



Presents:

Podcast Episode 120: Ten Ways to Make Money with Your Blog



By: Leslie Samuel



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Introductions

[Intro by Guy Kawasaki, Gideon Shalwick, and Farnoosh Brock]

Hello, hello, hello and welcome to another episode of Learning with Leslie, the podcast where you learn, I learn, we all learn about how to build an online business with a blog. No, I'm not talking about one of those blogs that will fall by the wayside when Google puts you in the sandbox. I'm not talking about the good kind there. I'm talking about one that will thrive no matter what gets thrown at it.

I'm your host, Leslie Samuel from BecomeaBlogger.com where we're changing the world one blog at a time. As usual, another exciting episode for you today.

In today's episode, I'm going to be talking about *ten ways to make money with your blog*.

If you're building a business with your blog, which I'm sure most of you are interested in doing, you got to make some money. This is something that a lot of bloggers struggle with, even bloggers who get a lot of traffic. It can be a tricky thing and there are many ways to do it. However, I found that a lot of people have no idea how to bridge that gap between just having a blog and having a business.

If that's you, don't worry, by the end of this podcast episode, you'll know at least ten ways that you can go about making money with your blog. So, that's what I'm going to be talking about today.

All right, let's get into today's content. What I'm going to be talking about, first, I'm going to give two announcements. Just so you know, one is going to be an update on a progress of Become a Blogger and then, there's going to be one that's more of a personal announcement that I'm going to share with you.

Then, I'm going to get into the content talking about these *Ten Ways to Make Money with Your Blog*. I don't have any calls for this episode so we're just going to dive right in.

So, let me start with the announcement.

Become a Blogger Announcements

First of all, I am just excited about August 1. If you've been listening over the last few weeks, you know that on August one, we're going to be changing models a little bit on the blog, not that I'm going to be doing anything different with my content. I'm still going to be doing the podcasts and bringing that to you so that, you can continue to get the value that you've been getting and hopefully even more with the podcasts in the future.

Also, what I'm going to be doing is we're changing to a multi-author blog where we have multiple authors that are going to be contributing content, actionable content that you can read the content that they're writing and then, you can go away and take action on it. That's the key thing.

So, we're going to be providing a lot more value especially starting on August 1.

Right now, we have about... No, we have exactly fourteen writers and they've gone through the application process and we've done research on them. Everyone that applied wasn't accepted because we were looking for very specific things but, now we have fourteen and we'll probably have some more in the future. They're working on articles behind the scenes right now.

I haven't yet decided, we haven't yet decided how often we're going to be posting to the blog, whether it's three times a week or five times a week. We're waiting to see how many articles we get in over the next week or two and that is going to determine how much we're going to start with when we start this process.

I'm just very excited. I know a number of you are excited about it, too. I've gotten emails. I've gotten calls on the hotline, talking about it so, I know you're looking forward to it and I can't wait to be able to share all that content with you—free content to help you build your blog, and that's what it's all about here.

So, that's announcement number one. Announcement number two and this is going to sound maybe like a surprise to some of you, I have just been accepted into a PhD program. Yes, I am starting my PhD. I'm doing a PhD in Leadership.



Just to kind of give you some background, I am a University professor. I was hired as a University professor two years ago. I'm teaching in a Doctor of Physical Therapy program. I'm teaching there and I don't have a PhD. My [Biology blog](#) opened the way for me to be able to teach at the University Level but, one of the requirements was that I would have to do a PhD.

The great part about it is that they are funding the PhDs so, I can't really complain about that. I chose to do the PhD in Leadership because it's a very flexible program. It's not as many classes that you have to take. You have to demonstrate that you are competent in fifteen different areas.

I can use the projects that I'm doing online to satisfy some of those requirements like the blogs that I'm working on and so on. I can structure them in a way that they help to satisfy the requirements for the program. It's still going to be a very intense program but, I like the fact that I get to customize it to exactly what I'm passionate about.

So, I'm just excited. I think it's going to help me to step up my game even more with what I'm doing online. You'll be hearing more about that in the future.

I just wanted to share that with you because it's something that's relatively new. I just got the email on Friday, this Friday before the release of this podcast episode and I am looking forward to see where things go. Things are going to get crazy, I know that and they're already crazy.

