

Affiliate Classroom

Volume 4 Number 7
June 2007
AffiliateClassroom.com

The journal of affiliate marketing and management best practices

Seven Golden Rules of Blog Monetization

The Marketing Potential of Blogs

Top 10 Blogs About Blogging



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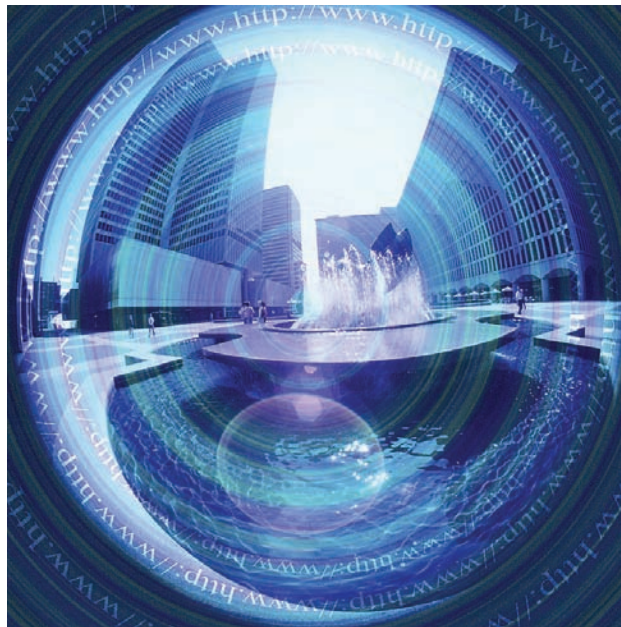
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COVER STORY

The 7 Golden Rules for Blog Monetization

by Mark Thompson

<http://www.income-academy.com>



Monetization can take many different forms, from a simple paid link to a fully functioning store. When it comes to choosing what method of monetization to use, the choice is entirely yours. Concentrate on one or two main blogs, or build multiple blogs on different topics.

There is no way to say this simply so I'll just come out with it:

If you aren't using monetized blogs to create an income, then you are losing out.

I recently had a friendly argument with an online buddy of mine who insists that his \$300 site-building tool is the best thing to use to build affiliate sites. So I asked him what his best-ranking site was.

Using the past tense "was" proved quite appropriate; within a week, I had created a blog and outranked him. Well, that's what friends are for! Guess what he's using to build his sites now?

Blogs are the most flexible and easy-to-use option when it comes to creating an online income, but there are several golden rules that you need to follow to ensure that you get the best out of your blog.

I recently created a video for a promotion I was doing where I added 10 different forms of monetization to a blog. The whole process took about 20 minutes from start to finish; that included building the site on a new domain and adding two articles. Obviously, I would never suggest you add 10 different types of monetization to any site, but it's good to know you can.

Monetization can take many different forms, from a simple paid link to a fully functioning store. When it comes to choosing what method of monetization to use, the choice is entirely yours. You can concentrate on one or two main blogs, or you can build multiple blogs on different topics.

This brings us neatly to Rule #1, so let's look closely at what the golden rules are.

Rule #1: Plan Your Blog

It pays to sit down and plan in advance how you want your blog to look. Do you want to build it around pages, or around posts? What about a mixture of both? Do you want the front of the blog to contain the latest posts, or a welcome message and some information about the blog?

Spend time deciding how you want the page URLs to look. Do you want to use standard blog post URLs, or customized permalinks? Getting all these clear in your head at the start will save you time when you set up the blog.

You should also consider how many blogs you are going to build. There are two schools of thought here: You could build multiple blogs earning a few dollars a day each, or you could build a small number of blogs earning larger amounts of income.

Many people are happy with a few articles and a few dollars of AdSense income per day from multiple blogs. Others want to see a minimum income of \$50 through affiliate sales

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from each blog, but have a much smaller number of blogs; this allows them to spend more time developing each one.

Whether you opt to maintain many blogs or a few higher-paying ones, don't forget to research plenty of monetization options before you start building a blog. The last thing you want to do is spend time creating content, only to find that you can't get accepted for an affiliate program and you have no alternatives lined up.

