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How I Started A 5-Figure Blog In 5 Shockingly Easy Steps

It has been about 10 months since I launched this website and I gotta say, **it has surpassed my wildest expectations**. To be honest, when I got the idea to get this blog going, it was all about creating an official website for my company. However, **thanks to the 5 steps I'm about to share with you today**, it has turned into a decent resource of good and usable online marketing information as well as a very profitable part of my business (**already into the 5 figures**).

What You'll Learn

- **The 5 shockingly easy steps that made this website the success that it is** - if I skipped those, I'm almost certain that this website would have gotten almost nowhere, or at least it would be doing much much worse compared to how it's doing currently.
- **A list of things I could have done much better** - I have improved this website a lot since its launch back in July 2015, and I still keep on improving it. In this section I will share with you a few things that I wish I knew back when I launched the website, which could have saved me some trouble.
- **The results** - basically, why you want to be the owner of a successful blog.
- **Wrapping it up** - the end credits.

The 5 Shockingly Easy Steps That Gave This Website A Phenomenal 5-Figure Head Start

First of all guys, let's define what a successful blog/website means. Well, that's actually very simple. A successful website/blog is one that provides a ton of valuable information i.e. helps

people as much as possible and, in that process, generates revenue in some form or another. Simple enough yes?

Now, I have always believed in preparation and tweaking things out beforehand. So, I was not going to go about any differently when I started creating this website. And thus began the research. Basically, these 5 steps that I'm about to share with you stem from the thorough research that I performed before I got to creating this website.

As I already mentioned in the beginning, it all started with the idea of creating an official website for the company - nothing that would generate revenue, just a website that shows the online presence of the business. But thanks to the aforementioned research, this official website of [Inet Solutions](#) has become the primary source of income. And I'm not going to tease you anymore - here are the 5 steps that gave this website a phenomenal head start:

1. **Picking out your niche.**
2. **Choosing the best domain service and hosting provider.**
3. **Designing the website.**
4. **Content research and monetization.**
5. **Email marketing setup.**

Yep. It is that simple and you will see in a minute when we get to detailing each of these steps. But before that, I want to lay down some ground work for this article. First of all, this website is using [WordPress](#), so steps 3, 4, and 5, will include plugins that I think are best when it comes to optimizing your WordPress website.

WordPress is an extremely popular and easy to use CMS, without the need for any programming skills at all. So even a person that has just gotten into online marketing can easily set up their own website with WordPress - in a matter of minutes.

But, even if you are not thinking about using WordPress, the detailing of these steps will still be of huge benefit to you, because the core ideas I will share with you apply to any website, no matter the platform. **Let's begin.**

Step #1: Picking Out Your Niche

This is the most important step and if you get it wrong, you will have to start this whole process all over - and actually, most people mess it up here. Let me explain. You can always migrate

your website from one hosting provider to another, you can always transfer your domain from one service to another, you can always change your website's design and re-configure it as you please, but you cannot change it's general niche.

You will have to start a new website. I mean, you can add topics relevant to your niche that expand the website's information circle, but you just can't change a sports website into a website about travelling. And this is where many people get it wrong. They go on the forums, and they look for "**the most profitable niche**" without caring if they are into it or not, just thinking about making some money:



Let me tell you right now - **it doesn't work that way**. I mean it could, but doing something you don't enjoy just to make money won't last long - trust me. The best case scenario here is for you to choose a niche that you are passionate about. You will hear many successful bloggers tell you exactly that. Why?

Because you will get your priorities straight much more easier, that's why. You will write content first (**with passion and interest**) and then you will also make some money as a result of that. But the content you write and the amount of work and effort you put into your website will overshadow easily the amount of work and effort your would put into a website in a niche your are not interested in.

Okay, now that we have cleared that, I think that you can easily select your niche. Just ask yourself what you would **love** to write/read about. That's it. Forget about "**profitable**" for a

minute. Trust me, the money will come after that (**one way or another**), but again, the other way around rarely works.

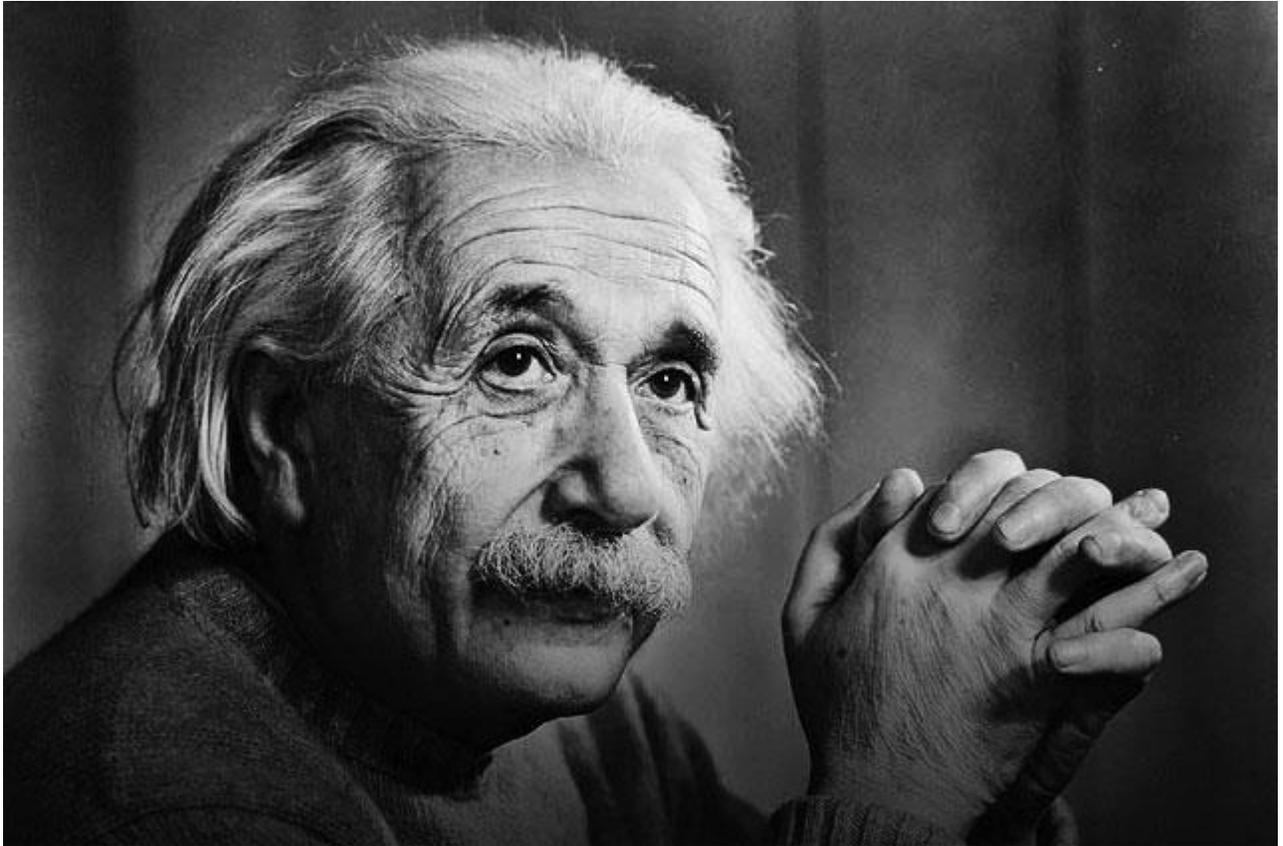
Step #2: Purchasing A Domain Name & Selecting A Hosting Provider

