

Episode 15 - Too Busy? When It's Time to Get Help

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 0:34

Hey, y'all, welcome back to another episode of the podcast. I hope that you're doing great today. There's not a whole lot new going on in my life. Personally, at the moment, I am just packing and getting ready for my move to Europe. I'm leaving in a couple of days to go to Europe, and I'm trying to get a few podcast episodes recorded in order to take a little bit of time off when I get there. And it's a lot to pack. My fiance is giving me a hard time because I've been packing and repacking multiple times over the last week.

Lauren 1:08

But y'all I've been living out of suitcases for the last three years, generally out of just one suitcase when I travel. But the rest of my things, my all of my belongings have been living at my parents' house in other suitcases for the last three years. So now I have suitcases and clothes all over the floor. And I'm trying to decide what to bring with me right now in a regular sized check in suitcase and then also a small carry on. And then I also have three other larger suitcases full of stuff that I'm going to have to just come back for at some point in time.

Lauren 1:44

Because as of right now my fiance and I don't actually know where we're going to settle down in Europe. We've narrowed it down pretty much to Germany, I think, with Spain as a second possibility, but I think it's going to be Germany. And we're just going to go visit a few different cities in Germany and kind of just see what feels right for us. And my fiance speaks German, he's, he grew up there. And I have just started learning German and oh, man, I don't wish that upon anyone. It is a very difficult language.

Lauren 2:15

I've been learning Spanish on and off for the last like few years. Because I spend so much time in Spanish speaking countries and, y'all, German is a whole different monster. But alas, I'm trying anyway because I'm going to have to speak it in order to live there. And my fiance speaks it and so does of his family. So that's been my project lately is just trying to start learning German in my spare time. If anyone has any tips or resources for learning German, please let me know. I am taking a course. But it's still slow moving.

Lauren 2:48

So alright, y'all, on that note of just being really busy with things we are going to talk about when it's time to hire out some help with your business. And this generally comes from just being too

Episode 15 - Too Busy? When It's Time to Get Help

busy. Because time is your most valuable resource. And y'all you can make more money, but you can't really make more time. You can save time, and you can get help by outsourcing some of the things that you're currently spending time on. But you really can't make more time. It's the most precious resource.

Lauren 3:22

And as I talked about, in another episode, episode three on what running a blog really looks like, we talked about how you have to wear a lot of hats in blogging. There're so many different things that you have to learn, you're generally a one person show, at least for the first year or two many people are. And there's just so much to do all the time.

Lauren 3:44

Some things are a lot more important than others for you to do, some things can be outsourced a lot easier. And in today's episode, I just want to take a little bit of a deeper dive into that. Into this place where you are having things falling off your plate, you are too busy, and you're thinking about getting help, but maybe you're not quite sure when or where to start. We're going to talk more about that in today's episode.

Lauren 4:08

And I'm going to tell you where we first started with our first hire and our second hire, and where I really think the best place to start is. And then also some common roadblockers to growth, some things that keep us from either hiring in the first place or hiring the right people. And then lastly, some tips that should help you to get started looking for some help.

Lauren 4:31

So first y'all, some of these different hats that you wear, we're not going to go into any of these in detail, but just the high level 30,000 foot overview. You need to create content, first and foremost, and all kinds of content across various platforms, right? This isn't just writing blog articles, it could be creating YouTube videos or recording podcast episodes, all kinds of content.

Lauren 4:53

Then you have to edit, you have to proofread, you have to set up, right? You have to add all the descriptions to things, add titles. There are so many little set up things that have to be done in order to take a piece of content from creation mode to actually publishing it and having it go out there. There's graphic design, social media, traffic, SEO, all of the stuff that goes with all of those things. Email marketing, of course, everything from creating your landing pages, to connecting all your funnels, writing all your funnels, writing emails to your subscribers, continuing to send broadcasts, and then creating and maintaining your products. That's a whole different thing, all the setup required to actually create it.

