

10

MISTAKES

THAT BLOGGERS
MAKE AND HOW TO

FIX THEM



BROUGHT TO YOU BY



INTRO

Hi, my name is Bjork Ostrom.



That's me to the right. My better half, Lindsay, is to the left.

A few years ago we started a food blog called Pinch of Yum. Lindsay focuses on recipes, photography, and written content for the blog. I focus on monetizing the content, SEO, and WordPress maintenance.

Over the years we've built Pinch of Yum into a business that is our primary source of income. I'd love to say this happened because of super smart decisions we made, but it's mostly due to mistakes that we made (and then corrected).

I'll be sharing ten of those mistakes in this eBook. Mistakes alone aren't very helpful, so I'll also be sharing what we did to fix them. Hopefully it saves you some time in your journey to building a successful blog.

A QUICK NOTE ABOUT...

AFFILIATE LINKS

Some of the links in this eBook are affiliate links, which means that we get a commission if you decide to purchase the product after clicking on the link. All of the products I mention are from companies I know and trust.

FOOD BLOGGER PRO COURSES

I occasionally link to Food Blogger Pro courses. These courses are member only courses. At the time of writing this eBook there are over 3000 members on Food Blogger Pro going through the video tutorials and learning from each other in the community forum. It's an incredible group of generous, smart, and motivated bloggers.

Enrollment for new members is currently closed, but you can [sign up for the Food Blogger Pro waiting list on to get notified the next time we open for enrollment.](#)

THIS EBOOK

In regards to this eBook: feel free to forward it to a friend, print it out, or add it to multiple devices for your reading pleasure. It's yours to use and freely distribute. I'd just ask that you refrain from copying the content and reproducing it as your own.



“If you're not making mistakes, then you're not doing anything. I'm positive that a doer makes mistakes.”

- John Wooden -

MISTAKE #1: TINKERING

WHAT IT IS

Tinkering is when you make really small (some would say useless) changes to your blog's design or layout.

It's especially easy to do when you're first getting started. You could search for hours on how to change the color of a button, get your pictures to line up a certain way, or get a certain widget to work in your blog's sidebar.

WHY IT'S A MISTAKE

Tinkering keeps you from doing what matters most: creating content for your blog.

HOW TO FIX IT

Make a "tinkering rule." For example: the only time that you can tinker with your blog is after you write a blog post.

MISTAKE #2: NOT USING GOOGLE WEBMASTER TOOLS

WHAT IT IS

Google Webmaster Tools provides you with easy-to-understand reports about your blog's visibility in Google. It shows you what's working well along with the things that you could be improving.

WHY IT'S A MISTAKE

If you're not using Google Webmaster Tools then you won't know about potential problems related to your blog's search engine optimization (SEO).

HOW TO FIX IT

Sign up for [Google Webmaster Tools](#). Read the [webmaster material](#) that Google provides or watch the [Google Webmaster course](#) on Food Blogger Pro.

MISTAKE #3: USING WORDPRESS.COM INSTEAD OF WORDPRESS.ORG

WHAT IT IS

WordPress.com is a really easy way to create a blog, but it has numerous restrictions. WordPress.org is a little bit more difficult to setup, but it offers much more flexibility.

WHY IT'S A MISTAKE

WordPress.com has restrictions on themes, plugins, and advertising. It's easier to get up and running, but it can create issues if you're hoping to create an income from your blog.

HOW TO FIX IT

When starting your blog be sure to set it up as a self-hosted WordPress.org blog. The [Setting up your Food Blog](#) course on Food Blogger Pro explains how to do this. WordPress offers some [helpful tips](#) as well.

[Read this](#) article if you're currently running a blog on WordPress.com and you'd like to switch to a self-hosted WordPress.org.

MISTAKE #4: NOT BUILDING AN EMAIL LIST

WHAT IT IS

An email list is a list of people that have signed up to receive emails from you. An email list is different than people “subscribing” to your blog via RSS.

WHY IT'S A MISTAKE

Not having an email list means missing out on one of the easiest (and efficient) ways to communicate with your followers. An email list allows you to extend the conversation beyond your blog and build trust. Trust is the most valuable currency in online business.

HOW TO FIX IT

Sign up for an email marketing service like [MailChimp](#), [AWeber](#), or [ActiveCampaign](#).

It's helpful to have an incentive to encourage people to sign up for your email list. An example is the eBook that you're reading right now.

