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HOW PARENT BLOGGERS MAKE MONEY

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www.tots100.co.uk

The Tots100 is the UK's largest community of active parent bloggers. We provide brands and PR agencies with fast, simple access to profiles and up-to-date metrics on thousands of the UK's most popular and influential blogs, as well as advising them on how to create high-impact social media campaigns, from competitions to sponsored posts and ambassador programmes. We also provide our bloggers with regular access to free blogging tutorials, webinars, social events and BlogCamp (www.blogcamp.co.uk) workshops, while highlighting the very best content being produced by British Mummy and Daddy bloggers.



www.realwire.com

RealWire is an award-winning online press release distribution service with over 10 years of expertise and is first choice for many of the UK's top digital PR and internet marketing professionals. RealWire's service can increase your story's coverage and improve your SEO results. RealWire has been the UK's leading innovator in press release distribution introducing a Social Media News Release option in 2007 and its patent pending targeting system, PRFilter, in 2010.





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HOW PARENT BLOGGERS MAKE MONEY



INTRODUCTION



Are you looking for ways to make money from your blog?

If you are, you are not alone. Bloggers covering a wide range of topics are discovering that blogging can be a profitable – if not lucrative – hobby. While not everyone makes a six figure sum from their blog (although some people do) it can provide an extra source of income and indeed enough money to allow you to work for yourself full or part-time. Six out of ten Tots100 bloggers surveyed in December 2011 told us that they are already making money from blogging.

This guide has been put together for people who want to make money through blogging but aren't sure where to start. Our research through the Tots100 Bloggers and Money Survey found that over 90% of the parent bloggers that don't currently make money through their blog would like to in the future. At the same time the Tots100 Bloggers and PR Survey found that bloggers are being increasingly targeted by brands but that there is still improvement to be made in understanding and interaction on both sides.

The guide provides details of our research findings, an overview of how to get started and how to make the most of money-making opportunities, along with the dos and don'ts, working with PR agencies and financial and legal implications.





TOTS100 BLOGGERS & MONEY SURVEY

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During December 2011, Tots100 conducted an email survey of 500 UK parent bloggers.

The responses included bloggers from all areas of the UK, with most bloggers having between one and three years' experience.

Survey results can be found on pages 21-24.

Key findings

59% of parent bloggers have made money from their blogs in the past 12 months

Bloggers are most likely to make money from sponsored posts (21%), where brands pay bloggers a set fee in exchange for writing about a specific product or service. Advertising is a source of income for 17% of parent bloggers, with 12% also accepting paid text links.

Some bloggers have turned their hobby into a service they offer clients

9% of bloggers are being paid to handle social media activity on behalf of a brand, while 8% are being paid to write on commercial websites.

Most blogs start as a hobby, a way for bloggers to explore their creativity, capture family memories and connect with like-minded friends over social networks. But over the last two years, there has been a huge increase in the number of commercial opportunities available to bloggers, as brands wake up to the growing popularity and influence of UK parent blogs.

A smaller number of parent bloggers act as consultants for brands, or provide training to marketing and PR professionals in blogger outreach techniques. Although relatively few bloggers have taken on this kind of work, it is one of the most lucrative activities for bloggers, overall.

Most bloggers say they are not earning what they would like to from their blogs.

Although 90% of the bloggers surveyed by Tots100 want to earn money from their blogs, 41% have never earned anything from blogging, and only one in three bloggers earned more than £500 from blogging during 2011.

Huge differences in advertising and services rates paid by brands to bloggers

One of the big challenges for bloggers is a lack of transparency in the rates paid for blog advertising and services, so the Tots100 asked bloggers what they charge brands. This revealed huge differences in rates – with advertising rates ranging from £20 to £100 per month, and charges for sponsored posts ranging from £30 to more than £100.

Tots100 also conducted an email survey with a similar sample of 250 parent bloggers about their experiences of working with brands and PR agencies.

Survey results can be found on pages 25-29.

Key findings

PR agency approaches on the increase, but relevance still a key frustration

Bloggers told us that the number of approaches they receive from PR agencies continues to increase, with bloggers now receiving an average of 4 approaches a week, with some bloggers receiving more than 20.

While most bloggers welcome contact from PR agencies, the most common frustration for 67% of bloggers remains pitches that are simply not relevant – with parents of teens receiving information about toddler products, or Mums to girls receiving offers to review boys' clothes. Bloggers also have strong ideas about the brands they like to write about – 30% of bloggers say they will decline a pitch if they don't like the brand involved.

Parent bloggers keen to work with brands

On the whole, parent bloggers are pleased to work with brands. Some 88% of the bloggers surveyed have accepted free products from a brand or PR agency, and 44% say that having the opportunity to try new products and services is the best thing about working with brands.

However, it's not enough to just offer bloggers freebies. A third of bloggers say they want to work with brands because their families gain new experiences and visit new places – while 41% say they want brands to help drive traffic to their blogs. Incorporating these elements into any pitch to bloggers will make it more likely to generate coverage.

TOTS100 BLOGGERS &

PR SURVEY



...but their primary motivation is still capturing memories of their children's lives

It is important for PR agencies to understand that while parent bloggers are increasingly open to working with brands and monetising blogs, relatively few of them consider this the most important reason to blog. Three quarters of bloggers surveyed said that first and foremost their blog is a record of their family's lives.

Smart brands, then, will look for ways to enhance this family record, through pitching appropriate products and brands that will compensate bloggers fairly while giving them access to new experiences, events and opportunities.

WAYS OF MAKING **MONEY** ON YOUR BLOG



Advertising

Advertising is probably the most obvious way of monetising a blog and there are multiple avenues to do so. Below are the different options of using advertising.

Advertising networks

An ad network is essentially a company which connects blogs that want to sell ad space with advertisers that want to reach potential customers. The benefits of using an ad network for an advertiser are it allows them to display their advertisement across thousands of blogs and websites easily and, because an advertiser can choose to pay only when someone clicks on the ad, it can be cost effective too.

Advertisements from ad networks are usually 'contextualised', which means the advertisement being displayed next to your blog post will be relevant to the content of it. For example, a blog post about a holiday to Rome may show adverts with cheap flights to Italy.

Google Adsense

Google's own ad network, Adsense, is the most commonly used and is more suited to smaller publishers like bloggers. By signing up to the service you are provided with a line of JavaScript code which you can insert in to your blog and each time a web page on your blog is visited the script will display ads fetched from Google's servers.






Pros

-  **Free**
-  **Easy to use**
-  **No middlemen to deal with**



Cons

-  **Can often look unprofessional if too many ads are displayed on the site**
-  **Some bloggers feel it cheapens the look of their blog**
-  **Rates can be lower than if you negotiated them on your own**

Handpicked Media and Glam Networks

Two other appropriate ad networks worth mentioning are Handpicked Media (www.handpickedmedia.co.uk) and Glam Networks (www.glammedia.com). Both of these sell advertising space across hundreds of blogs at a time and give bloggers access to the high-profile advertisers they work with and the payment system is based on page impressions (the number of times a web page or site has been accessed).



Pros



Ads look more professional than Google Ads



Cons



Payments are likely to be very low (£10 a month or less) unless your blog has very high traffic levels.



