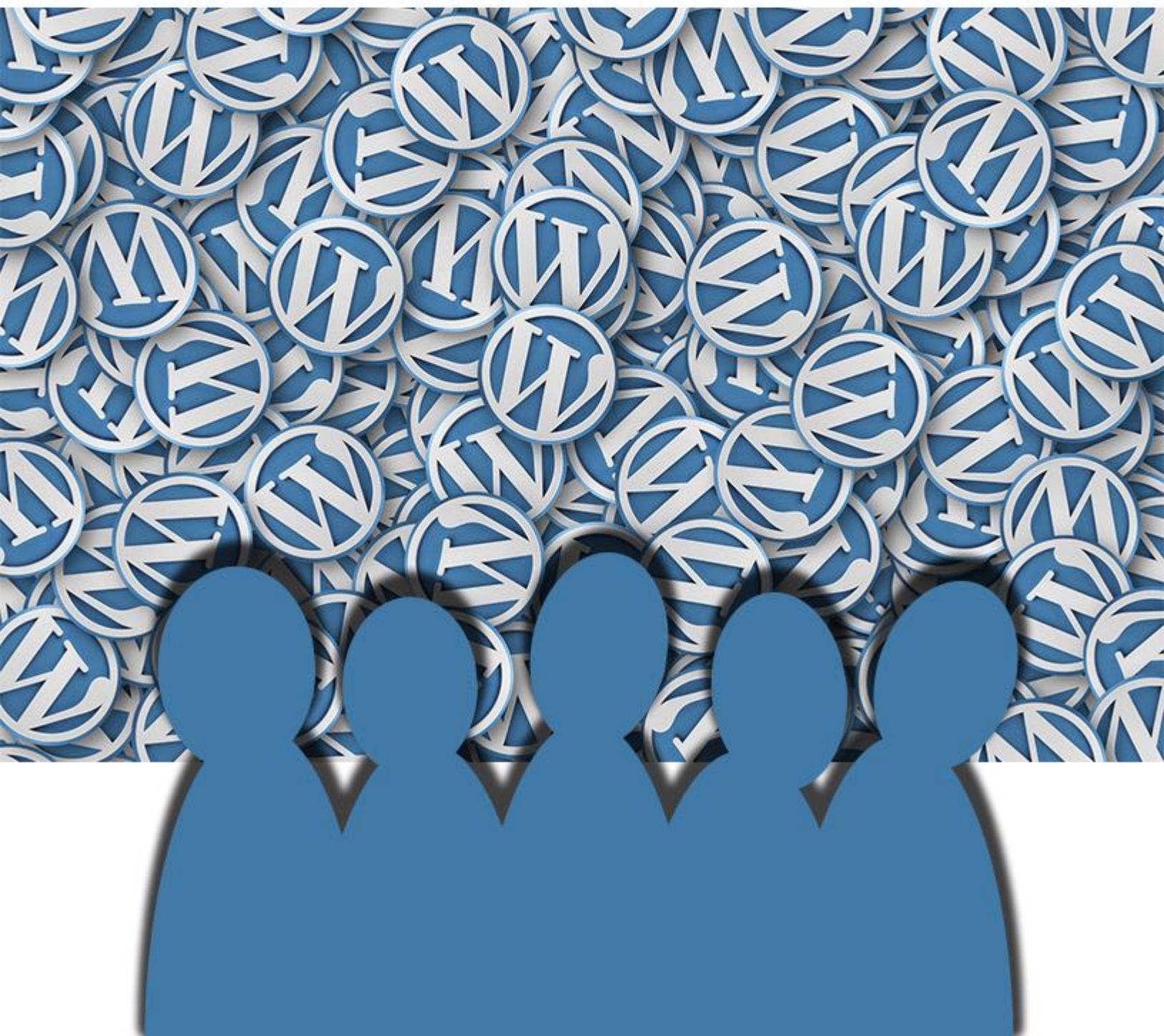


*Grow Your Captive Audience with*

# **BLOGGING**



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## **Grow Your Captive Audience With Blogging**

In order to succeed in business, you need to get your message in front of potential customers. Your message needs an audience, and that’s going to be true regardless of what your business is. So if you want to grow your business, you’re going to need to grow your captive audience.

