

INSTANT HOLIDAY **CASH**

Make eye-watering profits with
the lucrative holiday marketing
niche all year round



<http://successwithmike.us/ihc>

This product is brought to you by

Michael Harris

**Are You Frustrated by All the Useless,
Non-Actionable Internet Marketing
Information Out There??**

Me too! So I've decided to go against the grain, and share REAL information that WILL make you money. This is not the typical **non-actionable material** you find out there. There is no fluff and no beating around the bush—just rock-solid business-building information designed to help you build an unstoppable Internet marketing empire.

Every month I release BRAND NEW, cutting-edge reports and courses focused on helping you build a strong business foundation, so you can take your marketing efforts to the next level.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Hi there! I'm glad you decided to purchase this book and I'm sure once you delve into it, you will be too. This book is a comprehensive guide that will equip you with all the necessary tools to help you realize the money making potential of the different holidays. I have packed this book with so many ideas that you will start making plans for the next holiday on the calendar, right now!

Everyone, no matter what income bracket they fall under, feels a little stretched thin after the big holidays with all the gift giving, wardrobe additions and the parties etc. What I want to do ultimately is, get you out of that doomed mindset. I want you, looking forward to the next holiday season as a money making prospect; rather than the other way around.

I will not only tackle the big holidays, like Christmas, Mother's Day and Valentine's, but also will also give you tips and tricks on how to rake in the cash on smaller holidays like "Pancake day". You will start looking at the red dates on your calendar as the big money days. I can promise you that by the time you finish this book, you should be filled with great ideas and enthusiasm to begin strategizing how to maximize your profits for the next holiday.

This book is a one-for-all, no matter what your level of expertise in online enterprising, you can use this book. I have divided this book into section for beginners or individuals, and for small businesses all the way to medium and big businesses. In addition, who knows, once you start making money you might want to climb up a rung. I will discuss how you can even step up and start a free blog to make you extra cash for the holidays or you can incentivize your affiliates to do the "dirty

work” for you. You can even have sales, coupons, and gifts on your products or services, if you have a bigger operation.

In short, there is something for everyone to take away from this book and apply practically with success. What I would like to emphasize here, is the fact that you might not get it right the first time or rather on the first holiday, but if you keep finessing your skills and ideas with a “can do” attitude, you will start making more money than you can spend through that holiday.

ONLINE MONEY MAKING TRENDS

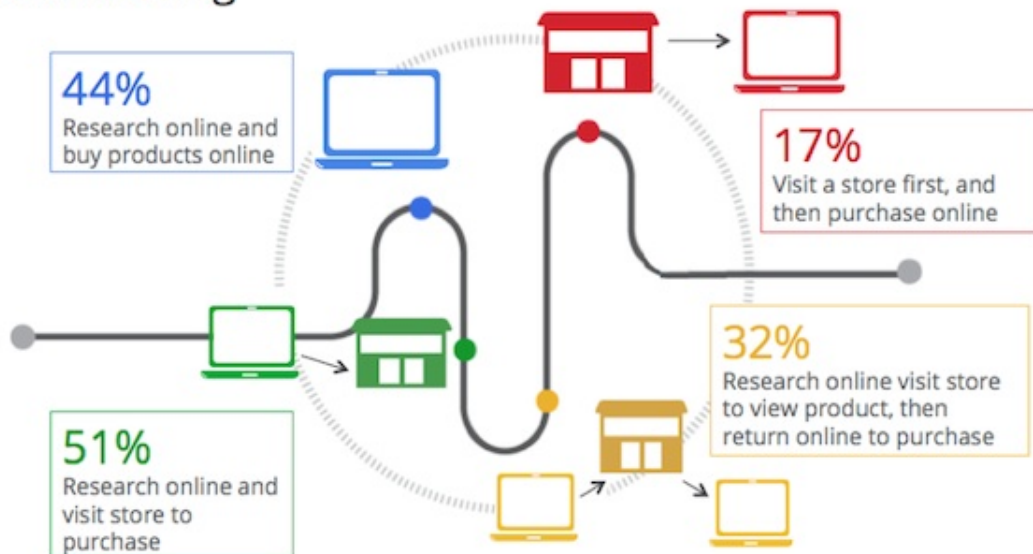
Every year, the economic indicators show that people are going to spend more and more money over the big holidays than the previous years. All the analysts and economists have their “ears to the ground” and start crunching numbers and all the possible trends that could mean better business decisions for the next holiday.

These reports are usually a great read for those who want to keep up with the ever-evolving customer base. For example, in past few years there is an almost 20% increase in online sales for the brick and mortar stores, and this trend is on a steady rise. People trended towards using the storefronts as showrooms where they just go to check out the stuff and later order it online. There were even instances, where people took advantage of the online offers by ordering online from the stores they were in rather than walking up to the till and purchasing the item physically.

Mobile sales also went up significantly, mostly because mobile apps went local and you could place orders from just about any local store without having to stand in a long line or be pushed around by the crowd in a packed mall.

The diagram below, from Google analysts, shows the visible shift from offline to online shopping for the holiday season.

Lines between offline and online shopping experiences are blurring



Here, are some of the significant trends for the four-week, money-spending, capitalist's dream holiday called Christmas:

Trend # 1: Online scores better than ever

When it comes to competition with the on-the-ground storefronts the analysts have concluded that there was an 11% increase in online sales of

brick and mortar stores. During the same holiday season the same shops saw a 2% decrease in sales from the previous holiday season.

Trend # 2: Keep them on their toes

The most common technique to get shoppers to pay attention to your product or service is to start slashing prices; “30% to 40% off”, analysts say have become only the starting point. Successful businesses offer a number of deals as the holiday season goes on, offering new deals every week or during special hours of the night. Analysts agree that, offers that had a limited time buy-out, were more successful in moving inventory than an all-season sales.

Trend # 3: Shipping offers and deals are a necessity

As the online shopping experience explodes over the big holidays, customers expect free, speedy and guaranteed deliveries across the states. Analysts say free delivery is one of the top five factors in online purchasing during the holidays, because if you don’t offer it someone else will.

Trend # 4: Staying ahead of the advertising frenzy

The numbers from the recent holiday season suggest that the retailers and the consumers alike are getting savvier about targeted advertising. For example, a “Leaked” Black Friday price to a targeted audience is a great way to advertise and give the illusion of exclusivity to your products. The idea is to get creative with your advertising; the traditional broadcast advertising (newspapers, flyers etc.) does little for the bottom lines.

Trend # 5: Gift cards are all the rage

Giving people gift cards from their favorite store rather than the actual gifts is frowned upon no more. With online shopping, it is much easier for the recipients to cash in their gift cards and get exactly what they want. According to a National Retail Federation survey the most purchased gifts for the holiday season was the gift card.

Trend # 6: Merging offline with online to boost profits

Businesses cannot survive without an online presence, but it is more so during the holiday season. You have to ramp up your online holiday shopping store just like you would offline. There is even a term for shoppers that treat the ground stores like show rooms and ultimately buy online; they are called “multi-channel shoppers”.

Trend # 7: Starting shopping offers early and ending them late

In last season, there was a big trend in keeping the momentum of the holiday shopping frenzy going on endlessly after the Black Friday sale, with stores opening early and closing late regularly even during the work and school days following the Thanksgiving break. To keep up with the influx of online shoppers who mostly come in stores to browse, stores roll out their online customer service to all day too.

Trend # 8: Building relationships in the cyber age

According to a Deloitte survey, 48% of consumers use social media for product reviews and great bargains? Having a “real” social media presence is a great way to build relationships with possible consumers.

WHY YOU SHOULD HOP ON

Are you so flushed with money that you don't need to capitalize on the money holiday rush? Yeah, that's what I thought. Do you really need a reason to make more money online? I'm, none-the-less, going to give you a few reasons to hop on the capitalist's bandwagon.

ADVANTAGE # 1:

When traditionally holidays are a time to relax and unwind with your family and friends, it is also a great time to get a piece of the huge spending surge. With people spending close to \$2 billion in just 4 weeks, can you really afford to miss out?

ADVANTAGE # 2:

If you plan everything and get your digital ducks in a row well before time, you can enjoy the holidays with your friends and family and still make a wad full of cash. For example, Walmart bought all the advertising space on Facebook for the Black Friday weekend (that is 72 hours) several months in advance.

ADVANTAGE # 3:

Even if you don't have an established business, blog or service you can still cash in on the holiday rush by providing content generation services to the "big" players. This requires no start-up costs and you can work according to your holiday schedule.

ADVANTAGE # 4:

The money you make will give you a great sense of accomplishment for the year ahead. Working just a couple of hours during the holidays will, on average, pay 15% more than during the regular season.

ADVANTAGE # 5:

Don't limit yourself to the big holidays like Christmas and New Year when the competition is tough. Marking all the big holidays related to your niche on the calendar is a great idea because there is money to be made for every one of those special days.

LET'S GET STARTED

As we mentioned earlier, this book is a one-for-all for all types of individuals and businesses looking to get some perceptive and some rather obvious money making ideas for different holidays. The only pre-planning you need to do before delving any further into this book is to make the commitment.

Always remember, your first working holiday season will be a learning experience, your second will most likely make you a big earner and the third will not even feel like work, just an opportunity for advancement.

With that in mind, if you are ready to thicken your wallet for the next holiday, make that commitment and read on!

CHAPTER 2

CASHING IN ON HOLIDAYS FROM HOME

So here we are in the first “meaty” section of your crash course in money making over the holidays. This section of the book is targeted at the individuals working from home. This includes anyone who has never worked online before to a seasoned online income generator. If you are working alone or have hired a couple of people from time to time, this section is a necessary read for you.

I will unravel the essential and secret tips and tricks that will help you gear up your holiday moneymaking plans. Let’s get started!

MAKING MONEY WHILE CAPITALIZING ON YOUR SKILLS

Before we start strategizing, let’s lay the groundwork so that you are heading in the right direction. A wise man once said,

“The easiest way to make money is by doing the thing you love.”

Cliché as it might sound, if you have had the pleasure of doing what you enjoy you will know that this is true. You should start by outlining your strengths as a person and your skills as a worker. Your strengths and skills will give you a clear idea, of what kind of time you have to dedicate to your online efforts and how you can capitalize on that time by getting the most out of your skills.

Here’s what I would suggest you should do. Write down in the table below what your strengths are, and at the end, a few sentences that describe what are your skill set and how you can use them. Don’t worry, I’ll provide ample examples to help you along the process.

In the strategy table below you will fill out the following categories:

Core Skills:

You will list three core skills you have as a worker. These could include that you are a writer, a graphic designer, lawyer, accountant, gamer, etc. any special skills you have learned to maximize your job potential in the offline work, will work here.

Three Actionable Work Traits:

Your working personality traits, like great people skills, a focused attitude to tasks and time management skills will be added in this part of the strategy table. Try to list at least three of these qualities. Remember though, be honest, as this table is for self-employment and won't become a part of your résumé.

Special Interests /Hobbies:

List any special interests you might have, like fashion, cooking, college football, pet grooming, gardening, etc. Again, list the top three interests you have and feel free to make them as specific as possible. E.g. making miniature model car replicas of Camaros' that stopped manufacturing after 1960's.

Time Availability:

In this part, list your time availability during workweeks, the weekends and during extended holiday seasons. E.g.

1 hour daily during a workweek;

4 hours in total over the weekend;

3 hours daily over extended holidays.

Market Interest:

For this part, you will list three of your most frequented social media sites or interests. E.g. Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, YouTube, etc. A healthy existing social media life will help your marketing efforts a lot.

Expected Costs:

This section is not mandatory to fill out, but if you are thinking of selling any physical products, crafts, or have a business or idea that will involve hiring a freelancer, you might want to do your research now and pencil in any expected costs. If you already have a working online setup, you just need to pencil in your monthly overheads and how much you can afford to spare as an advertising budget.

If you are starting out, you might want to do your research and then pencil in the expected cost and your maximum budget.

	Core Skills	Three Actionable Work Traits	Special Interest/Hobbies	Time availability	Social Media Interests	Expected Costs
1.						
2.						
3.						

Now that you have everything mapped out and sitting right in front of you, it's time to do what I like to call as the "Expectation Statement". This is more or less like an organization's mission statement. Just remember to keep it short and use words that are motivational to you for your Expectation Statement. Here's an example to help you get started:

"I will dedicate at least an hour a day to my online money making venture using the focus I have been commended on in the past. I will make a lot of money using my skills as a talented writer and researcher to connect with people with a similar online multiplayer gaming interest like mine and create a generous income for myself investing no more than \$50 per month. My hard work will pay off when I connect with a targeted audience using my social media contacts to pay off this holiday season."

I recommend that before you start working, you print this statement and stick it in a visible place in your workspace, you know, for

motivation when you feel tired or unfocused. We all need a little push from time-to-time; this is just the right medicine for those “off” days.

HOW YOU CAN DO IT TOO!

This is the part in which I will outline the three best practices, when starting prep for your holiday income-generating plans. The most important thing you can do is having a plan in place and following it for maximum effect. Other than that, below are the essential ingredients for your success.

KNOW WHERE YOU ARE HEADED

Part of meeting or exceeding your holiday income-generating plan is to have a benchmark to measure against. What most big businesses are great at doing is projecting profits and though they have expensive analysts on their payroll, you can do the same thing by just looking at your previous year’s holiday earnings. A good projection of profits is at least a 10% increase in the profits you made from the same holiday the previous year.

This way you can immediately start thinking of ways to improve your sales over the previous year. Try it. The effect is immediate.

If this is your first holiday working online, you can talk with more experienced people in the same niche through the different Internet marketing forums (the most popular is [WarriorForum](#)). You will be surprised to find how nice and willing people are to help, especially, when you ask politely. If that doesn’t work for your situation, then the

very least you can do is write down an amount you “want” to make off the holiday.

DON'T BE AFRAID TO CHANGE IT UP

Don't get stuck with the mentality that you cannot change or modify your plans if the sales aren't coming through. Be prepared to shift gears at any point before or during the holiday stretch, if need be. The way you can catch a problem before the holiday is over, is through constant analysis.

Use the great analytical tools offered by the Google Webmaster site to tweak your plan along the way and improve your profits as you go.

ALWAYS THINK USP

When marketing your skills, product, ideas, or service always know what makes your product unique. That's what a USP is your “Unique Selling Point”. Think of it this way if you have engineered and created a new vacuum cleaner that not only cleans floors, but can clean your curtains as well, wouldn't you want people to know that?

That's right! You advertise it. You tell people that this is the only product of its kind available on the market and just for this Mother's Day, you are slashing the prices for online sales only. No matter how saturated your niche is, find your USP and start making sales.

CREATIVE WAYS TO RAKE IN THE CASH FOR STARTERS

You have decided you need to make some extra cash for the coming holiday season; you even bought this book and started the preplanning. You know how much profit you want to make, how much you can give to your online venture and what skills and/or interests you want to capitalize on. But, you still don't have a setup.

Don't worry. I will cover every possible option that can make you money over the holidays. You just need to select the option that suits you best and start laying out the plans. You can use more than one of these moneymaking options to maximize your profits.

However, I would recommend that even if you feel like you know what option you want to go with, you read through each one. There are tips and tricks that will maximize your profits, especially for the holiday season. So, let's find you work!

DIRECT SELLING

Direct selling is the sale of a physical product or service that doesn't come directly from a retail center. It is better understood as a person-to-person exchange without any third party having a share in the profits or lack thereof. Direct selling makes for a great idea when you do not have a lot of money to invest in your business.

For the person working from home, making and/or creating novelty holiday items and selling them online can be a gold mine through the

holidays. People are always looking for that “special” gift item, and just being handmade and locally sourced and produced is enough to get the orders rolling.

Here are the top tips to employ for your direct selling business for the holidays.

PRICE IT RIGHT:

When pricing your product do not make the mistake of competing with the prices offered from huge retailers like Walmart. Pricing your product should be based on the following formula:

First, work out your per unit production cost. This should include all the raw material costs, E.g. if you are creating novelty seasonal scarves, make sure you include the price for the knitting equipment as well as the wool or cotton you are buying and/or any other buttons and bows you need. It should also include the utility costs that were spared for the product, E.g. the gas money for buying and transporting the raw material to your home, along with the estimated electricity and other utility bills that were expended for creating the product.

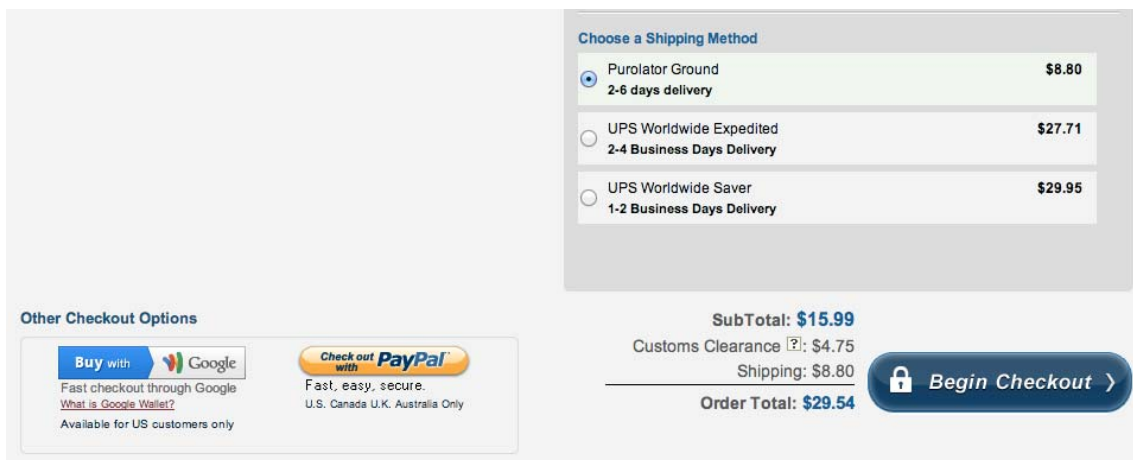
Next, work out the taxes (if any apply) and the shipping costs. If this is your first time selling to an international audience online, you should talk to different shipping companies and find out the most affordable plans.

Lastly, you will decide on your hourly rate. You have to pay yourself, that’s where your profits lie. Once you have a reasonable hourly rate,

you will start recording how many minutes you spend creating each unit.

