

7 Steps to Start Expanding Your Influence and Earning an Income Online with Blogging

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INTRODUCTION

My Blogging Success Story

I started blogging in 2005. I'm a pastor and it was my goal at the time was to send encouraging messages to all of my church members. I could have emailed them, but I wanted the writings preserved for others to see. So I blogged.

Fast-forward five years. I'd learned enough that I'd been invited to become the Editor of a well-known blog about blogging. A strange phone call came one day, which turned into a dream job opportunity helping to re-launch one of the most prominent online communities of pastors and church leaders in the world.

Since then, my blog has helped me start a church, recruit coaching and consulting clients, and earn a substantial passive income from affiliate marketing.

I'm a big believer that blogging happens to be a vital tool in the hands of any leader hoping to grow their influence or earn a passive income. And it's not changing anytime soon.

This little ebook is a condensed version of what I've learned over the past dozen years about building influential and income-producing blogs.

But before we get started, you need to know there's a bigger, better way to learn the art and science of blogging. It's with the 850,000-member strong learning community at Wealthy Affiliate University.

**Create your free account
at Wealthy Affiliate today...**



Affiliate Income Disclosure

It is safe to assume that links to resources are affiliate links. This doesn't change your price, and I have not received anything in exchange for mentioning them, but I would earn a small commission should you click through and make a purchase.

Further, since you're educating yourself about blogging and affiliate marketing, you should know that a disclosure like this one is not only the ethically right thing to do, it's also a matter of United States law.

**Read More About the FTC's
Disclosure Regulations**



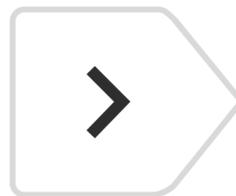
STEP 1

The BEST Way to Start a Blog

1. Sign up for a free account at Wordpress.com and start blogging. This is a **good** way to start a basic blog, but it's quite limited as far as earning an income.

2. Sign up for cheap shared hosting from Bluehost, install Wordpress with a single click, and start blogging. There's a big learning curve and issues with security and support.

Sign up for a web hosting account from Bluehost.



3. The **BEST** way (in my experience), is to take 60 seconds and start a Wordpress-powered blog with SiteRubix, the platform included with Wealthy Affiliate University.

I'm currently hosting over a dozen sites with my premium account. It's far better than shared hosting, I get very helpful support with any issue, and I have a massive community of eager bloggers to answer questions along the way.

Launch your website in less than 60 seconds.



Turn Your Passion into a Thriving Business
With the Wealthy Affiliate Community

choose your website name

.siterubix.com

It Starts with a Beautiful Website!

[Build My Free Website!](#)

STEP 2

Define Your Online Brand

A brand is way more than a logo. A brand is the story that people are telling about a person, a product, or an organization.

And you have a brand, whether you want one or not.

Think of a few of your favorite leaders to follow and you could probably describe their personality, their expertise, and what it is that makes them worthy of following pretty quickly.

If you're attempting to lead better, to lead more people, to influence the world in any way, then you have to embrace that there will be a consensus about you among those who know you. That's your brand.

Evaluate your brand with these questions.

Does the design of your blog reflect your unique personality?

Does the content show that you're an expert in your niche?

Does your blog feel personal? Or corporate? (Personal is better.)

And as you write, blog, influence, sell, share, help, and serve, your personal brand will grow along with your network. And with your network, you get to choose what to do with it.

But remember. It will never, ever, just be about you.

**Learn about branding from
Gary Vaynerchuk!**



STEP 3

Clarify Your Vision

A lot of bloggers start out with a great idea, but ideas run out of steam without vision. So, more than a cool domain name and niche concept, you need a picture of how your blog will develop over time. This is what we call **vision**.

I would express my vision for my primary blog this way:

I envision a blog that influences thousands of people who aspire to live and lead with hope and purpose.

Goals are concrete targets you hope to hit. You can have goals for a variety of aspects of your blog, such as:

I hope to build an email list of _____ subscribers by _____.

I hope to see an average of _____ pageviews by _____.

I hope to write _____ posts in the next _____ weeks.

Are you familiar with the concept of SMART goals?

Goals need to be specific.

Goals need to be measurable.

Goals need to be attainable (but not easy to attain necessarily).

Goals need to be relevant (they need to matter).

Goals need to be time bound (they have a deadline).

