

Interviews with Top Bloggers: - Nancy Boyd -



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1. Would you mind sharing a few things about yourself and your background for our readers?

Thanks Codrut. My company, Bright Wings, Inc., serves people who are up to something good, by offering products and services that support and inspire. My flagship website, <http://www.brightwings.com>, is a portal to everything we offer. Readers can learn more about me and my work there, too.

2. When did you get started blogging, and why?

My first attempt (and I call it that, because I had NO idea what I was doing!) at blogging was with Blogger.com back around 2000 or so. I started a blog associated with my SBI site (<http://www.find-great-organic-gourmet-food.com>) for the purpose of having an interactive mechanism for my visitors and readers. I found blogger to be very restrictive and difficult to use, and didn't put a lot of work into it, which of course meant that I got very little good out of it, either. Maybe several additional visitors, but not much more than that. (I wasn't using any methods to drive traffic, either.)

3. What's the biggest mistake you made getting started with this?

There are actually two:

1) Not starting with WordPress. As far as I'm concerned, it's the only game in town! Nothing else even comes close. It does everything I want in a blog, and then some.

2) Not finding talented help to assist me with the technical parts that I'm not good at doing. I waited much longer than I needed to, for the simple reason that I thought I needed to learn the technical parts myself. Instead, I outsourced them, which leveraged my time and kept me focused on what I do best (which is to create things and write.)

4. How did you come up with the idea of launching your blog?

Well, I knew I wanted to launch at least two of them, for two of my niches. And I knew I wanted to use WordPress. And there was a name for one of the blogs playing in my mind, like in the background, for several months. When I had the time to start working on the

blogs, I realized the name "Dances With Flowers" was the right one for the flower essence blog - <http://www.danceswithflowers.com>. And all the other ideas came flooding in with that name, making it easy to know what to do with it.



5. How often do you publish and how do you get content ideas?

I try to publish at least several times a week, depending on how busy I am or on what's happening in the world that I feel I want to respond to. There are several ways that I get content ideas:

- 1)** What my clients are asking. I use their questions and concerns as the basis for what I post.
- 2)** What information will be most helpful and useful for people to understand what the niche is all about, and how the products or services can help them. This is really about educating my market as well as providing value they can't get anywhere else.

The premise with both of my blogs is to position myself as an authority in my niches, so that people will feel comfortable with me to purchase my products and services. So far, I think it's working very well!

I love to write, so blogging is a natural extension and easy for me.

6. How do you mainly receive (or generate) traffic to your blog?

I am using several approaches. First of all, I have my own mailing lists, so the first thing I did was to let everyone know that I have new blogs and invite them to visit and comment.

Secondly, I am using highly targeted keywords in my content. That is

being picked up in web searches. (Sweet!)

Thirdly, I started using digg and stumbleupon, both of which are helping. Also I'm twittering about various topics and linking back to the blog. Twitter has some drawbacks but if you use it carefully, I find that it attracts attention to what you're doing.

Next, I will be doing some article writing and linking back to the blogs. And I will be writing some reports and things I can offer to attract new visitors and get sign-ups to my rss feeds and mailing lists.

Finally, although I haven't really started using this yet, I am exploring some new methods to generate traffic through other social media sites like facebook and myspace.

Oh. I forgot something important here. Because I am in the self-help and self-development niches, I am listed in several key online directories in self-help and self-development. Those have been (and will continue to be) important methods to generate traffic to these blogs. And, I may also be writing articles to post on those directory archives, too. In this niche, being in the directory sites with high targeted traffic is absolutely a must!

7. What is your most closely-guarded secret about blogging for money?

Well, it isn't much of a secret! You create relationships with people who want what you have, make it easy for them to buy, and over deliver on the fulfillment end. If there is a secret, I think it would be in making sure that you know who your market is. Don't be trying to sell dental tools to a golfer!! I mean, think about who your market is, what they want, and what they are so hungry to have that they would do practically anything to get.

In the flower essence market, for example, I have a very wide range of products that cover all kinds of solutions for people and their pets. But I don't market to "everyone and their dog", LOL! My target markets are people who already know and like alternative health products and services, and might already know about flower essences. If they don't know about them yet, they are open to try them -- and they definitely do NOT like the harsh effects of pharmaceuticals (or tend not to trust traditional medicines.)

I don't try to convert people who are not already "warm and friendly"

to my products. There are too many others who want what I have and are ready to buy. THOSE are the people I want to connect with and start relationships with, because THOSE are the people who will buy -- and refer their friends.

When people want something for a specific condition (maybe they are not sleeping well, or feeling depressed and don't want to take antidepressants) -- I have something for them and I can tell them about it, and interact with them to answer their questions.

8. What differentiates your blog among all the others in your niche field?

My content is awesome! My goal is to deliver quality content in words and images that people in my niche can relate to and enjoy. And I try to make it fun, too. I will soon be adding more interactive components like polls and surveys, maybe some contests, to increase the ways that people can interact with me and get value.

