

# First 9 Steps to a Money-Making Blog for Total Beginners (in Just 2 Hours a Day)

“Spending my free time sharing what I’m passionate about and getting paid to do it really is such a sucky way to live”... SAID NO ONE EVER. And that’s pretty much what you’re getting yourself into when you decide to start blogging seriously.

**Is it a lot of work?** Yes. Is it head-bangingly frustrating at times? Yes. Does it mean that you’ll probably have to sacrifice some of your Netflix time or Facebook-scrolling time? Probably.

But it is also extremely fulfilling, rewarding and fun!

Plus, if you follow the right plan (ahem, see below), you can save yourself a ton of time chasing “blogging tips” and actually start to make an impact on others’ lives and an income for yourself and your family as soon as possible.

It’s a pretty great gig. But you’re already here so I probably don’t need to convince you of that!

I’ve included a checklist here at the beginning of the guide that you can use to keep you on track as you learn and implement each step along the way.

# The “9-Steps” CHECKLIST

Follow these steps in order (detailed instructions in the guide below).  
Check each one off as you complete it.

- 1. Decide to treat your blog like a business
- 2. Decide on your blog topic + Avatar
- 3. Install your blog using WordPress
- 4. Choose a theme/design
- 5. Brainstorm 25 post ideas
- 6. Write your first post!
- 7. Start using Pinterest to get readers
- 8. Set up your email newsletter
- 9. Invest in your blog - EBA waiting list

But before we dive into this detailed 9-step plan, I need to tell you quickly WHY I wrote it, and I can do it in two words: **information overload**.

As I'm sure you've noticed, when you start to Google around about how to start a blog and make money, you come head-on to a huge and heavy brick wall called "information overload". Articles on how to start, what to write, how to write, headlines, tech, design, hosting (what's that?!), SEO (what's *that*?!), alt tags and algorithms and plugins (what the heck is that??!!) and before you know it your brain hurts and you just want to curl up on the couch and eat chips and watch Netflix and never look at a computer screen again.

**It's all just too much, and it scares people** away from doing something that is really quite easy, fun and lucrative. The thing is, you don't need to know it all *right now*. You just need to know the basics, the right framework for getting started on the right foot.

In my [network marketing business](#), we have a saying that "Ignorance on fire is better than knowledge on ice" which basically just means get over yourself and get started, even if you don't know all the steps ahead of you yet. But I'll do you one better: I'll give you **the first 9 steps you should take** after you've decided to start a money-making blog so you don't waste time on stuff that *doesn't matter right now*. If you do these things first, in order, you'll have set the foundation for a strong and profitable blog that will be a joy to work on.

**And that's why I wrote this post.** I recommend you read/skim this guide in it's entirety first so you get a clear big-picture overview, then start back at the beginning and actually follow along and do the work step-by-step. You can also sign up below to download this guide for free as a PDF so you can access it anytime. Okay, let's dive in!

# STEP 1: TREAT THIS LIKE A BUSINESS FROM DAY 1

A “sometimes” blog is a hobby blog, which is fine, but it won't make you money. This doesn't mean you have to spend 40+ hours a week on it, but it DOES mean you have to schedule hard, non-negotiable time into your calendar to work on your blog.

10 hours a week is a great start, scheduled in 30, 60, or 90-minute time blocks. This might mean you have to wake up an hour earlier or sacrifice your evening Netflix habit to make it work, but the time has to come from somewhere.

“Wake up an hour earlier and use that time for yourself, use that time to work on your goal. **You have time.** You're just spending it doing something else” - Rachel Hollis

**Action Step: Schedule 10 hours each week into your calendar in 30, 60, or 90-minute time blocks.**

## STEP 2: DECIDE WHO YOU WANT TO WRITE TO/FOR



Before you write a single word on your blog, you should decide who you're going to be writing to. In blogging and online marketing, this is typically called your "Avatar" (this will come in handy when you choose your blog name in the next step).

In the beginning, you might just have a vague idea, and that's okay, but the earlier you can narrow this down, the better since it will help you create the most relevant and helpful content for your readers. Think about who could benefit from what you'll teach. This doesn't mean you have to be a credentialed expert or have a prestigious degree on your topic! Just think about topics you're passionate about, can't stop talking about and naturally love sharing about and helping people with.

Oftentimes your Avatar will be YOU from one or two years ago. This is a little hack I learned from Ruth Soukup in her course, [Elite Blog Academy](#) (which teaches you EVERYTHING you'll ever need to know about running a successful blog... more on that at the end).

