

Niche Success Blueprint

“Start to Profit” Training Course

Module 13: Guest Blogging & Content Marketing

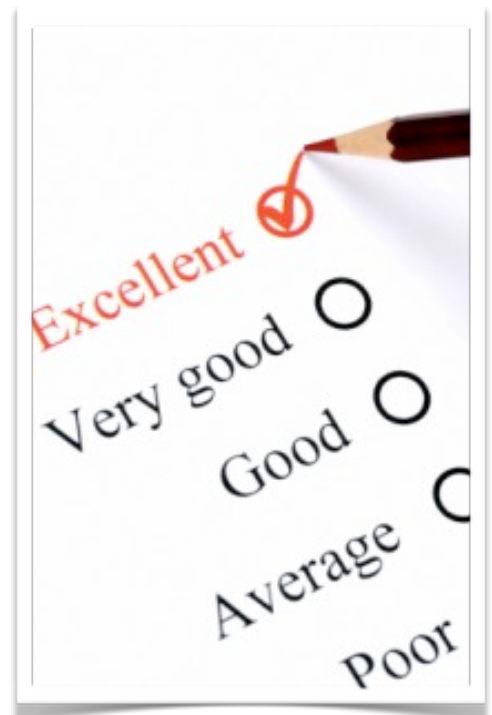
In Modules 11 and 12 we explored ways to grow your business using “leverage”, how to gain fast exposure through *strategic* networking, and how to use Social Media *efficiently*. This week we’ll look specifically at Guest Blogging, as well as other Content Marketing strategies, to help you get *even more exposure and traffic* to your niche site!

As a reminder: Your main objective should NOT be to “get traffic” or “get links” but rather to gain exposure in your market, to become known, and to continue building on your reputation and credibility.

Build a business that adds value to your market and attracts people to your website naturally.

When it comes to Content Marketing (which includes Guest Blogging and even Social Media updates!) the quality of your content is KEY. I’m going to show you easy, creative ways to come up with quality content angles & ideas - and how to market that content. :)

While you can use these ideas for content on your own site, we’ll focus specifically on *off-site* Content Marketing in this Module as a means of increasing your reach...



Caution: Comment Spam & Guest Post Pitches

Now that you're consistently publishing content and your niche site is becoming more established, you're likely attracting spammers already. You want to **be very cautious** about spam comments as they are often "duplicate content" of no value and include links to "questionable" sites (or sites that are participating in bad linking practices.)

What gets published on your site is your responsibility. Take this very seriously!

A popular plugin for Wordpress-based sites that helps control comment spam is [Akismet](#). It sorts legitimate comments from spam comments, and works fairly well.

You still need to manually review these comments to make sure no spam slips through - and to ensure no legitimate comments get filtered out. It's a pain yes, but a necessary task to keep your site clean of "junk" content and links.

You should also set up Comment Moderation within your Wordpress Dashboard as well. Simply log in and go to **Settings > Discussion** to find your moderation options.

Any first-time comments should be moderated. And any comments with multiple links should be reviewed as well:

About Lynn Terry

Best known for ClickNewz, Lynn works online full-time as a Professional Blogger and Super Affiliate. She has 18 years experience in a variety of online business models, and a passion for helping others achieve the same success & lifestyle.

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Before a comment appears	<input type="checkbox"/> Comment must be manually approved
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Comment author must have a previously approved comment
Comment Moderation	Hold a comment in the queue if it contains <input type="text" value="2"/> or more links. (A common characteristic of comment spam is a large number of hyperlinks.)

In addition to comment spam, another big issue is "**guest post pitches**" in your inbox. While it may seem great to have other people writing topical content for you, random pitches from people you don't know are *questionable at best* and most likely low quality or spammy attempts at using your blog for "link spamming" (questionable link building).

ANY content on your site is your responsibility. Personally, I **ignore random guest blog post pitches** from people I don't know, and I recommend you do the same. ;-)

Preparing For Your Guest Blogging Strategy

A guest blog post is simply *a post written by someone other than the author* of that blog. You may invite guest authors to write on your blog, or you may write a post to publish on another blog in your market. It's a simple way to bring fresh new content or perspectives to your blog, and introduce interesting people to your readers.

