

SPECIAL REPORT

Bloggng Basics And Best Practices



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About Tim Sales

After 11 years with the US Navy Underwater Bomb Squad Team, I answered an ad in the Washington Post that would change my life forever. This ad led me to the first and only Network Marketing Company I ever joined — and after just two years of working the business part-time I was making \$60,000 per month.

Five years later my income reached \$150,000 per month with 2,000+ new distributors joining my team each and every month. My distributor organization eventually grew to 56,000 people in 26 countries.



I decided to retire from active network marketing nearly ten years ago, but I still continue to receive a substantial passive income from my business. This ability to build passive income is one of the hallmarks of network marketing. Few opportunities can offer that and perhaps this is one of the reasons why you're reading this special report.

Out of my passion for teaching and training others to achieve success in MLM, I've created several sets of tools and programs to help you find prospects, invite them to learn about your opportunity, present that opportunity to them and ultimately train your new distributors to do the same.

These tools and programs are used by millions all over the world. My hope is that you will use these tools yourself. I am certain they can help you achieve your MLM goals and build a huge business – even if you're starting out part-time.

Blogging Basics And Best Practices

How To Start a Free Blog Using Blogger.com, Tips For Getting Started With Your First Posts... and more!

Introduction – What is Blogging?

Having an online presence is important for any business, but as a network marketer, you know first hand how vital it is to the success of your business to have a website that not only tells prospects about you, but also about your products and opportunity.

Having a presence on the web allows you to connect with a wide variety of people from all over the world. There are truly no boundaries to how big your business can grow and international expansion is much easier when you use a website to share your opportunity with others.

If you are looking for a way to show off your expertise, your products and business opportunity, you should consider starting a blog as part of your online marketing and lead generation efforts.

What is a Blog?

A blog is actually an online journal of sorts. With a blog you can upload daily, weekly or monthly posts about anything that you want. Some people create personal blogs as a way to keep in touch with family members. Pictures, videos and other information are uploaded so your loved ones are current with what is going on with you.

In this report, we are going to talk about business blogs. This is a blog that you begin to attract traffic in order to sell products or services. To be interesting to others, your blog will need to:

- Have updated content for visitors
- Be marketed to draw traffic
- Register with search engines so it can be found in the rankings

How to Start

If you are new to blogging, use a free blogging platform to get your feet wet. Sites like Blogger.com, Wordpress.org, Blogspot.com and others offer free blogs to users. Depending on the site you choose, the themes (layout of the site) and plug-ins (added features) will vary. Most will walk you through the process step by step so that you can be up and running in no time.

In this report, we'll take you step-by-step through the process of starting a blog using Blogger.com – and as you'll see, it's very easy to get started. You could literally have your own blog going in less than an hour and be uploading your first blog post tonight. Also, keep in mind that your ExploreFreedom.com account allows you to use the Brilliant Compensation video on other websites that you own. Take a look at the Quick Start Guide in your back office area for specific instructions on how to add those videos to your blog.

Before you start posting, decide what will be the theme, or niche of your blog. A jack-of-all-trades type of blog doesn't do as well as one that is geared towards a certain niche. If you want to focus on product sales, then you might want to make the actual product your niche. Or, you might decide to focus on the business opportunity – so your theme could be about the company you're with, or you could generalize it more and create a blog where you post about freedom and entrepreneurship.

Create posts that talk about your chosen subject or what would be interesting to people who are looking for information about your subject. Once you have decided on a path, it is time to create that great content.

How to Get Visitors To Your Blog

In order to be successful with your blog, you need to have people visiting it. To draw traffic you have to get the word out about your blog. Just as you currently do with your product and business opportunity, you have to tell your friends and family members that you are online and ask them to visit your blog. This is a great way to start.

