

# **Begin** with a **Blog**

Your Online Journey Begins Here!

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*Join the online business revolution, do the work you love, and write your own rules. Give yourself something more valuable than money:  
**freedom.***

# PREFACE

The purpose of this eBook is not to teach you how to make a living from blogging (although it's certainly possible if you put your mind to it). The purpose is to help you establish your presence online and show you why a blog platform and blogging can be powerful tools in your online-business journey.

After building more than a dozen online businesses from the ground up, including several successful blogs, and making enough income to live life on my own terms, people often ask me where's the best place to start.

And my answer is always the same: "*Begin with a Blog*".

No, implementing a blog platform is not a quick way to make money online, but done well, it is a brilliant way to develop valuable skills and build life-long relationships.

Some of the skills you'll develop include:

- The ability to set an online platform
- The ability to devise a killer brand name
- The ability to customize your website
- The ability to write stellar content

You'll discover all of this and a bit more in this eBook.

*Yours,*

*Tal Gur* | [DreamToBusiness.com](http://DreamToBusiness.com)

# INTRODUCTION

Whether you're self employed or someone who just wants to start a successful business, **a blog platform is the most easy, effective and economical way** to build (or grow) your presence online.

Not Convinced? Here are some numbers:

According to HubSpot's State of Inbound Marketing report, the average company that blogs has:

- 55% more visitors
- **97% more** inbound links
- 434% more indexed pages

Not only that, 57% of companies indicate customer acquisition through their blog. When you combine that with the fact that blogs maintained the top slot as the least expensive lead generation tool, you get a powerful combination.

Not surprisingly, an impressive 81% of businesses rated their company blogs as “useful,” “important” or “critical.”

If numbers don't inspire you, perhaps the following story will.

## The Intangibles of Blogging

It has been a good couple of hours since I started looking for accommodation in Zurich, Switzerland, my next destination on my European backpacking trip.

Every hostel was fully booked and only a few hotels had rooms left, for about hundred dollars a night - way over my budget!

I was less than a day away from taking the 500 miles train ride from Budapest, my current location, and I knew I would need to be creative.

Thankfully, I remembered a random conversation from weeks ago about a popular website called CouchSurfing.com, where you can stay with local people.

The problem - I had no profile and zero references. I knew that without feedback from previous hosts the chances to be hosted were nil to none.

I had **one powerful asset** though: **my personal blog**, which at the time detailed some of my travel experiences and life reflections (another good reason to start a blog). So I quickly wrote a short email that included a link to my blog and sent it to 50 CouchSurfing members in the Zurich metropolitan area.

After reading some statistics about CouchSurfing members who sent short notice requests, I estimated I would get one, maximum two, responses. Instead, I got 40 responses...around 10 were positive...and all in one day!

My blog established an incredible level of *credibility*.

## **The Power of Being Credible**

If you thought that the above story was unique, I could name at least a dozen others where my blog not only helped **elevate my profile**, but also boost my professional career, in a way that a TV commercial never could have.

In a world of many choices but not enough time, where marketing saturates our lives, we, more often than not, turn to those we trust.

Whether we want to launch a new product, find a host in a foreign country, or land our dream job, a blog can **establish our creditability** like no other platform.

By sharing real life experiences, unscathed by paid marketing, you come across as a **reliable source**. Not only that, posting quality content that is relevant to your niche, can set you apart as **an expert** in your field.

With so many benefits at stake (and I only scratched the surface), you can see why blogs have become so popular.

*What about **YOU**? Will you stay behind or... will you **MOVE** ahead?*

We live in the age of the internet and there is no better time to join the online revolution and start building your online presence. And if you ever wondered where to begin, now you know.

With a **Blog**, of course! :)

## STEP ONE: *Getting Started*

Over a decade ago, when I first started my online journey, I built websites from scratch by writing code in a plain text editor. Thankfully the online world has progressed a long way since then and now there are a wide variety of incredible free software solutions out there.

At the heart of it all is the widely popular [WordPress.Org](https://WordPress.org) platform - close to fifth of the top one million websites in the world are powered by WordPress.Org (*P.S don't get confused with WordPress.COM which is a hosted service and does not provide the same freedom. You want the self-hosted WordPress.ORG that provides you with full ownership and control of your site*)

Now, WordPress.Org has become widely known as simply “blog” software but that is too limiting in my opinion. In fact, you can use WordPress for your entire online business and the blog part can be made only optional.

