can increase traffic to your blog and give you free online publicity.

Blogging Etiquettes

Every social interaction, be it online or off, has a set of etiquettes attached to it. Blogging too has its own etiquettes that should be followed under all circumstances.

Not following them is considered blogging suicide. Etiquettes are not meant to limit anyone. They're a set of behavior rules that one must follow in order to co exist peacefully with fellow bloggers.

Etiquette is just another word for common sense and courtesy.

Mind Your Manners

Seriously, it's not that hard. Minding your manners is essential if you want to attract people to your blog. Be nice, polite and courteous. If someone leaves a comment on your blog, reply to their comment on your blog, visit their blog and leave a comment there as well.

Treat Your Visitors Well

Visitors on your blog are like guests. Treat them well and they'll come again. As discussed in the "Business Blogging Secrets: How to Avoid Killing Your Blog with These Common Mistakes", make your blog easy to navigate, read and follow.

Readers don't have the time to search for the RSS feed or email updates option. They also don't want to look for the comments. They should be placed in the eye

Return the Favor

If someone's done you a good deed or given you a break, reciprocate. Tell people about it and do a good deed back in return. It doesn't necessarily have to be the same person, give someone else a break like someone gave you.

Sustaining Your Blog

Your blog may have started off great, gotten really great reviews and high traffic, but to keep the momentum going you need something to sustain your blog. Otherwise, the traffic will fade off along with the readership you had taken pains to build.

In order to sustain your blog in the long run, it is important to plan.

Make A Content Plan

In order to make a success of your business blog so that it increases your income, a content plan is essential. Once you've decided what kind of posts you're going to publish on which days, your readers come to expect them.

A content plan includes everything related to the content of your blog.

- Whether you're going to blog yourself, host guest bloggers, ongoing contributors or hire bloggers.
- The type of posts you'll write and how often
- monthly features if any
- Days of the week on which you'll publish posts
- Back up posts

- Themes for posts, if any
- List of keywords to write posts about
- Number of guest posts to host in a month etc.

Blog content planning helps the blogger in time management and general monitoring of the site that includes replying to comments, watching out for spam etc. It also pushes you in the habit of devoting time to your blog every day.

Marketing Plan

Along with a content plan, a marketing plan is also important. You may be publishing the world's best content but no one will see it if you don't market it. A marketing plan systematically places your blog in front of a bigger audience.

A blog's marketing plan need not be a formal document. It could simply be a list of activities to be done on a daily, weekly and monthly basis.

The typical marketing activities of a blog could include

- Number of blog posts to leave comments on every day
- Number of guest posts to do per month
- Details and schedules of blog directory submissions
- Average hours allotted to social networking on a daily basis
- Article directory submissions
- Participating in blog carnivals etc

Blogging Myths

Myths arise from lack of information and in the case of blogging, from inexperience. Some of the common myths related to blogging in general and business blogging in particular are:

Myth #1: Blogging is Not Appropriate for Business

Says who? Entire pages of this report have been filled with the reasons and benefits of having a business blog.

A blog enhances a business. Having a website is no longer enough. You can increase sales, establish excellent PR, reach your targeted market and become known for your knowledge and expertise all through a blog.

Myth #2: Business Income Will Increase Immediately After Starting a Blog

Let's get real. A newly established business doesn't show a profit for years! Expecting a blog to earn money is folly.

Like any business, a blog takes time to establish itself. Some may taste success faster than others, but it's a similar story in running a business.

Give your blog time, tend to it properly and don't give up. Your business blog may not ever earn you money directly, but the indirect increase in your income through it will definitely be there.

Not convinced? Consider this: all those contacts you made through blogging that led to more business. Sure it's not your blog making money directly, but it is your business increasing through contacts you made via your company's blog.

Myth #3: Blogging Doesn't Require Much Time

I'll be honest, I thought this too. Just one week into blogging and I realized what a fool I was. Blogging doesn't require much time only if your blog is so old that you've worked out all the kinks and it now runs like a well oiled machine.

Since not many of us have reached that stage, blogging requires a lot of time and dedication. The minute a post is published we start worrying about the next one. We're thinking two weeks ahead and panicking how we don't have ideas for blog posts after that.

On a minimum, a blog requires two hours daily.

Myth #4: Maintaining a Blog is Easy

Maintaining a blog is as tough as keep a business afloat. There is nothing easy about keeping a blog going successfully. From having content issues to traffic woes, nothing comes easy in blogging.

To get results you have to work hard at your blog and exercise patience.

Myth #5: A Blog has to be Updated Everyday

While it is true that a blog has better chances of becoming popular if it is updated daily, there is not hard and fast rule. What works for some blogs may not necessarily work for others.

It also depends on your niche and topic of your blog. If most of your blogging requires feature length blog posts then blogging daily is not viable. The posts would need time to sink in and register with your readers as well as get the proper attention and comments.

To find out what frequency of posts works best for your blog, you will have to experiment with different schedules.

Myth #6: You Must be an Excellent Writer

That's like saying you must be great at conducting meeting to have a successful business. You don't have to be an excellent writer to get your point across in a blog post. Spellings and typos (occasional) are all overlooked if the basic idea is intriguing.

To write a blog, all you have to be able to do is string two grammatically correct sentences together and know your mind well enough to convey your message.

Increasing Income Through A Blog

Businesses that have a blog attached to them are in the enviable position of increasing their income. Not only does the blog increase your income monetarily but also increases goodwill, loyalty, public relations, trust, and over all influencing power.

A blog can increase your income directly or indirectly.

A direct increase in income through a business blog means income earned from the blog through the following means:

Selling Services And Products

As your blog is about your business, it makes sense to sell your products or services on it. Every sale you make online through your blog will be counted towards your income increasing because of it.

