

Blog Boost 2010

A checklist for getting your blog ready for the New Year...



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Need A Blog Boost for 2010?

As we close out 2009 and look ahead at the New Year, now is a good time to set **2010 blogging goals** and do any necessary blog updates...

I have decided to do quite a few updates at ClickNewz.com while planning my editorial and promo calendar for the year, and wanted to share a quick checklist of things you can do at your own blog as well.



The first step is to set definitive goals for the year.

Know exactly what you want to achieve, with a very clear long-term objective. My blog at ClickNewz is the core of my online business, and the space from which I share details of everything else that I offer. So my goals are very specific...

Blog Traffic Growth

One of my main goals is to increase my reach and grow my readership. This includes number of unique visitors, as well as the number of email & RSS subscribers. More readers ultimately equals more income and more opportunity.

I came very close to doubling blog traffic in 2009. I did very little blog marketing, so this is simply the result of blogging consistently and getting more engaged with social media – specifically Twitter and Facebook. I am currently seeing close to 30k unique visitors and more than 230k page views per month:

| | | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Reported period | Month Nov 2009 | | |
| First visit | 01 Nov 2009 - 00:00 | | |
| Last visit | 30 Nov 2009 - 23:59 | | |
| | Unique visitors | Number of visits | Pages |
| Viewed traffic * | 28822 | 62737 (2.17 visits/visitor) | 233513 (3.72 Pages/Visit) |

👉 If your blog is newer with much lower traffic volume, a good starting goal for the year is to reach 10,000 unique visitors per month consistently.

In 2010, I plan to do more strategic blog marketing, and increase those numbers dramatically. My goal is to increase unique visitors to 100k/month, with a million pageviews per month by the end of the year. Ambitious, but attainable.

I plan to achieve this by: growing my subscriber base, blogging more frequently, creating more keyword-based content for new targeted search traffic, increasing my social media reach, and networking.

Blog Subscription Growth

Traffic is good, but my ultimate goal is to grow a strong readership. That was my primary focus throughout 2009, and I am very pleased with the results, and the sense of community we have created here at ClickNewz.

That said, RSS & email subscriptions are not growing at the same rate as my traffic. According to FeedBurner I have around 6,500 total subscribers combined, with less than half of those being subscribed to the email list. While subscriptions are rising, they are rising at a slow steady rate that could obviously be improved...



I use [Aweber](#) to offer email updates to my readers. Aweber has a feature called Blog Broadcast that allows your readers to receive new blog posts by email.

I choose Aweber as that is what I use to manage all of my mailing lists across my niche sites, and they offer a number of features you can't get with other blog email notification options. Specifically: you own the list, you can email your subscribers directly, and you can customize the confirmation pages and confirmation emails.

I use [FeedBurner](#) to manage my RSS subscriptions as they offer full stats, advanced feed features, and because they integrate with Aweber to give me combined RSS/Email statistics.

One of the things I'll do to increase email subscriptions is offer an incentive to subscribers. You'll notice that I have two opt-in boxes on post pages, one in the sidebar and one at the end of each post, and neither offer any incentive at all.

In January I'm going to add an exclusive free download for new subscribers, with short compelling copy to encourage readers to subscribe by email.

While new traffic is good, repeat traffic and a loyal readership are ideal. If you don't yet offer a mailing list and an opt-in incentive, make it a priority in 2010!

Blog Community Growth

A sense of community is a strong sticky point for any blog. As I mentioned earlier, this has always been a goal of mine.

Now that I have a system in place for handling the volume of comments and necessary moderation, I'm prepared to take ClickNewz.com to the next level.

Having been through a number of growing pains in my 13 years of business, I can tell you firsthand that this is not something you want to jump into blindly.

Steady and strategic growth is a good thing.

Outsourcing was a huge goal of mine in 2009, so I now outsource: comment moderation, wordpress upgrades, and blog updates (plugin installations, new feature additions, etc). This frees me up to plan, write, respond to reader comments and get engaged with my target market via social media.

The first thing you want to do is *ask for comments*. As you wrap up each post, ask your readers what they think or what their experiences have been – or encourage them to ask questions on the topic.