This is the second most important step, because if you don't get this right, you will experience a lot of problems later on - possible hosting migrations (**as I had**), domain transfer problems, etc. Luckily for you, I have done a ton of research on both hosting providers and domain services and I will share with you my recommendations so that you can have a smooth sailing with your brand new website.

Of course, you can always go with whatever you like, but the services I will recommend are, in my experience and honest opinion, the best out there at the time of the writing of this article. Okay, so let's start with the domain name.

Step #2.1: Choosing Your Domain Name

Choosing a great domain name is of absolute vital importance. Basically, this will be the name of your brand so you need to make it memorable. When choosing a domain name, I always like to follow this one rule - keep it as simple as possible, but not simpler:



Right? Anyway, I'm sure that you have seen those long-tail keyword domains and I'm sure that you know that it just doesn't look good and it doesn't look professional. In a perfect scenario, your domain name would contain one word and would be a .com TLD. But, nowadays, there are just way too many domains that have already been taken and the .com for your domain name might not be available.

I like this one tool called [Name Mesh](#) which is perfect for generating a domain name for you (**based on keywords**) and will then show you which TLDs are available for purchase. If you don't have a certain domain name in mind, but only keywords that you want it to include, go ahead and try this tool and it will give you some good ideas.

Basically, what you are striving for here is a domain name that is relevant to your niche, is simple enough so that people can easily remember it, and has either its .com, .org, or .net TLD available for purchase. Why those three?

Well, from an SEO standpoint it doesn't matter what TLD you choose, but it is a fact that people are more used to these three, so basically it is a matter of an initial trust boost for your website. But don't be afraid to go with another TLD, for instance I was going to

purchase **inet.solutions** but the previous owner decided to renew the domain when it was very close to being dropped, so I went with the .org TLD.

That should get you on the right track in choosing your domain name. Another good advice I would give you is to not rush it. I took about 3 months waiting for both the .org and the .solutions TLDs to expire and when the latter didn't, I went with the first. So this should just tell you how important a domain name is. Just, take your time - you won't regret it.

Now, at this point you should have chosen your domain name and you should have selected a TLD that is available (**or not**). It's time to purchase said domain. Basically, there are two options here - either you will be purchasing a brand new domain, or you will be waiting for one that your really like to expire.

If you will be purchasing it, I recommend going with [Namecheap](#) or [GoDaddy](#). The prices at both of these domain trading websites are extremely affordable so you won't go wrong with either of them. One thing that might shift you towards Namecheap is that if you purchase a new domain from them, you will get one free year of [WHOIS](#) Guard privacy - if you need it of course.

The other option you have if you are purchasing a brand new domain name is to simply wait for me to recommend you the more affordable hosting provider which offers a **free domain name with each of its packages** - we'll get to that in a second.

Now, if you have liked a domain name that is taken now, but is expiring (**preferably soon**), you might need to go for a domain backorder service. If you are not aware, a domain name doesn't actually expire right after the paid period, but it takes some time after that - check [this article](#) for more info and also, you can check the current status of a domain [here](#).

The thing is that, even when a domain is finally dropped by its current registrar, someone else might also be waiting for it, and then it becomes a race. So in many cases, what you will need is a domain backordering service which will basically help you snatch that domain as soon as it gets dropped - and trust me, you can't beat a software in this race. In my case, with [inetsolutions.org](#), I used [SnapNames](#) to backorder the domain and as soon as it was dropped, their service snatched it for me.

So basically, those are your two options. If you don't like a certain domain name that is available, but you are interested in one that is currently unavailable, however is expiring soon

enough, don't be afraid to wait for the latter. As I already told you, the domain name is extremely important for the success of your website, so **make sure you get the right one**.

Step #2.2: Selecting Your Hosting Provider

Okay. So far, you have chosen a niche that you really like and you have chosen the right domain name that will represent your website. Now it's time to start the website setup process - and it begins with the hosting provider.

I always say that a hosting provider can make or break a website because if you happen to choose a bad one, you will experience a lot of down time (**your site being unavailable to readers**) or just quite simply high page load times, which is just unacceptable in today's fast-paced world - check [this article](#) for more info about the importance of site speed nowadays.

Now, when it comes to hosting providers, I will recommend you two services - one affordable to anyone, and one more advanced and a bit more expensive (**the one that this website is hosted on**). Before I reveal the hosting providers to you, I just want you to know that I have and still am using both of them and I can simply tell you guys that I have not had any problems at all. Okay, let's start with the more affordable one as I know that most people would go with it.