Rule #2: Take It Slowly

Ironically, as we are talking about blog monetization, I am going to tell you not to monetize your blog immediately. As strange as that sounds, you should take your time, build your blog, optimize it, and wait until it gets indexed before you add any income streams to it.

I've found in the past that non-monetized blogs tend to rank better and get indexed more quickly. You aren't going to have a flood of visitors in the first few weeks, so you will lose very little income by not adding any monetization at the start.

The long-term rewards of employing this method may far outweigh the initial losses through higher search engine rankings.

Rule #3: Less Is More

Don't add too many forms of monetization to your blog. Personally, I usually try to stick to one form of monetization, and I'll occasionally add a second.

When most people think of monetization, they usually think of AdSense. It's the obvious choice as it's easy to add and easy to manage, and Google reliably pays on time. However, it is not always the best form of monetization; in fact, I would say it rarely is.

Over the past year, I've been comparing my AdSense stats to those of ClickBank. The results make for interesting reading. On average, for every 1,000 clicks I send to ClickBank, I make \$440. I am lucky to make \$44 for 1,000 AdSense clicks.

Generally speaking, the only time I will add AdSense is if other methods aren't working well. Often this will be because the products sales page is poor.

Rule #4: Stay on Topic

Try to keep the monetization you add to your site in context. If your site is about healthy weight loss, then monetize it with healthy weight loss products. Nobody wants to see ads for credit cards on a site when they are trying to find a weight loss product.

You should have a good idea of what products you will be adding to the site if you planned your blog in advance. There are numerous affiliate networks, so if you can't find a suitable product in one, check out some others.

Rule #5: Test, Test, Test

Just because you've got a profitable blog doesn't mean that you can't make it more profitable. Switch things around on your site, or try different forms of monetization, to see if your results improve even more.

Research plenty of monetization options before you start building a blog. The last thing you want to do is spend time creating content only to find that you can't get accepted for an affiliate program and you have no alternatives lined up.

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I had been selling an ebook on one of my abandoned sites for about nine months. It was making me about \$35 a month on average, which is nice for a site that took me 15 minutes and \$7.99 to set up. Recently I tried a different approach and added eBay items to the site. Last month, the site made over \$60 for the same steady amount of traffic.

When you have good sets of performance stats for your site, add a new form of monetization and see how it performs. If it underperforms, you can always pull it; if you replaced a previous method with one that is underperforming, you can always reimplement the old method or try out another new approach.

Rule #6: Get Subscribers

You may have been told on many occasions that you should always try to get your visitors to sign up to a mailing list. You can achieve this by offering a series of tips or a free guide; the better the offer, the more subscribers you will attract.

What I am going to say next will probably shock most sensible marketers: I hate collecting names for my lists! I feel it's an imposition, and I have to force myself to do it.

However as much as I hate it, it is worth it. I've sent offers of ebooks to very small lists and made \$100–\$200 from one quick email.

If you are like me and detest list building, you can still get subscribers. Ensure that you make your RSS feed prominent. There are plenty of large RSS-style graphics available on the Internet. Draw your visitors' attention to your RSS feed, and make it easy for them to subscribe. Services such as Feed Burner (feedburner.com) are good for this.

By getting RSS subscribers, every time you make a post, they will see it. This gives them a reason to return to your site and read the whole article.

Let's see how many other forms of monetization we can think of...

Rule #7: Make Use of Plug-Ins

If you are using WordPress blogs, then make sure you make use of many of the available plug-ins. There are plug-ins that will enhance your SEO, and plug-ins that allow you to add various monetization sources. While many can be purchased, most are free. One thing they all have in common is that they save you time and help you to increase your profitability.

The easiest way to deal with plug-ins is to place all the ones you'll use in a folder on your hard drive. Whenever you create a blog, just upload them all en masse.

Building and monetizing a blog opens up a world of options in terms of marketing and income generation. So follow these simple golden rules for monetizing your blogs, and you can find yourself making a nice income with only a modicum of work.

About the Author

Mark Thompson spent many years working in IT consultancy in London. Following a re-evaluation of his goals and lifestyle in 2004 he sold everything he couldn't fit into the family car and moved to rural Spain where he now pursues a variety of online ventures. See: <http://www.income-academy.com>

MARKETING & BLOGS

The Marketing Potential For Blogs

by Kathy Jackson



A blog gives a voice not only to a website, but also to the customers and potential customers of the products and services represented on the website.