Some networks may also restrict your ability to trade with other advertisers, and may take commission on advertising you sell directly.

“I bring in a part-time income from advertising and sponsored posts”

I am currently with Glam Media. It was very easy to sign up, but financially I only receive around ten pounds a month from them. Also not being based in the South East I miss out on a lot of their events. My blog brings in a good part-time income, mainly from advertising and sponsored posts. I would like to have more advertising as it is a very easy way of building a regular income. Sponsored posts are great, but they are sporadic and some months I get a lot and others I get none.

Jen blogs at www.muminthepadhouse.com

Affiliate networks

An affiliate network operates similarly to an ad network in the way it acts as an intermediary between a publisher of content and a merchant (a company that is selling something). As a blogger you can sign up to an affiliate network and then apply to join affiliate programmes from specific stores. If accepted, they will provide you with a text and/or banner images that you can use to run their campaigns.

One of the most commonly known merchants with an affiliate programme is Amazon – known as Amazon Associates – where bloggers can place banner or text links for specific books. Affiliate networks typically pay you a commission so you will get paid when someone clicks a link from your blog to a store and makes a purchase.

Private ad sales

Some bloggers also run ads on their blogs that have not gone through an ad network or affiliate network. They are spaces on the blog that have been allocated by the blogger and advertisements that the blogger has secured by arranging them directly with companies looking to advertise. Usually the blogger will have a set price of how much they charge per space and the advertiser will provide the advertisement artwork to be displayed.

“Selling ads direct is most profitable.”

By selling direct ads on my blog, I've been able to build up a really good income stream, with around 12 ads running on my site at a time. I charge brands a set monthly fee, and always insist on a 3-month payment upfront before the ad goes live. A week before the advertisement expires, I email the brand with a link allowing them to renew their ad, which around 50% of them do. I like having that control, and knowing all the profits are mine to keep.

Sally blogs at www.whosthemummy.co.uk

Pros

- ➡ **A greater control over the ads you display on your blog compared to using an ad network**

Cons

- ➡ **Depending on the size of your blog you may not get accepted in to some affiliate programmes**

Pros

- ➡ **You cut out the middlemen (ad networks and affiliate networks) leaving you with the full share of the profits**
- ➡ **You have complete control over the ads you display**
- ➡ **You have complete control of the price you charge**

Cons

- ➡ **You have to proactively source advertisers**

Paid links

Paid links are payments made to a blog in return for a link from the blog back to a website. The purpose of paid linking from a payer's point of view is to create as many inbound links to their website as possible and thus drive visitors to it. There is a certain 'black hat' method (aggressive and illegal SEO tactics) involved in paid linking which aims to manipulate its position in the search engines. If this method is applied Google (the most popular search engine) may penalise your blog in its search rankings making it difficult to find and thus decreasing the amount of visitors the blog will receive. To ensure that you don't violate Google's guidelines it asks you to include a `rel="nofollow"` attribute in the anatomy of the link which informs the search engines to bypass it during indexing.

To include a No Follow command the anatomy of the link you're using should look something like this:

Without the No Follow command

```
<a href="http://www.nappiesrus.com/">Buy discounted nappies here </a>
```

With the No Follow command

```
<a href="http://www.nappiesrus.com/" rel="nofollow">Buy discounted nappies here</a>
```

Sponsored posts

Some bloggers choose to publish sponsored posts on their blogs. This means the blogger will be paid a sum of money to write about a company's product or service which is then published as a blog entry. The blogger retains full editorial control of the content and thus has total freedom of what they write. If it's a product review the blogger may even get to keep whatever it is they are reviewing.

Companies such as the Tots100 connect advertisers with bloggers who are willing to write paid posts about their product or services. The danger of sponsored posts is a credibility issue to your blog. While some readers understand the commercial aspect of blogging and usually wouldn't criticise a blogger for displaying adverts, sponsored posts are more risky due to their nature so each review must always be honest and fully disclosed that you have been paid to write it but your review is an honest one.



Pros



A very simple process (it's just a link)



Cons



A danger of being penalised by Google



Pros



Easy to do. Doesn't require any technical set-up



Lots of providers to connect bloggers with advertisers



Cons



Risk alienating readers and losing credibility



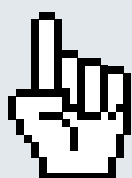
Some purist blog readers criticise this form of making money through a blog

GETTING STARTED



Now that you're feeling comfortable with how to make money from your blog you may want to get started.

Before you do though, we've provided a checklist of suggestions to help you on your way.



1. Get a good blog design

Is your blog using a default blog template that millions of other blogs are using?

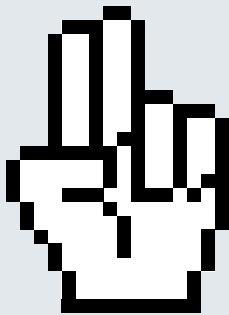
If so, you need to look at changing it to something more unique to help differentiate it from the rest. Depending on the blogging platform you are using there are various ways to improve your blog's design. Most hosted platforms such as [Blogger.com](https://www.blogger.com) and [WordPress.com](https://www.wordpress.com) offer a range of templates that allow you to change the look and feel of your blog to make it more individual.

Self-hosted platforms such as [WordPress.org](https://www.wordpress.org) give you complete control over your blog's look and feel provided you or someone you know understands web design. With WordPress (the most popular self-hosted platform) there are many 'premium themes' available which are pre-designed professional themes that you can buy at relatively low cost.

“Make your blog great first”

“If you want to get started writing reviews and taking advertising, then I think the best advice is to make your blog great FIRST. There’s actually no such thing as a freebie; you really do have to deserve it and earn it. Once you have a good blog with good content, go ahead and contact the PR companies or departments yourself. Send a polite email, asking if they have a blogger outreach programme, that you love the look of XX product, would love to review it, here are my stats, this is my niche of readership, would they be interested in working with you? But remember it’s a swamped market, and PR’s are rightly choosy.”

Laura blogs at www.littlestuff.co.uk



2. Improve your blog design structure

How your blog is ‘seen’ by search engines such as Google is important



Search engines are still one of the most important traffic drivers to a blog and you will find over time that a high proportion of your blog’s total traffic will come from people using them to find information on specific subjects. To capitalise on this and to make your blog as discoverable in the search engines as possible you should ensure that the design structure of your blog is easily navigational with a menu bar with links to specific pages.

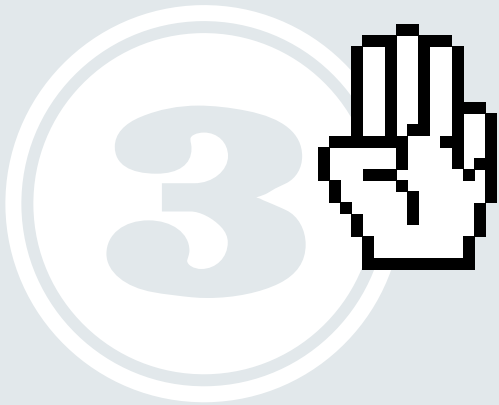
Also ensure that your permalinks (the URL of a specific page or post on the blog) are set up so they are easily readable to the search engines. For example a URL which reads:

www.londoncoffeereview.com/2012/01/londons-best-coffee-shops

Is much easier to understand to a search engine than one that reads:

www.londoncoffeereview.com/23499kl

By default, some blogs display links in the second way, but it’s usually very simple to change the style of your blog’s permalinks in the blog settings. If you’re not sure which sort of permalinks your blog has, just click on a post, and look at the blog post’s URL in the address bar of your browser.