It's also an easy way to build your credibility and increase your reach. By guest posting on a blog that already has an established readership, you are getting directly in front of your market. **This is a great opportunity!** Obviously you want to impress them with your content, and use the opportunity to attract new readers and followers.

Again, you want to be extremely cautious about accepting guest blog posts on your own blog. BE PICKY. Ideally you'll have some sort of relationship or connection with a person before you invite them to write a post on your blog. Or at the very least, they are a respected Market Leader you are familiar with and trust/respect.

Since guest blogging has become such a popular strategy, and also because so many link-spammers and low-quality bloggers have latched on to the strategy, *everyone* is super picky about who they allow to guest post on their website. So...

How can you possibly get YOUR guest post accepted on a popular blog in your niche??

That's exactly what I'm going to teach you. :-)



At this point in the course, you've already started making connections and interacting with people in your niche on a regular basis - with the goal of becoming known, and at least "getting on the radar" of Market Leaders and more established bloggers.

Be consistent with your "strategic networking", and continue being a "consistent face" around the web in your niche. That way you will at least be familiar to those people you choose to approach about writing guest posts for their blogs. Any respected blogger will ignore "guest post pitches" from a total stranger at this point. **Don't be a stranger!** ;-)

This is where creating quality content, strategically networking, being actively involved in groups & conversations in your niche, and *building your reputation* comes in handy!

Being “familiar” to someone can go a long way toward getting your guest post proposal read and even considered. But in addition to that, you need a **strong angle** to really get their attention. An angle *that benefits them*, that is.

Once you’ve done the groundwork of becoming a consistent figure in your space, and sharing quality content & tips, the next step is brainstorming creative angles for getting a post published on popular niche blogs *your target market reads*.

Switch your mindset from “marketing” to “serving your market” when it comes to creating content.

As I mentioned, you need a strong angle, and the most important aspect of that angle is that it *benefits the blogger* you approach about publishing your guest blog post!



Just like any “marketing strategy” you want to get out of the mindset of how it can benefit YOU - in order for it to work (meaning have *maximum benefit*). Instead consider how YOU can benefit others, whether that’s your market or anyone you want to connect with or work with. I know it sounds odd because obviously you ARE marketing your site or products, and obviously you WILL benefit, but you’ll benefit most if you **make the needs of others your primary focus** and your top priority.

It used to be enough that most bloggers simply needed consistent, high quality unique content. Before the “link-spammers” took over it was fairly easy to get a guest post published almost anywhere. **That’s not the case anymore.** That doesn’t mean it’s no longer a great marketing strategy, it simply means you need to *get more creative*. It also raises the bar, and encourages higher quality content that better serves readers.

Before we dig in to specific examples of creative strategies & content angles there are some **“Guest Blogging Best Practices”** you should know. *Take these seriously:*

- 1.** Do not “guest blog” for the sole purpose of getting links. In fact, consider using the [nofollow link attribute](#) on links in your guest posts, and any guest post you choose to publish on your site. The goal is exposure to readers, to increase your reach, period.
- 2.** Only include one or two relevant [deep links](#) (topical resources) in your guests posts. Place them in the actual content in a conversational way - instead of a byline at the end. Your bio is a good place to link to your Twitter or Google+ profile. This method is more natural (and makes for a better read) than just linking to your home page at the end.

Creative Guest Blogging Strategies & Angles

Earlier in this course you identified the Market Leaders, popular bloggers, groups and communities, authors, etc that are already successfully reaching your target market. Those lists are going to come in handy for your guest blogging strategy!

Get Organized

Create a spreadsheet, a new Note in Evernote, or whatever method you prefer of sorting and saving research data. As you continue your "Strategic Networking" you'll be adding to this file - making notes of how you can fill a need, or benefit that blogger. To give you some ideas, here are some creative examples / angles to consider:

✳ **Watch what they're promoting heavily.** Whether it's their own product/service or an affiliate promotion, consider ways you can *help them make more sales* or get more attention to whatever they are currently promoting.

