



How to Design an Effective Homepage

WITH CHRISTINA
ORLEANS

ABOUT CHRISTINA

Christina is a WordPress designer and developer for bloggers who take their business seriously. She focuses on goals, strategy, and vision when building a blog so the blogger isn't just left with a pretty blog, but one that will actually help them grow too.

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[00:00:07.960] - Liz Stapleton, Host

Creating an effective homepage can help you reach your target audience and your blogging goals. Being able to find a balance between speaking to your readers' goals and your own is the key to success.

[00:00:16.480] - Liz

Hi, I'm Liz Stapleton, host of the Blogger Breakthrough Summit and welcome to the Blogger Breakthrough Podcast. In today's episode, I'm sharing homepage design tips from web designer Christina Orleans. Let's get to it!

[00:00:26.290] - Christina Orleans

We're going to be talking about how to create an effective home page for your blog. One that gets you results. So an effective homepage can really make a difference for your blog. It can get your readers to see you as a go to resource. It can build authority and trust in their minds towards you. It can increase your page views, which is the goal of most bloggers or a goal of most bloggers, and it can do that in a much more meaningful way as well than just getting somebody to click on a related post within a blog post.

[00:01:02.960] - Christina

We'll talk about why a little bit later, and it can also increase your subscribers and pretty dramatically too, because of all of the above. And because we can do it in a much more effective and direct way. So we're going to talk about how to do all those things. So before we get started, there's a couple of things that we need to be really clear on. First is both your goals for your blog and your readers' goals for your blog. They have goals when they're visiting you, just like you have goals when you're blogging in general.

[00:01:40.880] - Christina

So it's really important that we don't go about your whole blog or your home page with just your goals or just your readers' goals in mind. We really need to marry the two and serve both of them. If you only focus on your goals when you're blogging and when you are designing and creating your new home page, that self-service is really going to come through, even if it's subconscious to people, it's going to feel a little bit. "Do what I want." It's going to feel a little bit pushy. It's going to feel like they might be overwhelmed with ads.

[00:02:22.220] - Christina

Just the self service is going to come through again, even if it's subconscious, but it's not going to make a connection with people. And we need to marry that with the goals of your visitors, because if you didn't focus on your own goals. If you didn't have your goals in the mix here and you were only trying to accomplish the goals of your visitors, then you would have a giant subscriber base. You would have tons of people that trusted you, that saw you as the go to resource, that just came back all the time, recommended you to everybody, did all the marketing for you, but then you would not not be accomplishing your own goals with the blog.

[00:03:01.840] - Christina

You wouldn't be making any money. You wouldn't be achieving the things that you want to achieve with your blog. So it's really important to marry your goals with the goals of your visitors, and you're going to see...Once you start listing them down, which I'm going to walk you through a little bit in a second. But once you start getting clear on your goals and their goals, you're going to see a really cool thing is that they are intertwined and they overlap. When you have something that you need to share with them, with people that you really know and can really help people.

[00:03:37.670] - Christina

Well, that's why they're coming to you. They want to know they want to learn. And so there's really a huge overlap, and sometimes we can kind of separate them too much and just see "what I want, what they want," but they really are the same thing. Okay. So it's super important to get clear on your goals and their goals first and then understand how to intertwine them and serve both at the same time.

[00:04:03.940] - Christina

Okay. So now it's time to list those goals that we talked about, and we're not just going to list those goals.

[00:04:11.910] - Christina

We're going to find ways to achieve those goals on your home page. We're going to figure out what will support that goal. So you probably have a big overall goal for your blog. I hope so, you should. So if you have your overall goal, then you probably have smaller goals to help you reach that goal. So only you know what your specific goals are for your blog, and you're probably getting a lot. You're going to get a lot out of this whole summit about what goals you should set, new things you should be doing.

[00:04:48.630] - Christina

So keep that in mind as we're going through this. So some examples. Here one of your goals to support your overall goal for your blog is probably to increase subscribers. That a really important goal for all of us to have. Whether we're bloggers or business owners or both, growing our subscribers is huge. So how can you do that on your blog? Practically, this is just we don't want to over think it, but practically we do that by encouraging newsletter sign ups. Right? That's one thing that you will want to focus on on your home page.

[00:05:28.630] - Christina

Again. When people visit your blog for the first time, they almost always come to a blog post and not your home page. So you've already solved a problem on your blog post. You don't need to worry about solving a specific problem again on your home page. You need... This is the time when we need to think about our overall goals and their overall goals and get them combined. Like we said. So one of your overall goals is probably to grow your newsletter. And so on your home page, we're going to need to encourage newsletter sign ups.

[00:06:02.750] - Christina

Another thing you might have as a goal for your blog is making money directly, and for that we might need to drive traffic to your shop or your Resources page or your Work with Me page, or maybe an affiliate page. However, you're making money on your blog or however you want to make money on your blog. If this is a goal to make it directly, then we're going to want to add something that will help funnel visitors to drive them to those pages where they can support you and you can help them by providing them products or services.

[00:06:41.040] - Christina

Another thing that might be a goal is increasing page views and this is always helpful no matter what. Again, these are the basic goals that you probably have and how we can do that is to make your homepage really sticky, to really encourage people to not just skip through and say, "Well, I guess this blog doesn't have anything else for me." We want them to visit your home page and think that they could just stay there forever, like they can visit it every day and keep learning from you.

[00:07:15.640] - Christina

So we really want to make it sticky and in support of that, we want to decrease the ways that people can click away from it. And a big one here is social media, so we don't generally want to really promote our social media channels too much on our blogs. We, of course, want people to come over and follow us there as a way to support our blog. Another marketing avenue for us. But think about what happens when people visit and then they see your link to Instagram, and then they click on that link.

[00:07:50.250] - Christina

But then they're just an Instagram and they've forgotten all about you and they have followed a bunch of other people. That's not what we want to happen. We want to serve their needs first, so decrease the ways that encourage people to click away from your blog and forget about you. We can always move those down to the bottom. That's a little trick, because usually when somebody finally gets to the bottom of a blog, then they have pretty much learned what they need to learn. And then it's a great time for them.

[00:08:17.380] - Christina

They're ready to ease out of your blog or your website, and so it's a great time to lead them over to a social channel where they can hopefully follow and then get distracted by the rest of the social media.

[00:08:29.340] - Liz

Okay, hopefully, this episode has helped to give you a better idea of how to marry your goals with your readers' goals to create a more effective homepage. Be sure to join me next time when we dive into how you can use related posts to rank higher in search engines.