Who has a blog? The better question might be who doesn't have a blog? Blogs have actually been around for quite a while now. The term "blog" was coined way back in 1999 — practically prehistoric times in Internet terms.

Then in 2003, Google (a company that has always bet on winners) bought Pyra Labs. Pyra Labs is the company that developed Blogger. Mostly in those days, blogs were just a playground for teary-eyed teenage girls and others who could best be described as "strange." Internet business people hadn't even considered the marketing potential of blogs.

But, true to form, Internet gurus quickly saw the marketing potential of blogs. In the waning days of 2002, the U.S. Congress passed the CAN-SPAM Act, making the sending of unsolicited email a crime. This made Internet marketers look with both eyes wide open for another way to reach the general public with advertisements for products and services. The CAN-SPAM Act became the law of the land in January 2003, and blogs immediately became the new "weapon of choice" for Internet marketers.

What Is a Marketing or Business Blog?

There are several kinds of blogs. The type of blog is dictated by the objective of the blog owner. Some types of blogs are:

Personal or Family Blogs: These blogs are dedicated to the exchange of information between a limited group of people (i.e., family members, business associates, members of organizations, etc.). These blogs are not intended for commercial purposes.

Noncommercial Subject-Specific Blogs: These are blogs in which the conversation between posters is on a particular subject. Some subject-specific blogs might be dedicated to topics such as politics, religion, sporting events, specific health problems, and more. The exchange of information is the objective such a blog, and no products or services are promoted. These blogs can qualify for a nonprofit tax status.

Marketing or Business Blogs: The objective of a marketing or business blog is to sell products and/or services. Although a marketing or business blog might be dedicated to a specific topic like waterskiing or mountain climbing, and blog posts do provide information specific to that topic, the main objective of the website is to sell products and services that are related to the topic. Marketing or business blogs are intended to be for-profit ventures.

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Blogs provide the ultimate win-win situation. The marketer and the customer both like the blog, and the customer is actually helping the marketer get a higher search engine rank every time he posts to the marketer's blog.

Why Are Blogs Effective?

There are lots of reasons why blogs are such an effective marketing tool, but I believe that one of the most compelling reasons is that a blog gives a voice not only to the website, but also to the customers and potential customers of the products and services represented on the website.

Back in the old Web 1.0 days, communication was a one-way street. The marketer could advertise products and services, but the technology wasn't available either to actually discuss the selling points of a product or service, or for customers to join in the discussion about the pros and cons of a product. Customers couldn't post questions and get answers. Communication between seller and buyer was limited to email.

Blogs have made communication between marketers and customers a two-way street! And those on both sides of the sales equation really like two-way communication. Blogs have proven themselves to be a very effective marketing tool in the last four or five years, and they've even exceeded the expectations of the "experts."

How Do Blogs Enhance Marketing Opportunity?

Blogs enhance marketing opportunities in many ways, especially for affiliate marketers. Some merchants do have blogs, but most do not. On most large merchant websites, you are much more likely to find a live chat option than you are to find a blog. So while marketing blogs are not the sole property of affiliate marketers, they are used more often by affiliate marketers.

Some of the ways in which blogs enhance marketing opportunities are:

An active blog helps websites rank higher in search engine search results. The search engine spiders, or bots, love blogs. Every marketer knows that a high ranking in natural search results means more visitors, and more visitors translates into more sales, and more sales means the marketer is making more money — which is the objective in the first place.

Search engine spiders love blogs because of the constantly updated content. The old saying "content is king" once again proves true, and it's also true that changing content is spider bait.

Most static websites don't have any built-in way of updating content. The products and services are there, and the descriptions are there, and there's nothing that changes from day to day. But the content of blogs does change, and the beautiful thing is that the marketer doesn't even have to make all of the changes that will attract the spiders. Blogs provide the ultimate win-win situation. The marketer and the customer both like the blog, and the customer is actually helping the marketer get a higher search engine rank every time he

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posts to the marketer's blog.

