

Marjaana Savila

BACHELOR'S THESIS

HOW TO BECOME A PROFESSIONAL BLOGGER

Degree Programme in International
Business and Marketing Logistics

2017

HOW TO BECOME A PROFESSIONAL BLOGGER

Savila, Marjaana
Satakunnan ammattikorkeakoulu
Liiketalouden koulutusohjelma
Huhtikuu 2017
Ohjaaja: Riitta Blue
Sivumäärä: 37
Liitteet: 1

Asiasanat: blogi, bloggaus, blogimarkkinointi, ammattibloggaaja, henkilöbrändi

Opinnäytetyön aiheena oli ammattibloggaamisen tutkiminen. Tässä työssä selvitettiin mitä menestyvän blogin luomiseen tarvitaan ja kuinka ansaita elantonsa bloggaamalla ammatikseen. Työ toteutettiin kirjoittajan oman kiinnostuksen pohjalta. Henkilöbrändin luomisen ja blogimarkkinoinnin keinojen tutkiminen olivat työn kannalta merkityksellisiä asioita.

Työn teoreettisessa osassa käsiteltiin ensin bloggaamista, jotta lukija saatiin johdateltua aiheeseen ja tärkeimmät bloggaamisen termit saatiin avattua. Omaan lukunaan käsiteltiin blogimarkkinointia. Seuraavassa luvussa käsiteltiin tutkimuksen kannalta oleellista henkilöbrändäämistä, ja tämän merkitystä ammattibloggaajien menestyksessä. Teoriaosa perustui artikkeleihin sekä ammattikirjallisuuteen.

Tutkimusosaa varten tarkasteltiin kahta eri ammattibloggaajaa ja heidän blogejaan. Valintakriteereinä toimivat blogien suomalaisuus ja kuuluminen luetuimpien itsenäisten ammattibloggaajien joukkoon. Tutkimus toteutettiin laadullisena tutkimuksena, jossa tulosten keräysmetodinä käytettiin sähköpostitse lähetettäviä kysymyksiä.

Tutkimustuloksista todettiin, että menestyäkseen bloggaajan täytyy rakentaa itselleen vahva henkilöbrändi. Bloggaajaa voidaan kutsua ammattibloggaajaksi, kun hänellä on tarpeeksi seuraajia ja yritykset kiinnostuvat tekemään yhteistyötä. Yritykset saavat yhteistyön myötä näkyvyyttä tuotteilleen blogimaailmassa, josta on tullut tärkeä markkinoinnin kanava. Ammattibloggaajat tienaa elantonsa yhteistyön pohjalta, sekä myös epäsuorasti muista bloggaamiseen liittyvistä sivutoista.

Tutkimuksen tuloksia voivat hyödyntää kaikki bloggaamisesta kiinnostuneet, ja erityisesti ammattibloggaamisesta kiinnostuneet ja siitä haaveilevat. Haastattelukysymysten pohjalta saatuja bloggaajien vastauksia voi käyttää käytännössä oman blogin ylläpidon ja tulevaisuuden suunnitteluun.

HOW TO BECOME A PROFESSIONAL BLOGGER

Savila, Marjaana

Satakunnan ammattikorkeakoulu, Satakunta University of Applied Sciences

Degree Programme in International Business and Marketing Logistics

April 2017

Supervisor: Riitta Blue

Number of pages: 37

Appendices: 1

Keywords: blog, blogging, blog marketing, professional blogger, personal branding

The subject of the thesis was professional blogging. The purpose of this thesis was to study what it takes to create a successful blog and make a living out of it. The research was executed out of writer's own interest towards the subject. The major factors in this thesis were creating a personal brand and blog marketing tools.

The theoretical chapter of the thesis dealt first with blogging so that the reader was familiar with the topic and the main terms. The next chapter focused on blog marketing. The terminology and the most common features of blogs were also clarified. The next chapter dealt with the most essential concept, personal branding and its meaning in succeeding as a professional blogger. The theory part was based on articles and professional literature.

For the research part two professional bloggers and their blogs were examined. The bloggers studied had to be most followed Finnish and independent professional bloggers. The study was carried out by using a qualitative research and an e-mail survey was used as a data collecting method.

The study results showed that in order to become a successful blogger one must build a strong brand. In order to be called a professional blogger, one must have enough followers so that the companies become interested in doing collaboration with the blogger. By doing collaboration with bloggers companies gain visibility in the blogosphere. Blogosphere has become an important channel of marketing. Professional bloggers make their living based on these collaborations and also indirectly based on other work related to blogging.

The results of the study can be useful to everyone who are interested in blogging and especially professional blogging. The answers to the interview questions given by the bloggers can be used in practice for maintenance of one's blog and for planning the future of the blog.

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	5
2	TOPIC AND REASON BEHIND THE THESIS	6
2.1	Purpose and objectives.....	6
2.2	Research problems	6
2.3	Conceptual framework.....	7
2.4	Boundaries	7
3	BLOGGING	9
3.1	Blog and blogging in general.....	9
3.2	Professional blogging and the work behind it.....	10
3.3	Two bloggers – two articles	13
4	BLOG MARKETING	15
4.1	CREF marketing model	15
4.2	Blog marketing resources	16
4.3	The downside and the challenge	19
5	PERSONAL BRANDING	21
6	IMPLEMENTATION	24
6.1	Research methods	24
6.1.1	Qualitative research.....	24
6.1.2	Data collection.....	24
6.2	Bloggers	25
7	INTERVIEW RESULTS	27
8	CONCLUSION	30
8.1	Branding.....	30
8.2	Blog marketing tools.....	31
8.3	Professional blogger definition	32
8.4	Revenue model.....	32
8.5	Downsides.....	33
9	SUMMARY	35
10	FINAL WORDS	36
11	REFERENCES	37

1 INTRODUCTION

I developed an interest towards blogs when I was 15 years old. Since then I have read all kinds of blogs from traveling to lifestyle. The blogs have had an effect on me. They have enhanced my interest towards beauty, well-being, fitness and much more. They have inspired me countless of times and helped me be the best possible version of myself. I have also found some of my daily used products and services based on blogger's recommendation. The blogs I follow are mainly lifestyle blogs and the content is about bloggers' daily life, travel, style, decoration, fitness and wellness. Many of my favorite bloggers blog for a living hence they are professional bloggers. Most of my favorite bloggers are from Finland but some are from abroad. Further on I will introduce two of my favorite bloggers and their blogs. I will use them as an example on how to make blog so successful that one can make a living out of it and become a professional blogger.

This thesis is research based and it is about professional blogging. I have always wondered what it takes to be a professional blogger, and how to make money by blogging. There are many different aspects to consider when blogging, and I intend to study these aspects. The blog scene has changed a lot in ten years and has become more commercial. Given that I have so much experience as a reader of blogs, this topic suits me well. I will find out what it would take to make a career out of blogging. This thesis is an outcome of my professional and personal interest towards professional blogging.

The thesis consists of the theory part and the implementation of the research. The themes in the theory are personal branding and blog marketing. The research is executed as a qualitative research.

2 TOPIC AND REASON BEHIND THE THESIS

2.1 Purpose and objectives

I am doing my thesis about professional blogging because it has been very intriguing to follow the emergence of this new profession. The purpose of this research is to study what it takes to create a successful blog and make a living out of it. This thesis will be the result of my own interest towards blogging and a document with which I can prove my knowledge and abilities regarding professional blogging. The main objective behind this thesis is to find guidelines for making a profitable blog. I will give guidance on professional blogging to anyone who is thinking about starting his/her own blog, and to whomever has been interested in blogging. As a subject blogging is very intriguing. I wish my research of the topic will benefit everyone who is eager to learn more about professional blogging and is wondering what it really takes to be a professional blogger. The background information that I need to reach my objectives will be about blog marketing and personal branding. During my studies marketing and branding have fascinated me and that is why I wanted to include them in my research. Personal branding and marketing are important things for a professional blogger to master. The possibilities to earn money by blogging are realistic, when you have the tools to master the personal branding and marketing of your blog.