To price your product, you will add your production costs with your self pay and keep the shipping costs and the taxes in a separate box. This gives the illusion of a cheaper product, than it really is.

Here is what the customers expect to see at the checkout:



Now the formula goes something like this:

(Production costs + (Hourly rate x Hours worked)) x 2 = Wholesale price

Wholesale price x 2 = Market price for the product

WHAT'S YOUR USP?

No matter what your product or what time of year you are selling, your product it is crucial to figure out your Unique Selling Point. You and more essentially your customers, need to know why they should buy the product and why should they buy it from you.

OFFERING SPECIAL HOLIDAY DEALS

The great thing about selling handmade or locally produced crafts is that you can make them a holiday novelty by adding a seasonal emblem. There are several holiday deals and offers that will help you start generating ideas.

Cut Prices: *The easiest and by far the most widely employed holiday offer is to cut a percentage of the price. This has an immediate psychological effect. You should start by reducing the price 30% at the start and up to 70% towards the end of the long holidays. You have to move the stock, especially if it's novelty holiday items that will just sit in your attic for a whole year.*

Price Matching: *Price matching is a relatively old concept that has been taken to new heights through the digital commerce age. Matching prices can be tough when you are not even aware of all your competition. Price matching for small direct selling operations should not be across the board. You can price match your products with a few stores though like Walmart.*

Create Urgency: *Creating a sense of urgency creates an increased demand. You should indicate to your customers that the stock won't last long, or that these prices will go back up again after Cyber Monday, or even that your shop will stop delivery three days before the holiday. Create a real sense of urgency behind the "Order Now" button.*

Free/Guaranteed Delivery: *Free delivery during the holiday season is all but expected these days. Unfortunately, that means you will have to swallow the costs of delivery yourself. (And for on-the-ground deliveries.*

Guaranteed delivery for the holiday is also a must. Make sure you inform your customers that if they order up to two days before the holiday (let's say Mother's Day) the product is guaranteed to arrive on the day.

Add Value: *Adding value to your products is also a great way to make customers feel special. The add-on can be anything from having the product engraved with the customer's initials throughout the holiday season to adding a hand painted porcelain duck!*

Wrap it Up: *This should fall under value adding, but it is an almost expected add on. Wrapping the gift item up before delivery saves customers a bit of time and is thus a valued "accessory". You can offer free standard wrapping service and for more exotic wrapping you can add a charge.*

Just remember to be as creative as you can be with your offers and know that your end goal is to make your customers feel special.

LOGISTIC OPTIONS

Finding a reliable delivery service is not hard at all these days but you still have to do your research and make an informed decision about the fastest, cheapest and most reliable delivery service. You might even want to have your friend deliver the packages locally, or you could do it yourself, if you can spare the time. You will, however, need a professional service for delivery across the states and even international delivery.

The top three logistical services in terms of reliability and economy are:

UPS (<http://www.ups.com/>)

ups United States New User | Log-In | Contact UPS | The UPS Store

My UPS Shipping Tracking Freight Locations Support UPS Solutions

Track

Tracking or InfoNotice Numbers:

Enter up to 25 numbers, one per line.

Track

Recently Tracked **UPS My Choice**

UPS My Choice enhances your home delivery experience

When you become a UPS My Choice Member, you will be able to:

- Receive proactive delivery alerts
- Sign for packages online when you won't be home to sign in person
- Reroute or reschedule home deliveries
- View inbound shipment information on the UPS My Choice Delivery Planner

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Welcome

Log in to fedex.com

User ID
Password
I want to
 Remember Me
Login

Forgot your password or ID?
New Customer? Register Now

Next door, the office, a hotel?

Request to change your package's delivery address.
Get started with FedEx Delivery ManagerSM

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- Create a Shipment
- Ship Now with Credit Card
- Get Rates and Transit Times
- Schedule a Pickup
- Customize your Delivery
- Order Shipping Supplies

Track a Shipment

Enter up to 30 FedEx tracking, door tag or FedEx Office order numbers (one per line).

Track

Find a Location

Enter a postal code, street address, city or province to find the FedEx and FedEx Office locations near you.

Find locations near...

Get a Quick Rate

From: Enter a location
To: Enter a location
Next

News

- Fraudulent Email Alert**
FedEx Introduces FedEx One Rate

USPS (United States Postal Service) (<https://www.usps.com/>)



WHERE TO SELL

The best place to sell your crafts online is through Etsy (<http://www.etsy.com/>). You have a built in customer base and a ton of specialized options to help you along the way. Other than Etsy, you can utilize a number of the hundreds of similar selling platforms to sell your products.

Remember, the more online stores you show in, the more customers you will find. Here are ten more such platforms you should definitely explore:

Amazon (<http://www.amazon.com/>)

Ebay (<http://www.ebay.com/>)

ArtFire (<http://www.artfire.com/>)

SuperMarket (<http://www.supermarkethq.com/browse/everything>)

eCrater (<http://www.ecrater.com/>)
iCraft (<http://icraftgifts.com/>)
Bonanza (<http://www.bonanza.com/>)
BigCartel (<http://bigcartel.com/>)
Zibbet (<http://www.zibbet.com>)
SilkFair (<http://www.silkfair.com/>)

Be sure to check out more specialty marketplace specific to your product. We suggest you create these profiles in addition to your blog rather than in place of a blog or a website.

THE THREE ESSENTIALS OF MARKETING FOR DIRECT SELLING

When you start putting together banners or coupons for your holiday deals and offers it's great if you can tell your customers what's so great about buying from you. Here's what you might want to emphasize:

Uniqueness: *Handmade products are locally produced and unique.*

Newness: *Your product or idea might be something new that's never been done before and, if it is or if it has a feature that's new advertise the heck out of it.*

Trust: *If you are a startup, you will need people to be able to trust you to buy from you. For that you should ask your customers for written or recorded testimonials and have an open comment section on your website. Investing a little money to get your website e-certified for secure transactions is always a good idea. This protects not only the customer but your business earnings also.*

AUCTIONING

Another great idea is online auctioning. If you use a computer regularly, you will already know what we mean here. Online auctioning has become a staple marketplace for a diverse mix of sellers and buyers to find great bargains on products they might not find elsewhere.

Auctioning as many thought when it first popped online is not a fad. Better news yet. Online auctions become more popular over the holiday season when people are looking for the “special” gifts they might not find anywhere else. Online auctioning as through EBay is simple; all you need are a few things lying around your house and your wardrobe that you have little or no use for and an account.

You are all set up. No need to price your product just let people decide for what and how much they are willing to pay and start making money. Once you get the hang of it, it is a good idea to visit local artisan fairs, flea markets and farmers’ markets etc. to keep your inventory full. The first website that jumps to mind when thinking about online auction is EBay and it is a good place to start but don’t limit yourself to it. Several other, more specialized websites are worth exploring. Below is a list of the most popular ones:

Craigslist (<http://craigslist.com>)

Copious (<http://copious.com/>)

OnlineAuctions (<http://www.onlineauction.com/>)

Amazon (<http://www.amazon.com/>)

Bidtopia (<http://www.bidtopia.com/>)

iOffer (<http://www.ioffer.com/>)

Webstore (<http://www.webstore.com/>)

Ubid (<http://www.ubid.com/>)

In addition to these you can set up your own online storefront just beware of the cost. Even for a simple store, the costs can range from between \$150 to \$2000. In addition, you will have to lure traffic to your website from scratch, whereas all the above-listed sites already have healthy traffic flow.

MARKETING FOR THE HOLIDAYS:

Auctioning is a person-to-person transaction so there will probably be no need to holiday deals like bigger businesses. Having said that, it does not hurt to add a holiday wrapping service and free customization to get with the spirit of the holiday shopping experience.

Here are a few ways you should market your items:

Use Social Media: *Social media sites like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube can and should be treated as your soap box. Whenever you put up a new item up for auction, let everyone in your social circle know and ask them to spread the word for you. Play on people's charitable holiday spirit to just pass your message along.*

A Good Picture is Worth a Thousand Words: *When it comes to online auctioning one of the most important things is getting a good set of pictures. Make sure the product is well lit, shot in front of a neutral background and remember to photograph every angle. Get some high-resolution images as well as some lower resolution images for faster streaming.*

Delivering On Time: *As with every other type of exchange during a holiday, it is expected that you provide some sort of guarantee for an on-time delivery for the day, with auctions people do not expect free delivery because they know they are already getting a bargain. If, however, you have a reputable auction storefront operating for a while now, you might want to sweeten the pot and offer on ground free shipping for the holiday season.*

Sign up for multiple accounts across different auction sites, especially ones that specialize in what you are hawking. There is a built in audience that comes with that and you do not want to miss out on that.

FREELANCING

Freelancing is a sure fire way to make some money in exchange for your skills as a worker. There are several websites that you can sign up with to get started. We've listed a few below:

Eance (www.elance.com)

Guru (www.guru.com)

Freelancer (www.freelancer.com)

Odesk (www.odesk.com)

PeoplePerHour (<http://www.peopleperhour.com/>)

The thing with freelancing over the holidays is that you don't need to do any special marketing and there are always a lot of people looking to hire your services. There is a massive increase in demand for content generation and that's where you come in and help employers

fill that need. The top most hired freelancers during the holiday season are:

GRAPHIC DESIGNERS:

Job Types: *Generate graphical content, including banners, headers, logos, icons, web pages, vector prints etc.*

Jobs Entail: *Graphic designers are the most frequently hired freelancers on the web, and during the holiday season the frenzy for landing a good designer becomes even more pronounced. As a graphic designer you may be required to create graphics for just about anything from banners to T-shirts and book cover designs.*

Average Hourly Rate: *\$8 to \$21*

WRITERS:

Job Types: *Write different types of content like copywriting, editing, technical writing, blog writing, academic writing, translations etc.*

Jobs Entail: *Writing jobs are defined on a as they come basis and depending on the job it will have you writing articles, blogs, copies or more technical product descriptions for the databases.*

Average Hourly Rate: *\$25 to \$30*

PROGRAMMING OR SCRIPTING:

Job Types: *Create programs and apps for websites*

Jobs Entail: *You will be required to create different programs like notepads, photo manipulation, e-commerce cart, etc. for websites. Another big trend for script-ers is to get hired to build cross-platform apps for businesses.*

Average Hourly Rate: \$25 to \$46

VIDEO CREATION:

Job Types: *Creating testimonials, infomercials, video editing, create video tutorials, how-to videos, etc.*

Jobs Entail: *You will be required to create one or several videos for a business. These videos will be a representation of extension of their brand. You might also come across simpler editing jobs for indie directors and film students.*

Average Hourly Rate: \$17 to \$28

WEB DEVELOPMENT:

Job Types: *Web content designer and creator, trouble shooting websites, developing applications for website integration*

Jobs Entail: *There are a lot of high paying jobs for quality web development. You are typically given a brief of either creating a website from scratch or revamping a website for the holiday season. Troubleshooting is also an often-posted gig for web developers.*

Average Hourly Rate: \$35 to \$45

ACCOUNTING:

Job Types: *Apply for jobs that ask for accountants, bookkeepers, and tax returns.*

Jobs Entail: *You will be required to do accounting jobs for both individuals and/or organizations.*

Average Hourly Rate: *\$16 to \$35*

TUTORING:

Job Types: *Teach and/or coach students*

Jobs Entail: *You will be required to teach students of different levels. You could be asked to tutor generally or for a specific subject.*

Average Hourly Rate: *\$20 to \$28*

SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER:

Job Types: *Liaison between and manage customers and traffic through social media sites like Twitter*

Jobs Entail: *Freelancers in this job category will be required to create social media accounts for different individuals and businesses and manage them. Managing these accounts means targeting and interacting with traffic, creating a public image for the company and/or update regularly to generate interest.*

Average Hourly Rate: *\$20 to \$25*

VIRTUAL ASSISTANT:

Job Types: *Do odd jobs for busy online entrepreneurs.*

Jobs Entail: *Jobs can include anything from writing or editing someone's blog to ordering flowers for their fiancé.*

Average Hourly Rate: *\$8 to \$20*

If you decide to do some freelance work, you can start making money immediately i.e. within hours. Picking the right person or the right category from a freelance job category is necessary though.

If you are a seasoned freelancer, you might want to invest some time in creating generic holiday themed packages that you can sell as a PLR (Private Label Rights) to more than one person and make some money. This way you won't need to work during the holidays, just sell your digital goods created before hand.

SMALL GIGS

Also called micro jobs, these small gigs are perfect for people who have a special or rather an eccentric or quirky skill. Don't get us wrong. There are several successful gigs that are completely run of the mill. For most holidays though people are looking for something different, something fun and exciting. Here are a few examples of successful Fiverr gigs that are holiday specific:

fiverr

Graphics & Design Online Marketing Writing & Translation Video & Animation Music & Audio Program

I will create a coolest facebook page for your website with 2000 worldwide fans for \$5

IN [ONLINE MARKETING / FAN PAGES](#) COLLECT f t g+ in



The screenshot shows a Facebook page for 'God 1st Church', categorized as a 'Church/Religious Organization'. The cover photo features a wooden tunnel with a cross at the end, illuminated by a bright light. The profile picture is a shield with a cross and wings. The page includes a 'Timeline' tab, an 'About' section, 'Photos', 'Reviews', and a 'More' dropdown menu. A video thumbnail for 'Hooked Life' is visible in the feed. Interaction buttons for 'Liked', 'Following', and 'Message' are present.

You could other examples here: <http://www.fiverr.com/>

You get the idea, right?

Be creative and give your gigs a holiday spin. There isn't a huge profit with these gigs, but if you generate enough interest, your gig can make a decent sum of money for the upcoming holiday.

Fiverr (<http://www.fiverr.com/>) is still the most popular micro job site and you should definitely sign up with them, but it is not the only site of its kind. You can explore and sign up for a number of sites. We are listing a few here to help you get started:

GigBucks (<http://www.gigbucks.com/>)

TaskArmy (<http://www.taskarmy.com/>)

ClickChores (<http://www.clickchores.com/>)

5Spot (<http://5spot.com/>)

Gigsbull (<http://gigsbull.com/>)

GigWalk (<http://www.gigwalk.com/>)

MARKETING FOR THE HOLIDAYS:

When you put up a seasonal gig, people will automatically know who it is targeted at and with micro jobs you cannot really offer any discounts. Not even free shipping in most cases.

So, how do you market your quirky and creative new holiday gig?

The answer is social media. Send out blasts to your Facebook and Twitter friends. Let your colleagues know through LinkedIn. Use every possible mode of social media to your advantage here and start generating traffic.

SOCIAL MEDIA

If you have a talent instructional or otherwise and are not shy to be in front of a camera, you can make yourself much needed holiday cash by creating a Videolog and cashing on the social media boom. There are

infinite ideas about what sort of videos you could make. A few popular holiday ideas are:

- Instructional holiday cooking videos
- Decorating ideas for your home
- Party planning ideas
- Holiday craft's videos (e.g. creating Easter Eggs or Christmas decorations)
- Seasonal fashion videos
- Make-up or grooming tips
- Planning a trip and travel safety videos

These are just to get the ball rolling. Use your imagination and then mega sites like YouTube and Vimeo to make hefty cash. And who knows, maybe you could end up being the next "Jack-Ass", "Justin Beiber" or even "Psy (of the Gangnam Style fame)". However, how do you make money? Videos are free on YouTube... or are they? You can sell advertisement space on your video and page (description, channel page etc.). If your channel explodes e.g. SourceFed (<http://www.YouTube.com/SourceFed/>), you will have sponsors that pay you before you make any sales! What's more, you can sell your own merchandise or crafts by directing interested customers to your sales site or blog.

Some other web video directories you can explore are:

Google (<http://www.google.com/videohp>)

MSN (<http://video.msn.com>)

My Space (<http://vids.myspace.com>)

Veoh (<http://www.veoh.com>)

Daily Motion (<http://www.dailymotion.com/us>)

Viddler (<http://www.viddler.com>)

Vator (<http://vator.tv>)

StumbleUpon Videos (<http://video.stumbleupon.com>)

AOL Videos (<http://video.aol.com>)

MetaCafe (<http://www.metacafe.com>)

SEASONAL SERVICES

There are countless seasonal odd jobs you can do locally to make those extra bucks for the holiday season. Let's be real, the holidays can get a little stressful, even for the most organized among us. Almost everyone needs a little help through the process. You can be that helping hand by offering your services through different local classifieds' sites.

Here are a few examples of jobs you can pick up during the major holidays:

PET WATCHING:

If you are a pet lover, this might be perfect for you. Several people need their pets looked after while they travel for the holidays. You can take their pet in as a guest for a few days and not only make money but enjoy the process as well. Just take care that the pets you decide to sit for are well behaved.

HOUSE SITTING:

Looking after a house, watering the plants, receiving any imminent deliveries are all included in the housesitting job description.

Some of the best sites to find pet and housesitting jobs are:

Pet-Sitters (<http://www.care.com/pet-sitters>)

Trusted House Sitters (<http://www.trustedhousesitters.com/>)

Mind My House (<http://www.mindmyhouse.com/>)

Luxury House Sitting (<http://www.luxuryhousesitting.com/>)

House Carers (<http://www.housecarers.com/>)

Other than these, you can always look for such jobs by posting through online classifieds like Craigslist.

CLEANING:

There are many cleaning jobs up for grabs during the holidays. People don't really like to clean up after big parties and welcome any help. You can find these cleaning jobs locally by posting on your local classifieds. What's more, you can start a blog or website as a local cleaning person and people can find you through that and hire you.

These jobs might not pay a lot through the year, but through the holiday season the hourly rates go up and there is a quite a bit of money to be made, if you are willing to do the dirty work.

CATERING:

Catering is another in-demand thing over the holidays. If you are a decent cook and are organized enough to cook for a number of people, this might be the thing for you. Culinary school students and aspiring chefs will do well to pick up these gigs for experience.

If this is your first holiday season catering, you need to have a set menu before the frenzy of the holidays sets in. Grocery shops are closed from at least Christmas until the New Year. You do not want to be caught without enough stock for an event you have to cater for.

Again, the best way to find these jobs are through the local classifieds, creating a blog targeted at a local audience. A popular choice for catering service listing is the Local Catering website.

