

Bloggging Skills Guide: How to Improve Your Blog Commenting



Plant a seed today, grow a tree someday. - Anonymous

Why do you make comments at other people's blogs?

No, really. Why?

In my career as a professional blog publisher, promoter and consultant, I have left thousands of blog comments around the blogosphere. I know what works and what doesn't. I have been blessed to create and strengthen hundreds of relationships of trust with fellow bloggers that have benefited my business as well as theirs.

Let me show you what I've learned so that you can avoid making the same mistakes as me. (You'll just make entirely new ones, right?)

Here's how to apply the [Visionary Blogging method](#) to make worthwhile blog comments that promote your blog and build mutually profitable relationships.

Quick Review: The Five-Step Visionary Blogging Method

- Step 1: [Increase your awareness](#), the ability to see.
- Step 2: [Sharpen your focus](#), the ability to look.
- Step 3: [Hone your discernment](#), the ability to evaluate.
- Step 4: [Excite your imagination](#), the ability to create.
- Step 5: [Strengthen your diligence](#), the ability to endure.

Step 1 - Increase Your Awareness: Master the What, How and Why of Blog Comments

You can't improve what you don't measure, and you can't measure what you don't see.

You will [increase your awareness](#) of blog commenting only as you learn to see the what, how and why of blog comments more clearly.

What is a blog comment?

A blog comment is a response to a blog post that is composed (and appears) at the same page as the blog post, usually right below the post content. Most blogs allow comments by any visitor and let you leave your name (you can use a pseudonym if you like), email address (kept hidden) and a URL (typically your blog or website).

How do you make a blog comment?

Simple. Locate the comment form (usually at the bottom of the page), fill in the required fields (many blogs require a name and email address and some kind of comment, but not a URL) and hit the submit button. Done.

Why should you make comments at other blogs?

For two huge reasons: attention and trust.

Blog comments can get attention

When you leave a comment at a blog, the blog owner gets an email notification. You get their attention for a moment.

Over time, you also get the brief attention of anyone who sees your comment. They may decide to visit your URL. So blog commenting generates a little traffic.

Also, search engines will keep track of your comment. And unless the blog where you make your comment uses the nofollow tag, you'll enjoy a (very) small boost in authority and search rankings.

Blog comments can build trust

When you make a comment at a blog, you create an opportunity for people to trust you (or not, if they don't like your comment).

First and foremost, you can build trust with the blog author.

Second, you can build trust with other readers and commenters at that blog.

Third, you can build trust with search engines that index that comment thread.

The Wrong Reason to Make Blog Comments

Many bloggers and businesses get this part wrong. [Way wrong](#). They want numbers. They want links. They don't care about people. They care only about themselves.

11 Business Bloggers on the Value of Blog Comments

1. Build relationships and forge friendships that turn into business partnerships. - [Joanna Young](#)
2. Create conversation that will inspire new topics for future blogging. - [Paula Hawk](#)
3. Build community and keep the conversation flowing. - [Deb Ng](#)

4. Create a sense of community and friendship. - [Angela Stevens](#)
5. Who can be brilliant if speaking into a vacuum? - [Jen](#)
6. Leaving comments on other blogs is a small version of being featured by someone else and inheriting a bit of her authority. - [Guilherme Zühlke O'Connor](#)
7. Nothing demonstrates the fact that the blogger is an actual human being more than his/her participation in comments. - [Vijayendra Mohanty](#)
8. We HAVE to as human beings reach out. Connections are the greater part of our blogging success, and I would say the blogosphere as a whole. - [Chris Garrett](#)
9. The main value of comments is building a relationship. - [Evan](#)
10. Comments are worthwhile the same way that conversations with any interesting person are. - [Sonia Simone](#)
11. For comments to be effective, they have to *add value* to the conversation. - [Bob Younce](#)

Blog commenting is like sowing seeds

The more you sow, the more you reap. If you plant good seeds the right way, plants will grow.

