

Top Blogger

The Journey to
How to Become a Top Influencer



With a Powerful,
Influential Blog



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Chapter 1: Introduction: What is it Like to be a Top Blogger?

No matter what you end up doing, working online is a fantastic opportunity and a great way to enjoy more freedom and potentially higher earnings.

If you work online, that means you can work from anywhere in the world, that you can set your own pace to work at and that you can choose your own salary.



But while working online is always great, there are a lot of different forms that this can take and not all of them are made equal.

In other words, some online businesses are more profitable and more enjoyable than others and if you're working to provide a service such as web design, copywriting or coding, then essentially you won't be doing anything all *that* different from working for an employer.

Clients mean deadlines and they're essentially very similar to bosses!

And then there are those hustles that you can get into online. Things like selling eBooks or working as an affiliate to promote someone *else's* ebook. These are passive income business models that will earn you cash while you sleep or while you travel the world.

They're low input and high yield – in many ways they represent the very best of both worlds and they're an ideal choice for those looking to earn money quickly.

But let's face it, these business models don't have all that much ambition attached. Selling an ebook is not exactly changing the world, especially if it's not even an ebook that you made yourself! What's more, is that selling ebooks aren't going to get you all that rich.

There's definitely a cut off point at which these 'get rich quick' schemes stop being profitable. There's a ceiling that limits how much you can earn and it's also not particularly exciting or rewarding.

To be honest, a lot of people who make money online using these sorts of methods aren't all that likely to actually *believe* in the products they sell. Essentially this feels like scamming people in order to make money, which isn't a great feeling.

This is why I *firmly* believe that becoming a top blogger is THE best way to earn a lot of money online. In this post, I'll be looking at what that entails and how you can get there. But first, let's take a look at why blogging is the perfect way to make money online.

The Reality of Blogging



Firstly, being a top blogger means generating a passive income. You'll have a website that will earn money for you but you won't need

to put in a lot of daily work in order for that to happen. This isn't like writing or web design where you are getting paid for the time you put in.

Here, you have done your work *up front* and thus you can kick back and relax while the money comes in from adverts, digital product sales and sponsors.

That's not to say that there's no ongoing work mind you; you *will* still need to write the occasional blog post and do some promotion – it's just that it is up to you how and when you do this.

And the best part is that this is a highly rewarding way to work and make money online. You'll find that you don't dread doing it because you'll be writing about a topic that you really enjoy and you'll be doing things that you're really proud of.

Imagine if your day's work involved stopping off at a coffee shop somewhere, getting yourself a nice hot drink and then leaning back into your chair while you type up an article on a subject you find fascinating.

Then there's the fans and the adulation. Being a top blogger is effectively like being a celebrity: people will read what you write and they'll leave comments and respond.

It's an amazing feeling when you write a post that you're really proud of and that you poured your heart into and then you get emails from people who read it and found it fascinating.

It's an even better feeling when you stumble onto a forum where people are discussing your ideas or recommending your posts!

You'll be an authority in the niche you love and you'll get to spend all your time reading and writing about it!

And the potential earnings for a top blogger are *huge*. Really the only limit is your ambition.

Take a look at someone like Pat Flynn, Tim Ferriss or Mario Popova and you'll see that you can become really very wealthy from a big blog by selling products, by working with sponsors or even just from Google AdSense.

What's more, is that a blog can serve as a platform to something else. This can be a tool that you use to become a published author, to get your own TV show or to launch another business. That might sound unbelievable but I'm absolutely serious!

Just take a look at someone like Aaron Marino (Alpha M) who started out with a style blog and now runs his own line of men's grooming products!

I can also attest to this myself. I have a (fairly) big blog and thanks to that, I got contacted by a large YouTube channel and asked to make videos with them.

I now get sent expensive electronic gadgets to review and get to keep them, while the videos I make for them get hundreds of thousands of views in the first day!

I even got a book contract and am currently on my way to becoming a published author.

Being a big blogger is an *entirely* different thing from other forms of making money online. It's a chance to get rich yes but also to get famous for doing something you love, to make a big difference in a given community or niche and generally to do something that actually matters.

If you like the sounds of that and you think the blogging lifestyle is for you then keep reading. This book is going to show you how to make it happen and we're going to go to some completely different places than most other books on this subject...

Chapter 2:

Strategy

Choosing a
Niche

Chapter 2: Strategy – Choosing a Niche

I promised in the last chapter that we were going to go to some rather different places in this book. That's true but before we get to the interesting stuff, I first want to cover something more basic: the process of choosing a niche and coming up with a brand.



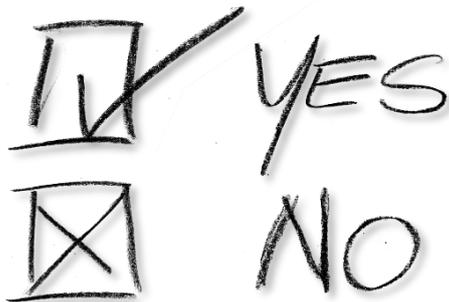
What you might not realize is that this is actually one of *the* most important aspects of being a successful blogger. Your fate is sealed as soon as you choose a brand (or fail to), so it's very important to give this the time and the attention that it deserves.

Choose Your Niche

First, you're going to choose your niche. Entire books have been written on how to do this, but I'm going to simplify the matter for you incredibly by saying this:

The niche you pick should be the subject that you are most passionate about.

That is *all* there is to it.



You might protest at this point and tell me that there's no money in 'knitting' or 'Marvel comics' or 'feng shui'. Whatever you're into, you've probably been taught that the big money is in health and fitness or it is in finance.

Get that idea out of your head and focus on writing what you know and love.

This is SO important because this is something you are going to be spending hours on every single day of your life for years to come.

If you want to become a TOP blogger – remember we're not talking small hustles here – then you need to put in the time and you need to know the subject matter like the back of your hand.