<http://www.localcatering.com/>

HOLIDAY FAVORS:

There is a huge demand for seasonal gifts people can give to their guests, families, neighbors, even give to hosts when they are attending parties. Mostly this need is filled through artisan fairs and farmers' Markets or the dutiful do-it-themselves. Most people do not have the time to be that crafty, and that is where you come in.

There are a multitude of things you can do: create small liquor tasting baskets, to artisan jams, to writing letters from Santa, Cupid or the Easter Bunny. There is no shortage of good ideas for such holidays "souvenirs" or what we call holiday favors.

Whatever your holiday gift giving idea or skill you will want to explore websites like ETSY (<http://www.etsy.com/>), Amazon (www.amazon.com), ArtisanFire (<http://www.ArtisanFire.com/>) and other websites we've listed earlier in the "Direct Selling" section. It is also important to list your products though local classifieds as well and offer holiday deals like, "Buy 2 get the 3rd free!"

RESELLING HOLIDAY SUPPLIES:

Every holiday season we all trudge through our storage to get out the decorations or the costumes from the previous year, only to find out that they no longer fit or create the ambiance you want to. What do you do with those supplies? Didn't you know that one man's trash is another man's treasure? You hawk it through Ebay, your blog or even advertise a holiday themed garage sale for your local audience.

EVENT STAFFING:

Much like catering and cleaning jobs, waiting and other event staff, like DJs are quite in demand throughout the holiday season. You can find these jobs that do not require any pre-planning or special skills.

Task Rabbit (<https://www.taskrabbit.com/become-a-taskrabbit>),

Craigslist (www.craigslist.com),

GigWalk (<http://gigwalk.com/>),

Easy Shift (<http://easysiftapp.com/>),

Field Agent (<http://www.fieldagent.net/>)

And other similar real work micro job sites. These gigs can pay off well during the holiday season and what's more you might even have a good time or make some contacts.

HOLIDAY SHOPPING ASSISTANT:

No, you do not have to be a professional shopping assistant (whatever that is) to find and land these jobs. These jobs mostly require people to buy and deliver a specific list of items to different customers. Busy

moms or young working couples need these sort of perks to enjoy their holidays.

Once you find these jobs through the aforementioned websites (Task Rabbit, Easy Shidt etc.) you will be handed a list of items to purchase, with quantity and quality specifications and an estimated budget. If your customer is not specific enough on their list ask them about it; what brands they would like or how many pairs of socks they need, etc.

Other than a good hourly rate, these jobs often come with generous tips, and if you are already out shopping for yourself, it can't hurt to help someone else out.

ADVICE SESSIONS IN YOUR AREA OF EXPERTISE

There is no denying the stress holidays can bring. There's just so much to do, even just the pressure to "relax" can make people anxious. There's a reason why suicide rates are at their highest during the Christmas holiday stretch. You will not believe the amount of people who need help coping with the day-to-day pressures. This where you come in; if you are a good listener, have a degree in psychology or behavioral sciences or are a student of these or even if you are just a "know-it-all" mama or wise beyond your years you can make a lot of money during the holidays by just catching people.

You don't have to be a board-certified psychologist to offer life advice. In most cases, what people need is a different perspective to get things going again. There are different sorts of advice you can offer:

- Relationship Advice,

- Traveling Advice,
- Cooking Advice,
- Dealing with Family Advice,
- Gift Giving Advice,
- Dealing with Stress Advice,
- Hosting Party Advice &
- Budgeting Advice etc.

What you have to do is set up a Skype (www.Skype.com) account and tie it in with your blog where you offer your holiday coping services. On this site you will have options of people buying one or several sessions with you online. A session can be anywhere between 5 and 20 minutes and you can put your rates as per minute or per five minutes. Depending on your level of expertise people might be willing to pay you more or less.

People can request these sessions and once you set up a time that is feasible for both of you, you should ask the client to make the purchase. Be attentive to your clients and really listen to their problems rather and this will help you avoid giving useless or generalized advice. Make your customers feel special and they will be back for more.

A great idea for running such a service is to offer sessions in packages for the holidays. Have packages like:

"Buy sessions for every day of the holiday weekend and get a 30% discount".

Be creative and offer irresistible deals to your clients. Who knows you might end up doing this full time.

CREATE AN APP!

Apps for just about anything under the sun are popping up on a daily, if not hourly basis. There is a real hunger for more specialized and professional apps growing as you read. Even we are thinking of developing an app to get our ideas pooled together before we start our next project. Do you have an idea for an app that you think will be a big hit for the next holiday? Then this might just be the thing that'll make you money this holiday season.

How? Well, even if you don't know a stitch of programming, but have a great or even a modest idea you can turn it into an app for a profit. Just hire a programmer that has a proven track record and create a holiday themed game or reviews app, which has a unique or fresh twist. Here's a step-by-step of how you can create an app and turn into profit.

Step # 1: Light Bulb: Think up that great idea for an irresistible app.

Step # 2: Work it Out: Take a pen and a paper or turn on your text editor and sort out how you see your app working. What sort of interaction you want? What is the functionality? What sort of design you are after?

Step # 3: Create it: You can either create it yourself or hire someone to do it for you. You can use one of the many trusted freelance websites like Elance (www.elance.com), Odesk (www.Odesk.com), Freelancer (www.freelancer.com), etc to find a person who can get the

job done for you. Once you are happy with the product you can make a payment of the agreed amount and move on to the next step.

Step # 4: Price it: There are several ways to make money from apps. The five most obvious options that come to mind are:

1. Create a free app with ads that will generate commissions for you
2. Create a free app with ads that has the option of upgrading to a paid version without ads
3. Create a free app with a conscientious “donate now” button.
4. Create a free app with an e-commerce model where people can buy other stuff through your app thereby making you a commission.
5. Create a paid app

Once you’ve decided what kind of pricing model you like, you can price your app competitively i.e. pricing should be similar to the other similar apps in the category.

Step # 5: Double Check the Money Channels: You will probably need to set up a Paypal or other such digital money transfer account. Having a Paypal account will save you heaps of trouble because it’s the most popular and secure platform of its kind.

Step # 6: Distribute it: Signing up with the apple app store is as easy as learning ABC. If you already have an Apple ID, which almost all of us do, you can use that to sign in and upload your app to the right category in iTunes under the app store tab. Pick the right category, so that targeted people are able to find your app when they are looking for similar content.

Here is a screenshot of the categories you can submit to:

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| • Arts and Entertainment | • Automotive | • Book Reviews |
| • Business | • Cancer | • Communications |
| • Computers and Technology | • Finance | • Food and Drink |
| • Gaming | • Health and Fitness | • Home and Family |
| • Home Based Business | • Home Improvement | • Insurance |
| • Internet and Businesses Online | • Investing | • Kids and Teens |
| • Legal | • News and Society | • Pets |
| • Real Estate | • Recreation and Sports | • Reference and Education |
| • Relationships | • Self Improvement | • Shopping and Product Reviews |
| • Travel and Leisure | • Women's Interests | • Writing and Speaking |

Step # 7: Make Money: With everything done, sit back and enjoy your holiday and see the money roll in. Oh yeah, don't forget to check periodically to help people troubleshoot or reply to comments on your app.

Before you get too excited be forewarned; the competition for holiday themed apps is very tough, so you need to be really good, unique, or both to stand out.

BECOME AN AFFILIATE

By definition, an affiliate is someone attached to a larger organization. Affiliate marketing is one of the most popular ways to make money online and it is by far the most rewarding. Becoming an affiliate online is not that hard, just about anyone can do it. The hard part like with most things is, being successful at it.

There is no perfect recipe for success as an affiliate. Having said that, there is a right way and a wrong way to go about becoming an affiliate and making a decent sum of money while doing it. We'll take you through the essential concepts you will have to grasp to start making affiliate money on the next calendar holiday.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT AFFILIATE PROGRAM

Choosing an affiliate program is not that difficult. Businesses want you to market and sell their products; after all, that's how they make money. The three top affiliate programs you must sign up for:

Amazon (www.amazon.com): Amazon has the largest online affiliate network. The great thing about being an Amazon affiliate is that most people end up buying more than one thing you were marketing and you get a commission on everything they end up buying!

ClickBank (www.clickbank.com): Clickbank is another huge affiliate program, but it only promotes digital products. The big plus of signing up with Clickbank is the huge commission percentages. With real products the commission lies somewhere between 1% and 15%, where

as for digital products at ClickBank, the commissions can run from anywhere between: 25% to 90%!

Commission Junction (www.cj.com): Commission Junction is an affiliate program that puts you in touch with different businesses and the products they want you to market. You have to apply to individual stores and get their approval before you can sell their goods. CJ or Commission Junction has some of the most groundbreaking and fresh products that you can affiliate for.

Other than these three giants, almost every big store like JcPenny, Macy's, Saks Fifth Avenue all have affiliate programs of their own that you can sign up with directly. The bottom line is, even if you just sign up with Amazon you will be in good company and have anything and everything you can possibly think of to sell.

KEYWORDS CAN MAKE OR BREAK IT

In the online world of commerce, keywords make the sales not the products. This is an undisputed fact, which means that choosing the right, or wrong keyword can mean doom or success for you, even before you begin. Choosing a keyword can be a sticky pond, especially for a beginner, but finding the right keyword is totally worth the headache. Let us, take you through a few keywords finding ideas to help you get started.

Idea # 1: Long tail keywords do better in tough niches like weight loss, holiday decorations, anti ageing etc, so, if you are thinking of going into a tough niche, you should be highly specific. Thus, if you are thinking of selling homemade scarves your keyword should evolve like this:

Product: Scarves

Defining characteristics: homemade, woolen

Holiday promotion: Cyber Monday

Color: Red, White, Green

Theme: Christmas Themed

Deal: 30% off

With the above information, you can create several keywords like

Keyword 1: 30% off homemade 100% woolen seasonal scarves this Cyber Monday

Keyword 2: Woolen homemade seasonal scarves on sale Cyber Monday 2014

Keyword 3: 30% off beautiful handmade seasonal scarves this Cyber Monday

Idea # 2: Product comparison keywords are a great hit too. You can use keywords that compare two products in the same category and become an affiliate for both products. It's a win-win really.

Idea # 3: There are several bestseller lists and people do love searching for them add the year and season the bestsellers offer, and you have a great long-tail keyword. E.g. "Best-selling holiday cook

books Christmas <year>". You can sign up as an affiliate for all the listed bestsellers and Cha-Ching!

Other than these you can use free services like Google's Keyword Tools (<https://adwords.google.com/>) and Uber Suggest (<http://ubersuggest.org/>) to find suitable keywords for you.

CONTENT CREATION OF THE MIND

Keywords will only work for you if you have the right content placement for it. A well-written blog will drive more converting traffic than twenty poorly executed websites. Here, are some of the types of content that people search for over the holidays:

Seasonal Product Reviews

Seasonal product reviews for gifts, etc. are always a hit during the seasonal rush. You can review just about anything from kitchen appliances to fashion accessories to cars. And if you are an expert in your niche, sites like CNET might even pay you for your informed reviews. People like to read reviews before buying just about anything, even more so if they are buying an expensive item.

Product and Price Comparisons

Comparing products in your content not only gets you some much needed genuinely-interested-in-buying traffic, but it also gives you a chance to sell several of your affiliate products through the same article.

Top Ten or Top Twenty Lists

Lists are popular all year round and the competition for landing on the top page of Google with a list can be tough. Nonetheless it is worth it because you can sell 10 to 20 products through just one well-researched, informative list.

Latest Updates on Hot Sellers

Through the holiday season people have their ears to the ground when it comes to pop-up stores and flash sales. See if you can get inside scoop of the bestsellers, E.g. where a bestseller is selling for the lowest prices or where one can sign up way ahead of the line to get the first upcoming iPhone version. It pays to pay attention and find out before anyone else.

Seasonal How to or Instructional Content

Every holiday has its own set of demands about which type of content, should be used when. Costume making and make up is popular for Halloween, decoration and cooking content is popular during Thanks Giving and Christmas, henna patterns during Ramadan etc. Creating video or text content that can help people will earn you a lot of traffic.

WHERE DOES THE CONTENT GO?

There are a number of places you can and should post your content. You can join article directories like eHow, HubPages and Ezine Articles to post your content on social media sites like Facebook and YouTube. The most common and best practice, however, is to start your own

blog or website. This gives you a lot more control over your affiliate destiny. We will discuss setting up and executing an income generating blog in the next section.

Before you start working on populating your site with content you will need a good place to call home or a site in this case. Here, are a few good tips to look for and find domain names that will do the work for you.

EMD (Exact Match Domain):

Finding an EMD can be both tough and expensive but if you have the intellectual and monetary resources we say go for it. It is worth the investment when compared with the rewards. They give you an undeniable edge over the competition when it comes to SEO.

Aged Domain:

This is a rather expensive route to take, but definitely worth it. Aged domains are hard to come buy and you might not always get what you are looking at that very moment but frequent the website auction sites like Flippa (www.flippa.com). You could also visit auctions at hosting websites like GoDaddy (<https://auctions.godaddy.com/>).

Another trick is to think in advance and buy domain names that you think will still do well in a few years. Sit on them for a year, maybe two, and then start with a fresh yet aged domain to get a higher ranking with Google.

If you can't afford or find either an EMD or an aged domain name, you will just have to get creative with your content and SEO and make it that much stronger.

PROMOTIONS AND TRAFFIC DURING HOLIDAYS

Remember how we spoke about people wanting to spend their money and opening their wallets during holidays. That's true, but shoppers are getting savvier and savvier and it's not easy to have them open their wallets for just about anyone. They want to look, prod, test, think, compare, review, and then buy something. This can be a good or a bad thing depending on the type of affiliate operation you intend to set up.

If you are interested in putting up multiple micro sites with no real content or personality you will be surprised to see how little the conversion rate of your traffic really is.

If however, you are really invested in your online shop front people will notice and the chances of them buying through you get better.

Here are few simple things you could do to give your website more personality and interactivity.

1. The content you post should be top-notch. Even if you don't write it yourself, it has to be approved and proofed by you before it goes live.
2. Become socially active by visiting other similar blogs and forums, leaving insightful comments and feedback.

3. Use images and videos to make your site more personable than a big storefront. People connect better through visuals. With all the tools available that we could possibly need to take pictures and shoot videos reviewing a product in store, why would you not?
4. Make it shareable through social media. Facebook, Twitter, StumbleUpon, Instagram all are great places to start sharing your fresh new ideas and posts.
5. Have interactive challenges with your readers, make it fun for them to visit your website.
6. Create a mobile app (if you can afford it) because according to a Google Analytics report, 48% of online holiday shoppers last year used mobile phones to make their purchases.

What are you waiting for? You have to find a niche, an affiliate program, products you want to promote, good keywords, a great domain name and start generating content to get your hands on that big holiday cash flush.

CASH IN AS A BLOGGER

Blogging is and has been a great way to connect and make money. Setting up a blog is easy; making money off it is a completely different ball game. When it comes to any major holidays, established blogs with a built-in reputation and those who follow the latest trends do better. Yet there is hope for the blogging virgins.

All a blog needs is good content and personality to become popular in a niche. You just have to be better than the one, before you and above you, in search engine results. Great blogs about how to organize and cope with the holiday “stress” can drive a lot of traffic and help readers save some serious money. Here are a few steps to help you get started in the right direction.

KEYWORD RESEARCH (PICK A NICHE)

If you have created a niche blog then there is a good chance that you have some idea of what keywords you want to target. We strongly recommend that you do your keyword research before doing anything else. What you will need at a minimum is ten longtailed keywords (2 – 4 words long) that you have a good chance of ranking for.

GET DOMAIN, HOSTING

Your domain name should already include your main keyword. Remember we talked about EMDs before? When you are choosing a domain name, you will often find that your first choice has already been taken, but you can often add an extra word like “review”, “today” “now” or something similar depending on your niche. If possible, do not add any words in your domain name before the keyword you want targeted, e.g. “the” or “my”, as this will lessen the effectiveness of your domain name as a keyword.

Your blog title, wherever possible should be the same name as your domain name, or the keyword itself. For example if you have bought the domain name “Latest Acne Treatments review” then your blog title could be “Latest Acne Treatments” or it could include the “review”. You

would make a decision on which would be best, depending on the keyword research that you did when you decided on your blog niche.

To help reinforce your keyword you can add some static pages to your blog that also have your main and secondary keywords as titles. This would mean that every post page that you have on your site will have internal links that are keywords, as well as lots of pages with the keywords on – all good stuff as far as search engines are concerned.

SETUP A BLOG (WORDPRESS)

Let's get practical and show you how to get a seasonal Wordpress blog up and running on your own domain name and hosting. If you set this up correctly, your blog itself will be a great traffic generation tool so if you are not familiar with this part of the process then take the time to set up your new blog using the instructions below.

INSTALLING WORDPRESS (WP)

There are two ways to install a WP blog on your own host account – by downloading the files from Wordpress and then uploading them directly to your file manager on your host site.

WordPress

Install WordPress (1/3)

Installation location

Install on domain

Install in directory

Leave empty to install in the root directory of the domain (access example: <http://domain/>).
Enter only the directory name to install in a directory (for <http://domain/name/> enter **name** only). This directory **SHOULD NOT** exist, it will be automatically created!