Write down 3 smart goals for your blog for the next month.

Learn about setting goals
for your blog



STEP 4

Refine Your Blog's Design

Effective website design is not about being pretty, colorful, or having lots of objects and moving parts. In fact, some of the most widely read websites have very little to look at outside the content itself... and that's the point.

Effective website design can be summed up as this: **framing great content well.**

If you're blogging with Wordpress, there are three basic directions you can go when it comes to your website's design.

1. Free themes - There are some great free Wordpress themes available, and if you're using the Wealthy Affiliate hosting platform, all of them are available with a click, and you can change between them anytime.

2. Premium themes - These cost a little bit of money - usually anywhere from \$50 to \$150. And there are a lot of premium themes out there to choose from. With premium themes, you usually get a lot more customization options built into the theme and often a nicer, cleaner look.

3. Custom theme development - It's a lot of fun, but a LOT of work! You need a knowledge of the programming language, PHP as well as some knowledge of Javascript and MySQL databases.

My favorite sources of
premium Wordpress themes



STEP 5

Extend Your Site with Plugins

A plugin is just an add-on, and there are a few that I consider pretty much essential to an effective website.

Check Out SEO Pressor from Daniel Tan



This plugin lets you create customized titles, meta information, and all kinds of other customizations. It also spits out a Google-friendly sitemap.

Check Out the Thirsty Affiliates Plugin



There are add-ons that allow you to auto-link words and phrases, measure stats, and further extend the functionality, but the free version works great in most cases.

Check Out the Google Analytics Plugin



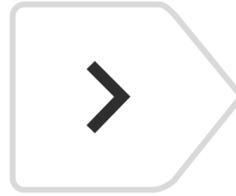
You install it, then go to the settings page and log into your Google account and it grabs the code needed to track all of your site's visits appropriately.

Check Out the EasyAzon Plugin



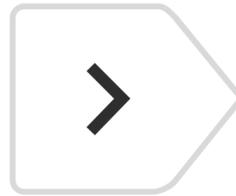
If you want to insert Amazon affiliate links into your content, or even build entire Amazon stores, this is the plugin you need! It lets you search Amazon and insert graphics, buttons, and more right inside the Wordpress post editor panel. It's powerful!

Check Out the Bloom Plugin from Elegant Themes



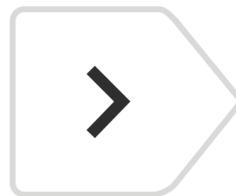
Bloom is a powerful plugin that helps you collect email addresses. You can easily add pretty pop-ups, inline opt-in forms, create widgets, and more. And, it integrates with most major email marketing providers.

Check Out the Monarch Plugin from Elegant Themes



Monarch, like Bloom, is offered by Elegant Themes. So if you buy either Bloom or Monarch, the other plugin, plus the Divi Builder plugin AND 81 awesome Wordpress themes all come with your membership! Monarch displays beautiful social sharing buttons on your posts and social follow links in your sidebar.

Check Out the Advanced Ads Plugin



How do you insert ads into your blog? And mix them up? And rotate them, put them in groups, use code or images or custom html? AdvancedAds. It does it all.

STEP 6

Build an Email List

There are three ways to get readers to your blog:

1. Search engine optimization.
2. Social media.
3. Direct traffic.

Each method of attracting readers has its merits.

People who find you through search engines are obviously already looking for the kind of content you're writing and, hopefully, for the products or services you might be selling. The downside is, they don't know you and there's no guarantee they'll ever come back after that first visit.

People you know through social networks are coming to your site because of you just as much as they are coming for your content. That's good because it's personal. The drawback is, most people clicking links on Facebook or Twitter have no particular intention to buy anything, so the conversion rate for social media traffic is lower.

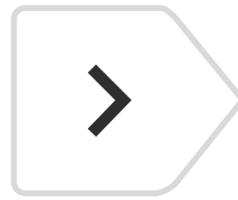
But people you send directly to your content are people who want your content and they're coming to trust you personally.

To put it another way, the very best thing you can do for your blog's overall influence, from day one, is to build an email list.

You can't just build your list in Gmail or another email provider. You'll have your account closed, eventually. You have to use a third-party and there are lots of good services to pick from.

While there is plenty of competition in this space, I would recommend looking at Aweber. It's very user-friendly, is built for bloggers and marketers, and is very open to being used for affiliate marketing.

