

## COFFEE BREAK BLOGGING

### *Podcast Transcript*

**Episode 54: The Strategic Way To Define Your Blog Categories**

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Hello! Welcome to another installment in our series known as Coffee Break Blogging. This one is number 54 and we are going to be talking in this one about our Blog Categories and how to actually set them up in the correct way.

Now in order to set all these in the proper context, let us talk about what most people end up doing with their blog categories. What most people end up doing is thinking of it in terms of little digital filing cabinets for their blog posts. So what they will usually do when they set out with their blog is they go, "Alright, well... what do I think that I am going to be talking about? And then let me go and create a category for every one of those things." Now, here is the thing: Typically, what we think we are going to write about will adjust over time. So inevitably, what is going to happen is that you are going to write that random post that you think is fantastic. And then you'll go and look at your list of categories and you are going to be like, "Whoa, crap! It doesn't really fit to any one of those things." So what you'll do, you'll make a new category! Awesome, right? Now if you do that over and over again, then what happens here is you end up with a big long list of categories. And it is not uncommon at all to see blogs that has 15 to 20; sometimes more than 20 different blog categories. And sometimes, you will see people who are assigning blog post to more than one category simultaneously.

Here's the thing... That is the filing cabinet approach to categories.

And obviously, it's natural. I don't blame you if you are doing that. It is natural to think of your categories in that way. But there is a more strategic way to do it. And I am actually all about "strategy"... marketing strategy associated with your blog. So that is what I am going to talk to you about today.

Now here is the other thing too; I want you to realize that readers do not really navigate by way of clicking on categories. I am going to give you a little caveat on that. They will definitely navigate based on clicking on categories if your categories were set up in the right way. But if you are doing what I said earlier and that is you have got a big list of 15 or 20 of them and let's say you have got the category widget on your sidebar and you dragged that thing in there so you have got this list of like 15 or 20 or more category links and each one has got that print to see next to it to show how many posts are in that category; people do not really navigate that way. They just don't. If you are putting that all there just to make your blog look busy, alright, it might accomplish that but it is not accomplishing anything worthwhile.

So with that being said, how will you get people to actually use your categories? Well, it comes down to thinking of your blog in a strategic way. Now, there are 3 simple facts that I want to remind you of and I have got them written down here so I am going to simply read them off. These are 3 simple rules that are true for your blog...

The first one is that the primary function of your blog is to communicate the benefits that your prospects is looking for and then motivate them to take the first step in your marketing funnel. Now, that first step is typically going to be to opt-in. So the thing is, your blog; it needs to be all oriented around those core benefits; the core things that your target market is looking to achieve. And then you get them to take that first step to achieve that thing in your marketing funnel which is going to be an opt-in.

The second fact about your blog... The web visitor is surfing the internet in a constant state of: "What is in it for me?" Now, they will subscribe to you if you offer them something that they want. In other words, it is about them; not you. That is a very important rule to keep in mind. This is not something where you just sit there and put it out on the internet and because of the simple fact that you put it there and you think it's good the world is going to beat down your door... That is not true.

Now, the filing cabinet approach to categories is very much about you. You wrote those categories because you are like, "Well, this is what I am going to write about and I am going to put in this little heading"... You know, it is very much about you. It needs to be about THEM. If they are thinking what is in there for them and make them click on something.

This is the third simple fact about your blog. This is a communication business and in order for communication now; we are talking real communication to take place, you have to be talking "to" them on common ground. There needs to be a common reality between what you are talking about and what they are looking for. Now hopefully, that makes sense. When I say "communication" I am not talking about the simple fact of talking "at" them. If you go and you find some random person on the street and you just simply start yelling at their direction; that is not communication. That is just verbal crap pointing in their direction. For it to be real communication it needs to be understood and actually fully received on the other end. That means they need to understand it, they need to read it and that they need to do something about it. That is real communication.

Now in order for that to take place, there needs to be a common reality. You need to meet them on common ground. If you are ever trying to talk to somebody about something that they have got zero interest in but you do you know how hard it is to communicate about something when there is no common ground. It just is really difficult to make it happen. So for real communication to take place, you need to meet them where they are at. So again, back up to rule number two; they are thinking "What is in it for me?" If you want them to pay attention to what they are saying, you need to be talking about what is in it for them because that is what they care about.

Alright, so those are the 3 basic rules. Now let us state how you want to orient your blog categories. Your blog categories should be based around the hot buttons of your market. You want to have a category that is aligned with each of the major benefits that your target market is looking to achieve. So here is what you want to do... You want to look at the people that you are serving; the people that you want to attract and you want to ask yourself "What are these people looking to get?" What is the outcome they are looking for? What is the outcome in Google that they are looking for? And you want to orient your categories specifically around those things. You don't want to have too many of them either. You want to really narrow this thing down. The fewer; the better, quite frankly.

Now I want to give you an example here. This is what the category looked like at the Blog Marketing Academy; let's say a year ago.

