



TOP 10 SECRETS

To Blogging Success



...the details of our days do make a difference in our lives... no experience is ever just for drill... everything can be a springboard for inspiration if we are willing to be open to the goodness of life.

Sarah Ban Breathnach, *Simple Abundance*



Thank you for downloading The SITS Girls' eBook. You've taken the first step to making your blog bigger and better!

Included in our book are our all-time top 10 secrets and tips that have helped to make our brand a huge success, and allowed us to grow our community of bloggers at a phenomenal rate.

We hope you find this information useful. **Remember: The Secret to Success in Blogging is Support**, so be sure to ask questions and get the help you need as you dive in.

Good luck!

The SITS Girls

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RESOURCES: Want more? Read about what our favorite blogging experts have published

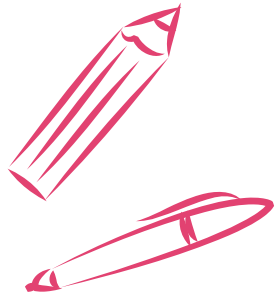
1.

WRITE RIGHT

LEARN HOW TO GRAB YOUR READERS' ATTENTION AND WRITE WELL

We all have favorite bloggers. Those who we can relate to and feel like we “know”. We’ve probably even read blog posts that are so well written and relatable that we wish we had written them ourselves.

Ultimately, blogging is not about the blogs you are reading. It is about the one you are writing. It’s about YOU... what you need to do to write a post that grabs your readers, reels them in, and keeps them coming back for more.



Keep your readers interested by giving them something they can't get anywhere else; give them... you.

Your blog is a compilation of everything you are: your experiences, hopes, dreams, thoughts, values. All of this is wrapped into a neat little package every time you hit publish.

MAKE YOUR BLOG A REFLECTION OF WHO YOU ARE

When you sit down to write a post, it should be about a topic that is interesting and important to you. Regardless of whether you blog about photography, coupons, fitness, or simply your everyday life, your content needs to stay true to who you are. Avoid focusing on topics simply because they are popular or will drive SEO. Writing without passion leads to no voice.

NURTURE YOUR VOICE

Open up. Think about what you're writing about...does it have a smell, a feeling, a memory attached to it? Words on a page are just words on a page unless you can find a way to breathe life into them. Allow people to relate. Make yourself vulnerable. All of this makes for good reading.

DON'T GET DISCOURAGED

Ultimately, write for yourself! Be sure that your blog is a reflection of who you are and something you can feel proud to put your name on. When all is said and done, at the very least you will have memories forever documented on your computer that you might have otherwise forgotten.

To learn more about **writing for blogs**, click on these posts:

- [Finding Your Writing Voice](#)
- [Content is King](#)
- [Writing Fundamentals](#)

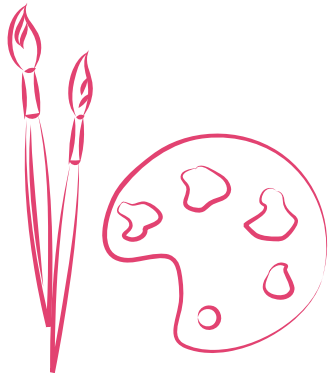
2.

LOOK GOOD

DESIGN IS IMPORTANT. LOOK YOUR BEST AT ALL TIMES

With so many blogs in existence now, it is more important than ever to stand out from the crowd. A good blog design will help you achieve this goal and make your site easily recognizable to visitors. Remember that first impressions count! If your blog doesn't look good or is confusing to navigate, your audience won't stay and continue reading.

A well-dressed blog can maximize your assets and show off your personal style. It will also encourage visitors to want to get to know you better, thereby resulting in stronger readership and greater success in achieving your blogging goals.



You don't have to spend a ton of money on a theme or hire a designer to have a stylish blog. There are simple style rules you can follow to keep your do-it-yourself blog from looking homemade.

KNOW YOUR BLOG TYPE AND PLAY UP YOUR ASSETS

When a new visitor comes to your site it should be obvious to them what type of blog they're about to read. For example, a humorous blog should have a funny title, tagline or graphics and look full of energy. Also be sure to give your readers a focal point to keep their first impression from being too chaotic.

CHOOSE PATTERNS THAT AREN'T DISTRACTING

Patterns are great and they add the kind of detail that makes your blog special. However, a distracting background can cause a reader to lose focus and miss out on the content you want them to focus on.

KEEP ACCESSORIES SIMPLE

Keep your widgets simple and only use a few. Otherwise, you risk readers becoming visually overwhelmed. Remember to be conscientious about what you really need and what you don't.

