

Episode 10 - Building an Audience Pt. 2

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're doing well, today I am in St. Petersburg, Florida, which is where my parents and one of my brothers lives. And I'm just here to get to my family through some health stuff that's going on and also came to get the vaccine. My fiance and I came to get the vaccine, and I posted something very briefly and very simple on Instagram and I got some nasty negative comment that was like, keep this disgusting stuff to yourself. And man, y'all people are crazy.

Lauren 1:15

Whether you have gotten the vaccine or whether you haven't, you have your own personal reasons for it, everybody does. So I think that people just need to chill out and pay more attention to what's going on in their own lives and care a little bit less about other people. But anyway, I digress. That is why I'm here and I'll actually be in Florida for probably most of the next few months before I head back over to Europe for a while. So yeah, anyways the internet is much better than Costa Rica and Mexico where I've mostly been for the last few months. So that's definitely a plus and to get to spend more time with my family.

Lauren 1:54

All right, y'all in today's episode, we are going to be talking more and again about building your audience. In the last episode, we talked about getting traffic to your blog, and all of the different platforms and options that you have to get traffic to your blog. Today we're going to talk more about what you do once you get those people to not just your blog, but also your podcast, your YouTube channel. Once you drive that traffic, what do you do with those people? Ideally, you have some way to reach them again because y'all it's hard enough getting people to your stuff, to your content the first time around.

Lauren 2:34

If you can capture those visitors and have a way to reach them again, it's going to be so much easier to then get more eyeballs on your content without having to, again, do all that initial traffic driving. So in this episode, we're gonna talk all about building an email list and really why it's so important, when you should get started, and how you can get people to sign up for your email list. First, I want to start off by talking about why email is so important and I know that this is not going to be super new for some of you. But y'all it's literally the number one single most important tool that we use in our business to make money. It's so important. So hear me out, I'm going to tell you why it's so important for us. So you can really think about how you can use it in your business or use it better.

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Lauren 3:26

First, one of the great things about building an email list is that it's a really great place to get feedback from your audience, all kinds of feedback. So feedback on your content, whether people even like it, or whether they want more or less of something, it's a great place to get feedback for anything that you sell, whether it's affiliate products, or your own products, or coaching or courses or whatever. You can send out surveys, you can ask questions and emails provide you a direct connection to the people that care about you the most. And ideally, the ones that you want to buy from you.

Lauren 4:03

An email list also provides you a way to build trust and really deepen the relationships that you have with your readers, subscribers, whatever, and provide you a better chance to make sales. You've probably heard us say it multiple times before but the money is in the list and this is so so so true. Because think about when people hit your content, depending on what kind of content it is, you know, if it's just a written blog post. Well, they're not going to really be able to get a really good sense of who you are from that blog post. Now, maybe it's a 10,000 word blog post, and maybe they do, but it's still just one tip of the iceberg, right? Same with a podcast episode or a YouTube video.

Lauren 4:44

They've just barely gotten to know you and what you're about. They're usually at a stage where they're either done with you because they don't like what you have to say or they want to learn more. So maybe they hop over and they look at other pieces of content. But if you can get them to sign up for your email list, then you're able to send them more targeted content. Content that just maybe doesn't have a space on your website or on your YouTube channel, it's a place for you to be able to get more real with your audience.

Lauren 5:12

Really share a lot of deeper stories and, of course, share things that will eventually lead to making sales. So it's a really great place to reach people outside of what you currently do outside of your website and your various channels, and start to build that trust and relationship with them. Now, as I mentioned before, it's the single most important tool that we use to drive sales and to make money in our business. I'm not kidding, y'all, it's literally the most important, other than actually building the courses, of course. You have to have a way to monetize but it's the most important tool that we use to make those sales and drive more traffic to the products that we sell.

Lauren 5:53

So many people think that making money with a blog or website is just about creating some content and then creating the products. Here's so many other pieces that connect between those things. And you can't just have your products listed up on your website and expect people to take in your content and then just buy. I mean some will, some percentage will, but if you're able to get people onto your email list, then you can do things like running internal promotions,

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you can push your courses a bit more. So we have our courses on sale fairly often for various holidays and it's a good reminder to people that, oh, yeah, I was interested in this thing and now it's on sale.

