



# WOMEN'S BLOGGING INDUSTRY & BUSINESS ANNUAL REPORT

**2015**  
**iBlog** magazine

# A letter from the publisher...

**To influencers, bloggers, agencies, brands and pr firms!**

We are pleased to introduce the inaugural iBlog magazine Women's Blogging Industry & Business Annual Report, where thousands of bloggers reveal where they spend their time, how they earn their income and what they want the most from brand & agency relationships.

The blogging & online influence industry is ever-changing. As roles evolve from blogger to influencer and businessperson to brand, we need to understand the current state of how women work in this industry.

We created this survey and subsequent report to demonstrate the way women influencers most successfully work, utilize social media, earn money and interact with brands and agencies.

If you work in the blogger outreach, social media marketing and influencer marketing sectors, you will want to closely examine the charts in the following pages that will reveal the major findings extracted from our data-intensive survey.

With thousands of women influencers surveyed in more than 20 niches, you will find that while there are common responses in certain areas of interest, others are rather unexpected. Read on to discover important insights that you will not find anywhere else.

Please enjoy this report. This report is free by submitting your email address below. Please feel free to share with your colleagues and peers. You can direct them straight to the report here: <http://www.iblogmagazine.com/WBIR15/>

Thanks,

Matt Cherry  
CEO & Founder



**Matt Cherry**  
CEO & Founder  
iBlog magazine



## The experts weigh in...

We invited industry leaders, top influencers & experts to provide insight.

iBlog magazine would like to thank all of the industry experts that took the time to review over 50+ survey results and major findings of the final report. Their insightful takeaways provide unique and professional views on the results and will help you apply new strategies for your blogging, brand and business strategy going forward.



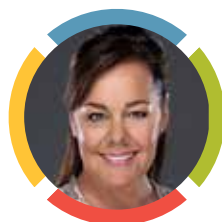
**Elisa Camahort Page**  
Co-Founder BlogHer  
SVP SheKnows



**Laura Mayes**  
Mom 2.0Summit  
TheQueso.com



**Holly Hamman**  
Co-Founder & CMO  
Tap Influence



**Tiffany Romero**  
President  
Influencer Management  
Sway Group



**Ana Flores**  
Founder + CEO  
Latina Bloggers Connect  
We All Grow Summit



**Danica Kombol**  
President  
Everywhere Agency



**Stacey Ferguson**  
Chief Curator  
Blogalicious



**Holly Homer**  
Founder  
Kidsactivitiesblog.com



**Stacy Debroff**  
CEO & Founder  
Influence Central  
Mom Central



**Susan Carraretto**  
Co-Founder  
5 Minutes for Mom



**Rohit Vashisht**  
CEO & Co-Founder  
Sverve.com



**Laurie Schacht**  
The Toy Insider  
Blogger Bash



**Dan Morris**  
Blog Organization Coach  
Blogging Concentrated



**Stacie Haight Connerty**  
Founder & President  
Social Media Chicks



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## MAJOR FINDINGS

Here is a summary of our major findings in the report:

- **Writing from the heart wins over being paid to post.** 83% of bloggers spend 0-3 hours writing a personal, original post. In contrast, 47% of bloggers spend 0-3 hours writing a sponsored post. Only 15% actually spend 3+ hours writing a sponsored post they are being compensated for.
- **Full time blogging is on the decline.** 55% of bloggers work on their blog 5-20 hours weekly while only 22% work 30-35 hours or more weekly.
- **There is a lack of marketing knowledge to secure paying jobs.** 85% of bloggers spend less than 3 hours per week prospecting and contacting networks, brands and agencies offering paying jobs.
- **Facebook still reigns supreme.** Bloggers consider Facebook slightly more important than their blogs for their business and the most important traffic driver to their blog.
- **Visual social platforms are becoming increasingly more important to bloggers.** Bloggers indicated they plan to increase usage of Pinterest more in 2015 than any other social platform. They're also interested in learning much more about Instagram.
- **Content strategies will be imperative to success.** When presented with multiple areas of importance for business growth, bloggers overwhelmingly chose SEO techniques at 86% and content marketing at 83% as the most important for their business in 2015.
- **The majority of bloggers still aren't making money.** The total annual income in 2014 for over 68% of all bloggers is less than \$5,000 annually or \$417/month.
- **Brands and blog networks lead the way to blogger pay.** Brands ranked as the largest source of income for bloggers and blog networks were a close second. Bloggers also stated they find most brand opportunities from blog network promotions, emails and eNewsletters communications.
- **Brands need to focus when making pitches to bloggers.** Bloggers stated that over 74% of the pitches they receive do not fit their blog's style, theme, tone or business.
- **Brands and agencies need to provide feedback to bloggers.** Over 85% of bloggers surveyed feel that detailed feedback after a project would help them execute more successful future campaigns.

The above points highlight what you will see in our full report. For a detailed view of what today's bloggers and influencers are utilizing in social media, practicing for their business growth, and their interactions with brands and agencies read the the following report with over 30 charts that convey our findings visually, as well as industry experts' thoughts on our survey results and how it impacts women influencers and the industry.

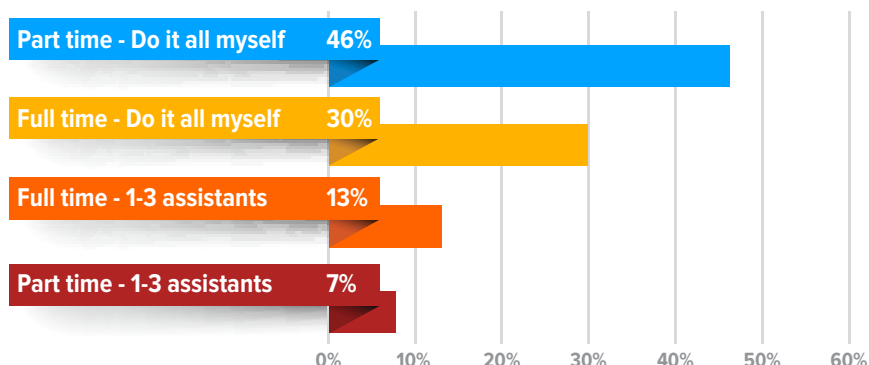
# Let's take a look at our women's blogging survey participants' demographics



# How do women influencers spend their time?

## What is your current blog operations status?

76% of bloggers are running a part time or full time business by themselves. 81% reported they do not outsource to third-party services for work-related business administrative tasks like photo editing, database upkeep or email list management.



**Laura Mayes**  
Mom 2.0 Summit  
TheQueso.com

### An expert weighs in...

Of all the stats in the study...and there is a lot of really interesting data included...the question that stood out to me the most was about blog operations. When asked if they have any help with blog operations, 76% of respondents say they do it all...everything...by themselves. It seems like this simple question is a key element, factor and consideration that puts all

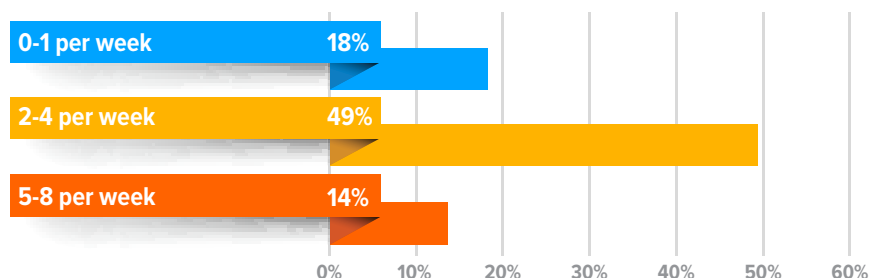
of the other data into context. promote and market anything 100% by themselves is remarkable. There is no other industry, and especially no other creative industry, where one person takes on all the key roles, jobs and tasks alone and expects to grow, flourish, sleep and/or avoid total burnout...if not insanity. It simply can't be done. Even if (IF!) this person happened to have 72 hours in every workday, there are very few humans (if any) who are gifted in content creation, production, promotion, administration, accounting, marketing and sales. And that's just seven things...or rather, seven departments of teams of people in any given creative agency. In other words, bloggers today are attempting to tackle department-loads of tasks, alone. It's admirable, but impossible to move forward when you're drowning in an attempt to do everything.

of the other data into context.

How many successful businesses are run by one person alone? (Spoiler alert: None.) The fact that so many people now work to create, build,

## How frequently do you post to your primary blog?

We added this question just for fun! There is no right answer. Post frequency is based on your business plan, passions and purpose for writing. Frequency does not ensure success, but planning helps.



**Important note:** Ask your readers what they want!

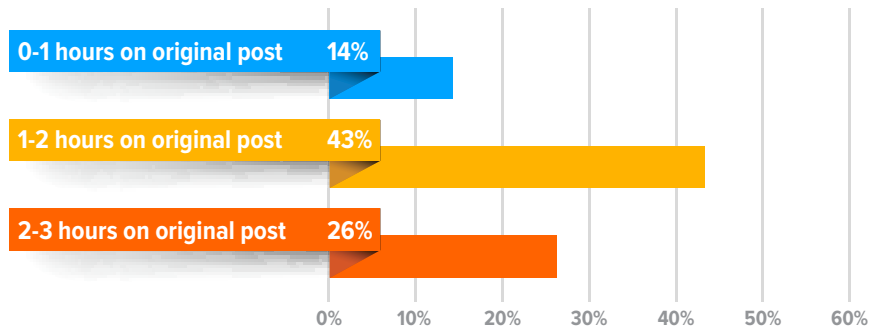
## MAJOR FINDING #1

Writing from the heart wins over being paid to post.

### How much time do you spend on a typical non-sponsored post?

83% of bloggers spend 0-3 hours writing a personal, original post as seen by the chart to the right.

In contrast, the chart below shows that only 47% of bloggers spend 0-3 hours writing a sponsored post. Only 15% actually spend 3+ hours writing a sponsored post they are being compensated for.



**Tiffany Romero**  
President  
Influencer Management  
Sway Group

### An expert weighs in...

Great content is the fuel for all our campaigns, and it's particularly important for sponsored posts. We found it interesting, and contradictory to our intel, that among those polled, 47% will take less than 3 hours to write a sponsored paid post. While each influencer in Sway Group's network has his/her own unique way of approaching a sponsored post assignment, all will take the time to develop quality content, because when it comes to

creating awareness and starting conversations, content is what continues to matter above all else.

