



**BOLD  
BEGINNINGS**  
*The Workbook*

*Busy Blogging Mom*

Although the author has made every effort to ensure that the information in this book was correct at press time, the author/publisher does not assume any liability to any party for any loss, damage, or disruption caused by errors or omissions, whether such errors or omissions result from negligence, accident, or any other cause.

No part of this document may be duplicated, transmitted, resold or reproduced in any form or by any means without prior written permission from the author and publisher. Unauthorized duplication of this material in any form is strictly prohibited. Violators will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

Copyright © 2016 Busy Blogging Mom

Book design and production by Chantal Steele, [www.busybloggingmom.com](http://www.busybloggingmom.com)

# THE TRUTH ABOUT BLOGGING

Blogging is exciting for anyone who's passionate about being their own success. The magic of blogging is that it isn't exclusive to any group of people.

If you're excited about blogging now, I hope that you continue to be excited and that your passion for your niche or expertise grows and multiplies as your blog does. However, the truth is that like anything worth doing, blogging is a lot of work.

Blogging isn't something to get involved with if you are hoping to get rich fast, and it's not something that you can be successful at if you are not passionate about your topics and message. Blogging is full of ups and downs, and it requires a large investment of time from the start. The truth is that it may take months or even years before your blog is exactly what you want it to be.

If you're passionate about something and want to share it with others, you're ready to begin! I hope you find this booklet to be a useful tool as you bravely enter the blogging world.

*-Chantal*

# MAKING MONEY BLOGGING

If you've downloaded this booklet, it's likely that you intend to make money from your blog now or in the future. Maybe you are motivated after reading the income reports provided by other bloggers. You *can* make money blogging, and the ways to do so are almost limitless! But how do bloggers really make money online? Here are brief explanations of the most common ways to make money as a blogger:

- Sponsored posts – You connect with a brand about a service or product and write a post about it. You + brand + \$ + blog post = sponsored post.
- Sponsored social media posts – This is when a brand compensates you to post as yourself on social media.
- Product/service reviews – These can be paid or you can receive “free” product for reviews. You share your thoughts about a given product with your blog audience and social media followers.

- Ads displayed on a site – this can be done by using an affiliate program or an ad network that does it all for you. You are most often paid per click or lead.
- Affiliate links – You drive traffic to another site with a unique URL and receive a commission when people sign up or buy.
- Sales of self-published e-books or other products – This is when you create and sell your own books, calendars, artwork, etc. on your blog.
- Offering services to clients or readers (think web design, virtual assistants, social media management, etc.)



# FIRST THINGS FIRST

## what should I blog about?

**HINT: DO THIS BEFORE YOU DO ANYTHING ELSE!**

Hopefully if you've already started a blog, you're absolutely 100% sure about your domain name and intended niche. However, it's totally normal to take awhile to clearly identify your niche. Use this page (and the next) to brainstorm for your blog and help yourself paint a picture of where you'd like your blog to go. Tip: Picking a niche that is too broad or too narrow can be hindering.

*my interests are...*

*my expertise is in...*

*I want to write about...*

*Blog name ideas include...*

*A year from now I want my blog to...*



# CREATING A LOGO & HEADER

If there's any one thing I want you to take away from this booklet, it's that you can absolutely blog without spending an arm and a leg getting started. There are several wonderful resources out there on which you can create your own custom logos, headers, signatures, and other graphics. I'm going to share those with you here!

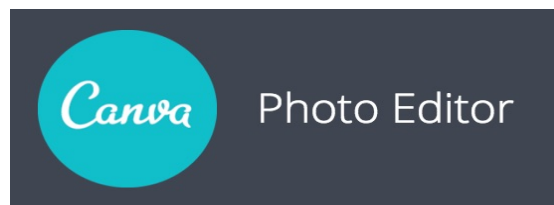
TIP: Creating free graphics is especially useful in the preliminary stages of your blog because the likelihood that you will change the appearance and message of your blog is high.

## Resource #1: PicMonkey



PicMonkey is a free option for editing and creating .jpg and .png images. It is highly user-friendly and offers everything you might need to create professional-looking graphics, including ones you might use for your logo or header. I use PicMonkey's free services for all of my blog graphics and suggest this option.

## Resource #2: Canva



Similarly to PicMonkey, Canva is a free option for editing and creating images. It, too, is highly user-friendly and offers everything you might need to create professional-looking graphics. Canva offers a few services that PicMonkey doesn't (like e-book cover design), but I am attracted to PicMonkey's simplicity.



# STYLE GUIDES: YOU NEED ONE!

A style guide consists of the colors, fonts, icons, logos, etc. that you will use on your blog. It is important to brand yourself as soon as you have a clear vision for your blog, and having a style guide (the visual stuff you will use over and over) helps you do just that. Readers and customers can easily recognize your brand when you use a consistent style for your graphics.