In this report, we’re going to talk about how to increase your audience by using the most popular blogging system on the Internet: WordPress. It’s estimated that WordPress powers fully 25% of all the websites that are on the Internet, so you can be confident that it’s a stable and reliable piece of software. And the price is certainly right. You can sign up for a free website and get started at: <https://wordpress.com/start/website>.

Of course, if you choose a free site, you’ll have a website address that won’t have strong branding elements (something like [myblogname.wordpress.com](http://myblogname.wordpress.com)), so in most cases you’ll want to purchase a new domain name for the blog (if you don’t already have one) and either use that address (see: <https://en.support.wordpress.com/domains/> for details) or sign up for an account with a web hosting service and run your own WordPress installation using the software available at [wordpress.org](http://wordpress.org) (see: <https://en.support.wordpress.com/com-vs-org/> for more information).

<b>WordPress.com</b> <i>Focus on your beautiful content, and let us handle the rest.</i>	<b>WordPress.org</b> <i>Get your hands dirty, and host your website yourself.</i>
Premium hosting, security, and backups are included. You can even upgrade to a <a href="#">custom domain</a> , like <a href="#">YourGroovyDomain.com</a> .	You'll need to <a href="#">find a host</a> , and perform backups and maintenance yourself. We offer <a href="#">VaultPress</a> for security and backups.
Choose from <a href="#">hundreds of beautiful themes</a> . Make it your own with <a href="#">Custom Design</a> .	Install custom themes. Build your own with PHP and CSS.
<a href="#">Integrate your site</a> with Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, and other social networks.	Install a plugin, like <a href="#">Jetpack</a> , to enable sharing functionality on your site.
Popular features like sharing, stats, comments, and polls are included. <a href="#">There's no need to install plugins</a> .	Install plugins to extend your site's functionality.
Personal <a href="#">support</a> and the <a href="#">WordPress.com forums</a> are always available.	Visit the <a href="#">WordPress.org support forums</a> for assistance.
You must register for an account on <a href="#">WordPress.com</a> and abide by our <a href="#">Terms of Service</a> .	No registration with <a href="#">WordPress.org</a> is required.

### *WordPress.com vs. WordPress.org*

This self-hosting option will give you much more control over your blog, although you will have to put in a little more time and energy to keep it up and running.

Ok, now that we have that bit of technical talk out of the way, let's move on to the best strategies for business growth. We've identified the seven most important factors to growing an audience through blogging, so let's talk about each one.

## **1. Have a Voice**

Having a voice doesn't just mean the act of talking or writing. It means having a point of view, being distinctive, and maybe even a little opinionated or controversial. There is a lot of noise on the Internet, and one of the biggest challenges that people face is sifting through all of that noise in order to find the content that's interesting.

In fact, one of the things that makes blogging such a great opportunity for you -- the fact that there are virtually no barriers to entry and that it's easy to start a blog -- means that there are a lot of not-so-great blogs out there.

By having a strong and consistent point of view, you're already going to be more compelling than most other blogs. You may already have an idea of how you want to go about building your blog audience, or you may need to take a little time to self-analyze your business and your

unique selling proposition. The voice of your blog should be a good fit for the product or service you're selling. For example, if you are an affiliate marketer for natural health care products, then a writing voice that's positive and nurturing is almost certain to be more appropriate than a voice that's "in your face" or that uses risqué humor.

Of course, in order to have a strong voice, you also need to know who you're speaking to.

## **2. Know Your Audience**

Be sure to consider this factor from a couple of different perspectives. First, take a look at your current customers. On average, how old are they? Where do they live? How much do they spend with you, and how frequently do they purchase? Are there any demographic clues that you can derive from your customer data that might help you come up with a picture of your typical client?

In addition, you should also give some thought to the people you want to be talking to. Who is your ideal audience? Maybe you're looking to just grow your following with more individuals similar to your current followers. Or maybe you're looking to branch out into new markets and reach a new class of individual.

## **3. Relate to Your Audience**

Be personal. Now, personal doesn't necessarily mean unprofessional or overly-familiar. In fact, it probably shouldn't mean those things. "Personal" means that when you're writing to your audience, you should speak to them as you would if you were having a face-to-face conversation. Your audience is made up of individual people, not a demographic group or statistic.