2.2 Research problems

My main research question is what it takes to be a professional blogger? What are the keys to success and how to make money by blogging? There are many keys to success, but what are these features that make a blog so profitable that a blogger can be called a professional. What it means to be a professional blogger? In which point does he or she become a professional and what actions does it take from blogger's point of view. My thesis will answer the question: What do I need to know about professional blogging if I want to make my blog profitable? What do I need to know about branding? What is the revenue model behind professional blogging?

2.3 Conceptual framework

Here is the conceptual framework of my thesis as a graphic illustration which I created myself.

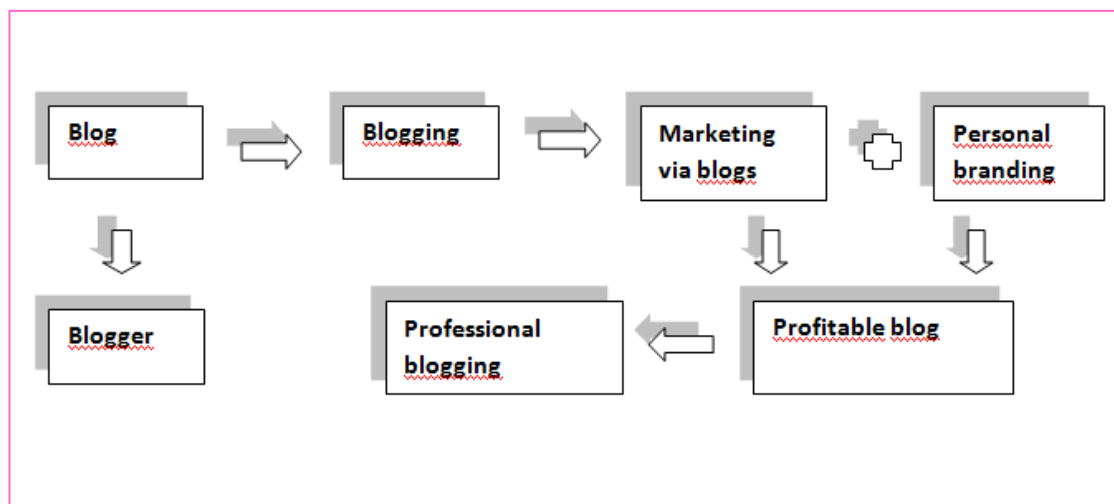


Figure 1 Conceptual framework.

The conceptual framework consists of few keywords which all define this thesis. *Blog* means an internet diary one can write down on and add pictures. *Blogger* means the person behind the blog. *Blogging* means updating and editing the blog and dealing with everything that comes with the blog. In theory part I will cover marketing via blog and personal branding. Together marketing and branding can help create profitable blog and help blogger to become a professional. *Professional blogger* means someone who is able to make a living for himself/herself by blogging. The model of earning through blogging will be handled in the chapter 8.

2.4 Boundaries

In the research I will not study bloggers who are foreigners. The bloggers I will study do not write just about one subject because they are lifestyle bloggers. The bloggers I will study are independent bloggers, so they do not blog in *blog portal*. Blog portal means a community of blogs gathered together in one website and typically the community is under some magazine. I will not focus on other than professional blogging.

Although I will study blogs as a marketing channel, I will not focus on how blogging affects consumers, but rather how marketing in blogs affects bloggers themselves by giving them a possibility to earn money. In addition to blogging there is another booming trend called *vlogging*. Video blogging differs from traditional blogging with the fact that vloggers only make videos. I will not focus on vloggers, but some of the bloggers I study in my thesis also create videos, which makes their blogs more interesting.

3 BLOGGING

3.1 Blog and blogging in general

Blog (as known as net diary) is a web page, in which up-to-date content can be created. The content of the blog is saved in chronological order and previous posts can be read in the form they were written. Only the blog owner can update, make and edit entries in blog which are called "posts". (Kilpi 2006, 3; Bly 2006, 11.) Anyone can visit the blog at its unique web address (URL). Readers can respond to the posts by posting their own comments in the comment sections below each post. The basic idea of a blog is to update the blog regularly which is an important factor in order to maintain the readers' interest towards the blog. Although regular updates are recommended, it might be hard to follow up, especially if there is no consistent plan. Usually blogs are personal web pages, where the writer publishes content from his/her own perspective. Behind the blog is a person called blogger. (McBride & Cason 2006, 15; Lietsala & Sirkkunen 2008, 20-21.)

The term 'blog' was born in 1997, when an American John Barger started to call his webpage by a term *weblog*. The name comes from the words web and log. (Kilpi 2006, 11-12.) The first web service for blogging, called Blogger, was published in 1999. Blog platforms and services have made publishing easier and bloggers can concentrate on the content itself. All blogs can be connected to each other with comments and links. Blogs form social networks and indicate being part of a community. Connecting with similar bloggers seems to help when creating a solid audience. *Bloggers* show their appreciation towards other bloggers by expressing what blogs they are reading. Bloggers can guide readers to interesting articles and make their own statements regarding the content by linking the information. Every new link can bring more readers into the blog and in the best case scenario a long link is created and the message will spread fast on the Internet. Linking can also lift the ranking of the blog in search engines and guide readers from one blog to another one. (Majava 2006, 88-89; Salmenkivi & Nyman 2007, 146-147.)

Blogosphere means a “space” in internet that includes blogs on everything from funny cat photos to fashion blogs. It includes every blog out there. It is a community of people using blogging as a creative outlet, news distributor, coping mechanism, or money-making enterprise. Connecting with other bloggers is essential for every blogger if they want to make their blog successful and well-known. Developing symbiotic relationships with fellow bloggers is a crucial step in this process. (Heller 2013, 75.)

Blogs continue the communal evolution which began decades ago. In 1970s and 1980s music fans created and printed fan magazines and civil radio channels existed. (Bly 2006, 9). This content produced by "regular" people is called alternative media, and that is what blogs are today. While traditional media is formal and stiff, blogs are fast and temporary. Books, magazines and newspapers are said to be "dead-tree" media. Blogging might be the most powerful form of marketing and media on the planet. At the beginning blogs were only written text, but now they are full of photos and videos. Video blogs aka vlogs are coming more and more popular. (Sirkkunen 2006, 148; Kilpi 2006, 5; Hintikka 2007, 27.)

Blogs are as popular as they are maybe because anybody can write a blog and they are real-time hence faster than news channels. Blogs can be easily found based on the content, subject, writer or headline; in addition they offer a chance to openness and interactivity. When evaluating all communication tools, blog seems to be the most convenient one of them all. (Scoble & Israel 2006, 200.)

Blogs are considered as significant technological, social and financial power of change, in which freedom of speech, publishing and producing get a whole new environment. (Kilpi 2006, 3). Blogs are part of this new business, and companies have noticed that blogs are important operators. Not everyone writes or reads a blog, but sometimes bloggers operate as if their blogs were reaching everyone. (Bly 2006, 4.)