You're going to have to write this content yourself too, which is just one more reason that it needs to be something that you understand and that you love.

What a lot of people do, is to pick a niche that they are only somewhat interested in that they think can make them money. Then they hire a writer to fill it with content and they wait for the site to grow.

This *never* works. It might make you some money but you will NOT become a 'top blogger'.

Why? Because this strategy isn't going to bring anything new to the table and it won't have your personality.

Let's say you're writing about fitness. In order to be a *top* blog, you need to be contributing either the most comprehensive and accurate information out there so that you are a top resource, or you need to be contributing new ideas that no one else has come up with.

You need to give your unique take on that matter and provide interesting insights and ways of looking at things that other people won't have considered.

You need to do all this in your own voice in a way that lets people know what you're about and that makes people want to keep on coming back to your site.

If you hire a writer, then even the best writer in the world is instead going to give you content that is generic. They won't use their own personal voice (because they are ghost writing) and they won't contribute completely new information.

That's because they're writers: not experts in that niche. And even if they *were* experts in that niche, they wouldn't want to give ideas that were too new, too controversial, or too unique because they'll assume that you want to sound like *you*. They can't put 'words in your mouth' in other words.

Only by writing yourself can you bring something new to the table. And you can only do that if it's a topic you really know and understand.

And this is before we've even mentioned the fact that you have to love the subject enough to spend all that time on it *without* getting tired of it and moving on.

How to Hone in on a Smaller Niche

But what do you do if the niche that you know is not one you can realistically succeed in? What if it is either too big or too small?



A niche that is too big might be something like 'bodybuilding'. This is a *massive* niche and it's an industry that has huge amounts of cash poured into it all the time. If you want to create a blog on bodybuilding, then you are going to be going up against some huge, established brands. These will include the likes of Bodybuilding.com!

So, the question you now have to ask is whether you *really* think you can compete with a site like Bodybuilding.com that is spending thousands if not millions of dollars on advertising every single day and that will already have a massive audience of regular readers. How can you stand out against that competition?

One solution is to narrow in and make your niche a little more focussed. What's a sub-section of the bodybuilding niche that you can make your own? I've seen entire blogs on how to work your calves before – aimed at people who aren't happy with the size of their calves.

If that's *all* you're focussing on and that's where you're putting *all* of your energy, then you can compete with bodybuilding.com in just that one capacity.

But a better example might be to focus on a specific demographic. That could mean fitness for the overweight, for the elderly, for women, for students, for mums or for entrepreneurs.

One of my favourite examples of a successful blog is 'Nerd Fitness'. Nerd Fitness is a blog about fitness that is aimed at *nerds*. This carves out its own very specific section of a larger niche and allows it to compete with much bigger names!

You can also make a niche *bigger* by combining it with other topics and other ideas. Nerd fitness does this in a way, because the concept allows the blogger to write about other topics too – in particular nerd culture!

Then there are examples like The Art of Manliness. This is a blog that covers everything that the author considers to be 'manly' – from health and fitness, to style, to how to smoke a cigar. It's a very broad concept but also one that is entirely unique in its own way.

This is something you can do if your niche is too narrow. If the thing you really want to write about is 'Sonic the Hedgehog' then that probably *is* too narrow a niche to make money from on its own. So why not branch out a little bit by including other video games you like?

Geekdom101 is a YouTube personality who started out blogging about Dragon Ball Z but has expanded to include other films, tv and games and has that way built a far more monetizable brand.

Likewise, if your passion is bonsai and you want to make that subject a little larger, then how about including some other things you're interested in that are related? Perhaps Japanese culture, horticulture, art, philosophy, painting?

In this way, you are now starting to create a brand out of your niche: creating a very distinct topic and tone that helps you to carve out your own audience while writing about the things that really interest you.

Route to Market



The other thing you need to think about when you start coming up with the idea for your blog is your 'route to market'. That means thinking about the ways in which you're going to market your blog.

At first, your blog is not going to be highly monetized. You might be able to sell a product but you'll need to build a

big audience before you'll start shifting units. Likewise, AdSense and other display advertising won't earn you much at all until you start getting heavy traffic.

So that means you can't really afford to pay for your advertising to begin with and that *in turn* means you need to find ways to market yourself for free.

A route to market is a direct channel you have to your target audience. Your target audience is your 'persona' – the imaginary person for whom your site has been designed.

You need to know what kind of person this person is and where they can be found and then you need a way you can reach them *for free*.

When you're at this stage where you're considering your niche, consider your route to market *as well*. Don't create a blog and then worry about how you're going to find people to read it!

For example then, ask yourself whether you're a trusted member of any online communities already? These are great places to advertise for free and to gain some buzz. Alternatively, do you know any good forums or Google Plus communities where you can post?

Make sure there's an audience and that you can reach said audience *before* you invest too much time into creating your blog.

Chapter 3:



Chapter 3: Creating Your Brand

Once you know your niche and your target audience, you should be starting to get a feel for what your blog is. This is what will now motivate your brand.

A brand is not just a logo. Your logo is part of this but what's more important is the 'mission statement' behind that logo. In other words, you need to know what it is that your blog is doing



for people, what kinds of people will read your content and how you plan to bring value to the world.

I highly recommend that you check out Simon Sinek's excellent TED talk on the golden circle. Here, he explains that what makes a successful brand is not what it does or how it does it... but *why* it does it.

What is the philosophy behind your blog? And more specifically, what kind of lifestyle are you trying to promote?

In the case of our bonsai blog, you might be promoting 'art, peace and culture'. If you have a blog about fitness then your mission statement might be:

'Helping people to lead a happier and healthier life, filled with new experiences and positive energy.'

Or it might be:

'A place for iron warriors to toughen up and talk about weight training.'

These are two blogs in essentially similar niches but they have very different tones and very different mission statements, which will define the kind of person that reads them and the way that the brand looks.