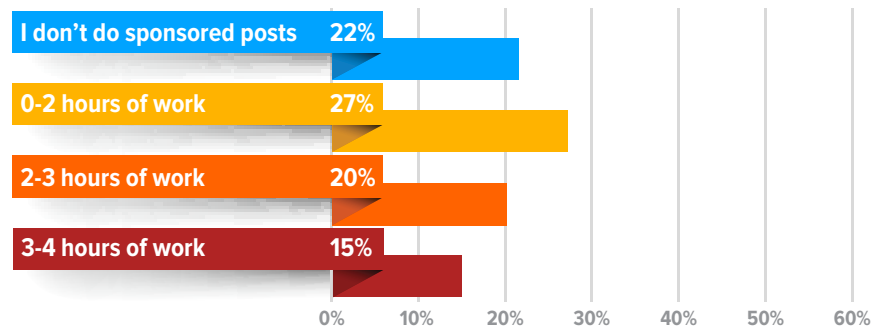
Influential publishers have learned how to provide value to their audience, and they know the best ways to deliver a brand message in their own signature style. A popular food blogger might choose to share a custom-created recipe in a sponsored post, a fashionista might style an outfit, a craft blogger might post a step-by-step tutorial.

In addition, transparency is a must for branded content. A compelling sponsored post that complies with FTC guidelines as well as Google's search engine Terms of Service is where paid strategy results in earned media — and it's why brands need to prioritize working with influencers who are skilled in the art of disclosure.

### How much time do you spend on an average sponsored post?

Only 15% of Bloggers spend more than 3+ hours on a brand sponsored post.

We asked bloggers to include time spent on work related items like videos, photography, crafting, cooking, reviews and research for the posts.



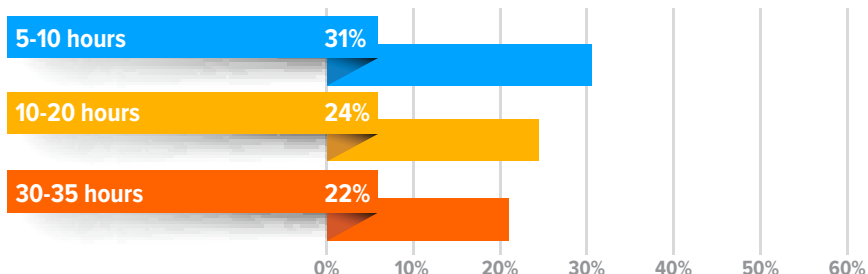
## MAJOR FINDING #2

Full time blogging is on the decline.

### How many hours per week is your typical blogging work week?

#### Major Finding #3

55% of bloggers work 5-20 hours weekly while only 22% work 30-35 hours or more, which would be considered closer to full-time employment from home.



**Stacey Ferguson**  
Founder - Blogalicious  
bLink Marketing Network

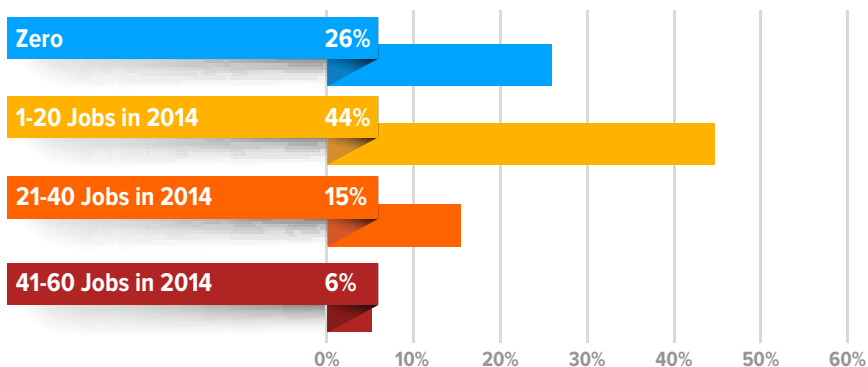
#### An expert weighs in...

The finding that “The majority of bloggers still aren’t making money” is related to the “Full-time blogging is on the decline” finding in the sense that blogging is no longer the endgame. Whereas blogging in and of itself used to be the goal – with sponsored posts,

ads, and blog ambassadorships as the main revenue source – today we are seeing that blogs are just one part of an overall integrated media brand. Successful blogger revenue streams now include coaching or consulting, events, digital products, merchandising, and more. This also explains the finding that “Content strategies will be imperative to success” because content marketing will drive blogging businesses through offerings like webinars, podcasts and the like.

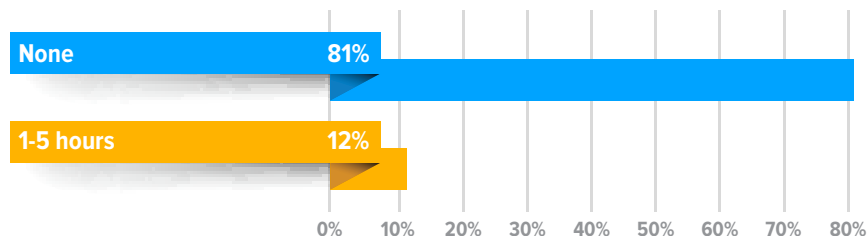
### How many paying jobs (projects) did you work on in 2014?

This includes projects, gigs, sponsored posts, reviews, ambassadorships, etc that stemmed from being a blogger.



### How many hours a week do you outsource work to others?

This includes tasks related to your blog, administrative tasks and virtual assistant work.



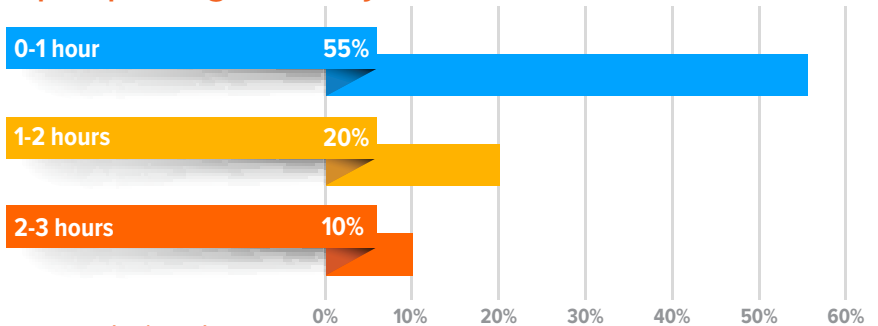


## MAJOR FINDING #3

There is a lack of marketing knowledge to secure paying jobs.

### How much time do you spend prospecting for new jobs?

85% of bloggers spend less than 3 hours per week prospecting and contacting networks, brands and agencies offering paying jobs.



**Ana Flores**  
 Founder + CEO  
 Latina Bloggers Connect  
 We All Grow Summit

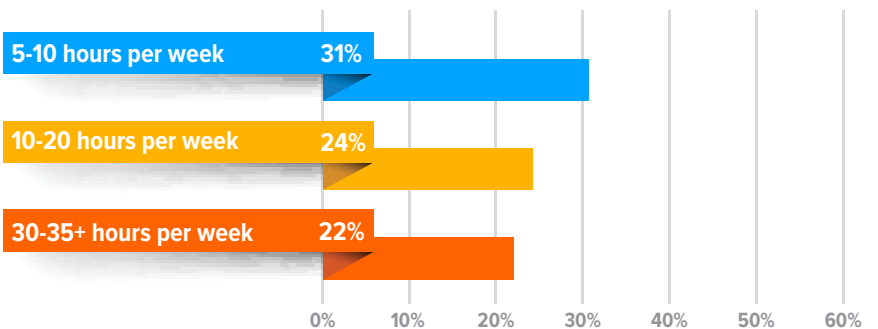
### An expert weighs in...

For professional bloggers, the topic of monetizing blogs is always front and center – as it should be. Given that it's such an important topic, I'm surprised that such a large percentage of bloggers don't invest enough time in actually strategizing how to market their brand and researching paying jobs. It makes more sense when you see that they are getting most opportunities through brands reaching

out to them directly and by applying for blogger network campaigns. As a network founder & CEO, it thrills me that we are providing a serious source of income to so many women entrepreneurs. However, I'd also love to see a much higher increase in bloggers realizing they actually should be spending much more time in marketing. The rule of thumb in business is 60-30-10: 60% on marketing and/or sales; 30% on making or creating your product (blog, videos, email text, images, etc); and 10% on administration and management. Bloggers are entrepreneurs and we need to see ourselves as such and apply the rules of business and marketing to our brands at any level in order to see those precious hours spent in creating content reap real rewards which allow us to reinvest in our business.

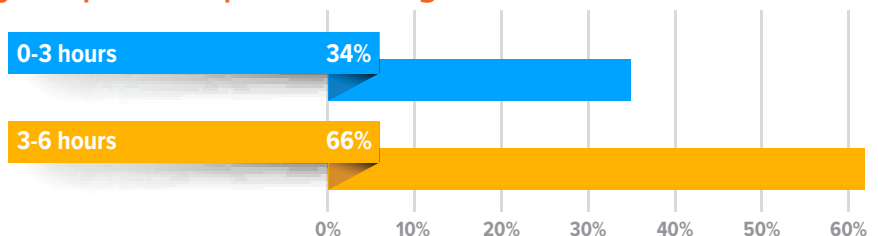
### How many hours per week do you typically work?

Performing activities directly related to growing your for-profit blogging business.



### How many hours a week do you spend on photo editing work?

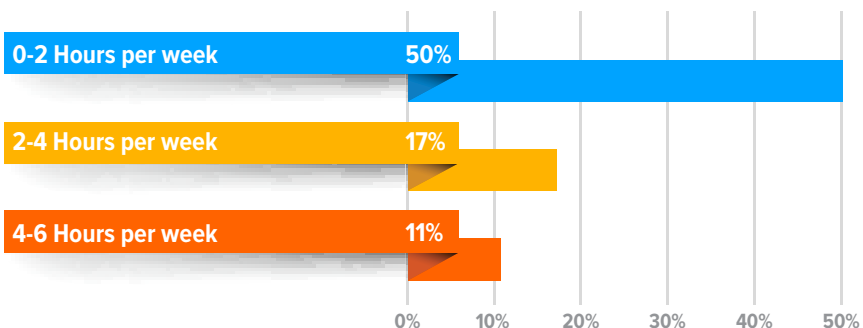
Non-compensated time that you spend on manipulating, editing, taking and producing photos for your posts, social media etc.



## Section 1 - How bloggers invest their time.

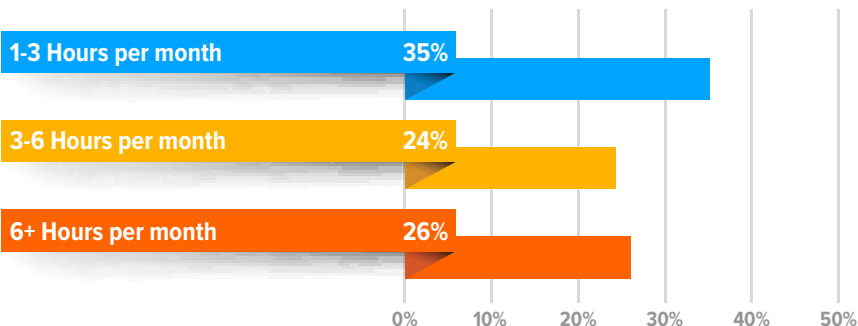
### How many hours a week do you spend on paying jobs for others?

