

Being a Good Guest – Blogger, That Is

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Whether or not you have your own blog, there are advantages to guest blogging. It's a relatively easy way to promote your name and brand. Here are some tips to help you make the most of the experience.

- Find out the host site's guidelines: content (e.g., will they send interview questions, ask you to blog about your book, or ask you to blog on a topic relevant to their audience?); length; format and technical specs; images (e.g., book covers, your photo, images related to the subject); and when they need to receive your post.
- Read recent posts to see the tone, subjects, the target audience, and which posts attract the most comments. Your post should be a good fit for the site and audience, and not repeat a recent topic.
- Write your post in a voice that reflects you as a person and as a writer. Be professional and relatively open. Share things like your writing process and your views on your topic, but be cautious about sharing too many personal details.
- Write so as to encourage readers to comment. Some posts end with a direct question and others are simply so intriguing they elicit comments.
- Know your goals. Most likely, you want readers to visit your website. So, whatever your topic, try to work in some information about your books and/or your writing process, and include the link to your website, social media, and personal blog, if you have one.
- Come up with a catchy title that's not too long.
- If the host site allows prizes, consider offering an autographed copy of one of your books, an e-book copy, or another appropriate give-away.
- Promote your guest blog through social media, your website, your newsletter, etc. Tell them the topic, give them the link, and encourage them to visit. It's good promotion for you and for the host site.
- On the day your blog is posted, visit frequently and respond to comments. It shows you value the comments and the opportunity to interact. It's also additional positive exposure for you.
- If you track website statistics that tell you when people visited and where they came from, then check your website stats after you've guest blogged. If you got an increase in traffic, that's one factor to consider when deciding whether to guest blog at that particular site again. However, it's only one factor. There's also the name (brand) recognition/repetition factor. Even if people don't visit your website this time, they may remember your name. Once they've seen your name several times, they may visit your site and/or buy your book.

- Incorporate guest blogging in your career plan. You should have a career plan that includes both writing and promotion. Guest blogging is one of numerous promotional tools. It's free but it's also time-consuming and often doesn't reach a huge audience. Use it effectively, but don't do spend so much time guest blogging that it distracts you from writing the next book or working on other promotional activities that might be more effective.

©Susan Lyons. International bestselling author Susan Lyons, who also writes as Susan Fox and Savanna Fox, writes "emotionally compelling, sexy contemporary romance" (Publishers Weekly). Visit her website at www.susanlyons.ca.