They were: Content Creation, Conversions, Entrepreneurship, Marketing, News, Social Media, Technical and Traffic. So that was a list of 8 categories, not too particularly along; but look at what I call them. Conversions, Entrepreneurship, Marketing, News... this are not benefit driven categories. Let's say you put yourself on the mindset of somebody coming to my blog; perhaps yourself, because you are actually listening to this right now. When you are going out there and you're looking for something you are going to type in to Google what you are looking for. Now, if you are looking to handle a certain thing on your blog like how to fix your header or how to put your logo on a particular place, are you going to go and look for the word "technical"? No. You are just not going to do it. That is not a benefit driven category name. Are you going to look for something; if you are looking to make money... are you going to say "marketing"? No. It is just generic. Basically, my prior category structure; like most blogs that I see were basically set up like little digital filing cabinets.

Now, what would be a better way to do it? Well, here is how I have re-done it and this is how it is right now. I am actually going to probably hone this down a little bit more but here are six. I honed it down to six categories and they are: More Traffic, Build My Platform, Sell More Stuff, Increase Engagement, Be More Productive and Build My Business. Now, I want you to look at those six categories and see how each one is benefit-driven. It puts me in the mindset of the person who is on my blog and is talking what they are looking for. If they want to get more traffic, are they more likely to click on something that just says "Traffic"? Or "Get More Traffic"? That is what they want. They want to get more traffic. They want to sell more stuff.

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I am thinking that at this point, I might actually hone it down because when you look at my target market, these are the big things that my audience really wants. They want to build a great blog, they want to get engagement from their readers, they want to get lots of traffic and they want to make lots of money. Now, I can orient my entire site around those 4 things. Build a great blog, get engagement from the readers, get lots of traffic and make lots of money. Four categories... And I orient everything that I do around those four categories. I even have one earlier about Be More Productive but quite frankly, the way I am thinking about it; it's great, I think entrepreneurs need to be productive. But it does not really speak to the real Unique Selling Proposition of the Blog Marketing Academy. The Blog Marketing Academy is about helping people monetize their blog in the most effective way. It is not about productivity. So therefore, as important as that topic probably is, I probably shouldn't talk about it the heck of a lot.

So those are the four things. Now here is what you need to do. You need to think about your categories. You need to ask yourself "What are the big benefits that my target is looking for" and you need to think about how you can orient your categories around those things and how you phrase those categories in such a way where they are going to communicate to your person who arrived on your site and hit them where they are at and communicate them on that common ground. And when you have that really finalized list of categories you can display those categories in a prominent location; your top navigation and your sidebar and people will navigate by them because now they have meaning to them. Now, there's not that many of them and they actually communicate to the person who is on your site. They will navigate by your categories; they will actually use the categories at that point because they mean something.

And not only that; if you want to get really Ninja about the marketing, you are basically segmenting your leads at that point, so you can put opt-in boxes into each of these categories and depending on where they opt-in you'll know what that person is interested in and you can follow up accordingly with your marketing. That is beyond the scope of this particular episode but in this episode I really want to talk to you about how to strategically define your blog categories.

So hopefully that was a value to you. Now again, as I told you in the last episode where we talked about what should go in your blog sidebar, there are a lot of different components of the structure of your blog to speak write to how well your blog is going to work from a monetization perspective and from a marketing perspective. And I have created an Action Plan over at the Blog Marketing Academy that I called "[The Perfect Blog Blueprint](#)". And literally what this does is walk you through all the different design components of your blog and the different content components of your blog and tell you how to tweak each one of them in order to get the best conversions out of your existing blog. It does not go in the content and all that stuff. It talks about how to actually set up everything so that you are going to get the most "bang" for your blogging bucks s, so to speak. So that is The Perfect Blog Blueprint. I highly recommend that you check it out over at [blogmarketingacademy.com/action-plans/perfect-blog-blueprint/](http://blogmarketingacademy.com/action-plans/perfect-blog-blueprint/) and that will simply take you right there.

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And again, it is one of the Action Plans that I have inside The Vault at the Academy and these are like little mini courses, they are very results-driven, there is no fluff in them and it just simply very checklist style to show you how to get the exact result you want. And that is how we set up these Action Plans. They are actually working out really well at the Academy and I encourage you to check them out. So again... [blogmarketingacademy.com/action-plans/perfect-blog-blueprint/](http://blogmarketingacademy.com/action-plans/perfect-blog-blueprint/).

Again, if you found this valuable, I would love it; I would just be your best friend forever... :-) Just head over to iTunes. Leave an honest review even if you don't like it; feel free to let me know that as well. :-) But post an honest review of this podcast over at the Coffee Break Blogging listing in the iTunes directory and I will highly appreciate it. I do monitor those reviews and I'll be curious to hear what you have got to say about the show.

Alright, with that I will see you in a few days with Episode 55; we are going to talk a little bit about the design components of your blog specifically how to funnel attention around your site.

Okay? See you then!