



How to Use Brand Journalism to Make \$1,500 With One Medium Post

Can you still make money on Medium without curation or Stripe?



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May 5 · 7 min read ★

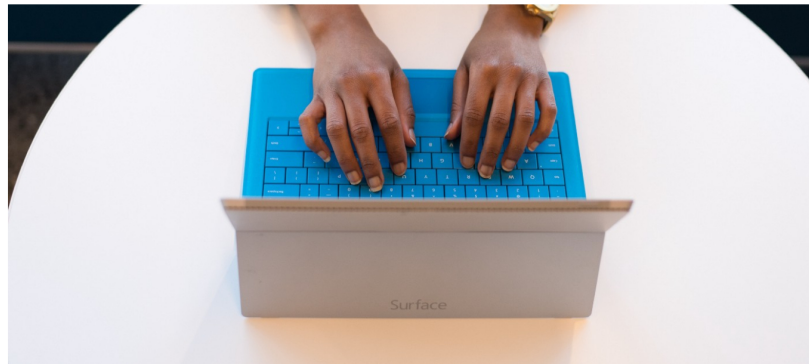


Photo by [Christina Morillo](#) from [Pexels](#)

What if you could make a guaranteed \$1,500 per Medium post without relying on curation, Stripe, or even Medium's own Partner Program? *

This was the question I set out to answer when Arlie Peyton, a writer on Medium, emailed me to say he'd accomplished exactly that — not only that but he also routinely made \$6–8k per month with just a handful of posts. *

To me, it seemed too good to be true. On my best month on Medium, I wrote dozens of stories and earned just under \$2,000. But enough lingering curiosity led me to email him back to find out what his secret was.

[I interviewed him for my YouTube channel](#), but I also went a step further and actually tried to follow in his footsteps. These are my results so far.

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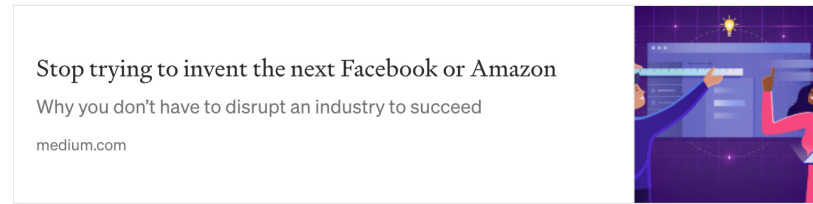
How Can You Make \$1,500 per Medium Post?

The short answer is brand journalism.

Peyton charges his clients \$1,500 to write a story about them. Not their

product, not their service, not their website, but a story about them that is valuable for others.

Take a look at Jotform's [Aytekin Tank](#) to see a perfect example of what brand journalism looks like.



This story is not an ad or a promotion. It's an insightful, well-researched, fascinating look at how you don't need to disrupt industries to be successful. It also happens to talk about his product and links to his website.

This is the service Peyton provides to his clients. As a bonus, because he's well-versed in SEO, he ensures that if the article makes it to the front page on Google for certain search terms within a certain time frame, he gets a bonus.

That's the secret: you don't sell. You tell a story. The primary purpose of the story is not to promote a brand or product, but rather to provide something of value to the reader *that isn't* the brand or product — it could be a lesson in success, a list of tools, a heartwarming story, or anything else. *

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Medium is a great place to do this thanks to its high domain authority. This means that you're more likely to rank on Google than if you used Wordpress, for example.

Can Anyone Do This?

When I hear claims to fame like that, part of me wonders how much is skill and how much is plain old luck. The biggest Instagrammers, YouTubers, and even Medium writers are often those who happened to hop on the wagon the soonest, or had connections, or got a big break.

Even after speaking to Peyton and being fully convinced that he can make what he does work for him, I was skeptical. Can anyone do this? What would it take? How long would it take?

I challenged him to teach me to do what he does as a way to prove that anyone can. I don't know the first thing about SEO or brand journalism, but I can write. In other words, I'm the perfect test subject.

I set out to create a new Medium account from scratch, wrote three stories, * making sure to follow Medium's no-spam rules including disclosing if any of the posts were paid. Then, I sat back to see if I could get results. Once I began ranking on Google, then I could try to pitch actual potential clients.

For each story, Peyton and I worked together to pick a key phrase to track on Google. I wrote the story, contacted the brand I was writing about, and

applied to new publications, all to try to make my story successful.

