

Episode 11- Building an Audience Pt 3.

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 back to the podcast. I hope that you are all doing well today. I am still in St. Pete Florida at the moment but I'm actually headed over to Europe next week. Finally. My fiance and I have been waiting to go to Europe for well, really since the pandemic started pretty much and it's been very difficult for Americans to get in over there. So I'm super pumped to finally be able to get in because we're vaccinated and yeah, we're going to be starting a new adventure.

Lauren 1:07

We've been hanging out mostly in the United States and Mexico over the last year, just because as an international couple, those are the only places that we've been able to get in together. It's been crazy. My fiance is Polish, but he grew up in Germany. So we're going to head that way to see some of his family and to look at apartments, finally! That's super exciting because as many of you know, I've been pretty nomadic for the last few years, and working while traveling.

Lauren 1:35

And I'm finally starting to get that itch to slow down a little bit, especially since the pandemic, to be able to have my own things in my own home, actually have a desk to work at and to not travel out of a suitcase full time anymore. I still love traveling, and I plan on doing it a lot but I just generally want to have my own home in my own space. So yeah, we're super pumped about that. I'm trying to hammer out a few podcast episodes over the next couple of weeks to kind of get ahead of my schedule and so I can take a little bit of time off to explore Europe, finally.

Lauren 2:13

And y'all I actually did travel a couple weeks ago, I went to the US Virgin Islands with my parents and my fiance. While we were on the islands, we were driving one day, and we passed this sign and it said, "The grass is always greener, where you water it." And the sounds pretty basic and simple, you'd think I would have heard it before, but I had never heard of that before. Whenever we think of the grass is greener, we always always, always think of the other side.

Lauren 2:41

I think that this is a pretty truthful and depressing phrase, just because it's a great reminder that we're never quite satisfied with what we have and we're always wanting and desiring other things. Things that we don't own or just thinking generally that things are going to be different when we're at some kind of state other than where we currently are. I really liked this take on

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this popular phrase and I'm going to try to always remind myself, whenever I think of the grass is greener, that it's always greener where you water it.

Lauren 3:10

And I take this to mean that wherever you are watering your grass, wherever you're spending your time and your energy and you're being intentional about what you're doing in your life, it's going to be greener, because of that. It's going to be brighter, it's going to be more fulfilled, you're going to be happier. And I think that we have to just trust this about ourselves to know that we are on the right path and no matter what all the other paths that we see on social media, all the other people out there that are on different paths, we can't ever compare our path to theirs, we have to just know that we are on the right path and we're doing the right thing.

Lauren 3:48

Just make sure that you give yourself a pat on the back today because you're listening to this podcast, you are doing something intentional for your business, for your life, and you are investing that time and energy into your own grass, your own lawn.

Lauren 4:02

Alright, I digress, y'all. Today we are going to talk about building an audience, again. This is part three of our building an audience series. In part one, we talked about driving the traffic, the visitors to your blog, your website, your business, your various channels. In part two, we talked about building an email list. So we talked about turning that traffic into subscribers, those visitors into subscribers and building your email list. Now in this episode, I want to talk about, what do we send them? How do we keep these people on our list? And how do we keep them interested in us?

Lauren 4:43

Today in this episode, we're going to talk about what kind of content to send. We're going to talk about funnels, automating your business, and we're going to talk about building relationships with your audience. So turning them into fans and fans that follow you for years and years to come. People that grow with you and support you. The very first thing that I want to talk about in this episode is those funnels and how you automate your business.

Lauren 5:12

I want to start with that, because this is generally the first thing that you set up with your email list. That very first thing is a welcome funnel. And this is really the first step in beginning to automate your business, because we're going to be setting up emails that send out automatically without you having to click any buttons every day, they're automatically sent to new subscribers on your list. This is all happening in the background. You've already hooked up your email, opt in somewhere across your social media or your website, wherever you have it, you're getting traffic, people are signing up and then they're automatically getting the first few emails from you.

