

## Episode 28: Selling Our First Website

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 have some really exciting news to share with you today: I sold a website! Well, okay, Alex, and I sold our first website.

Lauren 0:46

But it's really, really exciting. And I'm so excited, really, for this podcast, too, because it allows me to share this kind of stuff with you all in real time. I mean, we just sold this website on February 15. So it just happened. And of course, lucky for you, because I'm still not at all ahead on creating content. I'm still going to the hospital every single day in Florida right now to get my dad through this part of you know, his hospital stay into recovery from a stem cell transplant. So yeah, I'm behind in a lot of things. And that means that I'm recording the stuff at the last minute.

Lauren 1:23

And yeah, it was really excited to get to share this with you. I just kind of cleared off all other planned content, you know what I was going to record in the future so that I could talk to you about this, because I think it's really exciting for me, of course, but I also know many other people, some of our students as well that have sold their blogs in the past. And I think that it's a good thing to talk about, because you never know when you're going to find yourself in this position.

Lauren 1:50

And, really today, I want to talk to you about the transition from starting this first blog to arriving at the point where we felt like it was really the right time to sell it. And that's actually a time that we felt quite a while back ago, but we weren't able to sell it for a while. And anyway, I'm going to share with you really some accomplishments from this first blog, what we learned from the process of growing it like crazy, but also watching it start to fall and fall and fall into decline. And I'm going to share the good stuff, the details like how much we sold it for and who we sold it to. So I'm going to share all of that with y'all.

Lauren 2:29

Now, really, I just want to get started telling you a little bit more about this first blog, I know that many of you already know this, you know our story. So I'm not going to dive into it too deep here. But just overall, this was our health and wellness blog, it was called Avocadu--like avocado, but with the a "u". And this was our very first blog that we started. And it meant so much to both Alex and I because this is what really took us on this path of quitting our full time

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jobs. Traveling the world. It's what put me on the path to meeting my husband, traveling, and now living in Germany. I mean, honestly, it's just so much has happened since we started this.

Lauren 3:10

And really, we started this website based on the knowledge and experience that we had, because Alex was a personal trainer and I had been a pretty hardcore vegan. We didn't start this out with a lot of personal intention. That was our very first website, Health and Happy Hour, that I've talked with y'all about in the past. And that was really our passion project. But it didn't work out for various reasons. And I will say that this second website was started out with a little bit less personal intention, there definitely was a very specific intention to make money. And a seed of passion did still exist there because we did love health, wellness, fitness, everything in that space.

Lauren 3:49

But honestly, with this second website, "second," right, we really followed the numbers here and not necessarily our hearts. And that's because our traffic was mostly coming from Pinterest. And we were attracting people that we couldn't really relate to. And part of that was our fault, too, because we started out with this blog very broadly. I mean, we were creating all kinds of different content. We weren't really speaking to anyone specifically, we were kind of just trying to see what was going to be popular, what was going to work and remaining very vague and open and flexible. And I think that it worked out well for us. But it can also be not the best approach because it does make you a little bit more difficult to stand out. So you know, adding a caveat there.

Lauren 4:35

But that's really how we started and we really honestly followed the money here because we started getting a lot of traffic from Pinterest on this website. And even though the audience wasn't, they weren't our people we couldn't really relate to them to well, we could still help them. They still loved our diet programs. And we still made this work. Because our number one goal here was to earn an income online that would help us get out of our nine to five jobs and stay out forever. And that is really what we did and what we accomplished here.

Lauren 5:05

And speaking of specific accomplishments here, it made me so excited to actually make some notes on some of these accomplishments because it really made me remember just how much we did do here and how much we did accomplish.

Lauren 5:20

So, when we started out, Alex had some experience with writing some freelance writing. He had also written his first ebook in college, but I had absolutely none. As you know, I was a tax accountant. And I had to learn to write. I absolutely hated it at the beginning, I made Alex do all of it. I shied away from it, I put off learning it as long as possible. But I slowly started with some content, some emails, and now I write a lot of stuff, and I love to write. So I definitely, you know, got into that space just from this. That was a big personal accomplishment for me.

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Lauren 5:54

Now, we learned how to build an email list that at one point had over 100,000 subscribers on it. 100,000 subscribers is absolutely insane. We created our own diet programs, and we helped over 15,000 mostly women lose weight. We help some of those women lose over 100 pounds with our diet principles. At one point, we earned over \$40,000 in a single month, just from one article blowing up and going viral, resulting in tons of sales and traffic to our weight loss program. And we dove deep into all the analytics and all the conversions I had literally every step of the way. And that is how we started learning how to do a lot of this naturally.