3.2 Professional blogging and the work behind it

Blogging has become more and more professional. Life-style blogs became a phenomenon in Finland in 2008-2009. It did not take long until companies got interested in

bloggers and began to send them products to test. When the products bloggers had praised ran out of stores, the potential of bloggers was realized also by others than cosmetic firms. Blogging became business. First big blog portal Indiedays was founded in 2010 and the blogging community called Lily a year later. Most professional bloggers get monthly salary either from a blog portal or a magazine and then there are independent bloggers who run their own business around the blog. The most main factor that effects on the salary is the number of readers. It is hard to discover a specific amount of salary per month because bloggers like to withhold that information. Most popular bloggers can get at least 2000-3000 euros per month. The CEO of Indiedays Esa Suurio tells that the wage level of the most popular bloggers can be considered competitive against the salary of journalists. The most established model of earning money is *collaboration posts*: companies pay for the bloggers to write a specific number of posts about given product or service. When bloggers begin to get collaboration offers many start to take care of their own business. Other popular way of earning money is through *affiliate marketing*. It means that blogger publishes a link to a web shop and earns a share of the products sold through that link. Usually the share is four to ten per cent of the grand total. (Maksimainen 2014.)

Blogging takes tremendous amount of time, especially if blogger is a professional or aiming towards being one. The most popular professional bloggers aim to update their blog at least once a day. The frequency of posting has an important meaning. It is somewhat related to the length of each post. Bloggers must include some value for their readers in each post whether it is an interesting cooperation, or they have something important to say about some urgent matter. (Bly 2006, 41.) The most popular bloggers create fresh content with fresh ideas, fresh ways of thinking and fresh links. Blogging is not just writing but also taking pictures and editing them. In addition to these, bloggers need to plan their concept, themes, topics and schedules beforehand. Working resembles professional media production and many bloggers execute the principles of journalism. (Noppiari & Hautakangas 2012, 132.) *Professional blogger* (which means a blogger who makes a living out of blogging) consumes a great amount of time and a share of their minds on blogging. Professional blogger might constantly think about a topic to blog about, whether things they do and read belong to their blogs and how to continue keeping their blogs active and fresh. In some cases professional

blogging might be more time taking and mind consuming than a "regular" work, where you get to leave your work behind once you leave home. (Bly 2006, 47.)

In professional blogging, content is produced and planned very carefully. When going few years back, blog post material was photographed in a bus stop or in a fitting room. A writer of popular blog called Tickle your fancy says in her post that most of her days go by planning what, where, how and when to create content for her blog. When she is putting an advertisement campaign into practice, she splits the photo shoot and the release in many different phases. First the place to shoot and the photographer need to be booked, then reference photos must be found, technical implementation planned and the styling accessories acquired. Then there is the actual shooting day, editing the photos and then finally writing the blog post, and publishing the project. In addition to these there is of course updating the social media. She writes that every working day is different but they include everything from planning a campaign, a week schedule and meeting the clients into taking and editing photos, into taking care of the bookkeeping and invoicing. Many important abilities are needed when blogging professionally. She says that her salary depends on how much work she is ready to do and that the personal activity means everything. Blogging is time consuming and requires multitasking and many talents. (Sara 2016.)

Kira Kosonen wrote a blog post about her blogging and what it takes to blog as a professional. Since she blogs for a living, she often answers questions like what the job includes and how is she able to live by blogging. Blogs concentrate more and more on photography and being visual. Photography and improving these skills are an essential part of professional blogging and that is why bloggers invest on proper camera gear. Taking photographs and carrying camera everywhere is a part of blogger's everyday life. Editing the photos is another thing that takes a lot of time if blogger wants the pictures to look professional. Modeling is acquired if blogger is a fashion/lifestyle blogger. Taking outfit photos is part of bloggers' everyday life. Some readers and advertisers want video material in blogs and this is a demand in which bloggers should respond to. Making videos takes even more time than taking and editing traditional photos. Writing is an essential part of blogging and fluent text and grammar are very important skills to master. PR and marketing are very essential when considering networking. Thanks to these, bloggers end up making themselves visible to advertisers

and clients. Every blogger is an advocate of their own brand and that brand should be promoted if they want to move forward on their careers. Social media supports prospering as a blogger. Every social media channel such as Facebook and *Instagram* will create traffic to the blog and work as a “business card” to the blog. Instagram is a free mobile photo-sharing application that allows users to share pictures and videos either publicly or privately on the service. (Koskinen 2012). Controlling social media takes time and its power should not be underestimated. Finally computer skills are important to master when blogging. Learning to deal with IT-problems will make it easier to blog. (Kira 2015.)

3.3 Two bloggers – two articles

In the web site of *Iltasanomat* there is an interview of Kira Kosonen from 2014 when the name of her blog was still *Blond Rivets*. In the beginning there is a following description about Kira: “Kira Kosonen 27 years old, shows her style in elaborated photos that could be from a fashion magazine. In her written posts she comes closer to the reader and tells about the little things in her everyday life.” Kira comments that the combination of these two contrasts is a conscious choice. She wants the photos to be well designed and for them to include professional style-inspiration. The photos are editorial but in the written text she chooses to be warm. Even though she does not give away anything about her personal life, she feels that her personality shows in her blog. The blog also shows her values and what inspires her. When she writes blog posts she thinks if she wants the text to be found on the internet still after ten years. In this article it is mentioned that Kira made a career out of blogging systematically. The blog needed to be ready and good straightaway. It got attention even before it was published because Kira’s sister Hanna is a successful blogger. Now Kira is supporting herself by blogging full-time. She does not feel that the work is meaningless and she wishes for the blog to grow outside of Finland one day. (Haapaluoma 2014.)

In the web site of *Helsingin Sanomat* there is an article about how the best Finnish bloggers make money like doctors. Vilma Peltonen is mentioned and interviewed in this article. In 2014 Vilma was 24 years old and she had worked a year as a blogger for *Cosmopolitan*-magazine. After a year she resigned in order to start her own web

site. Her purpose was to make career out of blogging and photographing, which would profit reasonably in the future. Vilma justifies the resigning from the blog portal by saying that it is important that the new blog platform looks like herself and no one else can gain copyrights to her pictures. As an independent blogger one needs to start selling ads and that is one of the downsides of becoming an independent blogger. Here is a typical day as a blogger described by Vilma Peltonen:

9.30-10.30 Reading e-mails and blog comments and making couple of work calls

10.45-12.00 Going for a run and at the same time plan future posts

13.00-14.30 Writing a blog post and sharing it on both Instagram and Facebook

15.00-18.00 Answering on 50 comments and several work e-mails and reading a thesis about wellness-blogs

18.00-19.30 Editing photos and making a portfolio out of pictures for her new web page

22.00-00.30 Testing the video features of her camera and editing photos

Blogging under Cosmopolitan-magazine made Vilma a professional and gave her publicity thanks to which she was able to start her own business. Vilma was ready to take the risk of selling her privacy in the blog. Vilma admires people who can make a living out of their passion. Vilma never would have thought that she could be doing the work of her dreams. (Maksimainen 2014.)

4 BLOG MARKETING

4.1 CREF marketing model

Marketing communication resources vary due to changing circumstances in the world. In the present moment markets are better networked than never and word of mouth marketing works faster than ever before. The future role of internet and blog marketing as part of everyday life has inspired to change the Kotler's traditional 4P marketing mix (product, price, place, promotion) into a new form of *CREF* that actually suits better for blog marketing. (Salmenkivi & Nyman 2007, 217-219.)