Admin access data

Administrator username
(you need this to enter the protected admin area)

Password
(you need this to enter the protected admin area)

Base configuration

Admin nickname

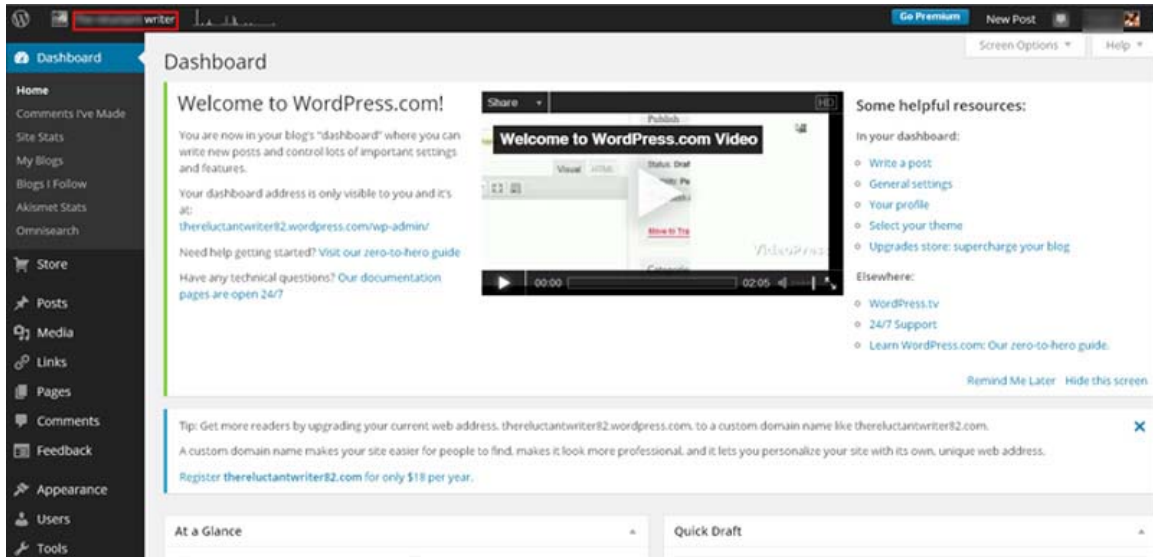
Admin e-mail (your email address)

Site name

Description

EXTRA TIP: When you click to finish the install, there is a box where you can ask for the installation details, including username and password, to be sent to your inbox. We highly recommend that you do this especially if you are planning on creating a lot of blogs.

Once you have finished setting this up you can go directly to your Wordpress admin panel. If you are unsure on how to get there you simply type in the address of your domain name and then forward slash "wp-admin". For example type in <http://www.yourdomainname.com/wp-admin> and that will take you to a login in panel. Once you have logged in, you will see that the Dashboard looks like this.



WP-Admin Dashboard

As you can, clearly see, you will have the name of your blog on the top left hand corner of your screen and then there are a number of links that are housed in the left hand column down your screen. These are the things we will be concentrating on first.

DEFAULT CONFIGURATION

By default, WP will install your blog with the standard Blue header with white heading theme. You don't have to use that theme and we strongly recommend that you don't, because it will make your blog appear amateurish and rushed. We will show you how to change your theme a little later.

When you first open your dashboard, you will also note that there is one post listed, one page listed and one comment listed. These are just filled with placeholder text so you can see what the theme looks

like – for now you can either delete all of these items, or leave them there and we will edit them later.

The default plug-ins for your blog will be [Akismet](#) and [Hello Dolly](#). You can deactivate them now if you like, but we will be showing you how to load new plug-ins to your blog shortly. For now you just need to know that plug-ins help increase the usability and SEO factors of your site. More on that, shortly.

If you open up your blog page before you have made any adjustments to it, you will also notice some elements in the column to the right hand side of the blog page. These are known as widgets and they too can be customized to fit your blog. Once we have updated your blog theme, we will discuss how to change those widgets to fit in with the topic of your blog.

The most common widgets are “Recent Posts”, “Categories”, “Tag Clouds” and “html boxes” where you can put advertising text or links to other blogs/websites. These are easily managed through your Dashboard – click on “Appearance” and then “Widgets”.

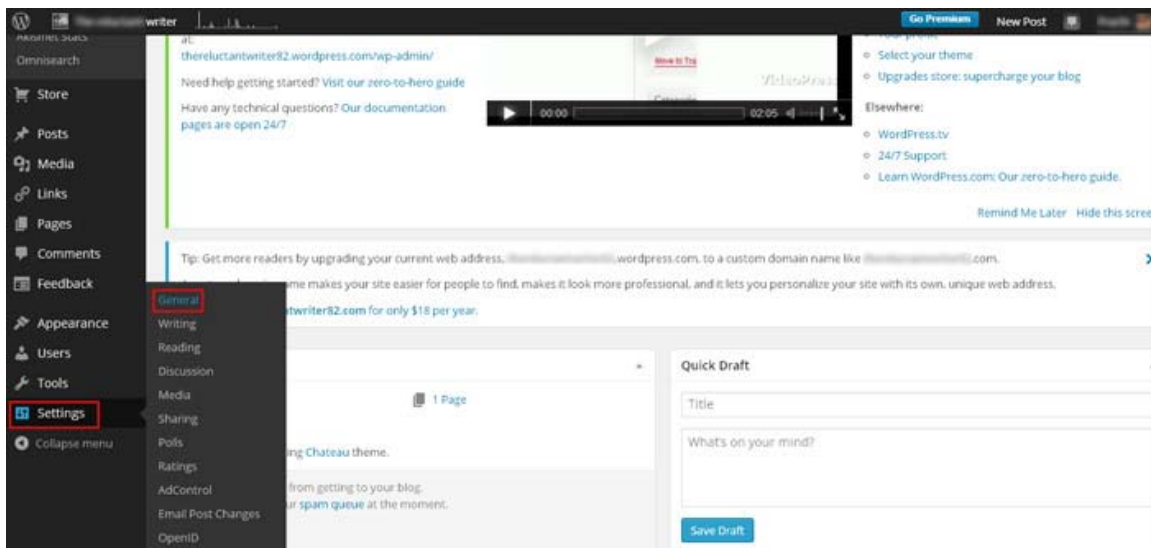
Okay, so now that you have had a browse around your blog the way it is at the moment, let’s start making some changes to it so that it will look professional and be search engine friendly. The first thing, we want to change are some of the settings for your blog.

SETTINGS

The Settings tab for your blog is at the bottom of the left hand column on your Dashboard. There will be a number of different headings under the Settings heading and the first thing we want to do is to change some of that information so your blog is easier to find and update. For each of the sub-headings below, click on the corresponding link on your blog dashboard and make the changes outlined under each sub-heading below.

GENERAL SETTINGS

Next, what you will want to do is to input the title of your blog and a tag line for it as well. A tag line is like a short descriptive sentence for your blog niche. Then, fill in the Wordpress URL and the site address – don't forget to include the "www" before your domain name because it won't do that for you automatically.



Include an email address – this is not something that is published but it is handy to fill it in because if there are any problems with your blog then you can be contacted. You might also want to make changes to the date and the time format but that is a personal preference only, doesn't really make any difference.

Don't forget to click the "save" button at the bottom of the page.

WRITING

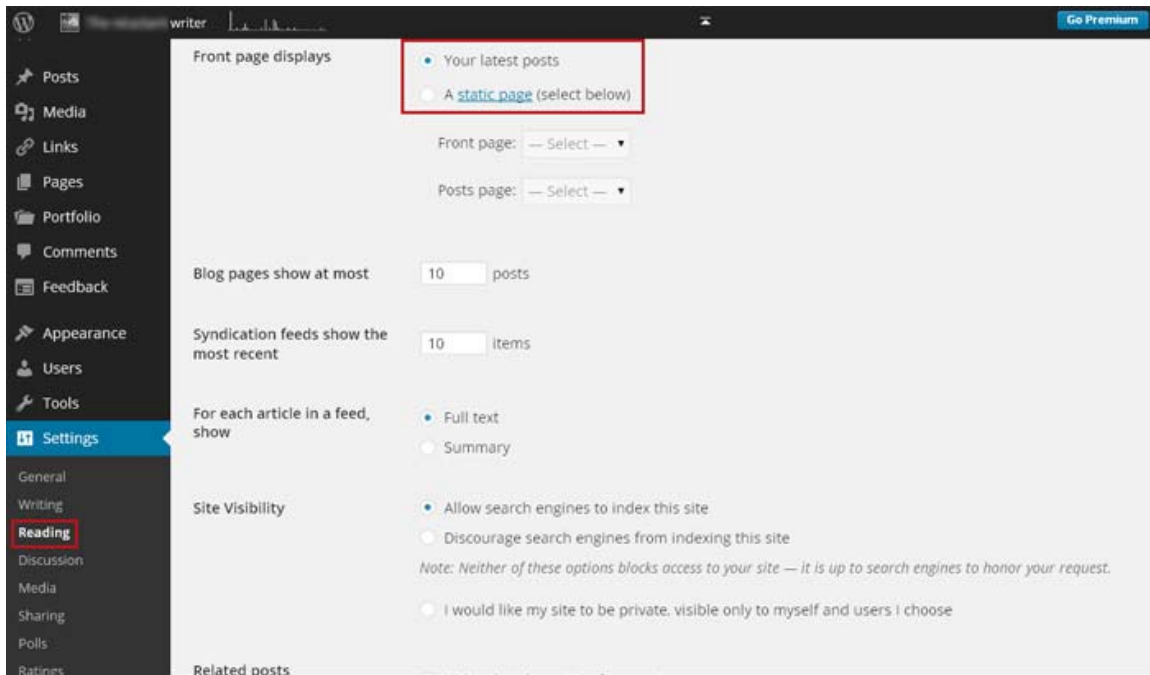
Click on the link for writing and this is where you can set the size of your post box and things like that. The only thing you should change on this page is up towards the top where it has "Update Services". The link that is in that box is a ping link. What this does is that it pings all of the major search engines every time you update a post or create a new post.

You want to add a lot more ping sites to that list so go to the "Further Resources" section of this book and select and copy the "Ping List" exactly as it is written there. Paste these links as a block into the "Update Services" box – you will notice they will show up one site per line and when you are done you can just click the "save" button underneath it. Now when you add a new post, or edit one the link to that post will be pinged to all the right places.

READING SETTINGS

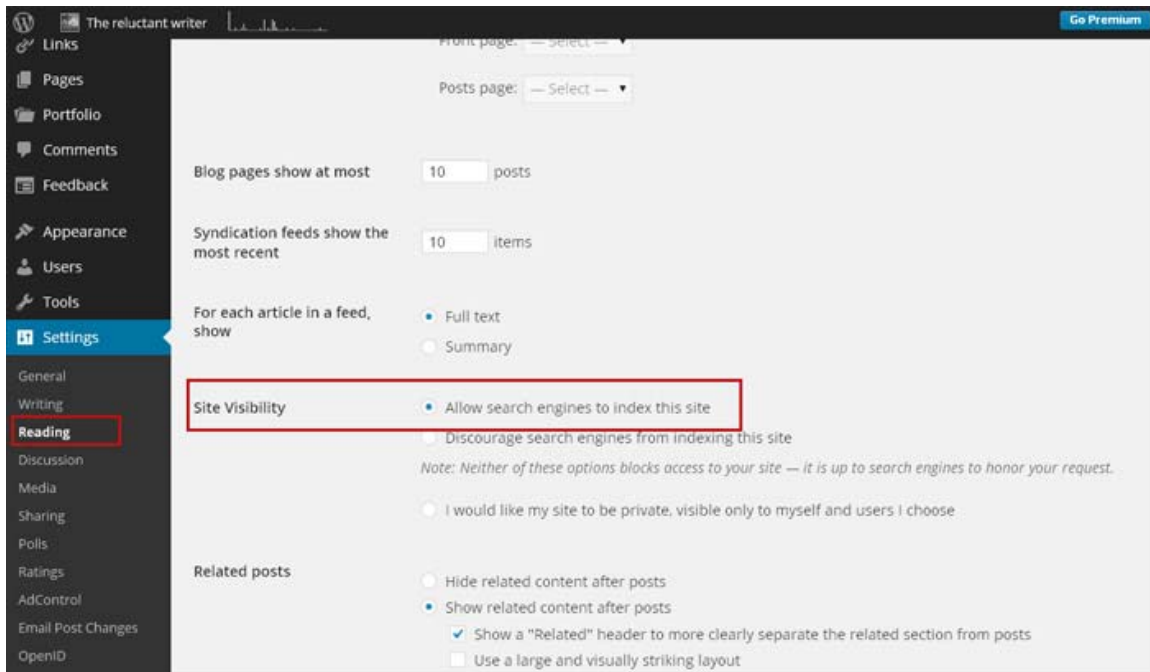
This is where you can set your blog to show either a static page that you have created, or your latest post to all the new people who click on

your blog link.



The default for this is your latest blog post and unless you are running a sales or squeeze page as one of your static pages that is fine to leave it like that. You can leave the other bits and pieces as default as well if you like.

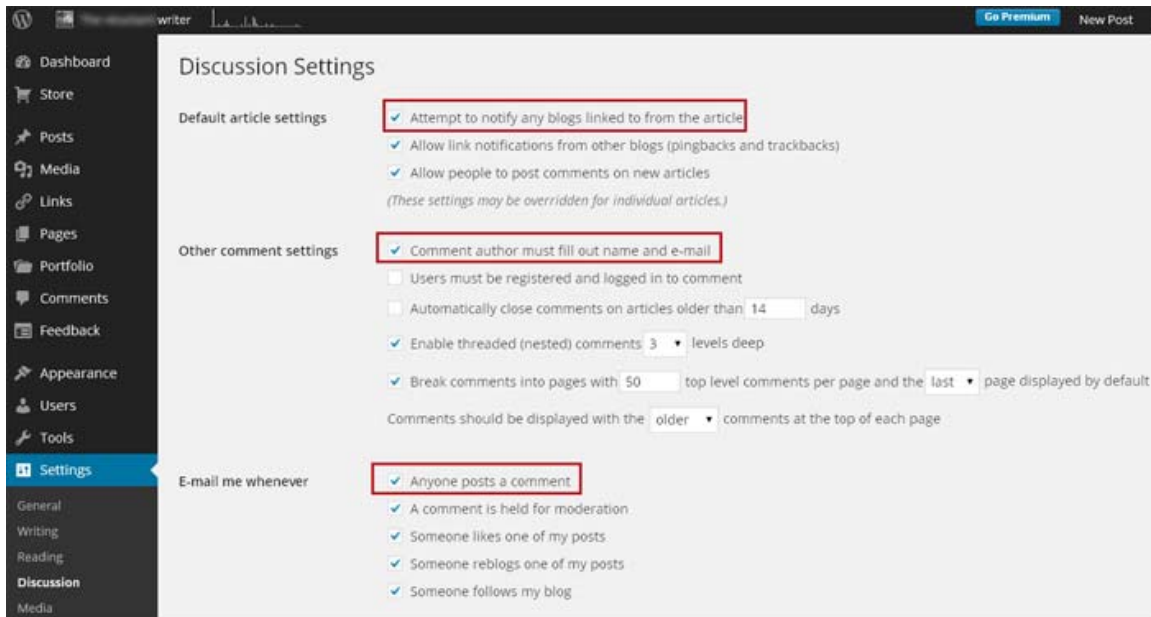
Also, in the section “Site Visibility”, make sure to select the option of ‘the blog can be found by search engines’ –and click “save”.



DISCUSSION

Most of the default settings on this page are okay. Just make sure that you uncheck the box at the top that says about notifying other blogs when they are linked to in an article. Also, make sure that you check the box that wants comment authors to enter their name and email addresses.

We recommend that you check the option for creating “avatars” for people who do not have their own, but that is a personal preference and not important. Also make sure that you tick the box that will get your blog to email you if you get any comments needing moderation.



Always moderate comments because you will quite often get spammed on your blog, especially if you start to rank well in search engines. We will show you how to implement a plug in later though that takes care of most of that. But it's a good idea to still moderate all the comments and make sure that you are not just advertising posts for other people's products.

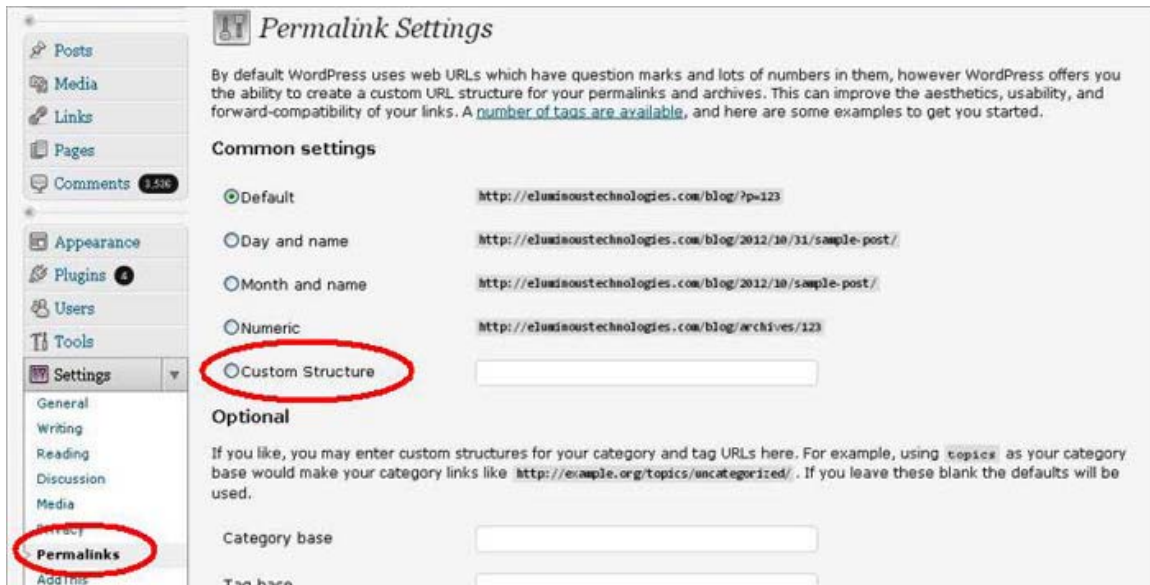
As before, click the "save" button, and we move on.

PERMALINKS

Okay now this is the section where you want to change your default URLs for your blog posts to "Custom Structure". By default, WP just creates URLs with numbers in them and this is not very good if you want to improve the SEO aspects of your blog, so you want to click into the "Custom Structure" dot and then in the box beside that you need to

type in `"/%postname%/"` (without the quotation marks). This will make the URL of each of your blog posts look like this:

`http://www.yourdomainname.com/yourkeywordpostname`



If you are planning to have a lot of categories for blog posts on your blog you could use `"/%category%/%postname%/"` (without the quotes) and each of your blog posts will include the category and title of the post in its URL. This will make your URLs for your blog posts look like this:

`http://www.yourdomainname.com/yourkeywordcategory/yourkeywordpostname`

This is an important free way of improving the SEO of your site so make sure you take the time to change your permalink settings even if you leave the rest of the settings as default.