Lauren 5:50

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This is the very first step in automating your business, or at least automating some part of it. And it's really the first step in this ever elusive passive income or, because I think that passive income doesn't really tell the whole story. But what we are talking about here is making money while you sleep and this is a real thing. I know it sounds cheesy, and it sounds like I'm some kind of marketing guru, but you can set up your business in a way that you are driving traffic and driving sales without having to actually do anything every day.

Lauren 6:23

This is the reason why Alex and I were attracted to this type of business. It's why we set up this type of business compared to the other options that we had out there and that's why we still run our business this way today. Because we didn't want to trade our hours for dollars. We didn't want to have to physically do things every single day and invest time every day, just to make sales. Now we still do this in a way and then we still work on our business and grow our business. But the things that we work on may or may not directly translate into sales.

Lauren 6:57

And when I'm recording this podcast episode, right now, I don't know that I'm going to make X amount of sales per episode or per week, I don't know anything like that. It's a bit grayer than that, in that I am working on building relationships and generally building up a traffic channel that hopefully will make me sales at some point. But it's not a direct relation, right? But these emails that we set up in a way are a direct relation, and that you can start selling products and selling other things in your email funnels. And they are designed to make those sales and to make sales on a daily, weekly, monthly, yearly basis for years to come.

Lauren 7:37

And y'all I'll let you know right now that the email funnels that we have, we've pretty much had the same funnels in place for a few years, we haven't had to change them at all. Now there have been a few updates here and there, we've updated our videos in our free course. And you know, we've made minor tweaks to the emails, but generally the structure of them has stayed the same and it's allowed us to do other things in our business, like start a podcast and create new courses. Because we have this system in place that's generating our sales on a daily basis and it's great.

Lauren 8:13

The very first place that you should start with this, this first step in automating your business is just to create your first funnel, and it could just be your welcome funnel. Now there's many different names for this, you might have heard, welcome funnel, indoctrination sequence, nurture sequence, sales sequence, sales funnel. It's all really the same thing and all it really is, is just a series of emails that someone is getting sent as soon as they opt in to your email list. So you are writing all of these emails, and you're setting them to publish back in your email software, and then you don't touch them.

Lauren 8:49

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And I'm just going to call it a welcome sequence in this podcast, just because that's the first place that you should start and this really is just what it sounds like. It's a way to welcome someone to what you do. It's also why it's called an indoctrination sequence, because you're indoctrinating them into you and your business and what you're all about. Y'all this is super easy. It can be as simple as a welcome email that sends them their freebie that they've opted in for (more on that in part two of this series in our previous episode, so make sure to check that one out if you haven't already.)

Lauren 9:25

But you want to send them that freebie that they opted in for and just say welcome, say thank you, say that you're so glad that they are here and you're so excited for them to take this journey with you. Then from there, you just send them a series of emails every day for the first five to seven days or so. You want to make sure that you're sharing your story and your background, why you're doing what you're doing, why you're here, and also educate them. If you can bust through any kind of common myths and misconceptions that they may have about certain topics that you're teaching about, this is what is going to get them to start listening to you more and trusting in what you have to say.

Lauren 10:05

See all these first few emails, do just that. Sharing stories, connecting with them, and trying to educate them. And then after that, at some point, you want to offer some kind of call to action. Ideally, you have some kind of product to sell. So you've been connecting with them in the last few emails about some kind of problem that they've been facing related to the topic that you're teaching about and then you have a product to sell, that's a solution to the problem. It's a very natural sequence and flow.

Lauren 10:37

If you don't have anything to sell, that's totally okay, you can sell affiliate products, or you just don't sell anything yet, you ask them to follow you on some kind of social media platform. You ask them to check out your YouTube channel, whatever it is that you want to grow at this point in time. If you don't have a product, just ask them to follow you there but at some point, when you do have a product or something to sell, you can then offer limited time sales.

