

THE BLOG PROGRAM

Podcast Transcript

Episode 10 – Blog Promo

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This is the Blog Program - Episode 10

Let's talk about promoting your blog.

Well, hello there... David Risley here from blogmarketingacademy.com and today, I want to talk to you a little bit about promoting your blog and getting traffic.

I mean, let's face it, we all want traffic. It's really hard to do much of anything with our site if we don't have enough traffic. And it really is one of the most pressing problems out there facing a lot of bloggers. In fact, a lot of you guys listening to me right now, I would bet that one of your biggest problems that you would complain about or you have attention on is the fact that you feel like you don't have enough traffic.

So, we're going to talk a little bit about that. We're going to talk specifically about 10 Promotional Tactics that you can use for your blog and your blogging!

So, this episode is going to be basically, just ME speaking; kind'a like the last one, so you can sit back, maybe take a few notes and hopefully, I spark a few ideas on your part. Now, I want to make a quick

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note; some of these things that I'm going to say, you had probably heard before and that's kind'a like I'm not going to be surprised about that whatsoever, because at the end of the day - promoting your blog and getting traffic is something that boils down to common sense! It boils down to things that yeah, you're going to hear it from a lot of different people, but it doesn't mean that you're doing it! So, sometimes we need to hear these reminders and get up off our butt and actually get this stuff done.

So, on that, let's get on and jump right into it on this 10 promotional tactics.

So, this is in no particular order, it's just on a little list that I prepared here...

Number 1 - STOP TWEAKING YOUR BLOG

Now, this one goes to those of you guys who; and I've gotten stuck on this one before - where you confuse tweaking your site and playing with the layout and things like that for doing something. And the thing is, at the end of the day, messing around with your design and things like that is not going to be any kind of a magic pill to getting traffic. It isn't as if you're going to hit some kind of a combination of design functionality and then all of a sudden the world is going to beat down your door. It just doesn't work that way.

So, realize that when you're spending time tweaking your site, that is not time that is being spent expanding your blog. And in almost all cases, unless your blog layout absolutely suck, which you know, let's face it - if you found a design from almost anywhere, it probably is not completely and totally horrible. So the thing is, you can't build traffic with a theme that you have. It is not necessary that you change it.

And I'm not going to say that changing your layout isn't going to have a positive impact, in many cases it will - but it's not an absolute necessity. Some of the most popular site on the internet is ugly as sin. Just look at [Craigslist](#)... I think it's insanely popular and it's extremely basic. It's basically text only. So, take that logic in your blog and realize that you don't need to have a beautiful logo and have everything just precisely laid out in order for people to come.

Now, in order for people to convert and in order for people to stay, your design does matter. But in order for people to come to your site in the first place, you don't need to do that. So, my number one piece of advice is to stop tweaking your blog. Simple as that.

Let's move on...

Number 2 – RESPOND TO ALL THE COMMENTS THAT YOU GET

So, the thing here is that people do like to feel acknowledged. They'd like to feel like somebody is listening. And everybody wants to be listened to. But the other thing, too, is that your blog is a platform for communication on the internet. And communication is never complete unless it goes both directions.

So, if you're simply lecturing people and then they comment, and then it's like you just sit there like, hit one on your stats... "Yup, I got a comment, sweet" and you don't actually talk back with them, you're completely dropping the ball. Because it isn't as if those people who comment in on your site is just a little "feather on your cap" that you got a "non-zero" comment count on the blog post. It's an actual flesh and blood human being out there that took the time to actually post something on your site, so you want to acknowledge them accordingly and really thank them for commenting, engage in conversation with them - that's really a big deal.

Not only that; if you have that function on your site where they get notified of comments on the blog or on that post or they get notified of replies, then you're going to trigger them coming back because you just replied to their comment and that's going to bring them back. Also, having more comments on the blog post lends social proof to that post. So, obviously if you're in there participating in the comments, it is going to get your comment count up. So, in a lot of times on blogs where they have a lot of comments, one of the main ways they got all those comments is because the blogger was in there interacting with commenters, frequently. They reply to people, they have conversations with people in the comments. And then as people start to realize that you actually are listening to them, they will start to comment more often.

So, very important; respond to all comments.

Number 3 – BUILD YOUR EMAIL LIST

Very, very important and this is an advice that everybody who knows anything has been given for a long time - and that includes me. But yet, unfortunately, I see bloggers out there who are not building their email list and I have no idea why. It just makes me want to hull my head on my own desk! And here's the thing... if you do not have an email list from your blog, then you're basically sitting back crossing your

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fingers in waiting for people to come back. And that's it! You've got no control whatsoever, you're building no leverage, and you're completely wasting your time.