Appeal to them as individuals, not a market group. This means that your blog posts should make some type of emotional inroads with them, with the exact nature of the emotional appeal to depend on what you're writing about. It might mean writing your posts from a first-person perspective, but not necessarily so.

Even if your business is a large one, and you're setting out to create a blog that speaks to your customer base, there are always ways to make it personal. Show that you understand the issues they're facing and the problems they're looking to solve. Use your blog posts to demonstrate to your audience that you're the best solution to those issues and problems.

You might be best for any number of reasons: your solution might be the cheapest, or the easiest to follow, or the most convenient. Use your key selling proposition to relate to your audience.

## **4. Provide Value to Your Readers**

For someone to want to come back to your blog again and again, they have to feel as if it was worth the time they spent reading your posts. Your blog should leave a reader with something when they're done. You need to provide them with some type of value.

The value you provide can take many forms, and it all starts with being unique. This, perhaps more than anything, will keep your audience coming back for more. Maybe the tone of your blog posts is humorous, or entertaining, or supportive, or informative, or inspirational. Chances are it'll be a combination of more than one of these approaches.

After all, if you're simply making posts with information and a point of view that could be easily found on other blogs, why would someone choose your blog over another? Remember that the value and uniqueness of your blog, and the key to growing your captive audience is you. Your blog is the only one that has YOU making the posts, so put that to your fullest advantage!

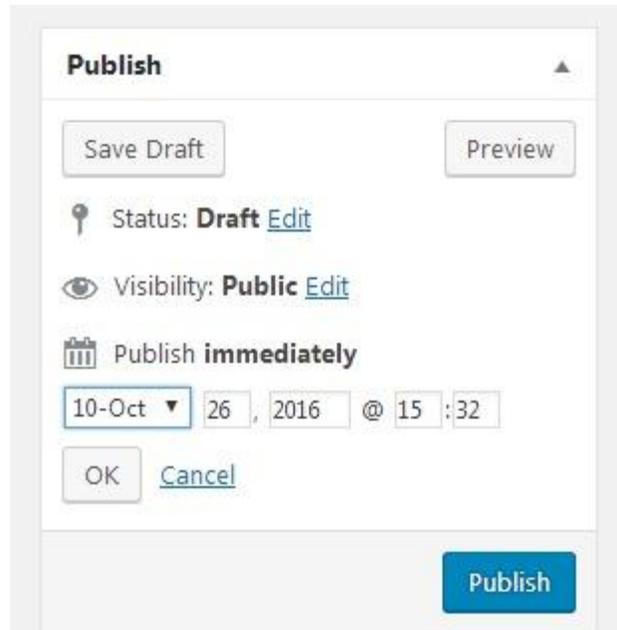
## **5. Schedule Your Posts**

While blogging can give you a great return on your efforts, you'll only achieve that return if your blog has regular updates and fresh posts. Coming up with a schedule for what you're going to publish on your blog can help you avoid the content droughts that can cause your readership to dwindle.

Once you start thinking into the future, you may find that once you get into a groove of coming up with new topics to write about, you'll be able to identify a half-dozen, or a dozen, or even more. Having a list of relevant topics can be a powerful thing, as many writers would agree that coming up with the answer to the "what should I write about?" question is often the hardest part of the process!

You don't necessarily have to write all of these articles at once, but at a minimum you should have a schedule for when each post will be published. Try starting with a once-a-week schedule and see if that needs adjusting. Whatever you choose, make sure to be consistent.

If you are able to write some of your content in advance, Wordpress makes it easy to automatically schedule blog posts for publication in the future. That way you can upload your new content, choose exactly when each post will go live, and then be free to focus on other aspects of your business until it's time to upload a new batch of blog posts.



