

Dragoș Rouă

**How To Build
Reputation
With Your Blog**

<http://www.dragosroua.com>

How To Build Reputation With Your Blog

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What Is Reputation And Why Do You Need It

Reputation is what makes you believed and respected. Reputation is a byproduct of Authority and Authenticity. Incidentally (or not) Authority and Authenticity are 2 of the 7 traits of the highly successful bloggers, but you will have a chance to learn more about those traits in the bonus chapter.

Reputation is also the thing that drives potential customers to your blog over and over again. It's the fundamental ingredient of personal branding. It's the main reason behind any kind of value transfer between you and your readers, being it a click on a banner in your sidebar, or an ebook purchase.

As such, reputation is the fundamental ingredient in building a business based on your blog. It's hard for me to imagine a successful (read it: profitable) blog, without a lot of reputation behind its writer(s). Yes, you can make some money without it, using standard monetization techniques like display and contextual advertising, but these are weakly linked monetization strategies, and they are working in a weak way. It won't be a lot of money from that pipe. If you want serious money, you have to back it up with reputation.

One final word about online reputation: keep in mind that you need it only if you want to create sustainable value through your blog. If you want your blog to form a solid foundation for your business, then reputation should be a serious concern for you. But truth is you can blog for various reasons. It's perfectly ok to blog for pleasure, or like a hobby, or every once in a while, as long as you don't expect a steady financial income from this activity. Just because you blog every once in a while, it

doesn't necessarily means you're going to make some money out of it. But the vast majority of bloggers do enter this field in order to generate some revenue. This ebook is for them.

The ebook contains 7 chapters (+ one bonus). Here's a short description of what you can find in each chapter.

1. Openly State Your Expertise On Your Blog

What you are good at and what you can make others become good at by reading your blog. This is a fundamental part in building reputation, yet so often overlooked. We will go through the basic steps of making obvious what you are obviously good at it.

2. Write On Your Blog Constantly

Reputation is about what you know to do best, but is also about your reachability. It doesn't really matter if you know how to do things, if you're at the North Pole and nobody can reach to you. By writing constantly you will prove at least you're there and available.

3. Interact With Your Audience

Respond to comments, tweet your moods and mingle on Facebook. Interaction is all about creating sustainable communication channels with your audience. If you don't interact with them, chances are they won't interact with you either, and that will lead to a stale communication process.

4. Interact With Your Peers

Chances are that other bloggers are acting on the same niche as yours. The biggest mistake is to treat them as competition. Befriend them instead. Try to build a strong and genuine bond with them. Help them and ask for their help. Participate in collaborative projects as often as you can.

5. Differentiate

You clearly stated your expertise, you write constantly on your blog from some time now, you interact with your readers and with your peers. But that's not enough. It's time to differentiate. It's time to let out the most different (and sometimes awkward) part of yourself. People usually identifies other people by difference.

6. Create And Promote Value

As soon as you have your blogging routine going on more or less on auto-pilot, you should escape it. You should start to create new products outside your blog. If you really are an expert, people will soon need a proof of that. A proof outside your blog. The blog is your distribution channel.

7. Be Patient

I left this part at the end for two reasons. First, if you had the patience to read through the first six articles, then you'll understand the seventh. And second, because it took me years to understand this for myself. It's probably the most important part of all.

The bonus chapter, The 7 Traits Of Highly Successful Bloggers, is based on one of the most visited posts on my blog.

Enjoy! :-)

I. Clearly State Your Expertise

Back To Basics

Openly stating your expertise on your blog it's fundamental for building online reputation, yet too often overlooked. Many bloggers, especially in the beginning, are focusing on building traffic, creating blog posts, interacting, and they forget the main reason they're blogging for: they're really good at something. There is something that they do better than anyone else. In this rush for creating more and more content, their very own expertise is left behind.

Well, make it obvious. Put it out there. Otherwise nobody will know what's the difference you can make. Suppose you will build a sizable audience. You will attract a fairly large number of subscribers. Your readers may like your posts, they may feel entertained, educated or motivated by reading your blog, but they won't create a mental link between a certain niche and your online persona. Unless you make it obvious.

How obvious? Well, it starts with your blog header and goes up to your about page. Will talk in a minute about the hot zones of your blog where you can imprint your expertise. For now, let me give you an explanation of my own blog header: brilliantly better. Apart from sounding really good (I love alliterations) it really mirrors what I am good at.

My work here aims to create a state of brilliancy while getting better. That is what I do. And this is my intended reputation. I know from experience that I can make you become not only better, but also feel brilliant in the process. That's my main area of expertise. I have of course

other, much more focused areas of interest, like blogging or online business. I'm not writing very often about them, but every few posts I publish something on these topics too. And while I'm not a top expert in these areas, I can help you to get better results by using general tools like self-discipline, personal productivity and so on. What I'm trying to say is that I don't have a specific topic in which I can improve your activity, otherwise I would have openly state it in my blog header. It would have been something like Brilliantly Better Blogging, for instance. You can chose your own goal, your own improvement area, and then use my blog as a motivator and trigger of inspiration. This is what I do.

Now think at what YOU are doing. What exactly are you good at? What is your most important value that you are ready to expose it out there? That should be your reputation cornerstone. You should start building on that one.

Master Your Blog Header

I already talked about this briefly in the last paragraph. I will only add that this is the pivotal place for your online image. It's the first thing the reader will see. It's often the "title" tag that search engine are taking into account when indexing your blog. This is how you will be remembered. Don't miss this spot by trying to throw in some fancy things, but with no relevance whatsoever in regard with your desired reputation. Be short, clear and honest. Save the fanciness for the blog posts.

Use Your Blog Posts With Caution

People are reading blog posts because they're based on direct, human interaction. They're not part of an elaborated publishing process, like in traditional media. Behind a blog is (usually) only one person. And people are reading that blog because of that person.

At this level, stating your expertise too often in your blog posts will be a little too much. Too obvious. Your blog posts are the place in which you are capturing your readers and make them feel good. You're not selling anything on your blog posts. On the contrary, you're giving away for free. And that keeps people coming again and again, because they have a repeated return for their attention investment.

So, use your blog posts with caution. What you can do, however, is to interlink some of your expertise pages from within your most visited posts. I think one of the masters in interlinking (this is how it's called) is Darren Rowse from ProBlogger. If you don't read his blog, you should start now. Seriously.

About Your About Page

Blogs have an “about” page for a very important reason. It’s usually the place your readers reach after you got their attention. It’s your second opportunity to get a seat in their heads (the first one is your blog header, remember?). If you don’t have an about page, your blog is worth half of what it could worth. If you have a “shy” about page, you’d better not having it at all.

The about page should be the place where you should list all your credentials, testimonials and all the other references about you on the interwebs: interviews, collective projects, media appearances and so on. Afraid that you have only a few? Well, go out and mingle, contribute and generate more. Afraid that you have too many? I don’t think there is such a thing like “too many” when it comes to your own credentials or testimonials.

