



# MONETIZE YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA

HOW TO BECOME A HASHTAG ENTREPRENEUR

By Heather Henderson | Contributor

Imagine being able to quit your boring office job because you're making a ton of money just from posting on social media. It might sound like a fantasy, but many people make a good living by monetizing their online presence. It takes a bit of dedication to cultivate your following and build your personal brand, but you don't need to be a Kardashian to do it.

The easiest platform to monetize is Instagram. You'll need to have at least 1,000 followers to start with, and the more you have the more money you can make. Getting so many followers can be a bit of a feat on its own, but if you consistently post good pictures with relevant hashtags they'll find you. Engaging with the community through comments can also go a long way toward building your army of loyal followers. Once you've managed to fulfill your lifelong dream of internet popularity, you can start reaching out to brands to get their attention.

Tag the brands you love in your pictures, and send their social media team a message expressing your interest in becoming a brand ambassador. If you have enough of a following, they'll likely be willing to pay you to post a photo featuring one of their products, and perhaps even gift you some free swag. Depending on the brand and your number of followers, they might pay you

anywhere from \$10 to \$10,000 for one post. Once you're well-established as an influencer, you'll have companies knocking on your door. From there, you can charge your own set rates for sponsored posts.

If you're not an Instagram kind of person, this works just as well for personal blogs. If you have the time and patience to start your own blog, it can be a fantastic resource for earning money. You can become a brand ambassador using the same Instagram method and make money through sponsored blog posts. You can also invite companies to put advertisements on your page, or just use the basic Google AdSense banners that will pay you a few cents for every click. The many options for monetizing your blog means it has the potential to be a lot more lucrative than Instagram...if you put in the work.

One of the simplest ways to make a few bucks with your blog is to utilize affiliate links. You can easily join an affiliate program through a website like Amazon or RewardStyle and use special referral links in your posts so readers can click through to buy whatever items you mention. After someone makes a purchase through your link, you'll earn a small percentage of what they paid. If you have thousands of people reading your blog and following your lead, that money can really add up.

If you're dying to work for yourself, but don't have any ideas for brilliant inventions or business plans to pursue, becoming a full-time blogger or Instagram personality can be a legitimate career choice. Many people have been able to quit their day jobs and earn a significant income this way. It takes a lot of patience and a little creativity. You won't be a social media sensation overnight, especially if your pictures or blog posts are boring. But for tech-savvy millennials, virtual entrepreneurship is absolutely within your reach.