You'll find that the confidence and self-esteem you gain from knowing your blog looks good will make you more likely to keep up with writing posts and taking the time to promote them.

Learn more about taking your **blog design** from drab to fab in no time by [clicking here](#).

3.

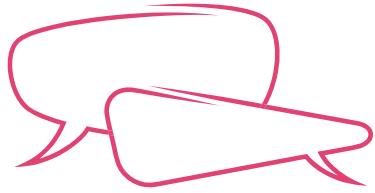
FIND A TRIBE

PARTICIPATE IN FORUMS TO LEARN ABOUT AND MEET NEW BLOGGERS

Every blogger needs a tribe. Why? Because this is the network of people that will read your blog consistently. They will help you learn by answering your questions and providing feedback. They will make you feel understood and valued.

This is the group that will provide you with a sense of community and support.

If you feel tribe-less, rest assured that your group is out there. You just need to find them. And we want to help.



A great way to network online is to join a forum and start participating. Posting regularly in a busy forum can often bring dozens of visitors back to your blog.

OTHER BENEFITS TO PARTICIPATING IN A FORUM INCLUDE:

Profile Building: Put consistent time into a large forum on your topic and you can build a significant following in your niche. Keep in mind the “What’s In It For Me” perspective for your potential readers. If you are able to provide value in the form of information, advice, or support, you are much more likely to develop fans among other forum users.

Driving Traffic: When you provide value and become a useful resource for others in a forum, people will want to know more about who you are and what your blog is about, ultimately getting people to click over to your site.

Understanding Your Niche: A hidden benefit to joining a forum is that it can be a great place for gathering ideas and understanding the needs of potential readers. Keep your eyes open for questions being asked repeatedly and then write posts to answer them. Doing so will convert your fellow forum users into readers on your blog.

Joining a forum couldn't be easier. If you have a particular niche, then consider becoming active in a community focusing on your topic.

You'll also definitely want to get involved with **The SITS Girls Forum**, which you can find by [clicking here](#). With free online classes, comment support, and an incredibly active community, The SITS Girls Forum is one of the best places online for bloggers to build their tribe and get connected.

4.

MEET UP

NETWORK AT BLOG CONFERENCES IN ORDER TO GROW YOUR AUDIENCE

Social networking has officially become a global phenomenon. In fact, we are now witnessing how technology is driving people to connect and meet up en masse with others in the 'real world'. Hundreds of millions are now actively searching for, finding, connecting/signaling, and staying in touch with like-minded people they are meeting online.

At blog conferences, bloggers can connect with members of their online community and further grow these relationships in person.



Bloggy Boot Camp, an extension of the SITS community, gives women the opportunity to increase their understanding of blogging and social media, while sitting next to their favorite people from the online world.

Living up to our fundamental belief that The Secret To Success is Support, Bloggy Boot Camps are hosted in a variety of major U.S. cities annually, boast one of the lowest ticket prices around, and cover everything from photo-editing to social networking to branding.

WHY SHOULD YOU GO TO BLOGGY BOOT CAMP?

- Because you love to blog.
- Because you want to know more about social media platforms, blog communities, SEO, PR, boosting your traffic, branding, vlogging, and much, much more.
- Because there is nothing like laughing, sharing, and networking with other women in person.

WILL YOU KNOW ANYONE THERE?

Maybe. Maybe not. But, because of the way Bloggy Boot Camp is organized, it doesn't matter. Conference attendance is limited, making for an intimate and inclusive environment. Seating is also assigned during most of the day, which means that you will not have to worry about where to sit or feeling left out. We take care of everything. In fact, with our help, you are sure to meet everyone in the room before the end of the day!

To learn more about how you can get involved in **Bloggy Boot Camp**, [click here](#).

5.

BE SOCIAL

USE SOCIAL NETWORKING TO EXPAND YOUR REACH AND CONNECT WITH NEW READERS

With so many bloggers in the social media space, it can be difficult to get noticed. Two ways to ensure your voice heard is by creating a Twitter account and by starting a fan page for your blog on Facebook.



Twitter. Do not underestimate the power of those bite-size messages topping out at 140 characters. They can be smart, useful, and maybe even necessary. Twitter provides a direct line of communication to your audience to promote giveaways, see what others in your niche are talking about, and gain immediate feedback on your posts.

Facebook. As one of the top 10 websites in the world, it seems that every person, company, and organization is now on Facebook. And your blog needs to have a presence too. Not only is Facebook indexed by Google, subsequently increasing the love that search engines show to your blog, but a fan page is also a very effective method to build a community and conversation around your site.