One of the most interesting “about” pages I know (although one of the simplest out there) is Brian Clark’s from Copyblogger.com. Go read it and you’ll understand why he’s a very successful online entrepreneur (not only a famous blogger).

Sidebars And Sales Pages

Blog gods gave you sidebars for a reason. There aren't just placeholder for your widgets, you know? They are valuable blog real estate that should be used. They offer a parallel visual experience for your readers. As such, they're much more available and ready to be clicked than the about page.

Usually, sidebars are very good for incentives. You can offer some assets in exchange to some loyalty: the classical free ebook in exchange of a newsletter subscription. But you can also use your sidebars to promote events, products or services you own or you are part of.

Another special case is what I call the "sales" pages. They are not products or services sales pages, but mostly "hire me" places. If you really are selling your presence, as a consultant or handy man, you should definitely use the hire pages as a way to clearly state your expertise. It's also pretty common to put there your services and your rates.

How This Works And Benefits

Openly stating your expertise makes it easier for the reader to remember you. It will create a strong image in their heads. I name this process: “buying some brain real estate”, identifying a niche with your name. It may seem like you’re very “in your face” with this approach, but believe me, you’re not.

Your readers are floating on a huge information ocean and in order to grab their attention you gotta be determined. I’m not advocating more than 50% of a regular blog page content (including sidebars) to be filled with your expertise, because this will transform your blog into a huge selling page. But it should be there and it should be visible. Many bloggers believe they will be “picked up” because they’re good at what they do. While this may be true, until they don’t make their skills obvious, nobody will even know what they do.

Openly stating your expertise is fundamental for building reputation but is not even remotely the only thing you need for that. On the contrary, if you’re resuming only to openly stating your expertise you will most likely generate the opposite effect of reputation: people will start to avoid you.

This is why we still have 6 more articles to go. :-)

Write Constantly

Why Writing Constantly?

Writing is about reachability, about making you findable in the huge ball of information that we call the blogosphere. But it's also about proving what you stated in the first article. Namely, your expertise. You can't become an authority unless you start getting out there and stating your point.

The difference between a good article and a good blog is that in the first case people will remember the main idea from the article, while in the second they will remember the blog name. A good article is nothing but a good article. A good blog is much, much more than that: it's a reputable brand.

It's like the difference between a one night stand and a long time relationship. In a one night stand you can enjoy a little bit of satisfaction and novelty, but on the long run, a long term relationship tends to be more fulfilling. You get a much deeper connection and the benefits are there to stay long before the physical satisfaction died. A good article will leave your readers with a one night stand taste, while a good blog will create something more powerful. A relationship.

How To Write On Your Blog Constantly

Easier said than done, I agree. Many bloggers are starting full power, keeping the posts going on for a few months and then stop. Something happens. It may be boredom or a blogging burnout, fact is that very few bloggers are reaching the first year mark. I know, because I was there too. And from my own blogging experience I created a few scaffolds which helped me stay on track. I will soon reach 2 years of constantly writing on DragosRoua.com and here are some of the tools that helped me reach this milestone:

1 Create a Publishing Strategy and a Blogging Setup

One of the most basics activities in blogging is writing. What do you use for this? Are you using a text editor? Do you write directly in WordPress? In my case, after a few trials and (substantial) errors I created a [blogging setup](#), using some GTD principles. It involves using a journaling software for Mac and a few tweaks. I use this for more than one and a half year now and I also teach this approach in my blogging workshops and one to one sessions. It just works, I guess.

2 Keep A Blog Posts Incubator Idea

Another popular reason for not writing constantly is the “writer block”. What should I write about today? I have no idea. My head is just a big empty balloon. Well, if you ever been there, you may want to create a blog posts ideas incubator. I had the best blog post ideas while driving and if I wouldn't have this capture and store system, most of my blog posts would have never been written.

3 Monitor Your Writing Goals

It's easy to get caught in some other things and forget how many articles you set up to write for the current week. Or for the current month. I know I forgot this quite often. So, I wrote my own little WordPress plugin to help me with that. In the process, a few features have been added: how many comments I would like to have and how many trackbacks. Go check out the [Blog Audit WordPress Plugin](#), it's totally free.

4 Write Series of Articles

Like this one, exactly. It will help you spread your writing for one-two weeks, while still forcing you to keep your focus on a very narrow topic. And that's good. It's good for you, as an exercise, but it's also good for your readers who are expecting valuable information. At least for a reputable source like yourself, right? Series can expand into very interesting collaborative projects, like I did with this massive guest posting experiment (which, in my opinion, it was a total premiere in the blogging world).

5 Participate In Blogging Challenges

There are two types of blogging challenges (maybe there are more, but in my experience, those 2 are the most common). There is the head to head challenge, and then there are the collective projects.

In a head to head challenge you establish a common goal with one of your blogging friends. And then check out the progress. As easy as that. Writing in a challenge forces you to keep a certain pace and also keeps your focus on the quality. After all, you gotta be better than the other one, right? I did this at the beginning of this year, when I wrote 4 books in one month, and my blogging buddy was Steven Aitchison, for the [Change Your Thoughts](#) fame. I won the first month and lost the

second one. But we both won a lot of experience and, most of all, we had a lot of fun in the process.

In a collective project, you start (or accept the invitation for) a collective ebook on a certain topic. Make the invitations and then wait for the posts. Or, if you're invited, just deliver your post. At the end of this process, the ebook is released, usually for free. There are few variations about these collective projects, if you want to know more, have a look at my about page, you will find there all the collective projects I've been involved in.

Blogging Burnouts

That's something you should be aware of. At some point, especially in the first year, you will eventually be hit by a blogging burnout. The words are not listening to you anymore, ideas seem dry and shallow, you can't write more than 2 sentences in a run. And you can only have a run every half an hour. This is a blogging burnout. Just like every other burnout, the job burnout, the relationship burnout, it's a signal that you reached the bottom of your resources.

What you can do when hit by a blogging burnout? First of all, acknowledge the fact that you're having a blogging burnout and not something else. It's easy to get caught in a mild depression, because you will feel the pressure of getting out there and you will realize that you can't. Just relax and accept it. Let the cup fill back by itself.

Blogging burnouts are the best use case for keeping an idea incubator, or, even better, keeping some buffer posts handy. If you have 3-4 posts you wrote earlier but never published, just schedule them a week in advance and take a week off from blogging. The blog will still be genuinely updated, it will be your content and once back, you will respond to all the comments.

Another approach is to announce a guest posting opportunity. If you can't write at all that doesn't mean others can't. Give them the opportunity to write on your blog and enjoy some time off. It's called interaction and it's good for you.