So, it's not just a matter of... oh, I'm not going to build a list because I don't want to spam people... That's a stupid mentality to have! At the end of the day, it doesn't matter; you could decide you never want to sell anything to your email list. That's perfectly within your right but you still need to have a list because otherwise, you're not going to have any way to reach out to the people that you've already reached and bring them back in when you have something else to tell them. You won't have any way of notifying them of new posts.

And no, RSS does not count because most of the world does not know how to use an RSS feed. Us, as bloggers, some of us know how to use RSS. A lot of bloggers don't use RSS that much, so RSS, while it's a very important technology; do not expect that your audience is going to know how to use RSS or is going to be willing to do it.

But everybody out there in the internet uses email. So that is absolutely the most important thing to promote. You need to get people on your email list. So, have that opt-in form on the sidebar, underneath your post and anywhere else that makes sense. And one last comment about that is - do not hold off on doing this because you do not have something to give away to get them on your list. You don't necessarily need to have a free eBook or something like that. It can help, but it's not necessary, so do not let that to be a stop.

You always want to have the opt-in form there. In fact, I would say there's an argument to be had for sometimes it's better to build a list without giving anything away because then you're going to avoid people who are just in there to get free stuff and then not come back. So, there's a deferent argument that we could have there.

So, at the end of the day, not having a freebie is no stop, build that email list, screw RSS feed; it doesn't matter.

Number 4 – TELL PEOPLE WHO COULD POTENTIALLY BE INTERESTED IN YOUR BLOG ABOUT WHAT YOU'RE DOING

Very, very simple. So, one of the ways that you can do this is to write a post where you thought about it ahead of time but that particular post will be interesting to certain types of people. And then once that post has been written, you go to those certain types of people and you tell them about your blog post.

So, for example, I've heard Derek Halpren from [SocialTriggers](#) talk about this where he had this post about Content Is King versus Design Is King or something like that. And he wrote the post, basically; he did it on purpose in order to spark a debate because there's a lot of people that think that content is king. And so after he did that, he went to crowd of designers and do like, "hey, you know these people are coming into my blog and saying that design isn't king and that content is king", he basically sparked the debate and then went to the interested parties and brought them in and got everybody debating on his site.

So, that is an example of what I mean by this. But it's the idea of making a point after you've written the post to go out to the types of people who could be potentially be interested about that topic and just tell them about it. You're not promoting anything, you're not asking them to re-tweet it, or anything weird, like that - you're literally just playing like, "hey, you might find this interesting, let me know what you think". That's pretty much it... and then find these people on the internet. It could be on social media groups, it could be other types of publications, and do that. Let them know what you're doing because that's a great way to let the world know about what you're doing and that's what we're talking about here... promotion.

Number 5 –WRITE CONTENT WORTH SHARING

Now, I know this one ☺... It can be a little bit... well, duh! And you know, I've heard my friend [Corbett Barr](#) talk about... he calls it epic shit. So, I'm just going to say it, epic shit. ☺

And the thing is, it's good advice but at the same time you're kind'a like, "How does that help me?" "How do I know when my stuff is "epic" or when my stuff is good or not?" I mean, most bloggers out there probably think their stuff is good, doesn't necessarily mean other people think it's good. So, it's just really a subjective thing and it's really hard to pin down.

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So, just a couple of things, here about writing content we're sharing. Think about the type of content that you like to share out there on the internet. Typically that type of content that will target people's heartstrings a little bit, they will hit people on an emotional level. In some cases, it's not about emotion. It's literally a matter of overwhelming people with sheer value. I know Glen Allsop over at viperchill.com routinely writes this multi-thousand word blog post and he gets a lot of good activity on those posts simple because they're so insanely valuable. Pet Flynn has done that in a few instances on his blog where I think he did one several months back as an entire guide on podcasting. There's really so much information there that people wanna share it.

So, that's another way that you can go. You hit people on an emotional level or simply blow them away with value and that makes it worth sharing.

Another thing that you can do is make it easy to share. One way you can do this is using tweetables or quotes or something like that. So, basically you have little segments inside the blog post where you actually have a quote. It could be your own quote from your own blog post, it doesn't matter. But then you have a button right then and there for them to share them out or a "click to tweet" type of thing. And you can actually go to clicktotweet.com and you can easily make pre-filled out shortcut links with that URL clicktotweet.com and when they click on that they will have a pre-filled out tweet and all they got to do is click the tweet button. And it's nice and easy for them.