3. Get a



Having some sort of logo designed also helps with branding and can be used elsewhere such as in your Twitter page or Facebook page to help with consistency and brand awareness. Using a freelancer sourcing site such as Elance (elance.com) gives you quick access to thousands of logo designers from around the world at low cost.

If you're feeling creative, you can also create a personalised header or logo using a favourite image or photograph, using free online software such as Picasa or GIMP, or commercial software such as Photoshop Elements if you have it on your computer.



4. Register a domain name

If you are using a hosted blog chances are your domain name will look something like this

<http://example.blogspot.com> or <http://example.wordpress.com>

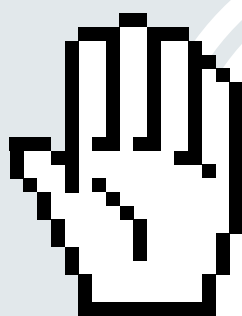
To improve not only the professional look of your blog but how it features in search engines it would be worth investing in a domain name purchase. If your blog is about reviewing coffee shops in London then registering, for example,

www.londoncoffeereview.com

may be a wise choice. Depending on the focus of your blog you can register a .co.uk domain if it is specific to the UK or a .com or .net domain if it has more of an international focus. Domain names are usually rented on a yearly or two yearly basis at a cost of around £10 for a .co.uk and £20 for a .com per year.

Buying a new domain name does not mean changing your website or host – you can simply buy a domain and “point” it at your existing site.

5. Set up traffic monitoring and data capture



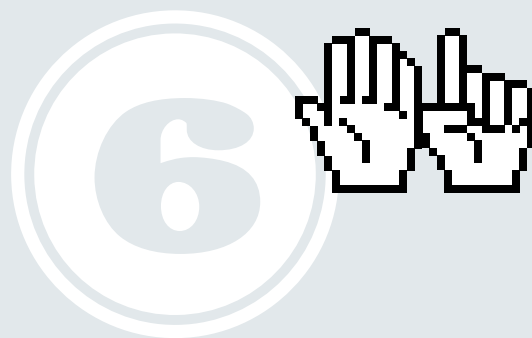
Understanding the traffic to your blog is important for two reasons. Advertisers will need to know the volume of traffic your blog is receiving. Having this data will allow you to promote it on an advertising information section on your blog.

The second reason is that it will give you an insight in to which of your content is performing the best. If, for example, the blog post you wrote on the best coffee houses in London has generated a lot of visitors, this tells you that you should aim to write similar posts in the future. Likewise, if a certain blog post has under-performed your traffic monitoring will let you know.

One of the most widely used traffic monitoring software applications is Google Analytics (www.google.com/analytics) which is comprehensive in the information it provides, easy to set up and free to use. Once set up Google Analytics will begin tracking your blog's traffic volume, location of visitors, keywords used and a wide range of other useful data. You might also consider Sitemeter or Statcounter, which offer less information than Google Analytics, but can be easier to understand for new bloggers.



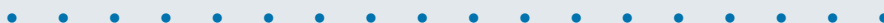
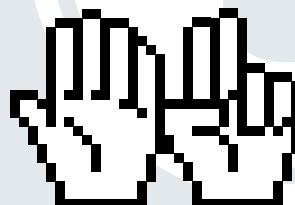
6. Create an advertising section



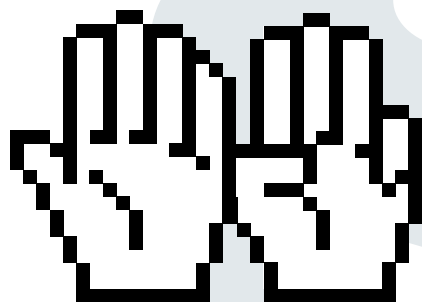
If you're planning on hosting private ad sales and/or writing sponsored blog posts a dedicated advertising page on your blog is recommended. Here you can sell the benefits of advertising on your blog to potential advertisers by detailing your blog's readership demographics, traffic volume and other variables such as advert sizes and, if you like, costs. Remember to provide contact information – an email address is fine.

7. Registering your blog in directories

There are a number of directories you can register your blog at which will help it become more discoverable by the right people. If you are reading this guide then chances are you are a parenting blogger so the Tots100 Index (www.tots100.co.uk) of UK parenting blogs is a good place to start. Here you can add your blog to the directory and your blog posts will be shared among the Tots100 community as well as a host of other benefits including seminars, social events and workshops.



8. Register your blog with ad networks and affiliate networks






In some instances you may have to find out if you can join some advertising programs. Registering with ad networks and affiliate networks will not only have you set up and ready to display advertisements it will also allow you to know what ads you can (or can't as the case may be) display on your blog.

9. Create a Disclosure Policy

To help maintain your credibility as a blogger and in some instances not break the law adopting a blog disclosure policy is recommended. Essentially a disclosure policy allows your readers to understand the practices and conflicts of your blog and for you to be as open and forthright about your vested interests as possible. If you live in the UK the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) requires bloggers to disclose when they have been paid for writing blog posts so from a legal perspective it is paramount.

Things to include in a disclosure policy include:

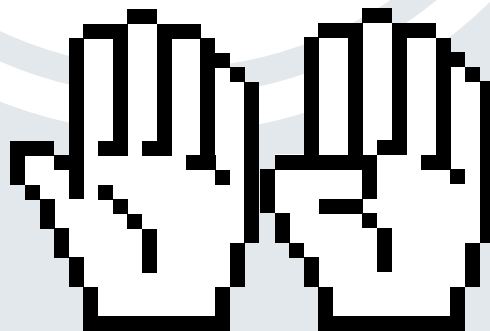
-  Any business interests that may be similar to the topics you cover on your blog
-  How you make money through the blog
-  How you will endeavour to ensure that all content is truthful and honest

Sample Disclosure Policy

This blog is a personal blog written and edited by my INSERT NAME. This blog accepts forms of cash advertising, sponsorship and other forms of compensation. I am sometimes compensated to provide opinion on services, products, websites and various other topics. Even though compensation is received for these I will always give my honest opinion, findings, beliefs or experiences on what I am reviewing. I will always fully disclose, upfront, if compensation has been received.

I have a business interest in the following companies, INSERT COMPANY NAMES, and will always disclose this when writing about them or similar companies.

This blog is not responsible for what you might click through from advertisements.



WHAT TO CHARGE£



The question on everyone's mind considering making money from blogging is what to charge.

There is no one set price for blog ads and content, and rates will vary according to how much traffic the blog receives, the demographics of the readers, and the topics it covers.

Tots100 conducted a survey among 500 parent bloggers to determine how much money they were making from their blogs. With the survey results we have created a price range indicating the average and top payment received.

