

## Episode 18: SEO Part 1

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're all doing great today. I also hope that my mic isn't too echoey, my ceilings are massive at my new place. I realized that there's not a single corner in this place that doesn't sound a bit echoey so I've got to work on that. Anyway, I have a great episode for you today because I have a special guest star. I have a member of the Create and Go team today, Noah Riggs. Welcome, Noah.

Noah 1:06

Hey guys, happy to be here.

Lauren 1:08

So y'all Noah, again, he's a member of our team, and he is our resident SEO expert. But he didn't start out that way. And Noah, why don't you go ahead and tell us how you found Create and Go. Oh, wait, wait, I should also mention that Noah is now on our YouTube channel. So if you haven't been over to our YouTube channel lately the last, how many episodes Noah, like three or four?

Noah 1:35

Yeah, three.

Lauren 1:36

Yeah. So Noah is actually our resident SEO expert and YouTube expert at Create and Go. But backing up a little bit. Noah, why don't you tell us how you found us. So how did you get started in the blogging world?

Noah 1:51

Yeah, so that time in my life was kind of in the later years of me going to college. I had already gotten an associate's degree, I had already started working as a firefighter. And I started to realize that this really wasn't what I enjoyed doing. I was working really, really hard as an EMT, and also studying a lot in school. I realized, if I was going to go to medical school, or go on to become a doctor, this is going to take a long time. And it wasn't that I was necessarily not down for the ride of hard work, but I just, I wanted to get there faster.

Noah 2:29

I came from a really poor background and so I just wanted to stop struggling. So during this time in my life, I was donating plasma twice a week just to make extra money. I was working two

## Episode 18: SEO Part 1

jobs, taking out student loans. And I just, I kind of had had enough, I was ready to not be struggling. I started looking for ways to make money that I didn't have to show up for work, like what could I do at home when I got off all of my other jobs that could help me make some extra money.

Noah 3:04

So I actually stumbled across Alex on the YouTube channel. I had seen that he made a video about how to start a blog and how to make money with blogging. And so that was really my first introduction to you know, Create and Go.

Lauren 3:19

Wow, donating plasma twice a week, for money. I've heard of people doing that but that just reminds me of back when Alex and I were trying to save money to dedicate everything to our blog, and we were eating the eggs and rice diet and just eating eggs and rice like every day, like multiple times a day. But yeah, donating plasma, that's a different level. Yeah. How was that? What does that even entail? Is it painful?

Noah 3:45

Yeah, so it's actually kind of funny, like I have these massive holes on my arm because the needles for donating plasma are so much bigger than like a normal needle. So it was like, you know, I was an EMT at the time so you know, it kind of made me laugh because it was my day job, like people were getting stuck all day. And then you know, the next morning I would wake up early and then I would go get stuck. It was um, it was honestly something that like, looking back I wish I never would have had to do but I'm really grateful.

Noah 4:19

You know, I sat there for hours, sometimes they would take you know, an hour and a half, two hours just to donate enough plasma to make like 80 bucks or whatever it was at the time. So you know, it was definitely rough on my body and stuff. But it was one of those things that now it keeps me motivated to tell myself like "No matter what I'm going to do, what I need to do to make sure that I never have to donate plasma again."

Lauren 4:46

Yeah, true that. I mean it definitely helps you appreciate what you do have and those experiences are what you know, shape and define us and do keep us pushing forward. So that's super important. Well, so what is your blog about and you know beyond finding Alex on YouTube, how did you start working for us?

Noah 5:08

Yeah, so after watching Alex on youtube I decided to dive in. I saved my money from donating plasma and bought the courses from Create and Go the program.

Lauren 5:18

Oh my god, it was the plasma money!

## Episode 18: SEO Part 1

Noah 5:21

Exactly, it was! But I decided to start my blog, because like I said earlier, you know, I came from a really poor background. My parents didn't have a lot of education in how to spend money, how to save money, things like that. And even though I wasn't making a ton of money I was doing pretty well off of like \$20,000 a year, I was managing to survive and still save a little bit of money, invest a little bit of money. So I kind of thought if I can do that, you know like this, then what about all the people that are making decent money that don't know how to save money, how to budget, how to invest.