But, I'm up to the challenge and I know with God's help, I can make it through. So, I'm excited. I just wanted to share that with you.

All right, let's get into today's content because this is something that I notice a lot of people struggle with and understandably so because there's so much information out there that it's kind of hard to take everything and put it together.

I remember last year when I met with a good friend, Cassandre Beccai. If you have been following me for a while, you know I have a partner blog with Cassandre Beccai. I saw what she was doing. She had a website and somewhat of a blog where she spoke about natural hair for women.

Of course, that is not something that I'm passionate about but, I saw her passion. I saw the enthusiasm she had and what she was already doing and I knew that if I helped her out, we could start something that could reach a lot of people.

It could turn into a significant and thriving business so, I [partnered with her](#) and we launched that blog about a year ago and it's doing very well. I don't have the statistics here but, she's getting good traffic. She has a decent size list. The last I checked, I think it was somewhere around 3000. I'm actually logging in right now to see...

Yes, she has a list, an email list of 3276 subscribers. It's going well. It's making money already because she's selling her hair products and so on. But, when we were looking into starting that blog, first, we did some research. We wanted to see what was out there and she knew a little bit about what was out there. I, of course, had no idea what was out there because I didn't care about natural hair for women much besides the fact that my wife has natural hair and she's very passionate about it.



So, we started looking around at how other bloggers were doing it and there were some very popular bloggers in that niche. However, what I noticed immediately was that the monetization was extremely weak. We even spoke to a friend who had a very popular blog, still has a very popular blog but, wasn't really making any significant amount of money with that blog even though she had a lot of traffic.

What I started to realize, as I kind of looked around, not just in natural hair, there are a lot of very popular bloggers that weren't making money and I noticed that the structure that they had set up was not one that made it easy to make money.

So, even the popular bloggers are having problems. Many popular bloggers are having problems making money. So, I figured, you know, let's tackle this. Let's talk about ten different ways that you can make money with your blog so, at least, if you're someone that's trying to blog in a way that you can turn it into a business or you already have a business, you can know about these ten ways. You can decide what works for you and start testing out different things and so on.

So, let's get on to those ten ways.

#1: Affiliate marketing.

This is the way that I recommend for many people to get started, if not most people to get started. And, that is affiliate marketing. Affiliate marketing is where you're basically promoting other people's products or services and anytime you make a sale, you receive a commission.

So, if for example, I am teaching someone to set up a blog, I know that they need hosting. I can recommend Hostgator. I can give them my affiliate link which is Becomeablogger.com/hostgator and if someone clicks on that, it tracks their click and if they make a purchase, that purchase is attributed to me because I am the one that referred them there and I receive a commission. It's that simple.

Now, the reason why I like to tell people to start with this especially if you're building a blog is because it's relatively easy to start. When I say relatively easy, I mean you don't have to focus on actually creating the product or providing the service.



So, supplying the product, you don't have to focus on inventory or customer service, at least not direct customer service. There are a lot of things that you don't have to focus on.

You can just start selling products and making a commission whenever there's a sale without having to go through that process of knowing how to create the product, knowing how to provide the service.

So, it has a relatively low barrier to entry. You don't need to know the technology. You don't need to know how to set up a shopping cart and all that kind of stuff.

You can get started. If you have a blog and you're providing content, you're providing value to your audience and there are products or services that you can recommend, affiliate marketing is a good way to do that and make a commission.

Now, with affiliate marketing, of course, you want to be very clear that you are making a commission for promoting that product or promoting that service so that, the person that you're referring knows exactly that this is something that you are getting money for doing.

That's actually part of the regulations that's set up for anyone that's doing affiliate marketing. So, just keep that in mind as you do affiliate marketing. But, it's a great way to start. It's the way that I started. It is how I first started making money online.

I was doing somewhat of a different system but, it was based on the affiliate marketing model. So, affiliate marketing, that is strategy number one.

#2: Providing services.

Strategy number two is providing services. There are so many service providers out there that I believe should be blogging. Let's say you're a plumber and... I live in Berrien Springs so, let's say, you live in Berrien Springs, Michigan.

You are a plumber. You offer your plumbing services to people in Berrien Springs and to people in the neighboring areas and so on and so forth. There's absolutely no reason why you shouldn't have a website online and why you shouldn't have a blog more specifically where you're providing value, educating the people in that area about plumbing.

