
Bloggers and your brand: How to make it work

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What can bloggers bring to my brand?



How do I make this
happen?

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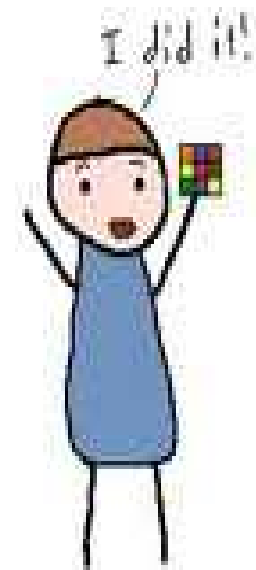
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Don't go in blind

Don't go in blind, do your research: Before approaching a blogger/ when they approach you, make sure you've read their blog and have a feeling for the type of topics they cover, to ensure the partnership will benefit both of you.

Keep it personal: Pick up the phone or ask to meet them in person to discuss a working relationship, bloggers are really approachable and appreciate your time and are often much more open to face to face meetings than traditional media

THE ADVANTAGES OF BEING COLOR BLIND



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Sizing up the opportunity

Don't be afraid to ask for their vital statistics:

Most professional bloggers will have a media pack or a section on their site outlining their site traffic and social media influence to potential working partners, if not, don't be afraid to ask for more information.

Depending on your objectives and desired outcomes, the following criteria are a useful measure of a bloggers impact online:

- Unique users
- RSS feed subscribers
- Twitter followers
- Facebook fans
- Pinterest/ Instagram followers
- Any examples of previous press trip/ commercial partnership outcomes



Sizing up the opportunity

It's not all about the numbers...

No two travel bloggers are the same, they will each have different preferences, some may be focused on photography, others video, others practical guides, budget travel, independent travel, adventure.. The list is endless. Be clear about the audience you want to reach, finding a list of the 'Top Ten Travel Bloggers' may seem the easiest approach, but it may not mean they are the best travel bloggers for you. A blogger with 1,000 readers that are your exact target market offers far more impact than a blogger with 100,000 readers who will never engage with your product.



Ok I'm listening, then what?

Be clear about what you want

If you don't know your objectives, how will they be able to deliver what you want? Be up front about what you want from the campaign, be it awareness, traffic, sales and clarify all your social media touch points you'd like them to engage with

Clarify what you can offer and what you expect in return:

A clear agreement from the outset will prevent any misunderstandings or disappointment in the long run when results are delivered. Clearly outline what you can offer them, be it accommodation, dinner or excursions and what you would like to see from them: For example one written review, tweets during the trip, promotion of the review via Facebook, inclusion on a Pinterest board etc. This will depend on the bloggers particular strengths and the size of your offering, but could also include, videos, photography, podcasts, guest posts for your website. Don't be afraid to negotiate with them, they will appreciate the clarity of your agreement.



They asked for what? Payment?! Pah!

Bloggers are online publishers with a commercial business model

Hosting a blogger on a trip in exchange for a review is just a small portion of what they can do for your business, they will often need to make the trip commercially viable to justify the time away – discuss a more rounded package, including things such a sponsored posts, asking them to guest post for your website or discuss their advertising rates to make the most of your relationship. They could produce video, image sets, podcasts, th possibilities are endless. It is possible to negotiate blogger relationships that are mutually beneficial without payment but be careful about how much you are asking for



So we have an
agreement, now what?

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A few key points to remember