Your goal in the beginning is to build your readership with interesting posts. Then you can put into play a number of profitable additions like:

- Google AdSense
- Selling Advertising
- Affiliate Marketing
- EBook Marketing



The simplest one to pursue is Google AdSense. You are using targeted advertisements to create revenue for your blog. These ads are placed by Google on your blog, and if one of your visitors clicks on an ad, you're paid for that click. There is more information on this at the end of this report. However, keep in mind that if you choose to allow AdSense on your blog, you have limited control over the type of ads that Google displays...and every prospect you send to your site will see these ads. While that may or may not be a negative thing, it's definitely something for you to consider.

Another way to make some additional passive income from your blog is with affiliate marketing. This is when you can get paid for referring your visitors to another persons' website and they purchase something. For example, www.FirstClassMLMTools.com has an affiliate program. When you place one of our banners on your blog and a visitor clicks your banner and purchases something, you'll earn a commission for that sale. It's very simple to do. To learn more about our affiliate program visit www.FirstClassMLMTools.com/Affiliate-Program.

EBooks and free reports are short downloadable electronic books that you can create yourself and sell on your website. They can be on a variety of subjects but in order for them to sell, you must be able to offer new information to your customers.

Blogs can be used not only to expose your product and business opportunity but also to generate revenue. Start with your chosen niche and market your blog to find the traffic you need. Then, utilize these ideas to turn a profit.

Blogging Best Practices

A Successful Blog Is About One Thing: Good Content

In order to gain and keep readers who keep coming back, you must provide interesting and valuable content to them on your chosen subject. In this section, we're going to go over some of the "best practices" for providing and writing good content that will really resonate with your readers, making them want to come back for more.

Write Great Blog Headlines

Writing great blog headlines can be difficult, which is why many bloggers simply don't bother to do it. However, if you're willing to learn how to get better at it, you'll be surprised by how much a good headline can improve your results.

So what's the secret to writing good headlines? It's a combination of things.

But most importantly, it involves thinking like a copywriter. This means that you must understand your audience, think like them, and then make a conscious effort to persuade them using every strategy available to copywriters.

Here are some ideas about writing blog post headlines:

1. Make a Big Promise

Your blog post may provide very large benefits to your readers.

Example: It might tell them how to use a new technique to improve their health that is not explained well elsewhere.

However, if you do not communicate this information to your readers, then they won't see the benefit and won't bother to read your entry.

Example: As an example, consider using a headline like:

"3 Easy Ways To Improve ____."

For all readers, this is a simple and tangible benefit and if this is something they want, then there's a good chance they'll read the entry.

2. Arouse Curiosity

Another strategy you can use to improve your headlines is to arouse curiosity.

By doing so, you will make it difficult for the reader to leave without having first satisfied that curiosity by at least skimming your entry.

Again, using our health example, you might say something like this:

Example: "Find Out How This Strange Health Tip Can Get You Real Results"

3. Use Trigger Words

If you've ever read a guide on copywriting, you've probably noticed that the term "trigger word" is thrown around quite frequently.

If you're not familiar with the term, it refers to any word or phrase that triggers a psychological response on the reader's part.

These are very useful, as they can compel people to take action and make decisions when an alternate choice of words would not.

The following is a short list of some "trigger words" that you may want to use in your blog headlines:

- free
- news
- introducing
- new
- announcing
- explosive
- proven
- shocking



4. Get Specific

Blog readers need a story that they can visualize if you want them to be compelled. If visitors cannot visualize the story that your headline suggests, then they won't bother to read further.

One way in which you can make it easier for them to visualize your story is to *be more specific*. As an example, compare the following two claims:

Example #1:

"Make as much as \$200 with this strategy in your first week"

"Make as much as \$197.83 with this strategy in your first week."

Example #2:

"Lose 20 pounds in one month"

"Lose as much as 19 pounds in one month."

In each case, the second option provides a higher degree of detail than first and signals to the reader that the blogger is communicating the exact story, rather than embellishing or being vague.

5. Speak Directly to Your Target Market

While it's true that the people you target have other interests, it's NOT true that you know what they are. All you know about the people who visit your blog is that they have an interest in your subject/niche.

This is precisely why it is vital to target these interests specifically, rather than a person with generic interests. This is something you should keep in mind when writing headlines.