See: [7 Questions to Ask On Your Blog to Get More Reader Engagement](#)

I personally respond to almost every comment. This encourages commenting, both by regular readers and new visitors. Often a comment or question on one blog post will inspire a topic for a new blog post.

Get involved with your readers and show them that their thoughts and questions matter by addressing the topics they bring up in response to your content.

Your blog should be an ongoing conversation with your readers...



I use a Subscribe To Comments plugin so that readers will get email notification of new comments to a particular blog post. This keeps your readers engaged on the topic, and lets them know when they've received a response to their comment.

In addition to reader engagement, I like to offer other perks to build on that sense of community. Here at ClickNewz I use the DoFollow Plugin and have recently installed the KeywordLuv Plugin, both of which “give back” for every comment left. These are not plugins that are relevant for every niche or blog, so you want to choose [comment plugins](#) that will be of the most interest to your readers.

A new plugin I am having installed is TwitterLinks, which will make it easier for readers to network & connect *with each other*. This plugin adds the Twitter ID with comments, so that you can easily find & follow people of interest.

- [DoFollow Plugin](#)
- [Subscribe To Comments](#)
- [KeywordLuv Plugin](#)
- [TwitterLinks Plugin](#)

It's important to create that sense of community on your own blog, starting at the beginning with your first few comments or subscribers, but you also have to work 'the blog network' in order to grow that community...

Blog Networking

A lot of people blog in a vacuum, trying to be “the lone blogger” – viewing every other blogger in their niche as the enemy and competitor. The truth is, the more blogs there are in your niche the more opportunities you have. And the more you network within that niche blogging community, the more your own blog will grow.

My goals for 2010 include more guest blogging, [blog interviews](#), cross blog conversations and blog commenting. There are numerous benefits:

- Quality Inbound Links
- Targeted Click-Through Traffic
- Exposure to Established Readership
- Indirect Search Engine Rankings

... all of which result in more traffic and more readers.

I'm using the [guest blogging guide by Nicole Dean](#) to map out these goals which includes: content idea generator, blog research spreadsheet, sample email to bloggers, and guest blogging editorial spreadsheet. A great resource for only \$17!

Blog Content Goals

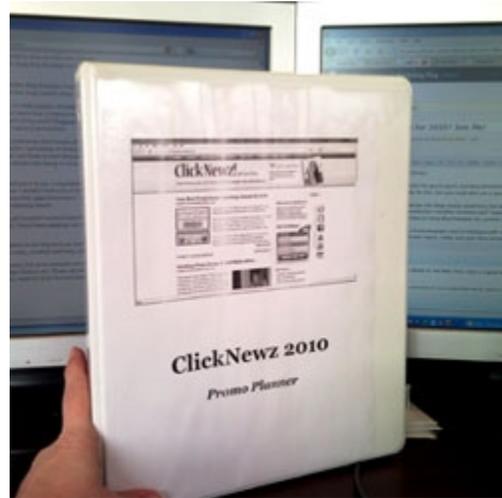
In addition to planning my content for guests posts and blog networking, I am also creating a 2010 Editorial and Promotional Calendar for my own blog. I used a simple 3-ring binder for this, but you could also use a spreadsheet.

Creating a 2010 Editorial Calendar (for blogs and/or email lists) has been the December Challenge for my [Elite Members](#).

We have come up with a lot of good resources along the way, and I finally settled on using Blog Energizer by Lynette Chandler as my base and starting point.

Lynette offers a [free 2010 Blogging Calendar](#) within Blog Energizer that was ideal in helping me map out and plan topics, series and year-long content ideas.

Having content goals, and an editorial calendar, is really going to be helpful for me personally. I have been blogging consistently for more than 5 years now, but still find that I tend to have more of a “*fly by the seat of my pants*” blogging style – which often results in missed opportunities for topics or promotions.



The 2010 Calendar will give you observances, awareness days/weeks, holidays, etc. This is a great starting point for topic ideas, and for capitalizing on themes people will be searching on at those times.

You can also use these to start blog memes, blog contests, to schedule timely promotions, or to initiate topical interviews or cross blog conversations with established bloggers.

