

So you want to be a
Giant Squid?

This ebook was designed to help you join the esteemed ranks of the Giant Squid! What's a Giant Squid you ask? Ah...you are about to find out...and you will not be disappointed!

by the Giant Squid Organizers
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What exactly is a Giant Squid?

A Giant Squid is a Lensmaster who has created at least 50 quality lenses and has been accepted into the Giant Squid Program by Squidoo HQ. A Top 100 Giant Squid has created at least 100 quality lenses.

Sounds easy right?

Well, Yes and No...

Giant Squids pride themselves on being the best of the best. We are proud to be included in such an awesome group of Lensmasters. In order to help you join this superb group of people we have put together what we feel are the most important tips for becoming a Giant Squid...so here goes!

Tip #1 - Ask yourself...Why Squidoo?

When you work for a “Bricks & Mortar” company you do a little research. You find out what the place makes, who they do business with, who runs the joint. Squidoo has a fascinating history and unbelievably cool people at the helm. Find our Who’s Who by visiting: <http://www.squidoo.com/pages/about>

Once you’ve done your homework you’ll have a little better idea of what Squidoo is all about. If you’re as impressed as we were, you’re ready to move on to Tip #2...

Tip #2 - Find Yourself

Decide what Squidoo can do for you. No, this isn’t some deep philosophical journey. What this means is that you need to find out why you have decided to become a Lensmaster. There’s no wrong answer, but figuring out your purpose will help you set realistic goals and achieve them. Find your purpose and your passion and you will succeed as a Giant Squid!

Tip #3 - Make a List

Make a list of reasons why you want to be a Lensmaster and a Giant Squid. The possibilities are endless but making a list helps you focus. Here's a sample list:

1. Create an income for myself.
2. Create lenses that reflect my values and interests.
3. Use my writing skills to make a positive contribution to Squidoo.
4. Promote my Zazzle Gallery.
5. Have fun.

This list is simple but provides a plan. Your list might include promoting your business, reviewing movies & books, showcasing a hobby, promoting your favorite charity, creating an online resume, documenting your travels, giving advice, earning money for a new bowling ball, vacation, new car, new house, paying for college or impressing your date, your boss or your friends' mother.

Tip #4 - Write What You Know

Knowing what you're doing is a good thing, and don't let anyone tell you otherwise. For instance, would you try and repair your furnace, jump Evel Knievel style over a large ravine or fly a plane without any experience? Heck no! You'd crash and burn. Of course the good news is that creating lenses is a lot safer, but knowledge will still get you far.

Some of Squidoo's most successful Giant Squids have created lenses about subjects that they know. Check out <http://www.squidoo.com/fairywings> by relache. She turned her expertise in costume design into many successful lenses. Lensmaster Christene took her experience as an http://www.squidoo.com/only_children to create a Top 100 lens. So what do you know? Are you an expert quilter, a SCUBA diver, an

engineer, an expert in politics or pop culture? Write about it!

Tip #5 - Find Your Passion

Finding your passion and expanding on it goes a long way towards creating a good amount of good quality lenses. What is your favorite thing to talk about? What excites you? What do you already know a lot about? What are you interested in learning?

When you've chosen to make a lens on a topic that you're passionate about, your readers will be able to see your enthusiasm shining through on your lens and will want to read more. Your interest in the subject will ignite theirs and before you know it you'll have a following of faithful readers.

Your passion becomes your niche and in turn you become the expert of your favorite subject. This gives you lots of opportunities to break the topic down into smaller bite sized pieces, with each of these pieces becoming a new lens on its own. Keep each lens as specific as possible and link each lens of a niche to the others. This can be done either by lensrolling them to each other or by using the featured lens module. Your readers can then easily find all of your topically related lenses

Once you find your passion and start making lenses about it, the writing will flow quickly, your product recommendations will come naturally, and before you know it you'll have easily created 50 fabulous lenses.

To get a clearer picture of how this works take a look at each of these niche lenses:

<http://www.squidoo.com/BirthdayCupcakes>

<http://www.squidoo.com/Easter-Cupcakes>

<http://www.squidoo.com/ChristmasCupcakes>

As you can see, the main topic (the passionate core) of each of these lenses is creative cupcake ideas but each lens is unique and can stand on its own.

Tip #6 - Image Is Everything

Of all of the things that you must have in each and every one of your lenses - one of the most important is images. Use good, contextually relevant images or pictures to illustrate your point, to engage and entertain your reader, and to keep the flow of your lens moving. Of all the images on your lens, quite possibly the most important one is the image you upload into your Introduction module. This image sets the initial tone for your entire lens. If your lens is featured somewhere (on another lens, or in a group), the image is going to be what convinces a reader to click on to yours as opposed to the one above it. And, as long as we are talking images, don't forget to put an image or picture into your lensmaster bio. It gives you personality and credibility, especially amongst other lensmasters.

