

Episode 14 - Make Money Blogging Pt. 3 Selling Your Own Products

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 another episode of the podcast. I hope that you are doing awesome today. So I have been reading a lot lately, a lot more than I have in a while, I guess because when I was traveling full time, I just never had the time to read. I was always exploring new cities, and meeting new friends and social life just took over. Since I've been in Florida, the last couple of months, I've had a lot of downtime. Really, I guess actually since the pandemic started, but especially in the last couple of months, I've made it a priority to do a lot more reading in my life.

Lauren 1:10

I just picked up a book yesterday and I wanted to tell you all about it, because I think it's just really awesome. So it's a book by a woman, and generally for women, although I do think that the concepts apply to everyone. But part of why I love this book so much is that I love the way that she speaks, and I think that she has a really powerful voice for women. So if you're a guy might not be up your alley, but ladies, this book Untamed by Glennon Doyle, it's so good. So I'm already like 30 or 40% of the way through.

Lauren 1:42

This book is all about really finding your true self and just being wild again, as she explains it. She kind of starts out this book in the beginning by talking about this Cheetah that she has seen at the zoo with her daughter and one of the kids at the zoo asked the zookeeper, you know, isn't this Cheetah unhappy in this cage? And the zookeeper says "No, of course not. This Cheetah has been raised in captivity, and she doesn't know anything else." And the author of the book notices that this Cheetah is pacing around the perimeter of her cage, she's very alert, and she's paying close attention to what's happening outside of her cage.

Lauren 2:22

She talks about how this Cheetah isn't necessarily happy, just because she doesn't know the wild, because the wild is within her, she can feel the wild. And just because she doesn't know that this certain wildness exists outside of her cage, she feels drawn to something more than what is inside of her cage, inside of her surroundings. Throughout this book, the author really compares this to our lives and how early around the age of 10 we start becoming someone that our parents shape us, society shapes us.

Lauren 2:58

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And we get our validation and our instructions from other people and decreasingly from inside of ourselves. Y'all, it's a really powerful message, but I also just think that the way that's presented in this book is just really awesome. I find the author really relatable and the way that she speaks, she makes me laugh and she's just so real and so honest. So it's very, very refreshing. Ladies, I encourage you to pick up this book and see what this author has to say about being wild again.

Lauren 3:30

Especially because I think it's a little bit tied to what we have to say today in that creating and selling your own products and services requires a lot of guts, just to get started alone, I know how difficult it is. I've seen my students struggle through it. I think that we often just have trouble imagining ourselves doing something like that, we all feel imposter syndrome, especially when it comes to creating something and creating something great. I think that this book really encourages you to look within yourself and to find that courage and knowledge and power within yourself and not to look to others for it.

Lauren 4:09

So anyway, y'all that book is Untamed, and let's move on to what we are going to talk about today, which is selling your own products and services. This is my personal favorite way of making money with a blogger website, and it's really how we scaled our income. It's how we took that first couple of \$1,000 a month that we were making with affiliate marketing and we created our own product after we knew what to do and what to create, because we knew our audience pretty well at that point, we created our first product, and it sold right away.

Lauren 4:43

After our first blog failed after our first product failed, we knew a little bit more about what we were doing this time. And from there, we were able to just start scaling, start turning up that volume button. It was really cool because we turn that 2k into 4k and then into five and 6k, to 10k, we're able to actually double our revenues for the first five months of business. Just because once we had a system that started working, we just started driving more traffic, we created more products, we increased our prices, we restructured things.

Lauren 5:16

Ultimately, we were able to scale like this, because we had the freedom over those things I talked about in the last episode, the product, the price, the profit and the promotion. Those are the things that you don't have control over when it comes to affiliate marketing. But you do have full control over these things when you're creating your own products and services. This is by far the number one best reason for creating your own products and services. Because y'all it's yours, it allows you so much flexibility, and you can make whatever you want and promote it however you want. You can charge whatever you want for it.

Lauren 5:54

Now there are a few downsides to creating your own products and services. Things like the time and energy that it takes to create something like this, it definitely can take anywhere from a few

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weeks to a few months or even over a year, depending on what you're creating, depending on how motivated you are and how much you drag your feet along the way. Or especially what we've seen some people just wait four or five months to even start on it once they have an idea. So that's a big downside. Sometimes it just won't sell because you don't actually know how to sell.