The Skill And The Habit

Just because you know how to write, how to express your best feelings, that doesn't necessarily makes you blogger. You need much more than skill to be there. You need a habit. And habits are one of the most powerful weapons in our daily life. So powerful that we often overlook their power, especially when they are used backwards. And we only feel it when a bad habit kickback instantly.

Let me ask you a question: do you brush your teeth? Daily? Good. You have good teeth, then. Maybe nature gave you good teeth by design, but brushing them every day ensure the fact that they will stay like this. Now, do you write daily? No? Then you didn't make a habit out of it. You may have some innate writing talent, just like you may have good teeth by birth, but if you don't make a habit out of keeping your writing shiny and clean, every single day, you will lose it. Or, to be more clear, you will lose the benefits it may bring to your reputation.

Why Is This Important And What Are The Benefits

Writing about what you're good at will gradually make you become better at it. It will refine your expertise. Your know-how and experience will grow just by doing it. You will be forced to find new ways of expressing what you want and that will refine your creative skills tremendously.

As for the “constantly” part, that will make your blog a powerful reference in your reader's heads. Suppose you're writing about minimalism. And your name is Leo Babauta. Now, if you write constantly for more than 2 years, every time somebody on this planet will think about minimalism, will be drawn to your blog. Being constant has this incredible power of building mental links which will work on auto-pilot at some point.

Yes, it works exactly like this.

Interact With Your Audience

Listen To Them

The first and most important part of this process is to listen to them. Period. They are your audience, they are consuming your products and they know better than you what they want. Really listening to your audience is especially difficult in the first stages of a blog, when all you want to do is to get “out there”, make your message heard and be sure it’s heard by as many people as possible. In this stage, every negative comment will be taken personally. That shouldn’t be a problem. unless you respond in kind. Bitterness and irony are the most common reactions to negative blog comments, especially in the beginning. Well, don’t. Don’t answer in kind.

Taking it off of your chest will make you feel better, but I don’t think it will add to your reputation, on the contrary. As you advance in the blogging world you’re going to realize that negative comments and positive comments aren’t different at all. They’re just reactions. Some of them are signs of a positive reaction you ignited with your post, some of them are signs of a negative reaction. And it’s ok to be like that. You’re not the beholder of the absolute truth and you don’t know their personal circumstances. They have the right to say whatever they want. And you have the right to take from their comments whatever you want. I had my own share of negative comments in some (quite popular posts), you can find one of them here: [33 Ways To Start Your Day](#).

I started (a little abruptly, I admit) with negative comments because they are pivotal part in the blogging process. The moment you’ll start to generate negative comments is the undoubtable mark of popularity. You’re becoming important. Your words are counting enough to get on the people nerves. You’re bringing in a change and change is always received with rejection (people love their comfort zones, you

know). I'm not saying you should hunt for negative comments, that would be equally easy and lame. I'm saying that if you do your job constantly, at some point you will create some opponents. It's natural, don't be upset. Don't get nervous. Don't panic. Go on and do your job as usual.

Comments Policy

A blog is about interaction more than it is about broadcasting. The huge success of this phenomenon is due exactly to this part. Traditional media is a one way communication process. Blogging (and social media) is a two way communication process. Your readers can openly state their opinions. And that's a very good thing.

As a general rule, I think you should keep your blog open to comments. And to answer to as many comments as you can, if possibly, to all. There will be milestones when you could get rid of the comments, but only in some special contexts, I'll talk about them in a second. In the beginning, you should keep your blog open. And pray for some comments, too. Answer to them carefully, even if they are just short sentences like: "nice post, I like it". Just say "thank you". Answer to them even if they are (or especially if they are) negative comments. Try to find out why they are negative. In other words, don't get offensive or defensive. Try to start an interaction.

From a certain level, managing comments could become harder than maintaining the blog. Especially if you get 50-60 comments per post or more. From this level up, I think you could update your comment policy. You can gradually go to answer only to certain comments, and then you can leave your readers only share their opinions or discuss. Some of the most popular bloggers found an interesting way to keep the interaction going on, while getting rid of the chore of maintaining or answering to hundreds of comments for every post: they created special forums. On these forums people will still have a chance to make their opinion heard, but it will be a much more open discussion space. I think Steve Pavlina did that a couple of years ago, and also Leo Babauta did that recently.

Email Strategy

A good part of your interaction will be hidden from your blog. Namely, you will be contacted directly, most of the time by email. You should have a strategy for answering emails as well. Some people think that because of the private nature of this communication channel, it wouldn't count as much as comments and tend to be a little lazy when it comes to email, or even ignore it completely. I think this is a mistake. Not only it will create a (maybe false) image of an isolated individual, but it will make people reluctant to get in touch with you in the future.

Almost my entire business communication related to my blog is done by email. I couldn't imagine how I could create some revenue with my blog without creating a more personal approach with my audience. Some of my readers become my blog business partners and I become a blog business partner for some of the blogs I follow. Not having a proper email strategy in place will create a serious financial handicap in the long run. Seems hard to believe but it's real.

I usually receive three types of emails: people are asking for advice, people are asking for business opportunities and people are just telling me that my blog helped them. Didn't get any angry email so far, but there's time. And I have patience . I had my share of online hatred and irony, mostly from Romanian bloggers, but no direct email so far. Anyway, my email strategy goes like this: if I can give advice, I give it within the time frame of a week. If I can't, I refuse politely, usually in a day or two. If the business opportunity looks interesting, I follow up. A few of my most profitable affiliate deals were created as a result of some long email discussions.

Social Media Strategy

I said it before, I'll say it again: your blog goes beyond your blog. You're not having only a single outlet, you have access to a lot of streams which can carry and deliver your message pretty fast to a huge audience. And that's social media. In my experience, as a blogger, there are only a few places which can be of interest: twitter, Facebook, StumbleUpon (since I already talked extensively about StumbleUpon before, and since SU is mainly a promotion outlet, I won't talk about it in this post, feel free to check out this post: [The First Six Months Of Blogging – Promotion](#)) Some people may have had good results using digg or reddit or delicious. I had a few myself, but not enough to draw some clear conclusions or to create some repetitive processes out of them.

From a reputation point of view, being at least on the most popular social media networks is a must. People are hanging out there. And they will expect to find interesting people there. It's like everybody hang out in the big cities and if you chose to isolate yourself in the countryside, it will take a while to make those big city guys know that you're around. You may still do it, but you'll have to shout a little louder.

Twitter

It's a "hit and run" network. It has a very good link generation potential, and it can also act like a reputation enhancer. Your followers can act like broadcaster for you, transporting your message to their followers and so on. A few people told me they discovered me not through Google or direct recommendation, but by Twitter. The structure of this network will make it very easy to propagate your message to a potentially very big audience, very fast.

But it has a few downsides too. Being so fast, it means others are waiting for their messages to be delivered too. Your message will get out of focus almost instantly. If you're not "floating", meaning if you're not

generating enough retweeting activity, your links, after a 5-10 minutes spike, will become almost dead. The biggest interaction happens in the first 5-10 minutes on Twitter.