Blog Advertising (monthly charge)

£35 £50+
AVERAGE TOP PAYMENT

Sponsored Post (price per post)

£60 £100+
AVERAGE TOP PAYMENT

Blogging (for commercial sites per post)

£40 £200
AVERAGE TOP PAYMENT

Copywriting (per day)

£135 £350
AVERAGE TOP PAYMENT

Consulting/Training (per day)

£300 £1,000
AVERAGE TOP PAYMENT



What is PR?

PR is a discipline that focuses on helping organisations of all kinds (brand, company, charity etc) communicate their messages to the relevant people. Unlike advertising which is 'paid-for' media, PR is 'earned' by providing quality and relevant content to the correct audiences. Many stories that you have read on newspapers or seen on the TV news may have been driven by PR.

Why do PRs approach bloggers?

Over the last five years or so social media has become an important part of our every-day lives. Nowadays we're likely to use tools such as Facebook or Twitter and if we don't write a blog we may certainly read them. Increasingly, established bloggers are not only seen as a credible source of information that are trusted among their readers but some are also commanding large readerships. Prior to social media PR exclusively focused on 'traditional' media (print, broadcast etc) but now that bloggers are influential in their own right PR (rightly) sees bloggers as an important part of the media mix.

Cooperation between PRs and parenting bloggers is a common occurrence. Almost nine out of ten parent bloggers surveyed by Tots100 reported that they have received free products from brands in exchange for coverage on their blogs.

"For me the trips and days out with my family are a real highlight of blogging"

The best thing last year for the boys was going on an Airbus 380 at Heathrow Airport, and visiting Hampton Court with Fairy. I have had lots of fun and made some super memories, from going to Edinburgh and learning to cook fish with a professional chef, to receiving new products from companies such as Morphy Richards, and then blogging about the good and the bad.

Jen blogs at www.muminthemadhouse.com

How do PR agencies choose the blogs they work with?

When identifying blogs PRs look at a number of factors. These include:

Relevancy. Is the blog relevant to what they are promoting?

Reach. Has the blogger built a community around his or her blog and are they part of the wider blogging community?

Willingness to collaborate. Does the blogger already advertise and accept products for review? In some instances bloggers have been quite vocal about their disdain for PR due to a bad experience so it is the PR's responsibility to find this out first.

Can I contact them directly?

PRs generally work from an office so will usually have a direct line to call. Alternatively their email is likely to be available too. Regardless of which way you contact them remember to tell them the reason why you are getting in touch and have the information (your blog URL, topics covered, readership, traffic stats etc) that will be useful to them.

How do I negotiate if what's being offered isn't what I want?

Like all business deals both parties should aim to have a mutually beneficial arrangement. If what is being offered is not agreeable to you then politely suggest an alternative option to the PR. The PR will have experience of this when dealing with journalists. Plus, the worst they can say is no.

For example, you may get invited to an event which is some distance away from where you live meaning there will be a cost to getting there. If the PR hasn't mentioned it in their invitation it is not impolite – and in fact should be expected – to reply asking if your travel (and other) expenses are covered.

There may be instances when you have been offered money to do something, a sponsored post for example, which you feel is not enough. It may feel like a tricky situation to push back and tell them that you want more money but, again, it is a case of you determining the price to them. In this instance tell the PR that you have a 'standard rate' of your fees for doing work and the current offer is below it.

If you don't have a standard rate of what you charge for doing work it is worth putting one together in times when you need to negotiate with PRs and/or advertisers.

“I only make arrangements once I have confirmation of the details”

I was invited to a round table event in London with travel expenses paid, but a couple of days before the event I was told that they didn't have the budget to cover my train fare as it was too expensive compared to bloggers who lived closer. By that time, I'd already arranged childcare for my boys. As a result, I'm now more cautious and only make arrangements once I have confirmation from a PR agency of things like travel arrangements.

Jen blogs at www.muminthemadhouse.com

Can I turn things down without ruining a relationship?

Yes, of course. If what is being offered by the PR at that time is not suitable for you then politely turn them down but add that you are still interested in working with them should the right opportunity come along. PRs are usually using Twitter which is a great way to maintain a relationship when you are not collaborating.

Can I write a bad review?

Integrity and trust among your readers are the most important factors when maintaining and building upon a successful blog. A PR understands this and knows the potential downsides of giving a product for review to an independent blogger. Try to be constructive when writing a review of something that isn't to your taste or standard.

“It’s important to have enough integrity to say no when something isn’t suitable”

I started out taking up review offers that would suit my needs or those of my family, and where I could write a fair and honest review. I think it’s important to have enough integrity to say when something didn’t meet your expectations, or isn’t suitable for your family. All sponsored features are relevant to my blog and readers should find something interesting in there. I will not have more than one sponsored post per week, or I’ll feature two on the same day at the weekend.

Nickie blogs at www.iamtypecast.com

What do I do if there is a problem?

If, for example, a product which was supposed to be sent to you from a PR doesn't arrive or the PR stops responding to your emails try to remain calm and polite throughout. PRs are often very busy so try to be patient early on. If a problem persists, how you respond is down to your own personal preference and there have been instances where bloggers have publicly criticised PR agencies and in some cases PR people personally for the perceived severity of the problem. Do what feels right but, remember, you don't want to be the blogger who complains about every single unavoidable issue.

The Tots100 research found by far the biggest problem parenting bloggers have with PRs is being pitched material that is irrelevant to the topics they cover on their blogs. In theory this should not happen as PR professionals are supposed to tailor their content to the relevant audiences but unfortunately this is not always the case. One way to reduce the amount of irrelevant information you receive from PRs is to ensure your About page explains clearly what sort of content you are interested in. You should also make sure your Tots100 profile is up-to-date and complete.

“I am glad I stuck to my guns”

I got in a spat with a brand who requested I did not label a sponsored post as sponsored. They spotted me talking about this subject on a forum and they got very snippy. All emails went unanswered, and the PR refused to take my calls. Recently they have contacted me again, and requested politely to work with me – in any manner I choose. I'm glad I stuck to my guns and maintained the integrity of the blog. However, I learned my lesson and will never again discuss a company in a derogatory manner in cyberspace – even on a 'closed' forum.

Laura blogs at www.littlestuff.co.uk

FINANCIAL & LEGAL



Once you've started making money through your blog there are certain financial and legal implications you should be aware of. We would advise you to always seek advice from an accountant or solicitor if you are unsure of any of these examples or similar areas.

Should I register as self-employed and declare my income?



If you are earning income from any of the sources mentioned then your blog will almost certainly be considered a trade by HM Revenues and Customs. You will therefore need to register as self-employed. Business Link provides a checklist of the actions you need to take (see useful links section).

The Business Link start-ups guide provides detailed information about setting up a new business. As well as declaring income you will need to keep detailed accounting records relating to your sales and any expenses. There are some helpful videos that cover the key areas you need to address.

Do I need to register for VAT?

If you are really successful it is possible you will need to register for VAT, though the threshold for compulsory registration is currently £73,000 (January 2012) so arguably this would be a good problem to have. Again information can be found on the Business Link website.

How do I go about getting paid?

Once you have written a sponsored post there is the question of getting paid. The regular way is to invoice the person or department responsible for paying you. If you've been working with a PR agency the person you have been dealing with will tell you the best way to do this.

