

Episode 5 - What Should I Blog About?

Lauren 0:01

Welcome to the Launch Your Blog Biz Podcast. I'm your host, Lauren McManus, I used to be a full time tax accountant and CPA with a whole lot of limiting beliefs and "I can't"s whenever I thought about starting my own business. Fast forward a few months, and I quit my job after starting and growing my first blog to six figures in just a year. This is my space to share and yours to listen and grow, about how to build and scale your own blogging business and design a life on your terms. Let's get started.

Lauren 0:35

Hey, y'all, welcome to another episode of the podcast. I hope you're doing well today. I am currently in St. Petersburg, Florida, which has kind of been my home base for the last few years when I haven't been traveling. And I'm here rather unexpectedly, due to some recent family news that I received, I hopped on a plane from Mexico. So I'm just here for a couple of weeks and banging out some podcast episodes in the upstairs bedroom of my parents house. So that's super fun.

Lauren 1:06

Today, I have an awesome episode for you all about what you should blog about. And of course, it's going to be more beginner focused. But we are going to talk about some more important things related to niching down. And as I'm going to say in a lot of these episodes, I think that it would be really great for even more experienced bloggers to listen to this for a really good reminder that you are on the right path, and you have your mind focused on the right things.

Lauren 1:35

We're going to specifically talk about choosing what to blog about or choosing your blog niche, it's called and niche just is marketing speak for a particular market segment that you're trying to reach. So it can be anything as broad as health and wellness or things more specific, like fast weight loss for women, could be something broad, like dog training, or much more narrower, like training German Shepherds.

Lauren 2:02

And in this episode, we're going to talk about what I'm going to call the three P's of choosing your blog niche. And that's passion, profits, and popularity. So we're gonna talk about all those things. And then lastly, we're going to talk about the importance of niching down. So being more specific with your niche. And that is the part that I think that specifically a lot of you will be really interested in. Especially because that's something that Alex and I have actually been doubling down on just in the last few months. So I'm going to give you my thoughts on that as well.

Lauren 2:35

And I want to start out this episode by discussing some of the confusing thoughts that I think many of you have, there's so much advice out there that's thrown at people in this stage, some of it coming from us, of course, but you're trying to think about what you should blog about. And it's also really about who you are, those two are really connected. And, you know, you have one person over here telling you to follow your passions and your dreams, which just sounds

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amazing, right? But then you have the other person on the other side telling you that you need to be smart and make sure that you follow the money. And so if that money is different than the passion, what do you do here. And then you also have somebody telling you to blog about everything, and then decide what you like most.

Lauren 3:17

You have all kinds of different advice being thrown at you. And the interesting thing here is that none of these pieces of advice is inherently bad or wrong. But they can all lead you down the wrong path if you aren't careful. I think that all three of these pieces of advice have one piece of these three pieces that I'm talking about passion, profits, and popularity. But ideally, you have some combination of all of these in your blog niche, or at least two out of three of them. And I'm going to discuss all three of these individually so that you can decide how to incorporate a bit of each one of these into your blog niche.

Lauren 3:55

So the very first one that I want to start out with is passion. And I want to start here because I think that it's really the best place to start when you are evaluating your options here. And in a perfect world, I would tell you to blog about a topic that you're super passionate about. Because that is what we get taught to do as kids right to follow our dreams chase your dreams. But I'm here to tell you that it doesn't always work out that way.

Lauren 4:22

The first blog that Alex Knight created was born out of passion. Alex and I were both super passionate about health and fitness. And at the time, we also didn't know what else we might blog about. So we stuck with what we knew. Alex had a professional background in that space. And I was just really passionate about it because I used to be a vegan. So we started a health and fitness blog. And our idea was that we were going to teach young men and women how to stay healthy and fit while having a social life, brunching, all the things that we were doing.

Lauren 4:55

This was a blog that was really about us and for people like us and that's why we were passionate about it because it was a cause that we believed in. And if you listen to my other episode on this blog, you know that it failed very spectacularly. But fast forward a few months in a second health blog later, and we started earning a profit. And in the beginning that continued to fuel our passion, because we were actually starting to make some money from something that we believed in.