For example, I use the same two fonts on all of my blog images, and I use just one color scheme at all times. The colors I use can be seen on my images, font colors, blog header, and more. Choose colors and fonts that contrast well with both light and dark backgrounds if possible and make sure that the fonts that you choose are easily read.

I created a style “cheat sheet” for myself so that I can quickly reference it when I need HTML color codes (like #ffffff, which is the code for white.) I also sometimes forget what the names of the fonts I use are, so I like to keep them on my style guide. Use the following page to have a quick and easy reference when you are making your blog graphics and designing your site.

# My Style Guide

Site Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## My Fonts

Font 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Font 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Font 3: \_\_\_\_\_

## My Colors

Color 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Color 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Color 3: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

# IMAGE SIZE CHEAT SHEET

*Ideal sizes for blog and social media images.*



Header Photo: 1500 X 500

In-Feed Photo: 220 X 440



Feed Photo: Up to 1936 X 1936



Cover Photo: 851 X 315

Profile Photo: 160 X 160



Featured Image: 672 X 372 (Not ideal for images to be Pinned)



Profile Photo: 160 X 160

Board Cover Photo: 217 X 147

Pins 600W X 900-2100 L

# SEO

## Tips for Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Refining your SEO skills will help readers find you and increase your presence online. Use these tips to help search engines find your blog and match them to your audience in an effective way.

**Tip 1:** Download a plugin like YOAST SEO to help you easily implement SEO best practices.

**Tip 2:** Choose focus keywords that are as relevant to your posts or pages as possible.

**Tip 3:** Use your keyword(s) 4-6 times in your post or page.

**Tip 4:** Include your keyword(s) in the first paragraph (or sentence if possible) of you writing.

**Tip 5:** If possible, use your keywords in a heading somewhere in your content.

**Tip 6:** Include your keywords in the meta description (this is what shows up in a Google search below a page/post name).

**Tip 7:** Add high-quality images to your posts.

**Tip 8:** Be sure that images have alternative descriptions that include your keywords (you can add these when you upload the images.)

**Tip 9:** Use a plugin to create a sitemap so that search engines can easily crawl your site.

**Tip 10:** Add relevant tags to all of your posts.

**Tip 11:** Look into keyword research (there are ton's of tools out there) to help yourself understand what makes a good keyword.

**Tip 12:** Change your URL permalinks to "Post Name" in your WordPress settings.

**Tip 13:** Make sure your post or page title includes your keywords.

**Tip 14:** Link to yourself (internal links) whenever relevant.

**Tip 15:** Get backlinks (sites linking to yours) as often as you can.

# CONTENT IS KING

*Tips for writing content that gets you noticed.*

- Search engines like long-form content. Make your posts 1,000+ words long to help yourself rank higher.
- Format your writing in reader-friendly ways, using headings, small paragraphs, and graphics whenever possible.
- Focus on offering something to your reader – help, advice, instructions, encouragement, etc.
- Make sure that your posts are at least 70% original content instead of inundating your readers with sponsored content.
- Try to have at least 10 quality posts on your site before marketing your blog.
- Share relevant content from other bloggers on your site and on social media to give readers quality information and help them understand your brand.
- Include links to reputable and relevant sites or articles in your posts whenever possible.
- Be personal yet professional in your posts.

# Idea Frenzy

Step 1: Set a timer for 5 minutes.

Step 2: Write down as many post ideas as you can before the timer goes off!

**READY? SET? GO!**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_
11. \_\_\_\_\_
12. \_\_\_\_\_
13. \_\_\_\_\_
14. \_\_\_\_\_
15. \_\_\_\_\_

# WRITERS' BLOCK-BLOCKERS

*Keep the creative juices flowing by using these ideas for inspiration.*

- Visit StumbleUpon to see what's trending on the web.
- Surf Pinterest to see what other bloggers are up to and what's popular right now.
- Take a walk and clear your mind.
- Visit big-time bloggers like ByRegina or other bloggers you admire to get inspired.
- Search "blog income report" on Google or Pinterest. Read about how other bloggers are making stuff happen.
- Go to the library and visit the magazine section. Flip through magazines that are relevant to your niche, upcoming holidays, etc.
- Check out some books that are totally unrelated to your blog to take your mind off of things and gain new perspective.
- Revisit your old posts to update them and be reminded of what you originally intended for your blog.
- Chat with other bloggers and entrepreneurs about blogging.
- Join blogging FB groups to be part of blogging challenges, get tips, etc.

FILL THIS PAGE WITH WORDS THAT YOU WANT  
TO BE ABLE TO DESCRIBE YOUR BRAND WITH







# BLOG POST CHECKLIST

*Before you publish a blog post, ask yourself...*

Do I link to myself in this post (another page or post?)

Do I link to another website in this post?

