



10 Secrets to Profitable Content Marketing

Starting a blog is easy. You can set up a WordPress site for free in a few minutes, then start publishing. Congratulations, you now have a blog.

But growing a blog is a completely different story. [According to the New York Times, 95% of blogs haven't been updated in over 120 days.](#)

Think about that. Those blogs are people's dreams. They had the ambition to share their knowledge, to become known for something, and maybe even to make money from it. They had the drive to actually get off their butt and start something.

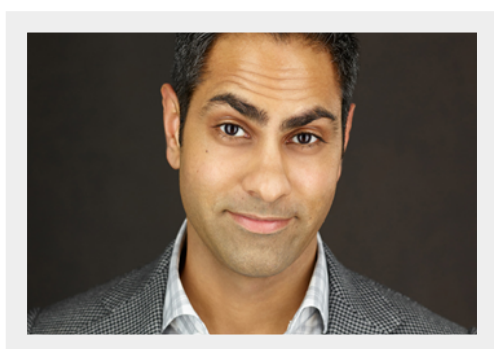
However, they quickly found out it wasn't easy. It doesn't take long after that to become frustrated, "take a break from it" and never return.

I'm here to tell you that it doesn't have to be that way.

And the best way to prevent your blog from becoming another side project is to talk to people who have learned the art and science of content marketing. And ask them what they do to not only maintain their blogs, but to make money from them.

That's what I've assembled for you today.

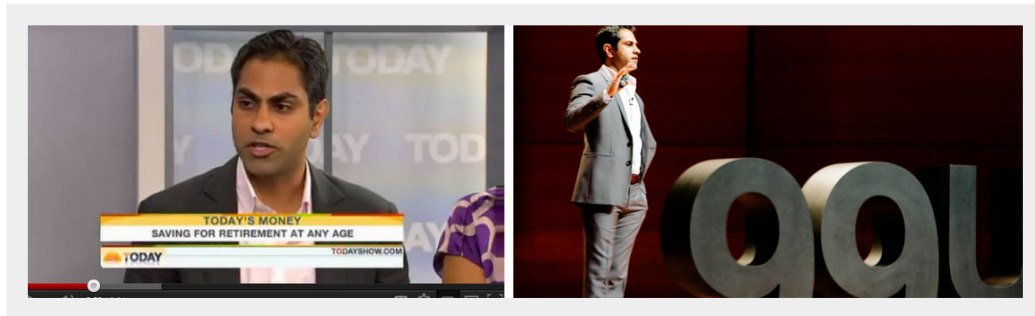
Who am I?



Hi, I'm Ramit Sethi, *New York Times* bestselling author and founder of [GrowthLab](#) and [I Will Teach You to Be Rich](#). I've helped millions of readers live a Rich Life using psychology, tough love, and tested, step-

by-step systems that work in the real world.

When I started, I had no idea what I was doing – and nobody read what I wrote. But as I grew, amazing opportunities opened up. Things like speaking in front of thousands of people and being on national TV:



It's also lead to some awesome media opportunities and publicity like this:



Fortune Magazine wrote a 6-page profile titled "New Guru on the Block"



Forbes Magazine featured me next to Warren Buffett and called me one of “20 Wealth Wizards”

Knowing how to create remarkable content can open doors like that for you. And it can transform into a profitable business, too.

In this guide, I’m teaching you exactly how to do it – without spending years learning the ropes or making countless mistakes like I did.

I also brought in a few of my expert friends, bloggers, and other writers. They’re revealing the secrets they’ve learned as they built huge audiences and mobs of passionate fans.

In all, these experts have more than 125 million combined monthly readers and over 50 years of writing experience under their belts.

So let’s not waste another minute and get started.

Secret 1: Bar stool test

If everything you publish is unreadable, you'll never have profitable content marketing. Which is why this first secret is about keeping your writing conversational – not stuffed with jargon.

When I started writing copy, I did everything wrong. I used big words, hoping people would think I was smart. I made every blog post 2,000+ words, thinking I'd impress people with my knowledge on the subject.

Now I cringe everytime I see those early pieces.

But thanks to a lot failure, I've learned a framework that guarantees readable content. It's a technique I relied on to help grow my site from zero to more than 1 million monthly readers.

It's called the Bar Stool Test.

Imagine you're sitting at a bar with your closest friend. You're having a few drinks and chatting away.

After a few minutes, your friend asks you, "What does your business do again?"

Would you read off the mission statement from the company's "About" page and say something like, "We're on a mission to drastically reduce process inefficiencies for our valued clients"?

No. If you used stiff words and robotic phrases like that, he'd look at you like you were crazy.

So what would you do? You'd take a sip of your drink and just start talking, using simple words and stories.

Good content works the same way.

It's not super-dense, technical material. It uses short sentences and reads the way people talk.

This is the first step to profitable content marketing.

A good check is to read everything you write out loud. If you find yourself thinking, "There's no way I would ever say that," trash it and start over.

Secret 2: Play the long game of traffic



This next secret comes from [Neil Patel](#). In case you aren't familiar, he's the co-founder of [Crazy Egg](#), [Hello Bar](#), and [KISSmetrics](#). He was also named one of the top 10 online marketers by Forbes and writes about online marketing at [Quick Sprout](#).