So, those are tweetables and quotes and things like that. You can even put your quotes or keypoints of a blog post into image form in order to allow people to share those things out on Pinterest and Facebook and stuff like that because you might probably have noticed that quote graphics are very, very popular. People love those things, so enable it by giving people the material to share that out.

So, if you hit people on an emotional level or blow them away with value and you really create content where sharing, and then at the same time you also make it insanely easy for them to share that material by giving them tweetables and quote graphics and things that they're actually going to be able to pick up and share across social media, then you're going to get more activity than you would otherwise for sure.

Let's jump over to the next.

Number 6 – HAVE CONERSATIONS, RUB ELBOWS AND BASICALLY... SMOOCH 😊

So, what I mean by that? It means, be active in interacting with people! Realize that promoting your blog is not all about blogging and social media and simply doing the internet thing. It really also comes down to actual human beings and people! And so, you need to take that into account. So, there's multiple ways that you can do this.

One obvious one is to go to conferences and stuff like that. It works out really well. So, carry business cards that happen to have the url of your blog on there. Go to meet up groups. Things like that.

My buddy Christian Russell has a pretty popular blog post on [blogmarketingacademy](#) that he wrote probably a couple of years now but he talks about what he calls the rule of 100 where he; I don't know if he still does this, but at the time, anyway, he was making a point to make 100 personal contacts every single day. And it's not like, 100 fresh people. What he meant was hundred communications from him to somebody else. So, it could be a reach out to them and say "hey" on Twitter, it can be sending them an email and just probably "hey, I just want to see what's going on, it's been a while since we've spoken", something like that where he reaches out and does a hundred contacts every single day. And he calls it the rule of 100.

I think it's a really good idea. Now, obviously it's going to take some work, absolutely, but it really goes to the heart of the fact that what we do here is a people business. It's not a digital business, I mean - it's an internet business only in the fact that it takes place on the internet but really what it comes down to is it's a people business. We're dealing with other human beings via the internet. And we sometimes forget that these are other human beings and that we need to form contacts with them as actual people rather than just anonymous email addresses or pixels on our analytics graph.

So, keep that in mind. Really make a point to have conversations, reach out to people and create relationships. It does take work, but it will also have positive impact on your blog traffic.

Number 7 – BUILD HIGHER VALUE ASSETS

What I mean by that is to not get stuck in the mindset of ONLY blogging. Realize that blogging; at least the way I consider it... I consider blogging to just be a word that encompasses all of content marketing.

We're in content marketing business and content does not only mean written blog post. It means other things. It means things like, eBooks and webinars and videos and slide presentations. All of it, it comes under the same category. So, don't get stuck in the mindset of only creating blog post. You need to get out there and do other things that have higher value to them. So, create eBooks. Do a webinar presentation. Create videos.

By the way when you create videos, not only can you distribute as videos to multiple sites but you can also embed the video on your blogs so you're getting not only blog post but you're getting some traction out there on the video sites. You can create slides and put them out on [SlideShare](#). You can create a document; so especially if you're giving an eBook away, you can put a PDF version of that on [Scribd.com](#).

There's lots of things that you can do here and the other thing to keep in mind is that you want to build things that will give you more long term value because the typical blog post... well, you write it, it goes up... it's like "fresh" for some amount of time on your blog and then eventually gets kind'a buried in the archive and won't see the light of day except for some random Google traffic. And that's not what we want. We want to create things that have more lasting value.

If you create an eBook, for example, it's going to have a longer term value because you can set up a squeeze page for that, you could build your list, you can create more long term leverage for your growing business than just a single blog post.

So, always be looking for ways that you can leverage your content. Create lasting assets. You can also look for ways where you can leverage some blog post that you've already written. Repurpose them, put them into other formats and not let these pages go deep into the archives and never see the light of day again because it's not very smart.

Number 8 – PURPOSELY SPARK CONVERSATIONS

So, the thing about this is that you want to write content sometimes which is not just talking about something. Sometimes; and I do this a lot on my tech site, where I will really write content that is really the sole purpose of that content is to get my audience talking back to me. That's it. So, sometimes I literally do a blog post where it's nothing but a question.