You should also build out an autoresponder series. An autoresponder series automatically sends pre-written emails to people after they sign up. These emails should be helpful emails, not marketing emails.

MISTAKE #5: USING ALT ATTRIBUTES FOR PINTEREST

WHAT IT IS

For years, we were putting Pinterest descriptions in our image alt text field. The alt attribute is a bit of HTML code that is available when you insert an image into a blog post, and it's meant to describe what your image is about to search engines and people using screen readers. WordPress has an area where you can enter in the alt attribute text when you're uploading an image.

WHY IT'S A MISTAKE

An alt attribute is important to optimize your image for SEO and screen readers, so it should describe what is shown in an image. Pinterest descriptions, which should describe the recipe as a whole, should go in the data-pin-description field.

HOW TO FIX IT

Always add an alt attribute before inserting an image into a blog. If you take a look at the Text view of the page, you can add a description just for Pinterest to your image tags. Here's what that looks like:

```
data-pin-description="Your awesome Pinterest description goes here!"
```

If you would rather add Pinterest descriptions alongside your alt text right in the media adder, our sister site WP Tasty has a plugin called [Tasty Pins](#) that lets you do just that. Pinch of Yum uses Tasty Pins to optimize images for SEO, screen readers, and Pinterest. You can also learn more about [alt attributes](#) and the [data-pin-description field](#).



MISTAKE #6: HIDING BEHIND YOUR BLOG

WHAT IT IS

Hiding behind your blog means that you're publishing content that doesn't contain any personal stories or details about you as an individual.

WHY IT'S A MISTAKE

Holding back personal information about yourself makes it hard for people to get to know you. If people don't get to know you then they won't want to follow you.

HOW TO FIX IT

Come out from hiding.

Post pictures of yourself.

Tell personal stories.

Ask questions.

Publish a video.

Etc, etc...

MISTAKE #7: NOT USING AFFILIATE LINKS

WHAT IT IS

Affiliate marketing is a type of advertising where you (the blogger) get a commission if someone clicks on a link from your blog and then purchases the product you were linking to.

WHY IT'S A MISTAKE

Chances are that you're already talking about products or services in your blog posts. If you're not using affiliate links then you're missing out on a source of revenue.

HOW TO FIX IT

The easiest way to start as an affiliate is to sign up for the [Amazon Associate program](#). After signing up you'll be able to add affiliate links that point to different products on [amazon.com](#). If someone purchases that product after clicking on your link then you get a percentage of the sale.

We also have affiliate programs for each of the brands we've created:

- [Food Blogger Pro Affiliate Program](#)
- [Nutrifax Affiliate Program](#)
- [WP Tasty Affiliate Program](#)



MISTAKE #8: NOT INSTALLING A RECIPE PLUGIN

WHAT IT IS

Recipe plugins display recipes on a blog in an easy-to-understand way with pre-built formatting, necessary data markup, recipe ratings, and more.

WHY IT'S A MISTAKE

Not only do recipe plugins make the process of publishing recipes online easier, they mark up your recipes in special ways so that they're understood by search engines like Google and Pinterest.

HOW TO FIX IT

Install a recipe plugin like [Tasty Recipes](#) or [WP Recipe Maker](#).

Tasty Recipes is the plugin that we built over on our sister site, WP Tasty, and it comes equipped with rock-solid SEO, import functionality, recipe ratings, flexible formatting, unlimited support, and more.

Free options like WP Recipe Maker are great for those who aren't ready to commit to a premium plugin.

MISTAKE #9: GIVING UP TOO EARLY

WHAT IT IS

Giving up on your blog before giving it enough time to be really “become something.”

WHY IT'S A MISTAKE

Talented and capable people never reach their full potential because they interpret their initial slow start to a lack of ability or skill. Building a blog (or a business) doesn't happen quickly. It takes months and months (and years and years).

HOW TO FIX IT

Lean into the things that you really love about building a blog and try and do those things as much as possible. Do you hate email but love taking pictures? Spend less time doing email and more time doing photography.

The only way you'll be able to sustain building a blog is if you love the process and enjoy doing it without getting anything in return. If you stick with it long enough (and continue to improve...see next page) you'll find success, but the only way to be able to do it for a long time is if you really enjoy the process.

MISTAKE #10: REPEATING WITHOUT IMPROVING

WHAT IT IS

Doing the same thing over and over but not getting any better at it.

WHY IT'S A MISTAKE

Doing the same thing over and over won't get you anywhere. Doing the same thing over and over and continually getting better at will skyrocket your chances of success.