The name is [InMotion Hosting](#) and it is an independently owned LA-based LAMP hosting company that offers any kind of hosting service you can imagine - shared, VPS, dedicated, WordPress-optimized, etc. With an A+ rating from [Better Business Bureau](#) (**and from me**) as well as well over 20,000 positive reviews, it is no wonder that this hosting provider is always at the top of the best hosting providers rankings table.

InMotion Hosting was also the [2016 web hosting review gold award winner](#) so the services that these guys offer are phenomenal. The one thing I really love about IMH is that their hosting services come with free SSD and a free domain - yep, if you had a domain name in mind that is available for purchase, you can simply go with InMotion Hosting and you will get it for free.

Other notable features of InMotion Hosting include:

- 90 days full money back guarantee.
- Free data backups.
- **Free 1-click installer** - you can install over 310 applications with the click of a button i.e. WordPress, Joomla, etc.
- Unlimited disk space and bandwidth.

- Free domain and website transfers if you are coming from other providers.
- **Fast support** - this is one of the most important features every top tier hosting provider must have. InMotion Hosting offer a ton of options when it comes to support hotlines - phone, email, Skype, live support and there's always someone ready to respond.

Their hosting services come with many other free features, all of which you can check out on their website, but the point is - they are an extremely decent hosting provider and you simply **can't go wrong with them**.

Now, their prices are really affordable, but to go the extra mile, I managed to get an **exclusive up to 38% discount on all business hosting plans** - you can take advantage of that through [this link](#). Also, if you will be using WordPress for your website, InMotion Hosting also has WordPress-optimized web hosting, so make sure to check that out - the discount link applies the 38% off to those packages as well.

Okay, now that I have given you the more affordable hosting solution, it's time for the crown jewel – [Traffic Planet Hosting](#). Right from the get-go, when I was looking for a place to host this website, I knew that I wanted the best environment and no trouble at all.

To be honest, I have never had a really bad experience with a hosting provider (**maybe it's luck**), but I have had some trouble with down times and high page load times in the past. I knew that this website could not be hosted on such environments so I did a ton of research on more WordPress specialized hosting providers. There are quite a few of them out there, but through my research, I was pointed to Traffic Planet Hosting - and thank God for that.

I mean seriously guys, I can list you a billion reasons and features right here as to why you should go with Traffic Planet Hosting for your WordPress site, or I can just tell you that **their services are simply flawless**. From the hosting itself to the support team, I can tell you that these guys know their way around the WordPress platform.

Their plans are a bit more pricey than the ones InMotion Hosting have for you, but it's well worth it if you can afford it. If you are coming from another hosting provider, it is easy too as TPH offers free website migration and will do so in up to 24 hours - without any downtime at all.

Bottom line is, if you want a reliable hosting provider for your website, you should go with either [InMotion Hosting](#) or [Traffic Planet Hosting](#) if you can afford it. Simple as that. A few honorable mentions here are:

- [SiteGround](#)
- [Bluehost](#)
- [iPage](#)

All of these are also top tier hosting providers, but again, the two services that I recommended above are simply the best hosting solutions in my opinion and experience. On one final note here, don't forget to [change the nameservers](#) of your domain name to point to your new hosting account so that you can begin working on your website right away.

Step #3: Designing Your Website

Alright. So far you have chosen a domain name and you have purchased it along with a hosting plan. Now it's time to create your website. I won't be walking you through the steps of setting up a WordPress site, but if you went with one of the hosting solutions that I recommended above, [it's a piece of cake](#).

Now, when you install WordPress, it is basically a blank template ready to be built on. And it all starts with the design. I like to prepare everything design-wise, so I have a ready "**skeleton**" for the content that is to come after the site is visually ready. And this is where it gets tricky.

Many, if not, most people neglect design and move right into functionality. That's a huge mistake. The design of a website is like the coziness of a home - if it's not cozy, your guests might leave earlier than you expect. And you don't want that. You want them to be engaged with your website for as long as possible:



So, the first thing that you need to do after you have installed WordPress on your hosting account is to pick a theme. Now, for all the different niches and topics out there, you will find a suitable WordPress theme as there are thousands of them.

I remember right when I first started dealing with WordPress, I looked at the top themes back then and [Enfold](#) came up first. Ever since then, I've been using it for almost all of my websites. Why one theme for all sites?

Because Enfold is not a theme specialized for a certain topic. No no. It can transform into almost anything you can imagine - [exhibit A](#). And the best part is its drag-and-drop builder. I'm telling you, I have tried a lot of WordPress themes, and none of them come even close to Enfold in terms of slick design, easiness of use, and flexibility.

However, sometimes you might actually be better off going with a niche specific theme as it will provide some unique components that other themes just don't have. So before you pick a theme for your website, make sure to look at as many relevant themes as possible and their demos in order to pick the best one that suits your needs.

One important thing I want to note here is color. Color is extremely important when it comes to design and it can strongly influence the mood and behavior of your site's visitors - [check this out](#). Usually, most WordPress themes come with different pre-defined palettes of colors, so you need to make sure that you select the one that explicitly represents your niche and the essence of your website.

Alright, now that you have a theme and you have selected a suitable color palette, it's time to design the structure of your website i.e. menus, blog categories, sidebar widgets, footer

widgets, social media icons, etc. Basically, what you are looking for here is creating a website that is simply ready to publish content.

For this process, I always recommend looking at the best performing websites in your niche and then modeling their structure, or even better, improving it. Once you are done with that as well, your website is basically ready for content. Just make a final review of the website and tweak things that just look out of place.

The design of a good website, and good design in general, requires a lot of perfectionism, so again, **don't be afraid to take your time with it** - I say that a lot during this article and it's for a reason. The more time you invest into your website, the more you will reap later on.

Now, aside from the theme, you might need to install a few plugins to make your website even better, not only in terms of design, but in terms of functionality as well. There are quite a lot of WordPress plugins out there and for the different niches you will most probably need different plugins, but in [this article](#), I have outlined 15 of them that you will surely need **if you will be making money from your website**.