An invoice is a single page document that lists the goods or (more likely) services provided by you to the recipient. An invoice should include your address, your bank details, the date, the recipient's name and address, and the list of services sold along with their fees. There are numerous invoice templates available to download for free on the internet. There are more detailed requirements if you are VAT registered.

Payment terms are usually around 30 days after the invoice has been received, although some accounts departments may make all payments on the last day of each month which means you could receive it slightly earlier or later than 30 days.

If you are not paid on time get in touch with the person you have been dealing predominantly with. In the unusual circumstance you are unsuccessful speak directly with the accounts department who should be able to resolve the matter.

Do I have to declare product samples I'm sent for review?

If you are sent product samples for review in the course of operating your blog and you are allowed to keep them then they are likely to represent income "in kind" and as such are likely to form part of your blog's income.

Do I have to declare if my expenses are paid by a company?

Potentially yes. As with product samples this effectively represents income of your business. However if the expenses are all wholly, exclusively and necessarily incurred in relation to your activities around your blog then the costs themselves should be an expense of your business and therefore cancel out the income received.

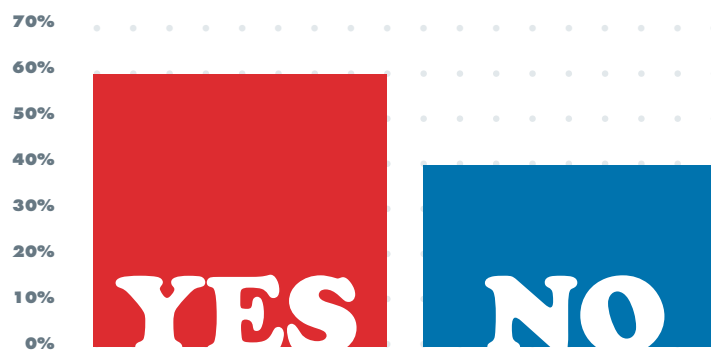




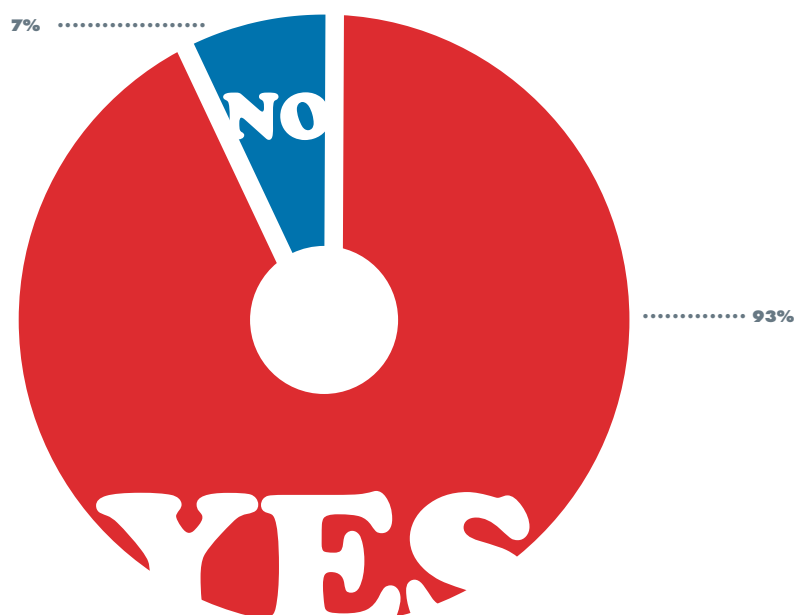
TOTS100 BLOGGERS & MONEY SURVEY RESULTS

★★★★★★★★

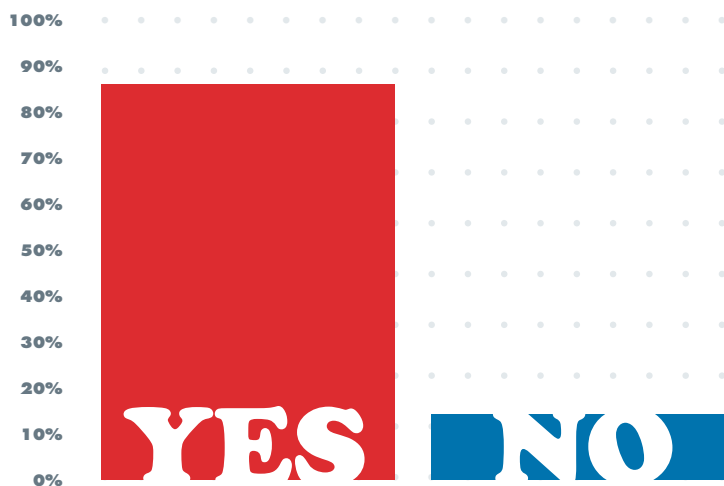
Have you made money from blogging during 2011?



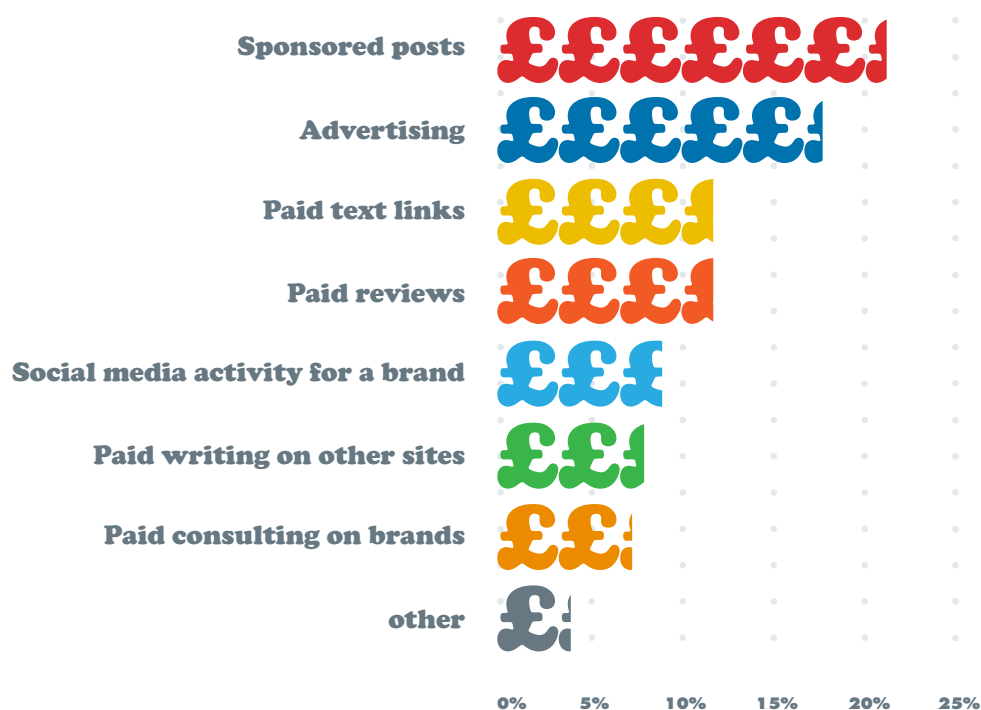
If you don't currently make money from blogging, would you like to?