ENHANCE YOUR FAN PAGE BY ADDING A GRAPHIC WELCOME TAB

Charm Potential Fans With Your Words. Share your philosophy, your mission statement, a summary about your product or blog, or maybe even testimonials.

Be Succinct and To The Point. Try not to say too much. Your fan page is an ad for your blog. You want to draw people in, not overwhelm them.

Ensure Your Design and Writing Style Are Consistent With Your Brand. When designing the graphics for your Welcome Tab, use the backgrounds, fonts and color choices from your blog. How you express your brand's personality on Facebook should directly reflect your site.

If you are new to **Twitter**, [click here](#) to get started.

To read more about how to be a success on **Facebook**, click on these posts:

- [Creating A Facebook Fan Page That Gets Fans](#)
- [Facebook Fan Page What You Need To Know](#)
- [Facebook Fan Page Update A Quick Guide](#)
- [Facebook Your Blog](#)
- [Five Things Every Blog Needs](#)

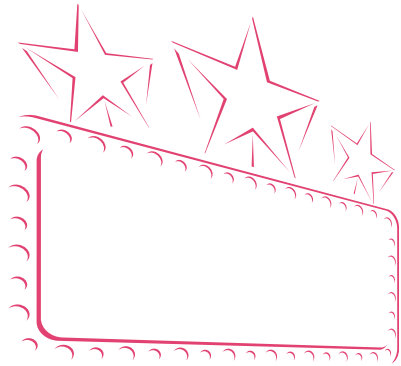
6.

GET FRIENDLY

LEARN HOW TO GET SEARCH ENGINES, SUCH AS GOOGLE, TO WORK FOR YOU

Unraveling the mysteries of Google and Search Engine Optimization (SEO) can be daunting, but it doesn't need to be. Five tried and true SEO methods to boost your traffic, readership, influence, and income in blogland are:

1. Get Your Own Domain
2. Research Key Words
3. Rename Photos
4. Use Headings
5. Keep Track of Stats



Let's take a look at our first recommendation, **Get Your Own Domain**, in more detail...

Rather than being under the umbrella of a “blogspot” address and giving your good SEO to another company (like Blogger), strike out in the world and register your own domain name. A short, memorable domain name can make the difference between creating a successful web presence and getting lost in cyberspace.

An example of a not-so-searchable domain name: www.thesitsgirls.blogspot.com

An example of a SEO friendly domain name: www.thesitsgirls.com

There are millions of sites where you can register your own domain, such as GoDaddy, Dreamhost, and Bluehost. Use their search function to find a website name that hasn't been registered yet and that is personal to you.

If your ideal domain name is not available, then you have two options:

- 1. Tweak your idea!** Try manipulating the URL by adding words such as “the” or “my” to the beginning of the website address. That's what we did for SITS. Our web address is www.thesitsgirls.com, rather than simply www.sitsgirls.com.
- 2. Buy the domain name from the current owner:** Check the “whois” information for the domain, and contact the person listed to see if they're willing to sell it. You should know that they are likely to charge a higher fee than you would normally pay when buying a brand new domain name.

For more information on how to boost your **SEO**, click on these posts:

- [Search Engine Optimization](#)
- [Search Engine Optimization \(Part 2\)](#)
- [Blogger To WordPress: Is It Time For You To Change?](#)

7.

GUEST POST

BECOME REGARDED AS AN EXPERT IN YOUR NICHE AND FURTHER YOUR CREDIBILITY

Many professional bloggers will tell you that guest posting is the way to go. What better way to tap directly into an audience that doesn't know your blog even exists? All you need to do is write something awesome and approach the right site and BAM! You've got yourself a guest post! So easy!

Only the path to success is not quite as easy as it sounds.



There are several important points to keep in mind to ensure your guest post will be a winner.

Relevancy: Be sure the site you're asking to write for is relevant to your niche. Don't waste your time submitting posts to sites simply because they have a large audience you'd like to tap into.

Original Content: Any post you submit to a site should be original and not previously published on your own blog... or anywhere. Not only is offering up a previously published post bad for SEO, but it is also like offering someone a half eaten sandwich. No one wants a bite!

Link Back: When your guest post is published on the site you submitted to, drive your traffic to that site. Use your blog, Facebook, Twitter... whatever means you need to get your community to click over. This is not only a bonus for the person hosting your guest post, but the more reactions you can stir from the post you write, the better you look and the more likely you are to be invited back again.