Tip #7 - Quality vs. Quantity Lens

This question has come up many times in the <http://www.squidu.com/forum/index.php>. This is a tough question to answer because quality is often times in the eye-of-the-beholder. Quality can mean different things to different people. Here's what we feel makes a quality lens:

1. **Choose your topic and stick to it.** If you are building a lens about Lemonade don't add a module promoting your cat (unless of course he drinks lemonade). This <http://www.squidoo.com/make-lemonade> lens from Euryale is a perfect example of a lens that sticks to the point.
2. **Stay organized.** Just like your closet a lens needs to have some order, so do your lenses. A Table of Contents goes at the top. A Guestbook is best at the end of your lens. Group products by subject... Books, CD's, DVD's, etc. Your lens should read like a well organized how-to book.
3. **Long doesn't always = quality.** Some of the best lenses get right to the point. You have to include

quality content but don't go overboard. People are looking for targeted, relevant content. Don't overwhelm your reader with too much information. You're better off creating a series of lenses and linking them together.

4. **Utilize Modules.** Squidoo has a ton of cool modules to make your lens look professional. Take advantage of the Poll Module, Duel Module, Black Box, Sticky Note, Featured Lens, Polaroid, etc.
5. **Give your readers a reason to come back.** If they like it, chances are they will mark it as a favorite. And, if you can get people to add your lens as a favorite you're definitely on the road to success. Give people a reason to visit you again. Once you have "fans", use <http://www.squidoo.com/Squidcasting> to announce updates to your lenses.

The other side of the Quantity v. Quality debate is, of course, "Quantity". **Quantity** comes with practice. Once you master creating a successful lens you will be able to build lenses faster thus increasing your quantity. Can you have too many lenses? Can you create too many lenses at once? No one can answer that but you. But what you need to remember while you are creating your lenses is that no matter how many you have, or how well one (or two or twenty) of your lenses performs - you are still the owner of your worst-ranked lens. And, there is a possibility that someone will only see that one and base their opinion on you, as a Lensmaster, on that one low ranked lens. How would that make you feel? If you can say that you are as proud of your lowest ranking lens as you are of your top ranking lens, then you can say you are on the right track.

Tip #8 - Diversity Within Squidoo

Just as you probably do not want to eat the same thing for dinner every night of every week of every month (unless it's Thai fried rice, of course), you also can get bored with things you create and lose interest.

You never have to worry about this happening at Squidoo. We have so many wonderful tools available to us in addition to the regular lens. Squidoo uses what's called co-brands or "Front Doors" to create niche

lenses. Many of these co-brands include easy-to-use templates which are great for beginners to get their feet wet. Below is a list of all the co-brands that are available to Lensmasters:

Squidoo Front Doors	Used for...
SquidBids	Promoting your eBay Auctions.
SquidBoo	Creating cool spooky Halloween lenses.
SquidFlix	Reviewing your favorite movies.
SquidKnol	Build your own entry in the world's database of information.
SquidLit	Review a book.
SquidVids	Create your own TV Channel.
SquidWho	Make a page about someone famous, including yourself.
SquidZipper	Just for Realtors®! ...Be the Mayor of your Zip Code.
The Ever Project	Create the Best, Funkiest, Coolest, Oddest Lens EVER!
Hey MonkeyBrain	Pick A Fight...This is where smart people go to argue!

Understand that it is up to you to use each co-brand correctly. You shouldn't use a SquidWho to talk about airplanes, and a SquidBOO! is not the place to highlight that cool pattern to crochet an Easter Basket. But you can often find great inspiration just surfing around and visiting the home page of each co-brand and seeing what has been made. For additional reference, you can also check out this lens on Squidoo Co-Brands or Front Doors. <http://www.squidoo.com/SquidooCoBranding>

Tip #9 - Patience Is A Virtue

All of four of us have been Lensmasters for well over a year, in most cases longer. In those months we learned a lot about making lenses. We have read about how to make a lens, reviewed the Top 100 lenses and gotten involved on SquidU. We became students of Squidoo and it worked. We gathered the knowledge and experience it took to become successful Giant Squids.

Right now the Giant Squid Program is adding new people on a monthly basis. You might be tempted to stay up for 3 weeks 24/7 creating your 50 lenses, or 100 lenses to be a Top 100 Giant Squid. This is probably not the best idea unless you enjoy sleep deprivation! The Giant Squid program will be there when you're ready. So slow down, take a deep breath and spend a little time creating quality lenses. Your brain will thank you!

Tip #10 - Don't Give Up

Being a Lensmaster can be a challenging job. Most people have other responsibilities and life often times gets in the way of lens making. In this lens <http://www.squidoo.com/SquidooTipsFromAGiantSquid> by bdkz, she tells this story:

"If you truly believe you have a good lens keep going. I myself almost gave up back in April of 2007. I had made 30 lenses and about \$5.00. I was getting discouraged. Then in May my <http://www.squidoo.com/starwarssaga> lens got picked as "Lens of the Day". I was thrilled! I got more inspired and started improving my old lenses and started making new ones. I found my niche (everything Pop Culture) and went full speed ahead. By August 2007 my payday was \$97.80. I have since grown my niche to include How-to lenses like <http://www.squidoo.com/zazzle101>, a lens which has now been on the Top 100 list for over 100 days. When I first started with Squidoo I never would have imagined getting where I am now, I never gave up!"