Example: A top blogger in my niche is currently promoting a brand of essential oils. She has a detailed page on her website, she started a Facebook Group on the topic, and I can tell that she's putting a lot of work into her marketing campaign.

However, there isn't really any public information about the benefits of the product or about her personal experience with it. **Bingo!** If I'm familiar with the product I can write a guest post on why I enjoy the product and the results I experienced.

I would make it a point to link to her web page on the topic, encourage people to join her new topical group, and also include a link to one of my related posts (perhaps a post on "why I'm taking a more natural approach" or "my favorite natural remedies" - *even if I need to write it first!*). I would include a very brief Bio/About so her readers would know who wrote the post, and include a link to my Twitter profile there.

Given this would further her agenda, provide "social proof" and promotion in addition to her own efforts, and **result in more interest/sales/members** - she would likely be interested in publishing that guest post! Especially since she knows who I am, or is at least familiar with me from our interactions on various Social Media channels. ;-)

It's not overly promotional, it benefits the blogger AND her readers, and it puts me in front of an active audience in my niche. If she loves the post (and the results!) she'll likely accept more guest blog posts from me in the future on other topics...

*** Consider books you've read & products you've purchased.** Look for authors and merchants who have blogs, of course. If you have personal experience with their product you could easily write a guest post about a creative way you used it, the results you experienced, or how you applied their advice (if it's a book or information product).

This approach for a guest blog post will work best if their readership is also your target market, of course. But if you are your target market, you probably use or buy a lot of products/books relevant to your niche.

Example 1: A blogger in my niche creates a digital product for Low Carb Meal Plans. Obviously I can become an affiliate and recommend the product to my readers - which is what I would do first. I might even publish a Case Study so my readers can follow along and read about my results as I use the product. (*Results sell!*)

This blogger and merchant may not know me very well yet, but if I am consistently making sales for them... you can bet I'll be on their radar. This will give me credibility with them prior to proposing a guest post. What angle would I use? In this case, I would probably condense the contents of my Case Study into a single post that outlines the benefits and results I experienced from using the product - and what I love about it.

I would wrap up the post by thanking her for creating a product that made such a big difference, and encourage her readers to try it for themselves - or leave a comment if they're using the plans too and share what they love most about it!

In this case I might contextually link to (ie *talk about*) my 90 Day Low Carb Challenge group, and how the meal plans were helpful in staying on track during the challenge.

How you link out will depend on who you are writing for/to and what you are writing about. Relevance is key. Consider the audience, and the *context* of the post. Never compete with the blogger of course, but rather benefit them with your content. Any links you include should not be competitive, but rather complimentary.

Example 2: You have a site about natural health remedies, or maybe organic cooking. There's a popular book out about all natural skincare. It's not the same topic as yours, but it reaches the same type of people - people interested in natural/organic solutions.

Since the topic is not directly related to your own blog, you can write a case study that includes impressive results (and ideally before & after pictures) and send that post to the author for potential inclusion on her blog. This would encourage even more people to buy her book, of course! And also get you in front of an ideal audience. ;-)

How To Get The MOST From Your Guest Post!

As you can see, I'm not suggesting you "guest post" just for the sake of marketing, but rather consider how you can best add value to the web as a whole - by sharing relevant helpful information that benefits everyone involved. The more you watch the "leaders" the more you'll start to see ways you can benefit them, or fill a need. Have fun with it and **get creative!** Obviously it's better to get fewer guest posts published that are *extremely high quality*... than it is to just publish mediocre content all over the web.

