

COFFEE BREAK BLOGGING

Podcast Transcript

**Episode 79: What Hollywood Can Teach Us
About Writing Awesome Emails**

*To get automatic updates of this show to
your mobile device, you can subscribe here:*

- [Click here to Subscribe via iTunes](#)
- [Click here to Subscribe via RSS \(direct feed\)](#)



=====

Hello there! Welcome to Episode 79 of [Coffee Break Blogging](#)!

We are going to be looking at writing emails and how to write better emails for your list.

In [Episode 77](#) we talked about the perfect Confirmation page. Episodes before that we were talking about how to actually get people on your email list, to begin with. And then in the last episode we talked about various types of campaigns, the various things that you can do with your autoresponder sequence which is going to be emails that you are going to pre-write and it is going to be sent to people, automatically.

But at the end of the day, you got to sit down and actually write. And the thing is, I know that many people, when they look at that blank editor on their screen and they are like, "Okay, what do I write now?" It can send you for a little bit of a loop and you are like, "Okay, I don't really know exactly how to go about writing these emails."

Now, one thing that you can do is [subscribe to other people's list](#) and you can see what they do. You can kind of just watch what they are doing. Now I warn you against assuming that these people whom you are subscribed to have some big breath of knowledge that they are drawing from when they write these emails. So don't assume they are all experts at email marketing or anything like that and think that when you just do what they do, it's going to work. But you can use other people's emails as inspiration to trigger ideas for things that you are going to say.

Also, [we can look to Hollywood](#). These guys are experts at content creation. They make multi-million dollar productions and they look really fantastic. One point that I want to make first, about this comparison is that your emails do not have to be perfect productions on the same level as you might expect from Hollywood.

So just because we are going to look at Hollywood and draw a few lessons does not mean that you have got to be a perfectionist; that you need to invest just tons of capital and time in your emails because that is not necessarily the case, okay? But just because we do not want to copy them doesn't mean we can't learn some lessons from the way Hollywood works.

The thing about Hollywood movies is that they tend to do a lot of common things between them. And there are various storyline patterns that you will see, that will also be mentioned in this podcast episode. So these are things that you can apply to your emails.

The first lesson that we can bring from Hollywood into our emails is that of having ["episodes."](#) It is the idea of you have an ongoing storyline that doesn't really end for quite some time but at the same time, there can be episodes in there. If you look at TV series, they work this way. There is a long overriding storyline that kind of brings the whole show together. But each individual episode has its own little sub-plot. Well, you can take that same pattern and apply it into your emails.

So if you set it up right with your Welcome sequence and things like that, you can basically bring your reader; bring your subscriber into this ongoing story; a story that resonates with your brand. It could be a story of things that you are doing during the day or things that you are learning, but obviously relate everything to the brand of your blog. I mean, this is not just a general journal of how you live your life and what you have for lunch; we got to think a little bit more strategically than that. But it is the idea of when you send an email, your subscribers feel like they are almost living by curiously through you and you can get them to where they are actually interested in what you are going to say because they are almost interested in "What's going to happen next?" that type of thing. Same kind of a thing that we might get as viewers of a TV show where we wonder what is going to happen next.

If you have ever watched the series "24", it is not on anymore but that show is addictive as hell! And one of the things about that is you have an episode of 24 and it always leaves you wondering what is going to happen in the next one.

And that brings us to the next lesson that we can bring out of Hollywood and that is the idea of ["cliffhangers"](#) or in marketing jargon, this is very often called an ["open loop"](#). Now the whole idea of an open loop is that you set up incomplete cycles, so to speak.

So everybody has this innate desire that when something starts we kind of want to finish it. Or if we get left with a mystery as to what something is all about or we get a spark of curiosity we naturally want to close it. And we almost have this sense of anxiety that gets built up until we find out what that is, until we get that sense of fulfillment and closure on them.

And that is the idea of an open loop. It is the idea of injecting cliffhangers into your emails. And it could be a very obvious cliffhanger at the end where you set up this whole storyline and at the end of your email you just kind of leave them hanging and you say "I'll see you tomorrow." And that kind of thing could definitely increase your open rates on the next email.

But you could also build in cliffhangers or open loops in the middle of your emails. It doesn't have to be such a hard core cliffhanger kind of like 24 might do to you. It could be something where you allude to something else in the middle of one of every email and then you say, "Okay, more about that a little bit later" and you just continue with the original topic of your email.

So you can get these open loops build this continuity between the emails by using these open loops. And this is stuff you see in Hollywood all the time and in TV show productions; especially TV productions where they got these episodes that bring the whole series together. They inject these open loops and sometimes just straight up cliffhangers at the end to get you to tune in to the next week's episode.

Now another thing that you can bring from Hollywood into our emails is the standard [Three Act sequence](#). We see this all the time in place and things like that. We have Act One which should be the idea of introducing the characters and in-sighting the audience and bringing forward the problem and things like that. And then in Act Two, that is where the problem deepens and the level of confrontation, the level of stress comes up and new complexities come up in Act Two. And then in Act Three, that is where we go straight in the climax and ultimately the resolution of the storyline. Now that is the standard Three Act Sequence and this can be brought forward into your email.

Here's the thing here... You do not want to do all these in one email. In fact, that is probably going to be pretty difficult. But what you can do is have an email series. So you have a series of emails that are created in advance and designed to go together.