The more trust you build and the more attention you get from the right people, the more mutually profitable relationships you can develop.

Now whenever you look at a blog comment form, what will you see?

Step 2 - Sharpen Your Focus: Measure Your Blog Commenting Carefully

Now that you can see the raw material of blog commenting spread before you, it's time to look selectively at it - first at the big picture, then at the details that matter most to your situation.

Remember how I said you can't improve what you don't measure, and you can't measure what you don't see.

Well, now you can see. Next we'll talk about [sharpening your focus](#) by *measuring* your blog comments.

How to Measure Your Blog Commenting Activities

1. Keep track of the blog comments you make.

By keeping a record of the comments you make, you can more easily monitor the conversations you're interested in and stay aware of what others say about you. Here are some ways you can keep track of the comments you leave at other websites.

- [Delicious](#) - Using your delicious account, you can tag the pages you comment at with a special tag like "mycomments" (see [my delicious comments list](#)). Keep your comments page bookmarked and review it daily.
- [Cocomment](#) - Here's [my cocomment page](#).
- **Bookmarks** - The old-fashioned way - but it still works great. Just make your comment and bookmark the page in a browser bookmark folder called "Blog Comments," for example.

Whatever method you use, my guiding tips are the same:

- Keep a record of the comments you make!
- Whenever you see the option to get comment updates by email or RSS feed, do it!
- Regularly (perhaps once a week), quickly check through the blog comments you have left (especially on blogs where you could not subscribe to new comment notifications) to see whether any new comments have appeared.

2. Keep track of the time you spend making blog comments.

One way to do this is to set aside a specific time each day (e.g. for 5-15 minutes in the afternoon, or from 8:30-8:40 am) to make your commenting rounds. Avoid making comments outside of that time window unless circumstances demand it (e.g. a post has a glaring typo that could embarrass the author if not fixed right away, or a post announces a contest where you must comment by a certain time in order to be eligible for prizes).

Another trick to help you control yourself is to keep a Web browser bookmark folder just for posts at which you plan to leave a comment. You can go through the folder daily during your self-allotted commenting time and delete the bookmarks as you make comments (or better yet, move them to a "commented on X date" folder).

3. Keep track of the effects your blog commenting has on your business.

The importance of this step cannot be overstated.

For example, if one of your goals is to befriend 5 bloggers in your niche in a one-month timeframe and part of your plan to achieve that goal is to leave a comment on each of their blogs once a week, then take a few minutes each week to check your progress and set, adjust or re-commit to blog commenting goals. (e.g. "I commented at all 5 blogs, and in at least 3 cases I've been able to start a friendly dialogue with the blogger. One of the bloggers seems to be ignoring me though. I'll try [egging his house](#).")

Step 3 - Hone Your Discernment: Evaluate The Soil and Plant Better Blog Comment Seeds

This step involves [honing your discernment](#).

The blog comment form is a patch of soil.

When you come across good soil, you study it carefully and pick the right kind of seed from your bag. You then carefully place the seed in the soil and continue on your way.

The more seeds you plant in fertile soil, the better.

Of course a business can't survive just by planting seeds. There has to be time for cultivation and harvesting. But planting seeds should be a part of your daily business routine.

Step 4 - Excite Your Imagination: Create Wall-Worthy Blog Comments

This step may just be the most important. It has to do with [exciting your imagination](#).

Think about what the blog post author may be thinking and feeling. What sort of blog comment would make their day? Their week? What would stick in their mind forever?

Imagine crafting a blog comment so good that someone who reads it will immediately print it out and stick on their wall where they will see it every day.

Have you ever gotten one of those comments on your blog?

