

How to Create a Stunning.

Professional Blog

With the Potential to Become a 'Top' Blog



How to Create a Stunning, Professional Blog With the Potential to Become a ‘Top’ Blog

Ever wanted to become a top blogger? In many ways, this is the perfect job and it will give you a chance to earn a living by writing about a subject that you love, all at your own pace.

Working as a blogger means that you make passive income. In other words, you earn money from the people who visit your site – meaning that the money comes in as long as your site is live. That means you aren’t exchanging your time for money anymore and taking a day off from work won’t cost you a day’s wages. You could spend all of tomorrow in bed and you would still make a ton of money from your blog! Oh, and if you reach the very top of your game, then the amount of money you can actually earn is gigantic.

At the same time, you’ll be a minor celebrity. It’s an amazing feeling to be a leader in your niche: to write content that people can’t wait to read and then to receive fan mail and questions. These days, becoming a blogger is actually one of the very best ways to *become* famous in fact!

Then again, if you’d rather stay anonymous then you can do that too!

Like I said: it’s the perfect way to earn money.

The only problem is that it’s a method that just about *everyone* wants to get involved with. If you want to be a top blogger, then you’re certainly not the first to try it and you certainly won’t be the last. Unfortunately, countless people have attempted this and failed in the past, so the question is: what can you do to be different? How can you succeed where others have failed?

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There are actually many answers to this question and if you want a completely blueprint to becoming a top blogger, then you need to read the full ebook: *Journey to Top Blogger*.

In *this* report though, you're going to learn everything you need to know in order to get off to the best possible start. In other words, we're going to look at how to build that blog in the first place. How to create a blog that has the *potential* to become a top blog. This will show you what makes the difference between a truly professional blog with the chance to become a gigantic household name and a much smaller blog that will never gain true recognition.



It Starts With the Niche and the Brand

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Before you can even begin thinking about how to create your blog, you need to choose your niche. The niche is of course the subject matter – this is what your site is about, whether that is fitness, money, dating, gardening, weddings or something else entirely.

A great niche is going to be something that has broad appeal so that you can gain the maximum number of readers, but it also has to be something that isn't *too* broad. By carving out your own niche, you will give yourself unique avenues through which to market yourself and you'll set yourself apart from the competition.

Often a good way to do this is to choose a big niche and then to hone in on a smaller aspect of that niche.

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So you have your 'fitness' niche but within that, you also have a huge number of smaller subcategories. These include such things as:

- Bodybuilding
- Weight loss
- Crossfit
- Bodybuilding for students
- Weight loss for the elderly
- Fitness for nerds

Another option is to *combine* niches. The 'fitness for nerds' niche is an example of this and it will give you the opportunity to blog both about fitness *and* about nerd culture. This is something that is done very well by the excellent blog 'Nerd Fitness'.

Either way, make sure you stand out and make sure that you have something that sets you apart on the basis of niche alone. Don't be 'just another fitness site' because that doesn't give your visitors any reason to subscribe to you. There are plenty of fitness sites out there already!

Mission Statement

In order to build a top blog, you need to begin thinking about the brand too. Note that 'brand' in this case does not just mean the logo – a brand is actually much more than a logo and instead speaks to the very 'mission statement' and the very objective of your site.

A mission statement is basically a statement of intent: this is your way of saying what you want your site to accomplish and why you're passionate about that. This is what sets your blog apart and if you have combined multiple different subject matters, then your mission statement is somehow going to communicate that.

A mission statement has nothing to do with you making money and nothing to do with 'what' you do on a daily basis. This is *why* you do what you do and it is *why* people should care and why they should be excited.

Your mission statement sets you apart because it can be completely different for two different sites that have apparently the same niche. For example, one fitness site might have this mission statement:

“A place for iron warriors to gather, exchange war notes and push themselves to the limit”

Or it might have this one:

“Helping to make readers happier, fitter and more functional in their daily lives.
Healthy life = happy life!”

These two sites have completely different tones and they have a completely different target audience. But that is what makes them different from a generic blog that lists exercises and that's what will make people *excited* about the niche.