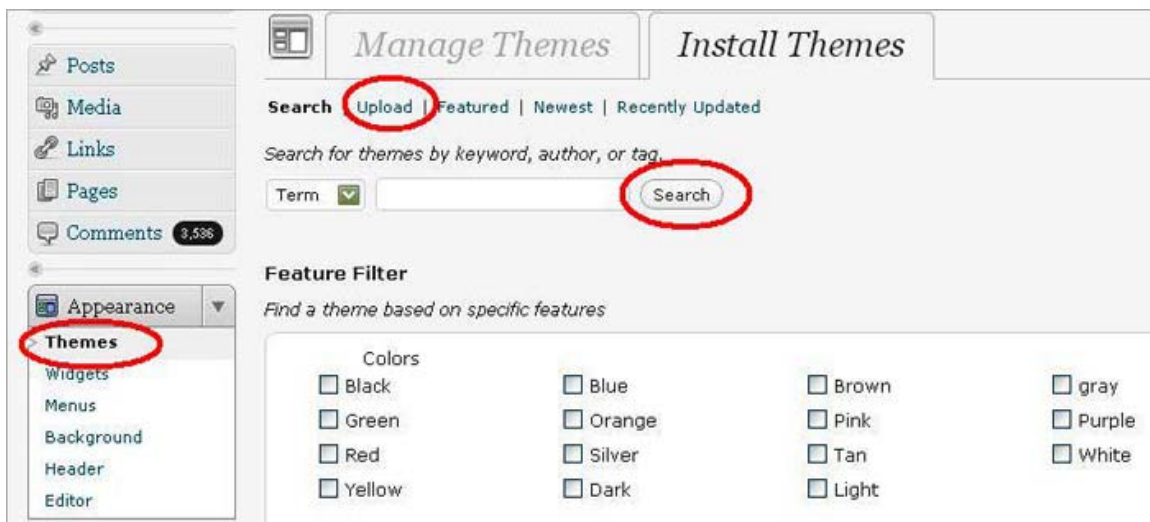
Now, as you will not have included any plug-ins on your blog at the moment, you should have completed all of your setting pages. Always

make sure if you do make changes here that you scroll down the page to hit the “save” button as it is really easy to forget this.

Now let’s change that blog theme into something more seasonal, festive, useful and appropriate for your blog.

To change the theme of your blog (that is the header, footer, graphics and layout) you need to scroll down the links on the left hand side of your blog dashboard until you find the link for “Appearance” and click on “Theme”. This will take you to a screen where you can change the theme of your blog page.

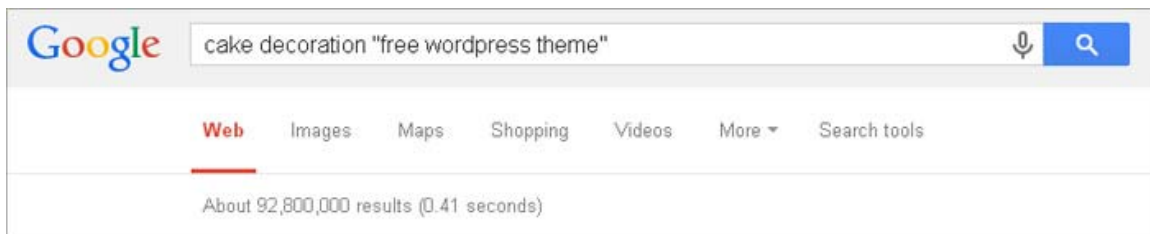
At this point, you can either upload a theme that you have already found from another site through the “upload” option, or you can search for a theme based on different search criteria that WP has provided for you. If possible try and get a semi-unique theme or at least one that matches your blog niche.



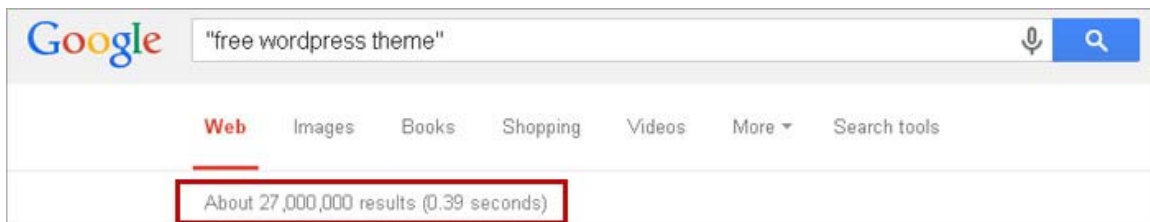
We suggest going with a two-column, right hand sidebar option because its friendly for new bloggers, but, of course, you can browse

for a while and find one that suits your needs. Make sure that the theme you do use allows widgets, plug-ins and preferably advertising blocks although you can always get a plug-in that will do that later.

To find free themes the best place to look at is Google. Type in your blog niche, free Wordpress theme, and then click to search. So if we were setting up a blog about cake decoration, for example, we would type into Google [cake decoration, "free Wordpress theme"]. We just tried that out and it came back with over 628,000 results, and we know that you will find similar results if you use your niche as a search term.



If you want to look through listings of free Wordpress themes you can always just type that phrase into Google ["free wordpress theme"]. When I did the search with quotation marks, I got over 25 million results.



PREMIUM THEMES

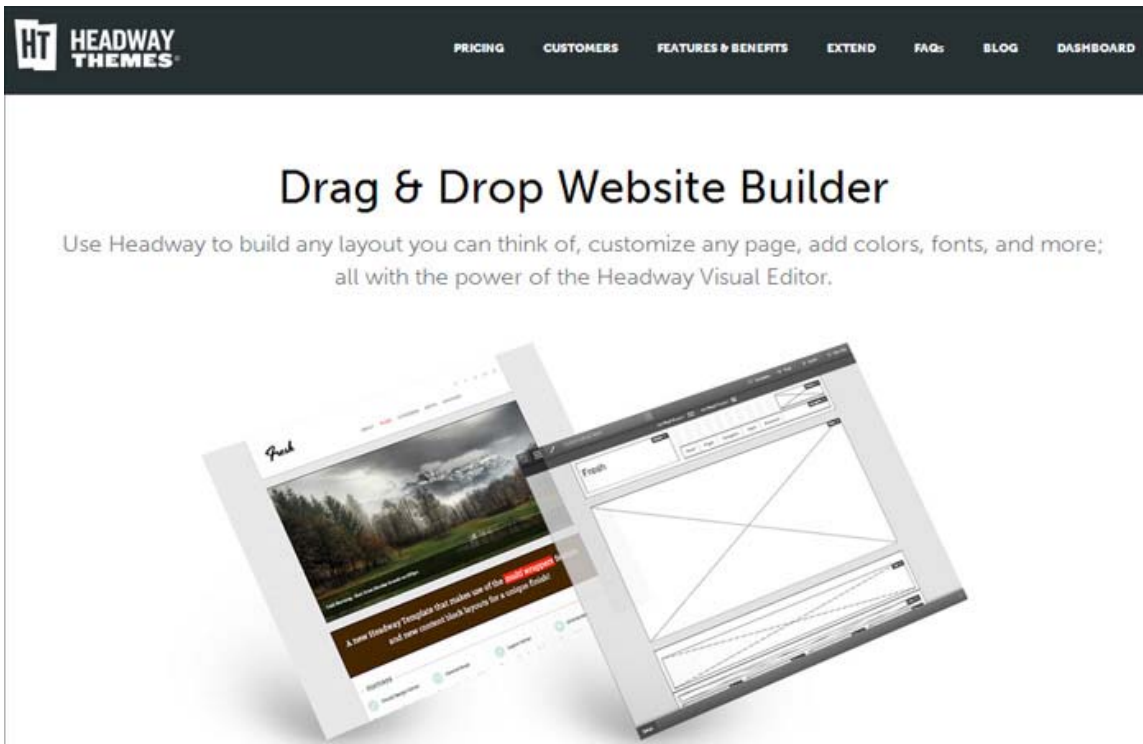
If this is your first blog, then we would not really recommend that you buy a theme for your blog especially when you don't know if you are going to be making any money from it. But once you have seen the earning potential that blogs have then you might want to buy a Premium theme that will help you in terms of SEO. Another thing to consider before investing money into a paid theme is that if your blog is seasonal, can you justify the cost of the Premium theme for the few days or weeks it sees traffic?

If you are a seasoned blogger, here are two of the most popular and most effective paid themes: Headway and Thesis.

HEADWAY

<http://headwaythemes.com/>

The Headway theme offers you customizable, header and footer, drag and drop capabilities and the site offers a lot of tutorial videos to help you get the most out of your blogging experience. A Headway theme will cost you \$87 for personal use – this means you can install it on up to two websites that you own or have developed. Alternatively if this is a business expense then you can pay \$174 for the option to install Headway on as many different websites as you like. The site accepts payments via PayPal and you can find out more by going here



THESIS

<http://diythemes.com/>

The Thesis theme is available from DIYThemes and they are an active community of bloggers and developers online. Their paid Thesis theme has been used by a huge number of high profile bloggers since its creation and the community surrounding the product is helpful and great to work with.

To buy a personal-use version of the theme will cost you \$87 and this allows you to put this on one blog. Alternatively you can pay \$164 and install the theme on as many blogs as you own. Once again, they accept payment via PayPal and you can find out more by going here

The Promo Skin is now available! Get [details here](#), or see a [demo here](#).

DIYthemes PRICING SKIN DEMO SHOWCASE BLOG LOGIN

Whether you're running a business website or a personal blog,
Thesis is a perfect choice because it enables you to do what
other WordPress themes can't. *See [what you've been missing...](#)*

THEISIS
the ultimate design and template manager for WordPress

For the first time, you can control every last detail of
your site and design with **three revolutionary features**
you won't find in any other WordPress theme:

PLUG-INS

The last part of this set up process is sorting out your plug-ins. A plug-in is a little piece of software that increases the capabilities of your blog and allows you to do more with it. Because, SEO is such an important part of driving traffic, the two main plug-ins; you should absolutely have are the All-in-one-SEO and the Google XML Sitemaps.

ALL-IN-ONE-SEO

<https://wordpress.org/plugins/all-in-one-seo-pack/>

The screenshot shows the WordPress.org Plugin Directory page for the 'All in One SEO Pack' plugin. The page features a navigation bar with links for Showcase, Themes, Plugins, Mobile, Support, Get Involved, About, Blog, and Hosting. A search bar is located in the top right corner. The main content area displays the plugin's title, 'All in One SEO Pack', and a description: 'All in One SEO Pack is a WordPress SEO plugin to automatically optimize your WordPress blog for Search Engines such as Google.' A 'Download Version 2.2.2' button is visible. The page also includes a sidebar with links to 'Extending WordPress', 'Plugins', 'Themes', 'Mobile', 'Ideas', and 'Kvetch!', as well as a 'Search Plugins' section and 'Popular Tags'.

This plug in allows you to create Meta tags from your blog title, your domain name, your blog description and any keyword tags you want to use. This is set up in the main section under the Settings option. Once you have done that your blog will be SEO optimized with your headings, Meta tags and keywords and there were a number of other different default settings that we found we did not have to change at all.

The only noticeable difference we found when using it was that each time we created a new post the All-in-one-SEO box would come up underneath the blog post editor and allow us to insert the blog title, keywords and a description for each post. This means that every blog post made is optimized for the keywords you want targeted. This step is a must if you want targeted traffic to your blogs.

GOOGLE XML SITEMAP

<http://wordpress.org/plugins/google-sitemap-generator/>



The screenshot shows the WordPress.org Plugin Directory page for the 'Google XML Sitemaps' plugin. The page features a navigation bar with 'WordPress.org' and a search bar. Below the navigation bar, there are links for 'Showcase', 'Themes', 'Plugins', 'Mobile', 'Support', 'Get Involved', 'About', 'Blog', and 'Hosting'. A 'Download WordPress' button is also present. The main content area includes a 'Plugin Directory' header with a login form (Username, Password, Log in) and a 'Register' link. The plugin's title 'Google XML Sitemaps' is prominently displayed in a large, bold font. Below the title, there is a description: 'This plugin will generate a special XML sitemap which will help search engines to better index your blog.' A 'Download Version 4.0.7' button is visible. The page also shows a list of 'Last modified (GMT)' dates and a 'Search Plugins' section on the left side.

The Google XML Sitemap is a great little tool that works in the background of your blog and, after you have set it up you basically don't have to worry about it anymore. What it does is creates a sitemap of your blog, updating it regularly every time you write new posts, or create new content. The sitemap is then sent out to all of the major search engines so that they can come and check out your new content and this service alone will seriously impact your search engine ratings.

That is because this plug-in is designed with the search engines in mind and so the information it provides about your site, to the search engines is in the format that the search engines can understand. Did

we mention that apart from searching for it on the plug-in page of your dashboard, downloading and activating it, that you don't actually have to update anything else on it at all unless you are a techie whiz that wants to customize settings?

Right, well that is the main part of setting up your Wordpress blog complete. These were the basic things we wanted you to cover in terms of your blog creation. Now let's find you some products to promote.

FINDING PRODUCTS ON AMAZON THAT ARE SEASONAL

You'll be in no short supply of products you can sell for any holiday big or small. All you have to be is smart about picking the right seasonal products. Although there is no science that'll teach you how to pick these products, there are a few tips you could use:

1. Define your niche and demographic before you start picking products you want to promote. This way you will have a clearer idea about what your target demo will buy within the niche. E.g. women in their 40's will go for slightly different smartphone models than men in their 40's.
2. Look for bestsellers within your selected niche. Amazon always has a long list of best-selling items for every category and sub category.
3. Look for novelty items that are hard to come by. Collectors' items or specialty gifts are a great way to get buyers to pull the trigger.

4. When searching for products keep in mind the different holiday sales and deals. Compare and choose the products with the biggest discounts.
5. Don't always go for the big-ticket items because it takes buyers a lot longer to pull the trigger on them. Instead, choose products with modest pricing so you have the potential of many sales. And who knows, once they are on Amazon, they might end up buying that big-ticket item and inadvertently earn you the commission for that.

WRITE CONTENT AND INCLUDE YOUR AFFILIATE LINK

After you pick out the products you want to promote through your blog you will start asking for and copying their affiliate links. You will have to make a few decisions like:

Where to place the links? And

What type of links would you want?

Link placement is crucial. If you make the mistake of just plastering your link anywhere you can, you run the risk of looking spammy to readers and search engines. You have to be smarter than that and use your affiliate links strategically and use the conventions. The conventions being adding textual affiliate links to the product's name, anywhere it appears on the page.

The other thing is you will have the option of using different types of links: textual links, gifs, banners (in several sizes); and you have to

decide what suits your site or content the best. There's really no right answer here. You just have to pick the one you think will work best and then test it for conversion. If it's not working as well as you hoped, change it. Typically, text links work better than graphical links.

Link cloaking is also something you should consider. Link cloaking is the practice of hiding a link so that it does not appear to be an affiliate links. There are three reasons:

1. People are getting savvier about advertising and they can easily pick out affiliate links.
2. Search engines do not like a lot of affiliate links on websites and they can (depending on the search engine algorithms for that month) mess with your PR (Page Rank).
3. Some popular websites like Facebook block affiliate links from their pages.

Our two cents use websites like:

1. aCloaker (<http://www.acloaker.com/>) is a free service.
2. Fast Blog Finder (<http://www.fastblogfinder.com/affiliate-link-cloaker/>) is also free.
3. Link Trackr (<http://www.linktrackr.com/link-cloaker.php>) is a paid cloaker.
4. Affiliate Link Cloaker (<http://wordpress.org/plugins/alc/>) is a free WordPress plugin for link cloaking.
5. Pretty Link Pro (<http://prettylinkpro.com/>) is a paid WordPress plugin for link cloaking.

There are several other options available and you can use any of those too. Even TinyURL (www.tinyurl.com) can do the trick for basic cloaking.

AVAILABLE PLUGINS TO INTEGRATE AMAZON, CLICK BANK

There are a number of very functional Wordpress plugins that will make your life easier as an affiliate marketer. Here, is our list of the must-haves that will help you integrate and get the most out of your Amazon and Click Bank links:

1. Amazon Auto Links (<http://wordpress.org/plugins/amazon-auto-links/>) is a great plugin to keep you links up-to-date, generating links of new products available.
2. Easy Amazon Wishlist (<http://wordpress.org/plugins/easy-amazon-wishlist/>) lets you create and control the appearance of wish lists with your affiliate links cloaked under them.
3. WP Amazon Ads (<http://wordpress.org/plugins/wp-amazon-ads/>) creates a list of related Amazon items with your affiliate ID. It is also good for sharing revenue if you have a multi-author blog.
4. Clickbank Storefront (<http://wordpress.org/plugins/clickbank-storefront/>) creates, like the name suggests, a storefront with Clickbank products with your affiliate ID.

5. Clickbank Niche Storefront (<http://wordpress.org/plugins/clickbank-niche-storefronts/>) is, as the name suggests a Clickbank storefront that is niche oriented.
6. Clickbank Sale Notification (<http://wordpress.org/plugins/clickbank-sale-notification/>) emails you every time you make a Clickbank sale.
7. iTunes Affiliates Pro (<http://wordpress.org/plugins/itunes-affiliate-pro/>) is a plugin to integrate your iTunes affiliate links easily.

Other Plugins you should ideally have on your blog are:

1. Simple WP Backup (<http://wordpress.org/plugins/simple-wordpress-backup/>) nothing should be more important to a marketer than a good database backup plugin. This one is top-of-the-shelf when it comes to performance.
2. All-in-One SEO Pack (<http://wordpress.org/plugins/all-in-one-seo-pack/>) is a great tool to have to automatically optimize your blog for search engines.
3. Google XML Sitemap (<http://wordpress.org/plugins/google-sitemap-generator/>) generates XML sitemaps making your blog search engine friendly.
4. Google Analytics Dashboard (<http://wordpress.org/plugins/google-analytics-dashboard/>) is a

must-have Plugin for every blogger. You don't need to think about this, just download and install it.

5. WP Optimize (<http://wordpress.org/plugins/wp-optimize/>) is the perfect Plugin to make your blog speedy by optimizing it.
6. Gravity Forms (<http://www.gravityforms.com/>) is going to fill all your form creation needs. An one-in-all and very user-friendly.

You can search for and use other plugins that might help you.

DRIVE TRAFFIC

There is absolutely no point at all in having a blog that is brilliantly written, offers heaps of great savings, bargains, information and more, if nobody lands on your page to see it. The lifeblood of anything you do online is the traffic that finds its way to your pages and enjoys what you have to offer.