Example: If you have a weight loss blog, then your headline should not work equally as well on a gardening blog.

That is—it should not appeal to general “human interests,” but instead, the interests of those who want to lose weight.

6. Draw Inspiration from Successful Bloggers and Tweeters

One of the best ways to learn how to write better headlines is to copy the style and approach of those who are successful at it.

One way in which you can do this is to watch the www.Digg.com front page each day. If a headline makes it there, then it has received hundreds or thousands of votes, indicating that the technique was successful.

Another place you can draw inspiration from is www.Twitter.com. Since tweets are limited to 140 characters, you can think of them as you would an unusually long blog headline. As you did with Digg, look for frequent re-tweets and analyze what it is that makes them unusually noteworthy.

7. Test, Track... Test, Track!

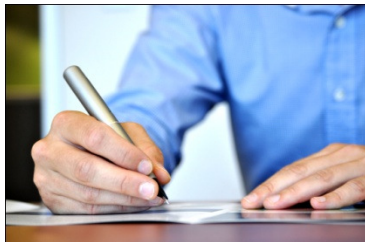
In addition to employing good headline strategies, you must also test them.

Otherwise, you will have no means of determining whether a strategy was successful or not. The best way to do this is to monitor your traffic statistics to see whether a certain headline technique increased the clicks to the post and amount of time the average visitor spent on your blog post. You can also test whether a headline and topic was successful by the amount of comments left by readers. If one of your posts receives a lot of comments and feedback, chances are you've hit on a nerve or something that resonates with readers.

Of course, for SEO (Search Engine Optimization) purposes, you will NOT want to alter the headlines of blog entries after you have already posted them. Instead, you will want to look at the results for many different headlines and blog posts and then see if you can determine which techniques are consistently yielding better results.

Want to learn more about testing and analyzing your traffic stats? Visit www.Google.com/Analytics.

What Should You Write About?



You might wonder how some bloggers manage to stay inspired and to find new topics effortlessly while others (like you) struggle to find new ideas. The truth of the matter is that many of those prolific bloggers didn't start off that way. Just like you, they had periods of time when they couldn't come up with great ideas or inspiration.

If you want to overcome this problem, all you have to do is find reliable sources of great ideas and then tap them periodically to make sure you don't run out of material.

Here are some helpful ideas you can employ to get great blog post ideas:

1. Ask Your Readers

Not surprisingly, your readers know what they want to read about more than anyone else. This is precisely why any attempt to generate new blog topics should begin with a

frank discussion between you and your blog readers.

If you use WordPress or a blogging platform that permits it, consider using a plugin to conduct two different polls.

- The first poll should ask what direction readers would like your blog to move towards in the long run.
- And the second should ask which topic they would like you to discuss in an upcoming feature piece. You might consider creating a new poll for the second question on a monthly basis.

When you first get your WordPress website installed, it will come with a standard set of features. But when you add **plugins**, then your website becomes unique to you, and gives your site the 'bells and whistles' to make it really sing.

So what is a 'Plugin'?

A WordPress plugin is **extra software code** that you can easily add to your website from within your admin area that give you extra functionality, such as extra Search Engine Optimization, or a fancy way to print out your web pages. **Many plugins are free**, in fact most of the one's I use are free. But sometimes you may want to pay for a premium plugin that is more advanced and complex than some simple free ones.

In addition to soliciting readers' advice through polls, you may also want to explicitly ask them to tell you what you should write about through comments or in an email. This will give them greater freedom to explain what they would like to see on your blog.

Now, if you do not already own a blog, then a great way to get ideas for your new blog is to ask this type of advice on relevant niche forums. Explain what you plan to do and then ask what people would like to read about.

2. Listen to Your Readers

In many situations, you don't even need to solicit your readers' advice! There's a very good chance that simply paying attention to the comments section of your blog will yield all of the information you need.

Example: Was there a rigorous debate in the comments section over one of your previous topics? Or was there a blog entry that was accompanied by a flurry of questions that you never addressed explicitly?

Have you started to realize a new blog post opportunity?