Lauren 11:03

Things like a new subscriber discount on a product that you have, you can offer bonuses, any kind of scarcity is what gets people off the fence, and we'll make them want to buy something from you. This is kind of what a welcome sequence looks like but a welcome sequence turning into a sales sequence when you have something to sell. And y'all, that's pretty much it. This has worked for years for us and it's really where we have made most of our sales without us having to do a whole lot, because we have those people listening to the podcast, and coming from the YouTube channel or coming from Google search.

Lauren 11:39

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They're signing up for our email list, they're getting these emails, and then they're buying their product. And we didn't have to actually do anything except create that piece of content at some point in time. Now, let's dig a little bit deeper than that, in that the primary goal of this funnel should not be to just make a sale. I don't want you to think of it quite like that. Of course, that is the overall goal, but your primary goal is to really focus on building a relationship with your subscriber, because this is what is going to end up turning them into a lifelong fan.

Lauren 12:12

So that way, two years down the road, when you start a podcast, they're there and waiting and ready to listen to episode one and to binge listen it. So thank you, all of you who are on my email list and who are here, because you are fans of what we do. I appreciate you so much. Y'all the reason that people stay on our email list and that they can't wait to listen to our content is because we built good relationships and Alex and I do that by just being real with our readers and our subscribers. We tell people about our stories, we tell them about our struggles, we connect with them and bottom line is that we always provide value before we ask for a sale.

Lauren 12:53

When you just put links out there and throw your great product out there, you might think that, you know, I'm offering them something really great so that's helping them and yes, it is. But you have to provide value before you ask for something in return. You always want to focus on those first few emails of sharing your story and providing that educational material to again bust through those misconceptions, those myths, to give them information that's going to help them on this journey for regardless of whether they decide to follow you on this journey or not.

Lauren 13:27

So you need to provide that value first and when you tell stories, and you share your own experiences, that is what is going to help them connect with you. We talked a lot about this in episode eight on creating content. So make sure to listen to that one too, if you haven't already, because that kind of content also goes into email as well, it's the same premise. Y'all always focus on connection relatability and WIIFT, What's in it for them? Always them first.

Lauren 14:00

Okay, y'all, that's pretty much a high level overview of how your email funnels work your automated emails. But what about everything else? What about all the other emails that you can send to your audience? What happens after someone is through that funnel? So after day seven, or however many days that you have, when do you send them emails after that? And what do you send? Well, we call these types of emails, broadcasts. Usually, this just means it broadcasts out to your entire list or it could be to some part of your list.

Lauren 14:31

But it's important to send out emails regularly to stay on people's minds and I'll talk more about what regularly means in a moment. But first, let's talk about what you want to send. Well, the first thing that you should always send out is new content. Anytime that you write a piece of new

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content, or you record a new podcast episode, we always send out an email every time I publish a new podcast episode or we publish a YouTube video or we write a blog article.

Lauren 15:02

Any kind of new content, we send it out to our list, especially because it gives that new piece of content, a set of eyeballs immediately and search engines, algorithms, they recognize that, they recognize that popularity. So it gives your new piece of content a beginning push in the right direction.

Lauren 15:22

Next, y'all share new projects. So if you have created a new course, or new product, obviously, you would want to send that out to your list. But if you started a podcast or YouTube channel, some other kind of project in your work, maybe it's some kind of personal project, but you think that it would be relatable to what you're teaching about, or something that would benefit your readers or listeners in any way, we'll share that out, it's a great way to connect with your audience.

Lauren 15:51

Also, not just new products, but you can also offer promotions on your existing products to your audience. I like to time mine out with holidays, so Fourth of July sale or Mother's Day Sale. That was a piece of marketing advice that I actually picked up at the traffic and conversion summit conference a couple of years ago. And it was that this marketing agency actually saw a major boost in sales when they created graphics, and they tied their internal sales to holidays and I found that that's worked really, really well for us.

