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Introduction

Blogging is a fantastic way to make money online, but most bloggers fail miserably. I say that not to discourage you, but to present to you the harsh reality that you can't just put up a blog, post to it now and then, and expect to make money with it.

Making money with blogs requires a couple of vital components. First of all, you need content. The better your content, the more often people will return to read it, the more they will trust your product recommendations, and the more links you will attract to your blog.

Great content will get you more of the other vital component to blogging success – traffic. Without traffic, it is impossible to make money.

Brick and mortar businesses like shops and restaurants also require traffic. They typically call it foot traffic, or the traffic that walks by or through their establishment. Online, traffic means the people who visit a website or blog.

Without traffic, the best blog in the world isn't going to make money. It's like a restaurant with no diners or a store with no shoppers. You must get traffic, and the more of it the better.

Of course, it's not enough to just get traffic. You could easily order 100,000 random hits from a traffic purveyor for a few bucks, but that doesn't mean it's going to make you any money.

The most important factor is the quality of the traffic. If you get 10,000 highly targeted visitors, it's almost always better than 100,000 random visitors, especially if those random visitors are from low-quality sources like pop-unders or redirects.

Think about it like this. If you owned a shop selling pizza, would you rather have 100 rabid pizza fans who hadn't eaten in 24 hours walk in to your restaurant, or 1,000 people who had just eaten a 5 course dinner and may not even like pizza?

Web traffic is very similar. It's much better to have a smaller amount of visitors who are very interested in what you have to offer than a larger number of random visitors who might just cost you a lot of money in bandwidth without making you any money.

We're going to look at the top ten ways to get more traffic to your blog. We'll focus on getting the best quality traffic possible, and all of the traffic methods will be free, because you shouldn't be spending a lot of money to get traffic to a blog unless it's very well monetized and proven to convert extremely well.

You should never buy traffic until you are pretty sure you can expect a reasonable ROI (return on investment).

Blog Commenting

One very powerful way to get traffic to your blog is to leave comments on other blogs, especially blogs that are related to your niche. Not only will you get direct traffic from other people who see your link, but you will get backlinks to your site that can potentially benefit your SEO.

When you leave a comment on a blog, you are generally asked for your name, email address, and URL. You can either use your own name or pen name, or the name of your website, or even a keyword phrase. It's more polite to use your name, but you may get more traffic if you use your website name or keywords. Your email address is required, but won't be displayed for anyone but the blog owner. Your URL will show up linked to the name you put.

If you want the links to count as backlinks for SEO purposes, they need to be dofollow links. If they are marked with the "nofollow" tag, they won't count for SEO purposes. Most blogs do have nofollow tags on their comment links, so check if you're really concerned. Remember, you should still get traffic from people reading the comments, so they are still valuable.

When you make comments, be certain you comment directly about the article you've just read. It's very important to actually read the article and say something about it. Most bloggers will just delete your

comment if they think your purpose for posting the comment was to get a link.

Don't leave links in the comment itself, either. Not only is it considered bad manners, but it is likely to get your comments deleted. The link you get attached to your name (or site name) is enough.

RSS Feed Submission

Most blogs will automatically ping your blog and RSS feed. Often they simply use pingomatic.com or pingoat.com, but sometimes they may have others listed.

Pingomatic.com and pingoat.com will ping multiple services for you, but there are many other places you can submit your feed and/or blog. You should submit to some of the most important ones.

Here are some of the best places to submit your feed/blog:

<http://www.UncleFeed.com>

<http://www.RSSMotron.com>

<http://www.Octora.com>

<http://www.Icerocket.com>

<http://www.Feeds4All.com>

<http://www.BlogDigger.com>

<http://www.Feed24.com>

<http://www.Techorati.com>

<http://www.RSS2.com>

<http://www.myFeedz.com>

<http://www.GoldenRSSFeed.com>

<http://www.FeedRaider.com>

<http://www.Feedooyoo.com>

<http://www.Feedage.com>

Blog Directories, Carnivals, and Communities

There are many different types of blog communities you can use to get traffic. Directories, carnivals, communities, and other types of sites are great for pulling traffic.

One of the most popular is MyBlogLog.com. This site is based on a widget that can go in your sidebar. When you are logged in and you visit a blog that has the widget, your avatar (a picture you choose) will be displayed in the widget on their blog as a recent visitor.

You will also have the widget on your blog, sending some traffic to their blogs, as well.

Most of the blog communities are better for blogs with wide appeal, because the visitors are so varied, but there are some niche blog directories. Additionally, the links will often be dofollow links that will count for SEO purposes.

Trackbacks

Trackbacks are great for bringing in traffic. If you make a post that references a post on someone else's blog, you can send a trackback. Your trackback will actually show up in the comments area of that post on their blog.

