

The Guest Blogging Survival Guide

Secrets to Becoming a Prolific Guest Blogger to
Increase Authority, Fans, and Traffic

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About the Author

My name is Kristi Hines, and I am a freelance writer, professional blogger, and ghostwriter. I started my blog, Kikolani, in 2008. But it wasn't always about blog marketing and blogging strategy. It actually began as a personal blog with poetry and photography.

A little over a year later, I changed my blog's focus to what it is today - a source for personal, professional, and business bloggers who want to learn more about online marketing to promote themselves and their content.

In 2010, I entered the world of guest blogging. Because I had already established myself as having great content on my own blog, I was able to secure opportunities with blogs like Famous Bloggers, Search Engine Journal, Search Engine Watch, and Social Media Examiner.

Over the last three years, I have written for over 50 sites as a regular contributor and a freelance writer. My portfolio includes posts published on KISSmetrics, Unbounce, Search Engine People, Income Diary, SEOgadget, Sprout Social, ProBlogger, Hongkiat, and many more.

In this guide, I want to share the strategies I used to secure these guest blogging opportunities along with the ways I ensure every post I submit to a site will be published.

Disclaimers

Some resources mentioned may be linked to with affiliate links. This means that if you buy from them, I will get a commission. You can rest assured that I only recommend resources I have used myself and that I know will make a difference in your quest for guest blogging.

Also, while everything is as accurate as possible, I cannot guarantee that every strategy will work for every blog, business, or person. Online marketing is about trial and error as well as keeping up with the latest news. What works today may cause Google penalties tomorrow. Quality almost always wins.

Why Guest Blogging

Content marketing should be an integral part of your overall online marketing strategy. Guest blogging is just one of the many ways you can spread your message throughout the Internet.

What is guest blogging? If you think it's just another link building strategy, think again. That's not the type of guest blogging this guide is talking about.

While guest blogging can be a sustainable link building strategy, you need to think beyond links. You need to have these three specific goals in mind when it comes to guest blogging.

Guest blogging can help you build your authority in a niche or industry. Establishing yourself or your business as a recognized thought leader can lead to more subscribers, more speaking engagements, more consulting clients, more paying customers, more downloads, and more overall conversions.

Guest blogging can help you grow a loyal fan base for yourself or your business. You can use your guest posts to increase your Twitter followers, Facebook fans, LinkedIn connections, and Google+ followers.

Guest blogging can help you bring more visitors to your website. You will be able to capitalize on the audience that bloggers have built and drive that audience to your own blog or website.

As you can see, just about any online marketing goal can be achieved through guest blogging. And this guide will help you through the guest blogging process, from finding opportunities to analyzing results.

The State of Guest Blogging in 2013

Like most online marketing strategies, guest blogging is starting to suffer tremendously thanks to abuse by unscrupulous marketers and SEO's looking to take cheap content and turn it into a link. When I say suffer, I mean that it is becoming harder and harder for even legit bloggers to attain guest blogging opportunities.

Major blogs that were seen as the holy grail in the online marketing world - Mashable, Copyblogger, and ProBlogger to name a few - have closed their doors to unsolicited guest post submissions. Some, like Social Media Examiner, have a vetting process so stringent that great writers get turned away. Others are only interested in long-term partnerships and turn away one-hit wonders.

There are, of course, still many blogs that welcome content from guest bloggers. But if you search unsolicited guest posts on Google, you'll find around 2,000 search results from sites that are specifically saying they do not accept them.

So how do you reap the benefits of guest blogging? Let's start digging in.

Finding Guest Blogging Opportunities

Your first goal in guest blogging is to determine where you want to be published. For example, if you are promoting a blog about social media or your business offers a social media toolset, you will likely want to get published on blogs whose audiences are interested in social media. Since one of the main goals for most guest blogging campaigns is to direct traffic back to your website, you will want to make sure the audience of the blog you are submitting a guest post for will actually want to click through.

Even if you are guest blogging for solely for links, you should still aim for relevant blogs. Google is improving its algorithm every day, and you don't need a link to your insurance site from a social media blog. Think relevancy and you will get far in both your guest post acceptance and your link building strategy.

So once you have determined what types of blogs you would like to contribute to, how do you find the best candidates? Here are some ways to do it.

RSS Subscriptions

I strongly believe that good bloggers are also good readers. If you are stuck in a rut looking for topic ideas, then you are probably not reading enough. Simply headline skimming will do.

As an avid blog reader, I subscribe to a LOT of blogs in [Feedly](#), the RSS reader that pulls its information from the soon-to-be-retired Google Reader. Feedly will soon offer a search feature that allows you to search for specific keywords in the blogs you are subscribed to. So start searching the blogs you are already a regular reader of for the following simple phrase in your Feedly.

“guest post by”

This will show you all of the blog posts submitted by guest authors, and thus show you all of the blogs you are a fan of that allow guest posting.