Make sure to check those out and also make sure to research plugins that might be helpful specifically to the niche of your website. Just don't overdo it as too many plugins may clutter it and make it too slow - and trust me, you don't want that. In the end, you want your website to look aesthetic and professional, which would induce a feeling of comfort in your visitors, and not like some of the websites on [this list](#).

Step #4: Content Research & Monetization

Alright guys. You now have a skeleton of a website ready to publish content and generate revenue. Or is it? Well, first **you need to establish what content you will be writing, its structure and goal, and the way it will generate revenue**.

The easiest and most effective way you can achieve that is to research the top sites in your niche. Look at their content, its structure, the topics, and the way they talk to their readers. Acquiring good content writing skills is actually not that hard - all you need is good control of the English language and knowledge that you want to share with other people. That's it.

And you can easily obtain both on your own by exploring the vast wilderness of the Internet. Take me for instance. When I started this website, I didn't buy any content writing courses or

anything like that. I just researched successful blogs in my niche and that was that. But let's get into more detail here.

Step #4.1: Content Research

If there's one thing that your website will get most out of then that's content. It is no coincidence when people say "**content is king**". Content really can be king and you are the one who can crown it as such. But in order to do that, you need to have a clear vision of the articles you will be publishing and researching the top sites in your niche will build a basic version of that vision.

But, in order to complete it, you will have to establish a few other things - **the most important one of which is content structure**. Let's get something clear right now - people are like compilers nowadays i.e. when they are looking for something, they want to acquire the knowledge only about said something and nothing else.

So chances are, many people who visit your website will skip most of your content in search for that one bit of information that they are really interested in. It is your job to make the search process easy for them or they will leave your website prematurely and most probably never return again. That is why I emphasized so much on the importance of content structure. You really want to plan out your article extremely well before you get to its writing:



And it's not only that. Content structure will help you with the writing process as well as it will direct you to the natural flow of the article you want to create. Okay, so far so good. But what is content structure really?

Well, this is quite simply the "**hierarchy**" of the text in your article. Yep, simple as that. In every article, there will always be more important information and less important information. Ideally, you want your readers to read all of it, and if your content structure is on point, many of them really will read all of it.

Alright. Let's wrap up a bit here. You have researched the top sites in your niche and you now have some vision of the content you will be writing (**thanks to all the blog posts you checked out and thoroughly examined**) and its structure (**the top sites usually have really good content structure, which is one of the bigger reasons why they are on top**).

What you need now is to define a template for all of your blog posts (**or for different types of blog posts that you have in mind**) which you will follow so that you can easily write each of your soon-to-come articles. Now, this template might differ for each niche and for each person as people have different writing styles, so all I can do here is to share with you my approach to creating content for this website's blog, which will give you some really good pointers:

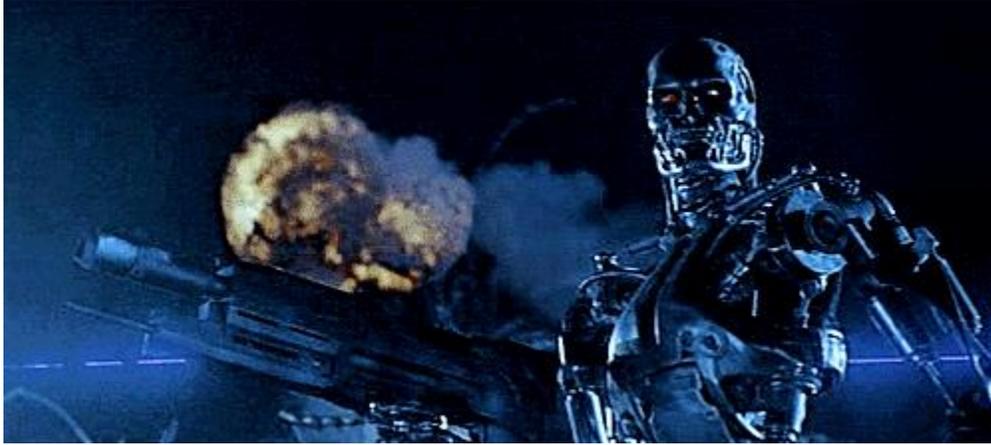
1. **Article idea** - when you have a blog, you get countless of those every day, especially if you are genuinely interested in the niche you are in. So, when I get an idea for an article that I think will help people in my field, I immediately create a new draft post so as to not forget about it. Then, I would create its title, tags, and meta description, and in the end, I will add a featured image.
2. **Topic research** - every article has a certain point you want it to make and a certain topic and before you get to writing, you want to research as much as you can so that you can acquire more and more relevant knowledge. The more knowledge you acquire the better the article will be. The better the article, the more people will read it. The more people read it, the more money you will make. Simple enough yes?
3. **Defining content structure and writing the article** - at this point, I already know what I will be writing and I already have acquired enough knowledge to be confident in the words I will be saying. Now, it's time to combine everything together. This is usually a quick process in your head that happens in an instant if you did well on the previous two steps, but what I like to do is always follow the article template that I have created for this website which basically goes as follows:
 1. Start off with one or two intro paragraphs that will explain the reader, in a simple manner, what this article is about.
 2. Go into a "**What You'll Learn**" section where I list (**with a few radio buttons**) the main sections of the article i.e. the H1 tags of the content that is to come - I got

this idea from [this website](#) (**gotta give credit where credit is due right?**) and to be honest, it is a really good content writing strategy. People just like to know what they will get out of a blog post as soon as possible and this gives them exactly that.

3. Write the essence of the article i.e. share your knowledge with your readers in a structured manner separated appropriately by heading tags. This means using (**if need be**) all the headings down H6. As we already mentioned, this will help your readers a tremendous amount and they will love you for it, but it is also a great SEO practice as believe it or not, Google loves structure.
4. End with a "**Conclusion**" section which basically wraps the article up in a few paragraphs.
4. **Review** - when I'm done with the blog post, I would go back to the beginning and I would read it from top to bottom. During this process, I would bold important words or sentences, I would proofread the article, and I would insert links for which I placed keywords while I was writing the post.
5. **Publish** - this is the best part of the entire process as you get to see your creation come to life. Trust me, if you've put in the work, and you really did a good job, you will feel phenomenally when you get to this final step of the content writing process.