Knowing your mission and making sure that this is present in everything you do is *crucial* for having a successful blog. Why? Because a) it will tell people instantly whether your blog is for them and b) it will turn your blog into more than the sum of its parts.

It will turn your blog into a *movement* and something that people can get passionate about and that they can really follow.

A Note

A note to consider at this point is that by creating your mission statement, you are going to be automatically alienating some of your potential visitors. Your blog can't appeal to everyone and if it did, then it wouldn't be particularly interesting for *anyone*.

Be prepared for this and embrace who you are and what you want to blog about. Don't try and appeal to everyone or you will lose your edge and become 'generic' yet again.

And in case you aren't convinced by what I've been saying up to this point in the book, I want you to stop to think about the top blogs that *you* read and the kinds of blogs that *you would* read.

Chances are that each of them is promoting a lifestyle or a movement. Chances are that each of them is doing something interesting and new.

Now imagine a blog called 'How To Get Fit' that only ever posts articles with titles like 'Top 10 Pec Exercises' or 'How to Lose Weight for Summer'.

Would you bother to read that? No – because it's derivative. You've read this stuff a thousand times before and you don't stand to learn anything new or interesting from it. So, *you won't read it*.

Generic blogs don't become top blogs. To succeed, you need to have real passion for what you're doing and you need to be yourself. It may sound a little cheesy but it *really is true*.

Creating Your Logo



Okay, so now you've done all that strategizing you're finally ready to start creating your logo. Your logo needs to be something that evokes the philosophy and the mission that you've settled on. You need this to be something that people can look at and instantly know what your blog is all about.

Of course, the name you choose for your blog is also going to play into this to a large extent.

If you're having difficulty coming up with names and logos, then try writing down lots of words that relate to your niche and drawing lots of items relating to your niche.

Take a look at all of them and see how you can combine them to create something interesting and unique to you.

Likewise, consider some 'best practices' for logo design.

Firstly, your logo needs to be a vector file. That means it will be made in a tool like Illustrator, not Paint! This will mean that your logo can be changed to any size without losing any definition and it means you'll be able to easily make edits without having to rub anything out.

This is ideal if you want to create a black and white version of your logo in future to go on a product, or if you want to make a banner for some future advertising for example.

Other considerations include: making sure that your logo is relatively simple (which again makes it easier for you to create various different iterations), making sure your logo doesn't include any clichéd elements (ticks, globes or light bulbs) and choosing colors that will work with your site design and future design activities.

If you aren't confident in how to go about this, then outsource this process. Come up with some ideas yourself and then find a freelancer on [freelancer.com](https://www.freelancer.com), [upwork.com](https://www.upwork.com) or [99Designs.com](https://www.99designs.com).

This way, you will get a much more professional looking final product and that's something that your customers and your visitors will be able to tell – trust me.

Don't cobble something together that looks *anything less* than 100% professional. If there are *any* imperfections, don't accept it as complete.

In fact, now is good time to set out onto the web and to try and find yourself some inspiration and some competition. Find blogs that are similar to what you want to build and make a note of them.

From now on, these top blogs are your competition and they are the gold standard you are going to try and reach. Pay close attention to what they're doing and what

you can emulate and if there's anything that you feel they're going better – work to get there.

This sounds simple but it's something a surprising number of top bloggers just don't do. If you want to be a top blogger, then your website needs to be as good as that of any other top blogger. Subtle differences in quality make a BIG difference that your readers will feel.

Building a Top Blog

Chapter 4: Building a Top Blog

This is a good time for us to discuss how you go about creating your top blog. We just discussed the importance of creating something that is every bit as professional as your inspiration for your logo. Now it's time to take the same approach to creating your own website.



Again: it needs to look *just as good* as the best in your niche. Cut no corners and don't accept anything that anyone could consider to be unprofessional or amateur.

The Basics

Okay, so I'm not going to go into massive detail here about how to create a blog. It's really very easy to get detailed instructions on how to do things like signing up for a hosting account and setting up WordPress, so you don't need me to go over it in-depth here.



What I *will* say though, is that you *do* need a hosting account – probably with a service like BlueHost – and you *will* probably want to use WordPress to create your site.

WordPress is a site builder and ‘content management system’ that

will allow you to create new posts as easily as clicking ‘post’ and manage existing posts just as easily.

What’s more, is that you can completely change the look and feel of WordPress by installing new plugins and themes and there’s a huge, thriving community filled with people who will help you to get to grips with it, answer any questions you have and build entirely new tools to help you out.

This will be particularly important for us later on, because we’re going to be using a lot of plugins in order to help us promote our site and grow it faster.

WordPress now powers a third of the web and is used in some of the biggest and most successful sites on the web – such as the BBC, Forbes, Mashable, Android Authority, The Four Hour Blog, Smart Passive Income and many others. In other words, it is a tried and tested commodity which removes a lot of the guesswork.

We *know* that WordPress sites can be highly successful and so when you use WordPress, you can rest assured that it’s not the design or the code of the site that is holding you back.

If you’re not successful yet, then you need to concentrate on other aspects of your business rather than worrying about the way the site has been built.

WordPress is also completely free and very easy to install. Through BlueHost’s cPanel, you can actually install WordPress with a single click.

This will make life *much* easier for you, so don't consider using any other strategy – it will ultimately waste your time and create more opportunity for things to go wrong.

Creating Your Theme

Once you have WordPress installed, the next step is to choose a theme. The great thing about WordPress as mentioned is that you can install new themes very quickly.



You can browse for themes through WordPress' own tool but I don't recommend using any of these – most of them are not terribly well designed and what's more is that they will be used on so many websites that yours won't be unique!

So instead, head over to a site like Theme Forest and be prepared to pay a bit for a professional looking theme.

This isn't going to be astronomical (we're talking in the realm of \$30) but as we've already seen, a professional site is an absolute must if you want others to take your site seriously and get excited about it.