Engage Readers: When your post has been published, we highly recommend spending time responding to the comments. Thank readers for their feedback, show them you're invested in what you wrote, and demonstrate that you are interested in a connection beyond a particular post.

THIS IS ESPECIALLY TRUE FOR YOUR FEATURE DAY ON THE SITS GIRLS WEBSITE.

We make it a point to ask questions that not only showcase your blog, but also allow our readers to get to know you... all in an effort for you to form lasting connections. Consider responding to the comments you receive on your feature day on your own blog AND those that you receive on SITS. You'll be happy that you did!

To learn more about **guest posting**, [click here](#).

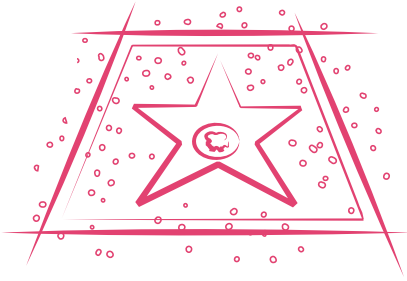


BE BUSINESS SAVVY

KNOW YOUR WORTH WHEN APPROACHED BY BRANDS

As a blogger, working with brands can be exciting, especially when you come across an opportunity that will drive traffic and attention to your site. As you get caught up in that anticipation, it's easy to keep saying "yes" to whatever you're being asked to do.

The hard part comes when you take a step back and evaluate a company's intentions. What is the company's ultimate goal with a campaign? Are you comfortable with it? Are the company's expectations a match with your blog?



Before you jump on the bandwagon to review a bottle of BBQ sauce on your blog, consider getting real with a PR rep and taking ownership of how you partner with brands on your site.

TELL THEM WHAT YOU WANT

A good PR person will hopefully do their research, but keep in mind that there are millions of blogs out there now. The easier you make it for a PR rep to understand what exactly your blog can offer to a brand, the more targeted the opportunities you will receive. Consider adding a page created specifically for advertising and PR that includes what types of opportunities you are open to and what's off limits.

SELL YOURSELF

YOU know that you have a loyal army of readers who trust your recommendations and that you've done traffic-boosting guest posts on a dozen different blogs, but will a brand know that at first glance? Make it a point to list your accomplishments and demonstrate your influence. Better yet, create a comprehensive, branded media kit that provides your blog profile, traffic stats, rankings, reader demographics, third-party references, awards/accomplishments, advertising options/rates, and your influence across all social media platforms.

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

Ultimately, you know your audience best. You know what they respond to, what types of posts they like, and how they will react. Brands want to work with you to access the trust you have with your audience. Don't sell out with a giveaway or review that you know only a few of your readers will be interested in. Although these types of initiatives might give you a way to work with a brand or a short-term payoff, they won't deliver results that will allow you to put a premium on your posts and your readers.

To read more about how to work successfully with **brands**, [click here](#).

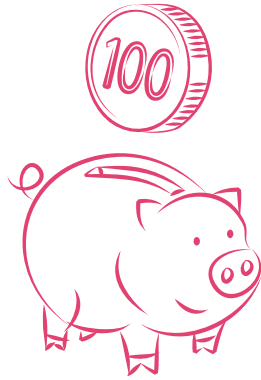
9.

SELL IT

MAKE MONEY WITH YOUR BLOG THROUGH OPTIONS LIKE ADS AND AFFILIATE SALES

It's natural for some bloggers to be interested in taking things to the “next level” with their site. The fact that there is money to be made in our little corner of the blogosphere is one topic that intrigued (and baffled) us during our early days of blogging.

Although making money is not the reason that many people begin blogging, it is something most of us wonder about at one point or another. For some stay-at-home moms, the cash brought in from blogs can even help put food on the table.



Blogs of all sizes can advertise. Though the lower your stats are, the less money you will probably make. That being said, starting out small is fine. It's a great way to learn how to interact with advertisers, while still being able to earn some pocket change.

HOW TO FIND BUSINESSES THAT YOU CAN ADVERTISE FOR

- Use the phone book, targeting smaller businesses when your first start out.
- Contact advertisers that competitors in your niche are working with.
- Google key words that define your blog (or niche) and see which businesses are associated with those terms.
- Create your own ad network.

FORMING YOUR OWN NETWORK IN ORDER TO SELL ADS

Keep in mind that forming your own ad network requires more time and effort than affiliate marketing. Not only must you maintain a working relationship with those in your network, but you also must be open to their feedback.