And that's basically it guys. Just 5 simple steps that anyone can model and make an article template out of. I know all this might seem a bit complicated if you're just getting into blogging, but trust me, you need a day or two to get the hang of it and establish an article template for your blog and it's all smooth sailing from there.

Basically, the entire idea of content research is so that you can come up with an article template that you will use as a skeleton for all of your future blog posts. This will help you a lot in the long run as after the 2nd or 3rd blog post using your article template, you will basically become like a machine:



Another great thing about having a clear structure of your articles is that it just looks professional and people love that - some on a conscious level, some on an unconscious level. The point is, it just makes your website much more cozier and trustworthy when everything just seems to be perfectly organized.

Now, a few important notes I want to mention here, all of which will help your articles be even more successful, are:

- **SEO** - you need to become aware of current SEO content writing trends. It is true that your main focus should be on writing for people and not machines, however, adding a little bit of SEO power to your articles won't hurt at all. I always say that the best SEO you can do for your website is to provide value, but in addition to that, you can perform some [keyword research](#) beforehand, which will give you a good list of keywords that you could naturally insert into the content of your post.
- **Readability** - making your articles easy to comprehend is of vital importance for their success. This means that your posts should be logical, easy flowing, and simple to follow (**shorter sentences, 2 - 3 sentences per paragraph, radio buttons, etc**).
- **Media** - content is not only text as many people might think by default. No no. Content also includes images and videos - two types of content that are much more adored by people than text itself, especially video. So, throughout your articles, make sure that you insert relevant images and videos whenever it is appropriate so that you can engage with your readers on a more visual level. Don't forget about the ALT tags as they are very important for the SEO of your website.
- **Links** - the crown jewels of SEO should always be present in your articles - both internal and external links. Don't be afraid to link out to relevant articles and to give credit where credit is due. And once you have enough posts on your blog, you will create a sort

of internal map of them in your mind so that whenever you are writing a new article, and you reach a certain keyword, a light bulb will light up in your head that will notify you of an old post you should link to. Do not underestimate the power of internal links as this website was ranking, in the beginning, solely on good content and internal links.

So, to sum up the content creation process again - you have the article template i.e. the content structure of your blog posts that you will create in your mind after you perform the content research for your niche, then you have the writing of the article itself while keeping in mind all of the important notes I shared above, and finally, you have the end masterpiece that will ultimately help your target audience solve their problems and of course, make you money along the way.

Now, before we get to the monetization of your blog (**we're almost there**), I just want to quickly mention the fact that if you expect to just publish an article and wait for people to find it on their own among the billions of blog posts on the Internet, you're in for a lot of trouble.

Content promotion is just as important as content writing and the time you invest into it should be no less than the time you invest into the writing of your blog posts. I won't delve into details as to how you need to promote your content because this is just way too niche specific, but what you can do is check out [this post](#), which basically shows you how I promote the blog posts of this website.

It will give you some good pointers about the way you can be going about your content marketing as well as show you the progressive growth of the traffic of this website thanks to all that content promotion. You will see that content promotion is just as important as content writing as without it, even if you write the most awesome blog posts in the world, very few people will ever find them - there's just too much competition out there.

So, it is your job to spread the word as much as possible in the beginning until your website establishes its own audience that will follow your blog, read its content on a regular basis, and spread the word about the articles that they love. I mean, that is how I did it and it has worked out pretty well so far. Alright. **Let's talk money.**

Step #4.2: Monetization

There are just so many ways you can monetize your website that sometimes, people get confused and don't know which strategy to focus on. That's a huge mistake. Yes, you want to

diversify the way your website generates revenue, but not that much. Okay, let's see what we have here:

- **Affiliate marketing** - promote other people's products for which you will get a commission every time someone makes a purchase from your links. That's my personal favorite way of monetizing a blog and it will most probably become yours too - I'll explain why in a minute. Notable websites where you can find products/services to promote are [ClickBank](#), [Commission Junction](#), and [Avangate](#).
- **Advertising** - you have a couple of options here. You can either sell ad spaces on your websites ([like we do](#)), or you can display ads from advertising platforms such as [AdSense](#).
- **Sell products/services** - whether it is some kind of software, an e-book, an online shop, or a service that you want to provide to your visitors, you can cash in a few extra bucks in doing so.
- **Donations** - you can also add a donation page on your website where people can express their gratitude for the good work that you have done by donating a few bucks to your cause.
- **Sell your website** - that is the final way you can make money from your website - literally. The general rule is that if your website is generating a stable income of, for example, \$1,000 per month, you can sell it for 10 to 20 times that i.e. \$10,000 to \$20,000. Sites such as [Flippa](#) and [We Buy Websites](#) are two of the most popular marketplaces for such purposes.

Now, those 5 website monetization approaches are the more general ones. All of them can be broken down into even smaller categories like, for example, the products/services approach may include you getting leads for other companies, you giving away premium content for cash, etc, you get the idea.

A very subtle thing to remember here is that you need to select the monetization methods that will work best for your niche and the specific ideas you have for your website. And how do you do that? Well, again, you will take advantage of the good old research approach.

Look at what successful websites in your niche are doing (**preferably ones that report their income**), so that you can see what's working and what isn't. That's exactly how I knew that I will be mainly focused on affiliate marketing for the monetization of this website. But why is affiliate marketing so good?

Quite simply because you get to live the blogging dream. Yep, you know those images of successful bloggers chilling out on the beach with a slim laptop and a screwdriver next to them?



This can be you. Okay, there is no screwdriver but you get the point. Affiliate marketing + email marketing (**we'll get to that in a minute**) is the combination that, in my opinion, will allow you to achieve this blogging dream status the fastest.