I asked him if he had any new discoveries, and he shared this gem:

"Something I learned recently is that most of the posts that have done well on the social web typically don't do as well on Google."

"Writing basic content that has high search volume usually isn't as popular as click-bait from a social media perspective, but in the long run, these high search volume posts usually generate more traffic due to their search engine rankings."

So I followed up by asking for ONE piece of advice on how to write content to boost search results.

“Use a lot of statistics and data. Posts with stats tend to generate more backlinks, which will increase your overall search engine rankings.”

This is what the long game of traffic is all about.

Instead of going after clicks, likes, and shares, write content that will hold traffic rankings. This will bring a steady stream of people to your site. And if your content can solve their problems, they'll buy your products and become happy customers.

Secret 3: The “2-4 rule” of great content



How many hours do great content marketers put in each day? I'm sure some people routinely do 12-hour marathon sessions in front of the keyboard.

But if you ask [Mark Manson](#), a personal development blogger who has been

featured on Forbes, CNN, Vice, and Time, he'll tell you that's overkill.

“I used to approach writing the same way most people approach work: Do as much as you can. But what I've learned is that I really only have 2-4 hours of really good content in me each day. Anything past that, even if I push myself to get it out, it's probably not going to be very

good, and I end up just creating revision/editing problems for myself later on.”

“So in a way, it’s been more efficient to write less. Focus on quality over quantity. An amazing 1,000 words is worth more than a decent 3,000 words, both in terms of publishing, but also in terms of workflow and my own mental sanity.”

If you just read that and you’re not a writer, you probably let out a sigh of relief.

He also revealed that publishing and getting market feedback early on was a breakthrough in turning his content into a business.

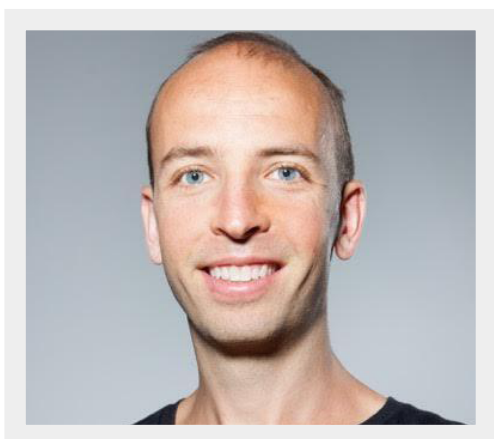
“Publish now. On a blog. On Facebook. On forums. Wherever. Start putting stuff up and getting feedback as soon as possible. There’s almost no downside today to putting as much of your writing out there as possible. It gets you used to exposing your work and receiving feedback/criticism.”

“For me, you really aren’t able to get a sense of how people are viewing your work until people are actually viewing your work. So get it out there ASAP.”

Secret 4: There are no “boring” industries, only boring content writers

Confession time: I hate SEO gurus. I’ve hired some of them when I was building up my site, and I got burned big time.

However, there are some good people in the industry who know what they’re talking about.



Brian Dean is one of them. He is an internationally recognized entrepreneur and a real SEO expert. He is the founder of [Backlinko](#), which provides practical strategies that professionals can use to get more search engine traffic.

According to him, there are no boring topics. Any mundane industry can use content marketing profitably.

“As someone that’s ranked content in some mind-numbingly boring industries, I know it can be done. It wrote a post called [“SEO Campaign Case Study: 1,117 Social Shares and 15% More Organic Traffic \(In 2 Weeks\).”](#)”

“I revealed how a Backlinko reader (Mike Bonadio) created a viral infographic for his client in one of the most boring industries online: pest control. This is black-and-white PROOF that you can create remarkable content in any niche (even so-called “boring” ones).”

Naturally, my next question was what advice he had to make

your content marketing more interesting.

“Telling stories (ANY stories) makes your content 2x better. When I first started blogging, I avoided personal stories and anecdotes at all costs. I thought to myself, ‘People subscribe to your newsletter for actionable SEO tips. They don’t care what you made for dinner.’”

“But I kept reading about the power of storytelling. So I decided to give it a shot. I published a post that had some actionable tips like usual. But this post also outlined the story of my SEO journey.”

BACKLINKOHome

Want to Increase Website Traffic? Follow These 4 Steps...

by Brian Dean | Last updated Oct. 3, 2015

In this post I’m going to show you how to get more traffic to your website using a simple 4-step formula.