Lack of prospecting for new jobs & taking on everything involved in the daily operations of a blog and business reduces the time spent on revenue-generating work for brands, networks and agencies.



### How many hours a month do you spend on learning & education?

Including social media, blogging and business education directly related to growing your business and earning revenue.

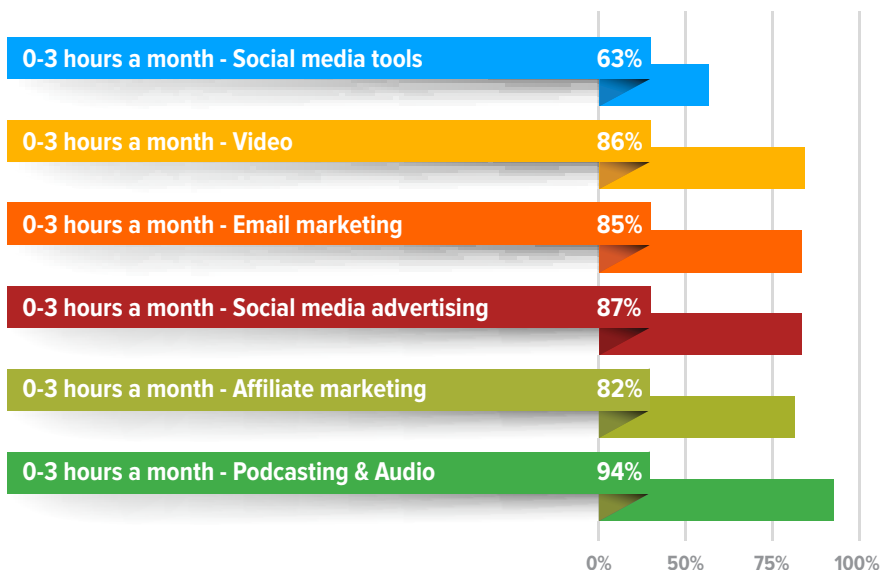


### How many hours do you spend a month on learning to monetize?

How many hours monthly do you invest in the following social media and marketing tools to learn how to grow your business and earn more revenue?

The overwhelming majority of bloggers surveyed spend zero to a maximum of 3 hours per MONTH learning how to use the tools available to grow their businesses.

Podcasting, social media advertising, video and email marketing were among the least favorite tools for bloggers to learn more about for business growth.

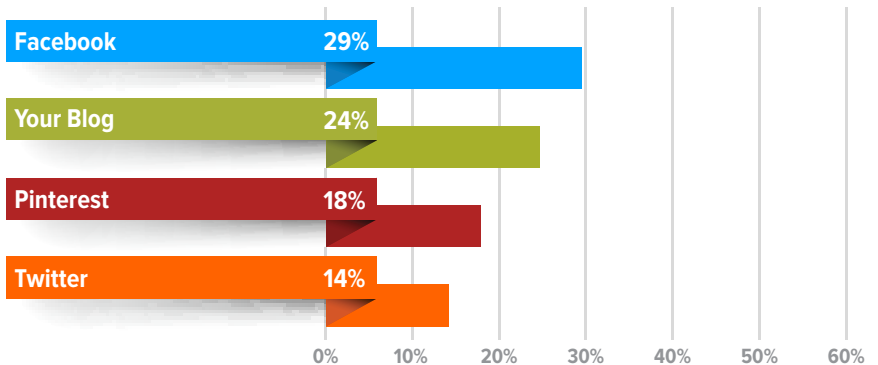


# How do women bloggers use social media?

## MAJOR FINDING #4 Facebook still reigns supreme!

### What is the most important social platform to your business?

Bloggers consider Facebook slightly more important than their own blogs for business success, as well as the most important driver of traffic to their website.



**Holly Homer**  
Founder  
Kidsactivitiesblog.com

the trenches of blogging. Bloggers have no budget and have to figure out what works/doesn't work by trial and error. While that might not be the glamorous route, it results in skills that can't just be learned through

### An expert weighs in...

An area I think bloggers are underestimating their ability in social media knowledge. 30-40% of bloggers are reporting that the agency/brand have above average to expert social media knowledge, yet 84% rank themselves as average, below average or unqualified in the area of social media. I truly believe that the best way to learn social media is through

a webinar and I wish bloggers wouldn't discount what they know! And because I often feel like the mom of the internet, I have one motherly word of caution. When asked what was the most important platform for your business, 61% of bloggers responded with Facebook, Pinterest or Twitter as opposed to just 24% stating it was their blog. Facebook, Pinterest and other social networks are great (I use them all), but they are spaces we "rent", not own. At any given time, we could be wiped off that network without warning or recourse. The only place we can truly build is our blog and email list. Recognizing our influence on these social media platforms as borrowed time can focus our interactions to be more intentional to expand the sphere of influence that we truly can control.



**Tiffany Romero**  
President  
Influencer Management  
Sway Group

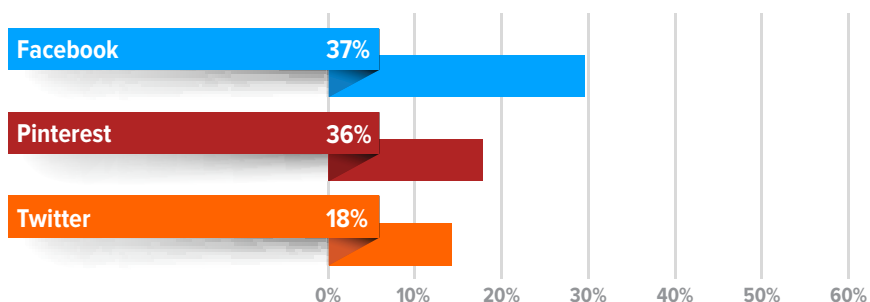
### An expert weighs in...

The survey takeaway that Facebook still reigns supreme among bloggers is interesting to note, especially among different blog niches. Instagram and Pinterest are very powerful for food and fashion influencers and

their target audiences – we find often much more so than Facebook. To carry a sponsored post to the next level, big, beautiful, pinnable images can be the key ingredient to viral campaign and are most successful on the newer platforms geared towards photo sharing. Photos not only help tell a story, we've found that posts with images are read more, shared more, and they tend to be better received.

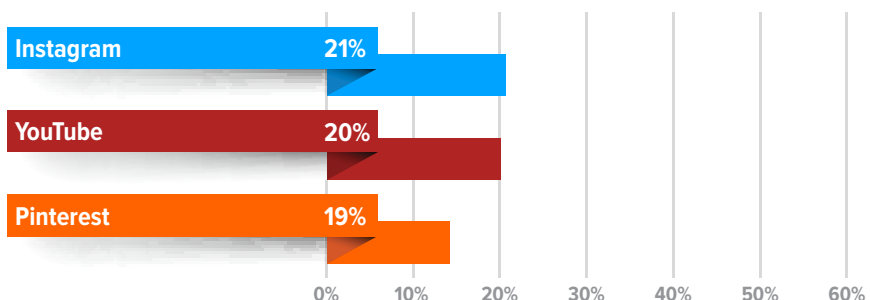
### Which social platform to drives the most traffic to your blog?

Bloggers reported that other social media platforms like Instagram, YouTube, Google+ and LinkedIn were all responsible for less than 4% of the overall traffic to their blogs.



### Which social platform do you want to learn the most about in 2015?

The visual social media platforms are at the forefront of bloggers interests in 2015. However it is still concerning that the amount of time bloggers will invest in learning how to use these platforms to grow their businesses may be limited to less than 3 hours a month.



**Rohit Vashisht**  
CEO & Co-Founder  
Sverve.com

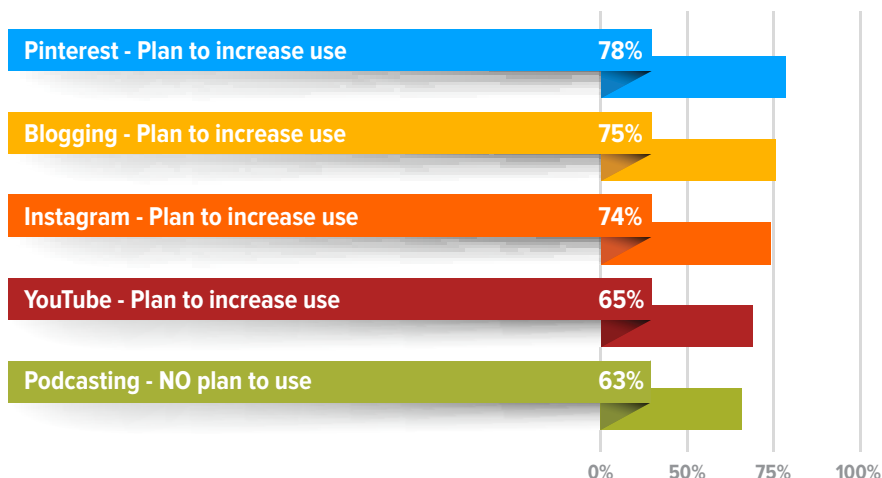
### An expert weighs in...

It is interesting to learn most influencers don't spend as much time learning new tools and techniques to monetize and grow their businesses. We believe it is largely because the industry is fragmented and many brands work with small players to outsource

their influencer campaigns. It makes finding the right opportunities tedious and at times waste of effort for influencers. We believe building in-depth profiles on networks and staying active will solve this problem as more and more brands adopt technology-based networks to run their campaigns. Influencers planning to spend more time on visual platforms is a great move as we see more demand for organic content on these channels.

### How will you change your social media use in 2015?

Pinterest was the #1 choice of bloggers to focus more effort on in 2015, followed closely behind by working more on their own blogs. Instagram and YouTube were very close in 3rd and 4th position which indicates that bloggers are discovering the power of video although it may still be intimidating for many bloggers to take the plunge, we hope the trend continues and that next year we see YouTube climbing the charts.

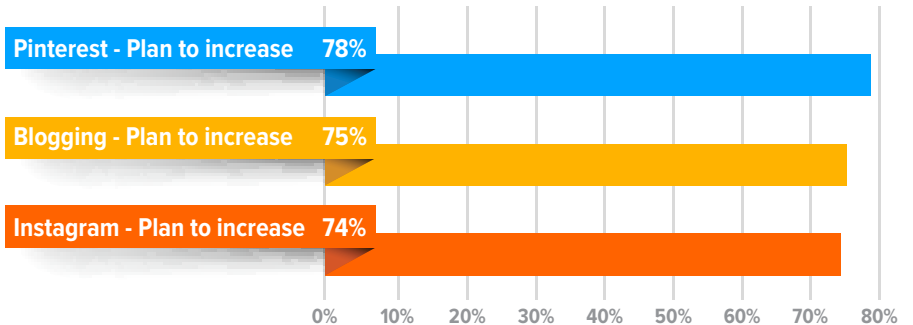


## MAJOR FINDING #5

Visual social platforms are becoming increasingly more important to bloggers.