Lauren 5:23

But unfortunately, because our first blog failed, we decided to start our second health and wellness blog in a totally different space. And then it was still about the overall topic of health and wellness and weight loss. But instead of teaching people in their mid 20s, to 30s, how to stay healthy, we were actually teaching middle aged women how to lose weight. So it wasn't exactly where our passions were not our initial passions. But y'all, we still follow that path because that was where the money was. And one other different kind of passion of ours was to

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get out of our full time jobs and to be able to run a blog, and work online. So that was a different passion in itself.

Lauren 6:05

So we did follow that money. And we did still love what we do, but it was different than what we originally had in mind. So I tell you all of this to make sure that you don't get too hung up on your passion, and so focused on it that you end up missing out on other potential better ideas or opportunities. So ideally, you do follow your passion. And if that leads you to a profitable blog space that you think you can really make some work out of that's definitely best case scenario. But it doesn't always happen that way.

Lauren 6:37

And something else I want to address here that I hear a lot from my students is, what if I don't have any passions or any hobbies, I mean, the first thing I want to say is, "Surely there's something, you're not just some dull person who has no interests." But I do get it. It's pretty common, I think. And I don't think that I had too many passions outside of health and fitness.

Lauren 6:58

I want to tell you that it's really important not to do intense soul searching in this space. And if you're really into that sort of stuff, then maybe go ahead and do it. But I have seen people get really hung up at this stage and just sit on this information for months and months, and not actually get started. Because they just can't figure out what to blog about. And they do get hung up in this sort of soul searching phase of trying to figure out what they're really interested in and what they could make from this. And they just end up frozen because they just can't decide.

Lauren 7:30

This doesn't have to be some kind of internal burning, fiery passion of yours. And don't look to the stars because the stars don't have your answers. This really should be a somewhat easy thing to determine for you, and it shouldn't be natural. So if you feel like you don't have any passion or hobby, or you're just not sure what to do here, I want to ask you two questions. And I want you to think about the answer to these two questions.

Lauren 7:58

The first one is what would your friends and family say that you just can't shut up about? For me, that was definitely health and fitness. I was definitely that person that gave all of my friends unsolicited health advice, and was totally the one that gave them judgy eyes over the dinner table, you know, when they ordered pasta rather than salad? And I guess if I'm being honest here, I had to admit that I think I'm still that person. But whatever it is, what do you think your friends or family think about you and the kind of advice that you give or the topic that you just talked about a lot. That in itself can definitely be enough to go on.

Lauren 8:36

And the second one is what do you already have experience in? So it doesn't have to be this existing passion. My experience lies in accounting. And I can tell you that at my nine to five job

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as a tax accountant, I was not super passionate about that. But if I were to apply that to starting an online business related to accounting, and that was enough to get me out of my job and to start traveling and make my own money. Well, that could definitely develop into a passion for sure. So is there something that you have experience in, whether it's professionally or personally, that you could start a business about that you could start blogging about. It can be anything professional or personal or just something that you're really interested in, and you want to learn a lot more about.

Lauren 9:24

Okay, so that's it for the first passion. Remember, don't get too hung up here and just stay open minded it should be a pretty natural thing. And once you have an idea of some of the things that you're interested in or passionate about, we need to next think about how the next passion fits into that. And that P is profit.

Lauren 9:45

Now I think that this one is a little less important because there are honestly tons of blogs, making money in just about every space you can think of. I mean, y'all there are some weird things out there that people are making money on. We know of a blog that makes money from selling a board game on how to find healthy herbs from your backyard. It's crazy, right? And I know personally, of a blog that sells courses on how to train goats. I mean, you can literally make money online doing absolutely anything these days. There's all kinds of blogs for pug enthusiasts, and things like LED lights, and succulents and ghosts, aliens, monsters, y'all, if people are searching for it, people are writing about it, and people are making money in it.