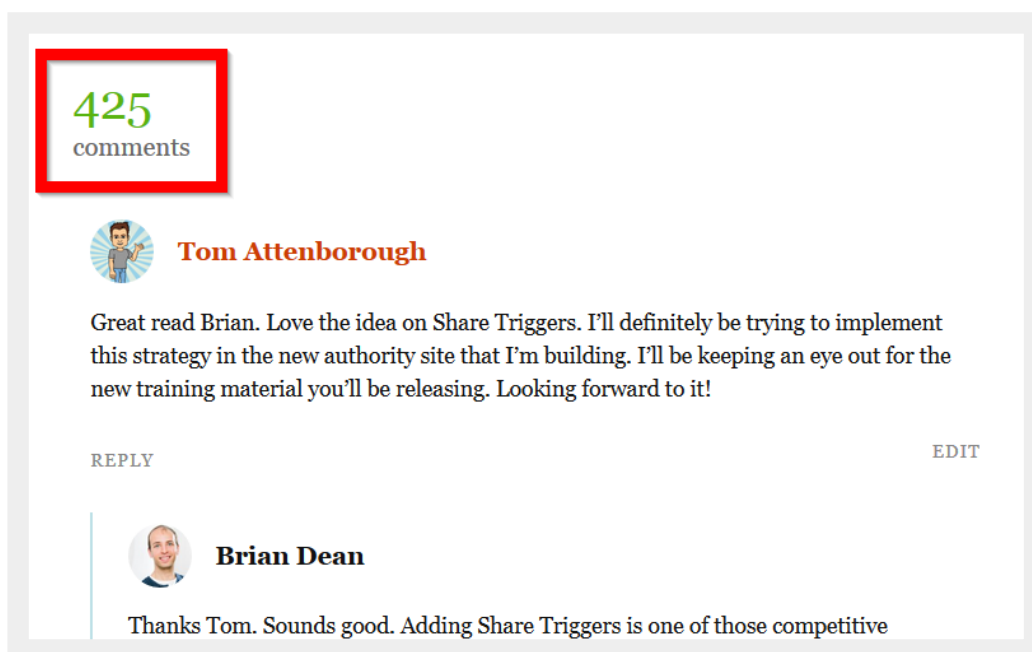
You’ll also see real life examples of how I used this formula to take Backlinko to over 90 thousand unique visitors per month.

Let’s dive right in...

The #1 Struggle Online Business Owners Face...

When you sign up for the Backlinko newsletter for the first time, you get this email from me:

“Even though this post was 70% story, it was well received. In fact, it has over 400 comments.”



Brian is right on the money with his remarks. I use stories all the time. It was part of the reason why I could write about dull things like Roth IRAs, 401Ks, and savings accounts, but in a way that attracts and engages readers.

Secret 5: Don't be afraid to be different

If you and I sat down and each wrote a one-page article, I could publish and sell mine. But you couldn't.

The reason is simple. You would censor anything you thought might offend someone or draw criticism. But I would leave it all in.

In fact, people unsubscribe from my blog all the time because I use curse words and make fun of people. But it only makes my loyal readers like me even more.

That's just my personality, though. You don't have to be outrageous or completely over the top to stand out online.



I asked my friend [Libby Kane](#) what advice she has on this. You may recognize her name. Libby is the personal finance editor at [Business Insider](#) and oversees the [YourMoney](#) vertical.

Here's what she said about being different online:

"Most of what's written and what we read is information we've heard before, and that's OK. In fact, it's a good thing — who remembers something they read once a few months ago?"

"You can make your version stand out by writing it the way you'd want to read it. Do you like lists? Pictures? GIFs? There's no rule that says you have to write a neat article of five three-sentence paragraphs. If you write the way you want to read, other people will want to read it, too."

She also said you should use your personal experiences and preferences like this in everything you write.

"You are the only person with your original experiences, insights, and opinions, and that's what will set you apart from everyone else. A great example of providing unique insights and experiences and sharing in a different way is this post from the website [Wait But Why on being late all the time](#)."

“Being late isn’t a revolutionary idea, and chances are, most people who are late have a similar process that they consider a boring, typical part of their day ... but people love to read about themselves, and people who aren’t late are fascinated by the glimpse into an experience they don’t personally have.”

In short, don’t be afraid to be different. You might lose a few complainers here and there, but you’ll build more loyal fans in the process. These loyal fans are more important to profitable content marketing than random looky-loos.

Secret 6: The 7-part checklist to beat your competitors

When I started blogging about personal finance, I had to compete with titans like [Dave Ramsey](#) and [Suze Orman](#). It was a daunting task.

That was years ago. Since I’m more established now, I’m not sure how the game has changed.



So I asked [Navid Moazzez](#) how he burst onto the highly competitive entrepreneurship scene and carved out a niche for himself so quickly. He had this to say:

“Something I learned very early on when I started publishing content online was that if I do a lot of research, the content will usually end up much better, because I know exactly what my “competitors” cover.”

“A great tool for finding the most popular content on a particular topic is [Buzzsumo.com](https://buzzsumo.com). You can even see the influencers who shared the content on social media, and you do outreach to them to see if they would be open to sharing what you’ve written as well.”

“And that brings me to something very important: If you’ve written something great, be sure to spend a lot of time promoting it, too. That’s absolutely key, or nobody will read your epic content you spent so much time creating.”

He also has an interesting checklist that he uses to test his content before he hits publish.

“After I’ve written the content, before I hit publish, I tend to ask myself a few questions:

- 1. Would my target audience share it?*
- 2. Is what I’ve written the best content out there on this topic?*
- 3. Does it include inspiring stories to engage my audience?*
- 4. Is it actionable?*
- 5. Does it contain examples and original data that support the content?*
- 6. Is it timeless/evergreen?*
- 7. Is the overall content of high standard and quality (everything from design, images, easy to read, great formatting etc.)?*

“If the answer is yes to these questions, then I know that what I’ve written is not only good, but REALLY GOOD and will be well received by my audience and other people who stumble across the content.”