Make sure to check the previews and pick something that is responsive (meaning it adapts to the shape and size of the screen looking at it), that is crisp and uses high definition images and that is relatively minimalist and not too overcrowded so that it looks busy or complicated.

Better yet is to pay a professional design company to build you a theme from scratch, but if you want to hold off you can wait until your site has picked up some momentum before you go about doing this.

Finally, you want to customize the theme yourself. This will start by using your logo in the header and from there, you want to make sure that the colors of the rest of your site match that header.

You might also want to think about implementing a different background, moving widgets around, choosing whether you want to add or keep the slider etc.

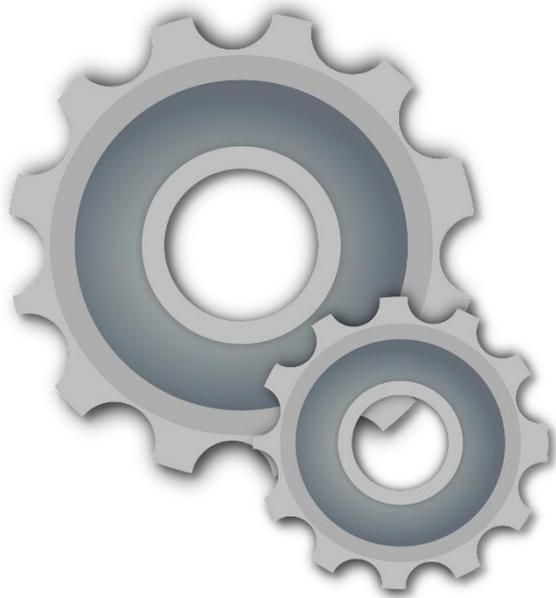
Think about the type of content you're going to be writing and whether the layout will be conducive to that.

For instance, many themes are very image focussed and this is particularly true if you choose a theme that has a slider (meaning it will rotate through large, crisp images that come from your blog posts).

This is great if you have a good camera and if you like to make lots of high quality images for your articles – but if you don't have the means of making or acquiring said images then it can actually be a bad thing!

So make sure that you only feature images heavily if you have the ways and means to make them!

Top Plugins for Bloggers



Now your blog is up and running, you can enhance its capabilities with some plugins. These are small programs that will add features to your site or to the control panel behind the scenes, thereby giving you more control over your content.

There are some plugins that are essential and others that can help a great deal when it comes to getting your site on the fast-track to success. Here are some that

you should consider installing:

WordPress SEO by Yoast

WordPress SEO from Yoast is your one-stop-shop for search optimization and makes the process very easy. It's the one recommended by the most users and lets you control things like the title of the post as seen by spiders as well as checking your keyword density and more.

We'll talk a little more about SEO in future but for now, this is a good start to get a little more love from Google.

W3 Total Cache

W3 Total Cache can speed up your website by using caching. This means that certain images and other elements won't need to be loaded from scratch each time a visitor lands on your page. It's a useful strategy and might help to reduce your bounce rate by appeasing impatient viewers.

LinkWithin

LinkWithin will place related posts at the bottom of each of your articles that way giving your readers an easy way to find more of your content.

This is a great way to keep people on your site because they'll want to keep on reading and won't come to a 'dead end' after they finish the post they're on.

Akismet

One of the few downsides of WordPress is the way it can attract spam comments, which can in some cases make your life a constant process of deleting nonsense posts.

Akismet is the best plugin out there for reducing that spam count and can make every blogger and site owner's life considerably easier as a result.

XML Sitemap

XML Sitemap is a great plugin that can help you to generate a sitemap for your blog with a single click. In turn this will help Google to index your site and any new posts so it's definitely worth an install.

Jetpack

Jetpack is not just one plugin but actually several that all come from WordPress.com themselves. This includes site stats (for those without Analytics), email subscriptions, social networking tools and more. It comes pre-installed and it's more than worth the couple of seconds of setup.

AdSense Explosion

If you want to monetize your blog with AdSense but don't want to get too fiddly with it, then AdSense Explosion is an ideal choice giving you just enough control while keeping things simple.

It has had a few problems, but the support is good enough to make it the go-to AdSense plugin for many a blogger. Again, we'll talk about this more in future but for now, you can install this, add your own AdSense code if you have it and start profiting right away!

All in One Favicon

All in One Favicon is the simplest way to add a Favicon to your site – that being the small image that comes up next to the title in the browser. This will make your site look more professional and increase your brand awareness in moments.

Google Analytics

While Jetpack gives you some webstats, they pale in comparison to the in-depth nature of Google Analytics that will really allow you to see how your site is performing and hone it to perfection. This plugin means your site will be Analytics ready with no hassle adding code to your pages manually.

Google Typography

If you go with a pre-made WordPress theme, you're still going to want to edit it to make the design yours. Changing the typography is one important way to do this, and this plugin makes that simple.

Go back and look at those top blogs in your niche again that I told you to note down. You'll notice that all of them have a very nice, crisp font that is easy to read. That's important because it's going to make people *want* to spend time on those sites!

Styles

Styles allows you to easily change many more aspects of your WordPress theme right from the WordPress Customizer.

Disqus

Disqus is the best comments system for many reasons and will improve the look of your comments section as well as making it incredibly easy for users to post and for you to manage. This also creates a new way for people to discover your site – through the Disqus community itself.

Optimize Database

Optimize Database will help to keep your database clean, thereby keeping your site sprightly and avoiding errors.

Woo Commerce

Woo Commerce is one of the best and easiest ways for businesses to sell products directly from their site and thus monetize their blog. More on this later again. The plugin is free, but payment gateway extensions will cost you a little (\$25-\$75).

iThemes Security

Formerly known as 'Better WP Security', this is a plugin that provides numerous ways to further improve the security of your blog – an important consideration for any business.

Bottom of Every Post

This is a plugin that allows you to add a section of code at the bottom of every post. Pretty simple! It's great because it's going to let us add our opt-in form later on, the way that people sign up to our mailing list.