Lauren 10:38

But that being said, you do want to be realistic here. And you want to think about how you might be able to reasonably make some money in this space that you want to be in. So do you think that you would be able to sell products? And would those products be physical products? If so, you might want to consider an e-commerce type of store. But do you think that you could maybe sell digital products, so ebooks or online courses, or coaching, which is super popular these days. These are all some really popular ways to make money. And some other ways that people put reviews on their sites, and they get money from the products that they recommend. Or there's also ad revenue.

Lauren 11:18

So there's many different kinds of ways to monetize a blog. And one thing you might want to do here is just do a little bit of research and look on Google or Pinterest and see if you can find some other blogs in the space that you want to be in and see if they are selling any kind of products or services or see if you can figure out how they might be making their money. Something else to consider here too, is that there are some blogging niches and some topics that do generate more money generally than others.

Lauren 11:49

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So consider this one for one. So information products and services in the business, financial and legal sector, are generally a lot more expensive. And one main reason for that is that it takes a lot more education and experience to back those products. So if you're giving out any kind of legal advice or financial advice, people go to school for a long time for that, and they get certifications that costs a lot of time and money. So when they're sharing that kind of information on the internet, they can generally sell products, that costs a lot more. And on top of that, if it's in the money space at all, people generally will spend more money when they know that they're going to get a financial return.

Lauren 12:30

But that being said, you know that there are premium products and services in every industry, there are people selling makeup products for 1000s of dollars. So think about what you might sell or how you might make that money. And also think about where the price point for that might be whether you might sell premium or lower price products. It's absolutely okay to sell lower priced products. That's been our main game on our health and wellness blog, you just need a bit more volume when it comes to visitors and traffic to your site. But we've worked in both of these situations in the past both premium and lower priced products. And we've made really great money in both spaces, they both worked very well for us.

Lauren 13:11

And I don't want you to get too hung up here, especially if you're first starting, don't get too hung up on trying to think too much about the money and about what you might want to sell and also about how much it might cost. These are just things to generally keep in mind as you're in the planning stages here. You don't have to have any of this figured out for sure. But it's just a good idea to begin to think about it and begin to visualize how you might make this work.

Lauren 13:39

And one other thing that I want to mention here before we move on is that you need to make sure that you're open to change and letting your blog evolve if the money takes you in a different direction. So that same example that I gave you earlier in which we pivoted on our health and wellness blog to a entirely different audience, because we were beginning to make more money from that. So we did put a little bit of our passion aside from our original idea. And we were able to pivot so make sure that you aren't too stuck on one certain idea and especially how you're going to implement that idea. Because it may be that once you get started and you start getting visitors and you start getting feedback in the form of comments and emails, they might tell you, you know, I don't like this or I want to see more of this. And they're going to eventually be able to tell you how you can best help them and you want to make sure that you pivot in that direction to what your audience needs. That's the way for true long term growth and sustainability.

Lauren 14:40

So ya'll, pairing your passion with profits is a win win scenario. But you really can't do this very effectively or very well without our third p which is popularity. And what I'm really talking about with popularity is the audience that your blog attracts. The cool thing here is that you don't have to have the largest audience possible.

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Lauren 15:01

Sure, it will help you because having millions of visitors to your blog, if you had that, it would really be very hard to not make money, you really can't go wrong with that many visitors. But it's not absolutely necessary. And perhaps you've heard this phrase before, probably like me if you aren't one of my blogging students, but if you market to everyone, you're marketing to no one.

Lauren 15:24

And here finally, I want to get into what I promised at the beginning of the episode. And that's the importance of niching down. This is the information that I think is so relevant to those of you who have already started and you're starting to gain traction, or you're even trying to maintain your level of success. But if you're really just trying to find where your specific space is, and you're trying to really work into that groove, and begin to get that consistent income, those consistent sales, and really start bonding with your audience and feel like alright, I know what I'm doing, and I've got it, it's really important to learn the importance of niching down.

Lauren 16:04

And I want to illustrate this by telling you about how we learned this with our first blog, our health and wellness blog. So on the blog, we sell a weight loss program. And that weight loss program can be done by pretty much anyone. There are a few, you know, asterisks and things. But generally most men and most women can do this product, but we only sell it to women. And in the beginning, we sold it to everyone, it was perfectly suitable for men. And in fact, men actually lost more weight on the program than women did.

