

A photograph of two women laughing joyfully, overlaid with a blue-to-orange gradient. The woman on the left has long dark hair and is wearing a white tank top. The woman on the right has curly hair and is wearing a peach-colored tank top. They are both looking upwards and to the right.

BEST KEPT CAMPS
MARKETING SECRET:
**THE MOMMY
BLOGOSPHERE**

Forbes.com declared five years ago that “U.S. moms control the purse strings at home—to the tune of \$2.1 trillion per year, roughly equivalent to the gross domestic product of Italy, the seventh largest economy in the world.”¹ Current statistics put that number above \$5 trillion and expected to grow.²

A short foray into the so-called Mom Market reveals a thriving network that may be a **best kept secret for camp directors** looking for ways to reach their target audience: Moms.

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Introducing The Blogosphere

Blogs started in the 1990's as personal, online journals. People shared their thoughts simply for the purpose of self-expression and connecting with others through common interests. The first paid blogger is thought to have been hired on March 10, 1997 at Ritual Entertainment, a video game developer.³ In 2004, "blog" was Merriam-Webster's Word of the Year.⁴

Since then, blogging has evolved into a major business. Popular blogging platform WordPress reports that by the end of 2012, it hosted 42 million blogs, with 500,000 new blog posts a day, 400,000 comments a day, and 329 million viewers. Of these bloggers, 9% make enough to live on and 2% make more than \$150,000. The influence of blogging was validated when the Huffington Post blog sold for over \$300 million.⁵



The Mommy Blogosphere: The Ultimate Word-of-Mouth Marketing

As women, and especially moms, began to attract large numbers of engaged followers through their blogs and social media channels, they drew the attention of well-known brands. Companies marketing all kinds of products—not just women’s products—began to recognize the potential power of sponsoring these bloggers to write about their products. An entire industry has sprung up to teach bloggers how to monetize their blogs, and to connect bloggers and sponsors. The success of a few wordy stay-at-home moms has inspired the growing influence of mommy bloggers, who, by the way, are smart, digitally savvy, and fiercely dedicated to their families.

The mommy blogosphere is good news for anyone marketing a product or service to women. Annabel Candy of SuccessfulBlogging.com says, “Blogs are a more cost-effective and effective medium than traditional media because they can help brands reach a targeted audience and get endorsed by someone consumers view as a trustworthy friend.”⁶

Research shows that moms trust other moms with brand information more than they trust any other channel. When researching purchases, moms look to social media recommendations 243% more, blogs 122% more, and Facebook posts 91% more than the general population, and they are 21% less likely than average to get their information through television.⁷ This is why word-of-mouth advertising about your camps from moms is your most valuable source of marketing.

What if you could take the word-of-mouth idea and give it the extra punch your limited marketing budget needs? Sponsored blogs could be a way to make that happen.



3 Ways to Tap into the Blogosphere

1. BE A SPONSOR AT A BLOG CONFERENCE

The 2013 Blissdom Conference for bloggers and writers was sponsored by an impressive array of product brands and charities, including those you'd expect: feminine, baby, cleaning and beauty products.

Following in line with research that shows women are 117% more likely than the general population to do business with businesses that give back,⁸ there was a non-profit organization that gives inoculations to third-world children and another that donated free meals to homeless children in America for every tweet sent out with the company's name.

There were food-related sponsors (raisins, pizza, applesauce), furniture and mattress sponsors, female-empowering organizations, and public service sponsors. There was even a sponsor for a popular yard pesticide. Sponsorships come in all shapes and sizes, so don't rule yourself out before you investigate. Even if it's just a presence in the swag bag of 800 moms, it's directly targeted to women who influence other moms. The point? **You should be where these independent mom influencers are.** Check out sponsorship opportunities at blog conferences. (You can find a list of 2013 conferences [here](#). There's even one for men!).

2. SET UP AN ACCOUNT AT A BLOGGING AGENCY

For a minimal amount (as low as \$25), you can establish an account with a firm that will find bloggers for you, such as [Social Spark](#) or [Sponsored Reviews](#), which allow thousands of bloggers to bid for your post. You may search the database and submit a request for a specific blogger, or post a blogging opportunity for bloggers to find. Once a sponsor-blogger connection has been made, you pay the individual's listed post price and could potentially have a blog up within a week or so.