Here's what I learned.

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1. There Are a Lot of Tools You Need to Even Get Started

For an SEO novice like myself, it took a while just to get acquainted with all the tools.

First, it's absolutely imperative to research your keywords of choice. Let's say I want to write about the "best cat toys." First, I have to see how hard it is to rank for that keyword. You can use [Ahrefs](#), [SEMrush](#), or [Ubersuggest](#). Then, I have to see how hard it would be to topple the results currently on the front page of Google for the search term. Using the [Moz](#) toolbar, you can quickly see the post authority and the domain authority — the higher they are, the harder they are to outrank.

This isn't even going into the depth of analysis Peyton did for me, but it was enough to begin with.

Next, you have to let Google know you've written the post with a tool like [Pingler](#). Google will find it organically given enough time, but Pingler speeds that up.

Finally, you have to know how to track it. You can google your keyword and page through until you find it, but by using something like [What's My Serp](#), you can get the result quickly.

You should also use a shortening link, with [bitly](#), for example, to track the number of clicks you're able to provide for your ultimate client (e.g. tracking how many people I was able to send to [bestcattotoys.com](#)) and the post itself. You can send the shortened version of the post to your client for them to send out in their newsletter, social media, and more.

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2. You're Writing for Power-Linkers

So you've written the story with a focus on SEO. Great! You're not done though.

It's actually not enough to write a great post and crush SEO. It's not enough to write a story that will make a CEO weep.

When you do brand journalism, you write first for the power linkers. You want to write a story so persuasive, so authoritative, so knowledgeable, that the influential people in the field will link back to it.

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This accomplishes three things.

- First, it increases your likelihood of ranking. When websites, like Huffpost, for example, link back to your story, it increases its chance of ranking higher on Google.
- Secondly, power linkers have access to an audience of people who care intimately about whatever you just wrote about, which makes them a great tool to prove to the brand that you bring value.
- Thirdly, the more people who read your post, the more money you'll make through the Medium Partner Program.

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3. Writing Is Only 20% of the Work

At this point, I had written a post that hit the SEO guidelines to Peyton's satisfaction. It was authoritative enough that power linkers would want to refer back to it. And it was something that could potentially drive traffic to my imaginary client, without being a promotion or ad.

I learned, a little bit to my chagrin, that being good at writing is only the first step.

Once I'd written the story and done all the tracking and SEO legwork, the real challenge began: marketing myself and my work.

For each of the three posts, I contacted the brands I'd written about. I asked them to share the post — on their website, social media, newsletters, or wherever. I forced myself to educate them on their funnels, letting them know when to use my link and their options for social media marketing.

Companies that will benefit the most from your brand journalism are those that don't know a lot about SEO, advertising metrics, and basic sales funnels. The more of that you can provide, the more competitive you'll be in the brand journalism market.

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4. Brand Journalism Success Is Not the Same as Medium Success

On Medium, it's all about publications, curations, titles, and headlines.

Brand journalism's priorities and metrics for success are different. For example, two out of the three stories I wrote were curated. However, the one that wasn't curated has had the most traffic from Google so far.

I tried hard to get into publications that would boost my reads. When I got into the publication I was aiming for, they changed the title to be more Medium-friendly, but less SEO-friendly.

Brand journalism and Medium both have a lot in common — the best posts in both cases are ad-free, bring value to the reader, and work best when you do more than just write good stories, going above and beyond into the

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do more than just write good stories, going above and beyond into the marketing sphere. But at the end of the day, they're written for completely different audiences.

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In summary

After learning about how brand journalism earned Peyton \$1,500 minimum per post, I wanted to find out if anyone — even an SEO novice who hates marketing herself — could do it.

I learned that there are a lot of tools you need to help yourself succeed and track your metrics, that your audience is this group called “power linkers,” and that even once you’ve written the perfect post, your work is only 20% done.

Most importantly, I learned that learning how to be successful on Medium doesn't translate to knowing how to be successful with brand journalism.

My posts have begun to rank and are slowly moving up the track. My next steps are pitching clients using my results as proof that what I do works.


In the end, I can safely conclude that if you love writing, aren't afraid to jump out of your comfort zone, and are willing to do the work, you can use brand journalism to make \$1,500 per post on Medium.

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1.7K claps



12 responses



WRITTEN BY

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