I'll give you a perfect example.

Marcus Sheridan, he's from [theSalesLion.com](http://thesaleslion.com) and he was a past guest on the Learning with Leslie podcast and I interviewed him about his experience and he brought a lot of value.

I don't remember exactly what [episode](#) that was but, I'll link to that in the show notes. Back in the days, he used to own a pool company, a fiber glass pool company. The economy was going down and he wasn't making as much money as he wanted to make so, he decided to go online because he heard about all the stuff that you can do online and he built a website. He started a blog and what he did was he basically answered the common questions that he always gets.

He made a list of about 50 questions and he went ahead and made one article answering every question and as a result of that, he started getting search engine traffic because people were searching for those specific questions and it built up his following online. As a result of that, his business increased significantly.

People started contacting him for pool services and now, he has one of the most successful pool websites on the Internet. It's at RiverPoolsandSpas.com. He's of course, moved on and done many other things since then.

But, it shows you how you can use your blog to promote services and that can help you to get customers. That's what it's about if you're a service provider, right?

There are so many different ways that that can be applied, whether you're a plumber, a carpenter, a coach, whatever it is, you can provide services from your blog, or at least, advertise services from your blog and make money doing so.

So, strategy number two, promoting services.

#3: Digital product creation.

Now, this is taking the same concept from affiliate marketing where you're promoting products but now, you're promoting your own products and these are digital products.

So, whether it's an eBook or an e-course, a video course, whatever, an audio course, you can create a product and you can sell that product.



Now, this is probably my favorite method and this is what I do at Become a Blogger. I also do it at my [Interactive-Biology](#) site. At Interactive Biology, I have a study guide that I packaged together and I sell that for \$34.95.

On Become a Blogger, I have a number of [different products](#) that I sell for different prices that teach people how to build blogs.

Now, here's the thing. If you're building an audience online around your blog and people are coming to know, like and trust you, they will be more likely to buy your stuff than stuff that you're promoting for someone else because they trust you, because they know the kind of quality that you provide and they are going to trust the products that you've created. Hopefully, you've done a great job at building that trust and hopefully, you've done a great job at putting together that product and now, you can sell that product to your audience and make money.

Another really good benefit to this strategy is not only can you sell the product, but you can also get affiliates now to promote your product. You can reach out there to other bloggers that are in your niche and have them be affiliates for you.

So, not only are you promoting the product, but over time, you now have this army of affiliates that are promoting that product for you. That's strategy number three. I think it's great. I love this method probably more than any of the others that I'm going to mention.

Digital product creation, that is one great strategy that you can use to make money from your blog.

#4: Selling physical products.

Then, this is something that I don't do personally but, this is something that works and works well depending on the niche that you're in. But, actual physical products, selling physical products that you've created.

For example, with Cassandre Beccai at cassandrebeccai.com, my partner blog over there, the natural hair blog and you're going to hear me talking a lot about that because that's one that I'm very much intimately involved with and intimately aware of what's going on over there.

But, she has created a line of hair products and it's called [Eden's Heart](#). She sells those products from her blog, and as a result of the growth of her blog, she is making decent money with her blog. She was making a little bit before but now, she's making significantly more. I'm talking significantly more.



I'm probably going to do an interview with her sometime soon to share the progress that has happened and we're actually going to go into the phase now of creating a digital product. Of course, I'm going to share those details with you as we do that.

But, because of her niche, because she's talking about hair care, hair products would be a natural type of thing to have provided on that blog, and that is exactly what she does and that does very well.

So, depending on what your niche is, if physical product is something that your audience is going to want or their going to be passionate about, there's absolutely no reason to go that way. I know it's easier to do the digital and that's the one that I prefer. But, depending on your niche, that can also work well.

That's number four, selling physical products.

#5: Advertising.

This is the main income stream for my Interactive Biology blog. Personally, I use [AdSense](#) but there are many other ad networks out there. For example, depending on what your niche is, there's [BlogHer](#). I know Holly from HappyFoodHealtyLife.com just recently switched over to

BlogHer and she has been very satisfied with how that's doing. It's performing much better for her than AdSense was when she had AdSense on her blog.

Then, there are others like [Chitika](#). I haven't used them personally but I've heard about them. I can't make any strong recommendations or say anything really about them because I don't have personal experience.