Shareaholic

This is one of several plugins that will allow your visitors to quickly and easily share your content on their social media pages. It's a quick way to get more likes on Facebook and Tweets on Twitter, which in turn brings more visitors to your site.

Instagram Widget by WPZOOM

This is going to place a feed with your Instagram pictures right into a widget, ideally on your homepage. This will allow people to see that you are active on Instagram and get a taste for the kind of content you share.

That means more followers and it means your site will look much more active and interesting.

Twiget Twitter Widget

In a similar vein, Twiget allows you to show your Twitter feed. This is great because it means people can see that you are active on social media and get a taste for the kind of content you create. In turn, that will mean that you can gain a lot more followers on there a lot more quickly!

YouTube Channel

YouTube Channel from Aleksandar Urosevic is a very powerful tool that will embed your YouTube videos into your sidebar – either your latest video or a random one. In a moment we're going to discuss *in depth* why YouTube is such an important part of your business plan!



Creating a Personal Brand

Chapter 5: Creating a Personal Brand

Okay, so now we're going to talk a bit more about the interesting stuff – the differentiating factors that will help you to become a *top* blogger rather than just... a blogger.

One of the options available to you here then is to create a personal brand. This basically means that you're going to put *yourself* at the forefront of your branding and

messaging and you're going to become a living advocate and example of the lifestyle you're living.

This isn't 100% necessary to run a top blog. But if you think about the biggest blogs on the web that *aren't* owned by massive companies, then you'll realize that the personality of the owner is *often* front and center...

- I Am Alpha M
- Strength Camp



- Smart Passive Income
- The Four Hour Workweek
- Matthew Woodward
- Brain Pickings
- The Art of Manliness
- Nerd Fitness
- Mark's Daily Apple
- Heidi Cohen
- Etc.

Having a personality attached to a blog makes it much more relatable, much more interesting and much more trustworthy. When you read a blog that is run by an actual *person* who is happy for you to see their face, you can feel as though you almost know that person.

That way, you're more likely to trust their opinion and to feel as though they are talking right to you when you read their comments.

Likewise, you can enjoy a bit of the voyeurism that comes from getting a glimpse into someone else's life and you can live vicariously and see what their lifestyle must be like.

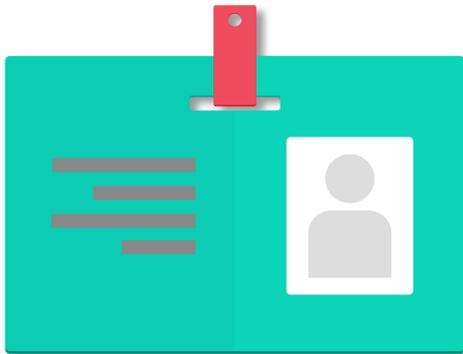
Reading about fitness on a generic blog is detached and you have no reassurance that the person writing cares about you, that they practice what they preach or that what they preach even works.

But if you are reading the blog of a guy who lives the life he promotes: who is in fantastic shape, who looks confident and attractive and who is friendly and outgoing, then suddenly they become a walking advert for the ideas and lifestyle they recommend. Suddenly you want to *listen*.

Creating a personal brand also opens up a lot more marketing opportunities and makes a lot more sense when it comes to Instagram etc.

So how do you do it?

Step One – Invest in Your Most Important Brand



In life, your name is your most important brand. Now that is also going to be true in an even more literal, business sense.

And just like any brand, you need to invest if you want to get the most from it. In other words, you need to practice what you preach and you need to show that you

are someone worth listening too. If a tramp came up to you and started giving you advice... would you listen? No!

Likewise, if a 'regular looking guy' (or gal) came up and gave you advice you might likewise not be all that inclined to listen.

We listen to people who seem to have it all together and so you need to try and present that face to the world.

This means that you need to start thinking about how you come across. If you don't normally spend any time looking after your health and fitness, then you need to start doing that and hitting the gym.

Likewise, you can start thinking about your clothes a little more and giving yourself a little more time to shave, to clip your nails and to moisturise.

Spend a bit more money on your clothes. This might mean you need to own *fewer* items of clothing but it is much better to have a few very impressive items than it is to have a *lot* of junk. Make sure that things fit as well.

All this might sound small but if you are creating YouTube videos or posting images to Instagram, then people will unconsciously pick up on that nice watch and the high

quality fabrics you're in and this will give what you're saying more weight and more credibility.

Instagram is a great place to focus on how you're going to create an image for yourself. Instagram is all about making life look more artistic and more exciting than it is.

So make sure you are taking photos of the things you are doing that are relevant to your brand and make sure that you are playing with angles, lighting and filters in order to make them more dramatic and desirable.

Again, take a look at what the top people in your niche are doing. How are *they* selling the lifestyle?

You can also be a bit candid with it. Don't be afraid to show occasional pictures of yourself out on the town with friends, or travelling, or chilling with a mug of coffee.

Don't do this too often if it is off brand, but do it a *little* because that way you can demonstrate that you are a well rounded person with a lot going on. Once again, this makes you a person that people want to emulate, follow and listen to!

Remember: it's all about the brand really and that means demonstrating that you *have* the lifestyle that your readers want. You don't need to be dishonest, but just make sure that you practice what you preach and that you can show the benefits of that on the camera.

Creating social media accounts is very important if you're going to be building a personal brand and this will allow your visitors and your followers to feel as though they're getting to know you. We'll discuss this more in future chapters.

Chapter 6:

Creating Content

Chapter 6: Creating Content

Now you have your blog and your brand and you know the kind of personality that you want to portray. Everything is in place for you to start filling your site and your social media accounts with content.

And yes, it is implied that you should have set up social media accounts on *at least* the top sites by now

(Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest). If you haven't, then go and do that now!

Now you can begin posting. And here's what that is going to entail...

Blogging

To become a top blogger...you need to blog.