### Which will be the most important to your business in 2015?

Bloggers indicated they plan to increase usage of Pinterest more in 2015 than any other social platform. They're also interested in learning much more about Instagram.



**Susan Carraretto**  
Co-Founder  
5 Minutes for Mom

### An expert weighs in...

While the majority of bloggers may not be making much money from their sites, the opportunities for successful monetization exist and are actually growing. But the key to blogging profitably is in advancing your skills - especially your photography and image editing abilities.

As the survey results show, most bloggers are not investing in training

and increasing their knowledge. So if you want to get ahead of the crowd and start earning more money, start learning. These days, blog posts must be visually appealing with images that are “pinnable” and encourage readers to share on multiple social sites. If a post is sponsored, you should invest even more time writing it and creating strong images.

Many bloggers in the survey indicate they spend less time on a post if it is sponsored. I think the opposite should be true. You should spend more time creating a quality article that will impress the sponsor and other brands who are looking at your site to review the quality of your work. A sometimes overlooked way to earn money blogging is to write for other bloggers who have larger audiences. If you do high quality work, which includes making fabulous images, top bloggers who need to outsource may hire you as a regular contributor. And the best benefit to contributing to a larger site is getting noticed in the blogosphere by other bloggers, readers and brands.

Overall you shouldn't be discouraged by the survey results saying the income potential for bloggers is low. Instead, sharpen your skills and find new opportunities to contribute to larger sites so that you can start earning while you build your own blog's audience.



**Stacie Haight Connerty**  
Founder & President  
Social Media Chicks

### An expert weighs in...

In the last few years, the landscape of professional blogging has really transformed. I have had to really change the way I approach blogging and social media. It is no longer enough to just be a writer. Bloggers have to be marketers, photographers, social media experts and so much more. You truly must be a jack of all trades.

The report says that visual social platforms are becoming more important to bloggers and I completely agree because they are more important to everyone. Every post I do is

much more visual with better pictures and more calls to action. I find that I am getting a lot of visits from Instagram, Pinterest, Facebook and Twitter so I make certain that everything I do is geared towards also attracting those into visual media. My posts and social media shares have pictures that I am continually working to make increasingly more attractive. I also share my work on many different social media outlets and I make certain that they get shared multiple times on those outlets.

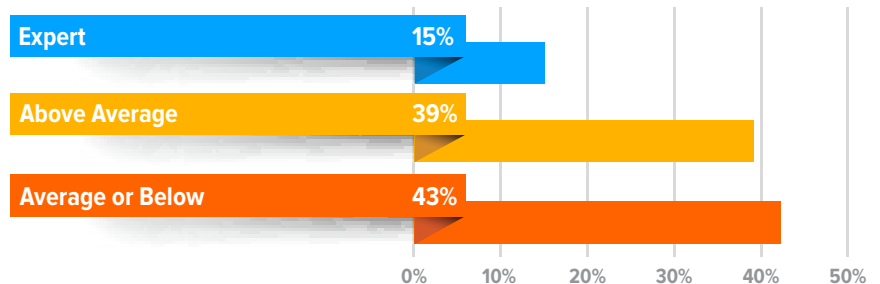
Bloggers have had to really make that visual component so much better to stay current and we also have to change/adapt as our industry changes. I heard someone speak recently and they said to find at least five streams of income so I have dedicated myself to that this year. I have ramped up affiliate marketing and have discovered that my readers really respond to it.

## Section 2 - How bloggers use social media.

Bloggers rate their current level of expertise in utilizing the following social media channels for business growth.

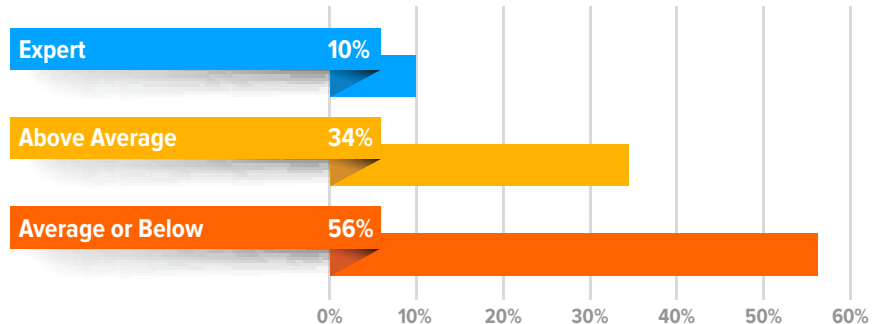
### Blogger level of expertise - Your Blog

Less than 15% of respondents considered themselves experts at utilizing their blogs to grow their businesses.



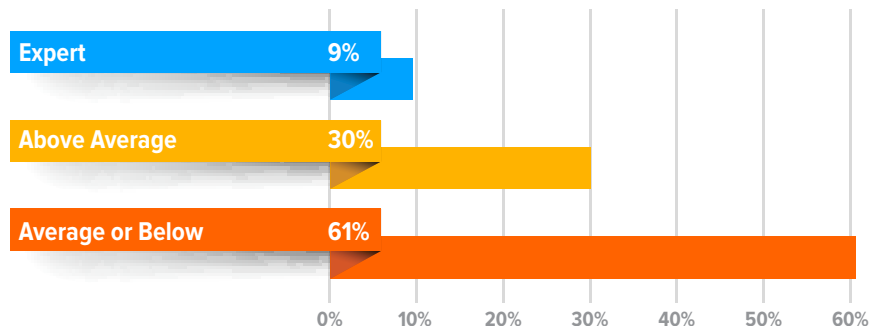
### Blogger level of expertise - Facebook

Facebook led all social media platforms (non-blog), with 44% of bloggers stating that they were above average or experts at utilizing the platform for business growth and revenue generation.



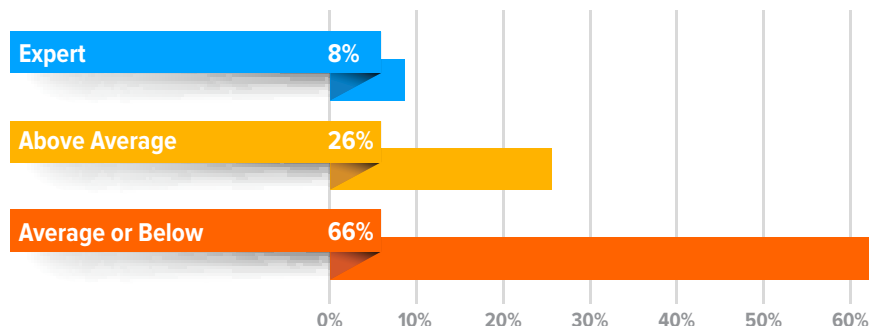
### Blogger level of expertise - Pinterest

Still in its infancy, Pinterest continues to grow in popularity among bloggers but utilizing Pinterest for business still lags. The good news is that bloggers realize the power of driving traffic to their websites and are increasingly using Pinterest for that purpose.



### Blogger level of expertise - Twitter

Twitter has been around for a while but its business applications still elude many bloggers. It seems to be an opportunity for bloggers to gain traction here. The industry needs more accessible business training on Twitter and the only channel to fall below Twitter, YouTube!

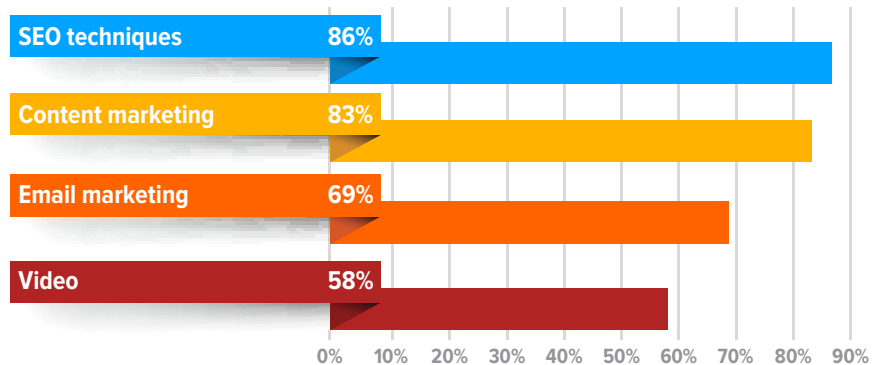


## MAJOR FINDING #6

Content strategies will be imperative to success.

### Which will be the most important to your business in 2015?

When presented with multiple areas of importance for business growth, bloggers overwhelmingly chose SEO techniques at 86% and Content marketing at 83% as their top focus in 2015.



**Elisa Camahort Page**  
Co-Founder BlogHer  
SVP SheKnows

### An expert weighs in...

I could not agree more that content marketing is the monetization path of the future for bloggers. When every entity...brand, non-profit, institution...is expected to be a publisher, the need for content increases. And I do believe

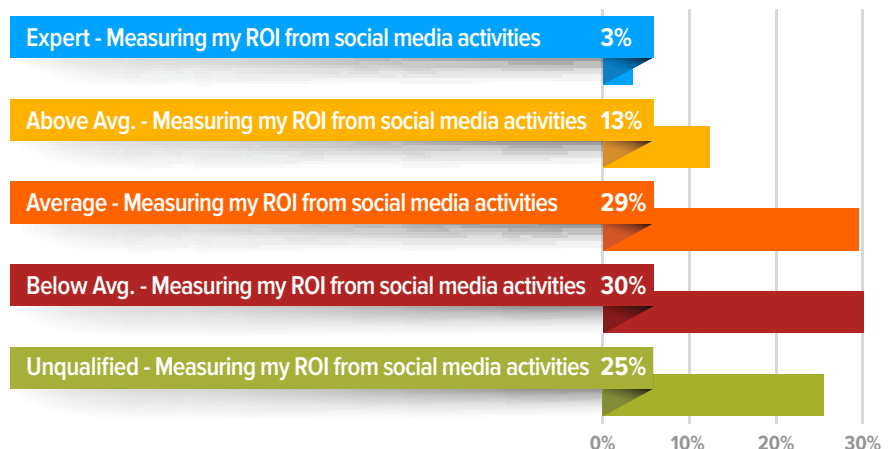
that quality content ultimately wins.

I'm a believer, though, that SMO+Mobile Optimization is greater than traditional SEO these days. SMO meaning social media optimization because Google is prioritizing social referrals in their results, and de-prioritizing sites that aren't mobile-optimized. So if you're getting SEO advice that's more than a year old, it's out of date!

### Can you measure your ROI from social media activities?

84% of our survey respondents indicated they were average to unqualified at understanding and calculating their own ROI from their social media activities.