There are many ad networks out there where you can display ads on your site and get paid. There are different models for doing that. It can be PPC which is pay-per-click which anytime someone clicks on one of those ads, you get paid a certain amount of money.

So, for example, I had AdSense on my Interactive Biology blog, anytime someone clicks on one of those links, I make a few cents. That doesn't sound like a lot but, it adds up over time to where I make anywhere between \$1000 and \$2500 a month just from people clicking on those ads.

Then, there's the CPM model which is the cost-per-mille. It's the cost per 1000 views. So, for every 1000 people that see the ad displayed on your site, you get a certain amount of money.

Or, you can use a different service like [Cranky Ads](#) where you can choose to serve ads at a monthly cost. Companies can contact you and say, "I would like to display ads on your site. I will pay you \$50 a month or \$500 a month or \$5000 a month," depending on how much traffic you have.

Now, here's the thing with advertising. Advertising works if you have lots of traffic. With my Interactive Biology blog, on a very bad month like on the summer when people don't care about Biology as much, I get somewhere around 30 something thousand unique visitors a month. On a busy month, I get about 55,000 unique visitors a month.

With that level of traffic, I'm able to make \$1000 or \$2000 or even more than that per month just based on the ads that are on the site.

So, it can be profitable especially if you have a lot of traffic.

Now, personally, I did not put any ads on my site until I had a lot of traffic. The reason for that is it's more of a personal preference but, in the beginning, I tried to focus primarily on building relationships with my audience and on building, creating the kind of content that people are going to love.

I focus on that all throughout but, I only focus on that in the beginning and I don't like the ads to be there because I find that it's a distraction. It's still somewhat of a distraction now but, I have enough traffic and I have a loyal enough following on my Biology blog that they are not going to care about the ads.

No, I'm not saying that you shouldn't post ads on your site if you don't have a lot of traffic. That's just my personal preference.

That's number five, advertising.

#6: Webinars.

Webinars are great. I have fun on webinars. You can use a service like [GoToWebinar](#) or you can even choose to use a Google Hangout and set it up for a webinar. There are different ways of doing that. But, you're basically teaching people something, teaching your audience something. They come on live. They can see your screen and you present something... at least, that's the way that I have done it.

Now, there are two ways to do this. You can do it for free and then, pitch a product or service at the end or, you can charge people to attend the webinar.

I have done both. When we were doing the re-launch of Become a Blogger Premium, we did a free webinar where we taught people about blogging from my perspective in terms of how I've built my Interactive Biology blog. I showed them the strategies that I implemented and then, at the end, I gave them the offer to purchase Become a Blogger Premium

It was at a discounted price and it did very well. I think by the time we got off the call, it did about \$10,000 which to me kind of blew my mind because it was the first time making a really significant amount of money in such a short period of time.



So, it can be very profitable to do that. You have a free webinar and then, you pitch a product or service at the end or you can, as I mentioned, charge people to attend the webinar as a part of the Become a Blogger Premium Plus Membership when we first launched that we had six monthly webinars. So, one a month for six months and people were paying \$97 a month for that and also the course material that came with Become a Blogger Premium.

Both models work but, webinars are very great because you get people all together on one call and there's just a high that comes with it. You have people listening to you and you're showing them stuff. You're teaching them stuff and you're engaging them, you're asking questions, they're responding. There's significantly high engagement on webinars if you do them well.

#7: Donations.

Asking for, or accepting donations on your site. This is another strategy. It doesn't typically make a lot of money but, if you're offering a lot of value to enough people, you can make some money. I used to do this more on Interactive Biology and it made anywhere between \$100 to \$200 a month.

I decided not to worry about doing this as much anymore. I think there's one link to donate on one of my pages now so, it doesn't make that much But, every so often, I get \$10 donations, \$50 donations or whatever the case might be.

If you have enough traffic, and you're offering enough value, you'd be surprised. These can make money. It's definitely a strategy to think about.

#8: Crowd funding.

Here, I'm talking about things like [Kickstarter](#), [Indiegogo](#), basically you have a project that you want to work on, you rally people around the cause and you get them to fund whatever project it is you're working on.

This is something I've thought about doing for my Interactive Biology site but, I have not done that. I don't have personal experience with doing this but, I know that it is a way that people do



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make money and in this case, you're making money to fund a specific project or something specific that you're working on.