Lauren 6:37

So we've accomplished so much. And really, it has put us on the path today, where we now have this other huge website where we teach all of you how to do the same. And I'm really just so so proud of it.

Lauren 6:50

And then there are the other things, right, we quit our full time jobs, we started traveling the world. The first trip was for one whole month in Nicaragua, we were working by the pool. And you know, there are monkeys around we were going to the beach every afternoon. And we put our lives on this insane trajectory. As I said, the one that would ultimately end up in our romantic relationship ending, but led us on this incredible path to where we are today--very much different people from back then, but really falling into our own in our own space in life. And yeah, again, me personally, meeting the Wi Fi tribe and meeting my now husband, living in Germany. My life would have looked so completely different if I hadn't have started this first blog.

Lauren 7:34

So now speaking of Create and Go and kind of this transition... What ended up happening is that Alex and I found that we had so much passion for the growth of the business. So all these accomplishments I just told you, it was really how we were able to grow and achieve all of this that excited us the most. And this is how we really started Create and Go. We were finally able to start a website where we could relate more to our people, more to you. That's why I get so excited on this podcast, because you are our people, and we are our people, right? Because we still have this business, we're still growing it actively, we're one of you. So before, we weren't really able to evolve much with our people, and now we're evolving alongside y'all. And that really excites us.

Lauren 8:20

And, you know, all of this excitement that I'm telling you now in this space, was really what led to a loss of passion for the growth of the other website, for our health and wellness website. Of course, the growth wasn't quite as fast. At some point, we started to plateau, just as this website, Create and Go has also hit a plateau. It just happens. You generally can't keep going up and up and up forever, unless you do want to invest massive amounts of time and energy into just the sake of growth, which we don't.

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Lauren 8:52

But, you know, this passion and desire to grow into new channels, to explore new sources of income and, you know, to really show up for your people--to start a podcast, do these things, to start a YouTube channel. We didn't want to do these things for that other website anymore. We had way too many things on our plate just trying to manage Create and Go, and we just couldn't do everything well enough anymore.

Lauren 9:15

And honestly, Avocadu started to really feel like an obligation, to be present for our customers, to create new content. And it really led us to not creating content that we were proud of. We outsourced it. And we tried so many different writers, from Upwork, to personal people that we know that we're great at writing, and none of it just really ever felt right. It never came out the same as when we wrote it ourselves. But we just didn't have the time or the energy anymore.

Lauren 9:45

So because of all this the revenue started to decline, and we knew this and to some extent we were just okay with it because our whole focus was on Create and Go. It was what made us happy and what we wanted to invest more time, energy, and money into. And we did throw resources at Avocadu, we hired people, we try to outsource as much as possible. But overall, it really just didn't have that love and attention of ours that it really needed to grow.

Lauren 10:14

So here's where we kind of hit this turning point to sell. Because, you know, as the revenue starts to decline, we do have these two options here: we either sell it; or we let it die this slow, painful death. We let it keep, you know, declining month after month, year after year, and, you know, just let it die, right? And really, one of the biggest things for me became this feeling of overall heaviness. I felt very heavy thinking about this responsibility that I had on this other website, you know, to my people, my employees, my customers, all of this, it just all felt very heavy to me.

Lauren 10:52

And to be honest, I was also very afraid to sell this website, because I viewed this website as an asset for Create and Go. Because in our courses, and in all of our content, really, we talk so much about this first website and how we monetized it. Because we did accomplish so much. And we learned so much. And we use it as a huge teaching tool for Create and Go. And I was afraid that if we sold it to someone else, it would not be right, or ideal to continue to talk about this website, because it is no longer owned by us. And how would someone else feel if they knew that we were opening up all of the monetization strategies of their website?

Lauren 11:32

And Alex actually talked to me, I think goodness, now maybe back around 2018, about selling this website. And these are some of the things that I brought up, I didn't really want to. It was making great money still at the time, and I thought it was a big asset to Create and Go. And I cringe a little bit at it now. Because if we had sold it back in 2018, we would have made well

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over a million dollars for this website, which would have been incredible, obviously. But we held on to it. And a big part of that responsibility is on me because it just didn't feel right. And I do like to listen to my gut. So I think you know, everything happens for a reason.

Lauren 12:12

But back then maybe sometime, actually, back then that was 2018, we didn't decide to sell it, I think back around 2019, before the pandemic hit, we were looking at selling it again. And we actually looked into a marketplace called Empire Flippers, which is a really great resource if you're thinking about buying or selling a website. Because for one, they do have a marketplace full of websites for sale, but they also go into a lot of the details about what you should look at. And it's just a really, really great resource if you're thinking about buying or selling at all.

