

# Guest Blogging Cheat Sheet

## Why and How to Approach Guest Blogging - the Smart Way!

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## INTRODUCTION

The following is an overview of why and how to approach Guest Blogging in a modern marketing and blogging environment. It is structured as follows:

- Why Guest Blogging?
  - How to Measure Guest Blogging Success
  - What May Be Wrong if Results Are Below Expectations
  - How to Find the Right Blogs to Post on
  - How to Find Good Topics for Your Guest Posts
  - How to Approach a Guest Blog Opportunity (Contact, Content, Communication)
  - Optimize Your Guest Blog Post for Your Own Purposes
  - Get it Right on Your End (Freebies, Landing Pages, etc.)
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- Add on: Some Ideas Where to Find Good Blogs for Your Guest Posts

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## WHY GUEST BLOGGING?

Guest blogging is a great way of getting in front of an already existing audience (the audience of the blog you are guest posting on) and spread the word about you and your expertise to new people outside your own circles.

But there are more reasons to go for guest blogging, as there are multiple benefits. Whatever your motives are, be clear about your goals to be able to measure your success.

1. For some time guest blogging was also famous for being a legitimate strategy to building relevant links back to your site. Matt Cutts (head of Google's Webspam team) declared war on guest blogging for gathering links a while ago. Still, it seems that this is still working and you can still profit from the link back to your own site. But guest posting should never be regarded as a simple linkbuilding strategy!
2. You can get traffic from the guest blog – the amount of traffic you can get largely depends on the quantity and the quality of the audience of the blog and how well your guest post matches the interests of this audience.
3. The author bio for guest blogging is a real gold mine for marketing. There are several ways of how to utilise this bio. Depending on how many words you are allowed in your author bio, you can combine some of these:
  - By mentioning your social media accounts in the author bio, you can push your follower count and boost your social media growth.
  - You can mention products you are currently marketing.
  - You can include a call to action for people to get your freebie and signup for your own newsletter.

In addition you gain recognition, reputation and new connections to worthy bloggers.

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## HOW TO MEASURE GUEST BLOGGING SUCCESS

Depending on your goals you need to watch out for some numbers. Guest blogging takes a considerable amount of work and it should pay off for you. If you do not see the results you were going for, you need to analyze why this happened, what you can do better, and if your goals are even reachable.

There are direct effects of guest blogging and rather long term, indirect effects. Both are important, but the long term indirect effects are much harder to measure and to connect to one single guest post.

Direct KPIs:

- Referral Traffic – be sure you have an analytics tool on your own website and watch out for traffic from the guest blog site. This traffic might not come all at once. There are blogs which generate ongoing traffic to their older articles, which might then mean that your own results spread out over a longer period.
- Social Shares – in most cases you will research beforehand how many social articles on the blog usually get. If yours gets much less, your topic probably was not the best choice
- Comments – they are nice to really engage with the audience of the blog. If people do not comment it can be a sign, that the topic did not speak to them or did not inspire conversations
- Signups, Sales – If you trying to get attention to a product launch, you should try to measure your sells for each source. You probably need some campaign links to really be able to measure this and you should consider landing pages for different strategies.

Indirect KPIs

- Social media Followers – you have to watch your social accounts very closely to really figure out how much they gained from a guest post. It is not possible to set up exact tracking for followers on social media

Long Term indirect and soft KPIs

- Google Search Traffic
- Reputation
- Brand awareness

The soft KPIs cannot be directly connected to one or some guest posts. But after a while of being active with guest blogging, you should see these growing.

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## WHAT MAY BE WRONG IF RESULTS ARE BELOW EXPECTATIONS

There are several things that can go wrong with your guest posting. Most of them do not mean that guest posting in general does not work for you. But it means you should analyze your outcome and optimize your actions. Here are some possible reasons why your results did not meet your goals:

- The topic of the blog is too far away from your own interest group
- The audience of the blog was much smaller than anticipated
- The topics you chose for your articles did not speak to the blog audience (make sure you spend some time on optimizing your blog titles or subject lines)
- The topics you covered spoke to the audience but were too far from your own interests and topics on your own site
- Your call to action was not good (i.e. in the author bio)
- The page you led the audience to did not convert (i.e. landing page)
- If you are using freebies or give-aways, these or your product might simply not be interesting for this audience

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## HOW TO FIND THE RIGHT BLOGS TO POST ON

To find blogs in your niche should not be the problem. In most niches it should also be possible to find blogs, which allow guest posts. But it is much harder to identify the best blogs for your guest blogging efforts, than simply finding blogs from your niche, which accept guest posts. There are many more aspects you should take into account.

Here are some ideas for finding blogs from your niche:

- Google
- Lists of blogs (see end of this paper for examples)
- Social media accounts from your niche – look up if they are running a blog themselves
- I am sure you know one or two great blogs from your niche. Take a look at the comments and the people commenting. Some of them will surely be themselves running a blog

Now, that you have identified some blogs from your niche, let's take a closer look at the requirements which make a good blog for guest blogging:

- Topic of the blog
- Traffic of the blog (check Alexa or other sites that analyze traffic of websites)
- Subscriber list – not all blogs disclose this number
- Activity, social shares – this is for everyone to see: Do the articles on the blog get a good number of shares? That is a good indicator for an active audience
- Easy communication with blog owner – I have had blogs published after one Email and I have written emails back and forth for 6 weeks before the post was published. Easy communication is definitely a plus
- Guest blogging guidelines – it is nice if a blog clearly states, what it expects from its writers – but some of these guidelines are really not very inviting. Take a look and decide for yourself, if you want to follow the guidelines or not.

