NAMS

Novice to Advanced Marketing System

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Blogging Mastery – Summary Checklist

Introduction

- ✓ A blog used to be an online journal
- ✓ It's now become a system of content creation and engagement
- ✓ Blogging previously focused on frequent posting
- ✓ Now bloggers focus on quality over quantity
- ✓ A writer now writes to target their readers and their needs
- ✓ Bloggers used to grow readership through interaction on the blog
- ✓ Today they grow in the same way, but in many different places
- ✓ Activities now include tagging, sharing, liking etc.
- ✓ Social media has meant the blurring of lines
- ✓ You can blog using social media, or 'microblogging'.
- ✓ Today blogging can be a viable career

Modern Trends in Blogging

- ✓ Some trends in blogging which are expected to continue:
  - Post Length
    - Posts are longer
    - They delve deeper into topics
    - Readers expect greater value
  - Fewer Blog Comments
    - There are increasingly fewer comments
    - Readers are interacting on social media
    - More bloggers are turning off comment sections

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- Graphics
  - It's not only about text-based content
  - The quality of graphics is improving
  - Bloggers have access to better software
- Metrics
  - Metrics used to focus on traffic
  - Today they also track engagement
  - Modern bloggers look at how readers interact
- Platforms
  - Bloggers have always used one-stop platforms like WordPress
  - Other options have arisen
  - It's not a requirement to use a blogging-specific platform

✓ Learning objectives include:

- Define your target reader
- Write captivating posts
- Share your posts to maximize engagement
- Make money from your blog
- Evolve your blogging practice

Define Your Audience

✓ When a blog was just a 'weblog', bloggers wrote for themselves

✓ It was an online journal and if people read it, it was a bonus

✓ Today it's more sophisticated and more focused on the reader

✓ The foundation of a blog today is to know who your readers are and what they need

✓ The number one thing you can do to improve your blog is to research your audience

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Your Reader Persona

- ✓ The best way to understand your reader is to create a persona or profile
- ✓ A detailed description of your ideal reader
- ✓ Tailor your content to this single person
- ✓ You can create separate profiles for different segments of your audience
- ✓ Look for trends among your readership
- ✓ Try not to nail down everything

Step 1 – Demographics

- ✓ Demographics include:
  - Age
  - Geographic location
  - Language
  - Gender
  - Income level
  - Education level
  - Religion
  - Marital status
  - Occupation
  - Family composition
- ✓ Discover this data by looking at Facebook Insights and other social media metrics
- ✓ Look at your Google Analytics for your blog

Step 2 – Explore Psychographics

- ✓ Psychographics include:
  - Personality
  - Attitudes

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- Values
- Hobbies
- Lifestyle
- Behavior
- Goals
- Challenges
- Image of self
- Pain points
- Needs and desires

✓ Psychographics are harder to discover than demographics

✓ The only way to understand is to observe and interact

✓ Watch how they behave and what they say

✓ You also need to understand how they buy and use products and services

✓ Pay attention to how they interact with products

✓ Ask yourself:

- Why would the reader want to know about your topic?
- How knowledgeable are they?
- What common questions do they have?

✓ A better way to get data is by looking at forums or groups

✓ Do a search in Google or Reddit

✓ Also look at what topics or subjects are popular

✓ Conduct a survey with existing subscribers or readers

✓ Create a short survey with a tool like survey monkey

✓ Offer an incentive for completing the survey

✓ Talk to your readers one-on-one to get the deepest understanding

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Step 3 – Learn About Your Reader's Behaviors and Preferences

- ✓ Learn about how they read and engage with the content they like
- ✓ Consider:
  - How do they find content?
  - What content formats do they like?
  - How do they consume content?
  - What is their taste in terms of length and depth of content?
- ✓ Go back to the forums and look at the content that's most popular
- ✓ See which topics get the most engagement
- ✓ Look at other platforms to see which types of content get the most engagement
- ✓ Current analytics can show you which pieces of content readers are staying on
- ✓ Google's Keyword Planner tool can tell you what questions are being asked
- ✓ Follow industry influencers and watch how they interact with their audience

Step 4 – Create Your Target Reader Profile

- ✓ Take all of the information you've gathered and put it together as a profile of your target reader
- ✓ Give each target a name and treat them individually
- ✓ Add a picture for an avatar
- ✓ Paragraph 1 should be for demographics
- ✓ Paragraph 2 should be for psychographics
- ✓ Paragraph 3 should be for behavior

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Create Captivating and Shareable Content