Before you write your next blog post, do your research and then run through this checklist. You’ll be unstoppable.

Secret 7: Beat the blank page blues in 3 steps

Getting started writing can sometimes be the hardest part. You carve out time in your schedule to write, sit down... and all of the sudden you decide it’s a great time to start cleaning and organizing your closet.

That’s why I want to introduce you to someone who has a demanding schedule and MUST make time to write great content.



Meet John Romaniello. He is an angel investor and expert in the fields of fitness, writing, and marketing. He’s also the author of the New York Times bestselling book *Man 2.0: Engineering the Alpha* and blogs at JohnRomaniello.com.

He sat down to talk to us about finding time to write in his busy schedule.

"In The War of Art, Stephen Pressfield says, 'It's not the writing part that's hard. What's hard is sitting down to write.' The specific reasons for this are probably different for every writer, but I personally seem to struggle with blank pages. Sitting down to write and staring at a bare Word doc creates massive anxiety for me, which hampers my ability to create."

Thankfully, he shared 3 strategies he uses to overcome this.

"Firstly, I notice that the more 'formal' the writing seems, the harder it is to get going. While getting started in a Word document is difficult, writing in an email comes more easily. For that matter, typing it in an app like Notes or even in the body of a text message allows things to flow pretty easily."

"So I'll often write up to half of an article somewhere else, and then copy and paste it over to a Word doc. Further, I find that things flow more easily when I write by hand than type them, so I often get started in a notebook."

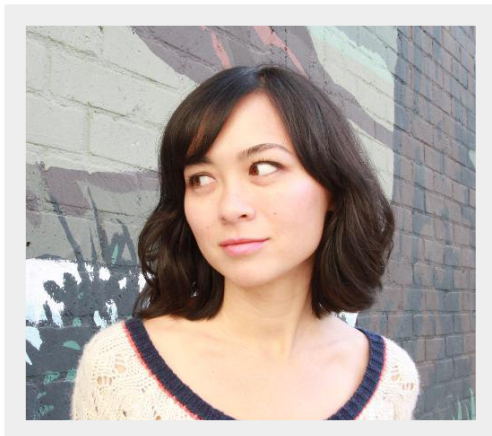
"Secondly, I create a simple outline. I more or less write my three main ideas and then leave space for 1-3 supporting points for each of those ideas. From there, I write one sentence for each idea and one for each supporting point. Many times, just creating this skeleton is enough to grease the wheels and let things flow."

"Thirdly, I impose time limits for specific projects. When it comes to my writing, I can fall into the trap of perfectionism and agonize over every word. That's probably necessary if you're writing the great American novel, but when you're writing about nutrition, this is a waste of time. Once I've got an outline done, I like to force myself to finish a draft as quickly as possible."

And if that doesn't work. Desperate times call for desperate measures, he says.

"Want to see how quickly you can really get something done? Go to a coffee shop with your laptop at 50% battery and leave your charger at home — then watch the magic happen."

Secret 8: Write your first draft with the door closed



Kristin Wong is a regular contributor to Lifehacker, NBC News, and Bankrate. She hosts and produces online videos for companies like Fidelity and writes about her journey with personal finance at her own blog, [Brokepedia](#).

She manages to contribute to all these sites and produce quality work every time. So I asked what her secret is.

"The concept of 'shitty first drafts' helped my productivity immensely, because it's the perfect antidote to writer's block. The blank page is intimidating, and one way to overcome that intimidation is to write a shitty first draft."

"It's a term coined by writer Anne Lamott. Stephen King called it 'writing with the door closed.' Write like

no one is going to read or judge your words. Write only to communicate your idea; don't worry about it being beautiful, just get the words on the page. Then, go back, edit it, and make it pretty. But you can't edit anything if you don't have anything on the page, and shitty first drafts get words on the page."

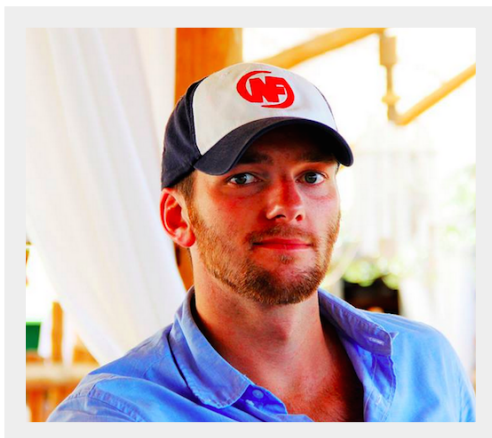
She also had a way to make the process of "shitty first drafts" more enjoyable.

"Because I wasn't 100% confident in what my perspective, voice, or niche was, I instead tried to mimic other websites that were doing what I wanted to do. In short, I wasn't being myself. After a while, I realized this was pointless. Those websites were already out there, so what was the point in just copying what's already been done?"

"I stopped trying to fit in and instead focused on writing what I wanted to write and how I wanted to write, even if it changed as I changed. Not only are readers more receptive to that authenticity, but I actually enjoy the process, which is kind of the whole point."