This “floating” can happen in a lot of ways and I don’t think this is the time and place in this post to cover all of them. The most common situations are: your tweet has been retweeted by an influencer (an influencer is a twitter person with at least a few tens of thousands of followers), you have a very big audience (hard to believe it will happen in the beginning) or you just got lucky, creating some very powerful viral content. I’ve experienced the first and the last of these situations quite often, especially the last one. There are few posts which are still retweeted daily even after a year: [100 Ways To Live A Better Life](#).

How do you create reputation on Twitter with your blog? Well, first of all, maintain a clear profile. Create and maintain a twitter landing page. Tweet your posts. Engage in conversations if people are asking you. Tweet other, non-blog related, stuff. People will know that you’re real and not a WordPress plugin. Create interactions.

Facebook

It’s a place for human interaction rather than link sharing. In this respect it’s more human than Twitter, but it’s also more picky. Building a strong presence on Facebook will ensure a constant (albeit small) flow of links. If you get links from Facebook, you can be sure that those who shared those links are really enjoying your content. There is no reciprocal “pay-off” for sharing, as it may be in Twitter, when retweeting is often a currency for supporting each other.

I admit I didn’t do much of an effort to create a Facebook presence, other than placing a link to my Facebook profile on my blog sidebars. And yet, I get friendship requests on a daily basis. Many of these friendship requests are generated by my blog. In fact, almost all the requests are generated by my blog.

Being mostly centered around relationships, Facebook will be a nice place to hang out with like-minded people, chat, exchange ideas or just seeing other people lives unfolding in front of you. If you got an organic Facebook audience, I guess the most important thing is to be consistent. Sharing stuff on your wall which has little or no connection with your blog will dazzle your audience (I did it a few times and it does).

Why Is This Important And What Are The Benefits

Direct interaction with your audience is a great gift. You have instant access to what people really like or dislike about you or your work. You know immediately if you did a blunder or if you hit it big. And you have a chance to meet a lot of people in real life. I personally met a few bloggers I respect while I was traveling last year and it was a fantastic experience.

Reputation is not something you carry on yourself, show it to somebody and they will recognize it. It doesn't work like this. Reputation is in fact created and maintained by your audience. You may brag about how good and skilled you are as much as you want, if other people won't agree with what you say, it will mean nothing.

So, if you really wanna know if you have built reputation don't look in the mirror, don't re-read your blog posts, don't get out in the front of your house and shout out from the top of your lungs: "I'm the best guy in my field!".

Just look at your audience. Your readers will never lie to you.

Interact With Your Peers

Who Are Your Peers?

In short, they are people who are doing exactly what you are doing. They are bloggers performing on the same field as you are. From a traditional (and also, completely dumb) point of view, they are your competition. From a smarter point of view, they are your peers.

Why do I think that perceiving them as “competition” is a dumb approach? Well, because blogging is a very specific business. Although it shares a good deal of common points with traditional businesses, blogging is completely different in some key areas. And one of them is branding.

In traditional business, if two companies are making shoes, they are competing against each other. They are building the same object, using more or less the same technologies. If two bloggers are writing about personal development, they are not competing against each other. They are completing each other and, in a larger sense, they’re feeding each other audience. Although they are building the same type of “product”, which in this case is “motivation”, they’re not using the same “technologies”. They’re creating their products using their personal experiences. Putting their own life on the line. And that brings diversity and originality to the mix. Although in the same market, the final products will be really different. And consuming each product will increase the demand for similar products.

That’s a fundamental difference. The more blogging products you’ll have on the market, the bigger the demand. Your audience will always want to consume some new, fresh perspectives on their topics of choice. So, two bloggers writing on the same topic will never be competitors. Unless they are dumb enough to copy each other posts sentence by

sentence which will totally wipe out any trace of authenticity in their products.

Now that we eliminated one of the most common and handicapping confusions regarding competition in blogging, let's see how you can really interact with your peers.

Guest Posting

The simplest way to interact with your peers is to guest post. Writing blog posts that will fit in other people's blogging pants is a great exercise. There are some unquestionable benefits like: increased exposure, enlarging your circle of influence, refining your writing skills and so on and so forth. But the real, hidden benefit is the interaction with the host blogger. I know I built a long term relationship with all the bloggers who accepted guest posts from me. Some of them are way closer than the circle of influence. They are in the circle of friends.

Massive Guest Posting

This is a special case of guest posting. Basically, it combines a series of articles with guest posting. In a massive guest posting project, you publish a few related blog posts (preferably from the same series) on a few blogs, all at the same time. I did what I think it was the first [massive guest posting](#) ever on the internet last year and believe me, it was an incredible experience. The links and exposure were great, but the connection with some of the bloggers who participated in this challenge grew tremendously over the last year.

Hosting Guest Posts

This is the obvious counterpart of the one above. Open up your blog and give other people the opportunity to guest post. Again, the visible benefits will be in the line of: more content for your readers, a little bit of diversity and so on and so forth. But then again, the hidden part of this iceberg will be the connection you build with the people who are guest posting on your blog.

Collaborative Projects

Every once in a while a collaborative project surfaces my inbox. Every time I am asked to do some writing for a collaborative project I'm incredibly motivated. I'm not accepting every request, mostly by lack of time, but the requests I accept are quickly climbing to the top of my priority list. Here are few types of collaborative projects I've been a part of so far, or I admire from a distance.

1. Free / Paid Ebooks

I've been a part of some very interesting projects, with both paid and free ebooks. One of the most interesting ebooks was [How To Network Awesomely](#) by Colin Wright, a book which I totally recommend. There are tons of other bloggers sharing their insights on networking in that book, not to mention Colin's own thoughts on this topic. As for the free ebooks, you can check out my 9 ebooks which are [available for free](#) at my blog. Only the ebooks, the printed versions are still distributed by major retailers like Amazon, and you'll still have to pay for that.

2. Memes

A meme is usually a challenge launched by a fellow blogger. I get far more requests than I can handle on this area, so I decided to go on only if the topic is really close to me. But the exercise in itself is still very useful. Be sure not to abuse it, because too much dilution will make you lose your identity.

3. Blogazines Contributions

Every blogging niche has some blogazines around. They can be collective newsletters, or they can be magazine style, like a collective blog. It's a good place to start making our voice heard, but, as with the memes, it's important not to overdo this. Contribute valuable content but still keep some of this content for your own domain.

4. Shared Content Products

Another way to interact with your peers is to create shared content products. Put together your expertise, your strengths and some time, ask around one of your peers, brainstorm a little and voila, you created a common product.

Social Media Interactions

The same rules that applies to audience interactions applies to peers interaction when it comes to social media. If you want to read them, go back and check out the audience interaction article in this series. One word though, when it comes to peer interaction, you are what you retweet. People who are on your stream are a measure of your own value. Pick them wisely and stick with them.