We asked bloggers to rate their level of expertise in providing detailed analytics to show they understand and can quantify the value generated from their social media activities. The results reveal that bloggers lack of knowledge in analytics and reporting supports being underpaid for their services and work results.



## How bloggers make money.

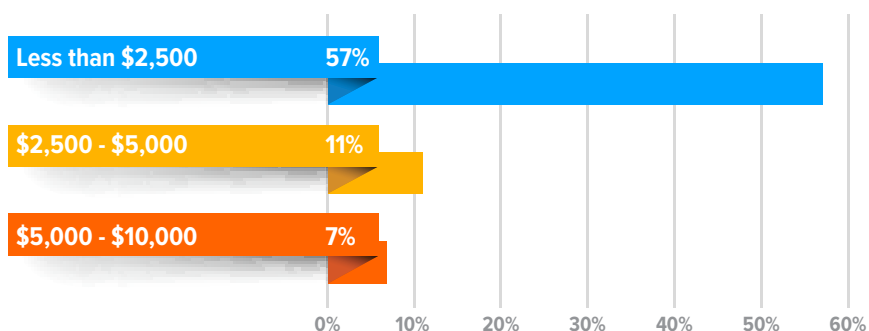
### MAJOR FINDING #7

The majority of bloggers still aren't making money.

Indicate your annual income from blogging and other revenue sources derived from your blogging career as stated on your 2014 tax return.

The total annual income in 2014 for over 68% of all bloggers was less than \$5,000 annually or \$417/month.

**Important note:** 6% of respondents indicated they make over \$60,000+ annually.



**Holly Hamman**  
Co-Founder & CMO  
Tap Influence

### An expert weighs in...

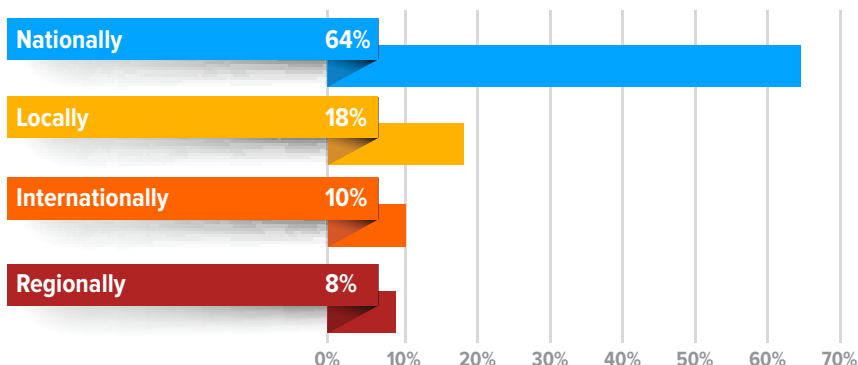
This has been a trend in the blogging community for years. Bloggers' desire to make money from their blogs is high but their self-ranked expertise level with critical monetization skills is low. Leveraging a blog or any audience channel (Pinterest, Instagram, YouTube) for revenue generation means it is a business. And running a business requires

skills that go beyond digital-specific skills like SEO, content creation, and increasing the number of unique visitors. It requires business skills like leadership, marketing, communications, finance/accounting, and decision-making.

But right now, education around these skills is not easily accessible to the blogging community. There are lots of avenues to learn how to take better photos, learn SEO, get better engagement on Facebook, and optimize video. There is a huge opportunity here for leaders in the industry to craft programs that also educate influencers and content creators on the critical skills that help them build a true business around their talent.

### Where do you earn your income from geographically?

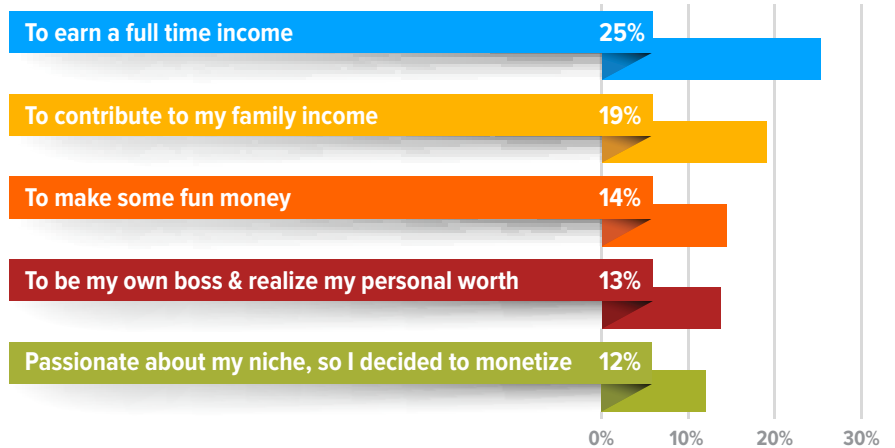
The overwhelming majority of bloggers surveyed make the bulk of their annual revenue by working brand on a national level. Alternatively, they worked with national brands that were performed or marketed locally, but still attained by networking with brands, agencies and PR firms at a national level.





## What is your primary motivation to blog as a business?

Only 25% of respondents are motivated to blog to earn a full time income, while approximately 5% are looking to grow a regional or national business.



**Holly Homer**  
 Founder  
 Kidsactivitiesblog.com

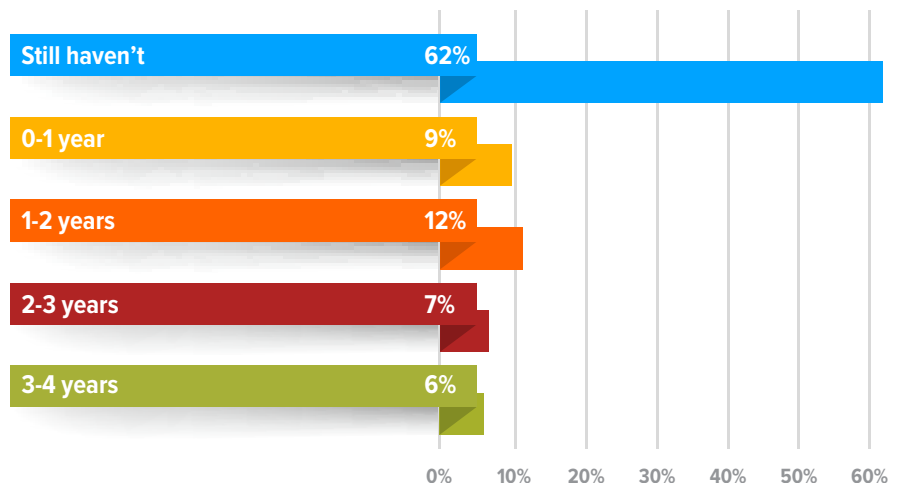
### An expert weighs in...

The results of this survey made me a little worried that bloggers are not seeing the limitless opportunity that is available. While 25% of the bloggers responding reported their motivation was to earn a full time income, less

than half of those (11%) are reporting more than \$30K a year in income. I love a perfectly fit sponsored post, but looking to brands to always pay the bills still feels like working for others and being dependent on them for a paycheck. What I love about the freedom of blogging is working for myself! The majority of my income comes from ad networks, affiliate marketing and using my platform to build a network marketing business.

## How long did it take to earn \$500/mth for six consecutive months?

62% of bloggers report they still do not exceed \$500/mth in net earnings from their blogging efforts. There is a learning curve in the lifetime of a blogger which usually begins with sponsored posts, affiliate links and evolves later as the size and strength of their blogs evolve. Brand ambassadorships, national projects and selling products, books and tutorials usually arise later in the blogger business life cycle.

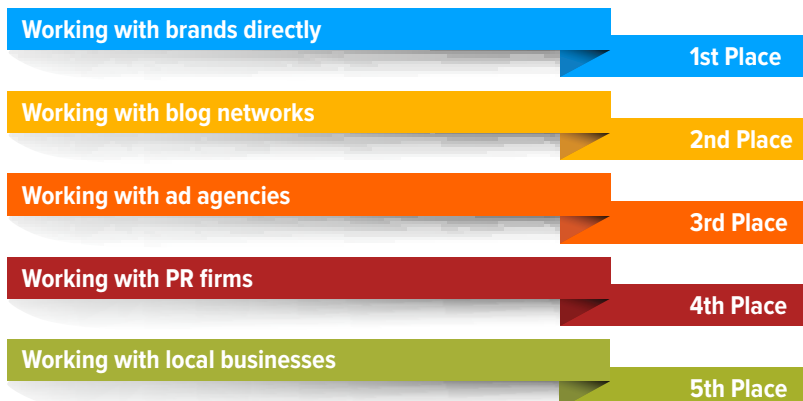


## Section 3 - How bloggers make money

### What is the largest source of your annual income?

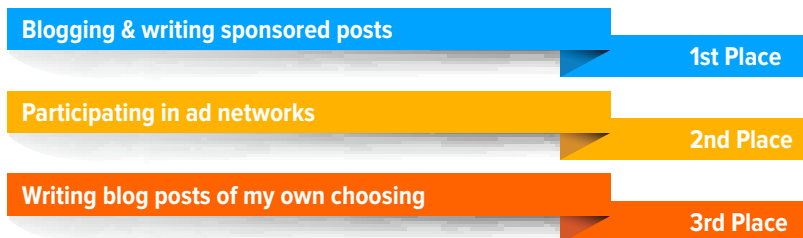
Bloggers were asked to rank in order the largest to the smallest source of their annual income.

Working with brands directly barely edged out working with through a blog network to secure job opportunities with brands. Blog networks and agencies invest in building relationships with brands so that bloggers can focus on creating content and growing their reach, followers and social media audiences.



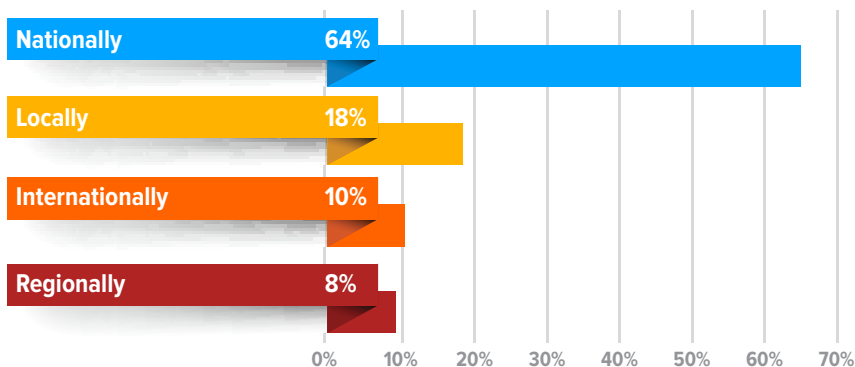
### Rank the top 3 ways that you earn money?

Sponsored posts still rank highest as the leading way that bloggers make money from their blogs.