There are some people that don't understand the sheer scale of the Internet. They think that if they put up a blog, or a site that people will just find it; but in terms of scale, that's like hoping they will find a tiny cul-de-sac in a remote village in New Zealand, by using a map of the world – it just won't happen.

According to CyberJournalist.net approx. 4.43 million new blogs are created every single day. That works out to 133 million new blogs every month!

Another problem is that if people don't know the address of your blog they are not going to find it either. They might use a search engine to

try searching for your blog, but if your blog is not ranked in search engines then your blog is not going to show up. So are you starting to see that just because you have a blog it doesn't necessarily mean you are going to get any visitor looking at it?

There is an old story that goes around the internet once in a while that says: "It doesn't matter if you are selling \$100 bills for just \$1 – if no one knows where your offer is sitting on the internet you won't make any sales". You need TRAFFIC! And, though there's lots of it tramping the online store close to the holidays, but they probably won't be able to find you if your blog is just sitting there patiently waiting for its flood of visitors then we have got some work to do...

Let's get Traffic to your Blog! By the Barrel Load.

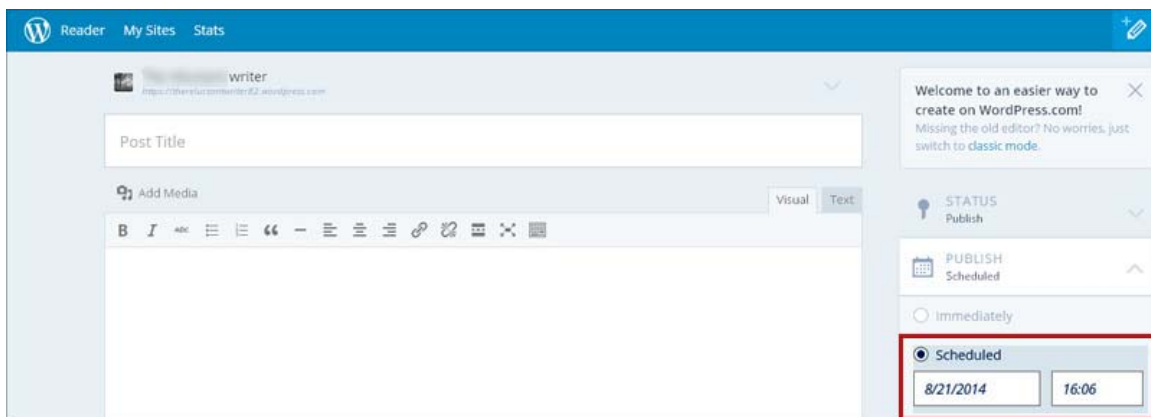
CONTENT

There are three different things that will help make your blog content traffic attractors (apart from the keywords that you will be using anyway for blog post titles and in the content itself): The topics you are covering, you're posting schedule and using original content. Firstly, wherever possible, make your blog posts controversial. Check out [Google Alerts](#) and [Google News](#) and find out what is happening in your niche, then post some content on it and start a conversation on that news wherever possible.

Use contentious headlines that are just begging to be clicked and then when you get readers on your page, encourage them to stay. Create a poll, ask for their opinions in your comment section or even offer readers the chance to contribute their own blog post to your blog.

Readers love the chance to have their opinions read, so offer guest blog spots to experts in your niche or to people who seem to have a lot to say. You will not only be getting original content for free but you will also be gaining some extra readers because your guest bloggers will undoubtedly promote their own post through their social network sites.

To gain organic traffic through search engines, you need to post content on a regular basis. Wordpress is great because it allows you to schedule your posts to be published on your blog at a future date and time.



Blogger.com offers the same opportunity in its advanced section of the posting page. This allows you to write 3-5 blog posts on the one day and then schedule them to be drip fed to your blog say at the rate of 1 - 3 per day (when your blog is new) and then one every two days or three times a week as the blog becomes more established. Remember your blog will be pinged to the search engines every time you add a new post; so keep the content updated frequently.

Another point you might want to remember is that content does not have to be written words only. Videos make excellent content and so

do audio files and photo galleries. Depending on your niche you can easily create your own video and audio files, or upload a couple from YouTube for example, and include your own short review on the content. Your readers will appreciate the diversity of the information you are providing or they might just like to laugh along at something funny you wanted to share through your blog. Either way you are attracting traffic and that is the key to this whole book.

BACK LINKING

If you have been online for a while you have probably noted that there is some debate about whether or not back links can help your blogs search engine ranking or not. Some Internet marketers claim that if your site is back-linked by sites with non-similar content (or not in your niche at all) that Google will penalize you for it. Other marketers will tell you that any link is useful and not to worry about it and there are even places now where you can buy back links for your blog which is supposed to improve the ranking of your site on search engines.

We are in favor of natural back linking. We typically, allow comments on our blog/s and when people leave a comment on the posts they are invited to include a link to their website as part of the sign-up process. These websites are all back links from your site. We also try and include a minimum of two or three links in the text of each blog post so that once again the links are a natural part of the content as opposed to forced or glorified advertisements.

The other side of the equation is commenting on other people's blogs and leaving a web link, when you do that, pointing back to your blog. You can find blogs in your niche by simply signing up for Google Alerts

and using your keywords as a search term. You can get updates sent to you daily or weekly that will highlight other blogs that have used the same keywords, and then you can go and post a comment on their posts.

Forum posts are another great way of creating back links and promoting your blog – most forums will allow you to place a link in your signature file after you have posted a certain number of posts in the forum. If you use the forum threads to provide valuable tips and contents in your niche, to other users, they will quickly start clicking on your blog link in your signature file, to find out what else you are doing. Definitely allow your readers the chance to comment on and yes allow them to promote their own blog link as well – just make sure you moderate the posts.

BOOKMARKING, GOOGLE MAPS, GLOBAL TRANSLATOR

There are new technologies being created all of the time and many of them can help you increase the amount of traffic you can get to your blog. Consider using Google Maps on your site if appropriate to your niche. Social Bookmarking and RSS feeds are also great ways of getting traffic (more on them in the next section) and if your niche has global appeal why don't you include Google Translator on your posts as you can then rank on non-English search engines – a whole new and not nearly as competitive search engine and traffic opportunity.

Those are the basic things you want to cover in terms of your blog content. Now we need to head out onto the net and find other ways of driving barrel loads of traffic to your blog. In this next section, we will

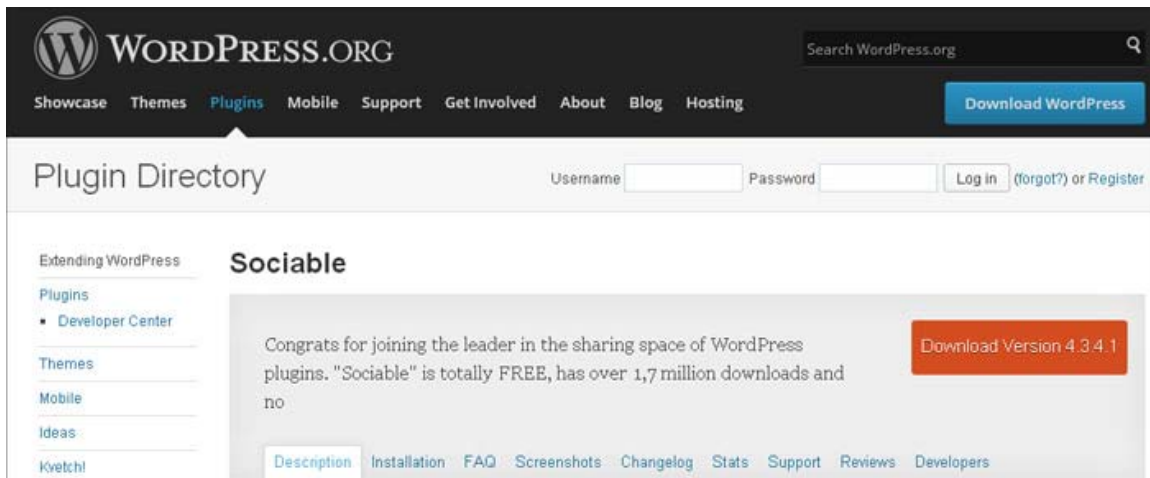
look at more ways you can let search engines know where your blog is living.

LET THE SEARCH ENGINES KNOW WHERE YOU LIVE

You will have already started to attract search engine attention from the steps you have taken in setting up your blog; using your plug-ins and using keywords in your content etc. The next set of tips will help you jump-start your efforts so that search engines find you even faster.

BOOKMARKING

Since the growth of social networking sites allowing your readers to share your blog posts with their fans, friends, twitter followers and more, this has become a really easy way to get fast and targeted traffic. All you need to do to allow your readers to share your content is to use a social bookmarking plug-in like “Share and Follow” or “Sociable”.



Both of these plug-ins provide share links at the bottom of each of your posts and this makes it easy for your readers to tweet, like, stumble, dig and just about “everything else it” about your posts.

Like anything else online, there are some sites that are more popular in the search engines than others, and when using social bookmarking sites you can gain valuable back links from social bookmarking sites that have a good PR rank. Below, we have included some additional details on a couple of these sites.

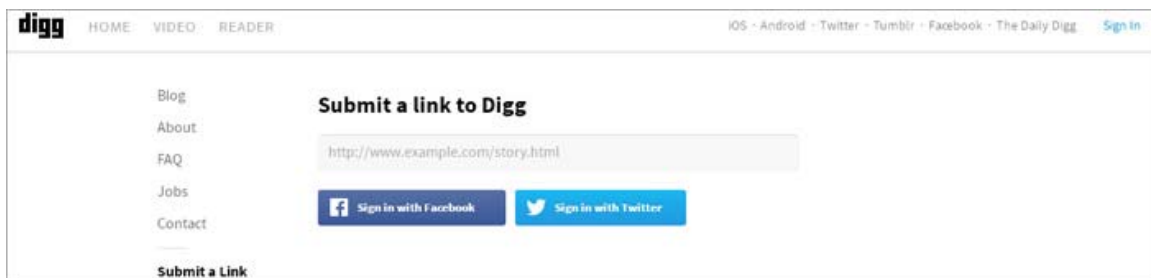
DIGG

To submit a site to the Digg site, you will need to become a member – it is free to sign up for – you will notice the “Sign in” link on the top right corner.



To submit a link on Digg, click here:

<http://digg.com/tools/diggthis/confirm>

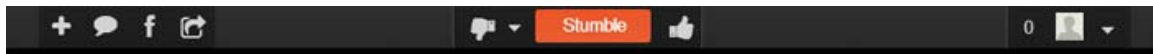


If you can find enough people that like your blog and they “Digg it”, you can end up being featured on the home page of the Digg site, which will result in a huge surge of traffic – this is where your controversial headlines for your posts could come in handy.

STUMBLEUPON



StumbleUpon is another social bookmarking site where the traffic you can get is helped if you have catchy post titles and are writing about popular topics. To use SU, you need to sign up for a free account and when you have done this you can download a small taskbar for your Internet browser. This comes with three buttons: “Stumble”, “I like it” and “thumbs down”.



When you have signed up, you will be able to go to your home page for your blog and then click the “I like it” button on your browser. A small screen will appear that will ask you to classify the blog, write a brief review/description, and then you just click the Add This Page button.

The image shows a screenshot of the StumbleUpon website's 'Add a New Page' form. The form is titled 'Add a New Page' and includes the following fields and options:

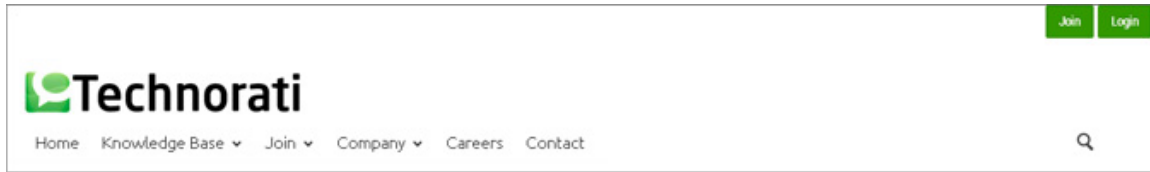
- Web page address:** A text input field.
- Is this page safe for work?:** Radio buttons for 'Yes' (selected) and 'No, it contains nudity or adult content'.
- What's this page about?:** A dropdown menu with 'Select an Interest' as the placeholder.
- Add Tags (optional):** A text input field with the instruction 'Enter tags separated by commas' below it.
- Write a comment (optional):** A large text area with a scroll bar.
- What's the page's language?:** A dropdown menu with 'English' selected.

A yellow 'Add This Page' button is located at the bottom of the form. The StumbleUpon logo and navigation icons are visible at the top of the page.

The site is then included for other SU members to see and rate and, of course, if you get a lot of “likes” then your traffic figures will increase. It is a good idea while you are on the SU site to sign up for blog/site links to competitor sites for your keyword – that way you can see what they are doing and maybe leave them a comment or two – all good linking for your site.

One tip with using SU is; don't just “I like it” your pages – as you are surfing the web “like” some other blogs and websites as well. This will help increase your exposure on the SU site as other users see that you do recommend some good sites in specific niches and they will pop back more often to visit the links you recommend.

TECHNORATI



This is another social bookmarking site that is free to join and when you have joined you can submit your blog for inclusion in their Blog Directory. This does have to be approved, so it is a good idea to leave off submitting your blog to this site until you have some good content on the blog. This will help it be accepted into the Blog Directory and, once you are listed in there, your site will be available to any of the thousands of Technorati members that are interested in your niche – this means more traffic.

USING OTHER BLOG'S TRAFFIC

As we mentioned earlier, if you can leverage the traffic from other popular sites then this is a great way of getting free exposure. Let's explore that by looking specifically at three different ways you can get traffic to your blog from other blogs in your niche.

COMMENTING

Honestly, we think this is one of the most effective ways of getting traffic to your blog for two different reasons. Firstly, you are allowed to place a link to your blog when you sign in to make a comment and, secondly the information that you give in, the comment will show other readers in your niche that you are knowledgeable about your topic and

are prepared to give them some useful information for free. Who can resist something like that?

Of course, this idea presupposes that you are going to give some quality content to the readers of the blog you are visiting and this is something that a lot of your competitors just don't take the time to do. They think that by putting in a comment like "great post" or "I agree" or even worse "You should check this out" with a link to their blog that they will be attracting traffic to their blogs. But all they are doing is creating links and not very good ones at that.

To really make the most of this type of traffic you need to spend some time regularly, each week commenting on blogs – a minimum of an hour a day two days a week at least. If you sign up for Google Alerts, you will already have some blogs that you can target with posts that are related to your niche, so all you have to do is go into each blog, READ the post (it is amazing how many people don't bother) and then make sure that your comment relates to what you have read and offers an alternative tip, some additional advice or something that will make other readers sit up and take notice.

Have you heard of the "do-follow" debate? Do-follow is a blog that allows links on their pages (like in the comments section) to your blog and they ask the Google spiders and bots to follow through from the link on their blog to yours. This makes Google happy because it can see that your blog is keeping good company.

The problem with getting hung up on this is that people who will comment on do-follow blogs are firstly missing out on a huge amount

of potential traffic in their niche and secondly, they are assuming that without a do-follow link their blog link on their comment is useless.

But if you are providing some good advice, other readers will click on the link to your blog just to find out what else you have to say. They don't care whether the blog they got your link from is do-follow or not. Personally, I would rather have those readers click on my links than encourage a link that maybe only the Google spiders and search engine bots will find.

Have you ever known a "bot" to buy a product or to comment on blogs?
– No, because you need real people for that. So don't worry too much about whether or not the blogs you are commenting on are do-follow or not.

BEING INTERVIEWED

What a wonderfully easy way to get traffic to your blog – being interviewed by another blog owner in your niche. All that it takes on your part is the time to answer some questions and make sure that your answers make sense and offer the listener some value. A bonus to this traffic method is that both you and the other blog owner will have new and original content to offer to the readers of both blogs.

Interviews can be conducted easily as part of a webinar or via Skype. It will probably be recorded as an audio file, and you can then offer the audio file and/or the transcript of the interview to people on your lists and through your blog posts. If the information is solid enough, you can sell the audio and transcript file as a new product on your blog and the interviewer can do the same.

When done correctly, being interviewed can be a lot beneficial to you personally and your blog traffic. To garner interest in your services you can put a small advertising link in the sidebar of your blog stating that you are “available for interviews”. Another way to get interviewed is to launch a new product and then let JV partners and affiliates know that you are happy to be interviewed about this new product or service.

GUEST BLOG POSTS

You will remember from earlier that we recommended that you ask readers of your site to submit blog posts to your blog. Well there is nothing to stop you doing the same thing on other blogs. If you find a couple of blogs that you like, that are in your niche, you can email the blog owner and offer to write a post or two in exchange for him providing a link to your blog on his site.

There are many blog owners that would jump at the opportunity to get some free content and if you can prove that you know what you are talking about in your niche then your expertise is going to be read by all of the traffic that is already going to the blog you are making a guest appearance on.

We can't stress enough how important it is that you build your reputation within your niche. Show that you are willing to help others with problems within the niche. Share some free valuable content and show in every form of communication you take part in that you are someone who knows the stuff and that you are a real person behind your blog posts.

This will increase the level of trust your readers will have in you and what you have to say, and you will be seen as an expert within your niche in a very short space of time.

- Be professional in all of your business dealings.
- Openly share quality information to your prospective readers so that they will keep coming back for more.
- Take the time to develop networks with other blog owners in your niche and who knows, once you decide to launch your own product, these same blog owners will probably look at a JV invite from you because they have been impressed with the information you have shared for free.

We will look more on this theme of giving things away to get traffic and make money with your blog in the next section.

THE POWER OF GIVEAWAYS AND VIRAL TRAFFIC

If you are new to the Internet, you might be wondering how giving away free stuff can drive traffic to your blog and make you money, but a lot of people do it successfully – so how does this type of system work?

TRAFFIC USING A FREE REPORT

There are three main reasons why giving away a free ebook (as an example) can drive traffic to your site and make you money. Firstly, when you promote anything FREE, you are going to attract interest from your niche. Secondly, you can use the FREE ebook to help you

gain trust among people in your niche (your potential customers).
Thirdly, you can pass on your free information to other people who can then give it away to their list members and on their blogs, which in turn increases your traffic.