Google

Next, you can try the almighty Google search for the following phrases. Just replace keyword with your niche or industry keywords.

“guest post by” keyword
“guest author” keyword
“guest post guidelines” keyword
“guest blogging guidelines” keyword
“guest author guidelines” keyword
“guest posting guidelines” keyword
“guest bloggers wanted” keyword
“guest writers wanted” keyword
“contributor guidelines” keyword
“writers wanted” keyword
“bloggers wanted” keyword

You can also add these searches to either [Google Alerts](#) or [Talkwalker](#), a free Google Alerts alternative. This will allow you to receive updates via email or RSS about new pages on Google with these keyword phrases and thus, new guest blogging opportunities.

Twitter

You can use the same keyword phrases listed in the Search Google section above to search Twitter. You can save the searches to Twitter itself or to Twitter management tools such as [HootSuite](#).

Prolific Guest Blogger Tracking

Do you notice the same people popping up from one blog to the next? In the online marketing industry, some of those people include Danny Iny, Leo Widrich, Gregory Ciotti, and others. If you do notice these types of people, do a Google search for their name plus some of the earlier mentioned Google phrases - “guest post by”, “guest author”, and so on.

If you happen to know these guest bloggers, you can use these searches to uncover great guest blogging opportunities and maybe even ask them to

introduce you to blog owners and editors at sites you would like to contribute to.

Guest Blogging Networks

Guest blogging networks can help you connect with blogs that are looking for guest bloggers. These networks include [MyBlogGuest](#), [BloggerLinkUp](#), [BlogSynergy](#), [Guest Blog Genius](#), and [Guestr](#).

If you need an enterprise-level solution to find guest blogging opportunities, you can invest in [GroupHigh](#). It is primarily geared towards PR professionals and agencies looking to perform blog outreach for businesses and brands. What is nice is that it allows you to search for blogs by keyword and quickly see blogs that allow guest posts, the blog's social following across the top social networks, mozRank, location, the topics it normally covers, and the last five posts. It comes with a price tag rumored to be \$5,000 a year.

Blogging Job Boards

While you may not be looking for a job, chances are a blog or business that is looking for paid writers will also be happy to accept content from a guest blogger. Some good job boards to try include the [ProBlogger Job Board](#), [Mashable Job Board](#) (search for blogger or writer), [FreelanceWriting.com](#), [Freelance Writing Gigs](#), and [Freelance Switch](#). If you find a great site that is willing to pay you and give you an author bio, that is even better!

Paid Writing Gigs

Some blogs are regularly seeking content and offering compensation for great content. The following are just some of the blogs that offer \$50USD or more for quality posts.

<http://www.vectordiary.com/tutorial-submission/>

<http://tuts.flashmint.com/get-paid-to-write/>

<http://www.psdeluxe.com/write-for-us/>

<http://www.hv-designs.co.uk/article-submission/>

<http://spyrestudios.com/contribute/>

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<http://www.pxleyes.com/tutorials/info/>
<http://net.tutsplus.com/about/write-a-tutorial/>
<http://vector.tutsplus.com/about/write-a-tutorial/>
<http://ae.tutsplus.com/about/write-a-tutorial/>
<http://psd.tutsplus.com/about/write-a-tutorial/>
<http://cg.tutsplus.com/about/write-a-tutorial/>
<http://photo.tutsplus.com/about/write-a-tutorial/>
<http://mobile.tutsplus.com/submit-tutorials-tips-articles-or-other-content/>
<http://webdesign.tutsplus.com/write-for-us/>
<http://wp.tutsplus.com/about/submit-a-tutorial/>
<http://audio.tutsplus.com/about/write-a-tutorial/>
<http://www.tutorialboard.net/get-paid-to-write/>
<http://www.problogdesign.com/write-for-us/>
<http://www.thetechlabs.com/become-an-author/>
<http://www.1stwebdesigner.com/contribute/>
<http://www.instantshift.com/contribute/>
<http://www.alistapart.com/contribute/>
<http://freelancefolder.com/write-for-us/>
<http://www.pvmgarage.com/contribute/>
<http://www.metroparent.com/Metro-Parent/Write-For-Us/>
http://www.dropzone.com/cgi-bin/safety/detail_page.cgi?ID=694
http://rocksolidfinance.com/ask-david/guest_bloggers/
<http://www.makealivingwriting.com/why-i-pay-writers/>
<http://www.onespoonatatime.com/guest-posts-wanted-50-per-post>
<http://www.crazyleafdesign.com/blog/contributors/>
<http://psd.fanextra.com/write-for-us/>
<http://www.therenegadewriter.com/guest-posting/>

Again, you'll want to try to stick with the opportunities that allow for you to have an author bio. Some will let you have it in lieu of the compensation fee.