A blog attracts new customers. Every marketer knows that getting a new customer is one of the single most difficult, not to mention most expensive, challenges of Internet marketing.

Advertising on search engines is expensive. A marketer can spend hundreds or even thousands of dollars on search engine advertising just to get one new customer. But a blog attracts those who are most interested in the subject to which a marketer's products and services relate. A participant on a waterskiing blog, for example, will buy water skis and products and services that are related to waterskiing.

Blogs might just be the best targeted marketing tool that has come down the pike since the Internet began!

A blog is the ultimate stealth marketing tool. Advertisers *advertise* products and services, but bloggers *discuss* a topic that is of interest to them and (hopefully) thousands of other people while recommending products and services (for which they are affiliate marketers) within blog posts. It's a well-known fact that people hate advertising. But marketers need to advertise so that they can sell products and services. The answer to those crossed opinions and objectives is a blog.

Blog posts do not LOOK like advertising, but advertising is precisely what they are. Blogs provide an advertising vehicle that actually works, that people like, and that is basically free.

A blog attracts new business opportunities. A blog makes an online business more visible not only to potential customers but to other online business people as well. A high rank in the search engines provided by a blog is irresistible to other online marketers.

As a marketer becomes more and more visible online because of his blog and as his search engine rank improves his opportunities for joint ventures and other marketing opportunities will increase. Success really does breed success. The more successful and the more active a blog is, the more successful the owner of the blog will become.

When Should Blogs Be Used to Enhance Marketing Efforts?

If you don't already have a blog on your website, then now is not too soon to put one on it. And the answer to the question of when blogs should be used to enhance marketing opportunities is constantly and unceasingly.

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MARKETING & BLOGS

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Blogs are not an either/or situation. You do not have to choose between a blog on your website or, say, publishing a monthly ezine or sending a weekly newsletter or advertising to your opt-in list via email. A blog is an excellent addition to a website, and it will enhance all of the other marketing techniques that a marketer is already using. Many affiliate marketers even use blogs in lieu of websites to drive their marketing efforts.

Regardless of what you do, you should make certain your customers and other visitors can access your blog:

- Your ezine, newsletter, and marketing emails should all contain links to your blog.
- A link to your blog should be included in the resource box of all articles and ebooks that you submit to article banks and ebook repositories.
- There should be a link to your blog in your name tag when you post to other blogs and forums.
- All sales receipts and acknowledgments should contain a link to your blog.

It's important for a blog to stay active in order for it to provide the best marketing opportunities, so blogs should receive posts at least every other day, and preferably daily. Posts do not have to be long; 300 words are sufficient.

Conclusion

Blogs are the greatest thing to come down the pike for Internet marketers since the very idea of the Internet was conceived and the first product was sold online. The marketing opportunities afforded by marketing and business blogs are almost unlimited.

We all know that building an attractive and easily navigated website is vital to online marketing success. That's a given. But the fact is that today's customer expects to have his voice heard. So not only is a blog a great marketing opportunity but the LACK of a blog can actually be a deterrent to sales.

Marketing and business blogs are here to stay, and they really do afford a whole host of marketing opportunities.

About the Author

Kathy Jackson is a Texas Rancher and freelance writer. She is also a contributing author for several farm and ranch publications. Internet marketing is one of Kathy's burning interests and she is just "tickled pink" to write for AC Magazine and Anik Singal, her marketing hero. On the Affiliate Classroom Blog (<http://blog.affiliateclassroom.com/>), you will find several articles by Kathy on various aspects of affiliate marketing.

BEST BLOGS

Top 10 Blogging Blogs

by Kathy Jackson



There is a real art — with some science mixed in — to both blogging and making money doing it.

Blogging is one of the topics most discussed at any gathering of Internet entrepreneurs both online and off-line today. The topic, blogging for profit, has certainly generated plenty of interest!

There are several kinds of blogs. Some blogs are intentionally nonprofit. They are communities of people who share a health problem or an interest who simply gather to discuss the topic and exchange information and/or ideas. No products are being sold, and no profit is expected.

Other blogs are “nonprofit” but not by design, and their owners are not happy about that kind of nonprofit status. These sites do have products and services for sale and the intention is to use a blog to create interest, sell “stuff,” and make a profit. Apparently, the task isn’t quite as easy as it looks. It seems that there is a real art — with some science mixed in — to both blogging and making money doing it.