Secret 9: Boost your street cred by walking into controversy

Every niche has a controversial topic or sacred cows that most people won't dare to touch. However, walking straight into these can be a great way to earn credibility. As long as you do it the right way.



That's exactly what Steve Kamb, the creator of [Nerdfitness.com](https://nerdfitness.com), did when he wrote a post on "Fat Shaming vs. Body Acceptance." Here's how he went about it:

"My favorite post recently is the article ["Fat Shaming vs. Body Acceptance: Is it okay to be fat?"](#) The editor on Team Nerd Fitness and I went back and forth with this article probably a dozen times, with 10+ hours invested into the writing of it."

"We took on a controversial topic, took a strong stance on it, then presented historical and scientific evidence plus personal anecdotes, and presented our case in a logical, fun, enjoyable way. Funnily enough, we received hate mail

from both sides of the argument, but those were dwarfed by the 100+ emails thanking us for saying what needed to be said and not being afraid to do so.”

It’s a controversial topic for sure. Just check any Facebook thread and see all the bickering that goes on. So I asked Steve how he knew he was ready to hit publish.

“I love breaking down a difficult concept or a controversial topic and attacking it from a unique angle with our twist of Nerd culture references and lessons.”

“Occasionally I’m off in my predictions, but when I’m writing something and saying ‘I can’t freaking wait to publish this,’ those are the articles that go over incredibly well. The fat shaming vs. body acceptance article was one of those.”

That’s the key. Don’t write for the sake of being controversial. Do your research and present your argument in a way that’s unique. This is a great way to boost your street credibility. That goes a long way in making your content marketing profitable.

Secret 10: Drive people to your email list

You can write the best content in the world, but it won’t be profitable without an email list. I learned this the hard way. When I started IWT, I didn’t have an email list for years. It’s a move that cost me millions of dollars.

An email list is the best way to keep people updated on your content and send them any offers once you launch a product.

But most people ruin their chances at ever getting subscribers.

To show you what I mean, let me ask you a simple question: Why should I (or anyone) sign up for your email list?

If you don't have a crisp answer, you're not alone. When most people get asked this question, they list tons of obscure reasons. Or worse, they don't have an answer at all.

That's a huge problem.

Because if you — the business owner — don't know, how can you expect your readers to?

When I started my site, my opt-in copy used to be hidden in the sidebar with this horrible language:

First, everyone has a god damned opinion. "What!? You can't run! You'll lose too much weight!" more than a few people shrieked upon finding out my strategy (working out, running, and eating more — as usual, [there are no secrets](#)). All I could do was point out that it seemed to be working within seven days, as I completed 1/3 of the . There's not much they could say about that.

Other people told me I would get fat (as if I would let that happen for a few hundred bucks). And of course, everyone had theories about what to eat, drink, and even what combination of weights to lift. It was like my [minutiae article](#) was happening in real life.

I ignored every one of them.

* * *

I picked one person to help me: my co-worker, Brian. No, he isn't a huge bodybuilder. And no, he doesn't read Men's Health every day or bring a giant jar of creatine to work every day. But out of all the people who offered advice, Brian is the only person I know who consistently goes to the gym almost every single day. I'd rather learn from the person who is boringly disciplined rather than someone who has sexy ideas. (My favorite quote of his when he asked me what I like to eat. "Do you like eggs? Peanuts? Mexican food?" I spent 5 minutes describing what I liked, and Brian sat there thoughtfully for a second. "Yeah," he said, "you just need to eat all of them." THANK YOU)

Then, I set up a [PBwiki](#) and invited all the bettors to get notified every week when I updated my weight. I then proceeded to talk an incredible amount of trash to psych out my bettors:

Starting weight	
-1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The beginning of the end for my bettors -RamiitA pall is cast over this challenge as I encounter my first-ever week of losing weight. I will recover. -Ramiit
+3.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none">I AM A HUGE MAN, THE LARGEST I HAVE EVER BEEN. I WON'T WALK ON BRIDGES BECAUSE I'M AFRAID THEY WILL TOPPLE OVER. I AM ALSO AVOIDING PICKING UP BABIES BECAUSE I AM AFRAID OF ACCIDENTALLY THROWING THEM INTO THE STRATOSPHERE. IT'S ON!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Using psychological principles to crush my opponents

This also uses the psychological principle of commitment to force myself to win my bet. (For example, how do you think I'll be affected by the fact that this blog post will be read by 40,000+ people?) For the two best books on practical applications of psychology, check out Influence: The Science of Persuasion by Cialdini and Propaganda: The Everyday Use and Abuse of Persuasion by Pratkanis and Aronson.

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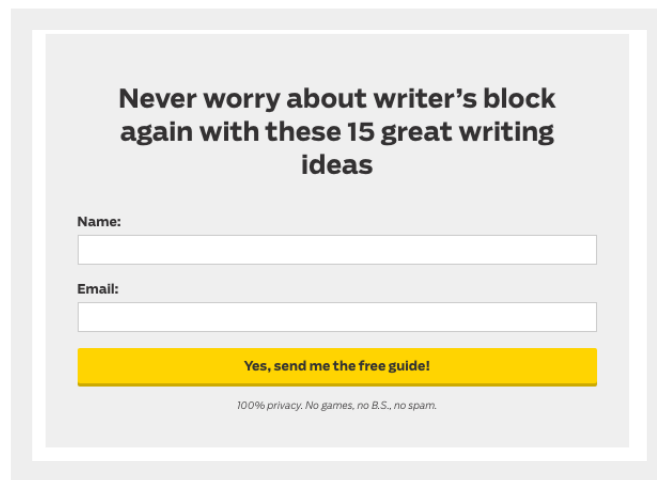
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RECOMMENDED READING

Who wants another “free newsletter” in their inbox?

