

How To Find Bloggers In Your Niche

(Power Outreach Tactics)



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by

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Intro: How to find bloggers in your niche?

There are no two opinions that blogger outreach is a huge traffic generator for growing solopreneurs.

I have two pieces of key advice gained from doing a lot of wrong things first, and then painstakingly learning to do it right.

The first piece of advice: think of blogger outreach as slow-cultivation of a network of important contacts. You cannot do it overnight.

Cultivating people takes a lot of trust-building, frequent and well-thought out contacting, and most importantly, being visible on their radar all the time.

The second piece of advice: the Internet is getting frightfully competitive, so be prepared to give a little more than you get.

You want favorable mentions, links, upvotes, sharing and a good word or two?

You'd better have something beyond expectation to offer the blogger you are reaching out to.

How to target the right bloggers in your niche

As with all marketing activity, if you aim at nothing, you will surely strike it.

Blogger outreach too, to be effective, demands a great deal of planning before you begin. You won't go wrong if your planning involves four steps:

Step #1: First shortlist the bloggers in a shoulder-niche who may be relevant to your brand.

A lot of solopreneurs looking for lists of bloggers to reach out to for backlinks or shares or mentions or traffic, often begin by identifying bloggers in their own niche.

This is tantamount to looking for direct competitors who will agree to promote you.

What are the chances they will take kindly to a request from you for this kind of work.

Sure, some bloggers in your own niche, who are not threatened by you, may agree and act favorably towards your outreach. But the vast majority of direct competitors may not be so positive.

The smarter ploy usually is to avoid direct competitors in your exact niche and to look for “shoulder-niches” where bloggers would be in a complementary space and not a competitive one.

The “shoulder-niche” needs to be highly relevant and supportive to your brand.

For example, if you are into “healthy vegetarian cooking” as your niche, you may like to look for bloggers who are into healthy exercise and fitness regimes.

They would see how your brand could complement theirs, and they may thus look upon your outreach kindly, because it is also beneficial for them to extend out to your niche as their future shoulder-niche.

The first question any blogger who is reached out to will think is: “What’s in this for me?”

If your looking for reciprocal backlinks, or mentions, or social promotion, or any other supportive marketing activity from them, you’ve got to look out for mutual relevance and mutual benefit.

Step #2: Identify your best sources of search for bloggers to reach out to.

Not every industry, market or niche is identical, and very often you may find that the best places to locate banks of bloggers in different niches would not be exactly the same.

For example, forums may be the best place to locate bloggers for some industries, while LinkedIn or Twitter may be right place for other types of niches.

You have to see how the pattern of congregation of bloggers is for your niche or market segment. Three of my favorite sources for looking up potential bloggers are Alltop, Twitter and Google Search.

[Alltop](#) is an aggregator site of RSS feeds from all sorts of top-end blogs, neatly classified by category and niche specialisation.

Some of the best-of-breed bloggers can be found via Alltop. I usually pick my top-line blogger crowd from Alltop by looking for good strong names from my niche, and from my shoulder niches.

Twitter hashtags are another great way to locate bloggers who can make it to your shortlist.

When you type in a hashtag of your niche area into Twitter, be sure to first check out on Hashtagify if the hashtag is a popular one.

[Hashtagify](#) helps locate the hashtags high quality bloggers would use to describe themselves, or their areas of interest and authority.

Once you get some blogger names down via the hashtag route, do your due diligence to check out their blogs, their content quality, their frequency of blogging, and their depth of domain expertise.

When you want to have reciprocal marketing assistance from another blogger, you need to know that the other blogger has enough “gravitas” in his niche.

Step #3: Prioritize your bloggers for outreach using three fundamental criteria.

If your initial efforts to locate a lot of potential bloggers has paid off, you may have a fairly long list of bloggers for outreach.

Some experts suggest that the more bloggers you can reach out to, the better.

I belong to the other school that believes in limiting my blogger network to just 50 chosen bloggers.

This shortlist could include some bloggers from the top-end of the success spectrum, some with middling authority, and some of the still-growing kind.

Three criteria can be used now to cull your list of probables into a final list you should be able to strike at.

Look first for domain authority signals, especially a marked differentiation in either content or tone and style.

See if a blogger stands out as a clear expert in his area of specialization, even if he is as yet a small blogger. People with distinctive domain expertise will find their way to growth soon enough.

People without clear and differentiated domain authority, despite their size, may soon decline into obscurity if competition is aggressive.