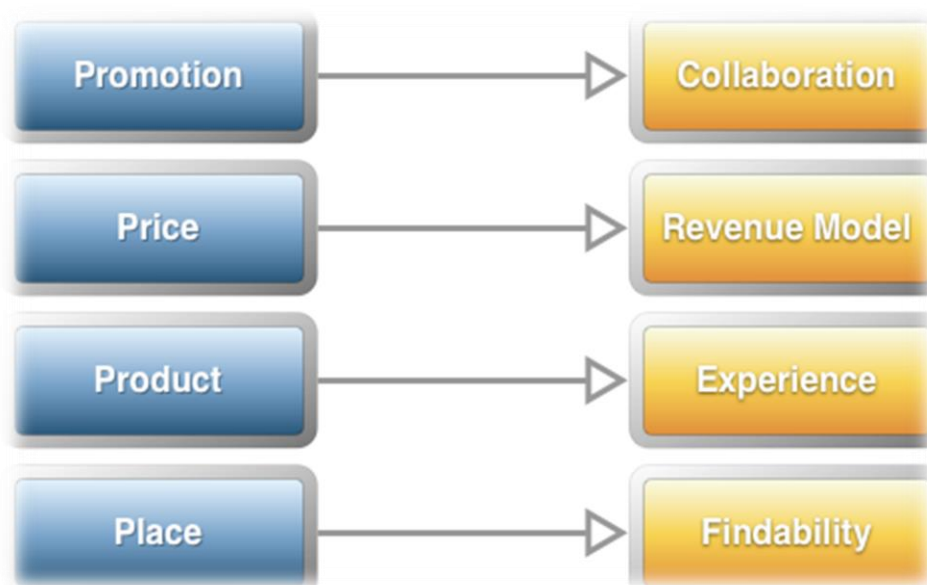


Figure 2 CREF Marketing model.

CREF comes from the terms collaboration, revenue model, experience and findability. *Collaboration* aims on getting customers on board in the marketing field. At its best, this interaction creates concrete product development ideas and adds marketing power remarkably. This can be achieved with low costs. Some of the benefits include increasing the brand knowledge, firsthand knowledge of customers' opinions and needs, and endless possibilities to use people's innovativeness when developing the company. (Salmenkivi & Nyman 2007, 221.)

According to *revenue model*, price no longer determines the procurement of product but there are other influential factors. It is very common today that products and services are offered free of charge. It is caused by companies' skills to use indirect revenue models when the main incomes become from other than selling the actual product. These indirect revenue models can be annual or monthly service payment or finance by ads or by sponsorship. According to the new revenue model, the influence of price decreases when making the purchase decision and the price competition becomes difficult. This is explained by population getting wealthier and the general change in consumer behavior. Now the middle class can save money in order to get products and services that once were unattainable for them. (Salmenkivi & Nyman 2007, 251-252, 254.)

Experience is a great trend. People expect experience and personality from the products and services they buy. The use of imagination and alternative media is usually cheap, and makes profit more than traditional marketing communications. (Salmenkivi & Nyman 2007, 264.)

What is meant by *findability* is that a product, service or brand can be found by a coincidence or as a result of search process. The information must be found at a right time in a right place. This gets easier when the community of Internet is utilized and as a result the information about a product or company can be found easier from the Internet. (Salmenkivi & Nyman 2007, 278-279.)

4.2 Blog marketing resources

There are different ways of marketing inside blogs. *Banner* means a marketing "block" in the web page, which is usually shaped like a square and is usually located on the side or above of the page. The banner ad can be a picture, an animated picture or an interactive presentation. (Kuvaja & Taljavaara, 2010, 7.) The blogger displaying the banner on his/her blog gets a compensation based on the number of clicks, shows or successful transactions. Banner is one of the most visible ways to advertise. By click-

ing this advertisement, reader is transferred on to the advertiser's web page. The meaning of banners is to draw attention but due to the commonness of banners, advertisers have had to improve them. (Salmenkivi & Nyman 2007, 276-278.)

Selling ad space on blogs is the most common form of revenue for bloggers. When ads are used on blogs, it is a great way for a blogger to make money without a lot of effort from the blogger. Blogger can have ad space on the sides, up or down in the blog. Selling ad space directly to the advertiser results in greater amount of money and the blogger does not have to worry on how many people click on the ad itself. For advertising, the money blogger earns is directly tied to the traffic he/she has in the blog. Advertisers are ready to pay more in order to reach a larger audience. (Heller 2013, 105.)

Popups are pop-up window advertisements which usually appear on the screen once the reader has entered a website or moves inside the page. Popups have lost their meaning and they are not used so much anymore since nowadays many web browsers can block all the pop-up windows. (Kuvaja & Taljavaara 2010, 26.)

The most popular form of marketing in blogs is *sponsorship* which in the blogging world appears as bribery. Many companies donate their products to bloggers hoping that they would write their own experiences about the products. However, bloggers write out of their own will and based on their interests, so the marketing directed towards bloggers must be suitable for them. Sponsorship is meant to help launch the company and its products or services, and connect them with positive image. Sponsorship cannot be bought like advertising space; it is arranged as case-by-case. Sponsorship does not necessary bring any money to the blogger so it is not considered as an income especially if the value of the products received is small. (Kuvaja & Taljavaara 2010, 28.)

Bloggers can acquire companies as their *partners*, and in their blog, offer a link to their partners' web page. Word of mouth -marketing is the oldest form of marketing used when there was no Internet or blogs. Nowadays information spreads fast and widely across the world from blogs to Facebook and from Instagram to Facebook. If the mar-

keting is successful it can accomplish large-scale results in a very short time. An *affiliate marketing* is a great ways to make money as a blogger. (Kuvaja & Taljavaara 2010, 28-29.) An affiliate program is an online system for marketing products or services which involves three parties. Blogger helps other people to market their products, and then every time someone buys through the link provided in the blog, the blogger makes money. (Heller 2013, 104.)

Collaboration campaigns are quite common. In collaborations blogger takes part in some event or action with the advertising company and writes about the experience in the blog. A cosmetics company can arrange make-up schools or Adidas can arrange a running school for bloggers who are ought to write about them afterwards. (Noppiari & Hautakangas 2012, 114.)

The blogosphere has accepted the paid advertising on blogs, only condition is that it is clearly specified as such. Many professional bloggers feature banner ads from advertisers in the margins of their blogs. As for promoting a product inside the text of the blog it was frowned upon some time ago, and it still sometimes is. The acceptance of product talk in blogs has been slowly growing and continues to do so. Blogger can mention using a certain product and naturally readers want to know what brand is blogger using so bloggers are doing readers a service by naming the brand. Readers may also want to order the product so blogger is doing them a service by putting the link from the blog to the manufacturer's web site, where readers can place an order for the product. This is not really advertising the product when the blogger does not get paid by mentioning this product. This is more of an "editorial mention". But if the blogger has an affiliate arrangement with the product seller and she/he gets a commission on every sale generated by traffic through the blog to seller's web site that is called a paid commercial collaboration. In these cases it is important to mention that it is a collaboration. (Bly 2006, 77-79.)

In lifestyle and fashion blogs marketing communication shows in different ways. Banners are just a small part of paid marketing in the blogs. Companies can give products to bloggers who can give them to their readers for example through arranging lotteries and giveaways. Usually in these cases bloggers get the same products themselves also. One of the most used forms of marketing is the word-of-mouth -marketing: Blogger

publishes outfit pictures in which he/she uses some cloth or accessory that is mentioned under the pictures. It is essential that the brand is mentioned, and usually it is linked to the brand's/store's web page. In addition to advertising and sponsorship there are other marketing resources. Products get media publicity but blogs get a lot of attention and publicity in other medias too. Sometimes bloggers offer their readers a chance to get discount in certain store by mentioning the blogger's name. This is clearly sales promotion. When blogger is writing about a certain product, reader can identify to the blogger like to any other celebrity and wants to adapt this style. In this case readers are no longer buying the product but also other values. Blogger's own brand and image has a huge impact on what customers think about the products or services that are being promoted in the blog. (Kuvaja & Taljavaara 2010, 41-42.)