Here is a detailed checklist to help you make impactful blog comments:

1. Read the blog post and the comments carefully. Look closely for little things in the post that the blogger would probably love for you to notice (subtle wordplay, careful research, indication of having spent a long time composing the article, etc.).
2. Be sincere, gracious and positive.
3. Call the blogger by name if possible.
4. Compliment the blogger and thank her genuinely for her post.
5. Try to write at least two sentences. Longer comments tend to stand out visually and thematically.
6. Be succinct. If your comment is long, consider posting it on your blog instead and linking to the other person's post.
7. Put some serious thought into your comment.
8. Be specific; prove that you understand and care about the post and the associated discussion.
9. Add something to fuel further conversation. It could be a link, a new idea, a tip, an opinion, a personal experience, or even a question.
10. Whenever possible, include a link with anchor text to a specific post or category on your blog. There is nothing wrong with sharing a bit of your work.
11. Re-read your comment. Check your thoughts, spelling and links.
12. Last question before publishing: "What difference would it make to me if I were the blog author and saw this comment?"
13. **Submit the comment!**
14. Make sure the links in your published comment and/or your name work properly.
15. As explained above, monitor the page so you can respond to any follow-up comments.
16. Try to contact the blogger personally and develop/strengthen a relationship of mutual trust.
17. **Ask.** Do this especially at the end of your comments. "What do you think about ...?" or "Do you agree with ...?" or "Have you ever ...?" ... Ask questions like that.
18. **Encourage people to talk about themselves.** People love to do this.
19. **Make it clear that you welcome and respect all opinions.** Make people feel like they are on equal footing with you.
20. **Respond quickly to other people's comments.** Write a reply comment the same day, if possible - the same hour, if you can.
21. **Make comments that encourage more conversation.** Keep the ball rolling by rolling it back to a previous commentator, to the post author or to the next commenter.
22. **Leave your comment open-ended.** Sometimes this isn't necessary, but it often boosts the conversation. End with a question, for example. Or address one part of an issue and leave the other side untouched.
23. **Try to get people to think about what you've said.** Make your comments intriguing and/or surprising.
24. **Let people know that you appreciate their ideas.** For example, you could email another commenter and say thanks. Or you could publish a follow-up post at your blog highlighting the conversation you joined and adding to it.

Step 5 - Strengthen Your Diligence: How to Endure as a Visionary Blog Commenter

This is a lather, rinse, repeat deal.

Work at this. Dedicate at least 5 or 10 minutes a day at a specific time each day to blog commenting. With practice and vision, you can probably be making 5-10 excellent comments per day in those 5-10 minutes and actually making an impact with your comments.

Strive to comment at *every* blog post you read unless there's not enough time (so, if you can't spare at least 30 seconds) or you have nothing useful/memorable to say. (**Note:** "Thanks, great post!" may be pointless or not; it just depends on the effect your comment will have on the blog post author and on other people who will see your comment.)

Closing Thoughts on Blog Commenting Improvement

First and foremost, remember this: **Blog comments are about people.** Business is about people. Specifically, blog comments are tools that you can use to build trust with people so that they come to your business and have you help them solve their problems.

Your Challenge: Become a Visionary Blog Commenter

From now on, start caring less about blog comment numbers and more about the attention and trust values of each comment you leave around the Web.

I have seen blog posts with over 200 comments attached to them, and at first glance that might seem like an extraordinary thread, but sometimes looking more closely you can see that many of those comments add very little value. No wonder we so often don't read every comment at a post - we skip to the bottom to leave a comment. It takes time to do this.

From now on, will you approach the blog comment box with an increased sense of vision? In all this, may I recommend one of the hallmark virtues of a visionary blogger: **selflessness.**

As you sow, so shall you reap. Try to forget yourself and focus on helping others. Sow selfless seeds through your blog comments and you'll reap a lasting legacy of mutually beneficial, valuable relationships of trust.

Stop making comments on blogs just to get traffic and backlinks and attention. Start making blog comments to build trust and add value. Be a trust-and-value blog commenter - a visionary blog commenter.

[Subscribe to Visionary Blogging](#) today to learn more about the blog improvement process.

Learn about <http://www.visionaryblogging.com/services/blog-consulting/> by Visionary Blogging.

Photo: [Grow Trees](#) by Thiru Murugan