The Real Value Of Links

Now that we saw the practical side of interacting with your peers, let's talk a little bit about links. And by that I understand at least 2 interpretations of the term "link". The first one is "link as a human connection" and the second one is "link as a hyperlink in the internet". As you will see, there is a big confusion between those two meanings, with a huge balance towards the second one. Many bloggers are valuing hyperlinks to their blogs over real life connections with other people. Which I think is totally wrong.

The focus of bloggers on Google ranking is understandable, to a certain degree. The problem is that the vast majority of bloggers are going way beyond this degree. Meaning they're starting to obsess over it. I know I've been there and I'm not ashamed. It's just a fact and now I'm over it. And I'm also able to explain it a little bit better, since it's something that I experienced first hand.

In order to understand the importance of page ranking (and, subsequently, the real value of links as hyperlinks) I would like to give

you an army example. You know the military ranks, right? A captain will always have a smaller rank than a colonel, and a colonel will always have a smaller rank than a general. This is how it works. And you identify their ranks by looking at their insignia.

The page ranks works exactly the same. You have a 3 PR page, which will always be smaller than a 5 PR page, which in turn will be always put to shame by a 7 PR page.

Many bloggers are trying to advance in this hierarchy by trying to acquire as many stars (read: page ranks) as possible. From a certain point of view, they think that a certain rank will give them access to a certain level of reputation. This is where the big mistake is taking place. A PR rank is just like a military rank, it will just say that you're a captain, a colonel, or a general. Nothing more. It will never say something about your ability to influence other people. Nothing about your value as an individual. Nothing about the value of your products. It will just say you have a certain rank.

Of course you can guess a little bit of information about a military by his rank. A certain degree of experience or skills. But the real value of a military is never given by the rank. It's given by what that person is doing on the field. By how that person is engaging in combat. By how he's applying the strategy right there, in the trenches. There's no rule that will say that, once in the trenches, a general will be spared by a bullet just because he's a general.

Page ranks, just like military ranks, are just a way to categorize your blogs with an incredibly large tolerance. They will never say something about your reputation.

In the army, if you do your job constantly, in time, you'll be promoted. You don't have to do something especially for this. Just go to work every day and you'll be promoted. In blogging is the same. If you keep your blog alive long enough, it will eventually receive a higher page rank. At some point, you'll receive a rank of a general.

But, please pardon my French here, I don't really give squat on that general. I've been through a [real war](#), and I saw how bureaucratic captains were acting on the field. A real life disaster. No, siree. Those generals are not for me.

On the other hand, there were some officers who were really inspiring those days. Courageous, generous, brilliant in terms of strategy and so on. Those officers were wearing the same insignia as the bureaucratic ones. From the outside, they looked the same. But they were fundamentally different.

The same goes in blogging. Two blogs with an equal number of links will get an equal page rank in Google, Alexa or whatever. But more often than not, the real audience of a successful blog is a few orders of magnitude higher than of other, equal blogs in terms of ranking. You start to get it now?

I'm not saying that using aggressive linking and social media automated strategies won't give you a certain Google page rank or a certain Alexa rank. I'm saying that, from a certain level of performance, those rankings are useless. They're not building reputation, they're building empty numbers. It's blowing in the wind.

On the other hand, when focusing on real life interaction, on building honest relationships with your peers, you won't generate only links and empty numbers, You will generate a movement. You will generate support and you will ignite new ideas. You will create inspiration. I don't know how to measure inspiration. I don't think there's such a thing like inspiration ranking. But in my experience inspiration is far more powerful than any Google page rank.

At the end of the day, a PR 7 blog which is there only by aggressive linking and social media automated techniques, will have the same PR 7 as a blog that reached there by creating genuine trends, by providing real value, by inspiring people to propagate its message and spontaneously create links for it. From the outside, or, to be more, clear,

from the mathematical point of view of the rank, they will be the same. But on the inside, those blogs will be completely different. The second blog will generate far more in interaction (and, if you really want to know, yes, far more sales) than a blog which relies only on page ranking techniques.

You will get results on both cases. And the choice is entirely up to you. You can choose to be a bureaucratic general, and you'll be wiped out by the first genuine revolution on the Internet.

Or you can be a general to lead that very Revolution.

How Do You Value Things?

The answer to this question is fundamental, not only in blogging, but in every value based process. Every time you want to establish the value of a thing, you will have to come up with a way to identify that thing first, to get around it somehow. Most of the time you do that in two steps:

- by finding common traits with other related objects
- by spotting the differences from other objects

The first step will help you identify and place the object in familiar contexts. The second step will make you see its real value. You value things not by common traits, but by differences. That's why it's fundamental to differentiate as much as you can if you plan on building your online reputation. Stay on an identifiable niche, but do it your own way.

A car is a thing which will get you from point A to point B. But a BMW is far more than a car. And you will buy a BMW not because it gets you from point A to point B, you can have that with a Tata (in case you didn't know there is a company called Tata, which makes millions of cars in India). You get the BMW because you are looking for the differences. You need style, power and a sense of luxury. This is what you are actually getting when you're buying a BMW.

Your needs will push you to pick a certain object or service, and you'll choose it based on its common traits. I need something that can take me from point A to point B. It may be a car, a motorcycle, an ATV or a public transportation subscription. But once you identified the common traits of the object or service, your buying decision will always be made based on a specific difference. That special twist that will make you feel fulfilled and balanced. We're buying differences.

The Meaningful Difference

More clearly, we're buying meaningful differences. We're getting something that we don't have and that it's difficult to find in common places.

How can you, as a blogger, create that meaningful difference, that special something which will make you a reputable character?

First of all, don't look outside. Look inside. Inside yourself. See what you can provide, not what the "market" needs. That's tricky, and you know why? Because we've learned so many things and we know so many processes that we forgot our own identities. We have a very hard time to find what's genuine and original in ourselves. Asked to fit in, to perform socially correct, we played the games as they were taught to us, leaving our own ways behind.

And your meaningful difference is in your own ways, not in the common practices. This is why I don't buy "mainstream". Never did. I buy things, I admire persons or I use services based on the personal brand, on what's different. For instance, I still dig Steve Pavlina. By many standards, Steve is a weirdo. The guy is into polyamory, hate regular jobs and spend his time doing exactly what he wants without giving a dime on what people think of him. Recently, he started a 30 days trial in which he considered everyone a figment of his reality, and acted accordingly. I met him in person and although we didn't "clicked" as friends I still consider him a highly valuable personal development blogger.

And you know why? Because I'm learning something from him that I can't find anywhere else. I'm learning how to be a weirdo. In other words, I'm learning how to take responsibility for my decisions and not feel guilt or shame for accepting myself exactly how I am. This is a pretty big thing to learn, believe me. I didn't learn from Steve how to create a popular blog, although he's still running one of the most popular blogs in

the world. This is the “common” part. There are a lot of popular blogs out there. But very few meaningful weirdos.