I printed off the calendar ([download it here](#)) and put it in my 3-ring binder, along with monthly and weekly planning sheets. Since I already have a lot of things in my Outlook Calendar, I simply printed weekly & monthly pages from there. You might use your Google Calendar or create your own planning sheets.

I started by analyzing my current categories, and popular keyword searches in my niche. Comparing these to the topical calendar, I have been mapping out content ideas for all 12 months of 2010.

I made a list of regular features to implement at my blog such as: monthly book review, monthly product review, weekly mail video, monthly interview, etc.

Your features will depend on your niche, but as an example you might do: Monday Motivator, Tuesday Tutorial, Saturday Slacker, etc. These can be fun, and if consistent your readers will keep coming back for their favorite features.

By outlining your content with an editorial and promotional calendar, including posts for your own blog plus potential guest blog posts, you can take advantage of seasonal and timely promotional opportunities and become a more consistent and interesting blogger.

A big part of your content plan should include keyword-optimized content, targeting every possible keyword phrase relevant to your topic or niche. As a start, see these three tutorials that outline exactly how I do that:

- [Getting Traffic & Sales](#)
- [Writing SEO Content](#)
- [Web Page Optimization](#) (Checklist)

Blog Updates

While you're doing all of this content planning, you should also consider some basic updates that you can do to improve your visitors' experience at your blog.

Over time your blog can get junked up with plugins, additions, advertisements and sidebar clutter. Now is a good time to sit back and view your blog from a visitors perspective and do a little clean-up work.

Look at things you can remove to make your blog easier to read and quicker to load. Also look at things you can add for better usability.

First, analyze your sidebar. Remove anything that might distract your reader from your main objective: getting them to read or subscribe to your content.

You'll notice I have very few ads in my sidebar, and no tag cloud.

I chose to put the tag cloud on my [archives page](#), as that is where you would typically go to search for specific topics. I also include tags on each post, so that my readers can easily find related topics or types of content (video, etc).

Make sure you have a search box in your sidebar. This is one of the most used features here at ClickNewz. Make sure all of your blog content is easy to locate.

It's probably time to update your About Me page – I know it is for mine!

This is also a good time to go back through your posts and look for opportunities to interlink related content. You should also look at your stats to see which posts are most popular or most read, or ranking well and bringing in consistent traffic, and make sure you have a good strong call-to-action on those posts.

Do a complete walk-through of your entire blog and make notes of things you can add/remove to improve readability and to strategically lead your visitors to and through your blog...

Blog Boost 2010 Checklist

If you're smart, you've been jotting down notes as you read along with ideas you can use on your own blog.

The most important thing that you can do is know your objective. This gives you an easy filter for blogging decisions. You can simply ask yourself: *is this in line with my goal, or does this distract from it?*

Just as one example, affiliate bloggers should never use AdSense on their blog. If you sell your own product/service, or you promote other merchants products as an affiliate, Google AdSense distracts from and competes with your sales.



I'll make it easy for you and give you a quick checklist of things you should consider for your blog as you are mapping out your 2010 blogging goals...

Blog Boost 2010 Checklist

- Set Goals. Know Your Objective!
- Remove anything that is not in line with your objective.
- Make sure your blog is properly optimized.
- Add/Update your Email Opt-in.
- Add/Remove Plugins.
- Clean up Sidebar Clutter.
- Update your About page.
- Increase post frequency.
- Interlink related posts.
- Update popular posts.
- Get fresh Inbound Links to your Pillar Content.
- Research niche keywords for new content.
- Make a list of [products to review](#).
- Create an Editorial Calendar.
- Make a list of blogs for commenting & guest posting.
- Make a list of experts to interview.
- Set up/Update social media profiles and go social!

Happy Blogging! 😊

Best,



p.s. Ready to take your blog to the next level? Subscribe to ClickNewz for more tips & tutorials, and grab the [Problogger Workbook](#) by Darren Rowse!

If you have any questions, or thoughts/resources you'd like to add, feel free to leave a comment on this topic at my blog:

<http://www.clicknewz.com/2181/blog-boost-2010/>

You can also join us on my [Internet Marketing Forum](#) for questions about affiliate marketing, SEO, getting traffic, or setting up your first blog or website.

Disclosure: I earn commissions on recommendations and resources mentioned.