It starts and ends with editorial

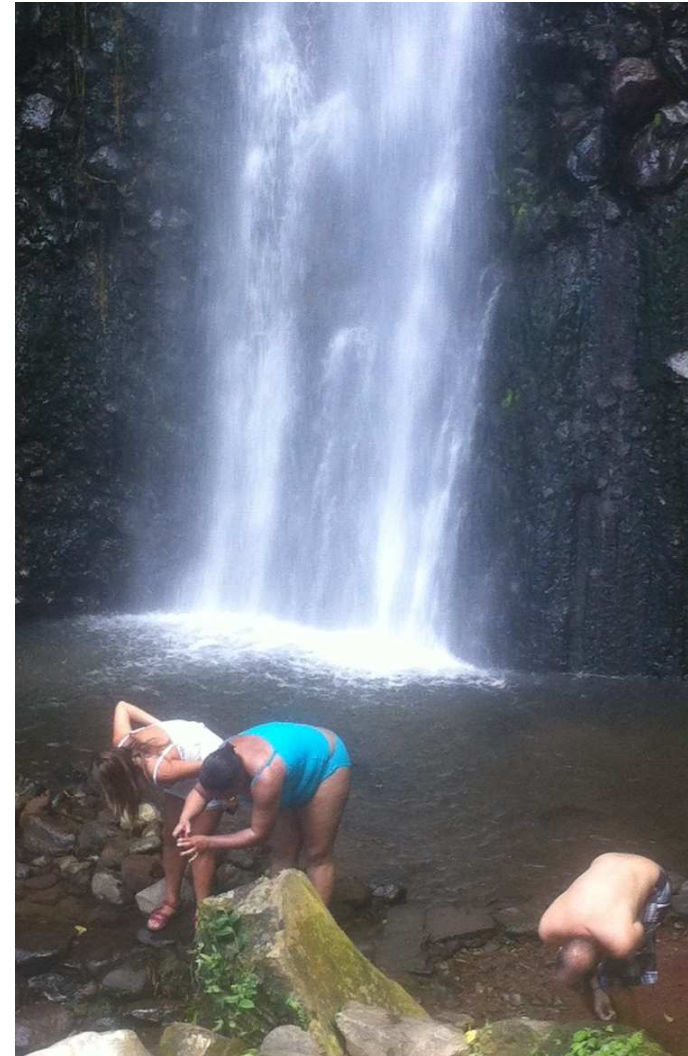
integrity: Although it's important to be clear about what you expect, bear in mind that in the blogging community, editorial integrity is held in very high regard. Their opinion and engaged following is why you're working with them, so expect them to be honest. Trust your itinerary, your product and your blogger



You can lead a horse to water...

Bloggers are story tellers, they will find the best way to convey your story

Bloggers build their audiences around their independent voice and unique ability to find a story. Give them free time to explore and discover for themselves. Offer them suggestions of things they might like to do and see but make sure their itinerary offers enough time for them to explore alone



The offending snail....



Use Wi-Fi to your advantage

In a world of online engagement, Wi-Fi is marketing king: To make the most of real time engagement whilst a blogger is experiencing your product, make sure they have access to a Wi-Fi connection, without this you may be missing out on a large proportion of live coverage, from tweets to instagram pictures, in which readers could be engaging with your product. If you're an accommodation provider where this is usually a paid for service for guests, consider offering it the blogger for free during their stay, the additional coverage is likely to offer an intelligent ROI.



It doesn't have to end there

The time in which a blogger is experiencing your product or destination is only half the opportunity. Ensure that those running your social feeds are aware of the campaign, follow them, engage with them before and after to maximize online discussions and continue relationships moving forwards



Where do I find these blogger types anyway?

Good old Google: Run some searches, read some blogs, see what you like and what you don't. Many blogs will feature a blogroll – a list of other blogs they like to read. If you like their blog, chances are, you'll also like the bloggers on their blog roll. Sign up to their RSS feed or newsletter and follow them on twitter to get a real feel for how they operate.

Paid for services: A number of companies offer databases of bloggers, listed by genre, country, interest and even site traffic. They can be costly and are not always hugely reliable but can be a good place to start collating lists for further research. Examples include Metrica and Vocus whilst the Professional Travel Bloggers Association is also just launching

Network, Network, Network: Much like traditional media, the blogging community is highly interconnected with meet ups and conferences being held in key cities most weeks. Meet ups are publicised online and are open to PRs/ marketers/ any interested parties to attend. With an informal atmosphere they are often the ideal place to start relationships with bloggers and learn more about the industry.

- TravelMassive
- World Travel Market,
- ITB,
- TBEX
- Traverse
- Travel Bloggers Unite



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