I mean honestly guys, the last month I have been, well, let's just say I wasn't that focused on work and yet, the money just keeps on coming. Now, I'm not saying that this will last forever as updating your blog with fresh content is vital for its sustainability and growth, however, it can surely last a decent time in standby mode as well - and you will see why in the 5th and final step of this article.

Of course, I'm not saying that everyone should go with affiliate marketing, but I am simply sharing my experience with it. Hey, if you're more into selling products and/or services, go with that. This website doesn't only use affiliate marketing as a monetization method, but also, advertising, and the selling of our products and services.

However, the main income comes from affiliate marketing. Now, a few things I want to warn you about AM is to not force it too much. I have been a bit way too aggressive with affiliate links in my past articles and many people get a bit agitated from that - and I can understand them. So be careful there. I haven't lost too many readers from this more aggressive approach to affiliate marketing, because people have told me that they tolerated the links due to the helpful information (**this is where the value of your blog comes into play**), however, it was a good feedback and nowadays, I place as little affiliate links as I can.

Okay. Now let's tie together the monetization of your blog and the articles themselves. If you remember the content writing notes I gave you in the previous step i.e. SEO, links, etc, then you should understand that there is one more you should now add to them - monetization.

When you are writing your blog posts, or more accurately, when you are coming up with an idea for an article, you need to also think about the way you will monetize it. Will it include the promotion/feature of a certain product/service you can get commissions from? Will it promote some of your own products/services? Will it sell premium content? Will it capture leads?

Those are questions that you need to ask yourself as you are coming up with the content for the article. And I know that many people think that bloggers are only thinking about monetization when they are writing their blog posts, but, if you have followed all of the steps we walked through so far (**especially the first one**), you'll see that it's not like that.

There's a very thin line between writing for people and writing for money and you want to stay on it. So be as subtle as you can with the monetization of your blog and your readers will love you for it. Most people just don't like seeing other people doing better than them - it is what it is. They would expect you to not monetize your blog at all (**if possible**), because well, what expenses do you have for your blog - \$3/month for hosting and \$9/year for the domain name? What do you need so much money for?

But what most don't realize is that the creation of a good piece of content takes a lot of time and a lot of effort. And well, no one has said it better than Heath Ledger (**R.I.P.**) as the Joker:



I just wanted to mention all that so that you don't get surprised when some of your readers leave a few negative comments about you being a greedy marketer who only cares about money. If you know in your core that it's not true, you will know how to respond.

The monetization of a website is a very subtle process and you want to perform a really in-depth research on the matter. Keep in mind here that you still have yet to launch your website. This is still all in the preparation phase. As I told you, I was developing this website for about 2 months before it finally launched - and let me tell you, it was more than well worth it.

Whatever monetization method you stop by, just make sure that you don't forget the real goal of your website - to provide value to your target audience and make money in along the process. Some bloggers really do become way too greedy and start writing articles geared mainly towards them making as much money as they can. **Don't be like that.** Keep the balance between money and value and your website will grow like a mushroom.

Okay let's wrap up this step. What you want when you are looking for monetization approaches for your website is a method that you know you will enjoy and one that will not disturb your focus on providing value to your readers. That's basically it. If your niche allows affiliate marketing i.e. there are good products to feature in your articles, go with it - you won't be disappointed. Just remember - **a good product sells itself.**

Step #5: Email Marketing

This 5th and final step is the cherry on top of the success of your website. If you do this right, you will get to finally experience what it is to have a real-life **automated money making machine** and I'm not exaggerating at all. Now, I've already explained how email marketing

works and how it is the true automated money making machine in [this article](#), so I won't delve into it again. But basically, this is it works:

1. **Automate** - before you even setup your opt-in forms, you need to prepare the series of emails that would automatically be sent to everyone who subscribes to your mailing list i.e. your email autoresponder series. I'll explain about that in a little more detail in a second.
2. **Capture emails** - you create various opt-in forms and place them throughout your website (**sidebar, footer, in-content, below post, etc**) which offer something (**preferably something very valuable**) to your website visitors for free in exchange for their email address.
3. **Promote** - once you set up your opt-in forms and you get a few email addresses added to your mailing list, you can begin sending them messages. This means links to new posts on your blog, notifications of not-to-miss relevant offers, newsletters, etc.

And that's basically it. Just three simple steps that you need to cover. Now, let me clarify a bit about the autoresponder series and email marketing in general. You see, the way you handle your EM affairs is via an email marketing software. The one that I prefer and would recommend to absolutely every blogger out there is [Aweber](#).

In a previous post, I mentioned that I was using [MailChimp](#), and I was, however, I decided to switch to Aweber. Why? Well, I might make an article just about that, however, simply put, Aweber allowed me to setup email autoresponder series with plain text messages and it brought me much higher delivery and open rates - which are of vital importance in the email marketing world.

Now, about the autoresponder series of emails. Remember when I told you about the real automated money making machine? Well, this is its core. An autoresponder series of emails is nothing more than a bunch of messages that are pre-created by you and will be send out periodically to anyone who subscribes to your mailing list via your opt-in forms.

So, when a person likes your lead magnet i.e. the thing you are offering them for free in exchange for their email, they would go on to subscribe to your mailing list, and instantly land on your autoresponder series. Usually, you would send them an immediate welcome message telling them what they can expect from you in the future, but after that, come the emails that are meant to help people on your mailing list solve certain problems and of course, make you money in this process.

Most people who come to your website would probably read just 1 or 2 blog posts and then subscribe and move on. It is your job to make sure that older and newer posts that they might be interested in could reach them. And that is exactly what you achieve from your autoresponder email series.

You get to promote your articles, which we monetized in the previous step, and you get to provide their value to your subscribers with the chance of you making a few extra bucks. That's basically how it works. Now do you see why I called it the ultimate automated money making machine?

Because you can setup your autoresponder email series and just add emails to it whenever you want, and all of your old and new subscribers will receive those messages until the end of time or until they unsubscribe - God forbid. **That is the power of email marketing.**

Now, one thing I want you to understand is the fact that having 10,000 email subscribers and having 10,000 followers on Facebook or any other social media for that matter are two completely different things. Yes, you can send messages to both followings easily, however, the engagement you will receive from social media doesn't even come close to the engagement of your email subscribers - just check out [these mind blowing email marketing stats](#).