Noah 6:01

So initially, you know, I set out to kind of answer all the questions that people ask me all the time, people in my family, my friends, like "How do you invest? How do you get a credit card?" You know, just all those financial questions that a lot of us never learned and so when I decided to start, like I said I bought the problogger bundle, so I made a big investment so I wanted to get the most out of it. The number one thing I did was joining groups and being as involved in the community or the blogging community as possible.

Noah 6:36

Because there aren't really people in my city that are blogging or making a killing online for the most part that you really know of. So I needed to get around people that knew about blogging, talked about it, were successful with it, and sort of surrounded myself with those people in a way that I can learn from them and it can help my own journey. As I was getting into those groups and surrounding myself with all of these people, there were moments that I came across people that were heavily involved with Create and Go.

Noah 7:13

And this was cool because it kind of helped me to build those connections or build that network that I didn't initially have whenever I started. Eventually after kind of making myself known in these groups of helping people out however I could, being an encouragement however I could, an employee at Create and Go at the time took notice of me. Basically whenever it came time for Create and Go to actually hire somebody, he let me know and was like "Hey, I really think that you would be a great fit for this team." And from there it was really history.

Noah 7:49

Lauren and I started chatting and kind of came to the realization that yeah, it would be a good fit with the team.

Lauren 7:56

Yeah, I think though I actually only hired you because you're from Louisiana, soo..

Noah 8:02

I do really remember it. It really surprised me whenever he was like "Yeah, give her a call at this number" and I was like, "She has the same area code as me?" Like what is this?!

## Episode 18: SEO Part 1

Lauren 8:14

yeah, so y'all so Noah is from Shreveport, Louisiana and I'm from New Orleans. I was born and raised there but I did live in Shreveport for a few years and I got a Shreveport area code and since then my number has not changed, it's still a Shreveport area code. It's just like if you've never been to Louisiana you probably still haven't heard of Shreveport but it's not that big of a town so it's like it's a very weird thing for us both to have lived in Shreveport for sure.

Lauren 8:40

I can definitely hear your accent Noah when you talk and I know I get comments on my "y'all" but that's where it's from. We're both from Louisiana. In fact, somebody actually left a negative review on the podcast because I say y'all too much and they said something like it was forced or like I was pretending too hard to be from Texas, you know, and it's like it's not at all because I'm from Texas. Although I've grown up in the south my whole life, Texas, Florida and Louisiana.

Lauren 9:05

But I was like, you know really do you have nothing better to do with your time then leave a negative comment? I mean, it was four stars but still it's like four out of five lowers your average, you know? So it's like yeah, man that's just cold but you know, it's not for everybody, I guess but I like it. I like the southern accent and yeah, we definitely bonded over that.

Noah 9:24

Yeah, I definitely get that accent remark kind of often as well. I definitely really never seen a negative like, "Man, you really have a southern accent" but like today on the YouTube video we noticed somebody said I sound like Jonah Hill. And I've actually, I've gotten a lot of people saying like, you sound like a country Jonah Hill. But yeah, definitely, definitely get those.

Lauren 9:51

So I'm leading this as an interview. I should really know all the answers to this because, of course I hired Noah, but it's also been what Noah, like two years, maybe three? I don't know, how many years has it been?

Noah 10:03

Yeah, just around three years actually.

Lauren 10:05

Yeah, I don't have the best memory. So anyway, it was about three years that Noah started working for us. I believe when we first hired you, we hired you for, I think just a general virtual assistant position. Because we really, at the time, just needed help with stuff, just all the little stuff that was falling off of our plates. But very soon after that, we realized, "Alright, this guy is like a go-getter." You just very quickly showed that you wanted a lot more responsibility and honestly, you just seem to really care about the business and be more invested.

Lauren 10:39

## Episode 18: SEO Part 1

And that was something that we recognized early on. So you'll probably remember better than I do, especially because you work a lot more on Alex's side of the business with the SEO and YouTube and stuff. So how did you then transition out? Like, tell me a little bit more about how you and Alex were starting on the SEO side and whatnot.

Noah 11:00

Yeah, so when I got hired, like you said, you know, right off the bat, I was mostly just handling tasks that were kind of falling to the wayside, or they needed to be kind of picked up because y'all are focusing on more important things. But I was definitely always coming to work with the idea of providing as much value as I can. That's sort of how I always approach whatever I do, with what can I help with the most? At the time, I definitely thought that I could help with more things so I always, you know, tried to ask, like, "What else can I help with? Is there anything else that you guys need help with?"