- ✓ Now you have a clear idea of who your target audience is
- ✓ You can start planning what kind of content you will create
- ✓ Blogging takes planning
- ✓ Bloggers don't just sit down and crank out a post each day
- ✓ They create lists of idea to draw upon when it's time to write
- ✓ They often set aside special times to write
- ✓ They might write a number of posts to have on hand
- ✓ Start by creating a list of topics
- ✓ Brainstorm by asking yourself questions:
    - What do they want to know about?
    - What specific questions are they asking?
    - What problems are they facing?
    - What are possible solutions to these problems?
    - What things do you know that they don't which could help them?
    - What is your audience member searching for?
    - What topics are your audience members talking about?
    - What kind of content is your audience sharing or commenting on?
- ✓ Aim for quantity when you're brainstorming
- ✓ Get down as many ideas as possible
- ✓ Then go back and prioritize them
- ✓ Keep in mind that not all content will be text-only
- ✓ Think about videos, infographics, etc

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Creating Titles

- ✓ Now, take your list and give each a title
- ✓ Your title needs to be catchy and clear
- ✓ Turn each topic into a working title
- ✓ Titles should be specific as well as catchy
- ✓ Using numbers in your title makes it clearer to the reader
- ✓ Include the format of the content if it's not text
- ✓ Then create sub-headings
- ✓ This will make things more swimmable
- ✓ Each section should have a few paragraphs

Other Tips for Titles

- ✓ Consider Keywords
  - Use keywords that people might search for
  - Put them as close to the beginning as possible
- ✓ Use Alliteration
  - Use the same letters or sounds
  - Repeated sounds make the title catchier
- ✓ Use Strong Language (in Moderation)
  - Make bold claims about what the article delivers
  - Make sure you deliver and don't overuse words
- ✓ Keep Titles Short
  - Make them as short as possible without losing impact
  - Keep it under 70 characters
- ✓ Show Your Brand Personality
  - Choose words, phrases, and grammar that reflect your personality
  - Make sure your titles are consistent with your other content

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Writing Your Blog Posts

- ✓ Post Length
  - Look at your reader profile to determine your post length
  - This varies according to topic and audience
  - If you have a topic that's too long, you can break it up
  - It it's too short, you can add to it or make it part of another post
  - It doesn't need to be the same each time
  - Aim for some consistency
- ✓ Write Like a Journalist
  - Start with a basic foundation and build upon it
  - Start with the conclusion and then fill in the body
  - Gain attention and offer a teaser at the start
- ✓ Break Up Your Text
  - Blogs rarely have huge blocks of text
  - Text is broken up by:
    - Short paragraphs
    - Line breaks
    - Images
    - Bulleted lists
    - Bold and alternative fonts
    - Blank space
- ✓ Links and Networking
  - Wherever appropriate, add links
  - Add a link where you cite an article or discuss a blog
  - Link to your own content too
  - Link when you mention another blogger o This can have networking advantages

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- Let them know you did but don't push for a reply

✓ Editing Your Work

- Blog are written in a friendly tone
- You can't let mistakes slide
- Make sure it's mistake-free and written in the best way possible
- Some easy ways to edit include:
  - Always read over your work
  - Read your work aloud
  - Sleep on it and read it again
  - Ask a friend to review it

Share Your Posts for Maximum Reach and Engagement

✓ Your content isn't much use unless people are reading and engaging with it

✓ Aim to get your content shared, liked, and commented upon

✓ Update social media profiles so that they include a link to your blog

✓ Include a call-to-action telling readers what benefits to expect

✓ Add a link to a 'start here' post

Spread the Word

✓ Getting people to engage starts with making sure they see your posts

✓ Some ways to make sure your posts get in front of your target include:

- Email Updates
  - The people most likely to comment on your blog are email subscribers
  - Create a lead magnet to encourage subscriptions
  - Repackage old content as a lead magnet

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    - It could be an eBook, resource guide, discount, etc.
    - Add a link on your blog where people can sign up
    - Send out automated emails whenever you post new content
  - Share Socially
    - Share the news about your new post on all social media platforms
    - Write a short comment about the post that tells readers what to expect
- ✓ Tools to help with broadcasting your post include:
  - Jetpack
  - Hootsuite
  - Buffer
  - Dlvr.it
  - Post Planner
  - EveryPost
  - IFTTT

Building Engagement on Your Blog

- ✓ Once people see your posts, you want them to read and explore
- ✓ To plant the seeds of engagement:
  - Be Consistent
    - Decide on a frequency that suits your audience
    - There's a sweet spot for each email list
    - Don't post too often to be spammy, but too little to be forgotten
  - Cross-Link
    - Relink to old posts on your blog where appropriate
    - If you mention a topic you covered in an older post, provide a link
  - Ask Questions
    - Ask a question at the end of your post to boost engagement

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- If you want them to answer on social media, send them there
- Or use a plugin so their comments show up on your blog and social media

How to Get Your Content Shared

- ✓ Make it as easy as possible to share your content
- ✓ Consider improving 'Share' buttons
- ✓ SumoMe allows you to add floating icons
- ✓ Include a Call-to-Action in your blog's social shares
- ✓ Encourage quote sharing via Twitter with tools like ClickToTweet
- ✓ Mention influencers where possible and appropriate
- ✓ Tag them to access their network
- ✓ Mention blog commenters on social channels
- ✓ Interact with your most loyal readers to encourage support