AFFILIATE MARKETING

Affiliate marketing is basically a method for businesses to reward bloggers by paying them a commission for selling their product. The best way to benefit from affiliate sales is to incorporate the products you are selling into your blog's content. If you host affiliate ads, consider reviewing the product in a blog post and providing an affiliate link so that your readers can make a purchase.

To learn more about **monetizing**, as well as to check out our amazing list of resources, [click here](#).

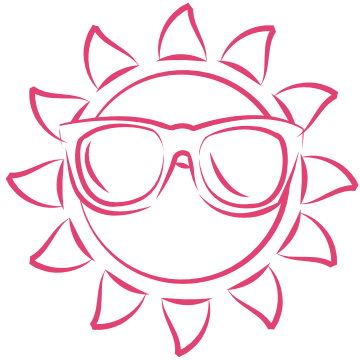
10.

AVOID PITFALLS

NEVER FORGET TO LIVE YOUR LIFE FIRST, AND BLOG LATER

Blogging has proven to be an amazing way for us to express ourselves, build memories, make friends, and even start businesses. Every blog has a different voice and it's great to see the various directions people pursue with their blogs.

The downside is that many of us fall into traps that, if we learn to recognize them, can be easily avoided.



Let's take a look at a few common mistakes in more detail...

BECOMING TOO FOCUSED ON LIFE INSIDE THE COMPUTER

You must fight the pull to spend every waking hour on the computer. Not only will this help you to avoid burnout, but staying in touch with friends and family will give you something to write about.

SPREADING YOURSELF TOO THIN

With SO many avenues to reach potential readers, it is easy to try to be everywhere at once. Writing, commenting, email, Facebook, Twitter, FriendFeed, Flickr, The BlogFrog, YouTube... the choices are endless. It's okay to dabble in networks to see what works best for you. Trying new things and staying current is important, but plan your time wisely. Unless you have hours to spare, you should think about how you can get the most bang for your buck before you get online. Creating blocks of time for the things you need to do will help you accomplish more, and faster.

OBSESSING OVER YOUR COMMENTS





It's okay to want comments, but checking everyday or multiple times a day is not a good use of your time. Above all, write posts that mean something to you, and be sure to engage your readers by inviting them to comment, asking for advice, or posing a question. Everything else will fall into place with time.

To read about **more pitfalls and traps** all bloggers should avoid, [click here](#).

RESOURCES

If you have big dreams for your blog, but are not really sure where to start, there are a number of blog eBooks that we highly recommend. These are all written by bloggers who are experts in their respective areas. What's more, we own these eBooks and use as them as the foundation for many of the blogging concepts we teach both online on SITS and in person at Bloggy Boot Camp.

Click on the graphic links below to learn more.

BLOG EBOOK	DESCRIPTION	WHY WE LOVE IT
	<p>Making great early choices is vital to the long-term success of your blog. This ebook from ProBlogger guides you, day by day, through your first week of blogging so you can get your blogging journey started on the right foot.</p>	<p>We think Darren Rowse's 30 money back guarantee speaks for itself! If you do not feel that this valuable resource is making a difference with your blog, then you can get a full refund. It doesn't get much better than that!</p>
	<p>31 Days to Build a Better Blog is designed to help you turn your site into the page view powerhouse you've always dreamed of in about a month. Each day includes a task (something to DO that day) and teaching (great instruction on both the WHY and HOW for the task of the day).</p>	<p>We first partnered with Darren Rowse during the summer of 2010, when we brought together over 500 women all focused on improving their blogs in 31 Days. Since that time, we have helped thousands of women work through the "ProBlogger Challenge" and continue to use Darren's program regularly on SITS.</p>
	<p>Graduating from Blogger to WordPress is an exciting move as your blog matures. However, because the two blogging platforms are different, there are some important steps that you need to cover so everything works properly — otherwise you risk losing your backlinks and followers.</p>	<p>Sharon Hujik has written a great book that is easy to follow and walks you through the entire process of moving from Blogger to WordPress. Even if you are going to hire someone to do the transfer for you, this book will help you speak intelligently about the process! It's a wonderful resource that we highly recommend.</p>
	<p>Mom Blog SEO (search engine optimization) by Kelby Carr (a mom who has been online since the 1980s, spoken at several blog conferences about SEO and been mastering SEO for eight years) will help moms who blog boost their traffic, readership, influence and income.</p>	<p>This eBook will take you through 30 days of quick and easy tasks to give your blog the SEO jump start it needs. Learn these tactics over a month's time, spending just a few minutes a day or spread out the activities over a longer period. Complete the tasks at your own pace!</p>