Sometimes you can write the post yourself. In that case, the fee would be less. You will want to make sure the readership of the blogger fits with your camp's target market.

3. FIND YOUR OWN MOMMY BLOGGERS

There are three ways to do this. One is to go to a free blog directory site, such as [Top Mommy Blogs](#), and post a request for the type of blog post you want, in order to be contacted by a blogger willing to write a sponsored post for you.

Another is to Google “Blogs in [your city]”. You may find not only a blog or two, but also a blog networking group. Contact these individuals or groups about hosting a sponsored blog about your camp.

It is also possible that there are undisclosed mommy bloggers in your database. You could include a question to that effect on your registration or other forms, or you could email a request to your list of parents. These moms are your best resource, as they are already fans of your camps. Like all moms, they’re looking for ways to save or make money. Even if they are not already doing sponsored blog posts, they are likely to be familiar with monetized blogs and might love the idea of earning a few extra dollars by blogging for you.

Most bloggers send out tweets and Facebook updates to announce new blog posts. Hundreds or thousands of people who know and trust your blogger will hear about your camp on her social media channels.



Cost of Sponsoring Blog Posts

The cost of sponsored posts can range from \$5 to \$5,000, depending on the amount of traffic the blogger has established. (If you're using an agency, it usually gets 30-50%). The average rate for freelance writers starts in the \$20-30/hour range. Experienced marketing writers, however, can charge \$125-150/hour. Blog posts can take several hours to write.

Annabel Candy of SuccessfulBlogging.com, is an advocate for fair pricing for bloggers. She recommends this chart⁹ for a starting point, though many are writing for much less than this:

SPONSORED BLOG POST RATES - A GUIDELINE

Unique visits (per month)	PR2	PR3	PR4	PR5
5000	\$50 - \$100	\$100 - \$200	\$200 - \$400	\$500 - \$700
10000	\$100 - \$200	\$200 - \$400	\$400 - \$800	\$1000 - \$1500
20000	\$200 - \$400	\$400 - \$800	\$800 - \$1500	\$2000 - \$3000
30000	\$300 - \$600	\$600 - \$1200	\$1000 - \$2000	\$3000 - \$4000
50000	\$400 - \$800	\$800 - \$1600	\$1500 - \$3000	\$4000 - \$6000

Source: SuccessfulBlogging.com

(PR2, PR3, PR4 and PR5 refer to Google PageRank, a 0-10 scale of the importance of a website with 10 being the best). Compare this to traditional media costs and you will see that sponsored blog posts can be an effective alternative. It's best to get your feet wet about how the process works by starting at the lower-to-mid price point. Try multiple bloggers and topics at different times of the year. Keep records comparing analytics of audience size, topic, calendar timing and cost of post to find the best value for your camp.



Legal Guidelines

You may be able to provide a full or partial campership to the blogger's child as part of the payment, so that he or she is writing from personal experience. The FTC is beginning to crackdown on undisclosed sponsorships,¹⁰ so be sure you understand barter laws to protect yourself in this type of exchange.¹¹

Part of the FTC restrictions includes a mandate to the blogger to disclose that the post is a sponsored blog. Due to the popularity of sponsored posts, if the post is a true word-of-mouth endorsement, this should not negate the positive benefit.

Conclusion

Sponsored blogs present a unique opportunity worth exploring. Getting a couple of dynamic moms on your side could be the best marketing strategy your camp ever had.

Welcome to the Blogosphere!

Next Steps

Navigating the blogosphere is one of the many ways to increase your camp's reach. [Contact us](#) to find out how ACTIVE Network camp management technology can further support your marketing efforts.

ABOUT ACTIVE NETWORK

As a pioneer in online camp registration and management, ACTIVE Network has been serving camps for over 12 years. ACTIVE's camp management solution was designed from the ground up to make life easier for camp organizers and families so that, ultimately, more kids can enjoy the incredible experience of camp.

Today, with 2,500 camp customers, ACTIVE is a leader in camp management & online registration technology. ACTIVE's software suite has grown to touch on multiple aspects of camp management, from advertising & marketing to registration, payment, donations, online camper accounts and community engagement.

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