If you're interested in finding out more about that, you can check out RoamingStartup.com with Robert Harper. What he basically does is interviews people that have had success with it and talks about the strategies that they've implemented. You can check them out over there.

That's number eight.

#9: Sponsorships.

That's another great strategy. Once again, if you have enough traffic, you have a loyal audience, you can get companies to sponsor you. You want to make sure, of course, that these companies are relevant to your audience because that's the way they're going to get the most value. Your audience is going to get the most value and it's not that you're just pitching some company that's random and has nothing to do with what you offer at your blog.

I listen to a number of podcasts for example that are sponsored by Audible.com or GoToMyPC from Citrix and there are many other examples in many niches. The key thing once again, you know your audience, you know what they're looking for and you know the type of companies that offer value to your audience and you can approach those companies and try to get sponsorship arrangements where they pay you a certain amount of money for mentioning them on your podcast episode, or for something else, whatever the case might be,

Sponsorships, that's another great way. I know that there are a lot of people making a good amount of money with it but, you need to have a big enough audience and a loyal audience at that for that to be very beneficial.

#10: Doing live events.

Once again, I've saved this last few for the end because it's things that I've never done but, I have seen other people be successful with it. Live event is kind of like a webinar but, it's in person. It's people coming to a specific place and you teaching something and you can charge for that.

On one extreme end, you have things like conferences, like New Media Expo and Social Media Marketing World where you get a bunch of people coming together around one particular topic. There are a bunch of presentations and you pay a certain amount to attend. That's on the extreme end.

On a smaller scale, you can have smaller little meet ups. I have a friend that has been doing that recently using [Meetup.com](https://www.meetup.com/) and getting people to come to different presentations that he has had and as a result of that, he has gotten some business where he doesn't charge anything for the meet-ups, just like with the free webinars but, he offers his services at the end.

You can do this and you can also charge for it just like you can have free webinars and paid webinars, you can have free live events and paid live events.

That is number ten and of course, I got to give you one little bonus tip. That bonus tip is to just be creative.

Bonus Tip: Be creative.

I mentioned ten things here and these are ten things that I know about but, there might be others that I don't know about or most people don't think about. You think about those different things and come up with your own creative way to make money.



One example that I use at one point in the past is because I have the Biology blog, I partnered with a company that offers tutoring. For every email that one of my visitors sends to one of the tutors, I think I, not for every email, for the first email, I got \$7 or something of that sort.

That's something that can add up over time. That's not fitting into any of these typical models that I have spoken about any of these ten categories but, it definitely worked. It didn't work as well as I wanted to work and I didn't find that it was offering enough value to justify doing it in the way that I was doing it but, basically, they integrated their site with my site and there was a specific set up that we had that allowed me to make money when someone emailed for information about tutoring.

So, it's kind of along the affiliate marketing model but, it was a slightly different set up. So, that's the bonus tip.

So, to recap on these ten strategies plus one, number one, affiliate marketing; number two, offering services; number three, digital product creation; number four, selling physical products, number five, providing advertising on your site; number six, doing webinars; number seven, donations, accepting donations; number eight, crowd funding; number nine, sponsorships; number ten, live event; and the bonus tip is to be creative.

Now, I am not saying that I need to do all of these things. You don't even need to do any of these things if you're not doing it to build a business and you can do something totally different. But, these are ways that you can think about in terms of monetizing your blog, in terms of bridging that gap so that your blog is not just a blog. It is a business.

I want to leave you with a question, **have you tried any of these models and how have they worked for you?**

Come over to the podcast, the Show Notes at Episode 120, so come to becomeablogger.com/episode120 and leave your feedback. How has any of these worked for you?

So, that's pretty much it for this episode. I hope you got a lot of value from that. You can now, if you haven't before, start thinking about these different strategies in terms of how you want to go about monetizing your blog.

If you are enjoying this podcast, once again, I would appreciate it if you can hop over to iTunes and leave me an honest review. What do you think about it? This is going to help for me getting additional visibility in the iTunes podcast directory and makes it so that, other people can find this podcast easier. It's great because it helps me in my goal of changing the world one blog at a time. You can go to becomeablogger.com/itunes and that's going to take you directly to the iTunes listing.

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So, yes. That's pretty much it for this episode.

Until next time, take care and God bless!