### Where do you earn your income from geographically?

The overwhelming majority of bloggers surveyed make the bulk of their annual revenue from working with brands on a national level or through projects with national brands that were performed or marketed locally but still attained by networking with brands, agencies and PR firms at a national level for projects.



### Rank the top 3 activities you want to accomplish in 2015?

We asked bloggers to rank the top three activities they thought would be the most important to their business success and earnings potential for 2015 and prospecting to brands directly outweighed the rest.

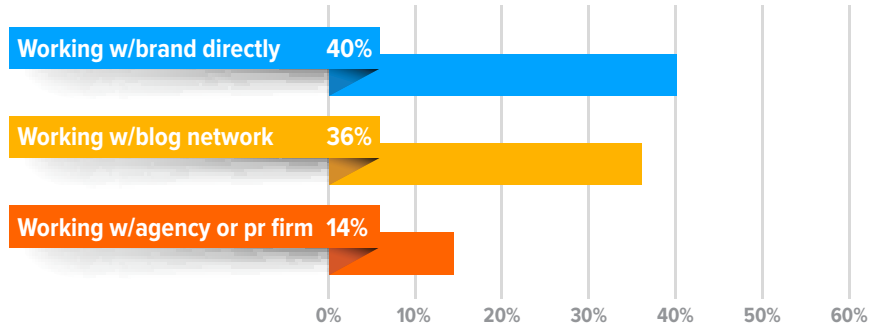


## MAJOR FINDING #8

Brands and blog networks lead the way to blogger pay.

### In which scenario do you make more money?

Working directly with brands ranked as the largest source of income for bloggers and blog networks were a close second. Bloggers also stated they find most brand opportunities from blog network promotions, emails and eNewsletters communications.



**Rohit Vashisht**  
CEO & Co-Founder  
Sverve.com

### An expert weighs in...

We work with over 20K influencers, 300+ brands and agencies, and have run over 1000 influencer programs on our platform. While many insights are inline with our own findings, there are a few that are quite startling.

Yes, the majority of influencers are making less than \$5K a year. This is a reality we see often. In our experience, campaign opportunities are less driven by reach and engagement, but rather

more by professionalism, brand relationships, and persistence. Brands want to work with influencers who they can trust for on-time delivery, consistent performance, and reliable results.

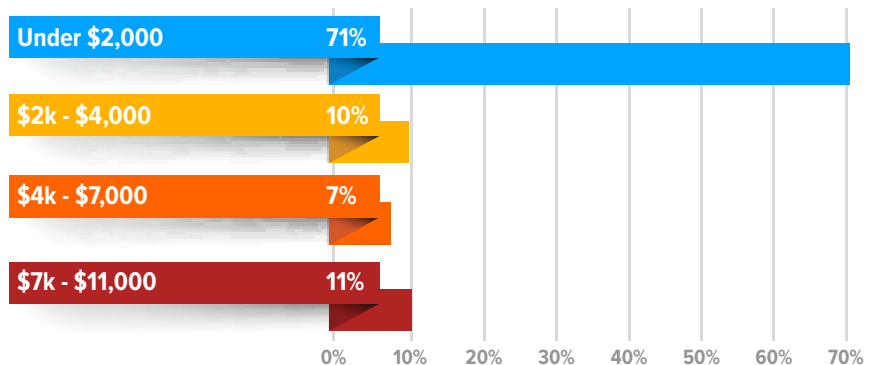
We are pleasantly surprised to learn that influencers are now getting more opportunities directly from brands or networks. It is inline with our vision of brands and agencies adopting a technology-based network for influencer outreach to power sustainable, scalable, and measurable campaigns. It was great to know that influencers look for feedback on their content from brands. Platforms like Sverve already provide feedback mechanism to brands and will be strengthening it going forward.

It was surprising to learn that full-time blogging is on a decline as we see an increasing amount of influencers adopting blog and social as a way to express themselves and build a business around it. However, we are seeing a shift in influencers spending more time creating content on the newer channels like Pinterest, Vine, and Instagram than on blogs, which might have skewed the results for this finding.

### How much in-kind/trade compensation did you receive in 2014?

This question was to determine how much non-monetary compensation was being earned by bloggers or received in lieu of cash payments for work provided.

This included: trips, hotels, flights, event tickets, expenses, products to review, food, meals, household goods, auto rentals, clothing, tech products, etc.

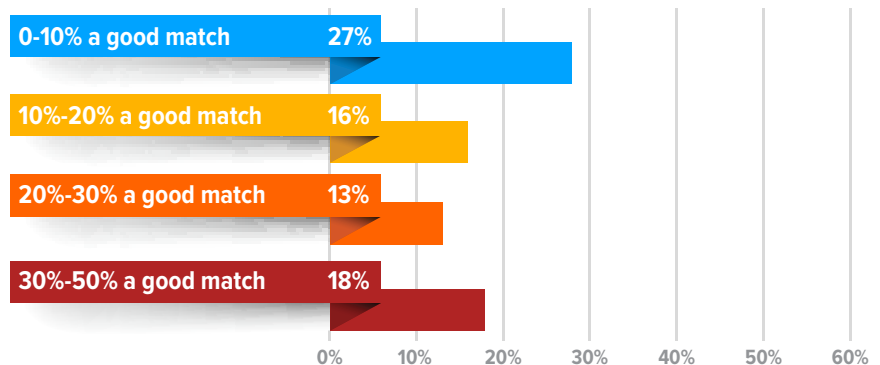


## MAJOR FINDING #9

Brands need to focus when making pitches to bloggers.

### When you get a pitch from a brand, how often does it fit your blog's style or tone?

Bloggers stated that over 74% of the pitches they receive from brands do not fit their blog's style, theme, tone or business.



#### Dan Morris

Blog Organization Coach  
Blogging Concentrated

#### An expert weighs in...

All of the information in this report can be boiled down to the question above. 74% of bloggers feel their sponsored work doesn't reflect the tone or style of their blog. The disconnect between how brands want their products discussed and how bloggers have built trust and influence with their audience should be the paramount discussion going forward.

The only way the brand / blogger relationship can work for the long term is if the bloggers do not burn out and quit. With 62% of bloggers making less than \$1,000 a month, there are a lot of families wishing they could have their moms back. Can the brands really afford to be working with new, non-influential bloggers every year?

And while the bloggers are scraping for every dollar they can get, they

need to learn that they are of little use to brands if they don't maintain the integrity of their blog's tone, voice and style. How can the blogger expect to make a full time income if their audience has little trust in their recommendations, or sees no value in returning?

Outside of the brands, voice is important for a blogger's future ability to sell books, be an influential ambassador, and be an effective speaker. Bloggers are the most adept people on the planet at using today's technology as a business tool and thus can play a strong role as consultants to any company. In fact blogging is an outdated term. Media Technologists might be better.

Contrary to this report, writing sponsored posts should not be the top revenue driver for bloggers. If we're really going to focus on making our audiences better, stronger, faster. . . bloggers should focus on products, joint ventures and affiliates. Brands and bloggers alike should start to put the audience's needs first, even if that means not talking about the brands that day. And in the end, brands would rather be recommendation 1 of 10 versus product 1 in 1000.



#### Holly Hamman

Co-Founder & CMO  
Tap Influence

#### An expert weighs in...

It is more fulfilling for bloggers to write stories and posts from the heart because it is more authentic, organic, and intrinsically motivated. They are deeply connected to the content so it takes less effort, is more fun, and is a labor of love so they often don't mind the work. Telling a story flows naturally - optimizing it for SEO and revenue generation is a harder, more conscious effort. The stories

behind sponsored content typically come from a brand or agency and are financially-driven. This means the story might not be as personal or emotionally satisfying and the effort feels more like work. Intrinsic motivation wins over extrinsic motivation every time. The opportunity for brands, agencies and influencer platforms is to better match bloggers with opportunities that align with their styles and audience. Two-thirds of brand pitches are not a fit for a blogger. From a brand perspective, if only 25% of their pitches are a fit, they have to pitch four times the number of bloggers just to get the number they need. So if you wanted 25 bloggers for a campaign, they have to research and reach out to 100. This is highly inefficient for both brands and bloggers.

### List the top 3 ways you discover opportunities to work with brands?

Experienced bloggers understand that you need a diverse portfolio of contacts to provide opportunities year-round for new projects, campaigns and activations. Maintaining open lines of communication with brands and agencies appear to be the most successful way of securing work with brands, exceeded only by gaining work through blog networks.

This suggests that networks play a key role in many bloggers' earning potential through providing leads and campaign opportunities in an accessible format.



**Elisa Camahort Page**

Co-Founder BlogHer  
SVP SheKnows

### An expert weighs in...

I'm not surprised to see this stat. First because I'm the recipient of many many untargeted pitches literally every day...and let's face it, none of my many personal blogs are incredibly active or well-trafficked!

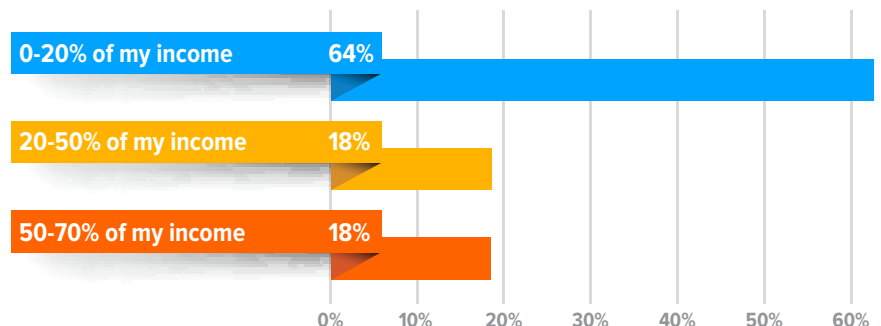
One of the primary questions I get asked by brands is, quite simply, "what are bloggers?" They can't quite figure out how to

categorize us. Are we journalists? Are we customers? Are we PR? Are we celebrity endorsers? And the answer may well be all of the above. So, here's the advice I give:

Who are bloggers? They are not necessarily journalists, but they may commit acts of journalism. And you should know their beat just like you know a journalist's. They are prospective customers, and they just may be a brand advocate in the making. Because they are speaking to (and influencing) many more of your customers. And finally, yes, bloggers are motivated by opportunity. Sometimes monetary, but not always. Ask, don't tell, and you can learn exactly what motivates an individual blogger.