Fast forward to today Now, I've learned how to create opt-ins that people want. For example, I included this opt-in at the end

of a post on crushing writer's block:



**Never worry about writer's block
again with these 15 great writing
ideas**

Name:

Email:

Yes, send me the free guide!

100% privacy. No games, no B.S., no spam.

If you were crippled by writer's block, would you opt in for this?

Of course you would! It's almost irresistible. It speaks to your exact needs. And it gives you an immediate solution to your problem.

You can do this, too.

All you need is this proven, 2-step process:

1. Create an irresistible offer or "bonus"
2. Sell the offer with ultra-compelling bullets.

Here's how to do it.

▶ Opt-in Bonuses: Good vs. Great		
INDUSTRY	"GOOD" OPT-IN BONUS	"GREAT" OPT-IN BONUS
Men's fitness	"21 Ways to Deal With Sore Finger Joints"	"The 3-Step Guide to Ripped Abs"
Personal finance	"Taxes and Asset Allocation 101"	"The 12-Minute Guide to Automating Your Finances"
Aspiring lawyers	"How to Communicate With Law School Professors"	"8 Easy LSAT Cheat Sheets"
Career advice	"The Ultimate Career Survival Guide For When You're Feeling Lost"	"My 16-Point Interview Preparation Checklist"
Dog training	"Learn How to Understand Your Dog"	"Bonus Video: How to Train Your Dog to Behave In Public"
Running	"Injury Prevention and Rest for Runners"	"The Step-by-Step Guide to Becoming a Runner"
Parenting	"Free Ebook: Connecting With Your Child Even When You're Stressed"	"6 Easy & Fun Activities to Do With Your Child Even When You're Busy"
Relationships for women	"The Career Woman's Guide to More Satisfying Relationships"	"Top 10 Mistakes That Are Causing Him to Lose Attraction"

10x your response rate with an irresistible offer or "bonus"

Whether you call them carrots, lead magnets, or bonuses, the key is to have the RIGHT one for your audience.

You can use a simple rule to figure out what the right offer is:

Identify your audience's single most pervasive and persistent problem...

...then offer them the single most valuable, concrete and immediate solution.

The key word here is “single.” Focus on solving 1 specific pain point for your readers, and they will jump on your offer.

Here are 5 examples of “good” versus “great” opt-in bonuses. Notice how specific the great opt-in bonuses are:

Here’s how you can do the same:

Brainstorm a list of problems your audience has.

Next, think about which problems you have immediate solutions for.

For example, you shouldn’t try to create an entire passive income system. That would be too in-depth.

But you could create a guide that helps someone find a profitable business idea. It solves the immediate problem and moves them closer to passive income. That’s the perfect crunchy tactic people want to opt in to your list for.

Once you have an idea for the problem you can solve, fill in this proven template to create a simple headline for your opt-in:

“[PROBLEM]? Get my [SOLUTION] and [RESULT]”

Here are a few examples of this template in action:

- “Tired of unsuccessful cold calls? Get my 3-part sales script and learn how to triple your sales”
- “Feeling tired all day? Get my power lunch recipe and beat the afternoon slump”
- “Sick of all the clutter in your house? Get my 12-part decluttering checklist and get your house clean and tidy”

See how that speaks to your audience’s pain? And see how immediate the solution is?

Now you've got an idea of WHAT your opt-in bonus should do, let's talk about how to create one.

3 simple ways to create your first opt-in bonus

1. Write a free report or ebook

Who hasn't joined an email list for at least one free report or ebook?


They're easy to create. All you have to do is write a short report (a few pages is plenty) and convert it into a PDF.

But don't let the simplicity fool you into thinking they're not effective. Some of our most popular opt-in bonuses are only 4 pages.

Plus, you don't even have to write your report from scratch. You could:

- Compile a bunch of your best blog posts into one easy-to-reference, easily digestible guide
- Pull pieces of content out of one of your existing products. For example, I often give away a free chapter of my book to new subscribers
- Interview experts on a subject and compile the answers into a report (many people are happy to do this as long as you provide a link back to their business)

Here's an example from our site, where we give away the first chapter in my *New York Times* bestselling book:








**Get the best of my
New York Times
bestseller for free**

—

This is a test. I've never put all this content online before. I don't want to cut into book sales, so get it now before I come to my senses and take this down.

Get The Best Of My Book For Free

Featured in:   THE WALL STREET JOURNAL   The New York Times 

Notice: We're crystal clear on what we're offering (a free chapter of my New York Times bestseller). And we're creating some urgency around opting in for this offer ("get it now before I come to my senses and take it down").

Also, notice that there's nothing else you can do on this part of the page. Yes, you can scroll down. But the action is clear: Push that button (yes, you'll have to give us your email) and you'll get a free chapter of this book — right in your inbox.