Lauren 6:33

There's a lot of ways that you can incentivize people to sign up for those courses, or, you know, products, ebooks, whatever you're selling. And we know that this works, because we have tracked this diligently with link tracking, and all kinds of different analytics and various tools. We've actually tracked this and we make the most of our sales from our email list, not just from random people clicking stuff on our website, which again, does work but it really just makes what you do so much more effective. As I said before, y'all it's really just a way for you to reach your audience again, and again and again, you can share new content.

Lauren 7:11

Y'all what email really does kind of, as I said before, is that it allows you to reach your audience again, and again and again, it allows you to share new content. So every time I now record a new podcast episode, I can send it out to my email list. Of course, the people that already subscribed, get an email, but I'm getting thousands of extra visitors to my podcast every month, just because I'm able to also advertise it to my email list, rather than just linking it on my blog somewhere. Of course, ideally, in the algorithm, you know, through the various podcast platforms, ideally, it will start to grow on its own. But right now I have this big email list that I can share that with.

Lauren 7:55

It's a really amazing way to leverage starting other businesses, starting new projects, because you're able to immediately get more eyeballs in front of what you're doing, whether it's feedback, whether it's making a sale, whether it's trying to grow a new channel or something. Having an email list allows you to already have people there waiting, who are interested in what you are doing and want to support you. So it's super, super, super awesome. Alright, y'all, so obviously tons of different reasons why you should have an email list.

Lauren 8:26

Next, you might be wondering, well, when should I start? Or maybe you've already started but if you haven't, really right away is the best point of time. If you have already started driving any amount of traffic, usually, you want to have at least some kind of consistent traffic, you know, maybe 50 visitors a day or something in the very least. But you really should start right away. There are tons of free options to start and I am going to give you some resources in the show notes for the best place to get started. But y'all it's so easy to get started and you can do it for free so there's no reason not to start right away.

Lauren 9:01

As soon as you start driving that traffic, because even 50 visitors a day to your website, if there's no way for them to be able to sign up for your email list and come back again, well, they may never find you again. It's wasted traffic to some extent. So for sure, right away, yesterday, today,

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that is the time to start. And even if you just have a few pieces of content out there, and you're just getting started, just put some kind of simple email opt in at least just to have something. On that note, let's talk about how you actually get people to sign up for your email list. Because I'm sure that y'all feel like this, as do I, I'm inbox zero by the way.

Lauren 9:41

So I do not just have emails in my inbox, I take care of them, all of them in a very timely fashion and I'm only on email lists if I really want to be on there. I read all the emails that I get, and there is no getting buried in my inbox because it's just very clean. I'm very type A, that's just how I am. But anyway, I'm on so few email lists, and only the ones I really want to be on and I know I'm very different, because tons of people are on all kinds of email lists and are actually the opposite. They're on tons, and they don't even actually read any emails but really, you do have to entice someone to sign up for your email list.

Lauren 10:19

Because there's tons of different email options out there, people get tons of emails these days. So this whole, like "sign up for my newsletter," it just isn't that effective. The reason for that is because people generally, as I said before, don't know you that well yet. Whether it's one podcast episode, one YouTube video, where they've read a couple blog articles, they don't really generally know you that well, unless your content happens to be so mind blowing, that they go and look for your email list somewhere.

Lauren 10:50

Generally, they do need to be convinced to actually give up that email address, because otherwise, they're just going to kind of move on or maybe they'll visit you again in the future, whatever. But generally, you do need to incentivize them a little bit, just to give them the extra push to give up their email address. We do this through creating a, what we call a freebie, it's also called a lead magnet, literally to generate leads for your blog, a lead as a potential buyer. Lead magnet, freebie, opt in, whatever you want to call it. This is the incentive that we offer to get people to sign up for our list.

Lauren 11:24

This can be in many different formats but generally, it is something that you're offering for free. Something that you're offering for free in exchange for their email address. Some really popular examples are ebooks, you can offer a free mini course, free downloads, spreadsheets, templates, checklists, etc, etc, etc. There are all kinds of different freebies that you can offer. Let's just say you happen to be in the finance space, you could offer something like a spreadsheet that helps someone get through or calculate some kind of debt or payment option. You know, there's all kinds of different things. We've personally liked the little free downloadable PDFs.