Link Prospector

[Link Prospector](#) is a link building tool by Citation Labs that allows you to run reports to find specific types of link building opportunities. This tool includes a guest blogging report that will find guest blogging opportunities based on keywords. For each domain that it returns, it will show you the pages on the website that mention guest blogging - usually these are blog posts by guest authors or guest post guideline pages.

Guest blogging reports cost one credit. You can try the tool for free using one credit to run a report. If you need to run more reports, you can pay as you go with a package of 5 credits for \$10 or get a monthly subscription fee that lowers the per credit rate.

Forums

If you participate in forums within your niche, be on the lookout for people who link to their blogs in their forum signature. If you interact with them frequently, it could lead to a good guest blogging opportunity. Also, if you belong to paid membership sites or private groups for people with a shared goal, those people would also be great to connect with about guest posts.

Conferences

You wouldn't think guest blogging would come up at a conference or event, but it does quite frequently. Meeting someone in person helps you create a stronger bond than you can with just emails and tweets. Guest blogging success can be built on great relationships, and conferences are a great place to build them.

Researching Blog Post Topics

How do you know what topics to submit to a blog? Here are some good ways to discover topics the blog owner or editor will be interested in.

Guest Post Guidelines

First, you'll want to start with their guest post guidelines page - most blogs will detail the types of posts they want by topic, level of difficulty, etc. If that doesn't work, you can always browse through their categories, which you can (hopefully) view in their sidebar or navigation bar.

RSS Browsing

Next, you will want to make sure your topic is unique. The easiest way to do this (if you haven't already) is to subscribe to the blogs you want to contribute to via a RSS. You can use RSS readers to quickly scan through the post titles a blog has published.

While you are looking through post titles, you will also want to note the popularity of those topics. I suggest using [Feedly](#) because you will see a score next to each post title that represents the post's Facebook likes and Google+1's.

Blog Comments

Once you discover popular post topics, another thing you can do is look through the comments for that post. Chances are, there were some questions asked that you could turn into a blog post. It also makes a great intro to the blog owner as it shows them you are in tune with their content and their audience.

Social Media

Another tactic is to follow blog owners and editors on social media. If you see them ask a question, think about a way to turn the answer into a blog

post. Reply with a short answer on Twitter/Facebook/Google+, then follow it up by contacting them and letting them know that you can turn that answer into an interesting blog post for their audience. It's the perfect way to come up with a good topic and connect!

Q&A Networks

Question and answer networks are a good source of content ideas as it lets you know what other people are interested in. If you monitor topics within your niche on [Quora](#), you can pitch relevant blogs with a topic that people are asking often about. For example, you can say that you follow their blog and have noticed that a lot of people have been asking about ___ lately, and you would love to share a detailed response via guest post.

Connecting With Your Goals

When you are researching topics to submit as a guest post, your primary goal is what to figure out something that will appeal to the blog owner, editor, and their audience. But don't forget about your goal for guest blogging. You will want to figure out a topic that achieves your goals as well.

For example, it could be something as simple as pitching Twitter-related topics to blogs you want to submit to because you are about to launch an eBook on Twitter. This primes the visitors from your guest post to be interested in more information you have to offer about Twitter.

Headlines

Finally, once you have a good topic idea, you'll need a good headline. Try to fit the theme of the blog first - if they seem to use a lot of numbered posts, how to posts, or other similar trends in their headlines, then stick with those headline formats - especially if those formats are the most popular. Alternatively, if the blog never uses those types of headlines, it might be good to avoid them.

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You can also pitch the same post and offer up a few headlines to choose from so the blog owner or editor can choose the one he or she likes the most.

If you're completely stuck on how to create great headlines, download the free [Headline Hacks](#) report by Jon Morrow of Copyblogger (opt-in required). Also, you can check out [102 Headline Formulas](#) by Chris Garrett (no opt-in) and [101 Headline Formulas](#) by Peter Sandeen (opt-in required). Between those three, you should be set on headlines for a long time to come.

Choosing to Post on Your Blog or Someone Else's

One of the conflicts that arise when you are launching a guest blogging strategy is whether to post a great topic idea on your blog or to submit it as a guest post. The fact of the matter is, you need awesome content to submit as a guest post and you need awesome content for your own blog in order to keep the new audience you have gained from your guest post.

Instant Social Fame or Long-Term SEO

There are a few ways I tackle this conundrum. The first is deciding whether the post topic is going to have instant social media success or have long-term SEO value. Sometimes posts have both, but other times, they have one or the other.

A post with the potential for instant social media success without long-term SEO value is something I would submit to someone else's site. Most blog owners and editors want to see instant results in the form of traffic and engagement.

A post with the potential for long-term SEO value is something I would keep for my own blog. Especially if it is evergreen content - the kind of post that will keep attracting visitors from search and satisfy them every time.