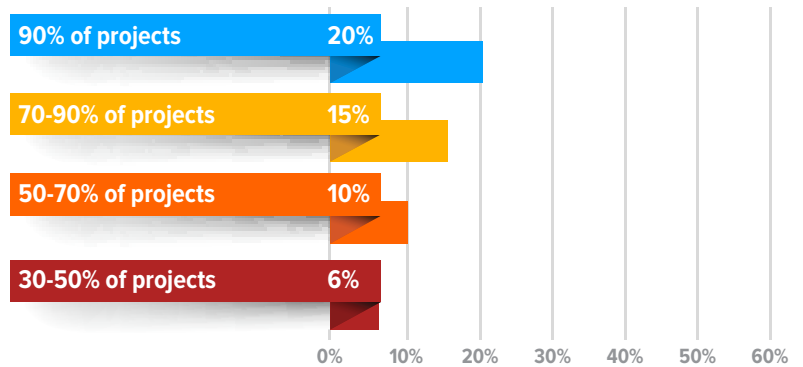
### What percentage of your income is from sponsored posts?

Brands ranked as the largest source of income for bloggers but blog networks were a close second. Bloggers also stated they find most brand opportunities from blog network promotions, emails and eNewsletters.



## What percentage of brand/agency opportunities are one time, short term projects?

The mix between short term and long term projects in a bloggers annual mix of income is determined by their partnerships with blog networks and agencies to provide leads as well as their business model. Many bloggers do not sell products or services on their websites but may participate in affiliate marketing and self promotion to secure new opportunities.



**Laurie Schacht**

The Toy Insider  
Blogger Bash

### An expert weighs in...

Using bloggers effectively may be the new frontier for brands and agencies to get in front of consumers, but on both sides, this way of doing business is still in its infancy. Based on the study conducted by iBlog magazine, nearly 75 percent of all bloggers mention that pitches they receive from companies do not fit their blog style, theme, or tone of business. I know how often bloggers

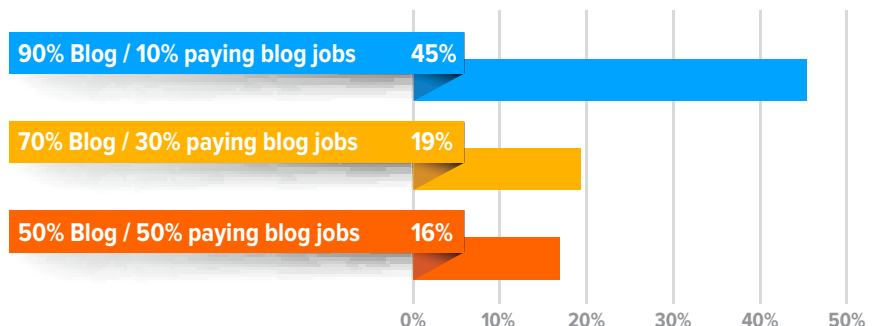
reach out to my office and have no idea what we do here at the Toy Insider. It is the responsibility of both parties to try to find the right partnership. And while blind pitches are sometimes effective, there are many (like me) who hit delete very quickly if someone has not taken the time to find out about my business. On the other hand, there's the old saying about throwing as much as possible against the wall and seeing what sticks.

When forming partnerships, feedback both ways is necessary. Not only should the blogger be sending a detailed report about the work they did to the brand/agency, but they should also follow up with either an email suggesting a call or a very short survey for that company to fill out so that they know what worked and what skills might need to be improved. Keeping communication open is essential in creating partnerships that last. Both sides need to see the ROI on their investment, whether that investment is time or money.

Blogging will continue to play an important role in reaching consumers, and the bloggers that spend time writing and learning about what's new and available will be the most successful in the space. Many see their blogging business as a part-time investment, either because of kids or other jobs, and the beauty about this is that blogging allows anyone with a voice to create a community. The more time that is invested into your blogging identity, the more your community will build. Like anything else, it does not come easy, but the rewards—whether financial or the time for other things like family or different paid jobs—lets anyone travel at their own pace.

## Which description most closely fits the way you divide your time?

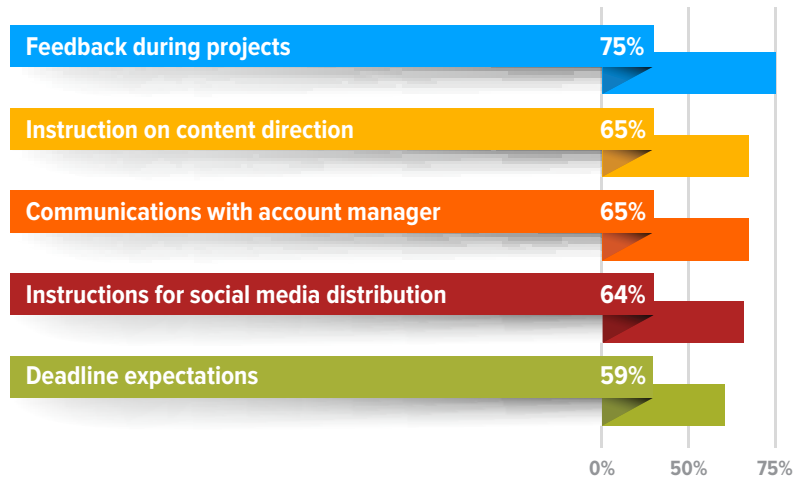
Less than 10% of survey respondents spend 90% or more on paying blogging jobs compared to their individual content.



### When working with a brand/agency what do you wish they would improve?

Survey respondents reveal that there are many areas between bloggers and brands & agencies that could be vastly improved for a better working relationship and end product. Specifically, bloggers are looking for better feedback on their success, or lack thereof, on a project, more detailed instructions to fulfill the desired requirements of the project and enhanced two-way communication with the account representatives throughout the campaign.

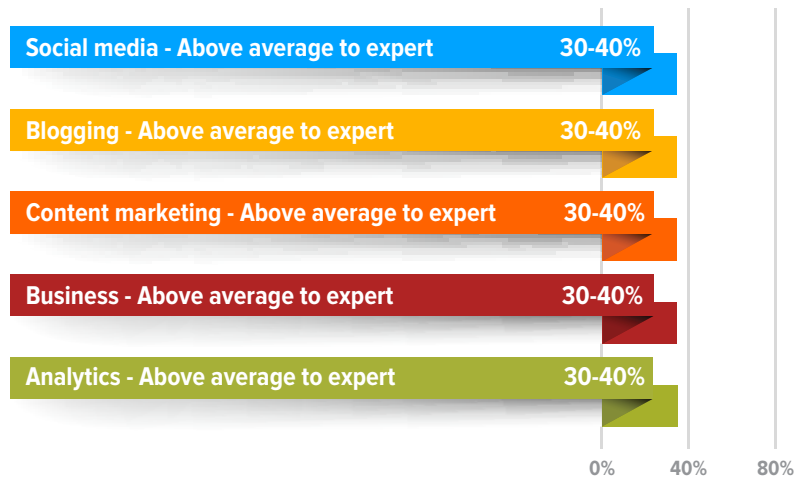
**Important note:** All percentages are for the responses of (Agree to Strongly Agree)



### What level of expertise does the typical brand/agency representative have in...

The overall consensus among bloggers was that 30-40% of the representatives from the brands and agencies they work with have above average to expert knowledge of the industry and the social media tasks that they are being assigned to complete for a project.

60% of the bloggers surveyed stated that the level of expertise among the brand representatives they worked with was average or below average.

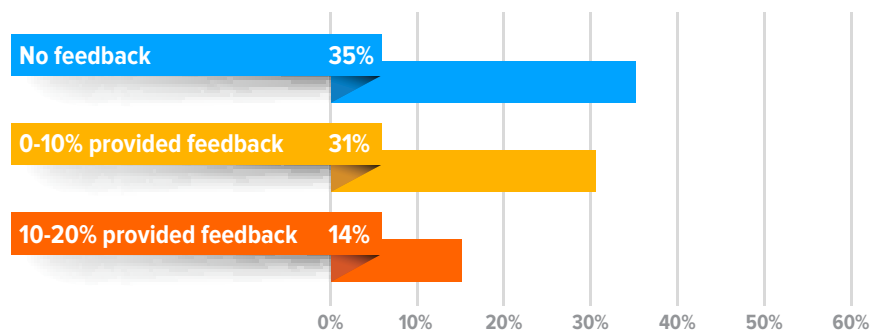


### How many brands/agency projects completed in the past 12 months provided you specific and detailed feedback about your blogging and social media efforts?

80% of brands and agencies provided little or no feedback to bloggers/influencers on projects they were compensated for to represent a brand.

Bloggers are provided few details on their reach, influence, successes or failure to meet the brands expectations.

As previously noted, there is room to improve brand and blogger relations by strengthening communication.

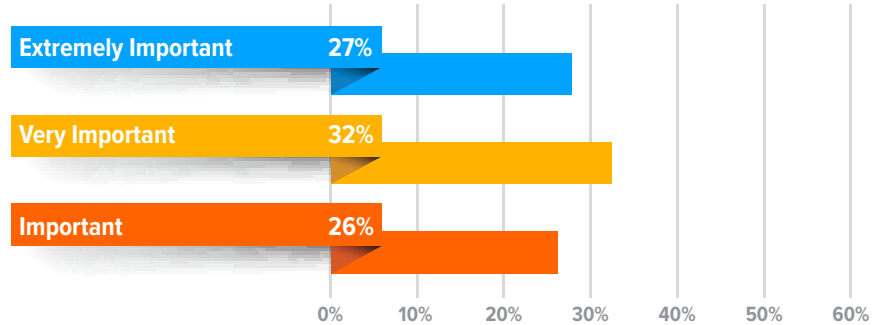


## MAJOR FINDING #10

Brands and agencies need to provide feedback to bloggers.

### How important do you feel brand/agency feedback is to your future success?

Over 85% of bloggers surveyed feel that detailed feedback after a project would make them better at new future projects.



**Danica Kombol**  
President  
Everywhere Agency

#### An expert weighs in...

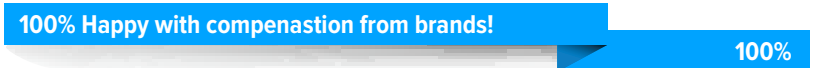
Feedback is the breakfast of champions and it turns out that bloggers are going hungry in the morning. iBlog Magazine's report could not be more clear. "85% of influencers feel detailed feedback would make them better at new projects." In a world where "content marketing" is all the rage, you'd think brands and agencies would be more responsive and tell

influencers when they hit the mark and what they wish they'd done differently. In our offices, we keep a poster of Bill Gates in our conference room. Emblazoned on that famous geeky mug is his quote, "We all need people who will give us feedback. That's how we improve."

We recently hit the mid-way mark of a campaign and realized some of our bloggers were off the mark on their social shares. Now, no quality blogger ever intentionally sets out to do a bad job for a client and we know that. Still, we hesitated before providing our feedback. Let's face it, sometimes negative feedback is greeted by a negative reaction. In the end, we did reach out to the bloggers and provided guidance on how their social content could better fit this particular brand. Guess what we learned? Bloggers do love feedback. They could not have been more accommodating. We saw a mid-campaign course correct and our client was thrilled. That said, I do think agencies and brands need to be careful about the feedback they provide to bloggers. Feedback does not mean you have the ability to rewrite a post or dictate social shares. It does mean providing well-crafted story architecture and a good idea of what success looks like for your brand.