Have you received free products from brands in exchange for coverage on a blog?



How have you made money from blogging?



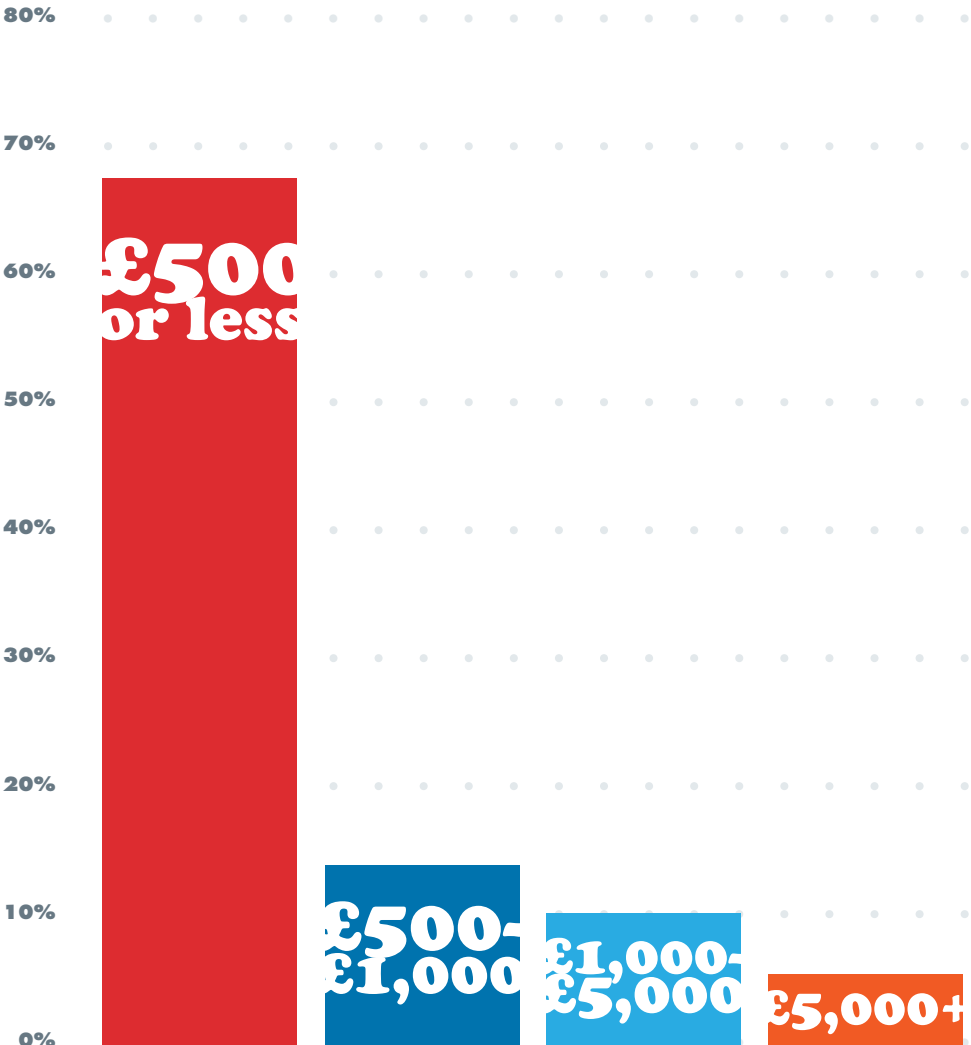
How much do you charge per month for advertising on your blog?



How much do you charge for sponsored posts on your blog?



How much did you earn from blogging in 2011?

