

2016 Suburban Steader Recap

Suburban Steader had a hell of a 2016. I want to spend a little time going through what changes the site went through, some of our successes, some of our failures and a bit about what the future holds. Overall, 2016 was a good year for the site and, more importantly, for the Suburban Steader Homestead and family.

2016 Stats and Milestones

First things first, let's take a look at some of the stats from 2016 and compare them to 2015. This post is going live on December 29th so these numbers are fairly accurate for the whole year.

Visitors 2015: 59,953 2016: 77,812 (+29.8%)	Sessions 2015: 68,299 2016: 87,968 (+28.8%)	Page Views 2015: 144,360 2016: 165,792 (+14.8%)
Twitter Followers 2015: 641 2016: 853 (+33.1%)	Facebook Fans 2015: 4,071 2016: 4,434 (+8.9%)	Pinterest Followers 2015: 2,115 2016: 2,521 (+19.2%)
YouTube Subscribers 2015: 29 2016: 51 (+75.9%)	Instagram Followers 2015: 0 2016: 88	

As you can see, Suburban Steader saw growth on all fronts. I'm most happy with the social media growth that's occurred.

Twitter, YouTube and Pinterest are all organic growth – I've done very little to grow Suburban Steaders followings in those places.

Facebook, while being the smallest percentage growth, has been where I've spent most of my time growing the audience (I did add 400 followers). The reason for this is that Facebook, far and away, is the most productive social media driver to the website.

Instagram is a new social media account I took on this year and, while there's a fairly small following, it's an active following. I don't have any stats, but I definitely get more interaction with Instagram posts than any other.

The site, while the numbers are up fairly well, is nowhere near where I want it to be and that has most everything to do with my lack of consistency posting. In fact, it's embarrassing to admit that I published twenty-six (26) posts in 2015 and only fourteen (14) in 2016.

Most importantly, however, is that 2016 was the first year that Suburban Steader was self-supporting. The site didn't make a lot of money, but it did make enough to cover all the costs associated with running a blog. And, for that, I'm quite thankful.

What To Expect In 2017

People spend a lot of time reflecting on the year gone by and making grand plans for the year to come this time of year. I suppose I'm not different. I had mixed emotions on 2016 – Suburban Steader saw better numbers across the board, but site upkeep and product creation was down.

Much like everyone else, I view 2017 as a new slate and have some plans to grow the site and extend the brand a bit

Blog Goals

Personalize The Blog

I feel like the blog is losing its voice, so to speak, and want to fix that. I think bringing more of my personality back to it will help elevate the quality of the writing and bring a more centered voice to the site. The other thing I'm going to concentrate on with regard to this topic is to use "I" more and "we" less. This site is not a conglomerate of people. It's one guy busting his butt to make it all work and I think it's time I own that fact!

Post Weekly

I've been thinking a lot about how to accomplish this goal and believe I've hit on a plan. 2017 will be the year of the Suburban Steader Homestead Review. I'll write a weekly piece about the goings on at the Suburban Steader Homestead. Not only will this approach cause me to publish weekly, but it will also chronicle a year in the life of a suburban homesteader. Articles in addition to this update will be published as appropriate. The goal will be one article and one update per week, but I'm not going to promise a standalone article per week right now.

Social Media Goals



Facebook

Facebook has been on a slow, steady climb. I've had about 10% growth in 2016 and, while that's not bad, I'd like to see more. I'd be ecstatic if I broke into 10,000 followers next year (yes, that's over 125% growth) but I realize the chances of that are slim. I do think that keeping my nose to the grindstone and pumping out content on a regular basis will

help grow the site organically, however.



Twitter

I've never been a big Twitter user and any growth I've experienced has been completely haphazard and organic. I will continue this approach as I'm not seeing a lot of engagement on this outlet. Essentially, that means that I'll keep sharing on this platform on a daily basis but there probably won't be a lot of interaction past that.



Google+

Google+ has shown to be almost a waste of time. If not for the fact that I can simultaneously post to Google+ and Twitter, I'd probably not post there at all. Unless something changes on this platform, I won't be spending a lot of my time there. Much like Twitter, that means that I'll keep sharing on this platform on a daily basis but there probably won't be a lot of interaction past that.



YouTube

YouTube is one of my two main goals in 2017 when it comes to social media. I will not commit to a regularly scheduled video but I will say that I intend on posting more videos in 2017 than I've ever posted before. I believe the engagement is worth it and I also like the fact that it's a creative process – scripting, filming, editing and producing. Definite

skill sets that I want to gain and also a way for my viewers and followers to gain knowledge.



Pinterest

I have a love-hate infatuation with Pinterest. When I need something, it's a great resource, but it's not a place I like to spend a lot of time. I find the mobile interface clunky and personally prefer Instagram and YouTube to it. I'll continue to post there when a blog post goes up and I'll also post when the mood strikes. The traffic bump *may* be enough to make me entertain more time on the platform.



Instagram

Instagram – my social media drug of choice lately. I love the pictures you can find and the speed of interaction is just terrific. I can honestly say that if I had to pick just one social media platform to use going forward, it would be Instagram. And, to that end, I need to be more of contributor and not just a lurker. Instagram participation will increase in 2017 – the end goal will be for me to be posting at least once a day. I don't think it's going to be a big driver to the blog but A) I could be wrong and B) it doesn't matter. The community interaction is what I'm after.

Wrap Up

First, I want to thank each and every one of you. Without my readers and social media followers, Suburban Steader would just be a diary of sorts. It's all of you that make this

site, and its social media accounts, what they are.

I want you to know that I fully intend to re-up my commitment for this project in 2017 but I need your help. Keep reaching out to me and letting me know what you want.

More product reviews? What kind? More how-to's? For what skills? More general theory articles? What topics?

This site is only as good as its readers and I know I have some of the best readers out there. Help me grow it into the wealth of knowledge I know it can be!

Wishing you all a Happy New Year! Many blessings and good fortune in 2017!



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