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Do I Need a Blog?

The Marketing Chat Podcast ep. 044

Podcast Transcript

Welcome! I've been sharing a lot about podcasting with you lately. So, I wanted to switch things up and talk about blogging today.

As much as I love podcasting, podcasting isn't for everyone. Not everyone wants to listen to a podcast. Honestly, I love reading blogs because I can read them as quickly or as slowly as I want to. When it's a really good post, I can read a section again and take notes easily. I can copy and paste quotes.

I'm just more of a reading-style learner. I don't know what you call that type of learning. It's not totally visual, though that is part of it. Like, it helps me to see that words on the page. When I was in school and taking a test, I could pull information out of my head by remembering what a formula looked like on the blackboard or what a written fact or quote looked like in a book. I just tend to remember information better through reading than through listening.

Even when I learn languages, I really need to see the words and the grammar written out. I use Duolingo for pronunciation. But then I buy grammar books and phrasebooks to fully absorb what Duo is teaching me.

So, even though I podcast in two places—here and at Geek Girl soup—I actually read way-more blogs than I listen to podcasts.

Lots of people are like me in this regard. Podcasting is great for people who don't want to be tied to their computer, phone, HomePod, Alexa, or Google device. In other words, podcasting is great for people who want to take in information while

multitasking, such as while driving, cooking, or cleaning. You can't read a blog while multitasking.

But that's actually a real benefit of a blog. You have your reader's undivided attention while they're reading your post. They can't be driving or playing Wordle while they read your post.

Now, I probably shouldn't say that you have their undivided attention because they are getting notifications of emails and text messages while they're reading. So, their attention always has the chance of being drawn somewhere else. But it's the same thing with a podcast. So, this isn't a disadvantage with a blog.

With the growing popularity of podcasting, are blogs still relevant?

Absolutely, yes!

I'll be sharing some statistics throughout the rest of this podcast. Sources are cited in the show notes.

About 77% of internet users read blogs. That's huge.

According to a HubSpot survey, people read blogs "to learn how to do something," "to be entertained," "to learn more about products or brands," and "to learn about news and trends in my job industry."

In fact, when it comes to making buying decisions, 44% of consumers say they read three to five pieces of content before engaging with a vendor. And 71% of business-to-business buyers read blog content while making a buying decision.

In other words, blogs are an essential part of the decision-making process for consumers.

Personally, when I'm buying a product, I read reviews. But, when I'm deciding to hire a service provider, I read their blog. I want to see how knowledgeable they are in their industry. I want to get a feel for their personality and see how generous they are with their free information.

Are they giving away just hints in their free information and holding back the good stuff just for paying clients? Or do they understand that the more high-quality free information they give away, the more their ideal client will be attracted to hiring them?

This is really important to me because pretty much everything is available for free on the Internet. If someone is holding back in the blog, I feel like they're going to hold back in their paid services.

People don't hire service providers to get a how-to. People hire service providers to get direct help with the how-to—or to have the service provider take over with the how-to. Someone trying to DIY their job is going to hire a service provider when the DIY becomes overwhelming or confusing. All the information on how to do-it-yourself is already out there—for free. They hire a service provider or join a course a program to get personalized help with their problem.

Your blog should give away enough free information to show that you know your stuff and have the capability and the compassion to help your ideal client.

So, how do you use your blog to attract your ideal client?

First, content marketing—that includes blogs, podcasts, and video—has been shown to produce three times more leads than paid search. That is, you get more organic traffic to your website with blogs than you do with ads.

Research shows that having a blog boosts your chances of ranking higher on Google by 434%!

Now, how quickly does that happen? You've got to be patient. It's not going to happen overnight. Research shows that traffic increases by as much as 30% once you publish 21 to 54 blog posts. So, the more your post, the greater your chances of rising in the Google ranks.

My suggestion is to post at least once a week. I used to post a blog once a week and publish a podcast once a week. Now I publish a podcast twice a week. Some people post a blog just once a month because they feel like that's all they can manage. It's understandable because the average blog post takes at least two and a half hours to write!

Think about it this way. Posting once a month gives Google 12 ways to find you after one year. Posting twice a month gives Google 24 ways to find you after one year. So, that's a year to boost your traffic by up to 30%.

Posting once a week gives Google 52 ways to find you after one year. That's still a 30% boost, but that boost starts to happen after just 6 months.

So, what if you post twice a week? That's 104 ways for Google to find you after one year. Then you have a chance for that 30% boost starting at two and a half months.

