

Boost your Traffic with a Blog Contest

by Nicole Dean of www.NicoleOnTheNet.com



Contests are nothing new in the online world. People have been using contests to get free web traffic for years. However, there is a slightly new twist since the blog revolution that has made running a contest much more effective and fun for bloggers. The concept is the same, but it allows for more interaction.

Blog contests are a great way to network with others and they're a fun way to draw attention (traffic) to your blog. I've personally sponsored contests like this, and participated in them, so I know this works. I've even won a few prizes by participating. The important things are to get great prizes and to really promote the contest well and you'll have results. Here's how it works.

STEP ONE: GET PRIZES

Every contest needs a prize, right? That's where you'll start.

You come up with a prize (or many prizes) that would be appealing to your blog readers. The prizes will make or break your contest. If you have nothing that people want, they won't play to win. So, get some good prizes.

Now, before you start thinking that this will cost you money, think again. If you have your own product or service that you sell, offering that as a prize would be preferable since it's free and you can promote it on your blog (so everyone who sees your contest will also see your product link). But, if you don't have your own products, you can easily ask around and find people who will donate prizes. Why would they donate? Because you'd include a link to their website in your contest – and we already know that your contest is going to get a lot of traffic, so they'd be silly to say "no".

You can get prizes that are digital (like ebooks), services (like ghostwritten articles), or actual products (like makeup or candles). You can even offer gift certificates or cash.

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Need prizes?

If you've got a "mom" contest in mind, contact the owners at www.MenuPlanningCentral.com for a prize. They'll normally donate for a good contest.

If you've got a "work at home mom" contest in mind, contact us at www.JustAddSweat.com for a prize. I know the owner. ;)

If you've got an "internet marketing" contest in mind, you can contact me, too. I usually have something I can offer. As long as you promise to promote your contest using the tips I have below, I'll donate.

Another great place to contact would be any message board or community where Direct Sales reps hang out. If you're looking for products like candles or skin care or vitamins, these reps will oftentimes offer a prize in order to get the free advertising in trade. Just make sure you only accept prizes from people you've seen hanging around regularly or who you've ordered from to make sure they don't turn into dead-beat prize donors who don't deliver.

STEP TWO: SET-UP YOUR CONTEST

Once you have your prizes lined up, the fun starts. You just create your contest and then start promoting it.

You have many options for how to run your contest. Here are just a few ideas:

1. Ask your readers to post a comment to win. All they have to do is comment. Anything from "I want to win" to "Nice blog" could count.
2. Some bloggers ask their readers to post why they should win and they grant the prize to the best response. Asking "Tell me why you should win" can certainly get people talking, especially if you have a really good prize.
3. If you're giving away money, you can ask "Tell me what you'd do with the money" and reward the person with the best answer with the cash.

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4. Ask your readers to post a story or question. You're in charge, so have fun with it! Anything from "most embarrassing moment" to "best tip" would work.
5. If you want to get to know your readers, you can ask them to complete a survey to win. (Recommended tool: www.OneMinuteSurveys.com) Sometimes running an anonymous survey can work to your benefit in getting more honest responses from people who might not feel comfortable emailing or posting their thoughts on your blog.
6. If your readers are bloggers themselves, ask them to blog about your contest (on their own blogs) and then comment at your blog to let you know they did it. Obviously this is highly desirable, as you'd get many links to your contest – through other bloggers talking about you – and you'd get much more exposure, too.
7. Or get creative and come up with something unique. (Example: <http://TellMeThursday.com>)

STEP THREE: PROMOTE YOUR CONTEST

Immediately after you post your contest to your blog, send a mailing to each of your ezine lists, letting them know about the contest. You'll certainly want your loyal readers to have the opportunity to win. (If you don't have a newsletter or ezine yet, you may wish to check out www.ShowMomtheNewsletter.com for a free tutorial.)

Next, contact your circle of influence (your friends) and let them know about your contest. Offer to do a blog post swap. If they'll blog about your contest, you'll owe them the next time they have something they want to spread the word about. An email to a buddy can certainly help you to get the word out.

Then, go and submit your contest to the contest websites. Yes, there are sites that list contests and free offers. This is obviously more effective in certain niches than in others, but it is free exposure to your contest either way, so do it. (Search google for "[submit contest](#)" & "submit blog contest" & "submit sweepstake" to find these sites.)

Of course, if you really want good mileage for your contest, you can also post on message boards in your niche with the signature pointing to your contest. As always, play by the rules.

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The last thing I'll mention about promoting your contest is writing a press release. If you're familiar with writing and submitting press releases, this would be a great thing to do. If not, you can hire someone affordably to handle this for you.

STEP FOUR: GET THE PRIZES TO YOUR WINNERS

Now, this should go without saying, but... don't forget to hook up the winners with the prize donors. That'll ensure you have a great contest the next time you run one.

For more free ways to get advertising for your website, sign up for my free web traffic course at www.WebTrafficBasics.com.

ALTERNATE IDEA #1: WEEKLY CONTEST

If the idea of setting up a big contest is overwhelming, consider doing a small, weekly giveaway. Many blogs, do a "Freebie Friday" where they give away something free. You could have something similar and schedule a giveaway/contest each week. It would certainly give your readers something to look forward to.

ALTERNATE IDEA #2: TURN THIS IDEA AROUND

Now that your wheels are spinning... you may be thinking of the possibilities of offering your product or service as a prize to a popular blog in your niche and asking them to run the contest. You can certainly do that, too. It works both ways. Simply find a really hot blog that you'd pay to advertise on and contact them asking if they need prize donors. Oftentimes, they'll say "yes". It doesn't hurt to ask!

Other Recommended Resources from Nicole:

- www.NicoleOntheNet.com – My blog.
- www.EasyPrivateLabelArticles.com – Free ecourse about PLR -- what it is, how to use it, and how to get it cheap.
- www.MomWebs.com – My favorite web host.
- www.ShowMomtheBlogging.com - Free blogging course.

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