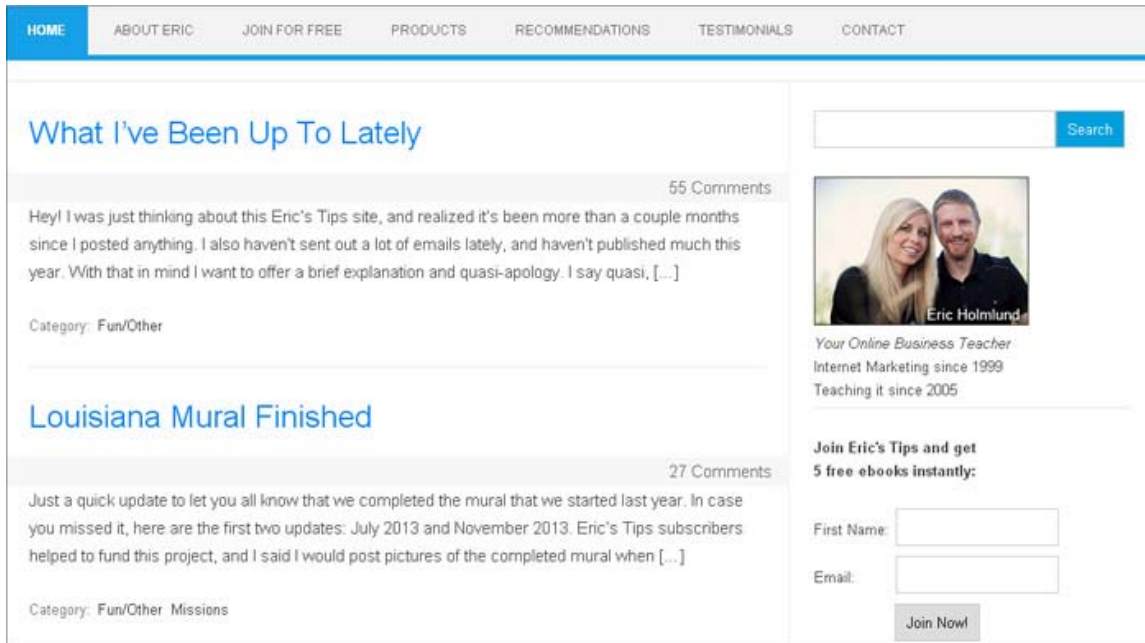
Let's say, you have created a blog for people who have been divorced but who now want to find a new soul mate. You set up your blog with some informative and creative ideas on how to get back into the dating scene and how to weed out the no-hopers.

You create a product or an e-course (or promote one from Clickbank or some other affiliate network) so that your blog is monetized and now all you have to do is get some traffic. So you write a report that you are going to give away for free and you call it say, "The number one secret to telling if your new man is a fraud" (or something like that – have a contentious title). Now, what do you do with it?

First – you are going to sign up with an autoresponder and set up a free sign-up form for promoting your free report and put that in the sidebar of your blog. You may try Aweber, GetResponse or Mailchimp, these are the top leaders in Autoresponder services.

On the next page is an example of what that can look like. This has been created using an Aweber form, but GetResponse is very similar. When the readers fill in their name and email details they are asked to confirm their email address and then sent a link to the download page where they can access their free report. Aweber will also hold their details so that I can send additional emails and information on that niche that might be of interest to them.

But you want to drive traffic, so how does this help? Firstly, because your report is free, you will get a lot of interest from people who are already visiting your site – simply because it is free. And, if it has a really enticing title to the report, then that will work even more in your favor.



The screenshot shows a blog sidebar with a navigation menu at the top: HOME, ABOUT ERIC, JOIN FOR FREE, PRODUCTS, RECOMMENDATIONS, TESTIMONIALS, CONTACT. The main content area has two posts. The first post is titled "What I've Been Up To Lately" with 55 comments. The text of the post says: "Hey! I was just thinking about this Eric's Tips site, and realized it's been more than a couple months since I posted anything. I also haven't sent out a lot of emails lately, and haven't published much this year. With that in mind I want to offer a brief explanation and quasi-apology. I say quasi, [...]" and the category is "Fun/Other". The second post is titled "Louisiana Mural Finished" with 27 comments. The text says: "Just a quick update to let you all know that we completed the mural that we started last year. In case you missed it, here are the first two updates: July 2013 and November 2013. Eric's Tips subscribers helped to fund this project, and I said I would post pictures of the completed mural when [...]" and the category is "Fun/Other Missions". On the right side of the sidebar, there is a search bar with a "Search" button. Below the search bar is a photo of a man and a woman, with the man's name "Eric Holmlund" written below it. Under the photo, it says "Your Online Business Teacher", "Internet Marketing since 1999", and "Teaching it since 2005". Below this is a form titled "Join Eric's Tips and get 5 free ebooks instantly:". The form has two input fields: "First Name:" and "Email:". Below the input fields is a "Join Now!" button.

An example of an opt-in form in a blog sidebar

Next, using the same form and the same free report, you are going to create a squeeze page. For those of you who don't know what it is, a squeeze page is a static page on your blog that's sole purpose is to collect names and email addresses so that, you can build a list. To create an effective squeeze page just use your enticing title as a huge headline, add in a couple of bullet points about what your readers will get out of the free report, and put in your opt-in form. Now, you have a page that other people can drive traffic to.

OFF TOPIC NOTE: While this is more of a list building exercise rather than a traffic boost technique, there is no point in driving heaps of traffic to your blog if you have not got any way of capturing their details so that you can continue to promote to those visitors long after they have left your site. And stick with me because the traffic aspect is coming up next.

Right, let's recap. We have a free report, we have an opt-in form on the blog posts page, and we have a squeeze page with an opt-in form on it. Now let's go viral with it.

Firstly, you want to post your free report to as many places as you can find that will accept it for free. In the resources section of this ebook you will find a list of places that distributes free eBooks and will accept your listing for free. That is traffic method number one.

Secondly, go back to those forums and blogs that you have commented on and include a link to your squeeze page in your signature line, or as your web address (for commenting). This is traffic method number two.

Go back to those blogs that you have commented on and check to see if the blog has a sign-up form of their own, or a newsletter. If they have, then email the blog owner and ask them if they would like to take advantage of your free report by giving it to their own list. That way you can leverage their list building efforts and traffic for your own blog. This is traffic method number three.

JV PARTNERS

Now, we want you to tweak your free report and change the link on your sales page (in the book) to a clone of the sales page that you are

going to create on your blog. This sales page is going to be used by your JV partners and you need them to use a separate order page to the one you already use, so that you can pay them a commission on the sales that they generate – see below:

Go back to the forums you have joined in your niche and look for people with a lot of posts to their credit and who seem to be respected within the forum. Send them a PM or an email and offer them your free report that they can send out to their lists with them (the JV partners), making a commission on any sales that come from doing this.

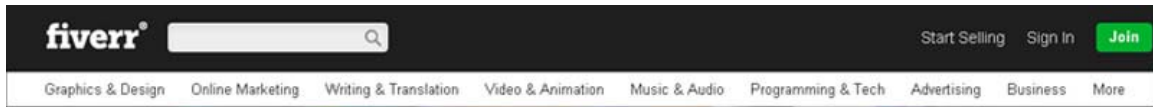
You get signups to your list; traffic to your posts and possible extra sales from the targeted traffic a JV partner can send you. This is traffic method number four.

Those newsletters offered by the blog owners you have already had contact with – would they like to JV with you and earn some commissions as well? Again, you will be leveraging their list and traffic. This is traffic method number five.

OTHER METHODS USING THE FREE REPORT

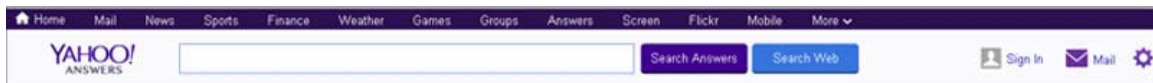
Submit the link to your squeeze page to a Blog Carnival – you can find a few links for that in the resources section. Make sure you can use your squeeze page link if possible so that you can capture email details, but if you can't do that, then send them directly to your download page. You will still be promoting your products and blogs through the links in the report.

Go onto Fiverr.com and offer your free report for \$5 as an immediate download. This way you are making a bit of money out of it too. You can use any of the other Fiverr-like sites we discussed earlier in the book.

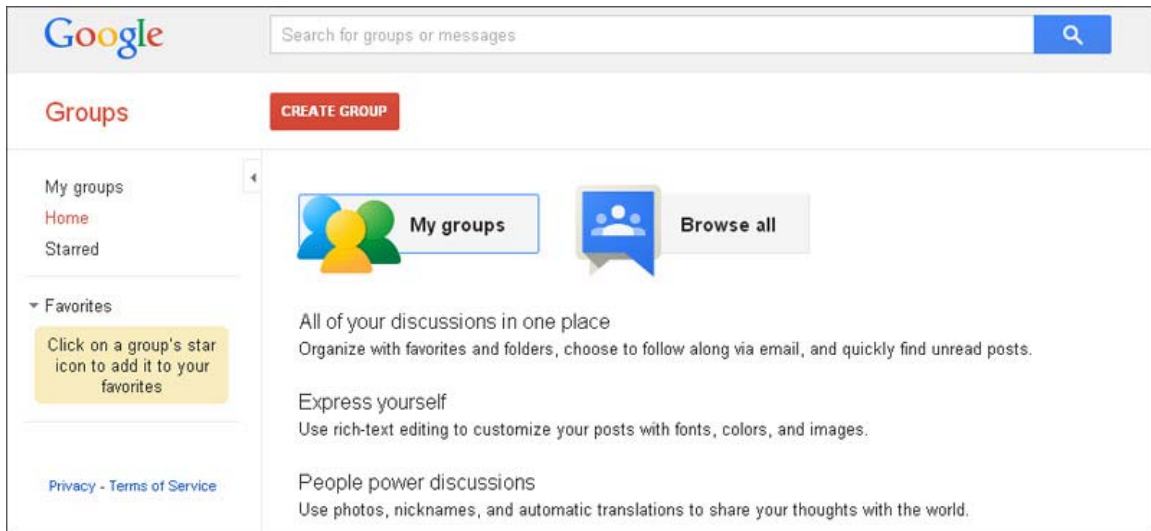


Offer your free report as a thread on the forums you have been working in. Make sure that your thread notes that you do have an affiliate or sales links in it (full disclosure), but point out how helpful that free report will be in solving “XX” problem – link that thread to your squeeze page.

Go onto Yahoo Answers and similar sites and offer dating advice including a link to your free report.



You can also use these sites to recommend your informative blog posts to interested readers. You can also use Groups as another source of traffic. Groups can give you intensely targeted traffic, so sort out a couple in your niche from Google Groups and any others you can find.



Remember to give quality information on these groups and answer sites and you will find a lot of people clicking the link to your blog or squeeze page.

That is another free traffic method using your free report. But we have not finished yet.

NON-WRITTEN TRAFFIC METHODS USING THE FREE REPORT

You can maximize your free report writing efforts by converting the content into other mediums. Using screen capture software and a program like PowerPoint Presentations you can create a slide show of your free report and then record it into video format using your screen capture software. This will create an mp4 file of your free report that you can then use on your blog posts and upload it to video directory sites like YouTube and others.

Read your free report into an audio file and convert it into a podcast. Then upload the podcast to free sites and allow others to download them. Make sure that you repeat your domain name often so that your listeners have a chance to write it down. Offer both your audio and your video files to other blog owners who might be interested in some free and useful content.

If you have gone to the trouble of converting your free report into a podcast you could also consider offering your main blog product in audio format, as well as, that does have a higher perceived value than an ebook might have. You can offer the audio version through your free podcast, as well as advertise your blog posts and written products.

That is another four-traffic method using the power of the free report. Thus, this is a total of 14 different methods that you can use to send heaps of traffic to your blog, squeeze page and sales pages, and they are all free to set up.

FREE LONG TERM TRAFFIC METHODS

A lot of people seriously underestimate the power of using free marketing methods like article marketing, video marketing, and using ezines as a marketing tool, press releases and social network sites like HubPages. In this section, I am going to briefly outline why each of these methods should be an important part of your traffic driving efforts.

ARTICLE MARKETING

Article marketing will generate traffic for you in three basic ways. Firstly, some of the better article directories have high page rank, so if you have a link to your blog in your resource box, then you are getting a high profile back link, which in turn increases your search engine rankings.

Secondly, the information you share in your articles will help show your readers that you are an expert in your niche. These articles will also showcase how your expertise can benefit them personally and that is a huge bonus to your future sales efforts. By the time your readers click onto your blog link, they will already be convinced that you are someone who can help them and that they can trust.

Thirdly, the articles have longevity. Your blog links to your articles will be online for readers to enjoy for years – and with no additional effort or cost. Can you see how that would be far more beneficial to your long-term blog business than paying out for advertising?

You do not have to write additional articles to put on article directory sites, because you can use your own blog posts if they are original content. You might want to rewrite a few versions of each post so that you can upload similar articles to more than one article directory. There is a list of the best ones in the resources section, but you don't have to do that if you don't want to.

Your articles only need to be 350-450 words long, so they won't take you long to write and if you do a minimum of five articles per week, within a month you will have 20 permanent advertisements for your

blog on the web showcasing your expertise and your links. The more articles you write, the more response you are going to get.

VIDEO MARKETING

Video marketing works in the same way as article marketing and if you are not that good at creating videos then you can use screen capture software and the PowerPoint presentation idea, I mentioned earlier to turn your articles into video content that can then be uploaded to video directories.

A little tip here is that when you upload your videos to YouTube for example, in the description section put a link to your blog in it first and make sure that you include the “http://” stuff because then your viewers will have a clickable link to your blog directly underneath your video.

EZINE CONTRIBUTOR

There are literally thousands of ezines on the web and they all need content. A lot of the ezines in your niche will be more than happy to include an article that you have written if it is useful to their readers, and you get to have a small bio and link to your blog included for free. To find ezines in your niche go to any of the ezine directories listed in the resources section.

PRESS RELEASES

A lot of people assume that press releases are used by offline businesses and are only ever used to promote new products or exciting news in big companies. But, the press release business online

is doing really well, and if you can spin a news angle to your niche topic, then you can use free press release services to promote your blog posts.

The best free place to launch your first press release is PRLog.org.



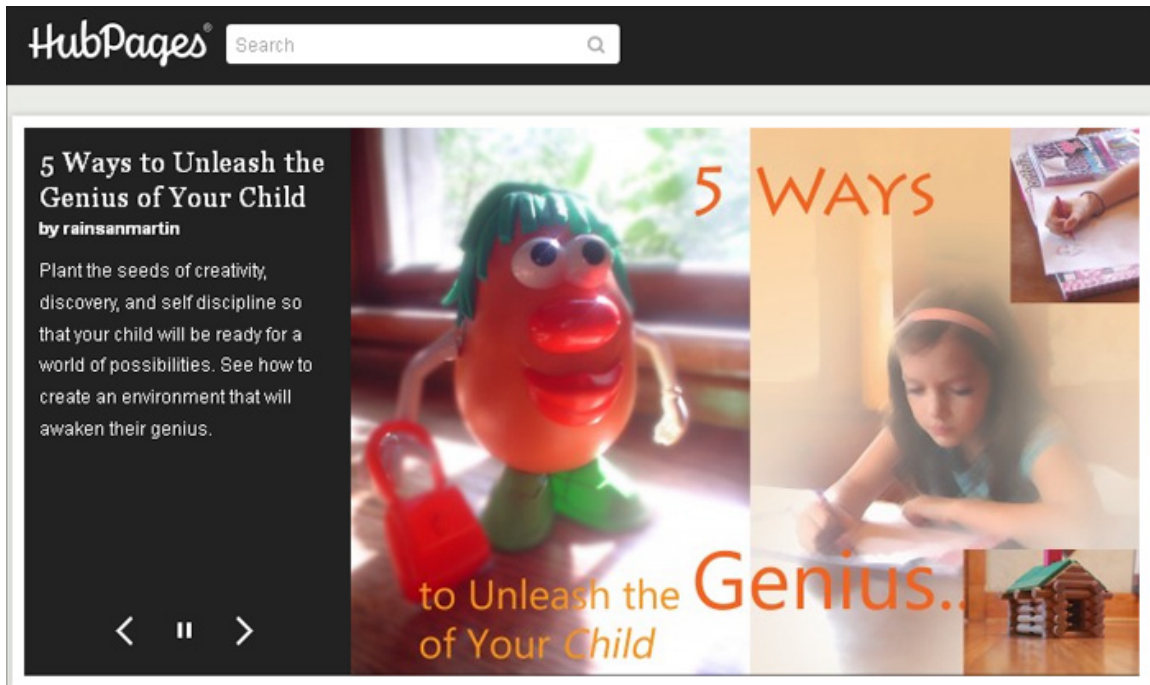
Not only you can submit your press release through this free site, but you can also get help on how to write one – check out the link on the left hand side bar.

Make sure that you use working contact details in your Press Release because a lot of journalists and other media personnel scan sites just like this one looking for story ideas and you never know when they might be calling you.

HUBPAGES

HubPages is a form of social networking site that allow their users to post “hubs” (pages) online for free. It uses a drag and drop modular design, and allows you to add all sorts of modules to your page including videos, pictures, Amazon products and polls just to name a few of them. Like article directories these two social sites have a good page rank so if you create a few pages on these sites, using your keywords and then insert in-text links to your own blog through the page then you are creating your own quality back links. Both sites are free to join; have communities and groups operating in them and heaps of free tutorial information so you can create your first lens or

hub like a professional.



EXTRA TIP: Link some of your lenses and hubs to your online articles and videos - link them back in return to your lenses and hubs - and have all of them linking towards your own blog as well and you are going to be generating traffic from all angles.

Your mind is probably bulging about now with all of the different ideas that we have presented here that can help you send barrel loads of traffic to your blog. But we can't leave without a mention of other social networking platforms so that in the lastly we are going to talk about social media.

SOCIAL NETWORKING PLATFORMS

Honestly, you would have to spend the last five years in a cave not to have heard about sites like Twitter, and Facebook. These social networking sites have been increasing in popularity with every passing

day and in the last year or so internet marketers have realized the benefits using these two sites to drive traffic to their blogs and products.