Inbound Marketing for Your Products

One of the top ways for a blogger to market their products is by creating content that will attract potential buyers. Since I have an eBook about Blog Post Promotion, I like to keep the majority of my blog topics about promoting blog content on my own blog.

While it's still important to share some posts that are related to your product to market it through guest blogging, you don't want to share all of those types of topics and leave nothing for your own site. If you do submit a guest post that ties directly into a product you sell, make sure you submit

it to a site that will allow you to have an author bio that leads straight to your product sales page.

Affiliate Marketing Revenue Potential

If you do a lot of affiliate marketing, then you will want to analyze your blog topics to see if they would easily link into an affiliate marketing product. One of my best posts for affiliate marketing revenue covered the differences between [Thesis and Genesis frameworks](#). Not only did it have huge affiliate marketing revenue potential, but it also had long-term SEO value. Over a year and a half later, that post still gets lots of search traffic and converts into affiliate income to the tune of anywhere between \$100 to \$500 per month or more when StudioPress is having a sale.

Following the Guidelines

It seems like a common sense point that needs no explanation, yet so many guest bloggers are losing out on opportunities because they are not following the laid out guidelines.

Why are guidelines so important? For the blog owner or editor, guidelines are set to make sure that publishing a guest post takes as little time as possible. The more time it takes for someone to publish your guest post, the less likely they are to publish it.

For starters, if you are submitting a guest post to a blog with an English speaking audience, your post should be written in good English. If English is not your first language and you are not proficient at it as your second language, then you should consider having someone edit your content prior to submitting it to a blog. Alternatively, you can have someone ghostwrite your content.

Next, follow the guest post submission guidelines point for point. If the guidelines ask you to pitch topics instead of whole posts, do just that. If the guidelines ask you to send samples of your work, send ones that are relevant to that blog and the type of content you plan to submit. If they want you to sign up for WordPress, do it. If they want you to submit images, do it.

If you follow the guidelines and submit awesome content (or awesome content ideas), you're more than likely going to get the spot!

For blogs without specific guidelines, play follow the leader. Find posts written by the blog owners or editors and format your post similarly. When you submit the post, send it in a Word document and also let the blog owner or editor know that you are happy to enter it directly into WordPress as well. Also include samples of your best, relevant work in your email along with your main social network links (Twitter, Facebook, G+) so the blog owner or editor can get to know you if they don't already.

Finding and Connecting with the Right People

If you want to ensure the best possible chance for your blog post to be published on any blog, from smaller blogs to blogs on the AdAge Power 150, you need to make sure the blog owner or editor is familiar with you first. They are much more likely to respond quickly to someone they know vs. someone who is emailing them out of the blue.

First, you need to identify the blog owner(s) and editor(s). For some blogs, you might be able to find that information on the blog's about page. Mashable, for example, has a list of their key editorial staff on their [about page](#) along with links to each person's Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn. They unfortunately are one of the many major sites that stopped accepting guest writers, but that's beside the point.

For others blogs, you might have to go on a research mission. You can start with the following queries on Google to find mentions of key positions on about pages, author bios, etc.

site:domain.com editor
site:domain.com founder
site:domain.com manager

If these people are writing posts for the blog, be sure to comment on those posts and share them socially. Even if they don't respond to your comment, they can't really miss them if you are a repeat visitor.

You can also use tools like [Followerwonk](#) to search for Twitter bios including a blog name, keywords (editor, writer, founder, owner, CEO, president, etc.), and URL's.

Your next mission is to follow them and interact with them.

First, tweet the person's posts from the blog and include both the main blog Twitter handle along with the author's Twitter handle. This shows you are a regular reader and fan of the blog. Next, follow them on a Twitter list

that you can monitor periodically. If they ask questions, be sure to chime in!

Last, but not least, see if they participate in Twitter chats. Peruse their Twitter profile and see if there are several tweets with hashtags like #blogchat, #seochat, #smchat, and so forth. Find out when the Twitter chats are scheduled (Google search them or refer to the [Twitter Chat Schedule](#)) and be sure to participate in the chat live. [TweetChat](#) is a free tool that makes it easy to follow the discussion, see your mentions, and send updates without having to manually add the chat's hashtag.

Google+ can also be handy for connecting with people, especially those who have huge audiences on other networks - they may notice you more in an environment with less noise. Facebook sometimes works, assuming the person shares public updates and allows people to subscribe to them.

If you're not having luck with the blog owners or editors, then consider going the referral route instead. See if there are any regular writers (not one time guest posters, but frequent contributors) on the blog that you know well enough to email. Let them know you are interested in submitting a guest post and that you love an introduction with the person who manages the guest post submissions / editorial calendar. This, in combination with making sure the blog owners or editors recognize you from their community, will further boost your chances of getting your guest posts published.

Writing the Perfect Post

If the guest post guidelines for a blog specify that you need to submit topic ideas instead of submitting a full post, go ahead and skip to the next section and come back to this one when you're ready to write your guest post.