Lauren 12:05

That's how we started and they're one of the easiest ones to create. We also have had great success with mini courses but they do take a lot more time to create. Whatever it is, this free

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thing that you offer should be very simple to start out with, because you have no idea if anybody is even going to want it, or people are going to be super interested in it, or if it's going to end up doing you any good. I'll talk more about that in a second. So it should be simple but it should also be related to, obviously the topics that are on your website, but also topics that you believe that you could monetize or if you're already selling products.

Lauren 12:46

This option should be along the lines of something related to what you're already selling. The reason for that is that we don't want to get people on our email list that won't ever take any action on anything that we sell. At the end of the day y'all, people sitting on your email list that will never ever, ever buy your products, they aren't really generating you any income. And to be honest, it also costs money to have subscribers on your email list so maybe they're even costing you something. We really want the people signing up for our email list to be targeted, and targeted towards the things that we're selling.

Lauren 13:23

So very interested people in what we have to say and what we do if you're not selling something now, what you might consider selling in the future. Of course, if you're just getting started, you don't know this yet and that's okay but it's just something to keep in mind. And here's an example of what that looks like when you are kind of doing it the wrong way. This is something that Alex and I figured out through a bit of trial and error with our first opt-ins and we created a few that were really popular. We got tons and tons of signups because people really wanted this freebie, they were really interested.

Lauren 13:54

But we did have some trouble at times pairing those really popular opt-ins with products to sell. So here's just one example, we offered a free guide on something like the 50 uses of coconut oil and it was super popular and had a really pretty cover that I designed. We had tons of signups, but the only product that we really had to sell at the time was a weight loss product. So think about all the people standing up for the 50 uses of coconut oil. It could be people of all ages, all demographics, interested in all kinds of different health things because of how broad Coconut oil is and then we're selling a weight loss product behind that. So we're getting tons of people on our email list that may or may not even be interested in weight loss at all.

Lauren 14:43

Now compare that to if we offer an opt in that's about weight loss, you know a quick guide on how to get started with weight loss. People signing up for that are obviously very interested in weight loss so we know that they're likely going to be interested in a product about that. Of course it's not a guarantee but it's much closer than the mismatch that we had with the coconut oil. And this was a really big trial and error process that Alex and I had to go through to really attract the right person who was interested in the way that we were monetizing, and the products that we had for sale.

Lauren 15:18

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Y'all, this matters, whether it's your own product, or even an affiliate product that you're trying to sell, however you're trying to monetize, it matters to attract the right people. So when you're creating this freebie, just keep this in mind that it's not just about attracting as many people as possible, which should be one goal, but you have to find a balance there and make sure that you're attracting the right people. Because otherwise, they're just going to sit on your list and they're not going to be as interested in what you're doing. They'll end up unsubscribing, they just won't be as engaged as the people who are really interested in those topics. Think about this, when you are creating your freebie and thinking about what topic you want that to be in and you know how you're advertising it.

Lauren 15:21

Alright, after you have brainstormed a little bit on what this freebie might be, before you actually think about exactly what it is, I want you to also think about where you'll be promoting it, because it might determine a little bit of what you end up offering. The platform that you're driving most of your traffic from does matter a little bit and where you're offering this freebie matters a little bit, you know how you want to structure it and whatnot. There are many different ways and places that you can get people to sign up for your email list.

Lauren 16:35

There are tons of different things like landing pages, scroll mats, banners, and pop ups and different inline content you can put on your blog or on your website. And not just on your website, but you can talk about it in your podcast, in your YouTube channel, in your Instagram stories, or however you're communicating with your audience. You can talk about this email freebie that you're offering. So if you do happen to have a YouTube channel, and you're having a lot of people watching your content, you may want to consider creating some kind of mini course because people are already used to watching you on YouTube anyway, they're already interested in videos, obviously, to some extent.

Lauren 17:14

So if that happens to be the platform where you drive a lot of your traffic, you want to consider that. And the reverse is also true in that if you don't have any kind of video content, you may want to consider starting out much simpler like a free downloadable PDF, or something like that. We always recommend starting there anyway, just because it's much simpler to create but based on the age demographics of your audience where they're coming from, they may or may not be interested in videos. We've definitely created a video mini course for our other health blog, and it totally bombed even though our mini course for our website, Create and Go, works super well.