Secondly, look for social authority. See how the fan following of your shortlisted bloggers is on Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube or Instagram ... and how “active and frequent” these bloggers are in airing their new blog posts.

See how many people are inclined to retweet their posts or share them out.

Social proof helps to know how well a blogger’s posts are received by the reading public.

You could have prolific authoritative bloggers who don't get half the attention their fabulous posts deserve, because not enough people find their writing appealing or their choice of topics interesting.

What you like, may not be what the public likes.

Finally, look at the bloggers' blog posts for blog comments. Don't just be enamored by the number of comments their blog posts get, but see how worthwhile each comment sounds.

Are peers and other knowledgeable people reflecting on their posts and commenting with analytical points or smart wisdom?

Are people asking deeper questions and getting answers from the blogger? It's often said that the quality of any blogger can be better seen in the quality of the comments on his/her blog.

Make sure any blogger you are evaluating has a lot of genuine readers making genuine comments on his/her article's main points.

Step #4: Check if the bloggers you have chosen are “reciprocators” by inclination.

Have they written product reviews or hosted giveaways for other bloggers before? Have they linked out to other bloggers a lot?

Have they even written well about their competitors? Do they frequently post roundups or lists that contain links to other blogs or bloggers?

All these are signals of people “who are willing to market on behalf of other brands”. These are the sort of people you need to outreach to if you need some gain from the connection.

At this point, don't give up on those who charge money for “sponsored posts” or “reviews” or “mentions”.

Even if some people charge for such marketing activity, not all of them may be “out of budget” – and many bloggers are ready to do favors to others who may be reciprocally useful to them.

You may also get by without paying anything, if you have a quid pro quo offer they cannot refuse.

4 ways to connect with bloggers before outreach

Nobody likes somebody who pops on their horizon suddenly asking for a favor, do they? Blogger outreach is similar.

Bloggers don't take kindly to those who suddenly appear out of thin air asking for their goodwill, marketing efforts, or a business deal.

When you've got your shortlist of bloggers who you want to get in touch with, realize that they have to be "softened" up a bit before you can make an actual outreach.

Get to know them, get them to know you, and when a certain comfort level sets in, that's when an outreach can be successfully made.

You may want to start interacting with them in some capacity so that they will notice your business' profile, and will have a look around your company website.

Here are four ways to do that:

#1: “Like” some of the bloggers’ social updates and be careful which updates you choose to “like”.

Pick recent updates that you actually do like — don't just hit like on the first three posts you see. Make it all look realistic by being real.

Look for updates of blog posts that resemble the kinds of niche interest your business and brand has.

#2: Share or retweet some of the best of the bloggers’ posts that may click with your own niche.

If there's are blog posts you think would resonate well with your own followers, then a really great way to get a blogger on board is to share or retweet some of their content.

Be picky here. You don't want to get too obvious suddenly retweeting or sharing a spate of posts by a single blogger or two.

That's not natural behavior, and smacks of too-sudden-false-interest. This will turn off not only these bloggers but also your followers.

#3: Post a truly valuable comment or two on the recent blog posts of your chosen bloggers.

Ideally, you should add a comment to a blogger's post, and then remember to also send him or her a Tweet that you have left a comment on an interesting blog post.

In your comments, stay clear of writing anything promotional about your brand. This is a big no-no. Blog commenting isn't an opportunity for you to advertise. Also avoid too generic or meaningless comments like "nice post" or "well done".

Instead, try to add something valuable to the ongoing discussion on the comments section of the blogger's post.

It's good to showcase your own professionalism here, without adding an essay of your own. A short but succinct analytical point would be ideal.

Then a social shout out like: "Thanks @Steve, your post on "6 ways to reduce bounce rate" was great. Have added a point for you to see in the comments ..." is just perfect.

@Steve will love it – and so will his followers.

#4: Don't be tempted to discuss opportunities for collaboration over social media or in a public platform.

If you Tweet that kind of offer upfront and to the hearing of everyone, the blogger will turn you down, often in front of everyone.

It's not going to make you look good in the eyes of your followers.

Use social media only to put yourself and your business on the blogger's radar. Don't even make a half-way allusion like: " @Steve, I've sent you a Direct Message on a sponsored review idea".

The blogger may not like people knowing he does sponsored posts or that people are contacting him about it.