Lauren 5:37

But then once it's created, y'all there's so much more maintenance and upkeep than you would probably think, at least in our space. In the business space, we have to update our stuff pretty often. We don't as much in the health and wellness space. So I guess that really does depend.

Episode 15 - Too Busy? When It's Time to Get Help

But just generally updating stuff, updating content, whether it's paid content, or the content on your blog, or other places--it does need updating and maintenance, you can't just push out content, and then never look at that content again.

Lauren 6:08

And then of course, customer service is a really big one if you do have products to sell customer service, and just taking care of responding to comments across all platforms, and making sure your people are taken care of can really suck a lot of time. So that's just a mega high level overview of the different stuff that you have to keep track of.

Lauren 6:28

And y'all, you're going to find that when you're growing your business that the problem is often not that you don't know what to do next, you aren't sure what the next step is, or you know how to make more money. It's just often that you're simply waiting until you have enough time to actually do that thing. Because you're still stuck writing emails or creating content or driving traffic. And there's only one of you, right, you only have so much time each day to focus on growing your business in this specific area that you're working on. And the biggest roadblock to success is often just not having enough time.

Lauren 7:04

So how do you create more time in your life? Well, chances are it isn't budging from your existing career, whatever work that you have outside of your blog. It's probably not budging from your family time, or your social life. Because if you're already working and running a blog, you know that there's just probably not any wiggle room left anywhere else in your life. I know that there wasn't for us. Because y'all there are only so many hours in the day.

Lauren 7:32

And the only real answer here is to stop working on things that aren't absolutely vital for you to do yourself. These are the first things that you're going to want to think about getting help for--anything that isn't so vital that you yourself is the one doing it. Or, what has less of you in it or could have less of you in it and could still move forward?

Lauren 7:55

So if you are all over your Instagram account, and you're constantly posting new Instagram content, and it's very much you speaking to your audience or pictures of you. Well, that may not be something that you could easily outsource to somebody else, so that may not be it because it has a lot of you in it. Although you could of course get smarter there and take a ton of different photos and have someone help you post them over time. That's always an option.

Lauren 8:18

But of course, if it's you on camera speaking, live, well that can't generally be outsourced because it's a lot of you. Same with the podcast episode. I'm talking to y'all today. And at the end of the day, I got to just show up to my mic and keep talking because I don't want to outsource that to anybody else. I want the content to come from me. So it has a lot of me in it.

Episode 15 - Too Busy? When It's Time to Get Help

Lauren 8:41

And Alex and I were different in that we were a team of two from the start. So we already had help from the very beginning, we had a whole extra person. And where we started was that Alex did the most important jobs in our business. He generally did the strategic planning and the content creation. And that was mostly because this whole idea of this business was really Alex's from the start. I was working full time as a CPA and I didn't yet know that I would be involved in this business at all, or even care to. It was only after we started and I started helping him out here and there in my own free time that I really enjoyed it and decided to hop on as well.

Lauren 9:23

So it's because of that, that Alex did it all at first. And he was just a lot better at content creation, which at the time was just writing, because he had already written his first ebook in college and had experience writing for other publications online. Whereas me as a CPA, I did spreadsheets. I did not write. I hated research and writing in college and I just wasn't a writer.

Lauren 9:46

So what I did at that time is when I think that most of you would be better off thinking about outsourcing from the very beginning. Because in the beginning I was really just help. I was just helping Alex to move all the content that he produced forward for the business. So I did things like learning Pinterest and social media, setting up all those channels, and pushing out the content across those different channels. I edited and proofread everything that he did, because Alex's grammar is terrible. And I am definitely the grammar police for sure.

Lauren 10:20

So I did all of that, and I did some graphic design, which I had no experience in. But I just liked working with images and fonts and stuff. And I had definitely a better eye for that than Alex did. So I was really a supporting role and helped to make sure that our content looked the best. It was all proof read and prettied and ready to go. And I think that that is generally where you should start.