4.3 The downside and the challenge

Commercial collaborations have become more and more common in blogs and it is one of the main sources for a professional blogger to make money. Many readers are complaining about the number of collaboration posts in the comment sections. Commercialization in blogs can annoy some readers who like to read more about the blogger's life than about a new electric toothbrush. (Katri 2016.)

The challenge for a professional blogger is to keep earning with a blog without every other post being a straightforward collaboration post and driving readers away. Bloggers need their readers, because the readers bring money to the bloggers. The more readers there are the more commercial co operations will take place and make money for the blogger. If blogger participates in cooperation campaigns, gets free gifts or benefits, it has to be brought up in the posts along with the name of the company in question. (Noppiari & Hautakangas 2012, 115.)

Blogging is an endless road of improving and challenging one self. Professional blogger is constantly thinking about the blog and because of the smart phones and tablets, the blog is always "with" them along with the most powerful marketing tools for bloggers: the social media. Blogging is a lot of work, all of which is not visible to the readers. Readers only see the tip of the ice berg, with tip of the ice berg meaning the

blog posts including the photos, text and videos. Underneath the surface lies everything else such as arranging the collaborations, photoshoots, selling the advertisement space and editing. Luckily most readers seem to understand the basics of this profession and the fact that professional blogging is a full-time job and takes time and hard work, and then blogger might want to make his/her blog commercially interesting and truly make money with it. As long as the bloggers write mainly about what they want and how often they want, the readers will usually stay on board despite how commercial the blog might be. (Kuvaja & Taljavaara 2010, 47.)

5 PERSONAL BRANDING

Branding is the most important thing for a professional blogger. It is critical for a professional blogger to constantly maximize his/her value in order to stay on top of things and keep on earning through his/her blogging. Each professional blogger has their own personal style to write, and to take and edit photographs. The personal style, what the readers expect from the blogger and what they think about the blogger are things that define the brand. All these are an extension of blogger's personality and important part of personal branding. (Heller 2013, 9-10.)

What is a brand? It can be defined as a name, symbol, design or anything that separates the "seller's" good or service from those of other sellers. Usually a brand includes everything from the logo, to the way someone behaves and the way someone services their products. A strong brand becomes something that guides the brand owner's actions, and is part culture and part identity. Actions inspired from the branding help to support the brand. Brand and branding are often mixed in together but in fact they mean two different things. While branding is the promises one can make, brand means the promises someone keeps. Branding means the art of creating and controlling the brand, and brand is the way customers (in this case readers) experience the product (blog). (Heller 2013, 11-12.)

When a brand is strong it will make everything else easier. Once the brand is established in certain market, the person behind the brand can be seen as an authority. Successful blogs have brands along with the bloggers behind them. It is up to them to define their brands, establish in the minds of readers and finally, use it to grow and gain more readers. Bloggers' brand will help them to show who they are and to stand out from all the other bloggers. In order to be successful and stand out from the crowd bloggers need to have a well thought out marketing plan and branding is the first and most important part of the marketing plan. Every brand and choice a blogger publishes on his or her blog, like links to others' web pages, headlines, texts, or pictures, express blogger's values and opinions. Even the name of the blog gives some kind of hint about the blogger's personality and image. (Noppari & Hautakangas 2012, 26.)

Brand is larger than just the logo or the design of one's blog. Brand is actually how people experience the blog when they read or interact with it. Brand can be also seen in blogger's social media, books, articles and basically everywhere blogger has made his/her mark. Blogger's brand will define the blogger and vice versa. The brand can become so strong that new readers will get to know the blogger through the brand and current readers will know just what to expect. Maintaining the number of old readers while gaining new readers is the outcome of successful branding and will help earn more money. (Heller 2013, 18-19.)

The first step in creating a strong brand is to decide what a blogger wants that brand to stand for. When starting the process of branding from scratch it requires thinking about goals as a blogger, how readers will read the posts and interact with the blog. How does the blogger want to be seen by his/her readers? One can be seen as an expert in their field, or as a contact for advice or even someone who can make readers laugh. Once the brand is defined, then it can start to grow and attract the kind of traffic and income a blogger dreams about. The most important thing here is to find a reason why people should be reading the blog and that will help finding out to whom is he/she writing for and what about. Whatever it is that makes a blog interesting to great masses, it is used to help the blog move forward and it is something that creates an online personality for the blog that is identifiable to all the readers. These days there are countless of blogs and new blogs keep popping up every hour which means that even more attention should be paid on how to make one's blog stand out from all the others. Branding is the key to this. Despite the fact that there are many blogs already in same niche, every professional blogger has been a newbie and they have just started little by little defining their very own brand as they go. (Heller 2013, 25-29.)

There are some ways a blogger can activate the readers, gain more of them that way make more value for his/her blog. As said earlier, linking and branding are important tools here. These following tools are also part of the branding. What professional bloggers are doing? They ask questions from their readers. They demand feedback from their readers so that they can develop themselves as a blogger and create even better content for their readers. They ask questions in both blog and social media. A professional blogger often uses open-ended posts that leave room for the reader to comment and share their own opinion on the given subject of the post. Surveys and polls are also

easy ways to get people involved. The readers become the focus group and they help the blogger to steer his/her brand in the right direction. Giveaway is an effective tool to get action from the readers and many successful bloggers use that once in a while. In a giveaway blogger offers something for free for one lucky winner for leaving a comment or subscribing as a reader for the blog. This works as an incentive and also strengthens the blogger's brand. (Heller 2013, 95-96.)

6 IMPLEMENTATION

6.1 Research methods

6.1.1 Qualitative research

In my research I will use qualitative research. Qualitative research is an exploratory and unstructured research methodology based on small samples through which insight and understanding can be provided. Qualitative research uses words and pictures as a description whereas quantitative research uses numbers as measurement. Qualitative research involves usually a face-to-face interview but can also be conducted by e-mail or by telephone. All data gathered is analyzed in a non-statistical way. I decided to use qualitative research as I do not need specific numbers in order to accomplish my research objectives. My research will focus on two bloggers. I will benefit from the fact that I also have an evaluation on professional blogging based on experience. (Malthora, 2012, 73.)

6.1.2 Data collection

In my data collection I use primary data as my source. Primary data is collected from the two bloggers who agreed to answer my questions via e-mail. In order to have a better understanding about different angles in professional blogging primary data is utilized. An e-mail survey is chosen to collect primary data since the two bloggers I will ask questions are both abroad. An e-mail survey means that the interview questions are sent to the recipient as such and the recipient answers those questions by sending an e-mail back including the answers to the questions. The answers help me gather more reliable and relevant data. The questions give bloggers enough space to answer the questions in their own way and help me gain more personal knowledge about their profession. The questions can be seen in the Appendix 1.

6.2 Bloggers

I have chosen to study two bloggers, Kira Kosonen and Vilma Peltonen because they both have professional, successful lifestyle blogs. I have followed Kira's blog almost from the beginning (2013) and I started following Vilma's blog just when it got very popular (2014). Kira and Vilma are both independent and successful Finnish professional bloggers in charge of their own business.