9 horrible outreach mistakes to steer clear of

You'd be surprised how many outreach emails do an awful job after a blogger has taken so much care to create a list of outreach prospects.

Time and again these 9 mistakes recur to spoil the probability of making a successful outreach. What use is so much planning if the implementation of the outreach campaign is sloppy?

Here's a list of typical boo-boos ...

1. The outreach email forgets to mention your own name, company or business website ... oops, who is this whole thing from? Chances are the emails forgot to include your "signature" – and it's an all too common occurrence.

Some outreach emails forget to include an email subject — and may end up therefore going into the receiver’s spam box.

2. The email gets too familiar too quickly (like starting with a “Hey Jake, how are you?”) ... or gets too old-fashioned (like “Dear Blogger or Dear Sir/Madam”).

What you need to do is to start with a “Hi Jake:” (which is casual but not too cozy).

3. In general, it’s also a good policy to avoid too many exclamation marks like !!!!! It sounds like hyperventilation. Serious businesspeople don’t convey such a flurry of sentiments.

4. The email’s too brief – or not brief enough. Don’t get straight to the point of what you’re writing for. Say a line or two about the blogger and his posts before asking, without resorting to obvious flattery.

And don’t ramble on either. Do what you’d do if you were talking one-to-one with a new and important business contact with a few precious minutes to spare.

5. It's good business etiquette to send a first outreach email to ask if a blogger is preliminarily interested in your broad offer, before then sending out a detailed second email upon receiving a favorable reply.

Don't launch into the economics of your proposition in the first email.

Too many outreach emails think the "money terms" will make the offer attractive in one go. It seldom happens.

6. Look out for any clues your email contains that shows you are working from some template. Many horrendous emails have reached me that say "Your blog (insert the name of the blog here) is really great ..." Omigod!

7. Don't get too cute in your email and suddenly lose your business-like tone when asking for what you want. Some emails, for instance ask for "a little link back".

It sounds really weird after a previous staid sentence that says "I have been in this eco-consultancy business for 30 years".

8. While your opening email shouldn't give out too much detail, don't make the mistake of giving no hint at all of what you're talking about either.

Imagine getting an outreach email that says: "I'm writing to ask if you'd like to make a business connection ..." Huh? Like what kind of connection?

9. Write to another blogger using a tone that suggests a letter between equals. Neither a groveling tone, nor a patronizing one, should creep in.

The absolute wrong words would be to say: "Would you be kind enough to consider ...?" or "I chose you from my list especially because ..." Neither of you is doing the other a favor!

When blogger outreach becomes distasteful

Remember #bloggerblackmail? If you were active on Twitter in August of 2015, you might remember seeing a trending hashtag called #bloggerblackmail.

It went viral so fast that it blew the confidence of many a marketer in the concept of blogger outreach!

The whole commotion started when a foodie blogger approached a London bakery for some free macaron samples in exchange for a blog post review.

Unfortunately, the blogger writing the review had perhaps hoped to get quite a few more macarons for review than the bakery sent her – and the situation exploded into a very ugly war on Twitter.

The disappointed blogger made a very unprofessional decision to post some negative Tweets, Instagram updates, and a blog post about the situation ...

... then the London bakery in turn posted on their website, naming and shaming the blogger who they claimed “blackmailed” them by threatening a bad review after not getting what she wanted.

All for a few extra macarons?

Twitter interface showing a tweet from Mehreen A (@a_mehreen) and three replies from wrapyourlipsaroundthis.

Tweet by Mehreen A (@a_mehreen):
 Just been invited to a bakery where we are asked to provide a full blog article including photography for 2 teas - and the macaron are crap!
 16/08/2015 18:26

Reply 1:
 wrapyourlipsaroundthis Not the freshest marshmallows, and not loving the grainy sugar coating on top
 12 likes

Reply 2:
 wrapyourlipsaroundthis Is there anything worse than hollow macaron shells. These specimens are all Anges De Sucre #wheresaladureewhenyouneedone #hollowmacaron #badbakery #foodpic
 23 likes

Reply 3:
 wrapyourlipsaroundthis A shame when the macaron shelf is so unloved! French meringue, not Italian, and made on Friday but served all weekend #wasteoftime #awfulservice
 18 likes

Anges De Sucre

Ryan Wenstrup-Moore wrote an article titled: ["#BloggerBlackmail: Why both the bakery and the blogger were in the wrong".](#)

He wrote this perfect summary of how this blogger outreach became hard for everyone to swallow ... and what should have been done instead:

“There’s been a lot of back and forth on Twitter between brands, bloggers and more; who’s right and who’s wrong. Team Bakery or Team Blogger. As someone who has been on both ends of blogger outreach, they are BOTH wrong.