Obviously our aim here is to go full-time as a blogger so that we aren't reliant on any other source of income and we can potentially give up the day jobs.

One of the first things you need to know in order to do this then, is that your blogging is going to need to be highly regular. You need to post at least once a week but where possible, I recommend that you post much more frequently.



This is another thing that should be fairly obvious but that seems to elude a lot of new bloggers: if you want to blog full time, then you need to treat it like a full-time job to begin with! You can't blog for 2 hours a week and expect to become top dog!

Blogging frequently will help you to get more attention on Google because it will create more content for Google to index and because it will help you build momentum with your readers – you'll be giving them a good reason to come back regularly apart from anything else!

At the same time, even if you only have long-tail keywords meaning that you only occasionally get a visitor from Google on each post, the more you have, the more you will scale up your profits.

Look at it this way. If each blog post you have gets 20 cents a month from Google and you write 40 blog posts per month... then you'll *still* be making \$96 within the first year.

Fortunately, the nature of Google and blogging in general is such that things like this tend to snowball. The more people read your site, the more you'll get shared and the more *additional* people will come to your site!

So, the more content you write the better. Only problem is that it takes a lot of time to write content and when you start out, you'll probably be trying to fit this in around

IFTTT will make it so that you can ensure all future posts to Instagram with a specific hashtag will *also* be posted to Twitter for example, thereby ensuring a steady flow of content on both channels even though you're only creating media for one of them.

If you are creating a personal brand, then this allows you to post about your day and hopefully, you'll find that inspiration strikes regarding what you can post and what you can say.

Using your mobile phone will help a lot here as we always have them on us and so it should be easy to pull them out to snap a photo of our workout, of what we're eating or of where we're travelling.

This way we are bringing our audience along with us throughout our travels and our routine and thereby promoting the brand and our lifestyles.

Of course, you also want to share the content you create and you can do this directly through WordPress.

Another tip? Don't be afraid to post *old* content that you made a while ago. This is a great way to get people to see posts they might have missed and to make more use from your 'evergreen' posts.

This is also something to keep in mind when your posting seemingly into the void and no one is reading your work. While you might not be getting any feedback now, it doesn't mean those same posts won't get read in the future!

Again, the most important thing to do is to provide value of some sort. The way you do this will vary from social media platform to social media platform.

On Twitter, the most common way to provide value is with entertainment – humorous or interesting snippets relevant to your niche. On Facebook, it's a good idea to share content that you find interesting and that your audience might do too.

Look at Facebook Pages like Lad Bible or IFL Science for a good model of how this works. If you post a lot of interesting things and your branding is clear, people will follow you just to stay updated.

And finally, on Instagram, the best way to provide value is by offering inspiration and by letting people live vicariously. This is why people like to see pictures of people doing yoga against sunrises on the beach, or working in cafes in suits.

Is it narcissistic? Maybe – but it's what people want to see and it can work wonders for your brand.



Chapter 7: YouTube

If you want to be a successful blogger, then you should *highly* consider becoming a successful blogger. This is absolutely one of the most effective ways to help people discover your brand, to communicate with them what you're all about and even to make sales.



YouTube can make a lot of money and if you get a few thousand views per month on all your videos it can very nicely supplement your income to help you blog full time. It also elevates your brand in a big way because video is something that takes skill and the right equipment to create.

Anyone can post to Twitter, but if you have a YouTube video with high production values, crisp video footage and great editing, then people will think that you must be a pro!

This is a much more personal form of media, a much more persuasive one and one that exists on a platform where it's relatively easy to do high quality SEO and get to the top of big searches.

Just take a look at a brand like Charisma On Command. This brand started as a blog and got relatively nowhere. They then introduced a YouTube channel and exploded seemingly overnight. The same can happen for you, as long as you know how to manage it.

So where do you get started?

The Basics



First, you need to decide on the kinds of videos you want to create. This should be easy enough, seeing as you already have your brand and probably (hopefully) a personal brand. You've taken a look at your presentation and you've learned

through Instagram how to make things look desirable.

Now you just need to polish up your elocution (speak more slowly to sound more confident) and choose a nice backdrop and you can consider to send that message of success and style.

Again, posting frequently is one of *the* most important things you can do and so that means you need to create shorter videos that will convey snippets of information. The great thing as well is that you can be relatively informal in your delivery.

YouTube is a platform where people love personalities and if you look at some of the top channels on here they all have a very conversational and candid manner. A real 'vlog' actually involves someone bringing a camera with them through their daily routine and narrating it!

There's nothing wrong with engaging in the hobby or passion you're writing about, getting out your camera and then just riffing on a topic close to your heart.

Production

What *does* matter though is the production. The higher quality your videos, the more successful they'll be.

Start with video quality: your videos should *at least* be 1080p HD and that means you need a decent camera. Ideally something like a Lumix with a flip screen so you can see yourself while you record. That said, a smartphone will do fine if it has decent autofocus and a high quality sensor.

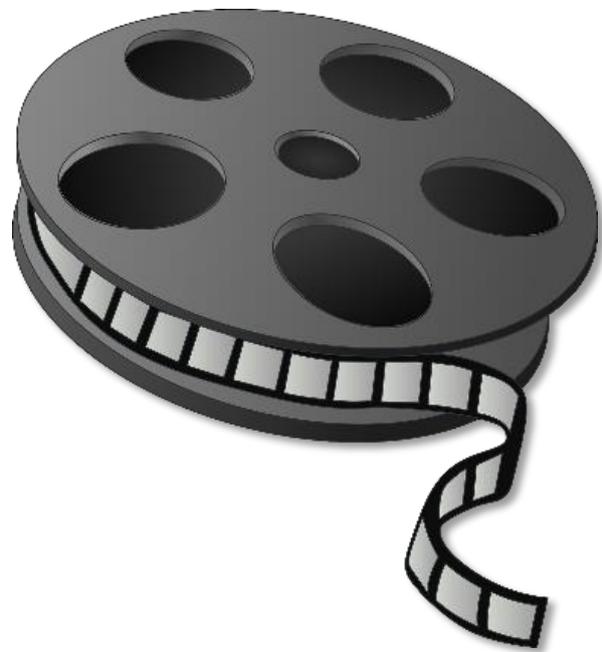
Actually, more important than this though is lighting. Your videos need to be bright which means you either need to stand near a window or you need to make the relatively small investment of a decent softbox.