Lauren 16:38

But over time, we began to realize that the vast, vast majority of our audience was women. And that really should have been very surprising, because we were driving most of our traffic from Pinterest, which is a very female dominated platform. So one day, and I have no idea now what pushed us in this direction, but we started to move in the direction of beginning to market more to women. We started changing certain things on the design of the program itself, as well as a lot of what we talked about on our sales pages and in our articles, in our emails, other places that we started talking about our product, we started marketing it just for women.

Lauren 17:19

And we had a concern here that by marketing only to women, we would be cutting our audience in half. Because now men wouldn't buy the product. It's just for women. So theoretically, that could be cutting our sales in half. But what we ended up finding we started going down this path is that our sales started to rise. And then we just started doubling down on this actually having banners that said, you know, attention, women looking to lose weight, we very specifically called them out. And what we found is that our sales rose up dramatically.

Lauren 17:49

So despite the fact that we cut the potential audience for this product in half, our sales went up. And that's because women wanted a product specifically for women. They wanted to know that

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this product was tailored specifically for them as closely as possible. And another example here is when you think about the word polarizing, right, they say that when you're polarizing, you alienate a lot of people. But what ends up happening is that you end up getting a smaller group of very devoted fans. So it doesn't mean that you should alienate most people or get so specific, that you don't have that much of an audience left. But it's just something to consider in that the more general that you are in your marketing and in your communications to people, the more that people are going to just gloss over your sales page and not want to actually buy because they don't feel like it's really, truly meant for them and going to help them.

Lauren 18:47

Now, don't get too specific here. Because if your niche is, let's say basket weaving, and you're already gonna have fewer people on that topic, you know, fewer than let's say knitting or crocheting, kind of somewhat similar topics, I guess, you could have basket weaving. But if you then narrowed down to basket weaving for retirees in Florida, well, that's gonna be way too specific, you're not going to be able to attract enough people to buy your product and to be successful. So I mean, I could totally be wrong there, I have no idea what the real space for basket weaving looks like. But do think about that. You don't want to go so narrow, that you've alienated almost everyone, and you just won't make enough sales. But you want to be specific enough that you can really hone down on a specific audience.

Lauren 19:35

And this is also something that is really important for Google SEO traffic, because Google wants to know that you are an authority on the subject that your website is about. We've seen a lot of algorithm changes in Google over the last couple of years, moving further and further down this path because there's so much information out there, so much, and a lot of it is crap, right? So they want to know that serving up the best and most credible information possible.

Lauren 20:04

Another example here is let's say that you have a blog on the keto diet. And here you want to include workouts because you know, workouts and diet, they're somewhat related, right? Well, if your blog is about the keto diet, you might want to consider having content like the best workouts for the keto diet or best workouts for low carb diets. Because this further reinforces your main topic of keto. This is also why having certifications or experience in the area that you start your blog in can really help with that credibility and building that authority in your niche. And it doesn't have to start out this way, you don't have to already have all this to get started. This can definitely be done and worked towards over time. I know that Cathy Dean on our team has a keto blog, and she has gotten some of her certifications over time. So this is just some food for thought some options down the road.

Lauren 21:00

And there you have it, y'all. Those are our three P's for success, passion, profits, and popularity. Remember here that you don't have to have a ton of passion to get started, you don't have to have a ton of experience to get you started. You also don't have to go into something that's super popular right off the get go. But all these three things should be present in what you're

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thinking about doing to some extent. You might have more of one than the other. But think about all three of these items and think about how they connect with the idea that you are currently coming up with or wherever you're at right now in your blogging career. If you've been blogging for a while, think about some of the things I've said in this episode and how they apply to where you're at right now. Try to consider all of these in your thoughts on finding your best blog niche and finding your true space and what you're doing.

Lauren 21:56

As always, y'all stay focused, but with an open mind. I'll see you next time.

Lauren 22:04

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