When I was starting this blog, I wasn't at all aware of the power of EM. I mean, I knew what email marketing was, but I really didn't think much of it. However, after I did my research, I realized that I just had to incorporate this into my website. And so I did. And yes, it was the last thing I did before I launched this website.

I installed [BizPanda](#) (and later [Thrive Leads](#)) and I gotta say, it has [worked out pretty well](#) for the growth of my mailing list. Understand that the mailing list you build from your website will be the single biggest asset you will ever have. Let me give you an example.

Let's say that you have gathered about 1,000 email subscribers and let's say that there's some special offer by a certain product in your niche that you know is good. So, you want to notify your mailing list of this offer to help them save a few bucks thanks to the special offer.

You send out an email to your entire list and then it's all math. If your message has about 20% open rate, which is not that bad, that means that 200 people will read the email you sent them. Now let's say that just 1% of them (**2 people**) take advantage of that offer, which is really low, and if your emails are converting at just 1%, then you need to work on your copywriting skills.

And for the sake of example, let's say that the product in question now comes with a special discount for its lifetime license and you get \$50 commission for every purchase. Just for sending one simple message, without any other work whatsoever, you've made \$100. Now imagine if you have about 50,000 email subscribers and your conversion rate is much better, say, 5 - 10%:



Right? And with that simple demonstration, we end the 5 steps. Easy right? I mean, you don't need to be a rocket scientist to get your own successful blog going. All you need is desire and a bit of time. I hope that these 5 steps build a good vision in your mind about how you need to go about launching a successful website, but let's summarize the entire process again:

1. Pick a niche that you love, that you are passionate about, and that you would love to read/write about.
2. Select a relevant, simple, and easily memorable domain name. Choose a suitable hosting plan from a top tier hosting provider which you know you won't have problems with.
3. Design your website with a beautiful theme and all the necessary plugins. Get it ready for the content that is to come.
4. Research the top sites in your niche, their content, structure, and the way they make money from their blogs. Then come up with a strategy for the content on your website and the way you will monetize it.
5. Implement email marketing into your website by creating autoresponder email series, opt-in forms and lead magnets.
6. **Enjoy the dot com lifestyle.**

It just doesn't get any easier than that guys. Now, at this point, you are ready to leave your mark on the Internet by simply following the 5 steps we walked through together, however, there are a few things I'd like to mention before we conclude this article - things I would have

done differently when I was developing this website and a few showcases of the results you get from successful blogging including **a glimpse of the money generated by this website so far**.

Things I Would Have Done Differently

When I say differently here, I mean better. The website you come up with after you employ the 5 steps from above will not be a finished work. **No no no**. There will never be a final product when it comes to the development of your website because you will always need to adapt it to future trends. But that's just part of the fun and you are going to love the change and the implementation of new stuff.

Now, when I was developing this website I did follow the exact same 5 steps just like I listed them above for you, however, there were things that I could have done much better. **Here's the promised list of those things:**

- **More blog posts on the homepage** - since the main resource of information on your website will be its blog, you want to have the latest blog posts appear right at the top of your homepage. In the beginning, I had placed a full width slider with a few meaningless images which did me no good and caused the homepage to have a very high bounce rate. However, when I changed it to a slider with the latest blog posts, everything fell into place.
- **Partner discounts page** - if you will be utilizing affiliate marketing for the monetization of your blog, don't forget to create a dedicated page for all of the products and services that you feature around your blog posts. You'd be surprised how many people check out that page and take advantage of the offers you have listed there.
- **Wider sidebar** - at first, I had completely neglected the sidebar of my website and used as much space as I can for the main content area and then wondered why no one was interacting with the stuff in the sidebar. While the main content area is the place where most of the engagement happens, you still want your website visitors to notice the stuff in the sidebar as well - opt-in forms, ads, links to other relevant posts, etc. So don't be afraid to make it a little bit wider.
- **Ads from the start** - it took me quite a while to get the courage to place some ads around the website (**sidebar and post content**), but it shouldn't have been like that. If you will be using AdSense or simply want to place a few banners with affiliate links to certain products, don't be afraid to do so right from the get-go.

- **Honor your color palette** - in the beginning I had a few opt-in forms that were in a different color palette from the rest of my website and just looked foreign. They performed pretty bad until I changed them to match the colors of the website in general.
- **Don't place too much stuff in the sidebar** - at first, I had like 5 most popular posts, 5 recent posts, 3 specific posts about tools, 2 opt-in forms, and even more stuff, thinking that it would increase the chances of visitors interacting with all that. Not true. The better option here is to place just a few widgets of high quality and relevance and be done with it.
- **Don't focus on number of words** - many bloggers around the world have this thought in their mind that all of their blog posts should be at least a certain amount of words so that search engines would love them. I had this thought as well and it was write longer posts - the longer the better. The truth is, when you are writing a blog post, you should pay no attention to number of words at all. Just say what you want to say and that's it.
- **I would have installed Thrive Leads right from the start** - when I launched this website, it only had 2 opt-in forms - one in the sidebar and one in the footer. And while it started generating email subscribers right from the start, it is only when I added [Thrive Leads](#) to the mix (**about 2 months after the launch**) that our mailing list started to grow like a seed.
- **I would have started using HARO much earlier** - if you don't know what [HARO](#) is, just check out [this article](#), but basically, it allows me to get unique high quality content + amazing backlinks - all for free.
- **Don't be too focused on SEO** - I mean sure, SEO is important, but it doesn't mean that you should be creating your content around it. The first few blog posts I wrote, I would perform a massive keyword research and gather a huge list of keywords and synonyms that I would force myself to include in the article. While this is not a bad strategy at all, it is way better to just get a few keywords in mind, that you want the article to rank for, and then simply write without thinking about a billion synonyms you must forcefully include in the content. And don't worry about backlinks. If your content is valuable, they will come on their own.