No need to feign authority or act as if you know it all. Just be yourself, and share tips, advice, hacks and revelations you've learned along the way. We'll talk more about creating content like this in Step #5.

**Action Step: Spend 15–30 minutes writing a list of things you love talking and sharing about. This can be anything from parenting to yoga to business to weight loss to crafting to psychology to fitness to... well, you get the idea ;). You'll probably have several things written down, but choose the one that sparks the most joy (yes, I'm a huge Marie Kondo fan).**

## **STEP 3: INSTALL YOUR BLOG ON WORDPRESS**

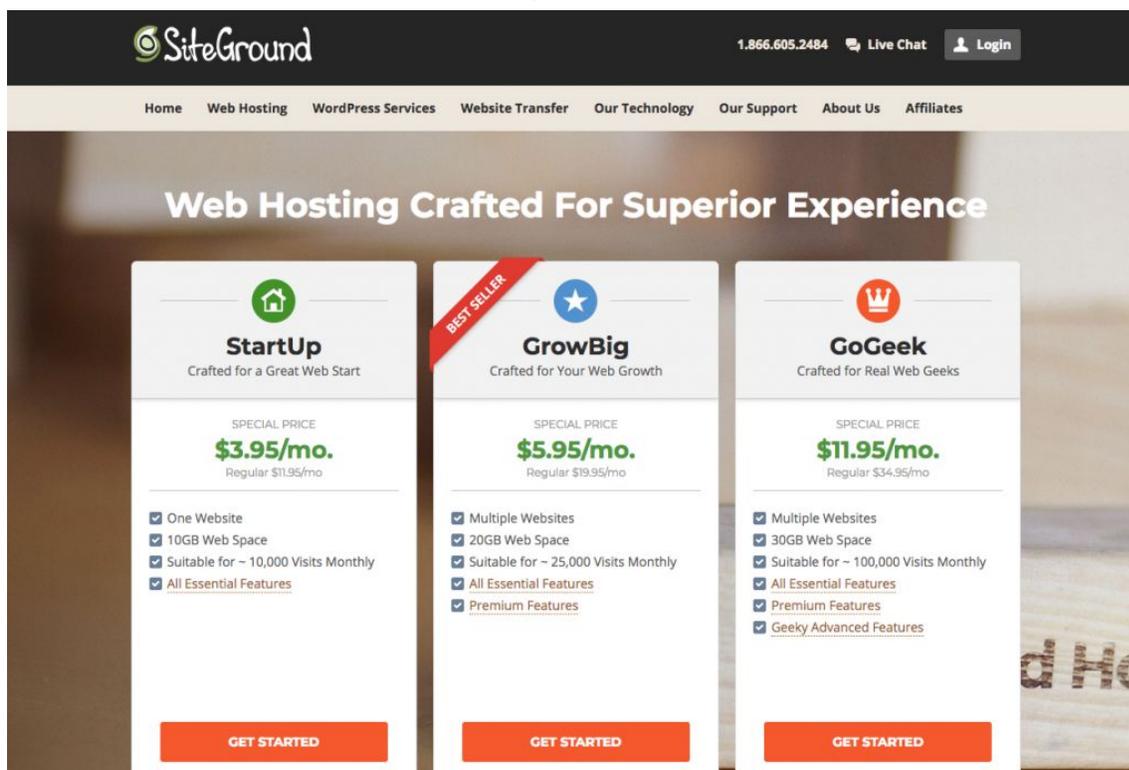
When you start a new blog, there are many different options for which platform to use to write on. I'm going to save you a bunch of time, frustration and money down the line and just tell you which platform is the best: **self-hosted WordPress\*\***.

Ask around to any professional blogger and 99% of them will tell you they use self-hosted WordPress. It's the most versatile and user-friendly of all the blogging platforms and is widely considered **THE go-to** for anyone who is serious about blogging.

Self-hosted WordPress is a free blogging platform, but you will need to pay for **hosting** to make your blog "live" on the internet. There are hundreds of hosting providers out there, but I use and recommend

[Siteground](#), because of their affordable pricing & *freaking amazing* customer service.

It's \$3.95 per month (paid annually) and all you do is [go to their site](#), click "WordPress Hosting" on the home page, and sign up with your credit card info for the "StartUp Plan".