Now, let's talk strategy. :-) But first, these are worth repeating:

Guest Blogging Best Practices

1. Do not do "guest blogging" for the sole purpose of getting links. In fact, consider using the [nofollow link attribute](#) on links in your guest posts, and any guest post you choose to publish on your site. This linking policy will [protect you](#) from looking like a link-spammer. The goal of guest blogging is to gain exposure and increase your reach.
2. Only include one or two relevant [deep links](#) (topical resources) in your guests posts. Place them in the actual content in a conversational way instead of in a byline at the end. Your bio is a great place to link to one of your social profiles. This linking method is more natural and will see *better results* than just linking to your home page at the end.

Pro Guest Blogging Strategies

- Make sure whatever you link to, which means EVERY link you include in any guest post that gets published, is highly relevant so you get the best ROI (or best results).

For example, if you include a link to your Twitter profile, your most recent Tweets should be of *direct interest* to the readers that will be clicking through from that post. Remember the examples in Module 12? Relevance is key. ;-)

- Promote your publicity! Share your guest post with your own readers/followers.
- Keep an eye on the comments once your guest post gets published. Interact with those readers and answer any questions they ask or thank them for their comments or thoughts. This will give them a chance to get to know you better, which will encourage them to want to stay in touch with you (follow you, subscribe to your blog, etc).

Making The Guest Post Proposal

Once you have a great angle for a quality guest post on a certain blog, it's time to propose your content offer to that publisher! This is where most people get **nervous**, but it's not something to worry over. What's the worst that can happen? Maybe you get ignored or even declined - but that's not so bad. *I'll show you why. :-)*

Do Not Use Email Templates.

If you've been doing your homework throughout this course, you've already been having fun and interesting conversations via social media, and writing "conversational content." Now is not the time to go all stiff and write something impersonal. Sit down and write a personable email to the blogger about your content proposal...

What To Include In Your Email

- Their name. :) Know who they are and address them appropriately. If you email me for example, I fully expect you to start out with "Hi Lynn," instead of "Dear Blogger" or "To: ClickNewz Webmaster" or some other such silliness.
- How you know them. Keep it brief but let them know you're a regular reader, a subscriber or member of their group, a customer, fan of their book/product, etc. *This brief bit should be directly related to the angle of your proposal.*
- Get right to the point (and benefits) of your proposal. Tie it into your brief intro.
- Attach a copy of your guest post as a PDF File or other universal format they can quickly open to see a nicely formatted (easy to read) copy of the proposed post.
- A **very specific subject line!** Even the most perfect email may never get read if the subject line doesn't compel them to open it and read it. Make it personal, not just "guest post request" (which everyone gets too many of already!). An example of a subject line that I would open might be, "Hi Lynn - About Your New Book..."
- Let them know this content was written exclusively for them, and won't be published anywhere else on the web if they choose to publish it. End with "Let me know either way at first opportunity, so I can publish it elsewhere if you choose not to use it."

Keep it **as simple and short as humanly possible**, while giving them enough information to entice them to consider publishing your guest post on their blog! :)

Don't Make These Mistakes When Writing A Guest Post Proposal

If you've followed my suggestions, you're doing THEM a favor with the content you've written for their blog. That's the way you want to frame it in your email. Never use wording that sounds like your asking for a favor or begging for help.

Be professional, be useful, and be relevant. Most people are out there pitching guest posts anywhere and everywhere - to anyone, anytime. They are not mindful of whether that person is obviously on vacation or recovering from surgery. They are not aware that they're right in the middle of a product launch (and likely putting off all non-critical emails). They pitch a topic that's not relevant to anything happening on that blog, etc.

Don't be that person. Don't do those things. Know who you want to work with, why you want to work with them, what they're talking about and/or promoting at the moment, and approach them with a content offer they can hardly refuse!

What If Your Guest Post Proposal Gets Ignored or Denied?

I suggested earlier that you attach a copy of your guest blog post to the initial email. You may wonder why you should bother writing it if you don't even know yet if they'll consider publishing it on their blog. Here's why...