Lauren 6:28

Or maybe the product that you create is not a great match for your audience, like what we experienced with our first blog. There's also a lot of maintenance, updates, customer service, I can tell you all that a lot of my time now is still spent updating my courses. During the pandemic, that was my major project, I started with the Pinterest course, I updated that entire course. Then I update the six figure blogger course and then I update our Launch Your Blog Biz course. So everything is updated. But by the time I'm done with that, I can usually turn back and see that oh, this lesson over here still needs to be updated again, things change a lot.

Lauren 7:04

Anyway, there's a lot of maintenance, sometimes that comes through products, it depends on what you're creating and how you're creating it. Some products definitely are fairly timeless that they can probably go for years or more without any updates. But when you're in the business world, that's not quite true. So it just depends, but they do require some upkeep and maintenance as well. But y'all no matter what that freedom over the product, the price, the promotion, the profits, the four B's, those benefits far outweigh any of the potential downsides.

Lauren 7:36

And let me backup just a moment here to actually explain what I mean by products and services. What kinds of products and services am I talking about? Y'all, you can sell all kinds of things with a blogger website, you can sell digital products and services. That is really where our entire focus is on, things like ebooks, courses, coaching, downloadables, even things like filters for photography. So you know, everybody's all into making their photos look all filtered and edited and whatnot on Instagram, and tons of people will sell presets and filters for photography.

Lauren 8:15

So even things like that they're downloadables and they're things that you consume online, not actually physical products. Although physical products are another example of things that you can sell, you can private label different products, you can create your own t-shirt store, there's many different types of e-commerce ideas out there. Now I'm not going to talk about e-commerce specifically because it's not a route that we've ever gone down. We specialize in digital products and services, as I said, and also y'all, you can do a combo of these two things.

Lauren 8:49

You can do things like yoga or coaching, and you can do them online and in person. So you can expand upon the services that you offer in person, any kind of physical goods or services, and you can expand that to sell them online as well. So that's what we mean when we are talking about products and services in this episode, and our very first product that we sold was an

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Ebook. It was an online diet program that was mostly an Ebook, but then it also had a few videos with it as well, and then we also created a similar thing with yoga.

Lauren 9:26

Those were our two very first products and then on Create and Go we sell online courses, which is our personal favorite way of earning an income with our websites. I personally like courses a lot because anytime that you are able to really speak to your audience, through the product that you're offering, I think that there's an automatic deepening of the relationship between you and your customer and if you do a good job, it also keeps them coming back to buy other products and services or courses from you.

Lauren 9:56

Coaching of course works in a very similar way. Now coaching is wildly popular, but it's also not a route that Alex and I have gone down, even though we could make a lot more money through coaching, just because given your time individually, you can make a lot more money. But as I've said before, in other episodes, Alex and I purposely have structured our business in a way that is more passive. We never wanted to trade our hours for dollars and we don't like being on calls. We'd like to set our own schedules, work when we want to, and have our free time whenever we want to.

Lauren 10:32

Running our businesses in this way allows us to have just that. So that's just a personal preference for us and just think about that in your business. When you're thinking about what kind of products or services you might offer. Think about what works for your niche, of course, but think about how you want to structure it because this is your business and you can run it however you want. So y'all, there are all sorts of products and services, and there are also different places where you can actually sell these products and services.

Lauren 11:01

Now you don't want to just link them up on your blog and wait for the sales to roll in, it doesn't quite work that way, you have to have a great traffic source. You want to make sure that you are driving traffic regularly to your content, to your email list, and then to your sales pages. That's personally the way that we have set up our business. But when it comes to selling products and services, there's also one other route that I want to address. And that is selling products or services on marketplaces.

Lauren 11:31

So let's just talk in terms of courses right now, think about course platforms such as Udemy, and Skillshare. Course platforms like this, almost operate similarly to Netflix, and that they're a place where you can browse content, and you're going to get served up some featured content, you generally use the search bar, of course to search for what kind of content, what kind of courses you're looking for. And platforms like these drive the traffic for you, my brother actually has courses on platforms like these on drone photography, cinematography, iPhone photography, all kinds of stuff like that.