Lauren 17:14

It depends on a few different factors and just keep that in mind. Ultimately, you want to make sure that you are sharing this opportunity to sign up for this free thing, as often as you can. So that's using multiple formats on your website, placing it in multiple different places, both above and below your content to make sure that people see it. At the end of potential podcast episodes, YouTube videos, if you have any kind of channel like that, make sure that you're

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mentioning it here and there. "We have a free blogging boot camp. So if you haven't signed up for that yet, that'll be in the show notes." That's just an example of me giving you a call to action and telling you to sign up for our email list. So if you're interested, make sure to check out the show notes.

Lauren 18:37

You can do simple things like that, those little small pitches at the end of your content to just give someone a last call to action and some action to take upon finishing your content to go take the next steps. Y'all from here, this is really where you're going to get into that final stage of testing, analyzing, optimizing, just all of the trial and error period. This is a stage that Alex and I really struggled through for several months and looking back on it, I'm really happy that those months happened because it taught us so much about email marketing and the sales process and just general marketing and communication with our audience.

Lauren 19:24

Because we had no idea what we were doing with email in the beginning and if we had created some weight loss opt in that sold a weight loss product immediately, we would have just hit a home run. And we wouldn't have been able to really teach these strategies to y'all because we wouldn't have had that experimentation process. And it is important to some degree that you have this as well. Now if you do have a home run right from the get go, well props to you, you've skipped a lot of steps and that's great.

Lauren 19:51

It'll save you a lot of time but this is the stage that you want to pay a lot of attention to and don't get too upset or distraught by failure here, because you will learn so much about your audience through these failures. And really just so much about how this type of business works and this communication process works. So trying to create an opt in that A people want and B that can also successfully sell a product at some point and is successful in getting those targeted, interested people on your list. That can be very difficult but you're going to learn so much more about what to say and how to say it.

Lauren 20:31

And so much that you can carry with you when it comes to finally selling products and really like growing and scaling your income so it's so important. At this stage where Alex and I were at, I've probably said this 100 times, my students are probably like, I know, you've said it so much but I love this story, because it just it really exemplifies the place that we were at and shows how dedicated we were to figuring it out. We had five different email opt-ins going to five different affiliate products. So we had five different email funnels, trying to sell a different product behind all these different opt ins and this was the stage in which we had traffic and we were just literally testing out different freebie ideas.

Lauren 21:14

Then we had different funnels built to sell different products and we're gonna talk more about email funnels in the next episode. But really, we were just trying to sell different products by

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getting people on our email list. And most of these bombed spectacularly but we spent a few months really testing out different stuff and analyzing all the data, the different open rates on emails and the conversion rates. We actually checked, how many people are visiting a certain page, and how many of those people are actually signing up for our email list?

Lauren 21:44

If it's only 25%, how can we increase that? Is it by changing our opt in, is by changing our headlines, changing the color or design of the page. We experimented so much with all of this, in the first few months, we weren't making any money, but we were desperately trying. This is how we learned about writing headlines and how to display products, how to, you know, really the whole marketing process. So again, this testing, analyzing, optimizing stage, you need to look at it from this perspective of it being fun, and perhaps not fun, but so necessary and vital to the growth of your business and just really pay attention, pay so much attention to this.

Lauren 22:29

Y'all the last thing I want to say here is just don't be afraid of email marketing. I know that it can be overwhelming in the beginning and I definitely felt that way too. I was like, I don't want to start email, I hate email, I'm inbox Zero, nobody reads emails anymore. I had all these negative thoughts and Alex really had to convince me that, you know, "Lauren, people aren't like you. People still do read tons of emails" and I can tell you all that they definitely do. Email Marketing still works just as much today as it did in the beginning of our business, it's still the number one most effective tool for driving sales for us in our business and that has not changed and has remained constant.

Lauren 23:10

It's so important, grow your list now right away, as soon as you start driving traffic, because every person that visits and doesn't have a chance to sign up your email list, is someone who might be gone forever. So y'all the last thing I want to say is to definitely check those show notes for the resources I mentioned. I'll also provide some resources on how to get started, our recommendations for email software and the number one tool that we've used for the last several years now in our business, which also hasn't changed. Number one most important tool.

Lauren 23:44

Then in the next episode, I'm going to talk about what to send in your emails, what type of content to put in there, how often you should email, how you keep people on your email list and engaged. We'll talk about funnels, funnels, funnels, so actually selling products via email. That is it for this episode, and I will see you on the next one. Bye, y'all.

Lauren 24:10

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