It should go without saying, but I will say it anyway. Don't submit content you have published elsewhere as a guest post. This includes content you've published on your own blog, as guest posts elsewhere, or on article networks. And don't expect to be able to use the content you submit as a guest post on your own blog, as a guest post elsewhere, or on article networks unless the blog owner or editor says it is OK.

Next, make sure you give your guest post your all. If you have a blog, make it something you would want your regular readers to see - especially since you will want to promote it to your audience. If you have a business, make it something you would want your customers to see. Don't submit sub-par content just because it's not going on your blog, it's not a popular blog, or for any other reason.

Beyond creating unique, awesome content, there are some specific elements of a post that can ensure it's success - or failure. Always go with whatever the guest post guidelines say. For the blogs that do not have guidelines or the things that the guidelines do not specify, here are some general rules to follow.

Length

If post length is not specified, then you'll want to go with a length similar to posts that are popular on the blog. If you're using Feedly, you can find the most popular posts on a blog based on Google +1's and Facebook Likes. Using the [Word Count Chrome extension](#), you can highlight the post text and click the button on your browser to find out how many words is in that post. You might want to look at the latest five popular posts and check the word count, then make your post an average of that length.

Formatting

Formatting elements you should almost always use in a post include good headings to break up the text, **bolding to emphasize important messages**, bulleted lists (some, but not too many), and *italics for quotes*. If the blog doesn't specify specific formatting elements, look again at their popular posts to see how they are formatted and make sure your post looks similar.

Images

Images are a touchy subject. You absolutely never want to use images you find on Google search as they more than likely are copyrighted. If you do want to use an image you find on another website, you **MUST** get permission first.

There are only three types of images you can use safely 90% of the time. The first is images with a Creative Commons license. These images can be used as long as you give credit to the image owner, typically by including their name and a link to their website. One place you can find Creative Commons images is [Flickr via their advanced search](#). Just check the box to search within Creative Commons.

The second is screenshot images you create yourself. One free tool that makes it easy is [Jing](#). You can use Jing to capture screenshots and annotate them, draw arrows, draw boxes, and highlight.

The third is stock images. You simply buy credits to purchase the image for use in a blog post. Some popular stock photography sites include [Big Stock Photo](#), [iStockPhoto](#), and [Fotolia](#). My suggestion would be to peruse the images they have first before buying a big bulk of credits.

Another handy free tool to have for minor editing of images is [Gimp](#). You can use it to crop images and make edits like blurring personal information, clearing unnecessary elements that distract from the main focus of the image, and cropping.

Links

Links are another touchy subject in guest posts. As a general rule of thumb, you shouldn't promote your own website, blog, business, products, etc. within the body of the post unless the guest post guidelines say you can have a certain number of self-promotional links. Typically self-promotional links are reserved for your author bio. You should also not use affiliate links within a guest post unless the guidelines, blog owner, or blog editor say it's OK.

So what links should you include in a post? Here are some that typically meet approval.

- **Links to specific things you talk about.** For example, if you are writing a list of 20 Twitter tools, link to each of them. Don't make the person editing your post or the readers have to track them down.
- **Links to sources.** If you're going to throw out a fact like there are more than one billion active Facebook users, 82% of which outside the United States and Canada, be sure to [link to the source](#).
- **Link to good resources.** If you run into something that you don't want / need to fully explain in your guest post, but you want the reader to have the option of getting more information, link to a good resource for it. Typically you will want to try to link to official resources first, then *current* articles. Don't link to an article from 2008 unless it is still 100% accurate and there isn't a more recent article on the topic out there.
- **Link to other posts on the blog.** Nothing says "I know your blog like the back of my hand" than linking to other posts from the blog you are contributing to in your guest post. The easiest way to track down articles relevant to yours is to do a Google search for *site:domain.com intitle:keyword*. This will help you find all of the other articles a domain has written about a specific topic that you can mix into your content. Again, aim for the most current articles.

The only way to sometimes get self-promotional links in your guest post is to make them contextually relevant. The easiest ones to get away with are links to blog content that happens to make a reliable resource link. You

might also be able to get away with links to things like your Kindle book on Amazon if you are writing a guest post about how to publish a book on Kindle.

Also, be sure to test your links and the resources you mention. There's nothing more embarrassing than publishing a blog post about tools you can use for something just to find out that one of those tools no longer exist. You can't help it if something shuts down after you submitted your guest post, but you can prevent yourself from looking clueless by making sure it still exists before you submit it.

Crafting the Perfect Author Bio

Your author bio is the thing that will help you build authority, drive traffic to your website/blog/landing page, and grow your social media audience. Hence, it needs to be just about as perfect as you can make it.