And here is the thing that really matters: in order to make a top blog, you need to have something that sets you apart and you need to make sure your passion is coming across. This is coincidentally why it is also *so* important that you only ever choose a subject matter for your blog that you are truly passionate about. If you are not passionate about the blog subject you have chosen, then people are not going to want to read what you have written because it won't be different from anything else out there. Even if you hire a top writer, unless they are passionate experts in the niche *you* chose, then the content is just going to sound generic and plain – because all they can have done is top research it from other sources online and then regurgitate it in their own words.

Choose a niche you really believe in and let your personality come across. Bring something completely new to the subject matter and make sure that you are challenging the status quo with genuinely remarkable ideas.

And one more reason that your blog needs to be in a niche that you're passionate about? Because it is the only way that you can keep writing about it every single day without getting bored. Even the best blog in the world will not be a massive hit overnight and that means you're going to need to find the will to keep going even when you feel a little disheartened. The only way you'll be able to do that is if you really love the subject matter.

Creating Your Logo

Once you've done this, you can then begin to create your logo.

It is *very* important that you create a logo that you are proud of and that really sums up your site. What's even more important is that it should look *professional*.

The logo is the most important part of your marketing because every single piece of marketing or advertising you create is going to feature it. Likewise, your logo is going to be featured on the website itself and it is going to have an influence on the way that you design your website!

If your logo looks poorly designed, then it will make your site appear amateurish and it will *instantly* prevent people from getting behind your movement or putting trust in what you have to say.

To make your logo, you first need to come up with an idea.

To come up with your idea, one strategy you can use is to create a 'mood board'. A mood board is essentially a collage that includes a range of different images and other sources of inspiration. This will include logos from other sites, as well as various different words and various different images that speak to the topic of your site.

Think about your mission statement: what words come to mind based on that? What images? Draw them, find them online and collect them all in one place. As you do this, turn off your 'filter' and accept that there are no 'bad' ideas.

Once you've done this, you can then start trying to combine these ideas in different ways. Put different images together and try working them into the text that makes your site's name. Eventually, you should find a few ideas you like.

Try to avoid generic or cliched ideas. Images like globes, ticks or lightbulbs are badly overused and will come across as cliched.

At the same time, try to keep your design as simple as you can. Simple doesn't mean childish – it means subtle and understated. Think of the Nike tick – it is *incredibly* simple and this is part of what makes it so successful. A simple logo is something that can easily be recreated and that will also be inherently more versatile, allowing you to incorporate it into more different situations whether those are banner ads or even products that you are going to sell.

To actually bring your idea to life, you need to use a tool called Adobe Illustrator. This is important, because it can be used to create 'vector files'. Vector files are files that don't use pixels in a map (which is what a regular 'raster file' uses) but instead use instructions that tell the computer how to draw the image. Those instructions might include things like: line this length and in this angle, move 30 degrees, line this length...

The reason this is important, is that it means that image can be blow up indefinitely without any loss in image quality or resolution. The ratios of the distances and angles are simply increased and the image is drawn again, only larger.

If you don't know how to use Adobe Illustrator, then this is the point at which you consider hiring someone who can. You can find someone cheap on Fiverr.com, or you can try 99Designs, where you will be able to get multiple different designers to submit ideas and then choose your very favorite.



Building the Site

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Now you have the logo and the direction for your site, it's time to get down to actually *building* the site in order to come up with something that will look the part and function as it should.

The place to start is by finding a hosting account. There are lots of places that will host your website but one of the best and most reliable is BlueHost.com. BlueHost offers hosting packages for good prices and also includes all the additional features you could want, such as the one-click installation for WordPress through CPanel.

You're going to want to use WordPress for building your site because it is absolutely unrivalled when it comes to building a site that is professional looking and fully capable.

WordPress is completely free and yet it powers over a quarter of all the content on the net. It is used by some of the biggest brands in the world and it has a massive community that is actively developing new themes and plugins all the time. In other words, WordPress is a tried and tested commodity so that when you use WordPress, you will know without a doubt that your site is going to be *capable* of becoming a top blog. If you build it yourself from scratch, there will always be the concern that perhaps the code is somehow limiting that potential.