I'm not just selling something. I think people who get to my blogs will quickly realize I am passionate about what I do, and generous in sharing all kinds of information about it, but. . . I'm not necessarily "pushing" it. I hope that I'm letting them know what I have, what it will do for them, and how they can get it -- without too many obstacles in between each of those steps.

9. If you had to get a boost in comments from your blog readers, how would you do it?

Well, that's something I really want to do more of, and I have been thinking about some ways I could do that. It's a great question! I've seen other blogs do things like give you trackbacks after you've posted a certain number of comments -- but the thing for me is, not too many of my visitors have their own web sites yet. So offering them a link back to their sites wouldn't be attractive for them.

I need to create a reason for them to do it. One of the things I've been thinking about is to do something like offer a half hour of personal coaching or consulting with anyone who posts at least 10 substantive comments. (The comments would need to be something more than "great post" or "keep up the good work". They would need to share their experiences with a product or service, ask questions, and so on.)

What I need to do is to get inside the heads of my visitors to find out what they want, what would make it worth their time and effort, to post. And then offer them one or two ways that they can benefit when they take the action.

Those are my thoughts right now, but I am such a "new" blogger I am wide open to learn how I could do this better! Everyone wants great comments on their blogs (well, most bloggers I know do. . .) -- and I think there have to be lots of different ways to get those comments. Not every method will work for every niche!

Probably for my niche, a discount coupon for products and services would be appreciated, so I'm thinking about that and will ask my Virtual Assistants what they can give me that will be simple to implement.

10. Which are the blogs you visit frequently and why?

There are several that I really like, that inspire me and teach me new things. I'll just give you a short list here:

<http://ineedorange.blogspot.com/>

<http://themuseasylum.wordpress.com/>

<http://www.wisdomatworkusa.com/blog/>

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

<http://www.christmascorgi.blogspot.com/>

11. Which are your favorite bloggers and why?

Suzanne Bird Harris (<http://www.suzannesaysblog.com>) because she's quirky, keeps it real, and does some cool things with her blog.

Seth Godin, because he's a very cutting-edge thinker (even if I don't always agree with his controversies.)

Vicki Neff (<http://www.ineedorange.blogspot.com/>) because of all the ways she manages to share so much of her world on her blog. I envy her talent! (And, by the way, where DOES she find time to do all those things???)

There are probably more, but honestly I can only spend so much time looking at other people's blogs! I have my own to work on, after all. But I think it IS important to follow other blogs, to learn and add dimension to your world view. I always have my antennae out for great new bloggers!

12. Which plugins you can't live without and why?

Askismet, because it's really good at catching spam – and filtering posts that could be questionable. Enormous help!

BackUpWordPress, because it automates that function (otherwise I might forget and lose stuff if the server crashes.)

CommentLuv, because it's a viral component and helps build relationships with people who take the time to post.

WordPress.com Stats is where I can get all kinds of useful information about what's happening with the blog – like how many visitors and where they came from, what posts and pages are most popular, and so on.

If I had to give up all the others, I could. . . but these I would keep.

13. What is the most important thing you learned about blogging that you could share with your best friend?

Don't be afraid to make mistakes with it. You can always change things later, but get started – and keep learning from everywhere. There are always new things coming along, that you can find a way to make your blog better as you grow. But start! The more human you are, the more people will relate with you 😊

14. What plans do you have for the future with your blog?

That's a great question! Because I consider my blogs still "new" (in the sense that I still haven't done everything to them that I'd planned – and am still adding important content) – some of my ideas can't be done yet.

But one of my exciting future plans is to add a membership component to one or more of my blogs, which would enable members to get exclusive content and discounts on my products and services (that are

not going to be available to non-members.) I'm looking forward to launching the first one in early 2009.

Maybe I'm a glutton for punishment – or maybe I just love blogging so much – that I'm also considering adding a couple more blogs when I get the first ones where I want them, so that I can do more personal things with them, along the lines of what Vicki Neff and Suzanne Bird Harris are doing. I think that's so cool – and right now I don't have a place where I can just say what I think about things that are going on in the world and in my life. I'd love that! So that's probably in the future somewhere too ☺

Thanks **for the opportunity to share!** Here's to your profitable and happy blogging, everyone!

Nancy Boyd
Founder and Chief Visionary
Bright Wings, Inc.
<http://www.brightwings.com>

We wish Nancy success in the future and thank you very much for sharing your BLOGGING tips, tricks & secrets with us all! ☺

If you want to get further into blogging, check out these resources:

- **WordPress Profit Maximizer** - The BEST WordPress Plugins sent to you weekly via e-mail:

<http://www.remarkableblogging.com/rb-products/wp-profit-maximizer/>

- **Lazy Blogging dot Com** - "Here's Everything You Wanted to Know About Building a Small Blog That Rakes-In \$300, \$3,000.. and Even \$30,000 Per Month!"

<http://www.LazyBlogging.com>

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