Kira Kosonen is a 27 years old blogger who first started with a blog called Blond rivets. She has been a professional blogger from the beginning of her blog career. In 2013 she started blogging in the footsteps of her big sister Hanna Väyrynen who writes the well-known blog called Strictly Style. Kira Kosonen is a founder and manager of www.kirakosonen.com. In her blog she has two different main categories: lifestyle and fashion. Her blog is not just about fashion and everything superficial, but she also writes about personal things and that is one of the reasons I like her blog because it is so versatile. She has a good balance between the deeper topics and superficial ones. She definitely has had many interesting collaborations with different companies and brands, which shows in the number of her readers. These collaborations have enhanced her brand further. I think visuality has had an impact on the popularity of her blog. She has beautiful well edited pictures in every post. She has been nominated in many different Blog Awards and she has won the Fashion blog of the year title on The Blog Awards and this year she's being nominated in Inspiration Blog Awards as "Most stylish of the year". Every aspect of her blog seems carefully planned. Everything from the functionality of the website to the content, is gathered into one great ensemble. Her outfits are inspiring and the photos are professional. The pace in which she posts is also good; she posts 4-5 times per week. She is also very responsive in the comment box below each blog post and that is something that the readers appreciate. Besides the activity in her blog, she is successful in social media, considering that her Instagram page has approximately 20 800 followers and the number keeps growing.

Vilma Peltonen is a 26 years old passionate blogger. She lives currently in Italy. Blogging is her main job and she has an experience of 10 years as a professional model. In addition to blogging she works as a photographer, and writes articles in magazines.

Before she became a full-time entrepreneur she studied theoretical philosophy and sociology and worked for Cosmopolitan –magazine. The subjects of her blog Vilma P. are as versatile as her topics of interest. She blogs about recipes, outfits, traveling, training and also photography and beauty. The theme and the heart of her blog is an overall well-being. Her greatest purpose is to inspire and encourage people to chase their dreams and listen to their hearts. I like her style of writing and in her text she always gets the readers to feel inspired and good about themselves. As a person she feels warm and welcoming. She has won many different titles such as Zalando Nordic Bloggers Awards 2015 – People’s Choice Winner in Finland and in Nordic Countries and Sport & Wellness Awards 2014 – Best wellness blog. This year she is being nominated as the best visual blog of the year in Inspiration Blog Awards. Best visual blog of the year -title is being described so that the winner has the visual pieces in place and a strong solid look in every channel. I think that Vilma’s brand fits into this description very well since she has a very well-known strong brand of her own and her social media is flawless. Her Instagram page has currently 20 400 followers and when thinking about personal branding I think she has done wonderful job, and it was interesting to see what her answers to my questions were.

7 INTERVIEW RESULTS

This chapter will include answers of two professional bloggers, Kira Kosonen and Vilma Peltonen to my questions, as well as my analysis on professional blogging based on the answers.

Kira started blogging in 2013 in the footsteps of her big sister Hanna, who had been a blogger for many years. She got the inspiration from her sister and got excited about the whole industry. She started blogging as a professional from the beginning and never thought she would do that just as a hobby.

Vilma became inspired about photography and as a result started a photo blog in Lily-blog portal in 2012. She had tried blogging earlier but back then it was hard for her to decide how personal the blog would be. She was insecure about producing public content. It was not until her current blog which was focused on photographs that she got the courage to continue because at first she was anonymous. Few months later she started writing more and bringing along her passion for wellness. Her blog combines all of her passions: writing, photography, modeling, content creation and different interests such as nutrition, exercise, fashion and books. She knew instantly that blogging was her thing. Once she had found her way of blogging, she pursued blogging actively and continued maintaining good quality. At first she did not believe that she could become a professional blogger, although she started blogging quite a professional way pretty soon.

I was very curious about what they both had done “right” to earn their success as bloggers. Kira had a clear and succinct answer for this: She has always hold on to good quality and updated her blog regularly. Vilma said that she has invested on quality and done collaboration posts as well as she could. She has been herself, honest and authentic. In addition to these, Vilma’s blog was one of the first ones about wellness, so that must have been beneficial.

It takes Kira two to three hours per day to update her blog, but all the other work around the blog takes double that time. Vilma said that the time spent on blogging varies but

she works every day around the year – also on weekends and holidays. Blogging is a way of life and it is hard to separate work and leisure. She carries camera everywhere she goes and since the content is created regularly, she spins ideas in her head all the time. She added that nowadays professional bloggers are doing so much more than just blog posts. Bloggers update several social media channels almost every day, create content for companies, do photoshoots as a model or a photographer, write books, or work as a journalist. The list goes on, so not all the time goes in on writing the blog. It takes one to two hours for Vilma to create a blog post with text and photos.

Kira's objectives as a blogger are to earn her living and to grow her own brand and company. Vilma's objectives are to pass on inspiration, information, tips and some nice moments. Kira finds topics from everyday life and surrounding phenomena and people. Vilma finds topics by being curious, reading and experiencing different things. She has never had troubles finding topics to write about because she has so many subjects of interest. She admits that it is easier for her to find something to blog about, when there is a lot happening in her life, such as traveling. Kira's most popular posts are about food and personal subjects. Also Vilma's most popular posts are about food and nutrition and they come up on the search engines couple years after publishing and are her most read posts. The fact they both have common is that they have many regular collaborators.

When I asked a straightforward questions about how to make blogging a business, Kira answered that by building a strong brand. Kira maintains and builds her brand by making choices that are natural for her and she does that without compromising quality. Vilma described her brand as fresh, positive and high-class. She maintains her brand by taking care that the content, collaborations and her own being all support the brand. Kira described that a good blog is clear, high-class and inspiring. Vilma thinks that a good blog is distinctive, based on writer's targets of passion and includes high-class photos and a good spelling. Kira thinks that a good pace for a professional blogger to publish posts is five to six times per week. She added that every day would be ideal, but it is very challenging. Vilma thinks that a good pace is regular depending on the nature and style of the blog, but three to seven times per week is a good pace. Success as a blogger requires self-discipline, work motivation and a desire of wanting to do it in a long run according to Kira. In Vilma's opinion success as a blogger takes passion

because at first blog is ran as a hobby without incomes. Success requires also networking, social skills, being interactive with the readers and constant development of oneself.

One of the common misbeliefs about professional bloggers according to Kira is that they lie at home with computers on their lap. She says that in reality professional blogger's job includes continuing running from one place to another. Vilma thinks it is hard to say one common misbelief there is about bloggers but if she thinks all the professional bloggers she knows, she thinks that not everyone knows how hard-working, ambitious, determined and versatile bloggers actually are.

When I asked about how much does they make money by blogging, Kira answered that it depends on the month and the different collaborations but in a month one could earn from 0€ to 10 000€. Vilma answered that it varies a lot but she does not want to comment it in detail. I was curious about what has been their accomplishment so far in their careers. Kira said that the filming trip to Cape Town by Nelly.com and winning the Fashion blog of the year title on The Blog Awards Finland –gala have been the best achievements of her career so far. Vilma answered that she has received the Finland's best wellness blog title three times, and won the People's Choice category in Zalando Nordic Blogger Awards in Copenhagen. Also the fact that she is able to earn her living as an entrepreneur and gets do what she loves, are one of her biggest achievements. Finally I asked them what are the downsides of blogging and Kira said that the pressure of updating the social media on a daily basis. Sometimes it is good just to be on one's own. Vilma thinks that tearing away from the work and taking a complete vacation is really hard as a blogger. In the end Kira gave one tip on how to create a good social media, and it was maintaining a clear personal style. Vilma thinks that good social media is achieved by being active (posting pictures, and commenting on others), creating a unitary personal style and by investing on good lighting of the pictures.

