

Niche Success Blueprint

“Start to Profit” Training Course

Module 20: Working With Site Sponsors & Brands

Last week you worked on putting yourself in front of brands and advertisers. Hopefully you've applied to each of those networks and set up your profiles and site info by now.

In addition to the list of preferred networks I shared in Module 19, I also gave you some creative ways to be *proactive* about your brand & sponsor connections...

There are plenty of advertisements and paid campaigns you can run on your site, but there are many other profitable (& mutually beneficial) options you can pursue with merchants too.

You want to be proactive with your networking, and strategic with your connections. Then make offers, cut deals, and send inquiries or requests.

Being open to options, being personable, interacting with them, opening discussions - are the things that will help you *stand out from the masses* when they're considering bloggers and publishers for paid campaigns or profitable long-term relationships. ;-)



Be Open Minded, Strategic and Creative!

Many bloggers who saw great success working with brands in the beginning actually did it unintentionally. The brands contacted *them*. Things have changed a lot in the last few years though and it's become more mainstream for brands to do "blogger outreach", so my advice to you is to get out there and "make it happen" - meaning do it intentionally!

"A business has to be involving, it has to be fun, and it has to exercise your creative instincts." -Richard Branson

There are no real "rules" or industry standards for working with brands, sponsors or advertisers. In fact the more things change and evolve online and with technology, the more options open up for both brands *and* publishers.

Each brand, each advertiser, and each blogger approaches things in their own way - from their requirements, policies, preferred communication, etc... to their expectations.

It's more an art right now than a science. Most brands are simply using Google or Twitter to research bloggers they may want to work with. Others are using networks like we discussed in **Module 19**. This means you need to be IN those networks, and you need to be interacting with them via Social Media (*ie putting yourself in front of them!*)

About Lynn Terry

Best known for ClickNewz, Lynn works online full-time as a Professional Blogger and Super Affiliate. She has 17 years experience in a variety of online business models, and a passion for helping others achieve the same success & lifestyle.

[Visit ClickNewz.com](http://ClickNewz.com)

[Join Lynn on Facebook](#)

[Follow Lynn on Twitter](#)

[Circle Lynn on Google+](#)

This is great news for you! It means you can "get creative" and consider great angles and options to negotiate. **Remember: everything is negotiable!** <- Keep that in mind in everything you do in business. ;-) Ask yourself questions like: "How can I benefit this person (or company)?" and "How would this relationship benefit my market?" or "What can I offer that is unique, appealing, creative, profitable, engaging, etc?"

You also have the option of declining offers that are not a good match for you or your market - or negotiating offers instead of just accepting or declining. Test networks to see which work best for you. Also test to see what types of brands, products and offers your visitors respond to best. As always: *Do more of what works, and less of what doesn't!*

The key is to get proactive with this profitable revenue source. Don't just stop at one-off campaigns, but rather look for ways to build credibility and form long-term relationships.

Is My Blog Too New or Too Small for Brands?

By now your niche site should be more than 90 days old, and maybe closer to 5 months, depending on how long it took you to choose your niche and get a website set up. You may have even had a website or blog up already when you started this course. But if you've been following along and completing the tasks in each Training Module every single week, you should be seeing a decent amount of traffic & engagement by now.

As I mentioned in Module 19 (Page 11) **I landed my first site sponsor when my low carb blog was only 8 weeks old.** ;-) In this Module, I'll give you some detailed tips for making great connections, and attracting those relevant advertisers and brands...

As a market leader or influencer in your niche, you're consistently marketing yourself to your audience. You should also be "*marketing yourself*" to other market leaders, merchants, and brands you really like.



We've discussed that a lot in previous Modules such as the Strategic Networking section in Module 10 (Page 8) and the Networking List in Module 11 (Page 10).

Statistics Aren't The Only Factor - Engagement is KEY!

Even with a newer site, and lower traffic & reach numbers than more established sites, you can easily land paid advertising deals with sponsors and brands if you have a very engaged and responsive audience. This is *highly valuable* to advertisers! This is why I encouraged you to stay active on social media and make those strategic connections. ;-)

What IS Engagement Exactly?

In the simplest terms, engagement = response. When your readers or followers take action (ie respond) when you publish something online, that's engagement.

Engagement can be measured by a variety of factors: number of blog comments, social media replies, likes, shares, pins & repins, tweets & retweets, contest entries, conversion rates on affiliate promotions, and even click-through's on links you share.

If your traffic stats are lower, but engagement is strong, be sure to highlight that point in your Media Kit and in your communications with brands and advertisers/sponsors.

Get Proactive! Reach Out To Brands & Sponsors

Let's start with some basic tips and actions you can take to set yourself up to land great deals with brands and potential advertisers and sponsors...