Lauren 10:46

It was only after Alex moved into learning about paid ads and starting and managing our YouTube channel that I then transitioned into content creation. And now y'all it's my primary role. I write most of our content, I still produce the podcast episodes, when you receive emails in your inbox, they're all still coming from me. Sometimes we have other people draft some things for us. But I heavily edit everything that goes out the door, because I want it to be in my own voice.

Lauren 11:13

But I transitioned into that, and only because Alex transitioned out of the important stuff he was working on, and then I moved into that. And then there was a big gap and the things that I was working on. So I was only able to transition into those important things, because I was able to hire out help for all of those supporting role things that I was doing.

Episode 15 - Too Busy? When It's Time to Get Help

Lauren 11:36

So back to those supporting tasks, and what I think is personally the best place to start. It's where we would have started if I wasn't already doing that. But this is generally what we call a GVA or a general virtual assistant. I guess just VA or virtual assistant works just fine as well. But it's just generally someone who helps you with all of those general admin type of tasks, and they can really do anything that you need in your business.

Lauren 12:02

But some of the first things in this type of blogging business that you're likely going to need help with is the social media, the traffic, the graphic design, editing, and proofreading. And it's really just all of those supporting tasks that push your content forward after you've created it.

Lauren 12:19

This can definitely look a little bit different for you and your business depending on what it is. But just train someone to help you do all of the little things. It's those little things like adding titles and descriptions, to your YouTube videos, your podcast episodes. It's all of those tiny things that begin to just really weigh you down and take up so much brain space.

Lauren 12:43

And y'all what might be your second hire, which was actually our first hire, because again, I was doing those supporting tasks in the very beginning. But this might be a customer service. This was where we needed help with the most, absolutely. And this was just people helping us to answer comments, whether that was in our support groups, or on our YouTube channel, or on our blog, or all the different emails that we receive, all the responses that we receive back from our email funnels, all the emails that we send out--customer service takes up a lot of brain space.

Lauren 13:18

And you'll find that over time, you're going to have to answer the same stuff over and over again. Because when new people find you, they often struggle with a lot of the same things. So you're going to find yourself repetitively answering the same questions over and over again. And that is a great example of something that you can train someone else to do. Because it's generally the same all the time.

Lauren 13:39

Yes, you're gonna have people randomly asked for refunds and things situations will come up in which someone can ask you how to deal with something. But ideally, you have that task managed out at some point, once you've gotten a good grip on it, because it's just not something that needs to have you in it every day.

Lauren 13:58

So those are the two things I think are the best areas to hire out at first. Now it may look different for you. It could be writing. Maybe you hate writing, and you'd rather produce YouTube

Episode 15 - Too Busy? When It's Time to Get Help

videos, but you still think writing is important. That's totally up to you. These are just the things that we've started with and where I've seen most people hire out their help for the first time.

Lauren 14:22

Now next y'all, I want to talk about some roadblockers to growth. And these are just things that will stand in the way of your growth and potentially you hiring out people or hiring out the right people. And the very first one is going to be money. Of course it takes money to hire people. So you may absolutely be too busy and need help and you may not be able to hire anyone because you just can't afford it. And I think that there are two ways to think of this here.

Lauren 14:51

If you are going to go into debt to hire someone. I'm not going to ask you to do that. I'm not going to recommend you to do that. That is your financial situation that you need to consider. But I do want to present another situation for you. And that one is thinking of this in terms of investment.

Lauren 15:09

In that when Alex and I first started, while we didn't hire help at the beginning, we spent I estimated around 15 grand in the first few months, on all kinds of different software and courses, and all kinds of stuff to try to get our first business off the ground. And we didn't go into debt to do this. So that's why I'm not recommending that you do that. But we did dip into our savings heavily, we weren't making a dime with our blog. And that money came from our pockets, it came from our bank accounts. Thankfully, we were both doing fairly well at the time, and we did have some money saved up. But we definitely treated those expenses as an investment. And we believed that they were going to pay off.