HOW TO FIX IT

This one probably isn't a problem for you. How do I know that? Because you're reading this eBook. Keep doing what you're already doing!

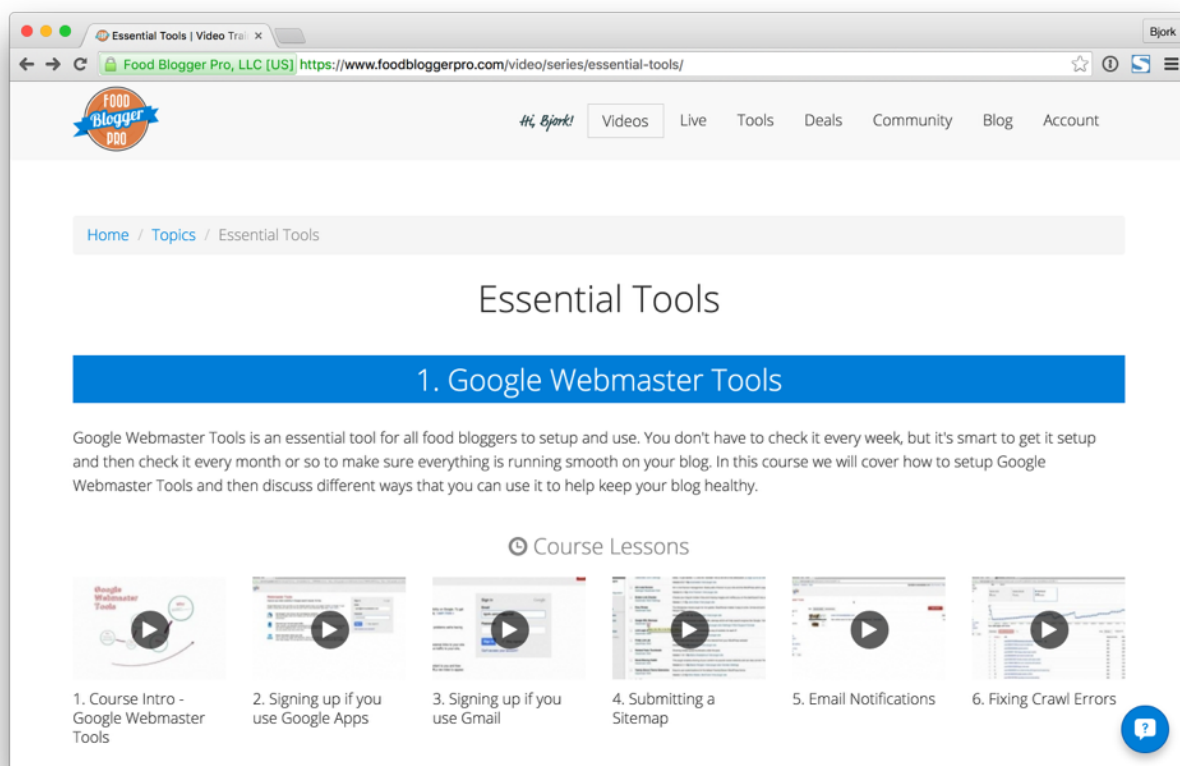
Continue to dedicate a portion of your day to education, even if it's only 15 minutes a day.

Need an idea for a place to learn more? Keep reading... :-)

FOOD BLOGGER PRO

[Food Blogger Pro](#) is a blog training and tutorial site that Lindsay and I run. At the time that I published this eBook there were over 2000 members working through the 300 training videos.

The site covers everything from WordPress to blog monetization to SEO to photography. The videos have a slant towards food bloggers, but there are bloggers from all different niches that are part of the community.



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WHAT'S NEXT?

CONTINUED TIPS

Remember point #4 about continuing to stay in touch with people and provide value with an email list? That's what'll happen next for you. Every week you'll be getting a tip from me that are similar to the tips in this eBook. Short, concise, and (hopefully) helpful. You can unsubscribe from these emails at anytime, but I think you'll find them helpful.

ANOTHER FREE EBOOK

We have another free eBook with advice from over 30 full-time food bloggers. It's called [The #1 Thing: What 30 top food bloggers are focusing on in the coming year.](#)

BE BOLD

Go forth and do! Be bold in the actions you take. Be okay making mistakes knowing that these mistakes will make you (and your blog) better.



Bjork Ostrom