Here are some of the main *benefits* of adopting WordPress as a blog platform:

- 1. Inexpensive and Affordable** - The basic platform is free and there are no charges in acquiring the software. You can install the default version of WordPress yourself or have someone else do it relatively inexpensively.
- 2. Widely Used** - WordPress is the most widespread content management software in the world. This means that it will not disappear or become obsolete anytime soon. It has a massive user base and ever-expanding library of add-ons.



It is also built on the popular PHP programming language which is non-proprietary (unlike .ASP) and as a result is free, widely used, and has excellent support and documentation.

**3. Highly Customizable** - With the built in themes features and plugins, it's easy to switch your theme or install a plugin in a matter of seconds without the need for any programming skills.

**4. Simple Content Publishing** - Once you've got your blog set up it is very easy to publish new content. You basically just have to hit the publish button and it's good to go. Too easy!

**5. Built in Syndication** - Content can be automatically converted to RSS feeds and syndicated to other sites. This allows you to make your content portable and reach a much larger audience than you could do on your own.

**6. A Two-way Communication** - With a blog you can engage and converse with your readers through the comments section below each post, something that helps to develop a deeper connection and a more loyal following.

**7. Search Engine Friendly** - WordPress is loved by search engines. Its architecture is optimized for Google and creates a solid foundation for better search rankings over time. Plus, with the right setup, you're able to customize every page you make.

**8. Multi-User Capability** - WordPress is a multi user system which enables you to assign other contributors to your site who can login and publish content under their own user name.

**9. Free Upgrades** – Unlike traditional Web site software, upgrades to WordPress are made available for free when newer versions are released. Beside the benefit of new features, it also enhances the site's protection from new security vulnerabilities.

**10. Powerful Admin Panel** - With minimal training you can easily setup your site via the user-friendly admin interface. You can add new pages, links and menus, as well as upload images and seamlessly integrate new side column widgets.

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There are obviously more benefits for adopting a blog platform, but these are the main ones that came to my mind. The important aspect to consider here is that WordPress and blogging are the simplest and least expensive ways to start your journey online.

Now that I've (hopefully) convinced you that WordPress is the way to go, you have another choice to make:

### **Where to host your WordPress blog?**

There are thousands, if not more, of hosting companies out there. They come in all price ranges, and with all kinds of bells and whistles.

It can often be a bit intimidating deciding which one to choose; especially for those taking their first step in the online world, but for the most part it's quite an easy and straightforward process.

Here are the main things you want to look for in a hosting company:

**Support** – This is by far the most important aspect of a hosting company I believe. If something goes wrong, a quick, courteous and reliable customer support can make a huge difference. You want a hosting company with 24/7 live and phone customer service. No less than that.

**Storage space** - Most hosting companies provide more than enough storage space but If you plan to store video or audio files, you might want to consider a hosting plan that offers significant storage space.

**Bandwidth** - The more traffic to your blog, the more bandwidth is consumed. Bandwidth is usually not a problem for a small-to-medium blog, but if you start to get a high amount of traffic, you'll want to have a host that provides high bandwidth and can easily upgrade your plan if your web traffic grows unexpectedly.

**Domains** - If you anticipate that at some point you'll want to host more than one blog, then it's best to make sure you have the option to do so in the future. Also, some hosting companies offer a free domain name when you sign up; however, this should be a small factor in your decision, as saving ~\$10 on buying a domain isn't as important as the above factors.

**Extras** - This includes ASP, SSL, CGI scripts, and such. Some of these you might need in the future, depending on the type of blog you are building, but in most cases you won't need them at all. The most essential thing is that the hosting company supports WordPress and will make it easy to install.

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[BlueHost](#) and [HostGator](#) are two of the most reputable hosting companies around. I can't provide a definite recommendation as I'm using my own dedicated server due to the high amount of traffic my sites generate (very expensive option for the novice user), but I can definitely say that a number of high-profile bloggers recommend [BlueHost](#) as the best web hosting for WordPress.

Now, when you sign up for a hosting account, you'll usually have the option to register a new domain, but before you do, head on to our next section which contains strategies about how to choose your brand name.

Carry on!