

10 Mistakes to Avoid WHEN MONETIZING YOUR BLOG

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34 W Terrace Ave.

Lakewood, NY 1475

United States

info@heartifb.com

www.heartifb.com

We've all heard stories of bloggers making six- and seven-figure salaries. They get tons of free stuff, their photos are immaculate, and their lives sound perfect. However, getting to that point takes a lot more than just posting to your blog a few times a month. And turning a hobby blog into a job takes some luck, and a lot of intention. Still, most of us aren't interactive professionals with years of marketing training behind us to help us navigate the murky waters of monetizing your blog. So here are 10 mistakes that we see over and over from early-stage bloggers.

1. Overestimating How Much Money You'll Make From Advertising

Advertising is one of the key strategies for large content sites. But for average or smaller-than-average blogs, it can be pretty underwhelming to see how much you really make for those thousands of fans you have. In general, most ads will make between \$2-5 CPM- that's the amount of money you'll make per thousand impressions. So if your site gets 10,000 page views a month, and you have two ads on the site getting \$3cpm each, you'll make \$60/month on advertising. Not that amazing. However, there are some tricks to increasing your CPM and as your site grows and your traffic increases, ads can be a nice supplemental revenue for your blog.

2. Selling Something Nobody Wants

I've met dozens of people who talk about eBooks they want to write, or in some cases, have written. They have an idea, they think it's wildly interesting, and they start writing. Only to find out later that their audience wasn't that interested. Before you start creating an eBook about that one topic that you think everyone will want, make sure that you actually talk to your audience and see if that eBook will solve a problem for them. Better yet, quit thinking about the book you want to write, and start thinking about the book your audience needs you to write. You have a voice and

an expertise, but make sure you spend your time writing about what your audience will buy, not what seems most interesting to you.

3. Too Many Affiliate Ads

Affiliate revenues are incredibly enticing. You just talk about someone else's product, someone hears you and buys it, and you make money. No creating the product, no support, no figuring out payment gateways. So easy.

However, it's easy to litter your site with offers to products your audience doesn't want or need, diluting your brand and your site's usability. Make sure you're only offering products that fit your voice, your site's mission, and your audience's needs. If it isn't a great fit, don't mention it on your blog, it'll just gum up the gears for when you do have a great product you want to promote.

4. DO NOT FORGET THE DISCLAIMER!

If you accept free products, use affiliate links, or post sponsored content, you must have a disclaimer on your site clearly stating so. They don't have to be original (you can copy ours if you like, it's [here in our footer](#)). Just let your readers know what relationships you have with brands and you'll be fine. You can read our full coverage of [what the FTC requires bloggers to disclose here](#).

5. Don't Add Monetization Too Soon, Or Too Late.

As we said before, throwing a lot of ads or affiliate links on your site can compromise the trust of your audience. And when you're just starting out and you have a small audience, you're trading their trust for a very small amount of money... so be patient and wait. However, when you do have an audience that is listening, and opportunities begin to reach a financial level that is significant to you, don't hesitate to start monetizing. Some people try from day one, and others wait years too long. Channel your inner Goldilocks and have the courage to wait, and then the courage to sell when it's time.

6. Not Looking Professional With Your Theme

I understand that for many of you, web design is not your strong-suit, and may be completely outside your skill-set. However, with as many amazing cheap or free WordPress themes available, it's

hard to forgive people for using a theme that looks unprofessional. [Creative Market](#), [WooThemes](#), and [ThemeForest](#) are just a few of the sites out there that have beautiful themes that you can customize to match your brand. If you're trying to monetize your site, let your readers know you're a professional by having a professional appearance. Even if you need to call in a favor or two from your tech-obsessed cousin... it's worth doing.

7. Do You Know Where You're Going?

Do you know exactly what you're trying to build? Are you building a brand around an idea? Are you trying to become an online micro celebrity? Are you just interested in making some money on the web? Knowing what your end goal is, and then not letting other ideas get in the way is a huge step in making sure you end up where you actually want to go. Don't take too much inspiration from sites and brands that aren't who you aspire to be. Know yourself and your goals, and make sure your monetization methods match.

8. Selling Too Much

We've already talked about dumping irrelevant affiliate ads on your site, and mentioned selling too early, or too late. But also know, you need to have a balance of when you're pitching, and when you're offering. Gary Vaynerchuk has a book all about this called "[Jab, Jab, Jab, Right Hook](#)." It's about providing value over and over, and then when you've proven your worth to your audience, you ask. Maybe that's offering a sale on a product, or reviewing an affiliate product, but first, focus on providing value through great content over and over. Then, every 5-6 messages you can try selling something.

9. Not Solving A Problem For Your Readers

I alluded to it above, but if you're not solving a problem for your readers (whether you provide entertainment, education, or something else), you'll have a hard time convincing them that they should stick around, click on ads, and/or buy a product you're selling/reviewing. You have to build trust and a relationship with your audience before you can expect them to trust you. So, in the words of Gary V. Jab, Jab, Jab. What that means is find ways to make your audience better, happier, faster, stronger. Send them awesome links to articles you love. Create amazing posts that inspire and educate. Show them the perfect way to wear that one thing that only you have figured out. But provide value and solve a problem. Then they'll take advantage of your offers.

10. Feeling Guilty For Selling

Over and over again I've heard people talk about the first time they started selling something on their site (maybe an eBook or a course) and how afraid they were that their audience would reject them, the audience would be mad at them, or they'd get laughed at. And repeatedly I heard people say "Those fears were unfounded and I wish I would have not been held back by them in the first place." Now, you may have a few vocal folks whining about how everything should be free on the internet, but for the most part, you can just know that they'll say that no matter what. And most importantly, know that they are not a true representation of your audience. Don't be held back by fear of what a few people may say. Because in the end, making a little money allows us to continue to create these blogs in the first place, and without, those whining may not have anything to read (and thus whine about) if your site goes away.

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