### How happy are you with the compensation provided by brands/agencies?

Over 95% of the thousands of blogger participants in our survey replied they were happy overall with the compensation provided by brands & agencies.



### Rank the top 3 brand/agency opportunities that you enjoy working on?

Bloggers want to develop strong ties to the brands that they work with. Influencers have shown that the support of a brand in a long-term relationship will also gain more exposure and increased interaction throughout the year, long beyond the original compensated activation period.







### Stacy Debroff

CEO & Founder  
Influence Central  
Mom Central

### An expert weighs in...

What particularly struck me from the survey results centers on influencers wanting more concrete guidance and feedback on their efforts when working with brands, agencies or networks. Over 85% of women bloggers surveyed shared that they want more detailed feedback to make them better at new projects. Which rings completely true - as so often in posts, social media sharing, recipe creations,

photos and so on, there's seldom specific feedback other than, "Great post! Great tweet! Thanks!"

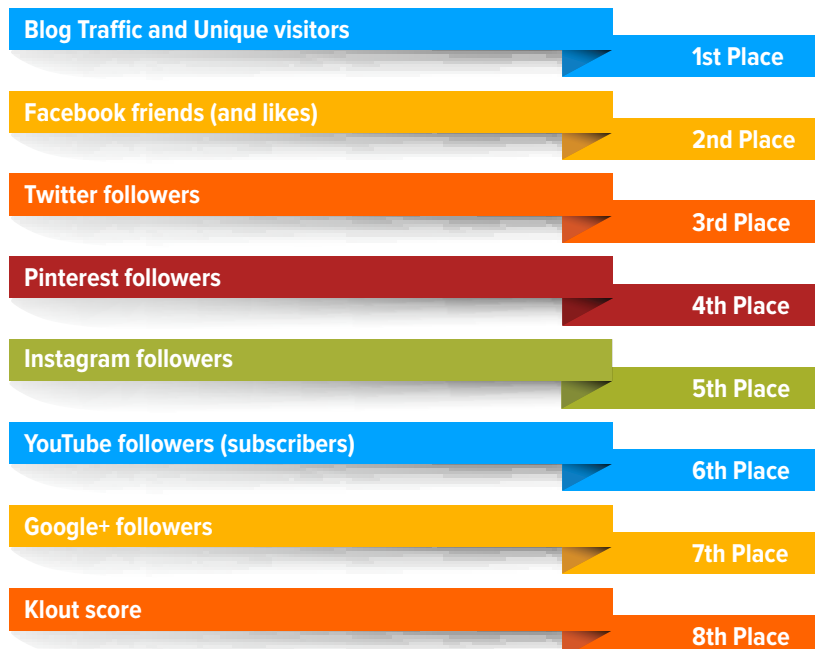
This gets echoed elsewhere in the survey results, with bloggers wanting communications improvement across the board from live feedback during projects (75%), more instruction on content direction (65%), and better communication with account managers (65%). In the flurry of activity and communications associated with a campaign, what mostly

gets pushed aside has been detailed feedback that enables all of us to have a stronger sense of what we're doing exceptionally well, and what we can tweak to better meet the expectations of those engaging us as influencers. So often as I've observed with our team at Influence Central and Mom Central, we share overall feedback along the lines of "Well done!" or reach out for factual or disclosure corrections, but seldom share detailed direct feedback from brands or agency clients on what particularly they liked, and what particularly had them dismayed. And our clients almost always have strong opinions on both.

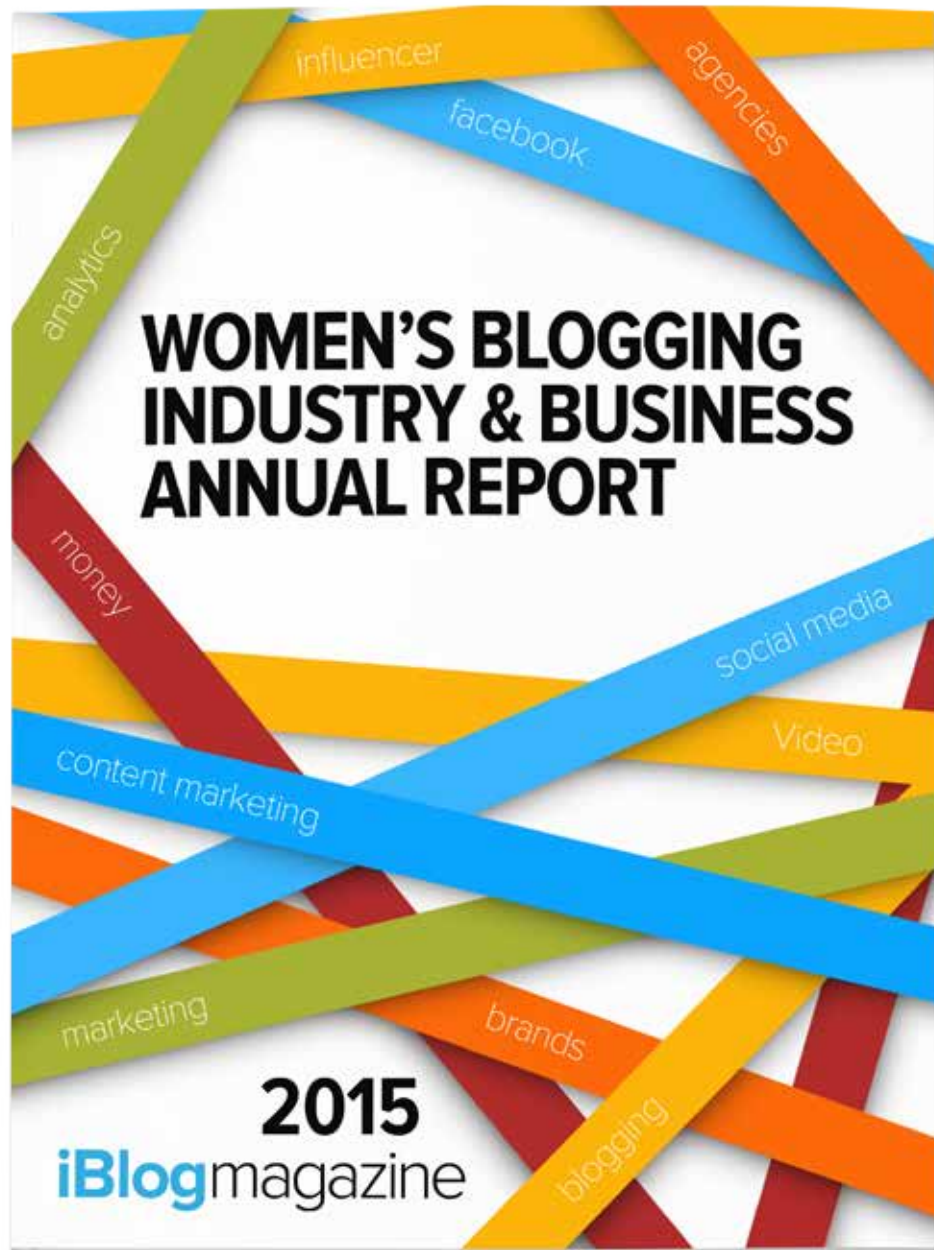
So what creates our hesitation to pass these on, rather than simply choosing some influencers more and becoming reluctant to serve up others in campaigns? I think the answer centers on taking the time to solicit and share specific great feedback from our clients (as opposed to that of our team), and overcoming a reluctance to offer up concrete feedback on perceived "mediocrity" out of concern of offending an engaged influencer. Definitely something we'll revisit with our client service team and with our clients- and a powerful take-away action item from the survey revelations!

## Rank the most important social media metrics asked for by brand/agency you have worked with in the past 12 months?

Blog traffic and owned social media networks remain the most significant metrics requested by brands when evaluating bloggers for a project or activation. While Facebook and Twitter still remain firmly at the head of the class for social media metrics, visual-based social media platforms like Pinterest and Instagram are quickly rising in importance. We expect to see a shift in the results of our 2016 Survey! What do you think will take the top 3 in 2016?



Download the entire report  
at [iBlogmagazine.com](http://iBlogmagazine.com)



Request a copy of the iBlog magazine media kit.



# Have you seen the new iBlogmagazine.com?

The screenshot shows the homepage of iBlogmagazine.com. At the top, there is a navigation bar with categories like 'MAGAZINE', 'BLOG', 'VIDEOS', 'FREEBIES', 'START HERE', 'iBlog', 'iBlogam', and 'Videos'. The main content area features several promotional tiles:

- WOMEN'S BLOGGING INDUSTRY & BUSINESS REPORT**: YOUR VOICE MATTERS. Now, 5,000 women bloggers in this next comprehensive survey on how women bloggers & influencers work. **TAKE THE SURVEY NOW**.
- The Blog**: Everything in one place.
- MEMBER'S ONLY PRIVATE**: If they only knew!
- FREE ISSUE**: INSTANT ACCESS TO iBlog MAGAZINE. Instantly access current issue for free and join thousands of women bloggers that love their results. Want even more? Sign up to receive our weekly feedlist. **I want it now**.
- freebies**: 25+ freebies to help you grow your business.
- start here**: Get the best tips & insider insights for your business.
- iBlogam**: social media gurus.
- Videos**: Expert video series - what info to grow your biz.
- Just 3** Blog magazine **ADVISORS** make them here.
- brands & agencies GREAT IDEAS** start here today.

The cover of the iBlog magazine features the title "iBlog" at the top left. The main headline is "WHY BLOGGERS NEED TO BE ON VIDEO NOW!". Other text on the cover includes "PIN & PLAY", "HOW TO CRUSH IT ON FACEBOOK WITH JOBS AND YOUR SMARTPHONE", and "HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT GEAR". There is a plus sign icon and a small graphic of a smartphone.

The cover of the iBlog magazine features the title "iBlog" at the top left. The main headline is "HOW DOES AFFILIATE MARKETING WORK?". Other text on the cover includes "Trend Watch a winning pinning strategy", "Twitter Promotion for affiliate marketing", "The AFFILIATE ISSUE", and "JUNE 2015". There is a plus sign icon and a small graphic of a smartphone.

The cover of the iBlog magazine features the title "iBlog" at the top left. The main headline is "People of Pinterest Study Findings". Other text on the cover includes "Facebook Ads with Custom Audiences", "DIY website improvements for business", "The INDUSTRY REPORT", and "July/August 2015". There is a plus sign icon and a small graphic of a smartphone.

Enjoy access to expert interviews, daily posts and your exclusive blogging industry magazine.

**Join iBlogmagazine.com today!**