*Each post in Wordpress lets you set a date and time of publication to occur in the future.*

## **6. Use Social Media**

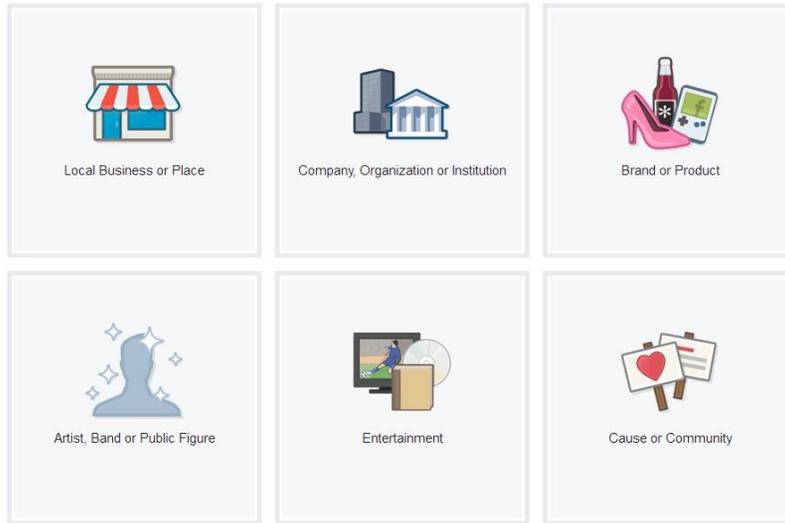
As you look to grow the captive audience on your blog, ask yourself what you're doing to drive new traffic to your site. Sure, you could purchase search engine ads through Google's AdWords program, or pay for exposure on other blogs and websites. But your budget might not be ready to pay for advertising quite yet. Fortunately, one of the most powerful ways of drawing in new readers (provided you do it correctly) is also one that's free.

Does your business have a Facebook presence? This could either be through your personal Facebook profile or a separate Facebook page that you've set up for your business. (Note that it's almost always better to have a separate page for your business. This lets you manage the boundaries between your personal and professional lives in exactly the way you want, by letting you focus on business promotion on your business' Facebook page without annoying your friends and family.)

Sign in under your personal Facebook profile and go to <https://www.facebook.com/pages/create/> and you'll see this:

### Create a Page

Give your brand, business or cause a voice on Facebook and connect with the people who matter to you. It's free to set up. Just choose a Page type to get started.



### *Getting started with creating a Facebook Page for Your Business*

The most common page types for someone looking to cross-promote their blog are “Company, Organization or Institution,” “Brand or Product,” and “Cause or Community.” The “Cause or Community” type may be a particularly good fit if your blog has an audience that actively communicates with you (and/or each other) on your site.

## **7. Help Your Readers Share Your Posts**

As you may already know with respect to other aspects of your business, your current customers can be your best promotional tool. Think about the value that comes from someone recommending your products or services to one of their friends or family members. Potential customers and clients are almost always going to trust the recommendation that comes from someone they know, as compared to advertisements or other promotions they might come across.

So once you have a separate Facebook page set up for your business (and this might be a page for your business as a whole, or perhaps even a page focused on a particular product or service you’re promoting), you want to make it easy for your audience to get the word out.

With the rise of Facebook, people have become accustomed to sharing articles and pictures with their friends and colleagues just by making a mouse-click or two. In order to make sure your valuable blog posts are getting shared as much as possible, and you certainly can’t expect people to copy the URL of one of your blog posts they find interesting, open their email program, start a new email to the people they want to share it with, paste your URL,.... you get the picture.

What would happen if someone found one of your posts so compelling that they wanted to share it with everyone they knew? They're not going to send a mass email to their full address book, and you don't want them to have to draft up a new Facebook post just to share your content.

Thankfully, on the Wordpress platform, you can extend the core functions of your blog by using what are known as "plugins." Plugins are small programs that you download and install on your blog, and they allow you to transform your blog into a much more powerful promotional tool.

The "Really Simple Share" WordPress Plugin Page

The "WP Social Sharing" WordPress Plugin Page

Getting your blog posts shared on Facebook is priceless. It's the kind of personal recommendation and organic promotion that money just can't buy. You can leverage this type of promotional strength with your blog, provided that you make it easy for your readers.

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Remember that blogging for your business is an ongoing process. You need to build an audience, but you also need to keep them. If you've tried blogging before but were unhappy with the results, take another read through this report to see where you might have been able to change things to get a better outcome.

You don't necessarily have to have a blog to build a great business, as there are other opportunities for you to create a captive audience. But if you start a blog, and put in the time and energy, you'll almost certainly be pleased with how things turn out.