Resources

EVERY BLOGGER SHOULD BE USING

A Publication of
Independent Fashion Bloggers

Every blogger who has turned their blog into a business knows that it takes a little more than just posting a few blog posts and some pretty pictures up on a website in order to start seeing some return. Below are some of our favorite tools and resources that every blogger should be using if they want to take their blog or brand to the next level.

Step 1: Getting Started

The first step to turning your blog into a business is to sign up for a reliable hosting service where you can begin to build your platform. Here are a couple great hosting servers we recommend.

Bluehost: Bluehost is one of the most popular web hosting platforms for bloggers who are making the initial leap from a hosted blog on Blogger or WordPress, to a self-hosted install. You can purchase a domain name, and get basic hosting starting at only $3.49/month. Plus, Bluehost can easily grow with your site at a reasonable price, so as your traffic grows, you won't have to worry about changing your hosting for a very long time.

Flywheel: If you've already got substantial traffic and are looking for more robust support and hosting, we recommend Flywheel (it's actually who we use here at IFB). They'll help migrate your site for you and are reasonably priced when you're getting significant traffic.

Step 2: Growing Your Brand

After you've setup your website, it's time to start growing your brand. The first place you should begin is with your email list. It's important to start capturing your readers from the first time they come to your site so that you can stay engaged with them over and over again. Here are some email marketing tools and services to get you started.

Campaign Monitor: Campaign Monitor makes it radically easy to create, send and measure the impact of your email marketing campaigns.

Mailchimp: Online email marketing solution to manage contacts, send emails and track results. Offers more integrations than Campaign Monitor.

SumoMe: SumoMe has a whole suite of free tools that can be used to grow your website's traffic and email subscribers. Easy to install, maintain and customize.

Leadpages: Great tool to create seamless Landing Pages for your blog. Can be used to make opt-in forms, customized pop-ups, and easy sign-ups for your newsletter or freebie.

Google Apps for Work: If you're going to treat your blog like a business, it's best to have an email address that is "yourname@yourwebsite.com" and Google Apps for Work can do this for you. Create simple email addresses and access the entire Google Suite of Apps with this service.

Other Options for Email Providers: ConvertKit, AWeber, Drip, or Infusionsoft

Step 3: Social Media

Having a strong social media presence is an important part of being a successful blogger; but don't let the pressure of managing so many accounts get to you. Use these simple tools to effectively manage your social media accounts so they don't manage you!

Hootsuite: Here at IFB, we use Hootsuite to help manage our social media accounts. We can have multiple members of the team log-in and schedules posts. And now that it integrates with Instagram, as well as Facebook and Twitter, it can really handle most of our social media marketing needs. Even the free plan can be a worthwhile tool as you're starting out to help keep you organized.

CoSchedule: What we love about CoSchedule is that you can write and schedule your blog post in the same interface that you write and schedule your social posts. Instead of juggling around multiple platforms, you can do everything at once in the same tool. It's essentially an editorial calendar that you can assign, draft, edit, and schedule blogs and social posts all in one spot.

Instamate: If you're looking for a way to enable Instagram posting capabilities right from your computer, look no further than Instamate. This tool allows you to upload, edit, post, and schedule all of your Instagram content; as well as add text overlays, search for top trends, keywords, or hashtags. And don't let the "salesy" layout of their website turn you away; this tool is actually really effective.

BoardBooster: BoardBooster is a really great tool to step up your Pinterest game so that you can begin to see more traffic to your blog. It allows you to schedule pins, clean up your existing boards, and optimize your strategy with quality analytics.

Other Options for Scheduling Tools: Buffer, Edgar, or Tailwind

Step 4: Creative Resources

Whether you want to edit, create, or enhance something within your brand, you can use this list of creative resources to make sure your content is top notch.

Canva: Canva is a wonderful *free* tool for bloggers to easily create custom graphics for their blog or social media. Easily upload your own content and create whatever you want, or browse their library of customizable graphics, stock photos, and designs.

Creative Market: Creative Market is a platform for handcrafted, mousemade design content from independent creatives around the world. You can find everything from stock photography and illustrations, email and website templates, fonts and photoshop actions.

Theme Forest: Theme Forest is a huge depository of website templates and themes covering WordPress, basic HTML, email templates & more.

Shutterstock: If you're looking for a larger collection of stock photography, look no further than Shutterstock. They also have stock video footage and music if you need those resources as well.

Other Free Stock Photo Websites: Pexels, StockSnap.io, Pixabay, or Creative Commons

Step 5: Learning & Development

Every smart blogger knows that the key to being successful is to never stop learning. It's important to continue your learning and development as a blogger and business owner even after you've set up the foundations to your business so that you can continue to expand and grow. Here are some great tools we love and recommend for you to continue your L&D for your blog and business.

Instagram Essentials 10-Day eCourse: This course is for anyone who hopes to grow their audience and increase engagement on Instagram. It gives you clear, explicit instructions on improving your images, thinking about how you schedule them, and introduces you to apps and tools that can help in every step of your Instagram workflow.

SEO Essentials 10-Day eCourse: This course is for anyone who knows that they should pay attention to SEO for your site, but don't quite know where to start. It gives you clear, explicit instructions on improving your site, thinking about how you blog, and introduces you to apps and tools that can help in every step of monitoring and improving your organic traffic. It's not an exhaustive resource in SEO, but rather, the 20% of effective steps to get you 80% of the results. If you do all the things we recommend, you know you're doing better than most bloggers. Each day you'll have a short lesson followed by an engagement assignment. In most cases, you can do both in under 20 minutes. It's simple but effective. What are you waiting for?

Udemy: Access hundreds of different online courses ranging from a wide variety of topics. Learn how to create your own custom code, uncover the keys to email marketing, or get a crash course on self publishing your own book. Udemy is a great resource to use for finding just about any online course you can imagine!

Step 6: E-Commerce

If you're thinking of selling an e-book on your site, starting up your own eCourse, or having a membership site to host all of your readers, consider some of these tools to make it happen.

Gumroad: Allows you to sell any digital product directly to customers without having to think about secure payments or delivery. They take care of it all.

Udemy: In addition to being able to enroll and watch different online courses, you can also create

your very own! Use Udemy's easy platform to create and sell your very own online eCourse.

Other Options for E-Commerce: Easy Digital Downloads, DPD, Teachable, or Teachery

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Bonus Resources: Our Favorite Smartphone Apps for Instagram

Best Apps for Editing:

- VSCO
- Snapseed
- Touch Retouch
- Facetune

Best Apps for Adding Effects:

- PicFX
- XnView Photo FX
- PicsArt
- Pudding Camera

Best Apps to Create a Grid of Photos:

- PicStitch
- Diptic
- PicFrame
- Photo Grid

Best Apps for Lens Boost:

- Camera+
- Camera ZOOM Fx

We have used, purchased, paid for, tried, or subscribed to all of these and stand behind each tool as a great resource for bloggers to use. There may be affiliate links used, but it's only because we love them enough to share the knowledge with you!