Formatting and Links

First, you will need to put yourself in the blog audience's shoes. What will they most likely want to click after reading your post? If you wrote about Twitter tips, for example, then they'll probably want to read more articles you have written about Twitter on your blog, try a demo of your new Twitter tool, and/or follow you on Twitter.

Next, you will need to look at other guest author bios on the blog. How long are they on average? How many total links do they include? Do they have links to your social profiles that are separate from your main bio and, if so, to what networks. You will want to take advantage of the ability to promote yourself but not go overboard.

You don't want to be the [freelance writer](#) who blogs about [blog marketing](#) that also likes [photography](#) and [infographics](#). You also may not want people to follow you on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Google+](#), [YouTube](#), [Pinterest](#), and [StumbleUpon](#).

You see what happens here. Readers won't know what to click. Instead, you will want to think focus on the things that are most important.

Be the freelance writer who blogs about [blog marketing](#). Get people to like your page on [Facebook](#) and follow you on [Google+](#).

Again, depending on the audience, you may need to decide whether they are more likely to click on a link to your business vs. a link on your blog that can lead them into learning more about your business.

Anchor Text

For those concerned about anchor text in your author bios, here are some things to consider. First of all, Google doesn't like for you to have tons of links with the same anchor text, so be sure to switch it up. I like to use freelance writer, blog content writer, freelance blogger, and a few other variations for my business.

Second, you will want to decide whether your goal is SEO or to get traffic. Sometimes they can be achieved with the same anchor text. Other times, you might want to sacrifice keyword anchor text to get clicks.

Google Authorship & Author Rank

The Google+ link, by the way, is imperative if you want to build up your Google Author Rank. The easiest way to do it is to link your content to your Google+ profile with a *?rel=author* at the end of your profile link and then link your Google+ profile contributor link back to your author page on the blog.

To find your author page on a blog, try clicking on your name if it's linked in the meta data of your post. You can also try finding it with the following URLs. Replace instances of username if you logged in to WordPress to enter your post with your own account.

domain.com/author/username
domain.com/author/firstname
domain.com/author/firstnamelastname
domain.com/author/firstinitiallastname
domain.com/blog/author/username
domain.com/blog/author/firstname
domain.com/blog/author/firstnamelastname
domain.com/blog/author/firstinitiallastname
blog.domain.com/author/username
blog.domain.com/author/firstname
blog.domain.com/author/firstnamelastname
blog.domain.com/author/firstinitiallastname

Unfortunately, not all blog owners and editors create separate accounts for guest bloggers. Some may even have them all lumped into one account. In this case, you might want to link directly to your blog post under the contributor links on your Google+ profile. Otherwise, people looking at your contributor links will just end up on the blog's homepage instead of seeing your content.

You can learn more about [how to set up Google Authorship](#) on Google+ and why it's important in [this post on Copyblogger](#). You can also see what posts have been linked to you via Google+ by searching for your name on Google, and when you see your photo next to an article, click on the More by you link.

Contacting the Blog Owner or Editor

Once you have your topic ideas or your guest post set, you will be ready to contact the blog owner or editor, unless they specified that you create an account on their blog and submit the content that way.

There are a few extremely crucial things you need to do in this email that will make the difference between getting your post published, getting rejected, or simply never receiving a response.

Address the Recipient by Name

Nothing says spam like emails that start out with just hi, dear admin/webmaster/blogger/sir/madam, or no intro at all. Don't assume that the last person who wrote a blog post is the person you want to contact either. Refer to the tips mentioned in the Finding and Connecting with the Right People section earlier. Or look on the guest post guidelines or contact page to see if there is a specific person that your guest post submission should be submitted to.

If you absolutely can't find a name for the blog owner anywhere on the blog, on their social networks, or the Internet at large, then start your email with an apology. Let them know you would have prefer to address them by name, but you couldn't find it. Don't start templating that apology to every blog you contact, however, as you'll probably email someone whose name was easy to find, and they will therefore regard your message as spam.

Stop Using Bad Templates

Speaking of templates, don't send the same email to every blog you come across without reading their guest post guidelines. As a blog owner, there is nothing like taking the time to create guidelines that specify a minimum word count of 750 and receiving dozens of emails from various people telling me they will submit 100% Copyscape protected content between 500 - 600 words.

Tell the Recipient How Much You Love Their Blog

Don't just say how much you love their blog. Prove it. Tell them you're a regular reader who loves to share their content with your audience. Assuming that's true, do a Twitter search for @yourusername blog.com and send them a link to their content that you've shared with your followers. Hopefully, they will recognize you.

If you do regularly read their posts, but don't share them on Twitter, switch it up and say you especially loved a particular post on their blog and why you loved it. Maybe say you learned a specific lesson and then say that you want to be able to help their readers learn something valuable in return.