Lauren 12:44

But what happened here is that our revenues at the time were showing too much of a sharp decline. So they actually rejected us, unfortunately. So it wasn't about the fact that it was only making, you know, \$2,000-\$3,000 a month. It was more like, well, seven months ago, you were making \$8,000 a month. So that's too much of a decline, and it wasn't stable enough.

Lauren 13:04

So at that point in time, we kind of just let the idea go for a while because we were still making some money on it. And we were too busy. There were some other family health issues. And you know, really just everything else that we're always busy with. Things just got in the way and we kind of forgot about it.

Lauren 13:19

And honestly, just about a month ago, I was talking to Cathy Dean, who is my customer service manager. I'm sure many of you know her. She's wonderful. She has a Keto blog over at [healthyambitions.co](http://healthyambitions.co). And Cathy is a rockstar. And she's actually been managing Avocado for us for maybe over a year now, kind of getting content organized on it, and getting guest posts written by others. She's been doing a great job trying to help us bring this website back to life a little bit. And yeah, Cathy is amazing. She has her own YouTube channel. She's on TikTok. She's on Instagram. She manages to juggle being a wife and a mom through all of this. She's totally crushing life. I don't know how she has time for all of it, because I'm not doing a lot of that and I still feel too busy.

Lauren 14:08

But anyway, long story short, I was talking to Cathy and I said, you know, Cathy, the revenues just aren't great. I think it might be time to make some changes. And really, I had to kind of stop paying her to keep managing this website too, because it just wasn't making enough money anymore. And I mentioned that, you know, maybe it's time to try to sell it again. And Cathy said, "Hey, if you do that I want first dibs." And I was like what?

Lauren 14:33

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So Cathy bought our website. And she's already in the health and fitness space with her keto blog. She knows our customers because she's been doing customer service on Avocado for us, and she's gonna let us continue to talk about Avocado, and continue to use it as a resource, as an example. And on top of that, she works for us. So I told Cathy I was totally happy to continue to give her advice about the website anytime she wants it. I'm just so happy that it has gone to a happy home because it really does have a near and dear place in my heart. And, yeah, it was really the best win-win scenario for us.

Lauren 15:11

So long story short, we really didn't have to go through Empire Flippers again, although this was our plan if it wasn't for Cathy's interest in it. And the revenues really have been very stable over the last couple years, they haven't changed a whole lot. So I think that we would have had no problem selling it on there. But this opportunity popped up. And it honestly just felt so right.

Lauren 15:33

And if you are thinking about buying or selling a website, some things to think about are definitely the diversity of income and traffic. So in Avocado's case, most of the traffic still comes from Pinterest, although we do get some Google SEO traffic as well. But we do have a greater diversity of income. So we get money from ads, from selling our own courses, a little bit from affiliate marketing, although it could definitely be taken more in that direction, for sure, Amazon Associates, and we also have our private labeled probiotic that we sell, mostly to our weight loss clients. So it's definitely diversified in a good amount there. And it's also an older website, it's, I think we bought the domain back in 2015. So it has a bit of a higher domain authority as well. So I'm so excited to see where Cathy takes this website.

Lauren 16:24

Oh, and I forgot to mention, we sold it for \$75,000, which I believe was maybe 30 something times the monthly revenue. So if you look on Empire Flippers, you can see exactly how people have priced their website based on what their monthly income is. And it's usually a factor between 30 to 50, something times monthly revenue. But that can also depend on a variety of factors. as I just explained. The more diversity you have over income and traffic, the higher you're going to be able to sell your website for, the higher the domain authority. So definitely go check out Empire Flippers, if you have any interest at all about buying or selling a website.

Lauren 17:07

And you know, we might have been able to get more from it from a marketplace like that. But we weren't overly concerned about getting every cent out of this website. We were just really happy to see it go to a good home. And honestly, it feels a bit weird to sell it, like I'm selling my firstborn business baby. Something I've worked so damn hard on for so long. But I know that it's time to let it go, and be cared for by someone else.

Lauren 17:33

Alright, y'all. Well, I think that is it for this episode. As I said, I'm just really excited for the next phase. For my brain space to be a little bit more freed up. I will be heading back to Germany in

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about a week. I get a couple of weeks of really hardcore work again before I then have to come back to Florida. So life is gonna remain a little bit hectic on my side for the next few weeks. But I'm hoping as the weather starts to warm up in Germany, you know, towards April, May that things start to settle down a little bit more. And yeah, I'm working on a lot of other things right now. So I will be sharing those all with you soon as well. All right. I hope you have a great day and I will see you next time.

Lauren 18:20

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