They can't give you a definitive answer without seeing the content. Plus it cuts down on the back-and-forth emails, and the chances your follow-up reply (with the post attached) may get overlooked. Just MAKE IT EASY ON THEM. Said from personal experience. :-)

They may love it so much they go ahead and publish it on their blog, and reply with a thank you note! In which case, you should be prepared the minute you send that email!
**Refer back to the tips on the second half of Page 7.*

There's the chance that you won't get a reply at all. It happens. Not all emails get open and read, or even seen. You might follow up with them once about four days later, or if you happen to be chatting with them on Social Media later that week you might casually say "BTW, did you get my email? I'd love to hear your thoughts!" Then leave it at that. You don't want to be a nuisance or seem desperate.

You may also get a reply declining your offer. They may or may not give a reason. Respect that, and then publish your awesome piece of content somewhere else! You might use it on your own blog, offer it to another blogger that could benefit from it. If it's an exclusive piece you may need to edit it slightly, but it's still highly valuable. ;-)

Go For “Natural Buzz” and Strategic Exposure

With every marketing strategy you employ, including guest blogging, the key is to have a **focused objective**. Know exactly what you want to accomplish - and *why*. Your goal is to achieve “natural buzz” in your market, getting in front of your ideal audience in ways that encourage very specific results. Start with your end objective in mind and craft your marketing strategy and your individual messages to achieve that objective.

A few helpful tips:

- **Be Conversational, Not Self-Promotional**

Even when you’re promoting a blog post or recommending a product, you can do it in a conversational way. “Strong recommendations” don’t have to be stiff! Simply talk openly with your readers about why you recommend it, the results you’ve experienced, open it up for questions/discussion, etc.

[blog post example 1](#) | [blog post example 2](#)
[social media example 1](#) | [social media example 2](#)



- **Use Smart Targeting**

When I launched my affiliate program for “Social Marketing Results” my main objective was to recruit active affiliates. Rosalind Gardner is a respected Market Leader that teaches Affiliate Marketing, and she’s the author of The Super Affiliate Handbook.

As part of my marketing strategy for that product and affiliate program, I wrote two guest posts for Rosalind’s blog - knowing I would specifically be reaching affiliates. These two posts make for a great example of “smart targeting” - and using a creative angle based on the targeted audience: <http://netprofitstoday.com/blog/tag/lynn-terry/>

- **Always Include a Strong (Relevant) Call-to-Action**

In everything you publish, let the reader know exactly what you most want them to do next after reading your update or your content. Give them the “next best click!” If you study the examples at each of the links above, you’ll see this in action. ;-)

Variety: The KEY To Smart Content Marketing!

I mentioned “natural buzz” as a goal. You need **a lot** of variety in your marketing strategy, and specifically in your Content Marketing strategy, to achieve this. For more on this topic [I highly recommend you read this post and the two links at the end.](#)

You do have to “push start” the marketing yourself in the beginning, but ultimately you want people sharing and linking to your site & content naturally. We’ll discuss things like “link bait” and “share bait” in future modules, but for now just focus on a natural, organic marketing strategy that creates **plenty of variation** in the links pointing to your site.



When you read the tutorials at the link above, you’ll learn that every link pointing to your site is considered by the major search engines as part of their ranking criteria. This is why people do “link building” - as an attempt to improve their search engine rankings. Unfortunately, done wrong those links can do more harm than good. Especially if you get a number of “unnatural links” - meaning **links from too many of the same sources**, or links you obviously created yourself, without any links coming from natural sources.

While guest blogging is a great means of getting quality exposure in your market, it should only ever be part of your overall strategy. **If you do any one thing too much, it looks like “link spamming” - even if that is not your intention at all!**

I recommend you focus on high quality guest posts with very strategic angles and smart targeting - which means doing fewer of them, and making it a point to get the best results. While you’ll get inbound links as a result, it shouldn’t be your objective. Focus more on providing value, getting exposure, and building your readership.

If you focus on Link Building alone, you run the risk of creating a red flag that could get your site penalized in the major search engines.

Instead create GREAT content that people will want to share & link to, work on building highly topical and super engaged social media channels, and above all... never do any one thing too much. Don’t go on a “blog commenting campaign” or “guest blogging kick” that creates hundreds of links to your site in short time. *That will set off a red flag!*

Add Variation: Easy Content Marketing Ideas

As you continue publishing great content on your site, and building up your social media engagement, also make **Off-Site Content Marketing** part of your natural growth. You'd be wise to grow your site slowly and naturally, with quality and integrity - versus speed.

