



Case Study: Blog Writer Boosts Visitor Engagement by 311%

When Josh Plant started his affiliate blog site, Green Homesteaders, he was aware of the challenges it faced. As the owner of a network of informational websites, Plant knew that targeting rural “Greenies” meant engaging an exceptionally independent, self-reliant, well-educated and often skeptical group of people who are highly resistant to being “sold.” It would therefore be essential to gain their trust by offering highly targeted, useful information presented in a voice they could relate to.

Plant had chosen green and off-the-grid rural living as a topic because of his own personal interest and experience in the subject. However, being a busy professional in addition to his online business, he decided to outsource some of the writing. He began to search for a freelance writer with knowledge of off-grid, rural life.

A Writer with both Technical *and* Psychological Expertise

Copywriter Anne Michelsen fit the bill perfectly. She had lived off-grid on a rural homestead for three years and could write with authority on the joys and challenges of sustainable country living. Even better, she had first-hand experience with two of the green technologies that most interested Plant: solar thermal and solar electric. Not only had she assisted with the installation of her own photovoltaic (PV) system, she had also helped her husband sell and install solar thermal and PV systems when he started his own solar installation company. As a result she had acquired intimate knowledge not just of the technology itself, but of the common questions, concerns and misconceptions people typically have about solar.

However, Anne’s technical knowledge represented only one side of her qualification for the job. She also had an engaging voice that encouraged readers to click through and read an entire post. And she was consistently able to come up with topics that piqued the interest of Plant’s visitors and prompted them to actively engage with the site.

Targeted Posts Triple Engagement

Rather than working with assigned topics or titles, Anne was responsible for coming up with topics of interest to Green Homesteaders’ targeted audience. Some of the posts were ghostwritten, while others appeared under Anne’s own name. Plant chose to do this in order to represent both male and female perspectives on green homesteading.

Since Anne's posts were interspersed fairly evenly with posts supplied by other authors over a period of several months, it was relatively easy to compare their performance. Anne's posts consistently earned a higher percentage of relevant comments and trackbacks, with an average of 70% of her posts resulting in engagement versus a 33.33% engagement rate for the others. In addition, Anne's writing averaged 1.4 comments and/or trackbacks per post, compared .45 comments per post elsewhere on the site – over triple the response rate.

Several visitors remarked on the usefulness of Anne's tips with comments such as, "Wonderful post...As always, you offer us the best tips! Thank you," and "Great tips. Exactly what I needed. Thanks!"

Trending Topic Choice Results in Big Time Publicity

However, the most exciting response came to a post titled "To Grid-Tie or Not to Grid-Tie," referring of course to the pros and cons of connecting one's solar electric system to the grid. Plant received the following comment:

This is EXACTLY the topic I was seeking to cover. Would you mind if we (turned this post)into a Green Air Minute? It's basically a 60-second news radio feature that gets broadcast nationally through CBS News Radio. You'll be credited as a contributor on our site from the article once it's published. Let me know if you're cool with that!

Needless to say, Plant was very cool with that, and enjoyed free national broadcast time as a result!

Note: Client and company names have been changed to ensure client confidentiality.



Anne Michelsen of Green Ink Copywriting helps green and sustainably-minded businesses thrive by providing lead generating web content, press releases and other sales and publicity essentials. For more information please visit www.GreenInkCopywriting.com or email anne@greeninkcopywriting.com.