If being a Giant Squid is something that you want to achieve, don't give up.

Tip #11 - Get A Little Help From Your Friends

If you hit a road block, need some inspiration, a little advice or even a fun story head on over to the <http://squidu.com/forum/index.php>. There are plenty of people that are more than willing to help you out. Squidoo is a community of wonderful people that want to see you succeed so never be afraid to ask for a little help!

Tip #12 - You Scratch My Back, I'll Scratch Yours

Squidoo set out to prove that you can make money while giving money to charity, too. Giant Squids take that principle one step further: you really can help yourself by helping others. How? When you welcome a newcomer, give helpful feedback, or recommend another person's lens, you're establishing your online reputation. That translates to clicks on your profile, the stepping-stone to your work. More abstractly, you're encouraging better quality lenses, setting a good example and raising Squidoo's clout, which is good for all of us.

Be genuine, though, not phony! You've probably discovered the difference on your guestbooks: there are the folks who read your lens and point you to a great resource you might want to link to, and then there's the flyby, "Cool lens! I'm sure you'll find my lens [on a completely unrelated subject] very useful: <link>!

Or, to borrow Megan's terms from the Squidblog <http://blogs.squidoo.com/squidblog/?p=204>, Giant Squids have learned to be Catchers as well as Throwers.

Tip #13 - Get Profiled

A profile is a “Must Have” for all Lensmaster’s but especially for Giant Squids. A profile tells people who you are and what you’re all about!

If you don’t have a profile go to your Dashboard and Click on the “My Profile” Tab. You can add a little blurb about yourself where it says “Default Bio”. Also add an image or logo. It doesn’t have to be your photo but add something fun...a logo, your cat or even George Washington!

While you’re there, change your “Allow Contact” setting to “On”. This way people can contact you and let you know what awesome lenses you have!

Tip #14 - Take some advice from Thomas Edison

“Genius is 1% inspiration, 99% perspiration”...now that’s some good advice! Edison was a pioneer for inventing the Phonograph. Seth Godin is a pioneer for “inventing” Squidoo. You can be a pioneer for “inventing” a lens.

Squidoo allows people to build a world of creativity, knowledge and fun. It’s a community that you will be proud to be a part of and a journey that will be full of many surprises. Becoming a Giant Squid is just the icing on the cake. So get inspired and start building those lenses! Before you know it you’ll have your 50 quality lenses and be able to swim with the Giant Squids...and you get a cool badge to boot!

Tip #15 - Network, Network, Network

Use <http://digg.com/>, <http://www.facebook.com/>, <http://www.gather.com/>, <http://www.linkedin.com/>, <http://www.myspace.com/>, and <http://www.squidoo.com/UseTwitter> to educate, inform, enlighten and amuse your audience. Just be careful not to go overboard and spam anyone. Here's a great post <http://www.squidu.com/blog/> about social networking on the SquidU Review from jeffwend.

Squidoo also has a really neat tool called SquidCasting <http://blogs.squidoo.com/squidblog/?p=178> that allows you to send your fans a little snippet about a new lens, updated lens, sale, movie premier, book release, election results...you get the picture!

Another way to network is Blogging. A blog provides you with free traffic and more visitors to your lenses. Squidoo Community Organizer Kimberly Dawn Wells talks more about this in Blogging about your lenses is da bomb <http://blogs.squidoo.com/squidblog/?p=206>!

So go out and introduce yourself and your lenses to the world!

Bonus Tip - Learn From Experienced Lensmasters!

The best place to learn is from established Lensmasters. For some information and inspiration on becoming a Giant Squid check out these cool lenses created by Giant Squids!

<http://www.squidoo.com/GiantSquids> by MeganCasey

<http://www.squidoo.com/topfreethings> by sethgodin

<http://www.squidoo.com/dosquidoo> by KimberlyDawnWells

<http://www.squidoo.com/SquidooTipsFromAGiantSquid> by bdkz

<http://www.squidoo.com/squid-angel-blessing> by KimGiancaterino

http://www.squidoo.com/first_lens by Margaret_Schaut
<http://www.squidoo.com/squid-angel> by SemperFidelis
<http://www.squidoo.com/jaguarjuliegiantsquid> by JaguarJulie
<http://www.squidoo.com/basichtml> by N376
<http://www.squidoo.com/squidconomy> by Loyalis
http://www.squidoo.com/50_Squidoo_How_To by bdkz
<http://www.squidoo.com/NewbieGuidetoSquidoo> by rms
<http://www.squidoo.com/squidoo-somebody> by Susan52
<http://www.squidoo.com/workathomewithsquidoo> by Janet21
<http://www.squidoo.com/squidtips> by Greekgeek