Make the blog yet another place where people can buy your products or services without any hassle. By making your products accessible, you're increasing the chances of people buying it from your blog.

The key is to not promote or sell your products within your blog posts unnecessarily. Put them up in your sidebar or refer to the subtly by using them in examples or narrating an incident about your business.

Affiliate Programs

Even if you're the world's best sales person, you can't do everything by yourself. Affiliate selling is great way to increase your sales and at the same time letting other people earn through you too.

Establish an affiliate program for your products and let other people sign up for the program so that they can sell them. Every time the members of the program make a sale, you get a majority of the payment while a small percentage goes to the member.

It's a win-win situation for everyone. You reach a wider audience through the affiliate program and make more sales while your members make money with each sale.

Using Adsense

Adsense is Google's answer for monetizing blogs. You can place Adsense ads on your blog and earn money when visitors click on those ads.

Google places those ads based on keywords and the content of your blog. The downside is that you have no control over the kind of ads that they would display. While most of the time, the ads are relevant, a substantial percentage of the time also displays ads that are not related to your blog or content in any way.

Google Adsense is a very popular and successful way to earn money from you blog. The more traffic you have, the more you earn from it.

Some blogs have had a high level of success running Adsense ads on their blogs that they don't feel the need to use any other kind of monetization.

It's important to note that earning enough money through Adsense to report an increase in income takes time and is directly related to the amount of traffic your blog is receiving.

Selling Text Link And Sponsor Ads

Another way to earn money from your blog is by renting out ad space and selling text links.

Sponsor Ads: A quick survey of different blogs would reveal that most sell ad space of different sizes on the blogs. These ad spaces are situated at various places throughout the page and usually have a separate rate for each size.

If a blog has an ad space in its header, it will be the most expensive. The reason for the high price is that most people click on an ad that has such prime real estate in a web page.

The rates also vary depending on the traffic the blog receives. Ad space in high traffic blogs will cost more than in ones that don't have as high traffic.

On a small to medium sized blog, an ad space of 125 x 125 can typically cost $20 per month.

Text Links: You can also earn from your blog by selling text links on your blog. These are usually places in the sidebar. The advantage of text links is that they're cheaper than ad spaces, and a link from a high Google page rank site increase contribute towards increasing your authority in search engines and page rank as well.

Offering Consultation Services

Running a business gives you skill and expertise that you can use to your advantage. One way to earn money through your blog is to offer consulting services. Whatever your business is about or your expertise, coaching other people to excel in it will not only cement your reputation as an expert but will also earn you an income.

Consultations can be charged per hour or packages with certain goals can also be set up which may take longer to reach.

Increase in Income through Indirect Means Because of Your Business Blog:

While there are a lot of ways one can earn income through a blog directly, it would be dumb to ignore the benefits of blogging that leads to indirect earnings.

Referrals

Referrals are a great way to build business and increase your income. You get a brand new online referral system courtesy of your blog. People, who read you, have interacted with you, or have done business with you, are likely to write about it on their blogs.

In today's age of social networking, websites like Twitter can also play a prominent role is spreading the word. If someone's looking for services that you happen to offer, someone will refer you to them and voila!

One way to encourage referrals is to offer a certain percentage of discounts to the person who referred you when they come back to you for repeat business.

Testimonials

Testimonials are a great way to add a stamp of approval on you. For those potential clients who come across your blog through search engines or by blog hopping, having testimonials that swear by your work will work wonders. They will feel an immediate sense of trust as they'll know that if things go wrong they'll have someone to go to and demand an explanation on the basis of their testimonial.

If you're displaying testimonials, always display the name of the person writing the testimonial and their website or email address. Don't expect people to believe the testimonial or trust your expertise on the basis of those testimonials.

Give your potential clients the option to ask about you by contacting the people who wrote you the testimonial about your work.

Works gotten on the basis of testimonials displayed on your blog are also counted towards indirect increase in income.

Word-of-Mouth

Word of mouth is a powerful tool in landing further business. It's also powerful in spreading the wrong kind of message. So be careful and make sure that the only feedback about your business going around through word of mouth is the kind you want.

You never know which blog reader is a potential customer or whose friend would become a client. Impress people by your knowledge, expertise and approachability through your blog and word will get around.

Even when someone is not looking for the services you offer, being mention in passing conversationally can mean more business in the future.

If your blog is being talked about online, in forums, comments, blog posts and social networking sites, then the word of mouth is spreading.

Recommendations

A recommendation is an endorsement of your business and can land you plenty of work. It doesn't necessarily have to be based on business dealings people have had with you.

People can recommend you simply on the basis of how you conduct yourself online through your blog and comments.

It is important to always remember to follow etiquettes and mind your manners. You never know which person may become your biggest recommender simply because you helped them out of kindness.

Reviews

Reviews play an important part in getting the word out about your blog and landing business through it. These kinds of reviews don't have to be paid. Some bloggers do reviews based on their dealings with another business or blog.

A few reviews by happy clients can do wonders for your business. A review sparks debate and question which you can jump in to answer and win potential clients over.

Citation

When you're running a blog and your business becomes known, bigger blogs and even newspapers might interview and/or quote you. This kind of publicity is an amazing tool in getting more business. Having your name printed as an expert in your field in a blog that receives a million visitors per month will naturally help your business.

Conclusion

Starting a business blog is not a shortcut to increased income. The results won't immediately be seen and money and more business won't start mounting right off the bat.

No doubt, an increase in income by starting a business blog is possible. For this to happen, one must be prepared to treat a blog with the same determination and hard work as they treat their business.

Patience, experimentation, hard work and constant learning are the keys to increasing you income through a blog.

Take Care,

Geoff Stephen