Your Biggest Liability Is Your Biggest Asset

That leads me to the core of this chapter. Your biggest contribution, your most important difference lies not in what you have in common with other people, but in what you have different. The thing you’ve kept deep down, hidden, the thing that made you feel guilt for not fitting in, the thing that created tons of rejection thrown at you incessantly, that thing is your biggest asset. Because that thing defines you. That thing is your unique contribution, your irreplaceable value, something that nobody else is having.

In my case, I guess my biggest liability is my attempt to do things everybody considered out of my league. I had an incredibly huge share of hurt because of that, but I also learned tremendously. I created an online business from scratch, 10 years ago, when nobody gave me any chance. I got hit pretty bad a few times. By competition, by crisis or by my own stupid decisions. And yet, after 10 years, I created enough value to profitably sell that business and embrace another challenge. Namely, being a personal development blogger, in a language I never studied (learned English by watching movies and reading blogs) on an incredibly crowded niche. And yet, in this niche, I am Dragos Roua, that Romanian weirdo who never quits, although he’s constantly laughed at for being ridiculous.

I have a very high risk tolerance, meaning I need way bigger challenges than the vast majority of people I know. And not only in business. If you think my career was a roller-coaster, you should look at my personal life. I have two kids from two different relationships. I entered those relationships despite being warned that “they’re not good for me”. For a while, I thought that myself. Look, I have this incredible talent of picking women who are not good for me. Then I realized it

wasn't that. It was my attraction to challenges. If a relationship had a high enough potential of being "difficult" I embraced it like a mosquito will hit a lantern in the night. Full power.

By many standards I failed in my personal relationships. But not by my standards. Not only I learned and gained experience. But I also enjoyed the trip. I've been in love with each and every woman. Even when the emotions dried and we had no other choices than to spend our lives together because we had common responsibilities, I enjoyed being friend with them. I still keep that friendship. But then again, don't think at a "common" friendship. It's very different from what you would define as friendship.

That difference, both in business and personal life, that risk taking capacity (way over the average and almost pathological) that is the thing that created the real value in my life. It inspired people. It pushed stalled lives ahead. It shook old structures and forced the building of new, more powerful ones. It destroyed to create.

What To Keep From This

Now, you may have noticed that this chapter has a different structure from the first ones. And I did this on purpose. It's not a list you can hang on your fridge. It's not a collection of actionable items you can put to work. It's a mix of left and right brain messages which will most likely leave you dazzled. And I did that also on purpose.

Because now it's time to forget what I wrote in this post and go find your own difference.

Do things your own way.

Go The Extra Mile

By now, you know how to write constantly, how to clearly state your expertise and how to interact with your audience. That, if you read the previous articles. Unfortunately, this is not enough. You have to push more. Once you reached to a certain writing and interacting level, you will hit a very subtle wall.

This is the wall of self-sufficiency. It's quite difficult to create such a routine, and I mean it. Then why don't you take a break and enjoy it for a while? After all, you're a blogger now, right? Right. You're a blogger. But you're not necessarily a reputable one. Writing constantly and interacting with your peers and audience will create a steady amount of traffic. Ok, now what?

How and why would you convert that traffic in something meaningful for you? Please note that I didn't said you should convert it into money. If money is of interest for you, go on, convert into money. But you can also want to convert it into something else. If you're a political figure, for instance, you will not hit money directly. Instead, you'll chase audience points or visibility. Again, if you're having a steady artistic career (you're a music player or painter, for instance) you may not want to convert into money. Popularity will be your target.

But the most important part of the question is not "how" but "why". Why would you want to convert that traffic? That's a key point and a very important question for every blogger who had been wrecked more than one keyboard writing. Once you reached to this point, you'll realize that is something more important going on with this blogging thing. What you developed so far was only discipline. A set of rules followed closely. And that discipline gave you something to work with. A foundation.

The key question is “why” would you like to build on this foundation. The question will challenge some of the most important parts of yourself. Having a constant audience will bring with it not only the benefits of being visible and appreciated, but also the responsibility of giving more. What and why are you going to give?

Before jumping to the next section, namely, the “how” part, take some time aside and think what are you going to give. The world is ready to receive it. Now it’s your turn. Hint: please have a look at the previous article, about differentiation. If you’re going to create value, be yourself. The world needs you, not a copy cat.

Blogging Related Products

In my need to expand my activities, I’ve been trying a lot of options. I also looked at other, successful bloggers, and tried to understand their strategy. Here are a few types of products that you can build, and market through a successful blog. These are just shortly described here as you can get a much more thorough list in the initial post: [“Want To Make Money With Your Blog? Build Reputation!”](#).

Ebooks

They are the simplest to build, because they involve mostly writing. As a rule of thumb, an ebook should provide more information than a blog post, or a series of blog posts. They would provide something that should be read in a wider time interval than a blog post too. You will also have to do some tidying up, editing your cover artwork and making the pages look good, which you usually don’t do at your blog (your theme does this for you).

Ebooks can be both paid and free. I don’t think you should focus more on the problem solved by that ebook than on its price. I have

written both paid and free ebooks and I didn't see any difference in the number of downloads. If there's something that is truly important people will pay the price.

Podcasts

These are the spoken equivalents of your blog posts. Making podcasts is a lot of fun but it's also a little bit more complicated than making an ebook. I had a few years experience working in various radio stations so for me it wasn't a big deal, but if you didn't have any previous contacts with sound recording and editing, you should take some time just to familiarize yourself with the whole setup.

There are a few bloggers who are doing pretty well by selling podcasts, or special versions of their content. I know I've been giving a lot of examples from the blogging and copywriting niches, but for podcasts, the first one that comes to my head is galadarling.com. I'm not even remotely in her target, but I can spot a solid business when I see it.

Live Workshops

These are the live versions of your blog posts. I did a few live workshops since I started this blog and I can tell you I had the most exciting time ever. It's a completely different beast than blogging, but it's also the most engaging thing of all. The live interaction, the energy exchange, the adrenaline rush, these are hard to be imitated by a blog.

On the other side, workshops are slower to build and harder to convert. They are enjoyable, of course, but it's kinda difficult to make a living out of them. Steve Pavlina, one of the most popular personal development bloggers in the world (if not the most popular), gathers between 20 and 150 people to his workshops, from all over the world.

Online Courses

This is something I just recently started with. I did this first on a third-party platform, namely Udemy. I had a course called “Goal Setting 101” hosted there for about 1 and a half years. I did pretty well in terms of revenue, until the platform became a little bit too intrusive for the teachers. Meaning they had an aggressive price setting strategy (you give them the right to modify the price of your course, by the way).