It's simple but effective.

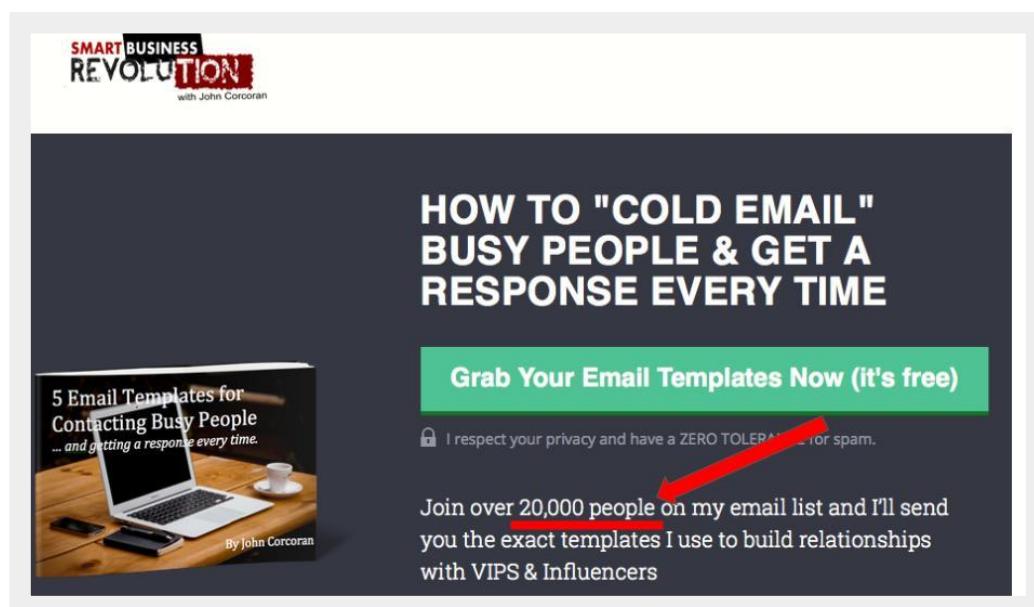
2. Give away a tool or some other “freebie”

You can also give your readers a free tool — something tangible they can take and immediately use.

For example:

- If your audience is into creative writing, you could give away the actual template you use to write a post
- If you help people with online dating, you could give away entire transcripts of texts you send — that your readers could swipe and use for themselves

Here’s an example of a free email template that one of our Zero to Launch alumni, [John Corcoran](#), gives away to his readers:



Notice:

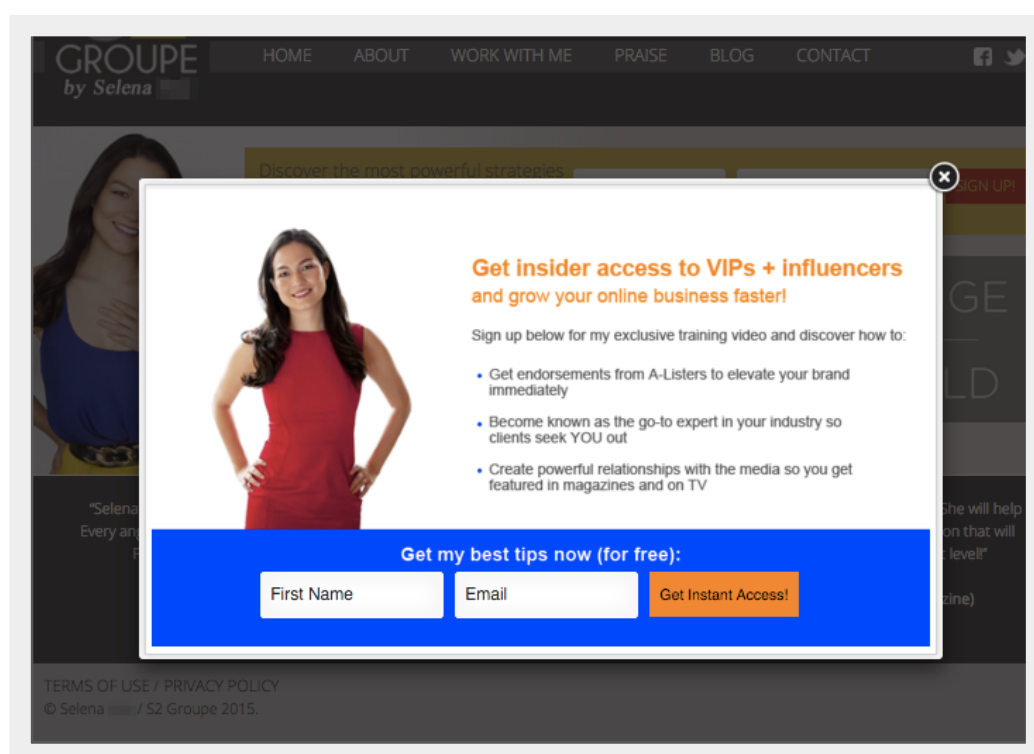
- It’s crystal clear both WHO this bonus is for (people who want to network with VIPs)
- And WHAT the promise is (email outreach templates). This is a perfect example of giving people a useful tool!
- The “Join Over 20,000 people” adds social proof and credibility to his offer

This is an awesome example of a tool you could offer to your readers.