The screenshot shows the SiteGround website's hosting plans. The header includes the SiteGround logo, phone number (1.866.605.2484), Live Chat, and Login. The navigation menu includes Home, Web Hosting, WordPress Services, Website Transfer, Our Technology, Our Support, About Us, and Affiliates. The main heading is "Web Hosting Crafted For Superior Experience". Three plans are displayed:

Plan Name	Icon	Special Price	Regular Price	Key Features
StartUp	Home icon	\$3.95/mo.	Regular \$11.95/mo	One Website, 10GB Web Space, Suitable for ~ 10,000 Visits Monthly, All Essential Features
GrowBig	Star icon	\$5.95/mo.	Regular \$19.95/mo	Multiple Websites, 20GB Web Space, Suitable for ~ 25,000 Visits Monthly, All Essential Features, Premium Features
GoGeek	Crown icon	\$11.95/mo.	Regular \$34.95/mo	Multiple Websites, 30GB Web Space, Suitable for ~ 100,000 Visits Monthly, All Essential Features, Premium Features, Geeky Advanced Features

Once you're done (takes like 5 minutes), just open a chat or support ticket there and let them know you're a new blogger and would like them to install WordPress for you. They do it for free!

Let them know what you want your blog name to be ([www.yourblogname.com](#)). When deciding on your blog name, consider your blog topic and Avatar and make it relevant. Another option is to use your own name for your blog name. **Don't obsess over this too much**, just make sure it's not confusing or hard to spell and doesn't have any numbers, dashes or special characters in it (gets waayyyy too confusing for people).

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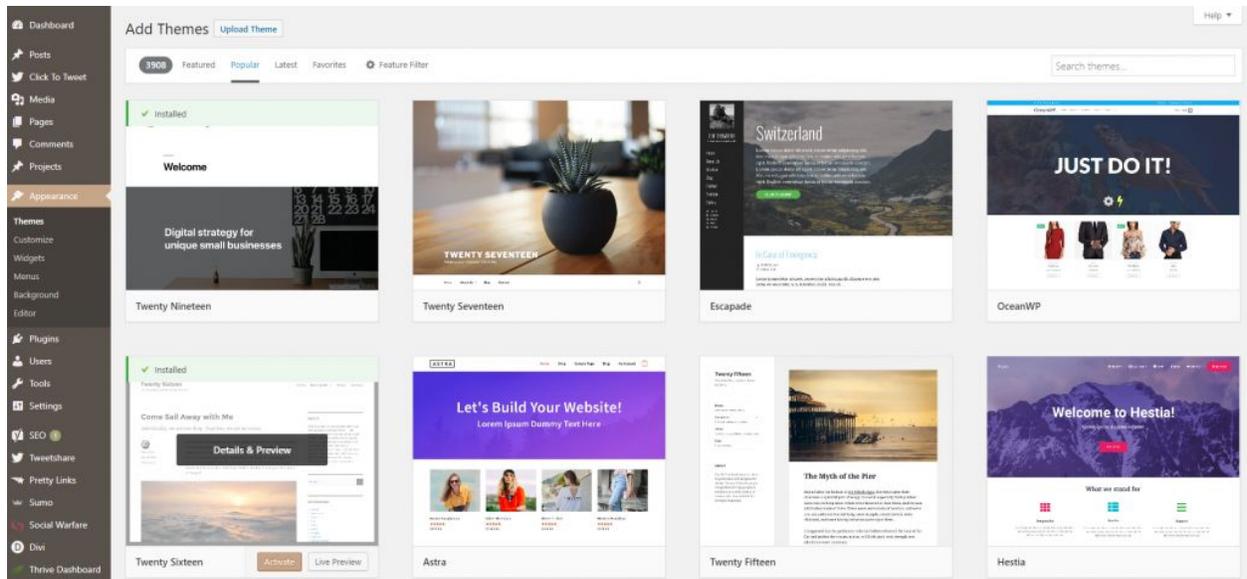
**\*\*Quick side note:** We're talking about self-hosted WordPress here, not WordPress.com. WordPress.com is really just suited for hobby bloggers. Self-hosted WordPress is for bloggers who intend to make money with their blog.

**Action Step:** Set up hosting at [Siteground](#) and ask them to install WordPress on your new blog.

## **STEP 4: CHOOSE A THEME/DESIGN FOR YOUR BLOG**

Once you get word from Siteground that your blog is ready, you can log in and start writing. BUT, hold up! There are a few steps you need to take care of before you dive in, the first of which is the **design** of your blog (called a "theme" in WordPress).