How to Monetize and Turn Your Blog into a Profit-Making Business

- ✓ If you find you're good at blogging, there are ways to make money
- ✓ Some models for monetization:

Affiliate Marketing

- ✓ The easiest way to set up a passive income and make a decent amount of money
- ✓ A good option for bloggers who don't have their own products
- ✓ Not the first option for those who sell their own services, but a good add-on stream
- ✓ You endorse or promote other people's products or services
- ✓ Get a commission in return

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- ✓ Passive income – you don't do the actual selling
- ✓ The first step is to join an affiliate network

Selling Your Own Products or Services to Readers

- ✓ You can use your blog as a lead generation machine
- ✓ Consider your reader's buying process
- ✓ Align your content to each stage
- ✓ Stages include:
  - Awareness
    - They recognize their own problems or pain points
    - Content here addresses problems and explains solutions
  - Evaluation
    - The customer is exploring features and benefits to solve problems
    - Provide content to educate the customer further
  - Purchase
    - The reader is ready to make a purchase
    - Offer free trials, discounts and other special offers

✓The best blogs speak to problems a reader faces

✓They seek to solve problems with the internet

✓You need to know which stage they're at and respond with the right content

✓There are four steps to make money by selling to your readers directly:

- Write content that provides value and engagement
- Convert visitors to subscribers
  - Provide a high-value gift and get visitors to sign up
  - Once they've subscribed you can work on building a closer relationship
- Send your subscribers content to build trust
  - Offer high-value exclusive content to subscribers
  - Create a schedule for sending emails
- Sell multiple products of services your audience wants to buy
  - Use a reverse funnel and offer highest-priced products first

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- Most of your revenue comes from a smaller group, so focus on them
- Make high-priced products as valuable as possible
- Sell products through webinars for high conversions

Getting Paid to Blog

- ✓ Once you're established, you can monetize by blogging for clients
- ✓ Get writing gigs or write as a guest blogger
- ✓ Clients will hire you based on your audience as well as your skills
- ✓ Some companies may hire you to pitch their products
- ✓ Make sure these jobs won't harm your reputation
- ✓ Be transparent about what you're blogging about
- ✓ Ghost writing is different as your name is not on it
- ✓ It does tend to pay less

Showing Ads on Your Blog

- ✓ Showing ads should be the last option
- ✓ You'll earn more with the above options
- ✓ A good option if you want to make a little money while you explore other options
- ✓ The predictor of success is the size of your readership
- ✓ The more eyes on your blog, the more people will click your ads
- ✓ It takes on average three years to create a profitable blog
- ✓ Be patient
- ✓ Focus on building your brand and relationships with readers

Create Consistent Blogging Habits

- ✓ Blogging requires consistent effort to keep producing content
- ✓ There are certain behaviors you should cultivate

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- ✓ The one universal tip is that you need to write a great deal
- ✓ The more you write, the better you'll get
- ✓ Dedicate time to researching, writing and editing
- ✓ Consistency counts
- ✓ Set aside a little time each day for writing

How to Create Strong Writing Habits

- ✓ Step 1 – Create a Goal
  - Create a goal to write a certain amount each day
  - Set a goal that's something you can achieve
  - Make sure you're consistent
- ✓ Step 2 – Hold Yourself Accountable
  - Enlist the help of a blogging partner
  - Discuss goals and check in every so often
  - Tell your followers so that you're accountable to them
- ✓ Step 3 – Create a Process
  - To blog consistently, establish a process and create a schedule
  - List the tasks you need to accomplish, and estimate the time they'll take
  - Create the same type of process for any related content
- ✓ Step 4 – Add Your Tasks to an Online Calendar
  - Highly organized people use online calendars for everything
  - It shows you visually what you need to do
  - It gives you a complete snapshot of how you spend your time
  - Decide when you'll work
  - Choose a time when there are the least distractions
  - Break up your tasks into different times of day

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Other Tips to Help You Maintain Your Blogging Schedule

- ✓ Plan your diet well to optimize your productivity
- ✓ Choose the right length of time after you wake up to get started
- ✓ Take short breaks to re-energize
- ✓ Develop good reading habits and use tools to aggregate your favorite sources
- ✓ Use tools like Evernote to keep track of your brainstorming

Conclusion and Next Steps

- ✓ Now you're ready to take your blogging to the next level with the strategies you've learned
- ✓ You've learned:
  - How to discover and define your target market
  - Strategies for writing captivating and shareable posts
  - How to share your blog posts with the world and maximize engagement to reach your target market
  - Various monetization strategies
  - Tricks and techniques for planning, organizing and self-discipline
- ✓ You need to invest a great deal of time in order to see the rewards
- ✓ It can take a few years before your blog builds its readership to the extent that it can earn money
- ✓ Make sure you're prepared for this time investment

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