Another thing that I'm doing is doing routine poles. I actually started doing "Pole of the week" over on my tech site and I'm using polldaddy for that. polldaddy.com, really cool site, it's put up by the same people that do WordPress itself, it's really a cool service... and it will allow you to embed poles right in your blog post, put them on your sidebar, all kinds of different things.

But the whole idea here is you write content which is not YOU just talking to people but you asking them what they think and getting them to respond. You want them to actively engage with you. And sometimes you need to write content that specifically does that. Ask them a question, maybe give your opinion and then really hammer them like, "what do you think? I really want to hear from you." And I can get them to post comments. If you do poles, it's really easy because it doesn't require a lot of work. Posting a comment may take a little bit more effort for some people but voting on a pole is usually something anyone can do in a couple of seconds. So, poles can help a lot, too.

And then what you do; I do this on my tech site, is that the next week, I will write a follow-up post where I will just literally announce the results of last week's pole and then I will post this week's pole and then the week after, again I will again post the results of the last week's pole. So, the thing is, I'm constantly engaging the audience; constantly getting them to talk back to me.

And then the other thing is you apply what the second thing that I've talked about on this episode was and that to RESPOND TO ALL COMMENTS. So, by creating content which is specifically designed to talk to you, and then you in turn acknowledge them and talk back to them; you're basically getting conversations going. And that is the kind of thing that builds audiences and communities. You definitely want to be doing that and not just talk about something and then sit back, cross your fingers and hope somebody finds it interesting. You need to do both. Sometimes it's good to just talk at your audience in order to teach them something, sometimes you just want to sit back and spark them and listen and then engage in conversation.

Number 9 – HAVE A SOCIAL STRATEGY AND ACTUALLY USE THE DARN THING!

When I say social strategy I'm talking about getting your content out on the social media and basically just engaging in social media. Everybody talks about that. There's all these "ghouls" out there to talk all about social media. Totally fine, it is what it is! But most bloggers, including myself, sometimes I'm guilty of this; is that when you publish a new post you'll share out that post across your social media channels and you kind'a just sit back and think your job is done. And it's really not! Because you're not going to get a lot of traction with a blog post if all you do is share it on Facebook, tweet it and maybe put on LinkedIn or something and Google+ and then sit back and hope that people take over from there.

You have to do more than that. You got to be out there and have more of a strategy in mind.

So, what's the use of doing this is to have constant sharing going on where even between your fresh blog post, you could also tweet stuff out just sitting on your archives. Take some of your most popular content you that you may have written a month or two ago and tweet them out again. Share them on Facebook again. Get those things out there and get some more leverage out of those older pieces of content.

You could also... and this is something we tried to do here in the Academy, is that when we actually post a new post, I don't just don't tweet it out once. I would actually schedule several tweets of the same exact post and we do this with hootsuite.com where you can actually schedule tweets. And I will try to at least setup 4 or 5 different tweets of the same post to go out over time; over 24 hours or so. And I think that that's something you should be doing because Twitter is a very instantaneous platform and when you tweet something out, only a very small fraction of the people who follow you are going to see it.

So, in order to maximize your distribution, you really do need to tweet things out multiple times. It just is what it is. Don't sit there and think, "well, people are going to think I'm tweeting this too much, blah, blah..." at the end of the day, most people would not even notice because people are not paying attention with everything you tweet out. It's just a fact of life. And also, you should try to vary the wording a little bit. We don't post the same exact same tweet five different times. We do vary it around. It just has to have the link to the same thing.

When it comes to Facebook, consider using the "promote it" posts in the different paid opportunities that Facebook has. But the basic idea here is you want to set up a system. Step 1,2,3,4,5... system that

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you create. That is a procedure that you go through with every single blog post or other piece of content that you put out on to the internet. And it needs to be a more robust strategy than just one share to each network and then hope people will take over. It needs to be more thorough than that.

And if you set up that system, if you're the only one running this, then you just run to the checklist everytime that you publish a post. If you happen to have a VA, awesome. Share that checklist to the VA and then tell them, "Whenever I post a new post, you go and do this..." and they will take care of sharing it all across your social channels. You just need to make sure that you have a strategy and hold to it here.

Lastly, the last promotional tactic I'm going to talk about here is...

Number 10 – USE AN EDITORIAL CALENDAR

Now, what I mean here is more than just using a plug-in.

There is a plug-in out there for WordPress editorial calendar, it's really cool, it puts a calendar into WordPress itself and you just kind'a see when your post is scheduled and all that. But that's not exactly what I'm talking about here. What I mean is for you to actually plan ahead. Don't just be operating on the basis of "what's my next post going to be?" You need to be thinking in really long term out. I mean, to the point where you might even want to consider planning out an entire quarter or even an entire year on your blog.