First off, the blogger reached out to the bakery in the first instance; she should have been clear about her expectations and the bakery should have been clear about what they were willing to provide in exchange for her time in review.

When I’m reaching out to bloggers on behalf of a brand I always explicitly state what it is I would like from them in terms of output and what I can offer them in exchange for their work.

One of the biggest points being made on Twitter is that bloggers don’t get stuff for free, but are working for their reviews. I wholeheartedly agree.

There is nothing wrong with a blogger being compensated for their work through an experience, goods or money.

That doesn't make them a blagger as some would suggest. There are "blaggers" within the blogger community who go out and ask for "free stuff" but those who provide quality content are nothing of the sort.

Neither party has behaved professionally; the bakery shouldn't have named and shamed the blogger. Blacklist her. Don't ever work with her again.

Tell other brands you collaborate with not to work with her, but do it OFFLINE.

It wasn't something that needed to be aired publicly although I'd argue that they knew exactly the kind of coverage it would get them by doing so.

Surely the bakery has had more reach from the so called "blackmail" than they ever would have got from a straight up review.

The blogger shouldn't have posted those "sour grapes" posts on Instagram about the products she did take away. It isn't professional and it doesn't exactly make anyone warm to her.

She was the one who reached out to the bakery in the first place. She should have been implicit in what she was expecting and not allegedly thrown a tantrum when she didn't get what she wanted.

Bloggers can be huge brand assets. When you get the right blogger paired with the right brand it is a beautiful thing.

It shouldn't just be about one-off reviews, but an ongoing, mutually beneficial relationship where that blogger becomes a brand ambassador.

Someone who promotes the brand organically not because they are continually being compensated in some way, but because they truly love the brand.

Bloggers shouldn't blackmail brands, but brands shouldn't name and shame either."

Read some expert tips on blogger outreach

Brian Dean in the article “Blogger Outreach: How to Get Influencers to Promote Your Content for Free”:

“When a new blog gets traction quickly, something specific is usually going on behind the scenes. Until now, the details of exactly how these bloggers achieved such rapid growth were known only to a select few, but it’s time to blow this thing wide open.

The strategy these out of nowhere bloggers use to supercharge their blogs’ expansion is blogger outreach.

While you may not have heard this term before, the idea behind blogger outreach is actually quite simple: Instead of sharing your content on social media (and hoping an influencer notices it), you put your content directly in front of the movers and shakers in your niche.

“Wait, do you mean randomly emailing bloggers to let them know I exist?” Not exactly.

It requires a little more planning than that. But like many other things in life, blogger outreach is a skill you can easily learn. And when you master it, the rewards will come thick and fast.”

Shane Jones in the article “How to Find Bloggers in Your Niche”:

“In order to have a successful presence on the web, you need to find others who share your interests, views, values, and goals.

Whatever topic you happen to blog about, there are probably hundreds of other people blogging on the same topic and over a hundred fifty million blogs on other topics.

That means there are plenty of bloggers ready for discovery in your own niche, but also that it can be enormously difficult to find them.

Of course, in seeking to connect with similar bloggers, you can't be expected to do all the work.

Building your social network serves the dual purpose of letting you meet new content creators and letting them meet you.

The more relevant you are within your niche and the more visible your presence is on the web, the more people will seek you out and connect with you.”

Tamar Weinberg in the article “What Is Blogger Outreach & How Do I Do It?”:

“Blogger outreach is all about relationships and trust! Either you have an existing relationship with someone who is able to reach out to the influencer on your behalf, or you need to work really hard to become their friend.

Follow them on Twitter, comment on their blog, wine and dine them, etc.

Just the other day, a friend of mine hosted a demo of a tool I loved and told him about. Normally, he wouldn't indulge anyone with a demo — time is money, people! — but he gave me the time of day because he trusted me.

And, because he was blown away by the offering, he'll trust me next time I approach him about something.

Remember, you could kill a relationship as quickly as you start it if you waste people's time and don't follow the aforementioned prescriptions.

With that said, the best practice to follow when contacting bloggers, whether you're a PR person or an in-house marketer at a company in need of publicity, is to work hard for their attention, and keep at it.”



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