**My #1 tip for you when choosing your blog theme?** Just choose a free theme from the gallery (screenshot below) that you like the general look & feel of, but don't spend longer than 20 minutes deciding!



*To do this, once logged in, click “Appearance” > “Themes” > “Add New” from the sidebar menu to browse the free themes.*

So many bloggers spend WAAAYYYY too much time in this phase and get sucked down the never-ending rabbit hole of trying to design a logo and make their blog look perfect. The problem is, **that’s the wrong thing to spend time on** in the beginning.

You need to focus your time on creating amazing blog posts and getting them in front of the right people. Otherwise you’ll have a perfect-looking blog that no one ever sees.

So just pick a theme you generally like, skip the logo for now (your blog name will still show at the top), and move on to the next step! You can – and should – upgrade your blog design later once you start to get readers... but focusing on this in the beginning really is a waste of time. Just trust me on this one ;)

**Action Step: Choose a design (theme) for your blog from the free WordPress gallery. Don’t obsess. Just pick one and move it along!**

## STEP 5: BRAINSTORM BLOG POST IDEAS

I always tell people that a good blog post (the kind that gets shared) will *focus on the reader*, as opposed to being about you. This is one of the fundamentals of a successful and profitable blog: **make it about your readers.**

**It should help them do one or more of the following:** solve a problem, reach a goal, inspire them to action, or help them shift their thinking. With that in mind, make a list of at least 25 problems or questions that your readers might have.

For example, if your blog topic is health & wellness and your Avatar is a millennial mom, the items on your list might look something like this:

- How to find time to workout with a new baby
- How to get your newborn baby to sleep through the night (so you can too!)
- 5 easy mommy and me exercises
- 10 foods that will increase your energy
- How to get rid of your mommy pooch
- How to (safely!) lose weight while breastfeeding
- How to create a morning routine when you're a new mom
- How to make time for self care with toddlers in the house
- 7 screen-free activities to keep toddlers busy while you work out
- An easy 10-minute home workout for new moms
- How to create a routine for your toddlers (and bring peace back into your home!)
- 21 common health mistakes stay-at-home-moms make
- Time-blocking for millennial moms (how to actually get stuff done!)

Okay, I think you get the idea ;) Just make a list of 25 things that you can help your ideal reader with. These will be your very first blog posts!

**Action Step: Make a list of 25 problems or questions your Avatar has.**

Also! Be sure to grab this freebie download that has 120 blog post ideas for more inspiration:



## **STEP 6: START WRITING POSTS**

Now that you have plenty of blog post ideas to get started... **get started!**

As you sit down to write your first post you might find yourself struggling with how to start, what to actually say, how long it should be, and how to end it all off.

It's the curse of the blank white screen. It can be intimidating for anyone, and especially so for new bloggers! But I've got a fix for that, and it's another trick I learned from Elite Blog Academy.

### **It's called the F.O.C.U.S. method.**

When you use the F.O.C.U.S. framework to write your blog posts, writer's block pretty much disappears and it helps the words just flow through your fingertips and onto the (digital) page. To use the F.O.C.U.S. method on your blog posts, just [follow the instructions in this post](#).

One final piece of advice on writing before we move on: **be consistent!**

This doesn't mean you have to write every day, but it does mean you should be posting consistently on a regular schedule, not sporadically whenever you feel like it. 1-2 x per week is great.

**I can't stress this point enough: your blog will not grow if you are not consistent.**

So plan out your content (use your list of 25 + the freebie with 120 additional post ideas) and plug those titles into your calendar so you know exactly what you'll be posting and when.

You can use Google calendar, post-it notes on your paper wall calendar, or whichever method you like, but DO PLAN IT and BE CONSISTENT.

**Action Step: Write and publish your first post using the F.O.C.U.S. method.**

## STEP 7: START USING PINTEREST

Okay, so now you're all set up and writing amazing blog posts consistently. What's next? Can you guess?

**Readers! You need people to *actually read your blog!*** In the blogging world, you might hear this referred to as “traffic” or “pageviews”, but it all basically means you want eyeballs on your blog.

But how do you find them? First, let's shift that question around because it's actually a matter of *how they find you*.

There are many, many, *many* strategies and tactics to getting readers to your blog, but I'm going to share with you the #1 best way to start: Pinterest.