Lauren 16:26

We offer promotions on our products regularly to our email list and this is another huge driver of sales for us. It also doesn't have to be your own products, you can offer other people's products. One thing that we do regularly with our list is we partner with companies like ConvertKit and Teachable and I do live webinars, so it's essentially just a free training that I offer. And then at the end of the free training, we do have a pitch to purchase ConvertKit, which we are an affiliate for, so we send those out to our email list.

Lauren 16:58

Again, it's always providing value first, because those free trainings have a lot of value before we then ask for the sale at the end of the webinar. So using email to sell affiliate products is one way that we also make a good bit of our income. And then lastly, y'all another way that you can email these broadcasts, is just to get some feedback. If you're thinking about creating a new product, or some kind of new project for your business, ask your audience first. They're the ones who have the most to gain from it and they're the ones that you should be listening to.

Lauren 17:33

Anytime that we have started something new or that we've thought, especially about changing something, we've asked our audience. There have been times that we have absolutely not

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made a change, or made it differently because of what our audience said. Because we thought that we knew what was best for them and they've actually given us the feedback that you know, you have a point there, but that's actually not true and here's why. It's a really, really great way to get feedback, ask questions and include surveys in your email.

Lauren 18:01

Alright, y'all, now that we've talked about content, let's talk about taking care of these relationships. Remember that you're talking to real people here. Real people are getting these emails, they're not just numbers, and you want to keep those numbers up. You want to keep people opening your emails, you want to keep them clicking on your emails, any kind of positive interactions that people are having with your content. It's really good because when you have negative reactions, when people are not opening your emails, they're not clicking your things, your stuff is going to spam, then you're going to have your open rates hurt, and it's going to impact your deliverability.

Lauren 18:39

It's really important to keep your email list full of active and engaged people who are opening your emails and taking action on the content that you're offering. So in order to do this, I think that you should try to focus on emailing out at least once a month, in the very least just to keep your email list alive a bit and just to stay in their minds. Ideally, you do email about once a week or at least every couple of weeks, but absolute bare minimum once a month and also I wouldn't email more than twice a week.

Lauren 19:13

There is an exception when you have a new funnel, especially because you're sending out valuable content every day not asking for anything in return. But maybe don't email out more than a couple of times a week after that just because you don't want to burn people out on what you have to say either. Also y'all to keep this email list clean and full of active and engaged people, make sure to clean it out regularly. You can actually use features in online software now to remove people who aren't active with your list at all.

Lauren 19:44

People who never open your emails, maybe they gave you a fake email address just to get a freebie then they never paid attention after that. You can actually clean these people out of your list. Make sure to do a little bit of housecleaning on your list, you know maybe once a quarter or at least once a year. Depending on how much you email and how many subscribers that you're getting. Then on that note, you also want to make sure that you are sending emails to the right people.

Lauren 20:09

There are also ways to segment your list to determine who has purchased products, who hasn't, who's interested in this topic, and who's interested in this other topic. Then you can actually exclude certain people on your list from certain emails to make sure that only the right people are getting the most relevant content. This is what is going to keep your email list clean and will

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make sure that you weren't bothering the wrong people and will make sure that your open rates stay up. And y'all, that's pretty much it.

Lauren 20:37

That's pretty much it on taking care of your list. Email is so, so important to just make sure to email out regularly at least once a week or once a month and y'all just get started. It's literally so important and even an email list with one single welcome email is way better than nothing. Today, I want to challenge you to create your first sequence with at least three emails. If you've already done this, if you're already past this, I'm so happy and I want you to go back through your emails and make sure that each email has a lot of you in it.

Lauren 21:13

That you are providing value and connecting with your readers and sharing your stories and experiences as often as you can. Y'all if you need any help with getting started with your email list, we're going to include a few different resources in the description. So make sure to check that out for the first steps on how to get started with your email list and to write these first few emails. Alright, y'all, I will see you next time.

Lauren 21:43

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