Now, it's a matter of what kind of blog you run. But like on my tech site on PCMech.com, we do not plan on out that far in advance because; and especially in the world of tech, things happen and we want to post something about it and so, I can't plan out on something based on a news item that I don't even know if it's going to happen. But in Blog Marketing Academy, this is not news driven space and I can plan things out. And I actually have an editorial calendar here for an entire 3 months in advance. And so right now, the current editorial calendar I have goes out through the end of August. I already know every single thing that I'm going to be promoting and what content I'm going to be creating through the end of August.

Now, that's what I mean by editorial calendar.

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Now, the benefits of this is that it allows you to not only plan ahead and remove a lot of the lay work for writing posts because half the battle of blogging sometimes is what the heck to write about, right? Well, if you have already got that figured out, you've already got that taped. It removes a lot of the work. So, all you got to do is just look at your list and be like, "okay, that's what I got to do" and you sit down here, write the darn thing.

But the other thing, too is that when you actually sit down on planning out that far in advance, it allows you to think a lot more strategically because instead of just being like just - you're always thinking only one post ahead, you can actually create content based around things that you want to do or strategies that you have in mind.

For example, if you decide that you want to do a webinar next month on some topic, you can actually plan it out to where you have content that is related to that content or that webinar running for a couple of weeks beforehand, then it all goes together really, really well.

Say like, I'm looking at my editorial calendar and I already know what I'm going to be doing from a marketing perspective in July which is about a month away as I record this episode right now. I already know that that marketing campaign is coming. I already got the content mapped out that's going to go around it and it just kind'a clicks. And I can sit down and plan those things.

Another thing is that people love continuity in their content. If you are planning out your content in advance and you can make sure of it, let's say... you can run a series for example, on a topic that people are going to find interesting and you can actually set up that series up in advance to where people are looking forward to the next installment in that series, and you can actually write the content so that they anticipate it, which is great for promotion on your site; but it's much easier to plan that out if you're thinking long term with your content rather than just what you next post is.

So you can create these cliffhangers. You can create these open loops in your minds that get them to want to come back and see what you're doing.

Now, when you do that... and I do it with a spreadsheet in Google docs, I actually have a pretty large spreadsheet here and it's pretty fancy, if I do say at least to myself; where I list out all the post, what my personal due date is, when that content needs to be done, when it's going to go live...

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This exact podcast that I'm doing right now is on my editorial calendar, the due date is coming up, so the date that you guys see this thing come on to the internet is the date that's on my editorial calendar and the due date happens to be today. So, this is the day that I said I'm going to have this content done so that I'm not stressing about it when it's due to come out. It also gives my VA some lead time to get you guys the transcript, and you can kind'a see all these stuff was thought about ahead of time.

And that's what you can do with an editorial calendar. Really, really powerful tool and it's something that I'll talk about more intensely inside the Academy because it gets strategic and that's the kind of thing that it would be best gone all over in that environment.

Okay, so... that being said, that is my 10 promotional tactics. I hope you found that really valuable.

And one thing I want to end off on is this; and that is that I've given you 10 things to do, you probably got a lot of ideas here, but I don't want to overwhelm you. So, my advice to you is to pick one, maybe two things that I've talked about in this episode and decide to take action on that. Don't worry about everything, I don't want you to sit back and get overwhelmed by the amount of things that you don't think you're doing. Just focus on one or two things and you're like, "okay, I'm going to do something about that" and go and do it.

And hopefully by the time the next episode of the Blog Program comes out, you want to take some action on the things that I've talked about in this episode.

So, that's my advice to you. I really want to make sure that you get some value out of this and the only way that you're going to get value out of is apply the stuff that I've talked about.

Okay, so with that being said, I really thank you for listening to episode 10 of The Blog Program. I'd really appreciate it if you share this out. If you're on my blog right now, share this on your social media channels if you found it valuable, of course.

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I would also really appreciate it if you head on over into iTunes and post a review and give it a star rating and that type of thing but, anything you can do like that to flow a little energy back in my direction; help me get the word out of this podcast, I would be very, very much appreciative to it.

I'm kind'a resurrecting this podcast from a nine month hiatus and any help that I can get to help get the word out is really, really helpful.

So, again, my name is David Risley - blogmarketingacademy.com... and I'll see you in the next episode. 😊