- Sign up for the Brand & Ad Networks in Module 19 and fill out your profiles at each network in detail.
- **Put a link to your Media Kit** out on Twitter using the hashtags #JournoRequest and #PRrequest in your tweet. Include relevant info, such as your niche & ideal topics.
- Join <http://www.HelpAReporter.com> It's a social networking resource for sources (you), reporters and advertisers to connect. (Free to join with upgrade options)
- **Attending conferences or events?** Create a PDF version of your Media Kit to have on hand at the event. They make for a nice visual snapshot of your blog that you can hand to brand reps or PR companies you may meet!
- Keep a close eye on relevant television commercials and magazine advertising. These are both great sources for finding companies with an advertising budget, in addition to scouting blogs similar to yours to find active (online) sponsors and advertisers.
- **Ranking well for a certain product, company or brand?** Reach out to them and see if they're interested in putting something specific in front of those searchers - perhaps a special offer or exclusive discount to increase interest and conversions.
- Follow up with advertisers you've worked with in CPA Networks, or that you see advertising on your site via Google AdSense. (*See tips & examples in Module 19*)
- **Test** different offers, product types, ad types, etc to see what your market responds to best. This will take some time of course, but continue testing & tracking (always!) to see what works best on your site and with your readers & followers.
- Be *extremely picky* with your advertising and personal recommendations. Above all, you want to maintain the trust and respect of your readers.



- **LOVE certain products or brands?** Do some research (Google!) to find a PR or Media contact and ask them if they do Blogger Outreach or if they're interested in working together to engage your audience with their current campaigns.

Tip: If you've blogged about them, or discussed them on Social Media (or something similar / related), be sure to include those links in your communication, and point out engagement levels so they know your audience is obviously interested!

- **Ask** your social media followers which products/brands/services (depending on your niche) they use and love most. This will start an interesting discussion AND give you ideas for product reviews, brands and merchants to reach out to, or affiliate programs.
- Be enthusiastic and *conversational* about the companies, brands, products, services, websites etc you LOVE - and always explain WHY. Personal results, case studies, photos, and basically any type of proof that you use & enjoy a product yourself tends to engage and/or convert much better than a "promotional recommendation".

Tip: *Market like you're sharing "a cool find" with a close friend!*

- Even if you don't have an affiliation or relationship with the brand or merchant, **talk freely about brands** (and places, products, companies, etc) ANYWAY - as a resource to your readers. Sharing great recommendations makes for good content, and great conversation starters. It also shows off your ability to "promote" and "engage" to potential brands and advertisers. ;-)
Tip: Be sure to tag them in your social updates to get in front of them, and as a means of opening the door to a potential relationship.

Also optimize your content so those brands/merchants will easily see you in Google!

- Stay super active on your social media channels. **Brands will look** at your reach and engagement, and to see how *interactive* you are with your market. Respond to blog comments, reply to questions, respond to YouTube comments, and get involved in conversations and discussions. Don't just "broadcast" on social sites, but make sure you're getting actively involved in niche conversations with your target market.
- Strike up conversations with brands you like. Mention them (and Tag them!) on social media, respond to and/or share their updates, etc. Get & *stay* in front of them.
- Beef up your "Reach" and your Media Kit with various types of exposure: newspaper, magazines, podcasts, radio, guest blog posts, etc. Impress those brands & sponsors!

How To Be A “Sponsor Friendly” Blogger

In addition to the tips I gave you on the last two pages, you want to position yourself as a professional publisher and as a positive Influencer in your niche. This means creating “family friendly content”, maintaining a professional public reputation, not getting caught up in petty fusses or “twitter drama” etc. Certain “hot topics” should be avoided (in most niches) such as politics or religion, simply because Brands are very particular about their associations - and steer clear of anything that could reflect negatively on their brand.

Make sure you have a professional profile with a head shot and detailed bio on LinkedIn, and that your other social profiles (Twitter, Facebook, Google+, Pinterest, etc) are niche specific and have detailed bios and engaging content.

Make it EASY for them to work with you. Have a great About page, a detailed Media Kit, and contact information in both places. Tip: Optimize your About page with your niche and location so they can easily find you in a Google search. For example, I might use a Title Tag like: “About Lynn Terry | Low Carb Travel Blogger in Tennessee”.

Keep your communications with brands or potential advertisers direct, simple and professional. *Be VERY prompt with responses!* Tip: Create an email signature that clearly reflects who you are and what you do (with hyperlinks to your properties).

As I mentioned earlier, *everything* is negotiable. Be open to offers you receive, but don't be afraid to respond with a counter offer if you think you can give them more value. They may or may not be interested, or they may come back with even more options!

You never know what opportunities may be available unless you ask, but HOW you ask is the key: make sure you're approaching it from a value-added perspective. Make your negotiations a win/win/win - for the blogger (you), the merchant AND your market.

In your communication, use terms like: Target Audience, Outreach Goals, Media Kit, etc. Let them know what makes you a great candidate! Consider your angle, relevance, how active you are in your niche (frequency), engagement, and any other strengths.

Agree on the details of the advertising campaign or sponsorship upfront, as well as the publishing schedule (exact dates), payment schedule and payment method. Again, be direct and professional, stay open to options (and say as much), and be prompt.

