

Blogging To Success Using Blogs To Generate Traffic

It's a proven fact that search engines love blogs. The question we should ask ourselves is why do they love blogs? It's pretty simple, search engines love to search and find new quality content. It is their goal to index high quality information as quickly as possible. If you've not been blogging then you've been missing out on an incredible opportunity to bring instant traffic to your website. The key to blogging is to update regularly, as just creating a blog and having no updates or content is useless. You need to update your blog several times per week to really reap the benefits.

Setting up your first blog

There are many free sites on the internet that will allow you to create your own blog and they will host it for you. I prefer to host my own blog, but I'm going to explain both options you have for blogging. I'll first start by providing the options for Free Blog Hosting.

Free Blog Hosting Sites

1) Blogger.com

This site is one of the most if not the most popular free blog hosting site. You can instantly create a blog and start writing on various topics. The positives about using Blogger.com are that it is spidered often, and your blog link will be in the path of the spider, enabling your new blog to be spidered quickly. Once your blog is spidered, the search engines will continue to visit your blog for updates.

Signup link: <http://www.blogger.com/>

2) Journalhub.com

This is a newer site, not as popular, but is a very solid choice for blog hosting. Your account is setup instantly.

Signup link: <http://journalhub.com/summary.php?op=RegisterStep0>

3) Aeonity.com

This site also gives you the ability to create an instant blog site.

Signup link: <http://www.aeonity.com/>

4) Ebloggy.com

This site also allows free blog hosting.

Signup link: <http://www.ebloggy.com/>

You can register with any of the above sites to start your own blog, but as I mentioned earlier I prefer to have my own site host my blog. Another option is to have two blogs. My recommendation would be to create what I like to call a sub-blog, where the blogger.com blog would be a blog you update from time to time that discusses topics dealing with your main blog. You should have links pointing from your blogger.com blog to your main blog site. The reason you are doing this is because blogger.com is spidered often and by default your blog with blogger.com, which is your sub-blog will also be spidered. Since your sub-blog will have links to your main blog it can also aid in having your main blog site spidered more quickly.

Hosting Your Own Blog

Hosting your own blog gives search engines a reason to keep revisiting your website. It is important as I mentioned before that you update your blog several times per week. Below you'll find some recommended free software for hosting your own blog.

WordPress

All my blogging sites use WordPress as I believe it is the best blogging script available. It's very easy to install and you can go live within just a few minutes.

Download: <http://wordpress.org/download/>

By default WordPress gives you the ability to choose if you want Search Engine Friendly URLs for your blog, but I've taken that a step further. You will only be able to follow the instructions I'm giving below if you already have WordPress installed.

If you have WordPress installed add this line of code to your "Permalinks" section:

/%postname%.htm

Input the above code into the line that says "Custom Structure" and ensure that you have the check placed in the "Custom, specify below" under Common Options.

What this does is give your blog highly optimizable search engine friendly URLs. Every blog post you make will have a keyword rich URL based on the subject of your blog. For example if your blog post was "Caribbean Recipes" your URL would be <http://yoursite.com/caribbean-recipes.html>.

It's a nice handy trick to get more search engine friendly URLs out of WordPress to ensure that your keywords appear not only in the subject but also in the page URL.

Blogging Themes

Now that you've got your blog setup, I know that by default WordPress skin may not be too pleasing to you. Let's change that by installing a new theme. The sites below offer some free themes that you can use and customize.

WordPress Themes Viewer

<http://themes.wordpress.net/>

Alex Kings' Theme Viewer

<http://www.alexking.org/index.php?content=software/wordpress/themes.php>

Kaushal Sheth's Themes

<http://www.kaushalsheth.com/themes/>

Theme Porter

<http://www.themeporter.com/tags/themes/>

Browse through those four websites and select a theme that you like best. You simply download the theme and upload it to your wp-content/themes directory, then activate the theme in the admin area of Wordpress under presentations.

Blog Pinging

Here's one of the reasons I believe that WordPress is a great option for blogging. WordPress has a built in "Ping" option that will notify all the major blogging and RSS feed directories that you've made a new post on your blog. This is automatically activated in the "Writing" section of Word Press. If you scroll to the bottom of the "Writing" section you will see a section called "Update Services".

Below that you will see a URL link: <http://rpc.pingomatic.com/>.

Whenever you make a post on your blog, this option sends out a notification to all the blogging directories that you have made a new post and they usually automatically index it. Each time you make a post this ping is automatically done ensuring that your feed is sent.

Blogging Regularly

Now that we've got the theme setup, the URLs for all your posts being search engine friendly, your pings being automated, the next step is to start blogging. Here comes the tough part, what am I blogging about? It's important that your blog be about something you actually have knowledge on, and can write about fluently. For example if your site is about recipes, you can have your blog posts related to anything about recipes, perhaps experiences you have had while preparing dishes, etc.

When blogging remember you must be very personable, friendly and seem easy to talk to. The reason for this is that with each post you make you are trying to elicit a response from users. With WordPress you have the option to enable comments. By having comments on your blog enabled, it increases your popularity rating. The search engines will visit and update your blog more often as it is constantly changing by having new content. I recommend that in each blog post you make, that you always ask questions, request feedback to ensure that the people viewing your blog find a reason to actually post a comment.

Successful Blogs

The best way to learn how to have a successful blog is to review other blogs that are proven success stories. To do this I recommend that you visit a site called Bloglines.com

Link: <http://www.bloglines.com/dir>

Do a search to find blogs that are similar to your blog and review each to see what they are doing. It's easy to tell if a blog is doing well by how often they are updating and how many comments each blog post receives.