Noah 11:40

I was always down to learn, you know, and things like that. I think Alex definitely took notice initially in how excited I was to learn. Just like with me now doing the YouTube channel, I don't shy away from learning something that I've never had experience with. I didn't even have the internet until I moved out of my house at 17. So like, I've always sort of just taken that, you know, and said, "Hey, I'm gonna have to learn and I'm not necessarily afraid to fail or, you know, take that time to learn it."

Noah 12:16

So I'm pretty sure Alex, at that time was like "Hey, this guy really wants to learn and really wants to bring more value to the table." And you guys really weren't focusing on SEO at the time. I believe y'all just hired somebody to help with the SEO maybe, like, three months before y'all hired me. So very early in the SEO game for Create and Go and Alex just wasn't he didn't think that that guy was, you know, really giving it the best effort possible at the time. And so, I guess he thought that me, as the "go getter" I was, that I would have a better chance.

Noah 12:58

And I mean, I just started dedicating my days and nights and mornings to watching videos, taking courses, reading guides, I mean studying ahrefs, and SEM rush and all of these different things, just to try and identify what Create and Go needed to do to improve our SEO.

Lauren 13:21

Yeah, I'll tell y'all that at the time, Alex, and I's experience with SEO was really non-existent/all over the place/Alex, at some point decided to invest more heavily in it. And it was very scattered, because at the beginning to be honest, we just didn't need Google SEO. Pinterest was so much easier and so much faster and we just didn't really bother that much with Google. It was more competitive, we knew that and we kind of just ignored it. And over time, our Google traffic did start to grow just naturally.

Lauren 13:55

## Episode 18: SEO Part 1

Because Google does recognize when you get other traffic from other sources, and over time, your traffic likely will start to grow to some extent. So at some point, we also realized too, that we had too many eggs in the Pinterest basket, and that we just needed to diversify. Because Pinterest changes, honestly, more often than I change my underwear, I think. It changes constantly these days and we were just kind of feeling like it would be better to diversify.

Lauren 14:26

We already have the YouTube channel, but we knew that it was time to turn our sites back to SEO. But the fact of the matter was, we were both too busy and we tried to throw money at the problem for a while, we hired agencies to help write SEO content and to go through our whole website. We hired individual experts, we took courses, and it was just all over the place. To be honest, I think we didn't really ever make any big changes until Noah came on board and Noah and Alex really kind of took a deeper dive. I think that, I mean, I'll let you talk more about it Noah.

Lauren 15:04

But I want to just say to our audience, to let them know kind of where we're at with SEO and why we needed to make that shift and why we have. And I think it's a good idea for anyone and everyone to diversify their traffic strategy. I really think that having a really good source of, at least one source, of search traffic, in addition to some other type of social traffic, I think is good. Because they also accomplish different things, right?

Lauren 15:33

SEO traffic has the potential to get you a lot of traffic, but some social platforms and platforms like YouTube allow you to really connect with your audience and stuff. So on that note, Noah, let's talk about, do you actually need an SEO strategy for your blog? In your research, in your experience now, into the SEO world. You can start off by telling us a little bit more about how deep you were diving? And what did you find? And does our audience need an SEO strategy for their blog?

Noah 16:05

Yeah, so absolutely first of all, if you don't have an SEO strategy, you're going to be in a tough place. You're really going to find that you kind of, what is the saying? Shoot yourself in the foot. That's sort of where we were with Create and Go. The problem is that, if you start out with focusing on SEO from the beginning, you can avoid so many of the things that we had to do. Like you said, I mean, you guys were probably two, two and a half years into Create and Go before, we really started making huge changes towards doing the right things for SEO.

Noah 16:51

The problem is, is after doing business for two and a half years or two years, you sort of, I don't want to say make mistakes, but you sort of ignore those things that needed to be done and now you have to go back and fix them, in addition to trying to improve for the future. The big thing with Create and Go was that, yeah, we were always trying to fix these old issues, before we could start focusing on the new things. And it's really important for everybody listening, that

## Episode 18: SEO Part 1

when you go to start your blog, or if you've already started your blog, and you haven't focused on SEO at all, then you really need to rethink where you're going from here and start focusing on it now.