In order to leave a trackback, you should find the post you reference on their blog and look to see if it has a specific trackback URL listed. If not, just link directly to the post.

In WordPress, when you make the post, there is a section near the bottom of the page for a trackback URL. You can leave multiple trackbacks if you reference more than one blog post.

Article Marketing

Article marketing is a phenomenal way to get traffic to any type of website. It's free, it's simple, and it can bring a lot of traffic. Article marketing requires you to write articles of around 300-600 words and submit them to article directories. In exchange for giving the directories free content, you get a link back to your site at the end of the article.

This is great for SEO, because many article directories have high PageRank and great authority, but they can also bring you a great deal of direct traffic.

I recommend submitting only very high quality articles, especially to the best article directories. Many directories are relatively picky about the content they accept, and the better your content is, the more people will likely click the link to visit your blog.

Some of the most popular article directories include:

<http://www.EzineArticles.com>

<http://www.Buzzle.com>

<http://www.ArticleCity.com>

<http://www.GoArticles.com>

<http://www.ArticleDashboard.com>

<http://www.ArticlesBase.com>

<http://www.iSnare.com>

SEO

One of the best sources of traffic for any website or blog is search engine traffic, because it is often extremely well-targeted. If someone wants to buy a red guitar, they will often go to a search engine and type something like:

- Red guitars
- Buy red guitars
- Where to buy a red guitar

If your site sells or reviews red guitars, you're going to want to rank well for these types of phrases.

The best way to make sure your blog does relatively well in the search engines is to use a good SEO plugin. Depending on your blog platform, it may be difficult or impossible to use a plugin. For example, Blogger or WordPress hosted blogs (hosted on their servers) can't use plugins.

If you use WordPress on your own hosting, there are a couple of very good SEO plugins.

The [All-In-One SEO](#) plugin has been around for several years, and it is in use by thousands upon thousands of blogs all around the world. It is highly respected and works very well.

And updated version of this plugin is called the [Platinum SEO Pack](#) plugin. It has the same features as the All-In-One plugin, but will also automatically do a 301 redirect on any URL that has a change of permalink. So if you change your permalink format, you won't lose any traffic.

These plugins will give you instructions for using them, but they are quite simple. At the bottom of the page when you make or edit a post, there will be a section for adding a custom page title, description, and keywords.

Also, make sure you add tags to all of your posts. There are a number of plugins available to help you do this automatically, but they are pretty inaccurate. Nothing beats adding some related keyword phrases to the post. I like to add at least 5-10 tags per post, but don't add too many.

Forum Marketing

Forums related to the niche of your blog can be a fantastic source of traffic. Basically, you will post on related forums and have a link to your blog in your signature file.

A signature file, or sig, is a section at the end of every post you make. If you have a sig set in your profile, it will show up automatically whenever you make a post.

Not all forums allow sigs, and not all that allow sigs will let you have a link in them. Make sure you read the rules carefully. There's no sense in breaking the rules and getting banned, because then the time you spent signing up and making posts is wasted anyway.

The best way to get traffic from forums is to just post helpful, honest messages. Answer questions you're qualified to answer, and make helpful posts. This should get you plenty of positive attention and will certainly get you some traffic.

Post Regularly

Make sure to post regularly! Although you don't have to post every single day, you should post at least once per week. The more often you post, the more often your posts will be pinged, the more often you'll get repeat visitors, and the more content you'll have in the search engines to bring you traffic!

Your RSS subscribers will also enjoy it if you post regularly, because they'll see your updates and be reminded to visit.

Squidoo & HubPages

Squidoo.com and HubPages.com both have a lot of Google authority. The articles posted there will often rank very well in the search engines, which can bring you a lot of traffic.

Basically, these sites allow you to make small, one page websites about practically any topic you choose. You can link back to your site from these pages, and you can also link to affiliate products for some additional income if you choose to.

These sites are free to use, and they make it very easy to set up pages, so I highly recommend giving them a try.

Social Marketing

There are many different social marketing methods, and most of them can be extremely useful for bringing targeted traffic to your blog.

Social networks like [MySpace](#) and [Facebook](#) are great, because they let you make lists of friends with similar interests.

For example, you can search Facebook for people who have golf listed as one of their interests, and add them as friends so you can communicate with them.

Facebook is particularly friendly to marketers. As long as you don't blatantly spam, you can market on their site. They also have groups, so you can start your own group related to your niche and market there to your heart's content!

Microblogs like [Twitter](#) let you build a friends list, also. Since you only have around 150-200 characters you can post in a single message on most microblogging sites, it takes very little time, and you can get a lot of traffic back to your blog.

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