Do I help, inspire, or add value for my reader in this post?

Do I have a CTA (call-to-action) in this post?

Is my post easy to read with headings and graphics?

Are the images in this post high-quality and "Pinnable?"

Is this post long enough to rank well?

Has this post been spell-checked?

Have I used SEO best-practices for this post?

# BLOGGING TERMS YOU SHOULD KNOW

- 1. SEO** – Search Engine Optimization – a method to write and format your posts and pages to be found easily in searches
- 2. Plugin** – Extensions of WordPress used for customizing your blog. Examples are YOAST SEO, Askimet, and SumoMe.
- 3. Content Upgrade** – A freebie offered to readers in exchange for an email subscription. Can be a free workbook, calendar, etc. Also known as a "lead magnet."
- 4. Widget** – A content area that performs a certain function. Most often seen in sidebars. (i.e. About Me widget)
- 5. Meta Description** – The description seen by search engines on your blog or posts. Important for great SEO. Download YOAST SEO or other plugin for implementation.
- 6. Bounce Rate** – The rate at which people are visiting your site and leaving without clicking on another post or page. The lower, the better.
- 7. Influencer** – A blogger, writer, personality, etc. that has influence on a group of consumers.
- 8. CSS** – "Cascading Style Sheet" – describes the presentation (colors, format, etc.) of a given page or document in markup language. Mostly for web designers (ignore it if you're not one even though all blogs have CSS)

9. **HTML** – “Hypertext Markup Language” – A language for creating effects like color, size, graphics, etc. on webpages
10. **Sitemap** – A list of the pages on a website – used by search engines for “crawling” and ranking your site
11. **Permalink** – A permanent hyperlink leading to a given page/post. Example- [www.busybloggingmom.com/bloggging](http://www.busybloggingmom.com/bloggging)
12. **Static Page** – A page that stays the same instead of featuring the most recent posts or updating automatically.
13. **Sidebar** – Widget-ready area of the side(s) of a post or page.
14. **Theme** – The overall style of a blog, including headers, fonts, formatting, layout, etc.
15. **Link Party** – A place to showcase your latest work by leaving a link to a post/page and visiting other blogs.
16. **VA** – Virtual Assistant – Remote workers that can be hired for anything on the web, including social media work, marketing, writing, etc.
17. **Affiliate Link** – A link provided by a 3<sup>rd</sup> party that when used, drives business to the other party and often results in a commission for the link user (the blogger.)
18. **Click-Through Rate** – The number of clicks an ad receives compared to the number of times that ad is seen (a.k.a. an “impression”)

18. **Unique Visitors** – Number of unique individual viewers of your blog (as opposed to repeat visitors)
19. **Conversion Rate** – The rate at which readers/customers are purchasing from a certain marketing effort such as an email campaign.
20. **RSS** – “Rich Site Summary” – A summary of the content of a given page or site, used to make receiving updates easy for readers.
21. **Opt-in** – Usually used with a lead magnet or content upgrade, an opt-in is an opportunity for readers to subscribe to your site, workshop, etc.
22. **Sponsored Post** – A post for which bloggers are paid to write about a given product or brand.
23. **Long-tail keyword** – 3-4 word, very specific keywords
24. **Gravatar** – “Globally recognized avatar” – A picture or graphic that represents a user
25. **Page (as opposed to post)** – A place for static information, often seen in menus



## WHERE TO FIND HELP

- WordPress.org (or your own platform) help forums. You can either read the questions asked by other readers or start your own help ticket.
- The Nectar Collective – Free tips, tutorials, and webinars for troubleshooting your email list setup, SEO help, product creation, and more.
- By Regina -- Find all kinds of tutorials and tips for all things blogging.
- Pinterest
- The Social Media Examiner (website)
- ProBlogger.com
- The Blog Stylist (website)



# SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGIES

## *Tips for basic social media marketing.*

- You should have social media accounts for your blog on these 5 platforms (if not more): Pinterest, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, StumbleUpon.
- Other useful social media platforms are Google+, Yummly (for food blogs), Bloglovin', LinkedIn, YouTube, and Tumblr.
- Social media should not just be used to share your own content – you are often penalized for this – and you should share other content regularly.
- You can save time by scheduling content to be posted with programs like Tailwind (Pinterest), Hootsuite, Buffer, and Edgar.
- You should develop a style guide to use consistently if your posts on social media are going to include graphics.
- Remaining consistent with your social media presence is important for your exposure.
- Add your posts and pages to StumbleUpon to reach varying audiences.
- Apply/sign up for business accounts on social media whenever possible. They often offer improved services and better exposure.
- Use the analytics pages associated with your different social media accounts to analyze the demographics and behavior of your viewers/readers.