Noah 17:40

Because the best time to focus on SEO is going to be before it's too late. You know, before your years and years down the road, trying to fix things. That's not to say that a blog can't be profitable from just social media traffic, YouTube, tik tok, and Pinterest and all of these social media platforms can be really, really great for a blog, but you want to be diversified. Kind of like Lauren said earlier, it's a good idea to have one of each.

Noah 18:12

And making sure that you're diversified, is going to keep you from running into a lot of those difficult months where maybe you didn't have a viral post, or maybe you got banned for a week or a month or whatever. So it's becoming ever more important to have success with SEO as well as social media. I'm pretty sure when I started at Create and Go, the traffic, the SEO traffic made up somewhere around like 25 to 30% of the traffic.

Noah 18:12

And now, it's sometimes made up anywhere from 50 to 70% of our traffic. So if we didn't care about SEO, I mean, over half of our traffic could not possibly be coming to our blog. And that would probably heavily affect the bottom dollar that we get at Create and Go. So absolutely, SEO should be a main focus for any of the listeners here that are working on a blog.

Lauren 19:13

Yeah, and I think and correct me if I'm wrong Noah, but I think one of the important things is that, with SEO, it can be very time intensive. But there are also things that you can do in the beginning that you can set things up to where sometime down the road, they are more passive, right? If you do a few things to get your initial SEO traffic going, it's not like with some social media and some other platforms where you have to continue to do a lot of really extensive stuff constantly, right? Or am I wrong?

Noah 19:42

No, I mean, that's definitely, definitely true. It's kind of like, a great example would be a YouTube channel. If you make one video that gets a million views, eventually that video is kind of going to die down and virality right? It'll still show up in like search, but it won't be just keeping that consistent like kick ass virality for forever. And you know, you have to keep making videos in order to do that.

Noah 20:13

And with SEO, it's not as demanding. If you create a post, and that post becomes number one on Google, and is considered like the best post for that topic. I mean, odds are, you probably only have to update that post or do something to it, like maybe once a year, not too often. And



## Episode 18: SEO Part 1

it'll continue to rake in a very consistent level of traffic, you'll have a huge spike when it makes it to number one. But then from there, it'll pretty much remain the same.

Noah 20:49

We found that a lot of our SEO traffic for keywords that stay in the same spot, are really consistent. And so yeah, in that regard, it does become sort of passive. And it becomes this sort of extra source of income, that now you can focus on, you know, harder on YouTube, Pinterest, etc, etc.

Lauren 21:11

Yeah. And another point for diversification is that all of these platforms have a life cycle. At the beginning of any newer platform, you see times when you can get massive amounts of traffic, and then over time, it begins to wane, right? We saw that with Pinterest when we first got on Pinterest years ago and over time, the algorithm has changed, it's gotten more complicated. And it kind of more evenly distributed the traffic around the platform. To be honest, Tik Tok is kind of seeing that same thing right now.

Lauren 21:45

Everyone went over to tick tock during the pandemic, and people were getting explosive traffic. And it was a platform that was somewhat similar to Instagram. But people all of the sudden were getting way more traffic were people that were struggling to get traffic on Instagram, all of a sudden amassed all these followers for doing barely anything on tik tok, and could drive all this traffic. But you know, Tik Tok is gonna go the same way as Instagram, they'll start to place more ads, like they'll start to more evenly distribute traffic.

Lauren 21:45

So no matter what it's a good idea to diversify your traffic sources so that you can not have all your eggs in one basket. And because over time, every platform gets more competitive. As I've said, in previous episodes, every traffic platform does have its pros and cons. So anyway, I digress. Let's head back over to SEO. And anyway, so we were kind of at the stage where you're talking about getting into Create and Go and realizing all the things that we screwed up, right?

Noah 22:46

Yeah. It's kind of just in regards to like, really simple things. Like making the meta descriptions the right link, or making sure the posts have proper links to other internal posts, and making sure the categories were set up properly. You know, there were a lot of these things that are kind of like, this sounds horrible. Like I'm ragging on you guys, but a lot of things that are really basic SEO stuff. But when you don't start with SEO in mind, you just don't think about those things.