Tell the Recipient Why Your Post is Awesome

Your goal is to sell your guest post to the blog owner or editor you are contacting. Tell them why the topic you are submitting is the perfect fit for their audience. Tell them that your guest posts usually receive a lot of social shares and engagement. Tell them that you will be promoting your post to everyone on social media. Make them want to publish your post.

Include Relevant Writing Credits

It never hurts to brag in this kind of email. If you have published similar posts, send a few links to the most popular ones - preferably the ones with the most social shares and comments. But don't send a post you wrote about car insurance when submitting a guest post about gardening. Make the credits relevant.

If you don't have relevant guest posting credits, then share the most relevant, popular links from your own blog. You really just need three tops.

Tell Them You Will Participate and Promote

The two things that are important to bloggers when it comes to guest authors besides the quality of their content is their willingness to participate in community discussions for their posts (the comments) and their willingness to promote the content with their audience. If you have a

significant following on social media, the promotion alone may get you the opportunity.

Let Them Know You Are Open to More

Not all blogs want regular contributors, but some blogs do. Let the blog owner or editor know that you would be happy to submit more than one guest post. We'll discuss the benefits of becoming a regular contributor shortly.

Golden Opportunities

Looking for the perfect time to strike, so to speak? If you are featured in a post on the blog, then you might want to contact the blog owner or editor shortly after - regardless of whether it was them or another writer who featured you.

This is how I gained my spot on Social Media Examiner. After I was voted as one of the Top 10 Social Media Blogs of 2010, I reached out to them to thank them for the recognition and see if I could contribute to their site as well.

Even if another writer on the blog mentions a post or guest post you've written, you can use it to your advantage to contact the writer, thank them for the mention, introduce yourself, and see if you can get them to provide an introduction with the blog owner or editor.

Things to Avoid

Last, but not least, there are a few things you should avoid. For starters, don't talk about SEO. If you've done your research, you know whether they allow authors to have links in their bio, therefore there is no need to mention that all you require is a dofollow backlink with your anchor text.

Also, don't be pushy. Most blogs have an editorial schedule they follow whether it is formal or informal. You can casually mention that you would love it if your guest post goes live around a specific time for a specific reason, but don't sound demanding. If you're promoting a product launch,

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be transparent about it - just don't expect anything. It's better to get published a few weeks late vs. not at all.

Following up about a guest post if you haven't heard back is not a bad thing, but again, be nice about it. Maybe ask if there is anything else they need to go along with your guest post, or if they need any edits.

If you need some examples of what not to do when submitting a guest post request, check out my presentation on Slideshare - [The State of Guest Blogging in 2013](#).

Promoting Your Guest Post

Once your guest post goes live, your next task is to make sure your post gets lots of traffic and engagement. You want to show the blog owner or editor that they made a good decision to publish your post. If you want a recurring gig on that site, you'll want to make a good impression with your first submission. If they see a lot of traffic and engagement, they will definitely be open to you submitting more content.

The best way to promote your guest post is through social media. The top networks that drive traffic to blog content are Twitter, Facebook, StumbleUpon, Google+, Pinterest, and LinkedIn. So start by sharing your guest post with your connections on those networks through status updates.

On networks like Facebook, Google+, and LinkedIn where you have groups and communities, you can do a little extra promotion by sharing your guest post with relevant groups and communities.

If you have some budget to spare, you may also want to consider investing in some advertising. You can use the official channels and try [Promoted Tweets](#) through Twitter Ads or [Promoted Posts](#) through Facebook Ads on both your personal profile and page. You can also [StumbleUpon Paid Discovery](#) to boost stumble views (traffic) to your guest post.

There are also unofficial channels that allow you to increase social shares through purchasing credits or promoting posts by others. These networks include [JustRetweet](#), [Easy Retweet](#), [Viral Content Buzz](#), and [Triberr](#). Most of these will allow you to increase the retweets, likes, and +1's for your guest post.

Want more tips on how to promote your guest post? Be sure to pick up a copy of my ebook, [Blog Post Promotion: The Ultimate Guide](#).

Responding to Comments

Comments are the lifeblood of engagement on a blog. Nothing shows a blog owner or editor your commitment to your guest post like staying on top of comments.

You'll likely be notified via email when new comments are published on your guest post if the blog is using the standard WordPress comment system. If they use Disqus, you can sign in to your [Disqus account](#) (or create an account if you don't have one) and, above the comment form, click on the star icon to subscribe to the comments. If they use [Livefyre](#), you can sign in to your Livefyre account (or create an account if you don't have one) and, below the comment form, click on the Follow button to subscribe to comments.

As an added bonus, the people you interact with in the comments will probably be more likely to want to check out your website and connect with you once you start engaging with them. It's a win-win situation - you'll make the blog owner or editor happy, you'll further build your authority, and you'll probably get some return traffic to your website.