Lauren 15:52

This is a business. And if you want to make money from it, you need to treat it like a business. And it will require you to invest some capital from time to time, that's just how it goes. So just consider this if you're in a place where you think that you're very close to break through. Or maybe you've even made some money, but you maybe are just two or three months off from really, really doing something with it, and time is your biggest roadblocker: Well think about potentially hiring some help. Because if you're going to hire help and get there faster, you will earn that money back if you're doing the right thing. So again, that is up to you and your financial situation to assess. But I just want you to think about it in terms of debt versus investment. And so you can figure out what might be best for you.

Lauren 16:35

Next y'all, my personal biggest roadblocker or to growth and getting help, was thinking that I could do it all and I could do it better. It's something that I am so guilty of today, even now that we've had a team for over a couple of years. I always think that I can do it better, faster. And I often will just do things myself rather than outsourcing it to other people. Because I don't feel like taking the time to explain it to someone, or because I know that it's not going to be done

Episode 15 - Too Busy? When It's Time to Get Help

exactly the way that I want it. And this is definitely the enemy to growth, this mindset right here, because it's going to keep you doing those smaller, mundane tasks.

Lauren 17:16

And the problem is I think that sometimes we look at them on an individual basis, you know, I start my day, and I get wrapped up into something and I'm like, okay, fine, I'll just do this, and take a couple hours, like whatever. But then when you'll get the course of the week, it's like, well, if I did that one or two times every day, I've actually lost out in a good eight hours, which is an entire day of my week, on stuff I didn't need to be doing, I could have taken that time off, I could have done more important things in my business.

Lauren 17:43

So you need to think about it from a bigger perspective and think about how much time you spend doing things you probably shouldn't be, and just simply for the fact that you think you're going to do it better. You need to instead find the right people and train them to do things better and do things in your way, even if it takes you multiple times to go over it with them over and over again, you need to do that rather than continuing to do them yourself.

Lauren 18:08

It's something I'm still guilty of. And it's the reason that I didn't hire out for a long time is because I just said, No, it's important for me to do this. And in reality, I think that I was a bit too lazy at times to hire someone afraid that they wouldn't do it right, or just not being able to let go of certain responsibilities that I have in my business.

Lauren 18:29

And something that's related to that is when you micromanage. So anytime that you are not allowing someone on your team to really have full reins of what they're doing, and you're constantly asking them how they're doing it, constantly correcting them, and constantly having your head and what they do, you're not going to give them that empowered feeling to really take things off on their own and do it without having to ask you all the time. So make sure that you're not micromanaging as well.

Lauren 19:00

I think that those are probably some of the biggest roadblockers to growth. So make sure that you're not succumbing to any of those things. And on that note, I just want to talk lastly, about a few different tips when you're hiring people, some more mindset stuff. And one of the things is to train people to be problem solvers.

Lauren 19:18

And I think that this is what is going to help you not micromanage, and help you to finally step away from thinking that you can do it better, that you have to trust in your employees, your colleagues, co workers, whatever you want to call them. You have to trust in your team to be able to do the tasks and to do them well. And you can hire and train people to do them even better.

Episode 15 - Too Busy? When It's Time to Get Help

Lauren 19:41

Another way to think about it is, what's that phrase that when you rather than giving someone fish you teach them how to be a fisherman, something like that. But you teach them how to do things, and you teach them in a way that they know that they need to seek out answers for themselves. And what I like to do when I'm talking to my team is I like to remind them that this is their space, it's not my space, it's their space.

Lauren 20:04

And I want that space to have room for them to grow. And I want them to always be seeking out better ways to do things, you know, this is my way. And I think that my way is the best way. But you are the one that's on the front line. And this is your job. So if you can find a way to do it faster, to do it better to make people happier, then by all means, I'm all for it.

Lauren 20:26

So just make sure that you give your team enough space to really be their own people, and help you actually grow. Not just do the job, but help you actually grow your business and seek out alternate and different and better ways of doing things. And it'll take you a little bit of time to figure out what kind of people are like this and what kind of people aren't. But this is part of you becoming a manager, and you learning how to train people on the right ways, too.