Know the brand/merchant, and be creative with ways to help them achieve their goals!

Going The Extra Mile For Your Advertisers

Whether you're working with a brand, a site sponsor or an advertiser there are little things you can do that will make a big difference in your relationship with that company.

Advertising isn't just a "revenue model", it's also a personal endorsement. Keep that in mind and be very picky about who you associate with and recommend, as it affects your reputation and credibility - not just your wallet.

They're basically paying you to advertise for them and promote their offer or product, but unlike traditional media most advertisers and brands are looking for a more social endorsement similar to "word of mouth" marketing, or a personal recommendation.

Even if they're going with a more traditional advertising relationship with you, going the extra mile for your advertisers is a great way to form a more long-term relationship with them. They may continue paying to advertise on your site, or be open to more involved advertising campaigns when they see you're delivering better results than expected!

Giving your sponsors & advertisers "Special Treatment" is a great way to strengthen that relationship. Your goal should be to deliver *results*, which will keep them on board, and also look *great* on your Media Kit or in negotiations with future brands & sponsors. :)

Enthusiasm and Engagement can *trump* Statistics... when it comes to delivering results advertisers will love!

As a newer blogger, you have the time to give advertisers your full attention. This is something that sets you apart from more successful bloggers with better statistics - who may not have the time (or interest) in taking extra steps to bring awesome results to their advertisers. Use this to your advantage, and highlight it as one of your strengths!

Mention your advertisers or sponsors within blog posts (where it's relevant, of course) and mention them on your social media channels as well. Make it a point to connect your readers with the brands you love, and introduce some of their best products or features.

You might highlight other reviews or case studies you find around the web, for example, or start a series or a case study of your own to engage your readers. It's not just about "earning advertising revenue" but also about sharing valuable resources with your audience, and being the go-to person for product *details* and great resources!

Well-Known Brands vs Newer Merchants

Always consider the relevance, how good a fit it is for your readers, regardless of the name recognition. While it's tempting to only work with the bigger name brands, it's also great to introduce new merchants or new products to your audience.

With newer merchants and smaller companies, you can usually work more closely with them - and often even work directly with the owner! They're usually more open to creative advertising ideas too, and happy to sponsor giveaways or issue exclusive discount codes or coupons to your audience.

Plus people love to learn about the newest, latest, most unique, etc - or being the first to check out something new - so it's a great way to better serve your market!

Regardless of the size of the company, deliver as much value - *the best results* - you possibly can. The more value you provide, the more valuable your advertising will be to brand partners and sponsors, which means you'll be able to command higher ad rates.

Score Package Deals

Don't just settle for selling ad space in your sidebar. Refer back to Module 18 (starting on Page 7) for creative ideas on turning advertising requests into "package deals" that deliver much more value - and much better results. At least make them an offer! ;-)
Offering them one or two "package deal" options will set you apart as an experienced professional - not just another blogger looking to make a quick buck on ad revenue.

Work Toward Long Term Relationships

Working with individual sponsors and advertisers can be a lot of work, so you'll do best to work with fewer brands or sponsors - and work with them more closely and for longer periods of time. High turnover requires more updates and more time spent negotiating details & payments. Not to mention you can offer better results getting your audience actively engaged in an ongoing series or case study about a product or a brand.

Tip: Start with a shorter-term offer, but follow up and express interest in continuing to work with them. Provide creative marketing ideas or angles, and package deals.

We've covered a lot of ground in the last few modules on creating your Media Kit, setting up ad space on your niche site, calculating your advertising rates, creative ways to work with sponsors & brands, and how to get in front of brands and sponsors that are actively looking to start paid campaigns with an enthusiastic blogger like you!

You have your work cut out for you! Go back through this module and make sure you have all of the steps completed, and all of your bases covered.

Don't forget to sign up for HARO (Help A Reporter Out) mentioned on Page 4. ;-)

Resource: "How To Pitch Brands"

Shannon Acheson wrote a book called [Bloggers & Brands: The Blogger's Guide to Pitching and Working with Brands](#). It's geared toward beginners who want to learn how to find the right contacts, craft a *one-page killer pitch* to help you land the jobs, and even how to navigate contracts and agreements. It includes 14 lessons with easy to follow assignments that will have you successfully working with brands in no time! It also includes sample pitches & emails.

I just downloaded it myself and it's very detailed and also includes 7 bonus (printable) worksheets that are extremely helpful. [See the discussion about it on ClickNewz](#)

Your Homework:

- Finish & Publish your Media Kit if you haven't already.
- Sign up for the Brand & Ad Networks in Module 19. Make sure your profiles are complete, and scan those networks for opportunities.
- Sign up for HARO @ HelpAReporter.com
- Start reaching out to Brands & Sponsors (Pages 4-5)
- Optimize your About Page and review your Social Profiles (Page 6)
- Continue writing great (optimized) content & stay *super-active* on Social Media! This is the key to increasing your traffic & engagement... and ultimately your revenue. ;-)

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 21. *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.