3. Shoot a bonus video

Videos are another great way to entice readers to opt in, especially if you're good on camera or just prefer shooting videos over writing copy.

Here's an example of a video opt-in bonus from a Zero to Launch graduate, [Selena Soo](#):



Notice:

- She calls it an “exclusive training video,” not just a “video.” Why’d she do that? This isn’t just fancy wordplay — it’s about positioning your material in the best way possible
- Also, pay close attention to the bullets she chose to describe the video. Who wouldn’t want clients seeking them out? Who wouldn’t want to be featured in the media?

The format for your videos can be simple. You can use PowerPoint and Camtasia to record them, as long as they're delivering genuine solutions to people.

That's HOW to deliver your opt-in bonus.

The final step is to make your offer irresistible with ultra-compelling copy to sell it.

The 3-Step Fascination Formula to grab people's attention

Here's how this works. Start with the main benefit of your opt-in bonus. Then go through the following process:



Step 1: Pump the energy level up to 110%



Step 2: Add a surprise or counterintuitive "twist"



Step 3: Add as many specific and vivid details as possible

Let's run through it once, using an example of a bonus for career seekers. One potential benefit might be:

"Get your dream job"

This copy isn't "bad." Who doesn't want to get their dream job?

But it's flat. And it's generic.

Let's give it a makeover with the 3-Step Fascination Formula.



Step 1. Pump the energy level up to 110%

When you're writing opt-in copy, you've got to have energy behind it. Take it to the extreme.

Why?

People browsing the web are basically sleepwalkers. They sleepwalk from site to site until they find something that jolts them awake.

The solution? Pump the energy WAY up.

So let's go back to the original bullet you might put beneath your opt-in offer:

“Get your dream job”

How could we pump this up with more energy?

How about...

“Find and land your dream job”

Hey, that's not terrible. But we can go one step further:

“FIND and LAND your dream job in months instead of years”

Now we're talking! This copy isn't perfect, but this is a good start.

Let's take a look at the next step.



Step 2. Add a surprise or counter-intuitive “twist”

It’s not enough just to sell the benefits of your offer.

You also need to pique your reader’s curiosity. The best way to do that is to add something surprising or counterintuitive to your copy.

So how would we pump up the bullet we were working on before:

“FIND and LAND your dream job in months instead of years”

How could we make this more intriguing?

Maybe this:

“FIND and LAND your dream job in months instead of years — even if you don’t know what your dream job is”

Wow! If I were a looking for a better job BUT had no idea what my dream job was, I’d want this.

There are several ways to add intrigue to your offer. You can:

- Add an “even if” statement (“Learn how to network... even if you’re an introvert”)

- Give a warning (“Miss this critical step and kiss your job offer goodbye”)
- Hint at a secret (“Most men go on dozens of dates and NEVER know they’re doing this wrong”)
- Name a technique (“My [Briefcase Technique](#) that helped me land job offer after job offer”)

Note: It goes without saying that whatever your twist is, your material has to deliver. Don’t make promises you can’t keep.

Which brings us to the last step...



Step 3. Add as many specific and vivid details as possible

There's one more thing we can do to take our bullets to the next level, and that is to make them as specific and vivid as possible.

Let's recall the previous bullet:

“FIND and LAND your dream job in months instead of years — even if you don't know what your dream job is”

This isn't bad. But it doesn't conjure up an image in your mind.

How could you take this copy and make it more vivid and specific?

Let's take a look at 3 different tweaks we could make to make the copy more specific:

- **“FIND and LAND your dream job in 6 months — even if you don't know what your dream job is”**
- **“FIND and LAND your dream job in 6 months — even if you're up against people with 10+ years of experience”**
- **“Flood your inbox with job offers — even if you have zero experience, want to switch industries, and have no network to help you out”**

That last one is strong. You can imagine getting emails with job offers — right in your inbox.

Now let's take a step back and compare the original bullet with the one we've just created for our opt-in:

“Get your dream job”

vs.

“Flood your inbox with job offers — even if you have zero experience, want to switch industries, and have no network to help you out”

Which sounds more compelling? Which would more likely to convince you to sign up?

Here are a few more real-life examples of before and after bullets:

Before	After
“How to get a job”	“How to find and land your dream job in 6 months or less — even if you’ve been fired before or have no experience”
“How to read female body language”	“How to pick up on subtle body language clues that 99% of men don’t even know exist”
“How to get more traffic”	“Send a site-crashing number of leads back to your site with this little known ‘Google Hack’”
“How to reduce inflammation”	“How this nutrient-rich superfood can help you eliminate burning stomach pains — even if you’ve taken medication for years”

What's next?

You've just learned content marketing secrets from people who've built successful businesses around their blogs. Together, they reach a combined 125 million monthly readers. So these aren't just random best practices. They've been tested in the real world.

If you found any of this helpful, we have even more free material about content marketing and copywriting on GrowthLab.

We cover:

- [Why good copywriting is critical to your business success](#)
- [How to write great headlines](#)
- [The 3 keys to 6-figure sales pages](#)
- [And much, much more](#)