Get a FREE One-Month Trial with Aweber!

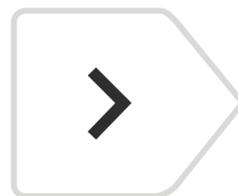


And after you've set up your account, how do you use it?

1. Email your list each time you post a new blog post (assuming it's one or two, maybe three per week at the most). Tell them what you just wrote about and include a link.
2. Keep it simple. Don't add a lot of images and flashy, shiny objects. Make it simple text. This helps to ensure that your email makes it to their inbox.
3. Email them occasional offers from products or services with whom you are affiliated.
4. Make it personal. Be available for a conversation with people who might hit reply.

There's more, of course, but that's a basic introduction and it's enough to get you started. Want to go deeper?

Anik Sangal's Free Online Workshop: Inbox Blueprint



STEP 7

Drive Traffic to Your Blog

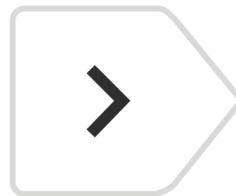
If you're a blogger, there are two things you absolutely need in order to keep going. Ideas. And traffic. I just want to give a sort of checklist of sources from which to drive traffic back to your blog. Some will seem obvious, but I want to be thorough.

Here we go...

Word-of-mouth. That's right - tell people you're blogging. Put it on business cards you can hand out.

Put a link to your blog in your email signature. You can set this up yourself, or you can use a tool like WiseStamp.

Set Up an Email Signature Using WiseStamp



Put links to your blog in the biographical portion of your social networking profiles.

Share the url's of your posts on your social profiles. You can just copy and paste the url into your status in most cases.

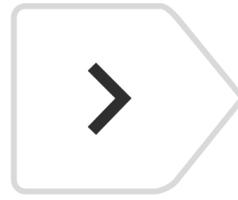
On Facebook, ask people specifically to click the link, like the post, share it with others, or leave a comment.

Email the link to the people on your subscriber list, which we just went into detail about on the last step.

Share a quote or graphic on Instagram and tell people to click the bio link, which can lead to your blog.

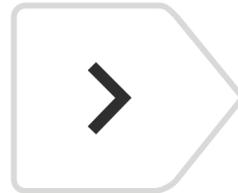
Hire people for \$5 to spread your posts far and wide using Fiverr, but only hire well-reviewed sellers.

Create an Account on Fiverr and Hire People for \$5.



Use JustRetweet.com to ask others to share the link on Twitter, and earn points by sharing links from others.

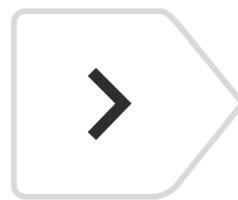
Create an Account on Fiverr and Hire People for \$5.



Write guest posts for other blogs and websites that allow you to link back to your blog in your bio.

Use solo ads to hire others to send you traffic from *their* email lists. Be careful - listen to the reviews about sellers.

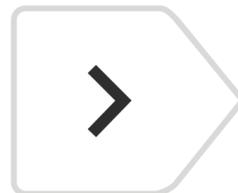
Try Out BigGenz Solo Ads with Guaranteed Results



Boost links for \$5 to \$10 on your Facebook pages. Leave comments on other blogs with your link.

Use safelists, but use them carefully. If you have no idea what a safelist is, it's okay. I have a whole blog post...

Learn More About Safelists and Which Are the Best



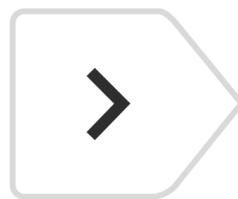
WHAT NOW?

Grow and Expand Your Blog

Remember to have fun. Build relationships. Create valuable content and market it well. That will bring you opportunities to serve others with your gifts.

In case you skipped to the last page first, let me leave you with three links I think are high in value:

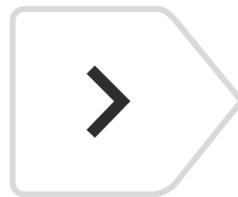
**The Wealthy Affiliate
University Community**



**My Big Toolbox of
Blogging Resources**



**My Big Toolbox of
Leadership Resources**



And always feel free to follow along with my blog!

Brandon A. Cox
brandonacox.com