8 CONCLUSION

8.1 Branding

So what does it actually take to be a professional blogger? First of all, one has to build a strong brand and be as distinctive from other bloggers as possible. Branding takes time, creativeness and discipline. Second of all, even though a blogger has to focus on his/her own blog, they also need to stay on top of everything else that is going on in the blogosphere and notice what readers are looking for in blogs besides inspiration and relaxing “me-time” while reading. Maintaining a strong brand means continuous self-development and interaction with the readers of the blog. Being interactive with the readers gives an idea of which way the blog should develop. Blogger needs to decide is continuing the same way the key to maintaining and increasing the number of readers the right way to go, or should he/she make changes. I have noticed that when a blogger has a clear brand, he/she gets a lot of followers. When blogger has more followers more money is being gained from marketing campaigns in their blogs. The more well-known blogger is, the easier it gets to brand a new product or service into their blog image and earn money by getting the readers to buy it or to click the link to the advertiser’s web page. Marketing and branding are the most important skills for a blogger to master and they go hand in hand in this profession. Taking care of the brand by making sure content stays high-class, collaborations are current and interesting are all keys to success. Making sure blogger’s own being supports the brand is important. Branding is successful when it is done passionately and the inspiration is being passed on to everyone. Branding means thinking about every aspect and detail there is to consider in blogging. I think that branding is one thing that creates the difference of being a professional blogger or writing a blog as a hobby. When branding is taken into a whole other level the readers pick up on that, become interested and continue following the blog. It is pleasant to follow something that readers know will always meet the certain qualifications they expect from the blogger. Self-discipline, motivation, networking and good social skills are mentioned as being keys to successful blogging. All of these are part of blogger’s own brand since they affect the blog a lot, and readers can see them. Every action and decision that a blogger takes is sooner or later shown to the readers and also to the current and possible future collaborators. Technical things

such as lighting in the photos, the editing skills and spelling are all part of defining the brand. A good blogger should keep these things as a priority in addition to the good content creation along with finding interesting topics to write about. This means blogger should always stay open minded to new ideas. When thinking about branding it seems to me that Kira and Vilma have done wonderful job and there are many marketing specialists who should consider them as an example on how to create a strong personal brand.

8.2 Blog marketing tools

Where does the money come from and how do professional bloggers earn their living? There are so many different kind of marketing tools used in blogs, banners being one of the firsts that I mentioned earlier. Banners are paid advertising space, which bring some regular income to the blogger but is definitely not the marketing type that brings the biggest income. Affiliate marketing is when there are links inside the text or under photos and by clicking the links readers can get to the companies websites selling the products mentioned in the blog post. This is the most common way of marketing in the blogs, and as a reader's point of view, maybe one the most pleasant ones. It could be used when blogger makes a collage of things which are currently trending in fashion, home styling, or when blogger makes an outfit post with pictures and writes the links to the web shops below. Every time a reader clicks these affiliate links, just to see the product, or ends up buying the product, blogger makes money. This is a pretty effective way of earning money, since it is so easy for a reader to end up buying the product or just checking it. When the product is seen used in action by someone to whom reader either relates to or wants to relate the product becomes more desirable. There are also collaborations with companies where blogger participates in some event arranged by a specific company and afterwards blogger writes a blog post about it and earns money. Having an eye for business and marketing helps being a blogger especially if one aims at being a professional. Professional bloggers are entrepreneurs and in charge of their own finance so it is beneficial if the blogger has some business intelligence. Also understanding how to successfully market his/her own blog is important. When blogger gains more and more readers it means more visibility and more companies wanting to do cooperation with the blogger. The more readers blogger has,

the more visibility the companies get when they are being mentioned or when their products are shown in the blog. It is beneficial when blogger has many different companies that want to do cooperation with the blogger. When there are more options to choose from it becomes easier to maintain a certain image and brand. It becomes easier for the blogger because then he/she does not need to accept every offer in order to make enough money. It can be said that there is a straight correlation between the number of readers and the money earned through blogging. A part from above mentioned direct ways of earning money, there are also some indirect ways for professional bloggers to earn money. Bloggers can also publish books or columns and do some modeling by giving their face for a certain brand to use in advertising campaigns. Usually the blogger who end up publishing a book or modeling in an ad-campaign are already well-known and popular.

8.3 Professional blogger definition

Professional blogger can be defined so that blogging is his/her main job and all the money comes directly or indirectly from blogging. Professional blogger is not only writing blog posts and focusing on creating the content but also doing some other work thanks to the popularity of their blog. Professional bloggers in Finland have usually at least a few thousand followers. In order to gain that amount of followers blogger has to work hard and be devoted. The higher quality of the content created might also tell that someone blogs for a living. Successful blogger can be considered as a public figure and their actions and decisions effect on the content of their blog. The more publicity the bloggers get, the more coo-operation possibilities with companies they get. Bloggers can contribute to their publicity by updating and investing on their social media such as Instagram and Facebook.

8.4 Revenue model

On the next page there is the revenue model for earning income as a professional blogger which I created based on what I found during my research.

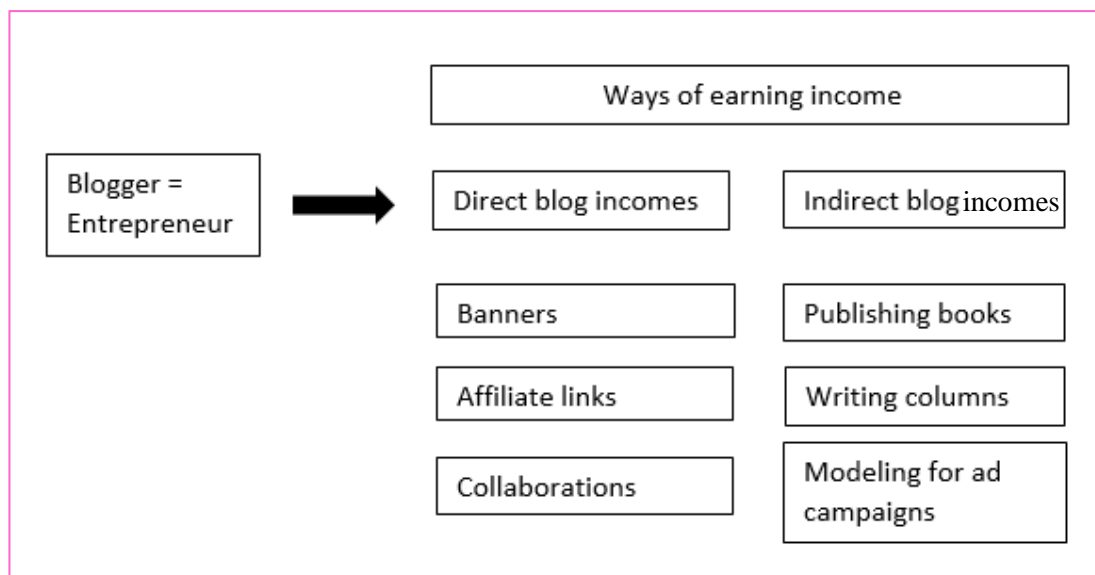


Figure 3 Revenue Model for professional blogging

In this revenue model I define blogger as an entrepreneur who has different ways of earning income. I divide blog incomes into two different categories which are direct blog incomes and indirect blog incomes. Direct blog incomes mean all the sources of income which consist directly from the blogging itself. I name three main sources based on what I found in the empirical part. These main sources are banners, affiliate links and collaborations. Indirect blog incomes mean all the other work that a professional blogger can do thanks to the blogging. When blogger starts to earn income through affiliate marketing, banners or collaborations the blogger is usually popular enough for companies to gain visibility during their cooperation. After the blogger has gained this public status he/she is be able to earn income through indirect ways.