These are all things you may want to come back to in the future by creating a second blog post on the topic.

3. Lurk on Forums

Lurking on forums can be a great way to generate blog entry ideas. If you don't already visit forums regularly, you can find some in your niche by searching in Google for "[your keyword] forum".

Example: "health forums" or "network marketing forum".

When you're on the forums, look specifically for hot topics.

For instance, if a thread has received hundreds of replies and has remained at the top of the forum for a sustained period of time, then there's a good chance that it will prove popular on your blog, too.

Also, if a post proves to be controversial and draws a lively debate between forum members, it may also be a topic to consider writing about on your blog.

4. Read Newspapers and Magazines

When reading online media, it's all too easy to jump around without getting an in-depth

overview of a topic. Sitting down to read a magazine or newspaper can often be a better way to get a more detailed, detached perspective of current events and hot topics. So, grab a few magazines and newspapers of choice and take notes as you read through them. Look for topics that have the potential to be funny, exciting, useful, or controversial. And then use them to stimulate discussion on your blog.



5. Check Out Article Directories

Article directories can be a goldmine for ideas when you need them most.

Next time you're struggling to come up with an idea for your blog entry, visit www.EzineArticles.com, locate the category that best describes your niche, and begin browsing. Look for headlines and topics that catch your eye and then consider posting on the idea if it looks promising.

6. Use Keyword Tools

One way to understand your blog readers better is to find out what they look for on the Internet. You can do this by using the Google AdWords Keyword Tool: <https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal>.

Using this tool, you can simply enter a word or phrase, such as "golf equipment" and the tool will return a massive list of related keywords, including such things as "golf umbrella" and "new golf clubs."

Here, you've tens and maybe hundreds of keywords that you can easily turn into ideas! You can also sort these results by the search volume they received, which will allow you to isolate the most popular keywords.

7. Continue an Interesting Conversation

Sometimes you won't even need to come up with a fresh idea by yourself!

Here is how:

Next time you encounter a hot conversation on another blog or in a forum, continue it on your own blog. Mention briefly where you found the conversation, give an overview of the arguments on each side, and then support one side or the other.

Since blog readers in your niche are likely to have strong feelings about such topics, you can expect a strong response.

How To Get More Comments And Interaction From Your Readers

Comments are the lifeblood of any truly successful blog. They keep the discussion going well after the blog entry has ended. And they signal to new visitors that other people find the blog interesting and worthwhile.

If you want to ensure that your blog becomes successful, retains visitors, and encourages visitors to stay longer and to become more active, then you should do whatever you can to try to draw more comments.

Here are some simple tips to help you get more comments on your blog:

1. Repost or Reference Comments

One great way to draw in readers and to encourage them to comment more frequently is to reward them when they do it.

Example: If someone makes a particularly insightful remark about your post, then it may make sense to comment on it explicitly.

You can do this by quoting part or all of the comment, mentioning the poster by name, and then saying something complimentary or funny about his or her post. If you do this in a way that makes people feel involved and recognized for their effort, then they're more likely to contribute in the future. Others, seeing this, will also contribute.

2. Hold Contests

Another good way to encourage readers to comment is to hold regular contests. In these contests, the entry fee will simply be making one or more comments. And the prize can be a number of different things, including merchandise from your business, a free consult, or something else you feel your readers would find valuable.

As far as picking winners goes, this is up to you. You could either select them yourself by picking the “best comment” or you could randomly select a comment.

3. Be Controversial

Another good way to encourage readers to comment is to occasionally post something highly controversial, but not ethically objectionable.

Example: You might cite a famous network marketer who has claimed that blogging is a waste of time; and that you should instead always just work your warm market list.

When it comes down to it, you don’t even have to take a side. You can simply introduce the controversy and then let readers jump in and flesh out the debate. This can be an excellent way to draw readers in and prompt them to get involved.

4. Create a Poll

Polls have many virtues. One virtue is that they allow you to capture information about your visitors that you might otherwise not be able to get. Another virtue is that they prompt involvement on the part of those who feel that their preferences were not well-represented in the poll.