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Lauren 12:09

And he makes great money doing that y'all, great money, but these course platforms generally take about 70% plus of your course revenue. And they take the vast majority of it because they are driving the traffic for you, you don't have to drive your own traffic. But you have to keyword your courses, right, you have to battle the algorithms and it's not just as easy as just throwing something up there and it sells because they're driving traffic. Something else that we've noticed is that, over time, these course platforms have started to produce their own content.

Lauren 12:47

So think how Netflix has done that, they used to just deliver you other people's movies, and now they produce their own movies. They have the data to know exactly what is working, what's not working, and what's going to sell. Now, these course platforms are very similar in that they know what people are searching for. They know exactly how much these course creators are making and how much they're earning every month and which courses are the top selling courses.

Lauren 13:16

And my brother has told me that he has started to see these course platforms, rather than promoting the top course creators on the platforms, they've actually started replacing some of those top content spots with their own content. You want to be aware of selling on platforms like these for that reason, in that it can be a way to earn quicker money if you keyword things right and you know what you're doing. But you're also at the mercy of algorithms and this specific platform.

Lauren 13:47

I know with my brother, these platforms have also told him that if he doesn't produce X amount of courses a year, they'll start to drop his content down in the rankings. So there's stuff like that as well. Alex and I personally prefer the method of creating our own content, building our own audience and driving all of our own traffic to our courses. It does take more time to set up but as I've said before, you have all of this freedom to be able to direct people where you want and when you want them.

Lauren 14:19

And other than the algorithms that you are at the mercy of for traffic, you're not also at the mercy of algorithms when it comes to making sales and your sales pages. So there are a couple of different routes there when it comes to the actual selling part. That's personally what we've decided to do based on how we like to run our business. Lastly, y'all before I leave you today, I just want to talk for a couple minutes about imposter syndrome, and the thing that is generally the biggest thing that's holding you back.

Lauren 14:50

Maybe you don't identify with this word imposter syndrome because it just sounds a bit cliché, but this really just means any degree of feeling not ready, maybe not good enough, thinking that you might not have the knowledge or the experience to be able to create something yourself.

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Maybe having fears and doubts that nobody would end up buying your product anyway, what would you ever include with it, all of these things are major roadblocks to getting started. Just general fear of putting yourself out there can be the biggest roadblock, and I have seen people, our students specifically, that are already making a little bit of money.

Lauren 15:31

They have all of the foundation for their business built, and they're making a good bit of money from affiliate marketing, maybe some other places. But they know that the next step is to create a product, and they're just aren't quite ready, aren't quite sure, aren't quite a lot of things. And instead, they choose to busy themselves with various other tasks and their business, which really can wait, because they're just not ready to get started. What we've seen, especially from people that create multiple products, is that it can sometimes take someone four or five months to create their first product, let's just call it a course.

Lauren 16:07

But then when it comes to creating their second course, then it only takes them about two months, and then the third one is only a month. And it's not just that I've gotten so much better. I mean, part of it is, but it's more just because they actually have the confidence, they have the confidence to know that they can do it and they're not afraid anymore, because they know that once it gets out there, it's the biggest feeling of relief. And especially when people start buying your product, the first couple of sales, it's immediate validation to what you're doing. And from there, you get to just start scaling, figuring out how to sell more, how to sell better, how to get to know your audience better and build better relationships.

Lauren 16:47

And that is truly the most fun and exciting part of running your own business. At that point, you get to actually really feel the full control over your own income. And it of course, is a double edged sword. It can be the scariest thing in the world when things aren't going right but I promise you, y'all, that's when it really starts to get fun, and the sky's the limit. So make sure that you are not your own roadblocker when it comes to creating your own products and services and putting them out there to your audience.

Lauren 17:20

It is by far above and beyond our favorite way of making money with our business, and it's the reason that we were able to scale to six figures a year and then six figures a month. If you aren't sure about how to get started with creating your own products and services, we do have a course on just that, that teaches you how to get started, how to create them, how to build email funnels to sell them, how to design your sales pages, all that good stuff. It's called Six Figure Blogger and we will link it in the description. Alright y'all, that wraps up our little mini series on making money blogging. I will see you next time.

Lauren 18:02

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 loved this

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