Becoming a Regular Contributor vs. a One-Time Guest Poster

In the SEO world, the goal of guest posting is to build as many links as possible. Hence, the goal is to get guest posts on as many sites as possible. But if your goal is building authority, getting more traffic back to your website, and building relationships, then you might want to consider regular contribution to top blogs instead.

Why is becoming a regular contributor more valuable? People tend to forget a one-time author, no matter how great their guest post is. But if you become a regular face on a blog that has a loyal audience, more and more of their subscribers will begin to notice you as you continue to produce great content for them. It's as simple as that.

The alternative approach that has been used by lots of successful guest bloggers - Leo Widrich, Danny Iny, Derek Halpern, Gregory Ciotti, and others - is to get your content on as many blogs as possible within a close timeframe. People who are into a particular niche tend to subscribe to a lot of the top blogs within that niche. If someone runs into 5 of your posts in the same week across their favorite blogs, they will definitely notice you.

What's the best frequency for a regular contribution on top blogs in your industry? Monthly is usually the best in terms of your ability to keep up with producing content for your own site as well as the others. If you think about it, if you were a monthly contributor to four top blogs, that's going to be two posts a week, assuming you only do one post per week for your own blog. Depending on what you do and how much content you like to write, that could be good enough.

Building a Portfolio

As you begin to do more and more guest posts, you should consider creating a portfolio of your best work. This is for two reasons. For starters, as you reach out to even bigger blogs in your industry, you can use your previous guest posts as samples. If you are interested in earning money through blogging, it could make the great start for a freelance writing portfolio as well.

Your portfolio doesn't have to be complicated. It could be as simple as one page on your blog that highlights your latest guest posts. Since I'm a regular contributor to multiple sites, I use a plugin called [WP RSS Aggregator](#). It allows you to import multiple feeds and display them on a page in WordPress. This automates the process of keeping my [portfolio page](#) up to date.

Another way to do it is through an outside service. [Clippings.me](#) allows you to create a free portfolio page where you add your latest posts from other sites as writing samples. If you'd like to keep track of the social sharing and engagement on your guest posts, you can upgrade to a PRO account for only \$8 a month to see a breakdown of how many tweets, Facebook likes, LinkedIn shares, comments, and links your guest posts are getting.

Analyzing Your Results

There are a few different ways to track the benefits of your guest posting strategy. Since traffic back to your own website will be particularly important, look into your Google Analytics traffic sources. You should be able to spot out your best guest posting traffic referrers under Sources > Referrers. If you contribute regularly to a particular blog, click on it in the list to see which posts are specifically sending visitors back to your website.

If you are contributing to a particular set of blogs in your industry, you may want to create an Advanced Segment / Custom Segment so you can see just the traffic coming to your website from those blogs. To do this, click on the Advanced Segment tab in your Google Analytics dashboard, and then click on the +New Custom Segment button. You can then add up to 20 domains - set each one up as Include > Source > Containing > domain.com, replacing domain.com with the blog's domain. By creating a Custom Segment, you can view all of your analytics data specifically from visitors who came to you through your guest posts.

To monitor social sharing of your guest posts, definitely try the [Clippings.me](#) PRO service mentioned earlier. If you have an enterprise-sized budget, you can also try [Grouphigh](#).

If you have been claiming Google+ authorship for your posts, you can use [Google Webmaster Tools](#) to see some information about their impressions in search, clicks, and rankings. Just sign up for an account using the same Google account as you use for your Google+ profile. Then look under Labs for [Author Stats](#). That will give you an idea of which posts do the best in search and how much traffic those blogs are getting thanks to your content.

Learning from the Best

Want to learn more about guest blogging? There are two courses that I have taken, am an affiliate for, and would highly recommend.

The first is [Guest Blogging](#) by Jon Morrow of Copyblogger. This course consists of 18 videos that take you through the guest blogging including making connections, networking with A-listers, pitching blog owners and editors, and writing posts that will get you results. There is also a private community, bonuses, regular Q&A calls, and more that you will get with this program.

The second is [Write Like Freddy](#) by Danny Iny of Firepole Marketing. Danny is one of those guest bloggers that seemed to come out of nowhere and then took over blogs in the online marketing industry with over 80 guests posts. He made it to all of the sites online marketers dream of: Copyblogger, ProBlogger, KISSmetrics, DailyBlogTips, Think Traffic, Smashing Magazine, and more. His course covers everything from finding the best places to get published to building relationships throughout the blogosphere.

Closing

I hope you have enjoyed this guide on guest blogging! If you have any questions, feel free to email me at kristi@kikolani.com or reply to any of the emails you receive from my mailing list.

Be sure to keep an eye out in your inbox for upcoming free guides I will be offering in the future - if you're not subscribed, be sure to [subscribe now!](#) Also, connect with me on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) to keep up with the latest online marketing news!

Oh, and if you need a ghostwriter to create awesome content for you to submit to blogs in the online marketing industry, be sure to [contact me!](#) 😊