And then with that you can actually set up like a Three Act sequence type of a thing. It doesn't have to be a nice linear three emails; but it can be.

Now another story pattern is called the “[Hero’s Journey](#)” and this is also kind of does follow the Three Act sequence capability; a little bit. But this is put up by a guy named [Joseph Campbell](#) where he talked about the Hero's Journey. Step one of the hero's journey is typically where the hero experiences some kind of a calling. They are like living this comfortable life and they are just hesitant to make any real changes but then they get called to greater service; almost hesitant to do it but, "Ah, man... I am being pulled back into this" and then there is this reluctant hero pulled back into the story to do all his heroic things.

And then typically, Act Two of this hero's journey might be the transformation. This is all the things that the hero is going to be going through and experiencing and discovering new things. He is going to be challenged in various ways overcoming different obstacles, things like that. And then it comes up to Act Three which is going to be "The Return"; this is where the climax is going to happen but then you are going to have that return where this person has triumphed over these obstacles and he has this new knowledge; this new enlightenment that he can then share with people.

Now that hero's journey is found in a lot of different storylines out there but it could be also used in our plot, so to speak, in terms of marketing and setting up these sequences and if you look at it in terms of... Let's say you are going to work a promotion around a product or even an affiliate product... So if we look at Part 1, this could be where we present the problem. This is like "you" are the person who is just going about their business. You are like the reluctant hero like, "I have this problem and all of a sudden I needed to deal with and I get pulled back in in order to like, deal with all these stuff!"

So it was almost like you were got presented with your problem and then you came up with a solution. All these stuff that you have to go through in order to discover the solution to this problem... And then Part no. 3 would be, "This is what I have learned and I am not going to share that with you" and you do that by way of the product that you are going to be promoting. So it is kind of like a way of building the hero's journey into a standard product promotion, okay?

So these are the things that you can do that come out of Hollywood, come out of typical story pattern so we can bring in to our emails. But here is the thing; and I mentioned this earlier, in order to do this, you need to plan out your emails in advance and typically have emails that are designed to go together. We need to move away from the one-off email structure where every single email that we send is just kind of a standalone thing and if they do not open it or if they don't read it it's like "Eh, who cares" like they didn't really miss out on anything.

Instead, it actually helps to have a campaign that you have actually authored in advance, kind of like the creator of a TV series probably knows the plot of that season in advance before episode 1 has even been released, they already know what is going to happen in that season.

You can do that by emails as well by writing out your emails in advance. And in fact, one of the other lessons from Hollywood that you can bring into is the idea of "Storyboarding." Now storyboarding, if you even watched like the behind the scenes type of documentary on a movie, you will all see storyboarding where they will literally and many times will draw pictures of various scenes in the movie and they will arrange them in a chronological format like right on the wall. And it is almost like a comic book in a way. And they will literally arrange the scenes in advance before they have actually gone and filmed it. Well, you can do the same thing with your email sequences by applying storyboarding to your emails.

You do not necessarily have to draw them out. That is what they do because Hollywood is a visual medium but you can still plan them out and write in advance and you can see from a global perspective how one email will lead into the next or how are you going to open a loop in one email that you are not going to close it for the next email, or something like that. And you can actually do this using storyboarding.

The way I've done this before... I learned this from a guy named [Andre Chaperon](#) who put together a fantastic email marketing course called [Autoresponder Madness](#), but the way he does storyboarding is he will open up the text editor and he will have four or five or whatever he can fit on his screen, text editors open on his marcher at the same time so you can literally see multiple emails simultaneously on your screen. And when you do that, you write all five emails or whatever it might be, in advance and you can just see them, you can see how one email will flow into the next one or how you might open up a loop on email number two that you don't close until email number four. But we write these things in advance and you can see them all in front of you; you can link these things up and you can make that storyline pattern work really well.

So hopefully you got some ideas here, some concepts that you can bring out of Hollywood; bring out of TV shows that you know and love and bring those lessons into how you structure your email sequences because you can increase your open rates, you can increase the level of engagement with your list, you can have your subscribers actually looking forward to hearing from you when you build these things in there. This story patterns have existed for a very long time, way before the internet. But they work because it is just kind of the way human beings tick. So if you build your emails around that, it is obviously going to work better. Okay?

[Subscribe To Coffee Break Blogging in iTunes – Click Here](#)

Alright, I will leave you with that and again, I have mentioned this in the last episode, but if you want to get more detailed and more actionable, concrete guidance on how to not only set up your email list but how to set up the linkages, the opt-in forms, how to get the mechanics of all these working, but then also what to do with your list once they are in there; I have got a course called [List Building Simplified](#) which goes in into all of that. In fact, I don't think I have mentioned this one but I have got one called [Master Your List](#) as well. I have got 2 courses; those things are really, really good combo that is going to cover the topic of email marketing and allow you to jumpstart that, or shortcut it, I should say; would be an even better word.

So, both of those courses are currently only available to members of the [Blog Monetization Lab](#). And you can learn more about the Lab over at blogmonetizationlab.com.

Lastly, again, if you are finding these episodes valuable, I would highly appreciate it if you jump over to iTunes and give me a quick star rating and an honest review of the podcast. And you could do that over at blogmarketingacademy.com/itunes and that will shortcut you right to the show over at iTunes.

So again, thank you for listening and I will see you in the next one which will be Episode 80. It's kind of crazy; we have gotten this high on the episodes!

See you next time! 😊