This will provide lighting for you that looks professional and make a *huge* difference to your videos.

A similar quick and easy upgrade is to get better sound. You can do this with an external mic or with a lapel mic. The Snowball Mic from Blue Yeti is one that many vloggers recommend.

Finally, you need to have good editing software so that you can put this all together. You're going to want some decent background music (commission some from a composer on Fiverr.com) and you'll want a decent 'video opener' (ditto).

Place your logo in the top left. Then stitch all this together and sync your audio track using something like Adobe Premiere or Final Cut Pro.



Now with your video component your audience will feel that they can get to know you and you can start to cross promote across all your channels.

Add your YouTube channels to your blog posts by embedding them and tell people on YouTube why they should *definitely* follow you on Twitter and check out your blog.

Of course the plugins we discussed mean that when someone visits your site, they'll be able to see all the media you're creating on all the different platforms!

Chapter 8:



Chapter 8: Promoting Your Blog and Videos

Unfortunately, blogging is not as simple as 'build it and they will come' (although regularly posting on Instagram and on YouTube will help this!).

Just because you have a great blog, that doesn't mean that people are going to want to read it regularly or that Google is going to help people to discover it.

So how do you get the word out?

There are a number of different strategies but I'm going to focus on the most important ones most and look at this from the perspective of a top blogger, rather than your conventional internet marketer...



Share Your Posts



Actually, the most important thing you can do to start building an audience for your blog posts is to *share* those blog posts.

There are a number of ways you can do that and chances are that with experimentation, you'll find what works for you and what doesn't. A

great option for many people is Reddit.

Find the 'Sub Reddit' that is most relevant to your niche and then post your blog posts in here, making sure that they have titles that will grab attention but also being mindful not to get banned from the community for spam!

If you get lots of upvotes (which happens occasionally), it can lead to thousands of new visitors in a single day.

Similar is Google Plus Communities. These tend to be a little less strict than Reddit but will still yield plenty of new visitors and hits on your site. What's more is that +1s are a good metric for boosting your SEO.

Digg is another good site, as is Stumble Upon. Otherwise, you might want to find forums where you can post your content. Again though, be careful not to be seen as a spammer – you need to make sure that you contribute to the community regularly and that you are an active member.

If you can do that, then your content will be welcomed rather than deleted. You might even find that the members rally behind you to help!

Make a Mailing List

Finally, make sure you have a mailing list. This is a way to make sure you are capturing the details of each new person that visits your site so that you can market to them later on.

This way, you can share what you're doing and promote your new posts directly in their inbox – which is much more direct and personal than going through social media even.

Influencer Marketing and Guest Posting

One of THE most powerful ways to get more people to visit your site is with influencer marketing. This means that you are going to exchange links with other big players in your niche or give each other a shoutout.



This happens on YouTube a lot where one creator might make a video featuring another and then they do the same thing in exchange.

Either way, influencer marketing allows you to gain access to a huge audience that someone else has gone to the trouble of building. If you try and contact the top blogger in your niche then of course you can expect to be told where to go!

But if you choose someone at a similar level as yourself, then you can help each other and then *build up from there*. Even if they're smaller than you, you can still help each other.

This is also why it's *such* a good idea to attend networking events as a blogger. If you do this, then you can find people to work with and make a much bigger impression by speaking in person.

This way you become almost real ‘friends’ and they will feel practically obligated to answer your emails and help.

Similar to influencer marketing is guest blogging – here you simply create a free guest post to give to another blog and the only proviso is that they have to include a link back to your site (often with a short bio) if they publish it.

This means writing content and then reaching out to big blogs. Again, start a little smaller and work your way up and don’t be afraid to ask – if you’re passionate about what you do then you’ll be surprised how often you get a good response.

Again though, this is why it’s so important that you know and love your topic and that your site *looks* professional. Top brands don’t want to associate with lesser brands!

SEO



I’m not going to go into detail about this here – this is not a book on SEO. But suffice to say that if you want your site to do well, then a little search engine optimization certainly doesn’t *hurt*. Spend some time learning the basics of SEO and make sure that your on-page content is up to scratch.

Don’t cram keywords though and don’t ‘write for the search engines’. Write for your audience and just make sure that you are naturally using related language and ideally, the occasional synonym or keyword.

It doesn’t hurt to do some basic research about what kinds of things people are searching for in the niche either.

Make sure your pages load quickly and are responsive for mobile too. The plugins and themes section of this book should have helped with that.

The most important part of SEO is to have a diverse and ‘organic’ looking backlinks profile and to get links from the biggest sites you can. Ideally, you want links from sites that Google trusts – and you can see this by looking at which sites Google features in its news section.

If you can’t get links from them, then get links from people that *they* have linked to – think of this like a game of ‘degrees of separation’.

Combine this with links that you acquire from people who want to share your content because it is so high quality. This is why it’s so important to write for people and not bots – nothing beats real links from real people.

One Last Tip

One last tip when it comes to marketing is to *look after your fans*. If you’ve ever read the book *1,000 True Fans*, then you’ll know the concept that having a number of ‘true fans’ can be enough to promote your business and ensure it’s a massive success.

Answer messages and look after each and every person that shows an interest in your brand. This is what you’ve been working for, so why would you ignore them?



Chapter 9: Profiting

After all this work, you'll probably find you want to start earning some profit. If you're going to make blogging your full-time job and really 'live the dream' then this is really pretty crucial.