Blog Links

Take another trip back to Bloglines.com/dir and do a search again for blogs within a similar genre as your blog but not necessarily identical. Start replying to some of the blog posts made, giving your thoughts about the post or topic. Do this a few times with various blogs, then once you've done it on a regular occasion end your post with a signature link that goes to your site. Take note do **NOT** do this in the initial stages or with your first post. You must first acquire a relationship with the blogs, first by posting comments and leaving positive feedback. After gaining trust you can simply place a link with your next post comment. I recommend replying at least 5 to 10 times before attempting to place a link.

Blog Commenting

When you've first started your blog as I mentioned prior, comments help your blog look more active. Initially you may find that users may not post comments to your blog. It's going to be up to you to get things going. Have your friends or family members start leaving comments on your blog as it can make your blog seem more active. People like to see activity; if your blog seems dead you'll likely get no responses. If you would rather not have your family even know about your blog, then you can post comments yourself but as a "Guest" or as registered user instead of admin. Respond to your own posts initially to create activity, then you'll start to see other real users placing comments as well.

What usually works best is to leave a controversial comment. Start making comments that are guaranteed to elicit a response. I've created "characters" before that post controversial statements on my

blog to really get user interest going. This "character" may disagree with a blog posting I made, creating a sequence of posts that increase the activity comments of my post. Once you see that users have taken interest in your blog you can now rely on their posts rather than creating fake ones of your own.

Remember if you are going to do fake comment posts, to space the timing between posts. For example never post two minutes after you've posted as admin, as it's too obvious that you're the same person. Allow some time to pass by before making your "fake user comments post".

If you would rather not do the "fake posts" yourself, some bloggers have actually paid users to reply to posts on their blog. If you go to popular webmaster forums, you'll find that users get paid for making posts on forums. The usual rate is about .10 cents per post or something within that range. The same theory applies for blog comments. You can hire a set of 10 to 20 people to comment on your posts and pay them a small fee, this way you generate some interest in your blog.

If you post a project on the sites I mentioned previously such as Scriptlance.com or Getafreelancer.com for "Blog Posters", you can find people who can get your blog active, by making comments and paying them a small fee. You can do this until you get users posting on your site in reply to the posters you have paid. Within a few weeks your blog should be very active. This benefits you in the long run as the search engines will be visiting your site often due to the constant updates.

Blogging Directories

A great way to promote your blog is to have it indexed in the blogging directories. I've listed below the most popular directories that you can submit your new blog to.

Blogarama

Link: <http://www.blogarama.com>

Blogdigger

Link: <http://www.blogdigger.com>

Blog Catalog

Link: <http://www.blogcatalog.com>

Blog Hub

Link: <http://www.bloghub.com>

Blog Rankings

Link: <http://www.blogrankings.com>

Blog Street

Link: <http://www.blogstreet.com>

Blog Search Engine

Link: <http://www.blogsearchengine.com>

Blog Wise

Link: <http://www.blogwise.com>

Blogz

Link: <http://www.sarthak.net/blogz/>

Blog Lines

Link: <http://www.bloglines.com>

Bloogz

Link: <http://www.bloogz.com>

Blog Pulse

Link: <http://www.blogpulse.com>

Blog Universe

Link: <http://www.bloguniverse.com>

Blog Tree

Link: <http://www.blogtree.com>

Contents Matter

Link: <http://www.contentsmatter.com>

Feed 24

Link: <http://www.feed24.com>

Feeders

Link: <http://blogs.feedster.com>

Findory

Link: <http://www.findory.com>

Get Blogs

Link: <http://www.getblogs.com>

Globe Of Blogs

Link: <http://www.globeofblogs.com>

LsBlogs

Link: <http://www.lsblogs.com>

Postami

Link: <http://www.postami.com>

Plazoo

Link: <http://www.plazoo.com>

Read A Blog

Link: <http://www.readablog.com>

Technorati

Link: <http://www.technorati.com>

Your Web Log Here

Link: <http://www.yourwebloghere.com>

My Yahoo

A quick way to get your blog indexed is to add it to My Yahoo. If you do not have a My Yahoo account, I would recommend that you register one right now.

Link: <http://my.yahoo.com>

Assuming that you have now registered, be sure to add your feed to Yahoo's RSS Directory, you can do this in your My Yahoo user area. This method is considered one of the fastest ways to get your blog indexed by Yahoo

Quick Recap : Keys To Success

1) Blog Frequently, at least a few times per week. The biggest mistake made by bloggers is to let weeks or even months go by without blogging. If your blog is not being updated it will no longer be considered "sweet" to the search engines, by that I mean it will be considered a "dead" blog and they won't visit as often.

2) Start leaving comments on other successful blogs, and then eventually leave a link back to your site after creating a relationship.

3) Research the most popular blogs within your category; you can use bloglines.com for your research. Look at what they are doing and try to model their success without copying.

4) Add your links to the blog directories to gain more backlinks.

5) Monitor your web stats to see where your traffic is originating. It is important that you use a web stats program that can show you how many people are "bookmarking" your site. A good bookmark ratio is a good sign that people are interested in your blog and have plans on re-visiting it.

Follow these steps and you will be moving forward with a very successful blog. Please remember each blog post does not have to be pages in length. It can be as little as one to two paragraphs. Keep in mind that whatever you post should be valuable to the user and elicit a response.