So I decided to move the course on a self-hosted platform. You can find it at dragosroua.teachable.com (at the moment of writing this ebook, the course was under a heavy restructuring).

Lateral Products

These are the complimentary products of your blog. I already talked about my iPhone / iPad app [iAdd](#), which is an implementation of my Assess – Decide – Do framework. But you can create a lot of other related products, not necessarily information based. I know a woman who was briefly in our circle of friends who started a very profitable business with slings (a variation of “wraps”, a way to carry your baby with you by wrapping it up all over you in a certain “outfit”). She was a very active member of a mothers community (which we may call her blog) and she was also quite respected. She started this business using only her influence in that community and it was a big success.

The Channel Is Not Your Merchandise

So, forget about “just writing on my blog” and start making your own products. If you’re good at writing, write some ebooks. If you’re a live motivator, create workshops. If you’re a musician, create music.

People will soon need proof outside your blog realm. They will want to see you performing on other levels. And if you met their expectations on those levels too, your reputation will sky rocket. As a blogger, you create only an audience. As an expert, you create reputation. The blogging is your outlet, not your job.

Take it as a sort of digital persona, a “placeholder” for your identity in the internet world. The blog will create and propagate your image, your informational body and your attitudes. But it will never be what you are providing. This is why I’m reluctant to use banners as a conversion tool for blogging. Putting banners on a blog will be like putting advertising tags all over your clothes. Would you walk outside with these tags on you? Nope, because that is your personal image, you can’t associate your image with advertising tags. The closest example is a Formula 1 pilot suit. Filled with advertising. Have you ever seen a Formula 1 driver walking around in those suits outside the competition? Never. They do it only when they want to associate their skills with those advertisers.

At the end of the day, your blog will be mainly a place of interaction and expression. It will not be your merchandise. Don’t confuse them, because it will never work like this.

With your blog you create audience and traffic. But what you “sell” is not your blog.

It’s your expertise.

Be Patient

First of all, congratulations: you've read all the first 6 chapters from this ebook. That's the good news. The bad news is that all you've learned or decided to apply so far will be completely useless if you don't have patience. Exactly, no matter how good you are in your field, how often do you write, how active is your interaction with your audience or with your peers, if you're not patient enough, it won't count. Not a bit. The whole wonderful scaffold you built for your blogging ascension will crumble at your first step, if you don't give it enough time to mellow.

But since you already had the patience to read the first 6 articles, there's hope . Let's try to find out together why you need time to create online reputation.

The 2 Main Reasons

Reputation, being it online or offline, is never built instantly. It's a function of authority and authenticity, that's fundamental, but it's also a function of time. It needs authenticity and authority stretched over a significant amount of time.

And here's the first reason for this: people don't assign value to other people instantly. They need a certain amount of time to make the connection between their needs and your expertise. Just because you're out there raising your flag, that doesn't automatically mean you're going to be followed. You still need to be evaluated. People live in their own circles and they have very strict rules for those who are accepted in those circles (even if those rules are not clearly expressed, they're still there).

And people also need proof. They need to witness you constantly performing at a certain level. They will not invest their trust in you if you're not getting over a certain threshold. Interesting enough, once you're over that threshold, they won't need proof anymore. You can goof around in circles, once you had your square centimeter in their brains, it will be very difficult to get out. The acceptance process is a very inertial one. It takes time to get in their heads, but it will also take time to get out of there.

The second reason for patience is that you need this time for yourself. This time is not about their heads, it's about yours. Blogging is an interactive process. You can't tell from the beginning what your audience will be. You don't know it yet, you have to go out and try a few approaches. Only after you know your real audience, the one generated by your blogging, you can start capitalizing on it. It's a fine tuning process between what you do and what others needs and you need to watch this carefully.

You also need time in order to understand how you can provide value. Many bloggers are collapsing exactly when they're starting to gain some momentum. They're becoming successful, but strangely enough, they can't handle the extra work that comes with this success. It's not that they're not able to schedule their tasks, it's a more subtle process. Somehow, they don't understand what they are suppose to do: continue blogging? On what tone? Do workshops? What kind? Write books? How many?... This sense of orientation is built in time, by observing and understanding your specific market demands and your own unique skills.

The Hare And The Tortoise

Blogging is much like a rabbit and tortoise race. You gotta be there constantly. Step by step, enjoying the pace and doing your job. And yet, many bloggers are taking the hare attitude: be spectacular, hunt that big hit that it will get you out of the crowd. Some of them succeed at this quite often: they get featured on delicious, or digg, or lifehacker. And? After the big traffic spike, nothing is left. The term “success” in blogging has nothing to do with big traffic. It’s all about meaningful relationships, sustainable value and, yes, conversions.

Early and fast success is spectacular but it won’t win the race. It will win a temporary surge of admiration, and, maybe money. But it won’t create a long term flow of opportunities and revenue. The tortoise wins the race because it’s patient. Because it stays there and it does its job. The hare will make detours, change its focus, shift to other areas of interest. And in the end, will come in the second place.

Your 2 Different Bubbles

One other thing that you have to be aware of in building online reputation is that you will live in two different time bubbles. One is your time bubble, and the other is your readers time bubble. Your time bubble is going really fast. The readers time bubble is much slower. If you really take the time to analyze your readers behavior, you'll understand that many of them are reading your blog only once a month. Yes, only once a month.

There is of course a hard core of admirers and followers, but those are not your main audience. The real audience is made by real people who are interested in your message. And those people have their own lives. Their own universe. Already filled with other people. And they will make room for newcomers with extreme scarcity.

Many bloggers are exhausting their time bubble in the first 6 months. By the end of this period they said everything they had to say. They're finished. And yet, in the time bubbles of the readers, they only made a few ripples. Nothing significant. Oh, that guy who used to write about personal development, I kinda remember him. But now he's out of the game, right?

You have to synchronize those two time bubbles. Meaning there will be times when you will have to repeat yourself on the blog. Or to say the same thing in 50 different ways. Or to slow down, splitting your message in a few posts. You're not cheating, you're just synchronizing the two time bubbles. I once read something about how dolphins are communicating. A researcher had this idea of playing their sounds at a much lower speed. It came out that the dolphins were talking on fast forward. Once slowed down, their language could actually be deciphered. Ok, it was a science-fiction novel, but you got the idea.

Oh, and I remember that I started to remember Steve Pavlina's name 2 years after I read his first article. Until that, it was just a curiosity

or something that I accidentally stumbled upon. It took 2 years for Steve to buy the square centimeter in my head that says “personal development”. During that time, Steve wrote and wrote and wrote. He stayed in his time bubble, waiting for me to remember his name.

Bonus: The 7 Traits Of Highly Successful Bloggers

What makes a blogger successful? What are the common traits of highly effective bloggers? If you've even remotely tried to launch your own blog, that question surely popped into your head at some point. And I bet it was rather sooner than later.