For your off-site content marketing, make it a point to **mix it up** with some of the ideas below. You might set a goal of getting off-site content published once a week or 2-3 times per month. While you can get more aggressive with it, just keep in mind that you want a lot of **variety** in the types of links that result from your content marketing. Make it a point to encourage natural links too - shares, quotes, recommendations, etc.

More Easy Content Marketing Ideas:

- **Interviews**

There are many types of interviews, or formats. One of the easiest and most popular is text interviews that get published on blogs ([example 1](#) | [example 2](#)).

There are also live interviews such as [Google Hangouts](#), [podcasts](#), webinars, etc. Even in audio/video (live) interviews, you'll get an attribution link as you can see by clicking the two links I provided to live examples. These are natural links, *meaning* they were created by someone else and placed in content they wrote, on a domain I don't own.

- **Content Uploads / Sharing**

There are many places on the web you can upload or share various formats or types of content. Examples include YouTube, BlogTalkRadio.com, various wiki sites, Scribd.com, SlideShare.net, etc. Get creative finding new ways & angles to reach your market!

You can even create a PDF tutorial or checklist, or other free content (just like guest blogging) for someone to use [as a freebie](#) for their list or community. [example 2](#)

- **Public Groups, Communities & Forums**

(See Module 12, Page 10) Look for public groups or communities where you can get actively involved. Most let you set up a profile or bio, and some even let you include your website link - or at least social media profiles. All content you share or post links back to your profile, which usually shows your post count and is great for credibility.

- **Contribute Content Where Requested**

Refer back to Module 12 Pages 9-11 to find places to contribute & submit content.

There are SO many great opportunities online! Sadly, most people **totally miss out** on them because they're too busy looking for that "easy button" or shortcut.

People that get featured, interviewed or get "great opportunities" are not LUCKY. They just happen to work smart. That means realizing **you have to give to get** and getting creative about it! Especially in the beginning when you're just starting out. It's well worth it though, and it will definitely be an investment *that pays off long term*.

The more exposure you get, and the more you put yourself out there, the more "natural links" you'll start getting as a result in time. People will get to know you, recommend you, blog about you, share your content, interview you, invite you to guest post, etc.

Above all, **focus on building an audience** in everything you do. Quick traffic is not worth near as much as a long term subscriber or loyal reader! An active, engaged readership will attract and interest *even more readers* - and it will also attract and **impress** those Market Leaders and Merchants you really want to work with. ;-)

Your Homework:

- Install Akismet and/or update your Blog Comment settings to avoid publishing spam comments. (Page 2)
- Create a spreadsheet or note to keep your Guest Blogging strategy organized. (Page 5)
- Start adding bloggers to your list, keep a close eye on them, and make it a point to interact with them regularly. Share their content, comment on their updates, answer the questions they put out on Social Media, etc.
- Brainstorm "creative angles" for each blogger on your list, making special note of what their current focus is, or what they're heavily promoting at the moment.
- Outline ideas for additional Content Marketing. (Page 12)
- Write and submit (or propose) at least one great piece of content somewhere on the web this week. :-)
- Keep publishing high quality (optimized) content & stay active on your niche Social Media channels!

If you have questions about this week's tasks you can reach me on [Facebook](#) or at my [Forum](#). Otherwise I'll see you next week in Module 14. *cheers*

Have Questions?

If you have questions, join us on the ClickNewz Forum:

[Join the ClickNewz Forum](#)

You can also post questions for Lynn Terry on one of the following social networks:

[Join Lynn on Facebook](#)

[Follow Lynn on Twitter](#)

[Circle Lynn on Google+](#)

If you would like hands-on help brainstorming your business or setting up your website, contact Lynn at: AskLynnTerry@gmail.com to discuss low cost private or group coaching options.