8.5 Downsides

The downside of blogging is that it is hard to separate blogging and leisure since blog is always on bloggers' mind. As a reader it seems that they sometimes live and breathe through their blog. Even when they are on a holiday they focus on blogging in some level and it should be considered as an asset since traveling gives great content to their blog. From reader's point of view it is always great to watch photos taken in some place exotic and follow their adventure virtually. There is also the pressure of updating social media channels regularly as one of the downsides of blogging. When someone

is blogging professionally they are usually very exposed and even famous. Being a successful blogger means that there are a large number of people following the blog and social media every day. Blogger can be considered as a role model for readers and can have a strong influence on reader's choices and preferences. This makes blogger exposed to all kinds of reactions and comments and not everything can always be about positive feedback. Even though there are negative sides in blogging the positive sides still get more attention. Bloggers give great value to the fact that they get to do something they really love.

9 SUMMARY

The objective was to find guidelines for making a profitable blog and the objective was achieved. Branding and marketing aspects were handled and they both are important factors in blogging. Professional blogger as a profession was explained and the tools for making money by blogging were discovered. A revenue model based on professional bloggers' earnings was drawn and explained. During my work I found out that in order to become a professional blogger, blogger needs to understand how to maximize the value of the currency. By currency I mean the number of readers. It is interesting how much blogger's own being and every action affects the credibility of the blog and the brand. One must be completely devoted to the blog in order to maintain his/her status as a professional blogger.

More often than not I notice current trends or interesting campaigns from a blog faster than I would through traditional media. I think this tells about the certain power blogs have these days. Blogging is very efficient way of marketing products or services and if the blogger has an eye for marketing and business, he or she can really make a profession out of it. We live in an information based society and since the smart phones became common, all the information became more available. Both blogs and social media have gained a steady role in marketing and they support each other. Based on this work I define blogs as an important marketing channel and a profession of the future with many possibilities.

Similar observations can be reached by other observers with some variations depending on the standpoint. The results and guidelines produced by this study could be taken into practice as such. The findings are really what they appear to be and the status as a professional blogger could be gained by blogging according to the guidelines created in this research. The results can be generalized to other bloggers as well than just lifestyle bloggers. If I was to try and be a successful blogger in the future I would read my work for practical advice.

10 FINAL WORDS

I was able to apply the knowledge I have gained during these last years as a reader of blogs and also my studies in Satakunta University of Applied Sciences in this thesis. The research gave me valuable information about professional blogging in practice. It gave me a comprehensive insight of the different aspects in marketing and branding, both which are important to master in order to become a professional blogger. I had the opportunity to ask questions from my favorite professional bloggers and receive current information concerning about professional blogging. I focused my research questions so that I would get an answer to questions I have wondered. In the end I can say that this work gave a lot of new aspects for me as a reader and also as a possible future blogger.

When looking back with the knowledge I have now, I would have done one thing differently. I would have sent my e-mail questionnaire to the bloggers earlier and avoid the delay due to that. Other than that, I am content of the whole process and the results of it. I reached my objectives and was able to enhance my knowledge about blogging. My supervisor was an inspiring support, questioned my choices and got me thinking differently throughout the whole process. I am satisfied on the time I spent on this work since I was working full-time during this research and I practice a very active lifestyle. I could have shared my time more efficiently and practice more self-discipline but I am still satisfied finishing the process and graduating on June 2017.

11 REFERENCES

Bly, Robert W. 2006. *Blog Schmog: The truth about what blogs can and can't do for your business*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Brown, Bruce C. 2008. *The secret power of blogging: how to promote and market your business, organization, or cause with free blogs*. Ocala, FL : Atlantic.

Haapaluoma, J. 2014. Kira elättää itsensä blogillaan: "Siinä näkyvät arvoni ja ulkonäköni, ja mikä elämäni inspiroi". *Ilta-Sanomat* 20.6.2014. Referred 13.4.2017. <http://www.is.fi>.

Heller, Zach. 2013. *Branding for bloggers: tips to grow your online audience & maximize your income*. New York: Allworth Press.

Hintikka, K. A. 2007. *Web 2.0 - johdatus Internetin uusiin liiketoimintamahdollisuuksiin*. Helsinki: TIEKE.

Katri. Onko hyvistä blogeista tullut pinnallisia ja kaupallisia? Fit you too. 12.10.2016. Referred 12.10.2016. <http://fityoutoo.fitfashion.fi/onko-hyvista-blogeista-tullut-pinnallisia-kaupallisia/>

Kilpi, T. 2006. *Blogit ja bloggaaminen*. Helsinki: Readme.fi

Kira. What it takes to blog. Kira Kosonen. 8.12.2015 Referred 4.11.2016. <http://www.kirakosonen.com/lifestyle/randoms/2780/what-it-takes-to-blog/>

Kortesuo, Katleena & Kurvinen, Jarkko. 2011. *Blogimarkkinointi: blogilla mainetta ja mammonaa*. Helsinki: Talentum

Koskinen, Petri. 2012. Facebook ostaa Instagramin miljardilla dollarilla. Referred 19.4.2017. <https://www.kauppalehti.fi>.

Kuvaja, Mari & Taljavaara, Eija. 2010. *Nykyajan napalm, Web 2.0 : muotiblogit - markkinointiviestinnän ja kulttuurin kohtaaminen verkossa*. Jyväskylä: Jyväskylän ammattikorkeakoulu, liiketoiminta ja palvelut -yksikkö.

Lietsala, K. & Sirkkunen, E. 2008. *Social Media: Introduction to the tools and processes of participatory economy*. Tampere: Tampere University.

Majava, J. 2006. *Kohti sosiaalista verkkoa*. Helsinki: Yliopistopaino.

Maksimainen, H. 2014. Suomen parhaat bloggaajat tienavat kuin lääkärit. *Helsingin Sanomat* 6.9.2014. Referred 3.4.2017. <http://www.hs.fi>.

Malhotra, N. K. 2012. Basic marketing research: Integration of social media. 4th edition. New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc.

McBride, N. & Cason, J. 2006. Blogging. Teach yourself. Reading: Cox & Wyman.

Noppiari, Elina & Hautakangas, Mikko. 2012. Kovaa työtä olla minä: muotibloggaajat mediamarkkinoilla. Tampere: Tampere University Press.

Sara. 7 viimeisintä työpaikkaani. Tickle your fancy. 31.10.2016. Referred 1.11.2016. <http://www.lily.fi/blogit/tickle-your-fancy/7-viimeisinta-tyopaikkaani>

Salmenkivi, S & Nyman, N. 2007. Yhteisöllinen media ja muuttuva markkinointi 2.0. Helsinki: Karisto.

Scoble, R & Israel, S. 2006. Blogit ja bisnes - Yritys 2.0. Helsinki: Basam books.

Scott, David Meerman. 2010. New rules of marketing and PR: how to use social media, blogs, news releases, online video & viral marketing to reach buyers directyle. Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley & Sons cop.

Sirkkunen, E. 2006. Vertaismedia haastaa perinteisen joukkoviestinnän. Helsinki: Yliopistopaino.

QUESTIONS

1. Why did you start blogging in the first place and what inspired you?
2. What are common misunderstandings about professional bloggers?
3. What are your goals as a blogger?
4. How much time does it take to maintain a blog of your caliber?
5. What do you think you have done right to earn your success?
6. Did you started blogging as a professional right away?
7. How do you come up with the subjects for your blog?
8. What are the most popular posts in your blog?
9. Do you have regular associates?
10. How to make blogging a business?
11. How would you describe your brand and how do you maintain it?
12. What makes a good blog?
13. How much do you earn and does your income vary a lot?
14. What is good a good pace to publish posts?
15. What does success as a blogger take?
16. What is the best moment of your career so far?
17. What are the cons in blogging?
18. Give some tips on how to create a good social media (Instagram, Facebook).