I have more than a year of blogging as a pro. And before starting to blog for a living I was an avid consumer of other blogs. I think I have in my RSS reader feeds I read for more than 5 years now. Gradually, I developed my own set of blog appreciation rules. And of course, if you've carefully read the title of this post, those rules are no more than 7. In today's article I'll write about what I think is the recipe for being a successful blogger.

I. Authority

This is what makes a blogger believable.

Authority creates trust. And trust makes you spend your precious time on that specific blog instead of doing something else. Because you know it's worth doing it. You know you're in for something. You've been there before and you weren't disappointed. Your expectations were met again and again.

Have you ever wondered what makes you click the links of a popular blog? What makes you follow that advice or buy that product? What makes a blogger believable? It's not his identity, nor his persistence, although both are part of the success mix, but his authority. You believe a blogger because you trust him.

Without authority a blog will be floating. It may jump every now and then if it touches some hot topics but if it doesn't build a significant level of authority, it will drift away, at the mercy of fashion. I think one of the most respected blogs in the marketing niche, for instance, is [Seth Godin's blog](#). Seth's authority was previously built by his books but it somehow spread over his blog. The person vouches for the blog in this case.

2. Authenticity

This is what makes a blogger accepted.

Being honest. Being human. Being able to make mistakes and accept them publicly. Blogging is such a fantastic media revolution not because it created a super hero, like cinema, but because it made the normal, average, human guy able to openly express his intentions, dreams, challenges. And made those opinions instantly available.

Authority without authenticity won't build a successful blog. It may create a solid corporation, but not a sustainable blog. With any interaction, people are unconsciously trying to find themselves in the other guy. It's a human need, called validation, we all need that. If, as a blogger, you don't reach out openly, without being afraid, you're in the wrong business.

One of the most famous examples of authenticity is, at least for me, [Steve Pavlina's blog](#). If you read it just for a few minutes you couldn't but notice that vibe of authenticity which makes Steve so popular even when he's allegedly "deluding" in some of the not-so-mainstream explorations like polyamory or, recently, BDSM or alike.

3. Accessibility

This is what makes a blogger palatable.

Accessibility makes a blog available, ready to be consumed. It's the way you write, the way you wrap up your message, the package by which you deliver your goods. If you want to be popular as a blogger, keep in mind that your audience is extremely diverse. It takes much more work than you think to write in an accessible way.

This quality is often overlooked in almost all bloggers rankings I saw. Usually, authority and authenticity are the main criteria, but there's no point in being an authority if you can't deliver a readable, straightforward message to your readers. Regardless of your expertise, a clear, accessible blog will always increase your chances to a broader audience.

The most brilliant example of an accessible blog is Brian Clark's Copyblogger.com. It amazes me how Brian writes in such an easy to understand way about really complicated topics, like the art of persuasion. Copyblogger.com is popular because it provides easy to understand access to incredibly complicated issues, not the other way around.

4. Persistence

This is what makes a blogger wanted.

Persistence creates demand. Showing up constantly and doing what you have to do will build a sense of expectation among your readers. They will know you're there for them. They will wait for you, call for you or ask things from you. Constantly broadcasting your message will create a certain frequency in your readers minds. They will just tune in.

Now, try to imagine a blog with only one article per month. How would this feel to you? Like a joke, I know. Or imagine a series of 5-6 fantastic articles in a week and then several months of silence. No way. Being there is fundamental, can't be avoided or faked. They say showing up is 80% of success. I doubt it will be exactly 80% but it's without a doubt compulsory to show up persistently in order to build a successful blog.

Few people know that several years ago, when he started Problogger.net, one of the most visited blogs on the planet, Darren Rowse only wanted an increase of 10% in traffic from month to month.

That tells a lot about how far he was ready to go with it. Problogger.net may not be the most spectacular blog on this planet, but it surely is one of the most constant, reliable and respected. And the persistence of the author plays a big role in that.

5. Connectivity

This is what makes a blogger available.

Connectivity creates links. All kind of links, from plain HTML, PR-juice enabled links, up to human contacts. One of the fundamental characteristics of a successful blogger is his ability to be broadcast as far as possible. And here's where connectivity plays a fundamental part. All A-listers are virals, without exception.

Have you ever wondered how many interactions a successful bloggers has in a normal day? My wild guess is that this number is at least 10 times higher than the average. Just imagine reading dozens of comments (and perhaps responding each of them), interacting on Twitter, or Facebook or Digg. You can't really do that if you're socially impaired.

One of the bloggers who could always be studied in schools for that is, in my opinion, [Chris Brogan](#). I've been following closely his work in the last few years and his growth was literally explosive. I think he directly interacts with more than 500 persons each day. Guess what? Those persons are also the broadcasters for his message. How many persons are broadcasters for your message?

6. Creativity

This is what makes a blogger valuable.

Creativity triggers admiration. We admire a blogger not because of his authority or authenticity, but because of what he brings new and beautiful in this world. For his capacity to innovate, to re-create his environment, to embellish and refine. Many successful bloggers actually created their niche from the scratch, they built something out of nothing.

This ability to re-organize the Universe in a new form, to create value and to touch others is by far my favorite trait from all 7. Without this ability a blogger would offer no more than a Wikipedia entry, valuable advice but flat, with no human touch, no improvement, no spark.

My favorite creative blogger right now is [Gary Vaynerchuk](#). For a guy who makes a living by drinking wine (joking, of course) he's unbelievably creative: he re-invented video blogging and he wrote a book not about Chardonnay, but about how to follow your passion! That's creativity, that's building something where there was nothing before.

7. Identity

This is what makes a blogger recognizable.

I chose the word identity because “personal branding” would have been a little bit too precious. But personal branding is what I meant by it. Identity is what makes you unique. It’s that centimeter you own in your readers’ cortex, the same way you could own some real estate. It’s the exact connection they make between a certain niche and your name as a blogger.

Did you observed how many times we actually use the name of a successful blogger to identify a niche? In blogging, the capacity to build a unique, easily recognizable identity (or brand, for what matters) is the difference between two identical copies of a newspaper. You may talk about the same things, have the same level of authority and the same creativity as other bloggers, but what makes you different is your brand. Your personal brand.

For instance, Leo Babauta identity would be tied up in my brain with the following concept: “minimalist productivity”. Whenever this concept pops out in a conversation, the first person I think about is Leo Babauta, creator of ZenHabits.net. That’s his identity. His brand. I’m sure there are a lot of other bloggers writing about minimalism, but their identity may not be as strongest as his.

Of course, all the aforementioned bloggers are sharing all the 7 traits, I just had to chose which one was the most representative for each.

Ok, Now What?

Now it's time to start your own blog. And implement some of the tips you got here.

If you need a nudge, or just a coach, remember I can be your coach. Just drop me a line at dragosroua@gmail.com and we'll take it from there.

Best

Dragos Roua