And that's basically it. I'm sure that there are many other smaller aspects that I would have done differently, however, those are the bigger ones i.e. the ones that influenced my website's success the most. If you don't want to make the same mistakes I did and even further speed up the success of your website, just follow the above directions, **but always make sure to look at everything through the filter of your own niche and vision.**

The Results

Remember how we defined a successful blog at the start of this article? Let me refresh your memory:

A successful website/blog is one that provides a ton of valuable information i.e. helps people as much as possible and, in that process, generates revenue in some form or another. Simple enough yes?

In this section, I will basically show you proof of these two aspects (**value and revenue**) that confirms the success of this website so far. Let's start with the proof of value i.e. testimonials from people who have benefited from the blog posts of this website:



Joseph Chikeleze (Edit)

November 14, 2015 at 6:11 am

Wow,

Thanks for sharing this with me on twitter – sure I fell in love with your content. Its awesome being here.

I've to dropped a comment to commend you – sure, I've learnt your style of sharing to colleagues on social media.

I like MaxCdn, I've used it before, but wanna use the premium package. You discussed it better for me, I will sure make the payment to speed up my blog.

Have a nice day as I subscribe to your mail list – that's blog engagement.

My regards,

Joseph



Francis (Edit)

November 11, 2015 at 4:43 pm

This is really an epic information that is not only straight to the point but detailed. This post should be the destination for anything on site speed optimization.

No doubt the post must have taken you lot of time to put together. I'd suggest you bundle it into a PDF eBook.

Thank you for putting up such a great post..



Augustus (Edit)

December 2, 2015 at 8:32 pm

Hi Dave,

I stumbled upon your link from reddit; it's much more than what I bargained for; I had to bookmark and come back to read this post.

This content is over-kill!!! and you really nailed it; one of my greatest fear when it comes to producing long post like this; is if people would actually read a very long post (Anything beyond 3,000 words).

I am currently growing my website audience and I cannot quantify how inspiring this blog post is. Thanks for sharing such detailed information.

Augustus



John (Edit)

January 30, 2016 at 3:36 pm

Hey I love your blog, started following it on and off since you opened a few posts on GSA's forum.

Now I can't say anything for your non-SER related posts as I haven't read them but you really seem focused on writing informative articles first and generating traffic second and not the other way around.

Tbh I always pondered about writing something useful but when I tried it, it didn't seem all that useful in the end so I just invested time in developing a product rather than writing.

Anyway, reading this post and your blog in general actually made me think about doing some experimentation and then writing an informative piece so sincerely thanks a lot for that.

I'd wish you best of luck, but you're well on your way of making your own.

Cheers!

Now, I don't want to bore you with a billion cheesy statements from our website readers, so I just displayed a few of them to prove a point. If you want, you can check the countless others that reside in the comment sections below all of our blog posts and the many others present on all of the threads we have opened on various online marketing and SEO forums such as [BlackHatWorld](#) and the [GSA forum](#).

And let me tell you this, the feeling of having another human being genuinely express gratitude and appreciation of your work is, well, priceless. I mean, you put in the work, you put in the time, and you put in the energy, and in the end comes along that person whom you've helped tremendously and who's sincere gratitude you can feel through his words. **Priceless.**

Speaking of priceless, let's do some math. I am, by default, a very private person when it comes to finances, but for the sake of this article, I will reveal to you exactly how much money this website has made since its launch back in July 2015:

USD	2015/01/01 - 2016/06/01		
Payments received 25 917,59 USD	Shipping collected 0,00 USD	Sales tax collected 0,00 USD	PayPal fees -421,23 USD

Now, out of those \$25,917 we can remove \$8,142, which is the money generated by [our Fiverr business](#) and we are left with \$17,775. Now, it is not fair to remove all the revenue from Fiverr as some of the orders have come thanks to our website, but let's not get into that much details here.

Now, the website was launched on the 27th of July, 2015 and the months that have passed since then are about 10. So, on average, this website has brought in about \$1,777 per month since its launch. Of course, what you need to understand here is that this was a gradual process and that the website made 3 digits in its first few months before moving on to generating a stable income and now, in the more recent months, is steadily heading towards that \$5,000/month mark - even surpassed it for a while in March this year by bringing in \$5,882.

The point is, most of those \$17,775 have been generated in the latest few months. Now, I'm not showing you all this data to brag or anything. To be honest, this is nothing to brag about. I mean, there are so many other blogs (**even in the same niche**) that are doing much, much better - 5 figures per month or even more.

And what expenses does all this come with? Well, basically none - about \$10 per year for my domain name and \$29.99/month for the hosting by [Traffic Planet Hosting](#), which could be less than \$5/month for you if you go with [InMotion Hosting](#) or any of the other more affordable hosting providers that I recommended in the second step - [Bluehost](#), [SiteGround](#), and [iPage](#). I mean, what more could you want from your ROI?

Now, the point I wanted to make in this section is that you can really do something that you love and enjoy and still make a decent amount of money in the process. It is, as you would say, a non-job. Don't get me wrong, it is a struggle, it's always a struggle. However, in life, there are two types of struggles - the ones that you hate and the ones that you enjoy. **Make sure that you live a life with the latter type of struggles.**

Conclusion

I have to tell you guys, this is the blog post I have most enjoyed writing of all the blog posts published on [our online marketing blog](#), because it felt really good to share my preparation journey. It took me about 2 months to get this website ready for launch, but as you can see, it was well worth it. Trust me, if you follow these exact same 5 steps to the letter, you will be well on your way towards financial freedom and the dot com lifestyle.

And I'd love to help you with any problems you might face. Just share them with me via the comment section below, or send me a message from [our contact page](#) - I'll be sure to respond to you as soon as possible. Also, keep in mind that I offer consulting services, so if you'd like some help you with your online journey, don't hesitate to [get in touch with me](#).

Bottom line is I hope you guys really enjoyed this article and I hope that it helped you realize that creating a successful website is not that hard and that you can really do something that you love and still make a living out of it. **So what the hell are you still waiting for?**