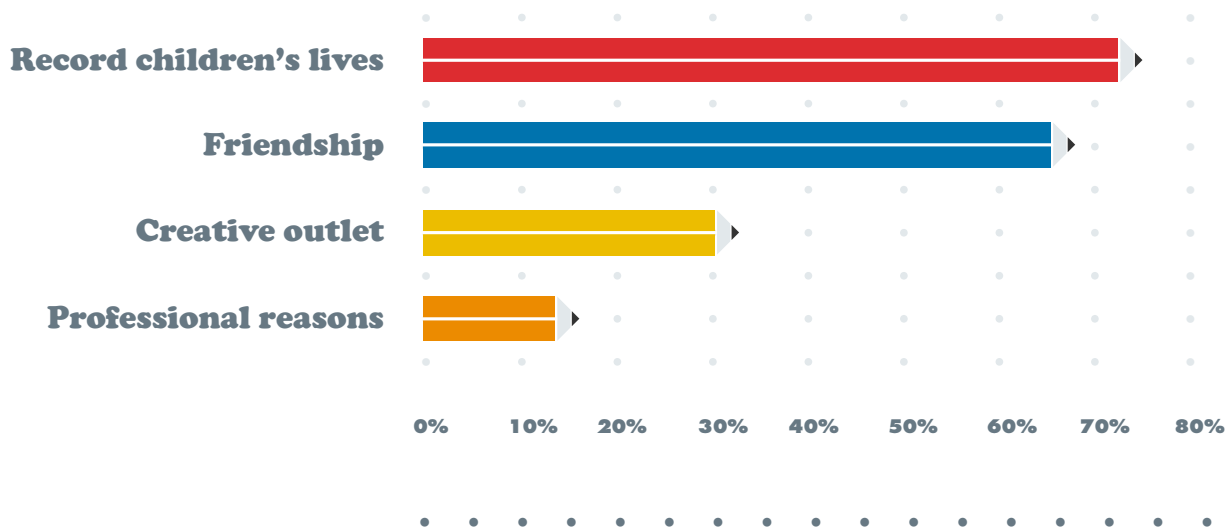


PR SURVEY RESULTS

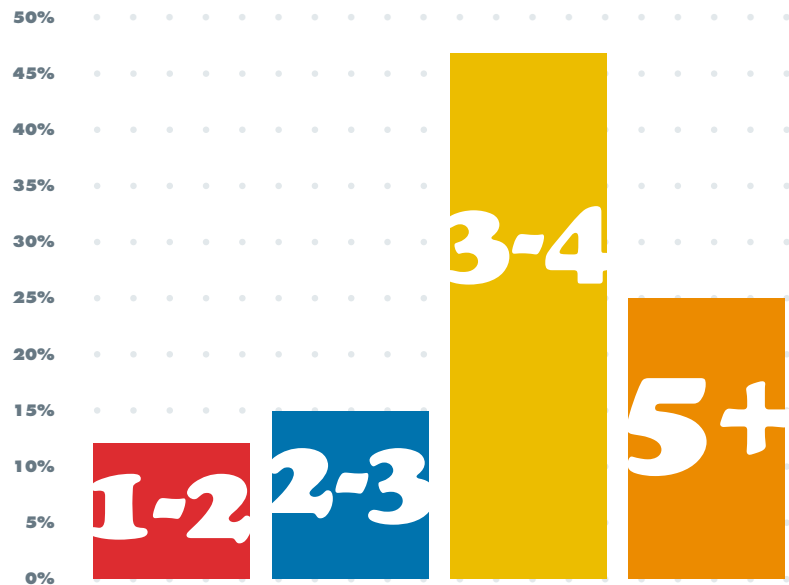
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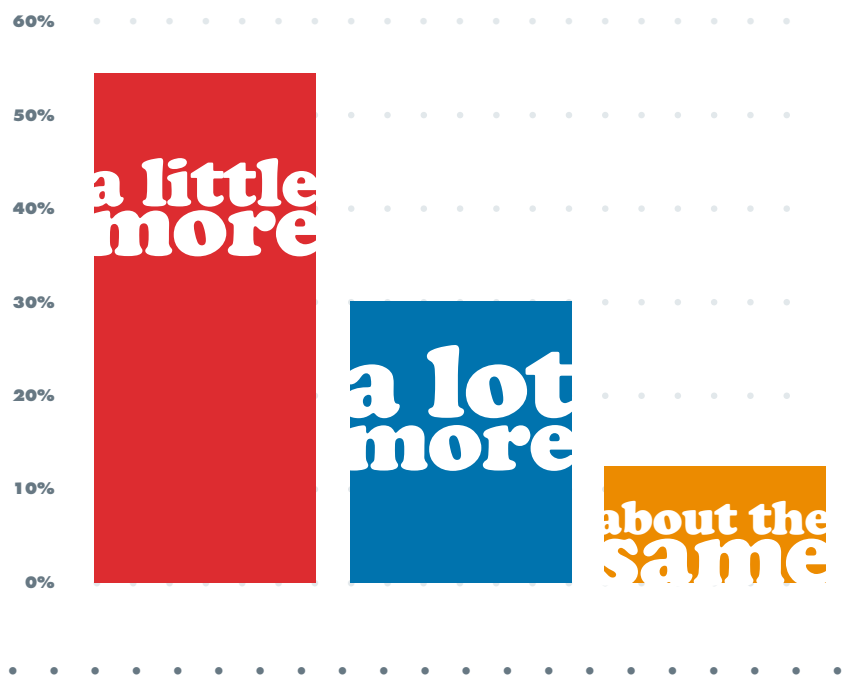
Why do you write a blog?



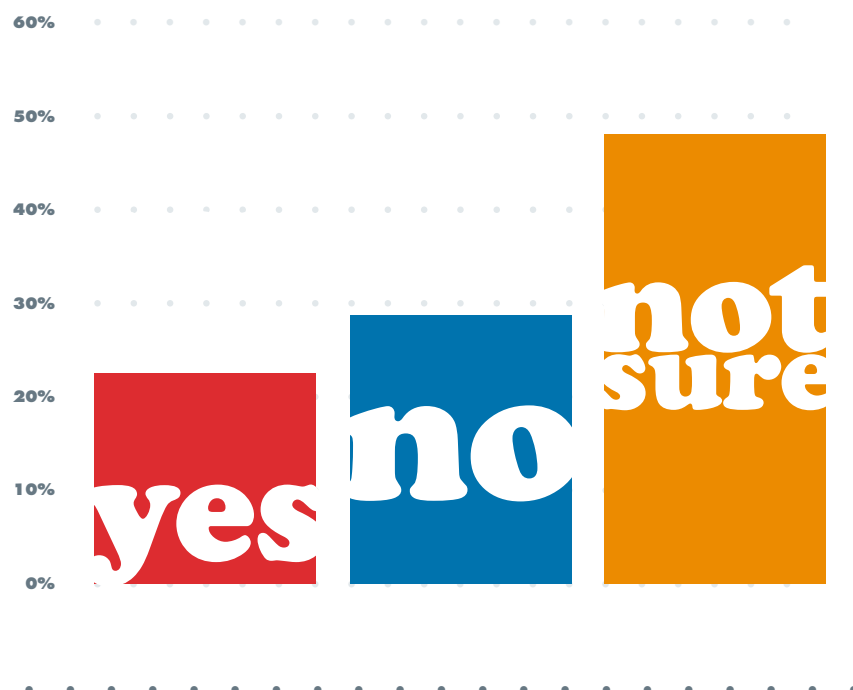
How many PR approaches do you get each week?



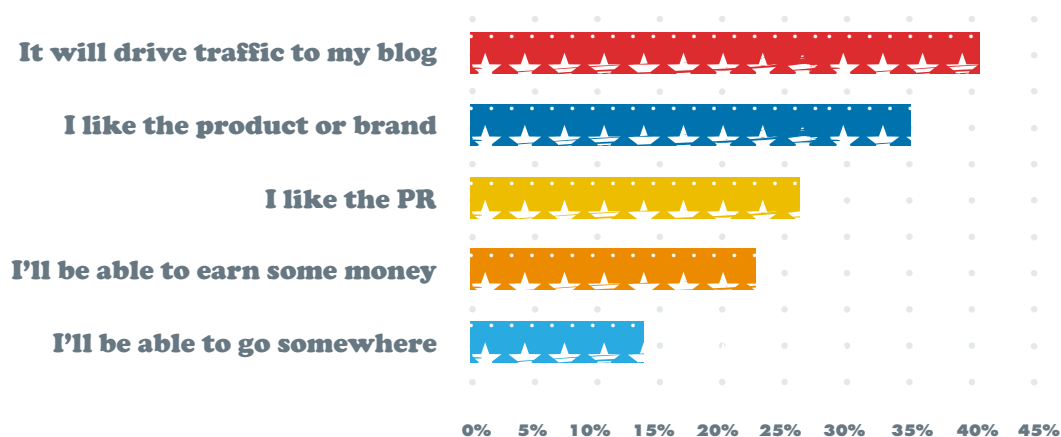
How does this compare to a year ago?



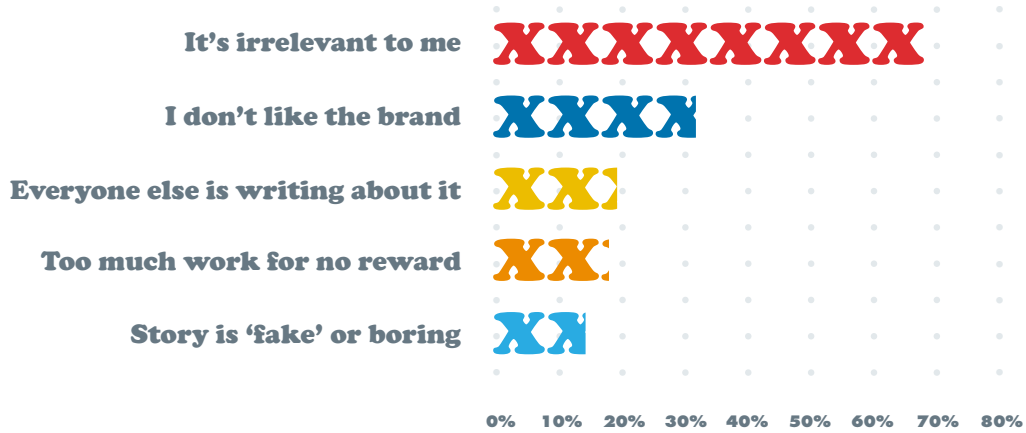
Do you think PR agencies understand bloggers enough?