A blog that is unintentionally nonprofit is a problem, and like all Internet-related problems, this creates an informational vacuum that must be filled. Blogging about blogging for profit is now a new Internet industry that’s doing well.

The ranking of these blogs about blogging is completely unscientific and is simply a reflection of my opinion about which blogs are the best, the most helpful, and the most informative. With that said, here are my picks for the top 10 blogs about blogging:

Daily Blog Tips (<http://www.dailyblogtips.com/>)

Daniel Scocco, the author of Daily Blog Tips, has a degree in International Economics and was working for an multinational company when he determined that, although he was being paid a very generous salary, he could make more money and have more fun doing it by pursuing success for his Internet businesses full time. That’s what he did and in 2005 he began blogging about his experiences and now he shares the lessons that he has learned in his Daily Blog Tips Blog.

Dosh Dosh (<http://www.doshdosh.com/>)

Maki (no last name given), the author of Dosh Dosh, is a young man who is still a student in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, but who is wise beyond his years when it comes to blogging for profit.

Entrepreneur's Journey (<http://www.entrepreneurs-journey.com/>)

Yaro Starak, the author of Entrepreneur’s Journey, is a young entrepreneur from Australia whose blog mentoring program is excellent. Yaro is extremely successful and has a definite talent for passing along what he has learned.



BEST BLOGS

Zac Johnson.com (<http://www.zacjohnson.com>)

Zac Johnson has been around long enough to know what does make money and what doesn't. He shares some excellent, and hard-gained, knowledge about affiliate marketing and blogging.

Blogging Tips (<http://www.bloggingtips.com/>)

Blogging Tips is a blog for bloggers about blogging. News that is of interest to bloggers is posted regularly, and topics such as designing your blog, promoting your blog, and coding are discussed at length.

Blog Storm (<http://www.blogstorm.co.uk/>)

Blog Storm is edited by Patrick Altoft. Patrick is the managing director of a search engine optimization firm and knows his stuff about blogging for profit. There's lots of great information on this site.

Pure Blogging (<http://www.pureblogging.com/>)

David Culpepper founded Pure Blogging for the purpose of providing usable information to bloggers of all skill levels. Needless to say, he's succeeded. The blogging information on the Pure Blogging site is practical and usable for all bloggers.

Net Profit Today Blog (<http://www.netprofitstoday.com/blog/>)

Rosalind Gardner's Net Profits Today really is one of the best blogging blogs around. I like the way the site is categorized, and it's so easy to navigate. It's simply an excellent site!

The Blog Entrepreneur (<http://theblogentrepreneur.com/>)

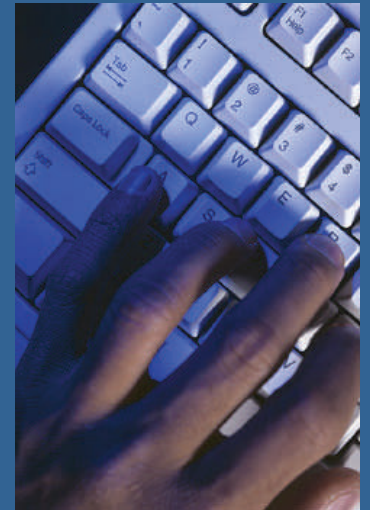
The Blog Entrepreneur contains some great information, such as how to find a niche idea and how to start your own mailing list.

Pro Blogger (<http://www.problogger.net/>)

Pro Blogger owner Darren Rowse says that this site is "dedicated to helping other bloggers learn the skills of blogging, share their own experiences and promote the blogging medium."

The order of this list could easily be reversed or rearranged in any number of ways. The order in no way means that I believe one blogging blog is better than any other. Each of these blogs have their own flavor and their own approach to blogging, and I recommend that they all should be used by anyone who is new to the world of blogging.

Blogging about
blogging for
profit is now a
new Internet
industry that's
doing well.



Thanks for reading! Next month we'll take an in depth look at all kinds of affiliate networks. As always, AC Magazine is free - no squeeze page, no email address required! Download your copy here:
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