
HOW TO

PARTNER WITH BLOGGERS

AISHA ADAMS MEDIA



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“Businesses that blog an average of 3 times a week receive 5 times more traffic than businesses that don’t bother to blog at all.” -Hubspot I am sure you have been looking everywhere to share your brand with relevant audiences and engage on social media. I get it; the pressure is on since 71% of people are more likely to make a purchase based on social media referrals (Hubspot). Contrary to popular belief, social media isn’t just Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, and Twitter. The soul of social media is good blogging.

That movie review you read was most likely a blog post promoted on Facebook. Even that recipe you got from that link on Instagram was probably a blog post. Most successful social media attempts lead back to websites that host blogs. The bottom line is blogging is vital to any good marketing plan; it generates leads, engages an audience, and keeps your website moving up the ranks in Google. However, most business owners aren’t mindful that blogging requires a particular skill-set.

Partnering with the right blogger is a good way to make your product or service stand out. Partnering with an industry-specific blogger can save your company time and money in the marketing department.

Characteristics of a Good Blogger

Good bloggers are trained writers, have influence (friends, fans, & followers), and are savvy when it comes to marketing themselves and their content. They bring their audience and know how to engage both current and prospective customers. Good bloggers know how to talk about topics relevant to your products or services and make people more aware of your industry, but they can do it while leading people back to your brand to learn more about your company’s product or service.

The Business of Blogging

I sat down with fashion blogger and founder of Bloggers Like Me (BLM) Leslie Young to discuss the impact bloggers can have on integrated marketing plans of businesses.

NNG: You are a pretty influential fashion blogger. What kinds of services do you offer to business owners in your area as a freelance writer and blogger?

LY: First, I'd like to say that I'm so glad you are covering this topic. There are bloggers and businesses "blogging blindly." Hopefully, this guide will bring clarity to this subject. I offer a wide variety of writing services for businesses ranging from product reviews on my blog to ghost writing on their blog or website. Although these are the common services I provide, I offer my writing services to anyone looking for a professional voice to enhance their business.

NNG: Businesses are looking for bloggers with influence and reach. What would you suggest small business owners look for when measuring how impactful a blogger can be to their brand? Should it be about blog hits, subscribers, or followers? Are there any magic numbers?

LY: In the beginning, when blogging was significantly undervalued, businesses across the spectrum sought bloggers strictly based on a "magic number" of followers. As blogging has become more familiar, brands are beginning to realize that influence is not always a direct correlation with the number of followers a blogger has. In fact, I would argue that most smart business owners would find value in collaborating with local bloggers who have influence in the business' community, as opposed to working with a non-local blogger based strictly on their following. For small businesses especially, it should not be all about the numbers, hits or subscribers. Quality over quantity should be your rule.

Advertising today has become noise for many consumers. It's hard to determine the best product for your dollar. For this reason, consumer trends indicate that referral relationships influence spending tremendously. Bloggers have an established relationship with their audience. They've already done the hard work. This is why smart businesses partner with bloggers.

NNG: How much should business owners expect to spend? What is the best method for coming up with fair compensation?

LY: While there's no absolute value that can be attached to a blog post, there are some qualifiers to keep in mind.

1. A well-researched blog post can take several hours and days to construct.
2. Many bloggers charge on an hourly basis, so if you're submitting an offer rate, keep in mind that it can be insulting if your offer doesn't at least meet your state's minimum wage.
3. Often, bloggers accept in-kind services. For example, if a blogger is hired to write a review of her experience at a nail salon, the nail salon may offer a flat rate along with additional free services at the salon.
4. Many bloggers have a media kit which outlines their standard rates. If they do not, it's best to ask the blogger to provide a quote for their service first and work from there.
5. A top priority for bloggers is exposure. If a business can offer exposure for the blogger (i.e., feature the blogger on a business website, host an in-store event for the blogger, etc.) this may also offset some cost.

NNG: What is the best way for business owners to find the right blogger?

LY: While there's no absolute value that can be attached to a blog post, there are some qualifiers to keep in mind.

Like any position you hire for, finding the right fit is essential. It is also important for you to review references and samples of the blogger's work. Make sure their work is free from typos, grammatical errors, etc. Find out the turnaround time for your project and make sure you are responsive.

Some businesses opt to work with agencies and skip the hands-on process of finding a blogger. However, like any position you hire for, finding the right fit is essential, especially in this role. I recommend business owners conduct an interview in person or over the phone, review samples of work and check references. Because this person will represent your brand, learning as much about the blogger as possible is important.

Bloggers Like Me is a community of 2,000+ bloggers across the US from all kinds of genres. As the founder of this community, I share collaboration opportunities with this community regularly.

Before You Partner: Attributes of a Good Blogger *BLM professional bloggers weigh in on what makes a good blogger.*

Good bloggers work hard and stay focused.

“Read, proofread, and then re-read your blog posts before AND after publishing them! Sometimes mistakes slip through, and no one wants their credibility lowered just because they missed a letter or a word.”

-Sanaa Brooks <http://www.sanaabrooks.com>

“Don’t get discouraged by low readership. The small victories, they keep you going while you wait for the bigger ones.”

-Lyne A. <http://www.anointedheels.com>

“Comparison is the thief of joy. It’s easy to get caught up in the next blogger’s numbers or opportunities, but that just robs you of energy you can spend doing YOU! There is no one out there with the same voice as you; own that. Run your race and don’t look over your shoulder for the next person.”

-Kristina Denise www.curvygirlchronicles.net

“Remember why you started. It will help you through the tough times and motivate you to continue.”

-Crystal Starkes <http://www.shebeknowin.com>

Good Bloggers have a niche, are informed, and are influencers.

“Be true to yourself and your blog/brand. Shiny opportunities come, and they go, but you have to live with your choices. Make sure you are happy with those choices!”

-Dea Win <http://www.prettygirlsrockdres...>

“Stay connected to other bloggers, focus on information that you and your readers would be interested in reading and learn from on a daily basis, stay true to who you are, and never give up!”

-Toija Rukuni <http://www.motheroftheworld.ne...>

Good Bloggers are creative, organized, and are strategic.

“Find a networking group with individuals that are thriving, supportive and encouraging... people who are willing to share information and want everyone to succeed. There is more than enough for everyone to eat.”

-Michellette ‘Mimi’ Green <http://www.mimicutelips.com>

“Each step brings you closer to your goals. Create mini-goals and celebrate when you reach each goal. It will keep you motivated to keep going.”

-Patricia Kira Kylolo <http://www.Divasintransition.o...>

“It’s okay to change your niche. Oftentimes, we grow from our original purpose of starting a blog; then we are forced to rethink and recreate. It’s okay to do that!”

-Crystal Starkes <http://www.alwaysphrea.com>



Are you thinking about adding a blogger into your strategic marketing plan? Let's brainstorm during a strategy session. Click my picture to schedule yours today!