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Not only that, but by using WordPress you will ensure that you have access to all the most powerful plugins (featured in the full ebook) which will help you to extend your reach and grow even faster. Choose another tool to build your site and you make life immensely more difficult for yourself for no good reason!

And as I said, there is a one-click installation available through BlueHost to let you install this. The good news is that most hosting providers actually include cPanel and the one-click installation and even if you don't have this, you can install it by downloading the files from WordPress.com easily enough.

Customization

Now add your logo to the top of your website. This is the first change you're going to make to start customizing your site and making it yours and it's also going to help you to begin to define the look of your site. Whatever color scheme you have chosen for your logo, this is going to instantly impact the look of your site and the best option is to choose a similar color scheme for the rest of your site.

To do this, you will first want to install a custom theme. A theme is basically a particular design for a WordPress site which once again can be installed with a single click. You can find free themes through WordPress itself in the control panel but the best themes are paid. And one of the best sites for finding these paid themes is ThemeForest. Go to themeforest.net and you'll find a huge selection of different looks for WordPress.

There are a few things to consider for your site when choosing these. A good WordPress theme/blog design should be:

- Responsive – This means that the site will change shape and size in relation to the screen that is viewing it. In other words, it will be mobile compatible and won't look too big or too small on different screen sizes.
- Fast – Google will penalize sites that take too long to load and a lot of users will also simply just *leave* sites that do.

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- Customizable – You want your site to be customizable meaning that you can change lots of aspects of it. This will not only give you the freedom to make it really beautiful and just the way you want it but it will also make sure that there aren't too many other sites on the web that look just the same as your site.
- Image-Rich – These days, the best website will have lots of large, high definition images. A great feature for example is to have a slider that will go along the top of the site and showcase your latest content. Of course this means you will also need to focus on obtaining lots of high quality images or taking photographs to go with your site.

Most sites will let you look at a live preview before you select them. When looking at these, try to imagine them with your own logo and everything else in place and then ask yourself: is this as good as the top blogs in your niche?

Because that's what you're competing with. A lot of people will make blogs and think it's 'good enough' for a blog made by one person. Sure, you're at a disadvantage. But you know what? Your audience doesn't care. Your audience just wants to see an amazing website and they'll leave instantly if yours is anything less than 100% professional.

And here's another thing: if your site doesn't look 100% professional, then you'll never get a link from another top site and you'll never get sponsorships or paid advertising. Think about it: why would a top blog want to recommend your site if it looks like it was made by a 10 year old?

With this installed, you can then go about tweaking it to your heart's content. This should normally mean that you will change things like the font (very important for good readability), the color scheme, the layout of widgets and number of sidebars etc.

Plugins and the Rest of Your Presence

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Once you have finished tweaking your site to perfectly match your mission statement and to look every bit as professional as your top competition, the next thing you need to do is to do the same for your social media accounts.

Set up accounts with Twitter, with Facebook and with Instagram. Consider others too such as Google+ and YouTube. Make sure that on each of these channels, you are using the precise same logo and name and keeping your brand completely consistent. You want to make your brand *everywhere* and communicate a very clear and singular message.

You can then start to install plugins. We've listed lots of these in the main ebook but they will essentially fall into some basic categories. Some plugins will help to improve the function of your site and its marketability – things like SEO plugins and speed optimization plugins. Of course these are very important for building a site with the potential to go massive.

But the others will be things that help improve the experience for your visitors and change the look of your site. Many of these will be widgets – small 'apps' that run in the sidebars of your site and do things like showing off your social media accounts. That can be a very powerful tool because it ensures that people see the rest of your online presence the minute they land on your site, giving them more ways to contact you and to stay in touch.

Once all this is done, then you have a site that is ready and waiting to be taken to the next level. All that's left is to start filling it with meaningful content and marketing it. Which, to be fair, is the hard part!

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