Use a poll for the second (and lesser-known) virtue. That is — create a poll that is incomplete — and then allow your readers to chime in by arguing that you should include additional categories and explaining why that is the case.

Tip: Alternatively, you'll offer a complete list of choices but rather explicitly ask them to comment why they chose it. People will start a discussion on why X is better than Y or the vice-versa.

This should stimulate some interesting comments, which could lead to a discussion between blog readers.

5. Give Readers Less Time to Comment

As with many things in life, it's all too easy to put off blog commenting and tell ourselves that we will do it tomorrow instead. And, not surprisingly, this is something that many readers do. They decide to put comments off until later, but when they go to do them at another time, they find a new blog post and lose interest in placing the original comment.

One way to get around this is to put a cap on the amount of replies you allow or the amount of time people have to post replies. When they see this cap and realize the implications, they will be prompted to post now, rather than later. While it may seem counterintuitive at first, it can work quite well in practice to bring in additional comments.

6. Show the Carrot

Instead of threatening to prevent people from commenting, you may want to consider giving them a positive incentive to comment.

For instance, you could put some requirement on the number of comments you must receive before you will create another post.

Example: You might say that you will only post after you have received at least 30 comments from readers.

With this said, it is important that you follow the response to this policy over time. Make sure that readers aren't simply posting "good work" or "nice post," but instead are

actively participating. Otherwise, this system will not work and you may need to switch to something else.

Note: I can't stress enough the importance of the "carrot" principle in place for this strategy:

You need to show people what's next.

Tease them about the next blog post and make it clear that you'll post this new exclusive post right after you reach a certain amount of comments.

Make Money from Your Blog



Initially, finding high-quality content for your blog and then getting people to see that content is the most important thing you can do with your time. However, as your blog evolves and your readership grows, you might want to take some steps to earn money with your blog.

Here are some ideas to help you earn money from your blog:

1. Use Google AdSense

For starters, you should consider putting up Google AdSense ads. The advantage to this approach is that it is simple.

Tip: If you're using Blogger.com, the Google AdSense is already built in. After all, it is one of the Google services. However, there are many plug-ins and themes for WordPress and other platforms, which only need you to insert your Google AdSense code.

AdSense enables you to earn money by placing targeted text and image ads on your blog. Google will automatically choose which ads to show based on your blog's content. You earn money when visitors view or click on these ads.

All you have to do is create an AdSense account, generate some lines of code, and then place those lines of code in your website. From there, the AdSense “script” (software) will generate ads that are contextually-matched to your site; and will generate revenue whenever they are clicked.

This means that you don’t need to talk to advertisers, and you don’t need to draw up a contract. All you have to decide on is what type of ads to use. You will have a choice between a half dozen types, including banners, image ads, and text ads of various shapes and sizes.

2. Sell Advertising Space

In general, this won’t work well for low traffic sites. However, if your blog receives a lot of traffic and you can back this up with documentation, such as traffic records, then selling advertising space may be a lucrative option.

When it comes to selling ad space, you will have a few different options.

You can choose between text ads, banner ads, and image ads. You can also choose whether you want advertisers to pay per click or to pay per view.

3. Seek Out Sponsorship Opportunities

In addition to (or as an alternative to) selling ad space on your site, you might consider seeking out sponsors.

The sponsors could agree to provide a free prize for your contest in exchange for being mentioned on your blog in the days leading up to the contest.

Alternatively, you could have long term sponsors for the blog, who make a monthly donation in exchange for your promoting their products periodically and for including a banner on your site that references them as a sponsor.

4. Sell Your Own Products/Services

Another way to generate revenue through your blog is to create your own products or to sell existing products.

Obviously, the goal is to sell more products from your primary business opportunity and also to recruit more people on your team. Your blog will help you do both.

In addition, you might decide to create and sell other products from your blog like an eBook, a short report, or video or audio content.