Noah 23:21

You're like, "Oh, I just want to make a good meta description, whatever you say is good. That sounds good to me." And it's sort of like you're not really aware of the things that you need to



## Episode 18: SEO Part 1

improve or need to fix. So at first we were really lost because we're just like, where do we go from here? All the traffic that we were getting at Create and Go, predominantly had to do with you and Alex's name. I mean, like I'd say probably 10 to 15% of it was just people searching you or Alex's name and then the others would be just searching Create and Go.

Noah 24:00

So it definitely kind of made us aware at the time that we're gonna have to sort of, I guess this EMT terminology of like triage it, and that's really how me and Alex approached it. We were like what could be the worst things that we've done wrong and we sort of started filling out that list from worst or most likely reason why we're not getting SEO traffic all the way to the least likely. Over the course of a year, year and a half, we just started knocking those things out one by one.

Noah 24:33

We started building backlinks, we started working on the website to make sure it was set up properly, categories set up, properly internal linking, etc, etc. And we finally started to get the results that we were sort of looking for, we started to bring in a little bit more traffic here and there posts started to move up. But eventually I think like, right before the pandemic happened, we finally started to see drastic changes. All this work that we were doing to sort of fix things started to really improve our traffic to the point that it was bringing in almost 70% of our traffic at the time.

Noah 25:17

It's started to level out now, and now it only makes up around like, 50% or so. But we definitely realized, like, "Hey, if you do these things properly, then we can actually start to get some good SEO results." I think that that's something that's really important for all the people that are listening, that like even if you've already written, I mean, we probably had 25 or 30 posts. So even if you've already written a ton of content and put a bunch of time in, it's never too late to go back and fix those things and use a proper SEO strategy.

Noah 25:58

So yeah, we did realize "Hey, we kind of screwed up," but we really put in the work and we put in a lot of time and effort just to turn our results from barely anything to pretty good and we're still working on them every day. And we still have a lot of things that we hope to accomplish with the SEO traffic at Create and Go, that we're still working on.

Lauren 26:24

So yeah. We did a lot of things wrong and man I remember those times too. It felt like one long dark year when you and Alex were working on the SEO stuff and I was just, I wasn't involved in that part of the business really, so I didn't really know what was going on. And I was just like, Is anybody doing anything around here? Because it was like slack was quiet, nobody was talking as you and Alex just had your heads down in the SEO trenches for that whole year.

Lauren 26:50

## Episode 18: SEO Part 1

And y'all the culmination of that was, A) them fixing a lot of our SEO problems. But B) Noah has also created an SEO course for Create and Go. It's called SEO Blueprint for Bloggers and it's our newest course, a newest addition to the Create and Go courses so we are really excited for that. And if you haven't checked it out yet, as Noah said, you can start SEO at any point in time along your blogging journey, the earlier the better of course, so you don't make any of those mistakes or overlook things.

Lauren 27:23

On that note, that is what we're going to talk about in next week's episode. Noah is going to come back next week and we're actually going to talk more about some of the nitty gritty things you're probably interested in, he's going to talk about the three most common SEO mistakes that people are making with their blogs. As well as two mistakes that we made here at Create and Go, is that right Noah?

Noah 27:47

Yeah, absolutely. We kind of touched on a lot of things in this episode. But next week I really want to dive deep into some of the really common mistakes that I see clients and just fellow bloggers making. Like you said in addition to talking about some of the bigger mistakes that we made, that a lot of our followers may be less likely to make but still affected us negatively nonetheless.

Lauren 28:13

Yeah, so make sure to check out the SEO course and come see us next week for sure when we get into those specifics. Well I want to thank you, Noah, for joining us on this episode and I'm really excited for next week!

Noah 28:28

Yeah, I really appreciate you having me. Same here, I'm super excited for next week and I really hope you guys you know enjoy this one. But I really hope the next one is going to be one that just kills it.

Lauren 28:43

Alright, well we will see y'all next week.

Lauren 28:48

Thanks for listening to the Launch Your Blog Biz podcast. Don't forget to subscribe so you don't miss future episodes. And please share the love by leaving us a review if you love this episode. If you want to learn more about how you can launch and grow your own blogging business, make sure to check out our website at [CreateandGo.com](http://CreateandGo.com)