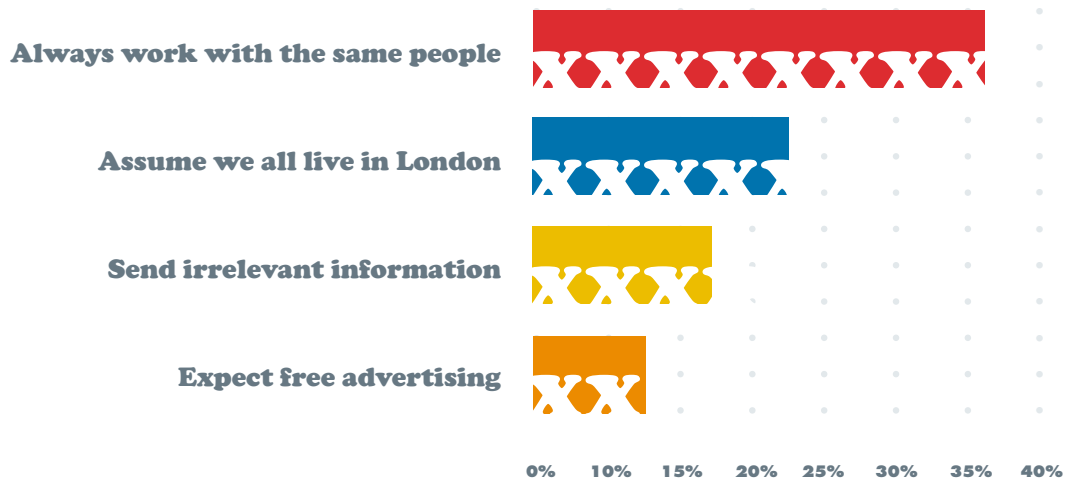
What makes a PR pitch interesting to you?



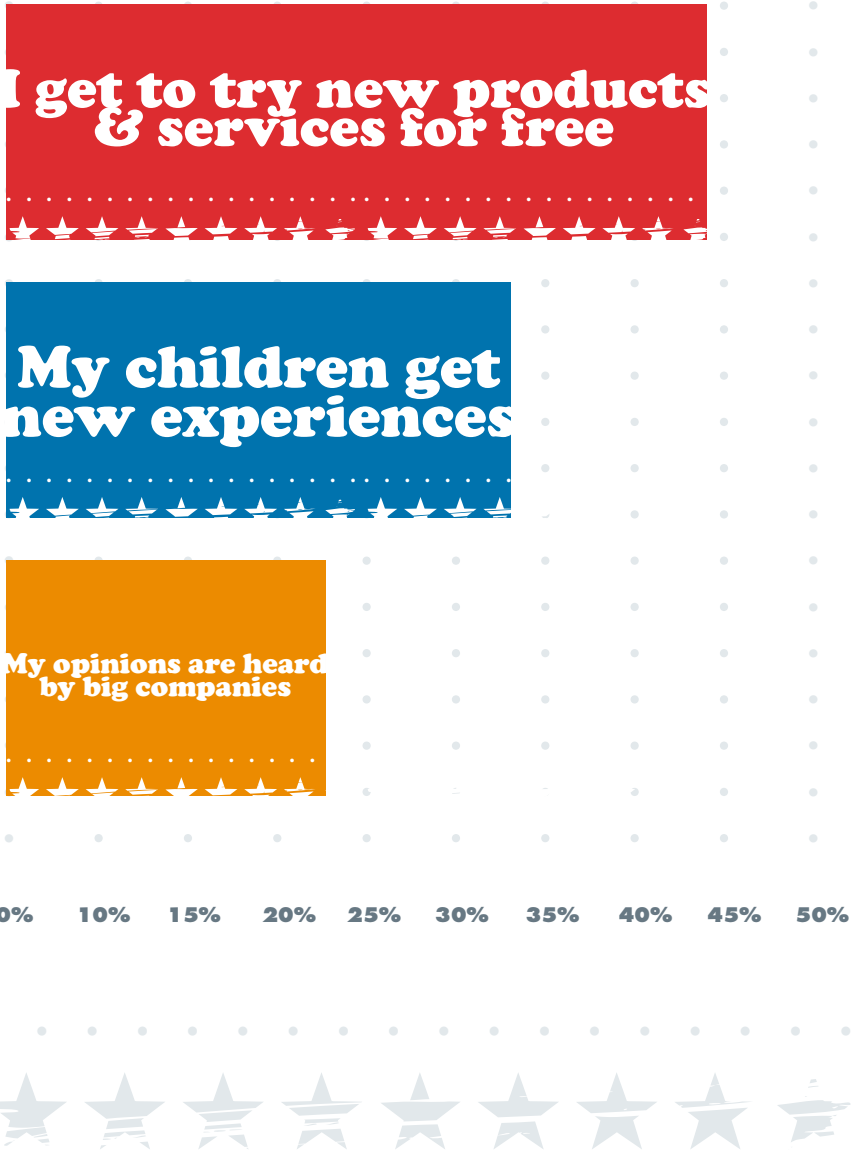
What puts you off a PR pitch?



What frustrates you most about working with brands?



What is the best thing about working with brands?



USEFUL LINKS



1. Advertising Network links

- a. Google AdSense www.google.com/adsense
- b. Blogads www.blogads.com
- c. Chitika www.chitika.com
- d. Glam www.glammedia.com/publishers/glam_publisher_network/directory_of_glam_sites.php
- e. Handpicked Media www.handpickedmedia.co.uk

2. Affiliate Network links

- a. Amazon Associates <https://affiliate-program.amazon.co.uk>
- b. Click Booth www.clickbooth.com
- c. Ourfreestuff.net <http://net.ourfreestuff.net>
- d. Affiliate Window? (widely used by parent blogs) www.affiliatewindow.com

3. Sponsored Post links

- a. Pay Per Post www.payperpost.com
- b. Sponsored Reviews www.sponsoredreviews.com
- c. Blogsvetise www.blogsvetise.com
- d. Tots100 www.tots100.co.uk
- e. Foodies100 www.foodies100.co.uk

4. Blog Design links

- a. WordPress <http://wordpress.org>
- b. WordPress Premium Themes <http://wordpress.org/extend/themes/commercial>

5. Logo Design links

- a. Elance www.elance.com
- b. Picnik www.picasa.com
- c. GIMP www.gimp.org

6. Traffic data software links

- a. Google Analytics www.google.com/analytics
- b. Sitemeter www.sitemeter.com
- c. Statcounter www.statcounter.com

7. Blog directory links

- a. Tots 100 Directory www.tots100.co.uk
- b. Foodies 100 Directory www.foodies100.co.uk
- c. AllTop www.alltop.com

8. Financial links

- a. Invoicing templates <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/templates/CL102207655.aspx>
- b. Business Link www.businesslink.gov.uk/bdotg/action/home
- c. Business Link Startups www.businesslink.gov.uk/bdotg/action/layer?r.s=tl&topicId=1073858805
- d. HMRC www.hmrc.gov.uk

**USEFUL
LINKS**
(continued)





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★★★★★★★★
HOW
PARENT
BLOGGERS
MAKE MONEY
★★★★★★★★
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IN ASSOCIATION WITH