Once the product is ready, you can sell it on your blog by accepting payments via PayPal.com. You might want to start by introducing your product through a blog entry; however, at a later point, you may want to relegate it to a permanent position on your blog, such as in a top banner or in the sidebar.

5. Promote Affiliate Products/Services

An alternative to actually creating products to sell or selling existing products that you own is to promote products as an affiliate.

Regardless of what niche you are in, you should be able to find affiliate programs to join with lucrative and timely payments. In fact, even if you have your own products to sell, it may still be a better idea to sell affiliate products.

For starters, you should visit www.FirstClassMLMTools/Affiliate-Program. If your blog is promoting your network marketing opportunity, then your readers might be interested in some of these tools and training products.

Another great place to sign up as an affiliate is Amazon.com. You can post links to books you recommend on your blog and when readers click the link and purchase that book, you'll earn a commission.

Ways to Improve Your Blog Design

Design plays an important role in determining how your visitors will view you and your blog. A sloppy, poorly-organized blog will convey to your visitors that you're either an amateur or that your blog is very low-budget. Either way, this is a bad signal to send to visitors who are seeing your blog for the first time.

For these reasons and others, it is important that you work to improve the design of your blog.

1. Choose Your Theme Wisely

Whether you're using Blogger, WordPress or another popular blogging platform, you'll likely have access to hundreds or possibly thousands of different blog templates. Instead of picking any old theme, spend some time to find one that matches your niche and looks clean and professional.

If you want a free template you can simply scour Google results for "free blog themes." On the other hand, if you want to browse higher-quality, paid themes, you should look at <http://www.themeforest.net>, where you will find themes for as little as \$10.

2. Customize Your Theme

Now that you have selected your theme, it is time to customize it and put it to work for you. Many of these changes can be made through the administrative panel. This might include something simple like re-arranging your sidebar.

In addition to this, you can make other changes. For instance, you can limit the amount of posts that will be displayed on your home page; or alter how the comments will appear on your blog.

To get additional help in customizing your blog theme, simply go to YouTube and type in "customize blog theme" – or any other set of words that apply to the help you need – and take a look at the results. There are literally hundreds of how-to videos on every

topic imaginable and you can easily find step-by-step instructions to assist you as you begin blogging.



3. Be Social

If you make it hard for people to promote you, then fewer will do it. And if you make it easy for people to promote you, then more people will promote you.

This is precisely why it is important to incorporate social media into your blog. If you make it very easy for people to take content on your blog and refer to it in tweets and on Facebook, then people will do it more frequently.

Make sure it is easy for people to access Twitter and Facebook immediately after reading a post, so that they can quickly tweet about you or reference your post on Facebook.

To learn how to connect your blog to all your social media accounts, visit www.FirstClassMLMSocialMedia.com.

4. Use a Blog Post Image

This may depend on your theme, but in general, using an image to accompany your blog posts is an excellent way to improve the visual appearance of your blog. For starters, you can use free stock photographs. Make sure that the photographs are legal to use and will match well with your posts.

If you find that this process is getting tiresome over time, consider only doing it for important blog posts. In fact, this could even act as a means of signaling when a post is important.

If your blog eventually becomes very profitable, you may even consider hiring a freelancer to create graphics, charts, or cartoons that accompany your entries and are exclusively for your blog.

5. Take Advantage of Your Footer

In the past, the “footer” portion of blogs was often underused or left entirely unused. Today, things are changing rapidly in this area. It is common to find a number of different items in the footer now, including a “latest posts” section or a “popular posts” section.

Additionally, people have begun using footers to add contact forms, so that visitors easily send emails or submit feedback. It has also become common to add your subscription form to this area – so that anyone can subscribe to your email list from any page of your blog.

So, next time you logon to your administrative panel, consider re-vamping your footer (via widgets) to take advantage of this otherwise wasted space.

Conclusion

Blog design is often overlooked as a secondary consideration. In reality, however, it plays an important role in determining who stays on your blog, what they do when they're on your blog, and who and how many people they refer to your blog.

If you take time to make even small design improvements, you will reap benefits for the remainder of the blog's life.