To start with, you need to *not focus* on that. Hopefully, this book has communicated to you how top bloggers get there by writing about what they're honestly passionate about, by creating a unique brand and by *living* that brand in a way that all their followers can see.

If you can do this, you'll eventually get successful enough that opportunities present themselves to you.

This takes time though. And if you're planning on getting rich overnight, then you're going to get quickly frustrated and give up. That's why you're *not to focus* on profit to start with. In fact, I recommend that you don't even monetize your blog at first.



You won't make much anyway in the first couple of months and it's more important that you learn to enjoy what you're doing and build the trust.

Once you decide to start earning, you then have a few options:

AdSense



AdSense means placing adverts on your site that will pay out each time someone clicks on them. This is the easiest and fastest way to monetize a site but as a result, it's also the least profitable.

You're right at the bottom of the ladder here because someone is obvious able to earn much more money from those visitors or they wouldn't be willing to pay you for them.

Google takes its cut too and ultimately you won't earn a living from AdSense until you're getting hundreds of thousands of daily hits to your site.

That said, this *can* be an easy way to make a small side income while you focus on better methods.

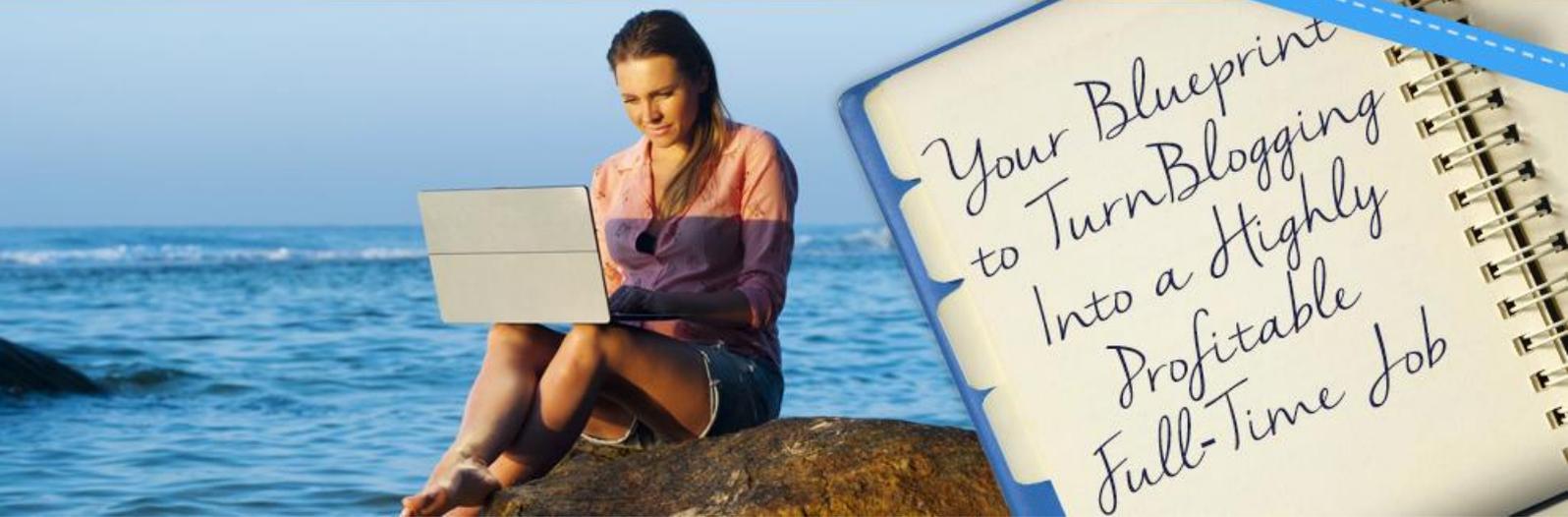
Selling a Product

The ideal scenario is that you sell your own product. This will be something like an ebook or a course that you develop. People will want to buy this because you've put the time in and built that trust and now you'll be getting *100%* of the profit.

Better yet, selling a product will *keep* people engaged with your brand and mean they'll be more likely to buy *future* products from you.

Don't have a product? In that case you have two more options: buy one that you can edit and resell (look for 'PLR' products) or sell affiliate products – products that you recommend in exchange for

Conclusion:



Conclusion: Your Blueprint to Turn Blogging Into a Highly Profitable Full-Time Job



With that monetization in place and your brand on-point, all that's left to do is to keep on posting content and keep on promoting your site. We've seen how to do this but let's just recap the most important steps to get up and

running and then to keep it growing.

Getting Up and Running

- Choose your niche – Pick something you're passionate about and then carve a niche within that
- Create a brand – Know what your blog is 'about' and what your 'mission' is. Know your target audience.
- Create a logo – This should speak perfectly to the topic of your blog.

- Create your site – Use WordPress, make sure it is as professional as your top competition. Install the recommended plugins and customize your theme.
- Get on social media and YouTube – Make sure your branding is consistent across all these channels.
- Invest in yourself, make sure you embody your brand

Keeping it Growing

- Aim to post at least 3 x 700+ word blog posts and 1 x 1,500+ word blog post per week (more is better!)
- Post to Twitter, Facebook and Instagram at least twice daily, ideally more frequently
- Ensure synergy between those three channels and your blog
- Post 1x new YouTube video every week
- Create 2x new guest posts per month/influencer marketing opportunities
- Attend blogging networks
- Post to communities and forums in your niche
- Be an active member of those communities
- Answer your fan mail and comments – look after your followers!

Keep this up and make sure that you *really* love what you're doing and that your content is *really* unique and you'll be well on your way to being a top blogger.

Soon, you'll be earning money while you sleep all for doing something that you are absolutely passionate about!

The single most important part of all of this? Write about your passion and do it in a way that is honest and exciting. That is the ONE thing that *all* top blogs have in common. This is not something you can hack or cheat at.

And anyway, why would you want to?