## HOW TO FIND GOOD TOPICS FOR YOUR GUEST POSTS

The topics you write about as a guest post should match the interests of the audience of the blog you are guest posting on. Your topic should also be close enough to your own blog or product so that people reading the guest post have an interest to visit your own site.

To get the most out of your efforts choose hot topics from the blogs past coverage. Here are some ideas on how to find the best topics for your guest posts:

- Look up the most popular articles on the guest blog
- Research the best running articles of past weeks (analyze number of social shares and comments)
- Out of this selection, pick a topic close to your own field of interest or what you have to offer on your own site (i.e. freebie for your singups, product, blogarticles)

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# HOW TO APPROACH A GUEST BLOG OPPORTUNITY (CONTACT, CONTENT, COMMUNICATION)

## **Build a personal connection:**

The best way to get a guest blogging opportunity is always to meet the blog owner in person. There are blogs, which officially take guest posts where rumors tell that it is virtually impossible to get a guest post in, without a personal reference. If you have a chance of meeting bloggers from your niche in person: grab it.

If you cannot meet bloggers in person, you might still be able to talk to them in social media. Do never underestimate the power of a conversation.

It is not always possible to get to know a blogger personally before you want to apply for a guest post. Do not despair. That is by far the more common case and it is still possible to be very successful with guest blogging.

There are several other ways of contacting blogs for guest blogging opportunities. Here are some we successfully tried:

## **Email or Contact form:**

Probably the most common way of contacting blogs for guest posting opportunities is the direct approach via email or if you cannot find an email address use the contact form provided on the blog.

In any case, you should definitely check first if the blog has guidelines for guest posts, look them up and keep as closely to the stated requirements as you can.

I recommend to write a perfect post which you want to submit and send this finished post with your application. Not all guest posting guidelines suggest this, some ask you to send a short outline of your post idea. I would rather go for a great finished post. The simple reason is: The chances are high, that the blogger does not know you and your writing. Even if you send some links to reference articles, the blogger does not really know what to expect from your post. If you send the finished post, the blogger can instantly check, if he would want to publish exactly this article on his blog.

Whatever you do, there is one thing you should always keep in mind: Make it as easy as possible for the blogger to see what he gets if he accepts a guest post from you. Every email, every bit of work he has to put into the conversation with you, might just be the tiny bit of effort that keeps the blogger from answering you. He is busy with his own stuff. The easier you make it for him/her the bigger are your chances of getting published.

The downside of always sending a finished post: You need to write a lot of articles and chances are that some will not get published with the first blog you send them to. I do not think that these articles were written for nothing, you can always send the article to another blog some time later or publish it on your own blog.



Still if you feel more comfortable to just send an outline and get a response before you finish the article: That is a legitimate way to go.

**Other ways of getting in touch with bloggers:**

I have had success with getting in touch on Twitter with the question if a blogger would be interested in a post on a certain topic. Be creative – but do not be annoying.

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## OPTIMIZE YOUR GUEST BLOG POST FOR YOUR OWN PURPOSES

Successful Guest Blogging does not end with getting an article published. You need to optimize everything around your guest blogging effort to get the most out of it. Since you have to follow the guest blogging guidelines of the hosting blog and most likely your article is not going to be about your own product or service, you need to focus your optimization on the bits that you can:

- **Your bio:** Usually the author bio for guest posts is fairly short. Still you can get the most important information into these 2 or 3 sentences. You may want to include some of your social accounts to gain followers, link to your signup form for your own newsletter or even to a new product you are selling right now.
- **Links:** I have seen advice for guest blogging that wants you to include 1 or 2 links to your own stuff in the actual article. In truth some guest blogging guidelines forbid this. See what you can do, and if you include links to your own stuff in the article make sure they really fit and do not sound over deliberate. A good place for links is your author bio.
- **The Importance of a Call To Action:** Your bio will work better if you include a clear call to action: “you can download her ebook here” works far better than “she has also published an ebook about...”
- **Comments:** Once your article is published, make sure you join the conversation, If your article gets comments, head on over and answer them. This is your chance to actually connect.

## GET IT RIGHT ON YOUR END (FREEBIES, LANDING PAGES, ETC.)

You are still not done with optimizing. You need to get it right on your own end. Otherwise you might even succeed to lure the audience of your guest post to your own site, but lose them there. Here are some hints on what to optimize:

- Landing Page, signup form: Whatever you want people to do on your site, make sure your site is optimized for them to get them to actually doing it.
- Freebie: It helps to offer your new visitors something for free that they will like and help you build your audience.

## **ADD ON:** SOME IDEAS WHERE TO FIND GOOD BLOGS FOR YOUR GUEST POSTS

**Alltop:** <http://alltop.com/>

Alltop collects “the headlines of the latest stories from the best sites and blogs that cover a topic.” They have subscribed to thousands of sources. It helps you discover stories and blogs from your field of interest.

**Bloggerlinkup:** <http://www.bloggerlinkup.com/>

Bloggerlinkup basically brings together blogs looking for posts and writers looking for guest blogging opportunities. From my experience I would say they rather have smaller blogs asking for posts, but it could be a good start.

### **Some lists of blogs that accept guest posts:**

Not all blogs on the lists are equally easy to approach.

<http://webmarketingsaga.com/the-grand-list-of-386-blogs-that-accept-guest-blogging/>

<http://www.petersandeen.com/list-of-guest-blogging-sites/>