# 50 TIPS TO GET YOU STARTED

1. Get yourself a Gravatar. This will help readers identify and recognize you more easily. Sign up for free at [www.gravatar.com](http://www.gravatar.com) and quickly appear more professional.
2. Submit your blog URL to major search engines. This will help people find you and increase your search rankings.
3. Submit your sitemap to Google or use a plugin that will do it for you. This helps Google crawl your site and improves your rankings.
4. Make sure that all of your blog images are “Pinnable.” High-quality, vertical images work best and should be included in every post. Make sure that you add a great description into the “alternative text” box when you upload your images.
5. Join blog networking groups on Facebook. You will find other blogs in your niche, have the chance to promote yourself, be inspired, and find collaboration opportunities.
6. Use original images (your own!) whenever possible. If you do not have high-quality original images, find CC0 license images (free for any use) at sites like Pexels or LibreStock.
7. Create unique and customized graphics for your site using a free editor like PicMonkey or Canva.
8. Create an opt-in form (email subscriptions) for your readers on your site and put it in relevant and easily-accessible places.
9. Make sure that you have share buttons for social media. You want readers to be able to share your work easily. I use the SumoMe and Jetpack plugins.
10. Set goals for your blog. Then set action steps for each goal.



11. Record your stats and expenses monthly. Measure your progress to keep yourself motivated, accountable, and aware.
12. Have a legal page with a privacy policy and advertising disclosure. Protect yourself.
13. Settle into a niche and hone in on your expertise to gain credibility.
14. Reply to the comments people leave on your blog. People like human interaction and you are more likely to have repeat readers.
15. Handle negativity with grace. If there is a negative reaction to your blog, don't give into negativity. Be polite but still acknowledge the thoughts of your readers. Agree to disagree.
16. Share love with other bloggers. Comment on other blogs, share other posts on social media, and interact to build community and gain respect in the blogging world.
17. Join link parties when relevant, as often as possible in the first few months of your blog. Link parties are a wonderful way to gain traffic and get comments. Follow the party rules and discover other blogs to make new friends and learn from others.
18. A simple but attractive theme is important. Stand out to readers without making your blog difficult to navigate or read.
19. Spellcheck is a must. Do not lose credibility by making simple spelling mistakes.
20. Bold focus keywords in your posts and on your pages for SEO.

21. Use Wordpress.org forums for technical help. If you're having a problem with WordPress, it's likely that someone else has had the same problem.
22. Read Ruth Soukup's, "How to Blog For Profit: Without Selling Your Soul."
23. Follow big-time blogs like byRegina, Dale Partridge, The Nectar Collective, and more for tips, help, and inspiration.
24. Post often to increase exposure. Google likes regular posters and you will climb the rankings if you have more content.
25. Follow your own followers back on social media and use it to gain insight about your audience.
26. Only be an affiliate for companies that you believe in.
27. Schedule your posts and social media interaction to maintain exposure and save time.
28. Use the same fonts to help create a recognizable brand.
29. Put your blog name or logo on your images. The more eyes that see your name or logo, the better.
30. Ask people to follow you on social media in your posts.
31. Link to yourself in posts in order to reduce bounce rates and engage readers longer.
32. Always preview posts before publishing. Use the preview tool to see how your post will look before publishing.
33. Check image previews on social media before using them.
34. Try to post at the time of day that your readers are online. You can find info about optimal times for varying social media platforms on the Social Media Examiner.

35. Pin other people's images regularly. The recommended amount is about 10 pins per day in order to keep from being penalized by Pinterest (your own images are less likely to be found in searches when you are penalized.)
36. Create your own link party to bring more traffic and get to know other bloggers.
37. Do not post about yourself too often—focus on helpful content for your readers.
38. Stay inspired by taking breaks, reading other blogs, surfing Pinterest, using Stumbleupon, and reading income reports.
39. Schedule your social media posts so that if you need to take a break from blogging, you can do so without sacrificing too much exposure.
40. Don't put all of your eggs in one monetization basket—use several different ways to earn from your blog when possible.
41. Add your pages and posts to StumbleUpon to gain new traffic and exposure. Add a StumbleUpon button to your site and posts so that readers and other bloggers can easily share your ideas.
42. Subscribe to blogs you admire to see how their authors are doing email marketing.
43. Back up your site regularly to avoid losing your content.
44. Have at least 15 posts before you go live and start advertising yourself.
45. Don't add unnecessary plugins to your site. They will slow your site down and can conflict with one another.

46. Use Google Analytics to analyze your progress, audience, and its behavior.
47. Ensure mobile responsiveness. Make sure that you have a good, easily navigated mobile site by using a plugin like WP Smart Mobile if you don't have a mobile-ready theme.
48. Try to guest post on other blogs whenever possible. The more sites that credit you and link back to your site, the higher you will rank in search engines.
49. Create an opt-in gift (lead magnet) when you are ready to grow an email list. This adds value to the reader and compels more people to sign up.
50. Have fun!