TWITTER AND FACEBOOK

Like any form of marketing or traffic generation method you have to make sure that you are reaching people who are interested in your niche. While it might be tempting to just rack up Twitter followers by the thousands, or Facebook fans, but if these people are not interested in your niche then your efforts will be wasted.

Another thing about using Facebook and Twitter is that a lot of Internet marketers just keep sending out sales promos and they don't offer any relevant information to their followers or fans. Doing this is just going to result in people "un-following" you and "un-liking" you or just ignoring your messages and news.

The challenge in using Twitter certainly is conveying useful information in 140 characters, but it can be done. One useful tip is to find news articles about your niche via Google Alerts and posting a shortened link to that to your Twitter followers. On your Facebook account you can set up fan pages and post all sorts of information there including news items. Don't forget that the blog posts you do on your own blog can also be broadcast through Twitter and Facebook so you can attract a bit of a following through there as well – it all adds up to increased traffic.

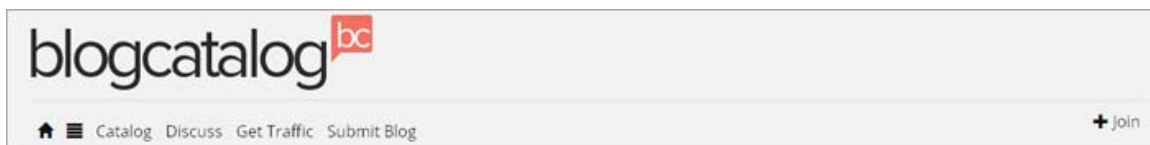
BLOGSITESLIST AND BLOGCATALOG

Something that is a little newer in the social networking world is sites that are set up specifically for bloggers to promote themselves, join groups and communities and get some great advice. We are going to take a quick look at two of these now.

Blogsiteslist.com is a free to join site. This site has a great community feel and you are encouraged to post your blog link on their site. They even provide you with a little widget so you can see who has been looking at your content.

BlogCatalog is another directory site where you can post your blog – newest blogs get to spend a little bit of time on the home page, which can help with a traffic surge.

They also have an active forum where you can ask and answer questions, and there are a lot of blogs listed on the directory where you can find JV partners, places to add your comments too and so much more. While you are signing up you should also take a look at their tools section because there are a lot of widgets, plug-ins and share tools that will help you increase the amount of traffic to your blog, and improve the viewer's experience when they get there.



TINY TIP: When using any form of social media try and allocate your time wisely. Otherwise you can lose a whole

day being distracted by messages from friends, new things to try out and that type of thing. Stick to a schedule of maybe 1 hour per day to do social networking and then get back to the other things that will make you money and help your blog grow and prosper.

That's it for getting your blogs set up and getting your mind working on the all the moneymaking opportunities through any holiday. We hope you have found something that would make you some ever-desired extra cash for the next calendar holiday. But wait! We aren't done yet. We still have a lot of good ideas for small and big businesses to ramp them up. Dig in!

CHAPTER 3

BIG BONANZA FOR ONLINE MARKETERS

It is the jolliest time of the year for Internet marketers or at least successful Internet marketers. We are not just talking about the winter festivities, when it comes to the holidays; there is no discrimination while spending.

In this section, we will focus on different ways small online business owners and marketers can make money by placing strategic ads, banners, holiday offers, affiliate incentives, targeting holiday products, etc. This section is targeted at marketers who are product or service owners. It doesn't matter if your products/services are small or large, you will take away a lot of useful strategies, tips and tricks for making your next holiday more profitable.

WHERE TO START

Whoever said that the "first step is the hardest" had seen a marketer at work. The thing about developing plans and strategies is to know where to begin not just about how to go about it. There are several ways you might think of approaching the holiday cash frenzy; you could do any of the following:

1. Creating and selling a digital holiday-related product
2. Starting and selling a holiday related services
3. Creating and selling a physical holiday related product
4. Putting a holiday spin on your existing digital or physical stock
5. Promote your holiday-related existing stock
6. Promote your existing service with a holiday spin

Once you know what you are going to do to achieve the profits you want, every other decision will become that much easier. Next, start strategizing how you can sell your products or ideas with a holiday spin. The amount of money people cumulatively spends over the major holidays is staggering, but getting a piece that can be tough if you are not being pro-active.

This is what we suggest you do, every quarter i.e. every three months you sit down and look at your calendar to plan the next three months and know where you are headed. Most real life businesses have a three-month fiscal quarter where they assess how they did previously and fine-tune their strategies for better results in the next quarter. This is what we want you to do.

Look at your existing and in-the-pipeline products and according to the season and holiday coming up, put some on the fast burner in terms of production and put some on hold. Once you have decided on the products you are going to be promoting in the next quarter, pin-point your target demographic. Then locate your demo's geographical location and go after them.

Now, the next step is to start strategizing and to get a solid plan in place, but before that we want to work out one last thing - the timing.

WHEN TO START

Timing is everything with holiday marketing and waiting till the last minute can be a costly, if not just a bad idea. With holiday marketing campaigns, you can never start too early. We cannot emphasize

enough, the importance of a well-timed campaign. A jewelry sale a couple of weeks before Mother's Day, or a fireworks clearance sale before the 4th of July can be very profitable. But, the same sale a day after the holiday might not reap even half of the same rewards.

Similarly, there is such a thing as starting a campaign too early e.g. marketing for Valentine's Day before New Year's day is sure to be a bust. What we are trying to say is: like with everything else in life, "timing" is everything when it comes to online marketing.

Here are some of our most effective holiday marketing tips:

THINK AHEAD OF TIME

Now, there might be a right or wrong time to begin your campaign but there is no wrong in prepping for big holidays in advance. It's actually very wise to get things done before hand so you won't be slammed during the holiday with anything but raking in the cash.

If you do start prepping for your campaign early, this will give you the time to test variations of your campaign before hand. E.g., If you want to invest in paid advertising through Adwords for the coming Christmas it might be wise to test your niche keywords with Adwords over Labor Day or Halloween. This gives you some time to readjust your strategy, if need be.

MAKE A SPECIAL HOLIDAY CALENDAR

There are hundreds; if not thousands of calendar apps you can use to create a calendar that highlights all the holidays you can take

advantage of over the year. Now we did think about including a calendar here for you, but it would be impossible for us to include all the different holidays for a variety of different businesses. Instead, we want you to do the work. Get a calendar that you are familiar with and start mapping out the holidays.

Google it, if you are not sure you are covering all the holidays. Once you do this you might be surprised at all the opportunities you could've or did miss. After you have a holiday calendar, the next step is to weed out the holidays that will not speak to your business. If you sell hardware, Mother's Day might not be your target holiday. You get the idea? Weed it out. But, remember you should still have at least one holiday promotion going on every month, if not more. Take as much time as you need to create your holiday calendar and really start thinking about all the holidays you want to promote.

The top three calendar days of the year for maximum holiday sales are:

- Black Friday
- Cyber Monday
- First Week of December (especially the 6th of December)

Do not forget these on your calendar.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF HOLIDAY SPECIALS

Putting certain items in your inventory on a special promotion for specific holidays is a time-tested method of making greater sales. The tough part is to know what to promote on which holiday. If you took our advice and made yourself a little holiday calendar earlier, this part

will be much easier for you to sort out. Open up your ledger, your books, quarterly reports, or even your PayPal statements if that's what you have been working with previously. Start identifying the your bestsellers for every holiday that you have marked on your calendar. E.g., if you had sold a lot of a gourmet chocolate truffle for Valentine's then that should be your biggest promotion.

If you are relatively new and haven't been in business for long enough to know what your bestsellers were, make informed decisions by looking a different Internet marketer's shops, and by asking them about what they most like to promote for each holiday. You'd be surprised how helpful people are, if you show them respect.

At the end of it, what you are looking for are at least 2 – 3 products or services you can promote for each holiday you have marked down on your calendar.

TAKE IT DOWN

Just as you had to time the start of the campaign, make sure you finish it on time too. If people see a Christmas banner on your website a week after New Year's, they will think you are not professional. Wouldn't you too? You did the hard work, so don't be lazy and take the holiday specials down. Don't worry, there's always another holiday just around the corner. You'll probably have to deck up your site sooner rather than later.

5 BEST WAYS TO CAPITALIZE ON THE HOLIDAY INFLUX

In this section, we will further your agenda of big holiday sales by discussing the following five most effective ways to boost your sales and/or the profit margin.

INTRODUCE AFFILIATE INCENTIVES

If you have been successful in the Internet marketing game for over three months we can bet you have tried or have wanted to try affiliate marketing. Affiliate Marketing at the core is getting knowledgeable people to do the grunt work for you. What could be better? Get them to do the grunt work and make you loads of cash over the major holidays!

This is where your holiday calendar will come in handy again. If you want to make money over any specific holiday, you will want your affiliates to know that. Start preparing the way before the holiday, get your banners and deals ready to hand out to your affiliates with ample time for them to start putting a marketing plan in place for the holiday. However, that's not the only thing you want to do. You want to not only incentivize your customers with holiday banners and deals but you also want to do the same for your affiliates.

That's the trick to getting the "super affiliates" to pick your products for promotion for the holiday. The secret to the success of super affiliates are their genuine mailing lists and you want those on your roster to make some serious money. But how do you incentivize your affiliates –

well, that's mostly up to you, because, it depends a lot on what, you are selling. What does the trick in most cases is an increase in commissions for the number of sales made. Let's say, the current commission for an affiliate for your product is 3%, you can create an incentive plan by saying:

If an affiliate makes over 50 sales, the commission will become 5%

If an affiliate makes over 75 sales, the commission will become 7%

If an affiliate makes over 100 sales, the commission will become 12.5%

You get the idea, right? If you are an affiliate marketer, you will benefit from looking out for these amazing incentives and promote products that not only sell, but give you a greater return to make your holiday more rewarding as well.

PUT A SEASONAL SPIN ON ALL YOUR MERCHANDISE AND SERVICES

Here's our mantra, no matter what you are selling/marketing you can give it a seasonal twist. This section is especially for marketers who do not have a product of their own or do not have an "inventory" – meaning they just sell a few products.

If you have a limited inventory or a service to offer, then you really need to work out a game plan beforehand to make the most out of your holiday calendar. By offering a seasonal promotion of your article writing service where you put a 10% discount on all holiday-related

articles you produce would get you a lot more jobs than your competitors. The point doesn't matter how big or small, you need to put a holiday spin on it, to make it more exciting for your customers.

If you are a marketer with a huge inventory, you can promote certain products come certain holiday but even then you can put a seasonal spin on everything by offering complimentary services on everything e.g. free gift-wrapping, free delivery, free customized mug, buy more – save more, etc. are all great for giving your online store front a holiday glow.

PICK PRODUCTS THAT ARE RUMORED TO BE BEST-SELLERS

Picking the seasonal best sellers and promoting them is a sure fire way to get sales go through the digital roof of your shop. We have talked a little bit about this before, but here we will discuss how you can go to huge storefronts like Amazon and Ebay and find out what their best sellers are for the season and promote those or similar products.

No matter what niche you are in, you can take advantage of the best seller lists almost every huge retailer has on their website to sell. E.g. If you are in the fashion niche, check out Saks Fifth Avenue for their bestseller list for the upcoming season. www.saksfifthavenue.com/

If, however, you are looking to create and sell either digital or real products, do your research and pick products that are sure to be a hit for that particular holiday. The age of information surely overloads us with data, and deciphering what will sell best can be tricky. The trick we

use to find out what products are bound to be a hit as soon as they come out are through numbers.

Look at the interest in similar products before and read as many reviews from trusted sites as you can. Going to trade fairs related to your niche though out the year is also a great way to get insider information about what is the next industry best seller. Picking the right products for the right seasons is half the job done. No point in promoting iPhone 5 after iPhone 6 is released.

INVEST IN PAID MARKETING

The competition for attention from buyers is tough during the big holidays and this might be the right time to invest in some paid marketing, if you have the cash. Paid marketing might not be right for you if you do not have a good understanding of targeting seasonal keywords. It is the fastest way you start to see results, or lack thereof. So, target keywords that are sure to give you a good ROI (Return on Investment).

Have a game plan and bid higher for keywords that are bound to generate better results during the holiday. Adwords and other such PPC (Pay Per Click) advertising programs will have a lot of big corporations bidding on the top keywords so you better have either your analytical tools ready for finding less competitive keywords, or have your checkbook ready to dole out some hefty cash. In any case, you do your research before you start paying for advertising and it's almost a foolproof way to get traffic. Converting this traffic to sales, however, is a whole different ball game and will depend entirely on your content.

PUT CONTENT GENERATION INTO OVER-DRIVE

We think its time to emphasize the importance of starting content generation well before the holidays. We have discussed how to get traffic to your products but if you do not have the “right” content, the traffic will never convert into paying customers. Your website or customer “landing page” will not only need promotional banners and deals prominently displayed, but what you need most is a defined “call to action”.

You want to say to your potential customers: buy now or miss out. Make them feel the value and urgency of the sale. Give them as much information as they might need to make that decision, load up on content like:

1. Testimonials,
2. Reviews,
3. Lists (Top 10 or Top 20)
4. Comparison with Similar Products/Services,
5. Video and High Resolution Images of the Product,
6. Technical Specifications,
7. Price Comparisons,
8. Value Adding Deals,
9. Email Campaigns
10. Social Media Buzz etc.

It’s imperative and the whole point of creating the holiday calendar to get all this content ready well before you have to start marketing for that holiday.

PLAN IT RIGHT!

Like with everything else, a good plan is the only blue print, we marketers have for success. Get that holiday calendar going, if you haven't already, and plan everything to the Tee. You do not want to be caught off-guard without any contingency plans. Holidays are the time to sell-sell-sell and then sell some more!

Plan out everything for the big holidays like Christmas and test to perfect the marketing strategies you will use for big holidays throughout the year. You should have a plan of not just when to start or what to promote, you should know everything about the marketing campaign from the launch up till the point where you might have to stop taking orders. In a nutshell, plan for success.

CHAPTER 4

HOW LARGE CORPORATIONS DECK OUT FOR THE HOLIDAYS

We can all learn a little by reading up on the marketing trends and behaviors of the big retailers like Amazon and Walmart. After all, they do pay hundreds of thousands of dollars for marketing experts to come up with foolproof ways to meet profit expectations during holidays.

Having said that, there is no “recipe for success” that can be rehashed year-after-year. The only constant with successful retailers is evolution. If they cannot keep up with the latest online trends, they might as well give up because, as we mentioned earlier in the book, brick and mortar stores can exist only with little success without a successful online front.

We do want to discuss some of the constantly employed practices by these large corporations that are sure to either result in success or in failure.

BEST PRACTICES

Here is a simple list, in bullet points of the seven most effective, tried and tested holiday marketing practices for big businesses.

1. Get in early with the plan is the motto for all big businesses. Most big retailers will plan out their holiday marketing plans down to the exact minute they start. E.g. Walmart bought out the entire advertising space on Facebook months before its complete three-day holiday cloaking of the social networking giant.

2. Another almost no-fail ploy is to grab the attention of the buyers by planning a surprise deal or event or product launch that is sure to get people excited and talking. These, of course, are targeted towards the season or the holiday.
3. Big businesses, especially the ones with PR reps on the payroll like to create some controversy about their products to get tongues wagging and to get people interested. "Any publicity is good publicity", after all.
4. Large retailers like to advertise their best bargains as "deal of the day", or "deal of the week" etc. This way they direct their customers towards the items they like to sell most.
5. Creating "recommended for you" lists from their inventory is also a great way to incentivize customers to buy more and feel catered to specifically at the same time. The process is easy enough to employ and highly effective if you can find a decent programmer for your e-commerce site.
6. Newsletter subscriptions are also a great way to get your holiday specials to customers' inboxes. This is where big specialty or niche retailers like Rue La La (www.ruelala.com) find most of their seasonal customers come from. Having a professionally created e-newsletter is neither expensive nor hard to manage, but produces amazing results during the big retail seasons.
7. Big businesses include freebies, like complimentary gift-wrapping, on holiday delivery guarantees, and free shipping etc. as a standard for making any holiday season special.

WORST PRACTICES

Now let's list a few of the pitfalls that should be avoided as they are avoided by big businesses.

1. Do not make any promises or guarantees you can't keep. Do not promise on the same day delivery if you can't keep it. Do not say you have the lowest price on a product if you are unsure about it being true. These are just a couple of examples of what kind of guarantees you should not make, if you are not 100% sure you can deliver on them.
2. Make sure you have enough stock to last you through the holiday season. If you are in the clothing or any other such niche, you might want to check your inventory not just for enough stock, but enough stock in the right sizes.
3. Avoid the temptation to use generic and/or loosely targeted keywords especially during holidays. You need to pinpoint the keywords and target your demographic to make the most out of your paid marketing campaigns.
4. Another pitfall to avoid is not taking into account the benefits of good customer service. There is bound to be a mishap or more no matter how careful you are. It is the holiday rush after all and you can do only so much. Not having a good customer service would mean you not only risk losing future business, but will also suffer the wrath of the wronged customer through social media.

5. Not marketing your “flash sales” or “hot” holiday events to your most interested clients is almost sinful in commerce. You have to get your best customers on a special “high-spender” or “VIP” list and give them a special preview of flash sales before anyone else. Otherwise, you might be losing out on 70% of your holiday business.

6. Not securing your servers for the holiday rush. Big businesses like Amazon do not take high traffic volume dilemmas lightly and neither should you. Prepare yourself for an influx; buy more bandwidth from your host servers if you need to. Provide a smooth and secure shopping environment for your shoppers to have any hope of a successful holiday turnover.

Remember what we said earlier, these are only some of the general practices that might make you lose your money. You will need to do your retail and trend research before and after every holiday season to keep up to date on the marketing trends. Keep those eyes open and looking in the right places.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

We hope we made true on all our promises and delivered some insightful and informative ways to make your holiday season more profitable for the coming year. What we have emphasized more than anything throughout this book is pre-planning. If you don't have a map you'll never know what direction to take. You might get there in the end, but it'll be a bumpy ride.

So, get that holiday calendar sorted and start planning for the year ahead today.

Procrastination is a marketer and retailer's worst enemy. Best of Luck for a joyful and profitable year ahead! 😊