Lauren 20:57

Another tip, before you hire any help at all, is to learn everything that you can before you outsource. Now, there are scenarios here where that may not apply, things like writing, if there are certain tasks that you just hate in your business, and you're like I suck at it, I don't want to do it. That's it. Well, that's okay. But just remember that you know your business and you know your audience. And anytime that you hire out anybody, they're going to often be a step removed from that, especially when the job that they're doing is related in any way to your audience specifically, or to communication with that audience, there's going to be a person removed there.

Lauren 21:37

So you need to make sure that you learn everything well enough to be able to properly train someone else to do it, as well as you can, or at some point, ideally better. But I found that it's really important to learn everything first. For instance, I had a friend once asked me what I thought about him hiring out some marketing in this company. And I was like, you know, I don't know. I mean, I think that you could hire out some help. And there are certainly copywriters, and people that know a lot about marketing. But at the end of the day, you have to be the one that oversees that content, because you are the one that knows your audience.

Lauren 22:13

They can tell you certain phrases, certain things that work across the general masses and in various niches. But at the end of the day, the buck stops with you. And you have to be the one to know that that content is still speaking to your people.

Episode 15 - Too Busy? When It's Time to Get Help

Lauren 22:30

And lastly, y'all when you're thinking about outsourcing, the way that I think about it now, because I struggle so much with just letting go of tasks and outsourcing myself, is you need to make sure that you're continuing to think about everything that you're doing on a daily basis, and try to think about all the things that you just do not need to be doing. As I said before, the things that just aren't as much you as other tasks. Anytime you get hung up on some random project for an hour or two, think about, can I give someone else access to this project? Could they have done this? And the answer might be, Well, maybe not as well. But could I have trained someone to do it that well? Well, if the answer is yes, then you should probably outsource that.

Lauren 23:14

It's something that I still try to analyze on an almost daily basis to make sure that I am continuing to offload things that are just not as important to me because as time has gone on, and I've launched this podcast, I just have too many things to do. And I spend too much my time putting out small fires in my business. So I'm trying to teach some people on my team to be able to put out those fires for me.

Lauren 23:38

And one other thing that I like to think about is when things start falling off your plate, that's when it's time to get help. It's okay to let things fall off temporarily. I know that when Alex and I were starting to create products, we let email marketing fall off our plate. But we also suffered from it. We had a day where we actually made \$0. And it was a day when we had already for a few months been making consistent money. So we definitely felt that. And we knew it was because we had stopped emailing. And we simply didn't have enough time to email.

Lauren 24:09

So we started emailing a lot more, and then we started making more money again. So you can see where if we had hired out some help, and we hadn't dropped the ball on that task, we would have made more money and that person would have been paid for. So when things start to fall off your plate, and the more and more they fall off, those are the things that, A, you need to hire out, and B, that's how you can tell that okay, it's really time to get some help here because I'm letting too many things go.

Lauren 24:34

I would forget to post certain things to our support groups, or forget to do this or that. And I would often be like, well, I guess it wasn't that important anyway, but rather than just making sure it was done and having someone to help me do it if I couldn't, I just started to let things go. And all of a sudden I just had way too much falling off my plate that I was like alright, it's way past time now to hire someone. So ideally, if you can notice those signals earlier on, that's going to help you decide when it's actually time to get help.

Lauren 25:04

Episode 15 - Too Busy? When It's Time to Get Help

Alright, y'all that is it for today's episode. It was a little bit longer, and I just want to finish with telling you what to expect in our next episode, because I think that many of you will find it pretty interesting. In the next episode, more talking about team work, I guess. Alex and I are going to talk together, he's going to join the podcast again, and we're going to talk about what it's like running a business with your ex. So we're going to talk about some of the ways that we have worked together, and some of the ups and downs that we've had. So make sure to check that episode out, especially if you have a business partner, and maybe you have some weird dynamics to work through sometimes. Alright, y'all I'll see in the next episode.

Lauren 25:47

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 episode. And 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.