I'm sure you've already heard of Pinterest, but probably think of it as a place to save recipes, kids birthday party ideas and DIY projects for your home. And it is that.

**But it's also the successful bloggers' secret weapon** for getting massive traffic to their blogs.

It's impossible to explain Pinterest blog marketing in one bullet point, but the basic gist is that you create “Pin” images for each blog post (super easy with a free tool like [Canva](#)) and pin them on Pinterest for others to find.

When you're ready for this step, take [McKinzie's free Pinterest course](#) so you make sure you do it right (and save yourself time and frustration trying to “wing it”).



**\*\*Quick side note!** You're going to be tempted with many other traffic strategies you hear about, such as SEO (Search Engine Optimization), Facebook pages and groups, live video, YouTube videos, blog networking, Facebook ads, and many others, but I implore you to put your blinders on and just focus on Pinterest to start. It's the easiest and fastest way to gain traction in the beginning, and if you split your focus onto other things you're going to get overwhelmed and make very little progress. Stay laser focused!

**Action Step: Set up a Pinterest account for your blog and sign up for [McKinzie's free Pinterest Primer](#) marketing course.**

## **STEP 8: SET UP YOUR EMAIL NEWSLETTER**

Having an email list is suuupper important! You should get this going as soon as you can as it will help you leverage your sporadic and unpredictable blog traffic and convert it into loyal readers and fans who come back to your blog again and again.

To start, you can use a free mail service like [Mailerlite](#) or Mailchimp until you reach your first 1,000 subscribers. Just sign up and follow the instructions to create an email sign up form to place on your blog.

Email marketing for your blog is a whole other topic, and when used effectively, can help grow your blog and income by leaps and bounds. But for now, just keep it simple.

When you're ready to dive into the details of email marketing and making money with your blog ([here are the 5 ways most bloggers actually make money](#)), then you're probably also ready for Step #9, so here we go...

**Action Step: Sign up for a free account at Mailerlite or Mailchimp and create an email sign up form for your blog. Place it in your sidebar and footer for now.**

## **STEP 9: INVEST IN YOUR BLOG**

**Here's the part where I give you advice that you don't really want to hear.**

As we talked about in Step #1 above, if you think you can create a successful blog by working on it for a few hours every once in a while – you're wrong. *You need to invest time* into this and commit to it for the long haul.

But you also need to invest money, specifically in training or you'll just end up spinning your wheels following endless "blogging tips" and getting nowhere. **You need a cohesive blog growth plan.**

After all, we're treating this like a business, remember? I love the way Rosemarie from [The Busy Budgeter](#) puts it:

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“Whatever job you have now, you probably trained for right? Maybe you went to college, maybe you interned, or maybe your predecessor trained you. Well, trying to blog without investing in training is kind of like trying to do your job without anyone ever telling you what your job is. Without investing BOTH time and money into your blog, this isn’t going to happen.”

Books and courses on blogging, marketing, running an online business are all great investments.

I’ve mentioned several resources throughout this article to help you start your blog and take your education further, but my #1 recommendation is [Elite Blog Academy](#). It’s the only complete blogging program I know of that covers every single thing you need to turn your blog into a successful business.



**The catch?** It’s only open once a year. The creator, 7-figure blogger Ruth Soukup, is dedicated to making sure each year’s students get the attention and training they need to really make their blog successful.

[Just take a peek at these bloggers’ stories...](#) aren’t they fall-out-of-your-seat amazing?! So even if right now you’re thinking there’s no way you can afford to invest in your blog, [just get on the](#)

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[free waitlist anyway](#), because you never know what could happen between now and the time it opens up again and I would hate for you to miss out and have to wait for another YEAR to really take your blog to amazing levels!

**Action Step:** [Sign up for the free waitlist at Elite Blog Academy.](#)

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Okay, I know that was a lot of information packed into these 9 steps! Your head is probably spinning with ideas and information, but just pause for a moment and take a deep breath. The fact that you're still here reading this means that you're serious – congratulations!! Just take things one step at a time... the really great news is NOW YOU KNOW WHICH STEPS TO TAKE! Doesn't that feel great?! Isn't that a relief?!

**But now, you have work to do.** Knowledge isn't enough to start your blog or make any money; you need to take action!

So let's quickly circle back to Step #1: block out time in your calendar this week to start your blog. Will you do that for me? For YOU? I hope you say yes.



Love,  
Candis

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