Now, it still takes time to get onto page 1 of Google. The average blog post on page 1 is over two years old. So, you see why posting at least weekly will give you a greater chance of ranking higher faster. You'll have more posts for Google to index.

In fact, websites that have a blog are shown to have 434% more indexed pages than websites that don't have a blog. That is, Google keeps track of websites that have a blog more than it keeps track of websites that don't have a blog.

Why is that?

Google loves websites that are updated frequently. Google doesn't like websites that just sit there doing nothing.

With a blog, you are constantly updating your site—even if you never update your homepage, your about page, your services page, or your contact page. You are constantly adding new posts to your blog. Google sees that and indexes those new pages.

Now, you can also go back and update old blog posts. I highly recommend going back to old posts and adding links to relevant new posts. This helps boost those old posts in Google ranking. Google sees that you've updated the old post, and it tweaks the algorithm.

How else do you attract readers?

One way is to use images. Posts with images are shown to get 94% more hits than posts with no images. Images help grab the reader's attention and help to break up the text, making the text easier to read. You don't want your content to feel like a textbook!

The length of your post is also important, and recommendations vary about how long your post should be.

First, 73% of readers skim posts, while only 27% of people say that they read posts fully from start to finish. In fact, the average reader spends only 37 seconds reading a blog post!

Not surprisingly, 75% of readers say they prefer reading articles that are fewer than 1,000 words. Four pages of 12-point font with 1.2 spacing comes to about 1200 words. So, 1,000 words would be fewer than four pages.

Posts of fewer than 1,000 words also help with getting backlinks. And backlinks help boost Google ranking. There is a positive correlation between word count and

backlinks up to 1,000 words. That is, posts up to 1,000 words tend to get more backlinks. Posts of more than 1,000 words tend to get fewer backlinks.

Word count also has somewhat of an effect on organic traffic. Posts up to 2,000 words tend to get a bit more organic traffic than posts that have more than 2,000 words.

Now, you don't want your posts to be too short. Google doesn't like micro-posts, and neither do readers. You have to put real content in your posts. There is not magic word count that is ideal for both readers and Google. My recommendation is no shorter than a page. And even that is really tough to give high-quality content in a way that is easily digestible by readers. So, shoot for two pages at least.

What about headlines? How important are they?

Super-important!

First, you don't want anything cutesy for a headline. Google can't index a cutesy headline properly. And readers won't know what the post is about.

If you're looking for an article on should you start a blog, which headline would you click on?

"Do I Need a Blog?" or "OMG! Yes, You Need to Do This!"?

Yeah, I have no idea what the second one is about—and I just made it up! It could be about absolutely anything. Now, it could be a good email subject line. But it's a terrible blog post title. What is Google supposed to do with that?

It contains absolutely no keywords. There is nothing for Google to index. And It gives readers no idea about what the post is about.

Here are a few stats related to headlines.

Headlines of 14 to 17 words outperform short headlines by nearly 77% when it comes to social sharing. That is, posts with long headlines tend to get shared more often. I find this really interesting since the whole title doesn't show up when you share those posts. That's probably part of the allure. You have to click on the post to see the rest of the headline. In the long headline, the first few words are like a teaser.

About 36% of readers are more attracted to list-based headlines. That is, "5 reasons why you should start a blog" or "7 easy ways to start a plant-based diet."

Finally, headlines with a question mark get 23% more shares on social media than do headlines that don't have a question mark. This goes into that teaser thing. Questions engage readers. Questions make readers think and make readers want to find out the answer.

I could have titled this podcast, "Yes, You Need a Blog." But, would you have listened to it then?

No. I mean, once I've answered the question—in the title—do you really care about *why* you need a blog? Probably not.

So, now you understand that blogs are still totally relevant. Blogs are an essential part of the decision-making process for consumers. Blogs help you get found organically on Google. And blogs encourage people to share your website on social media.

You've also got an idea of best practices for word count and for headlines.

Now you're going to start a blog or pick your blog back up, yes?!

You may need additional resources, and I've got them for you!

You can start with two blog posts: "[Best Practices for Blogs and Podcasts](#)" and "[Ideas for Creating Content for Blogs and Podcasts](#)." If you're in Squarespace, I've got two

video tutorials: ["How to Create a Blog Template in Squarespace"](#) and ["How to Start a Blog in Squarespace 7.1."](#) All these links are in the show notes.

I've also got two podcasts for you with information on search engine optimization: ["What is SEO and How to Set it Up"](#) and ["How to Improve Your SEO with Ling Wong."](#)

And, if you need a place to keep track of your blog post ideas, I've got a [content calendar](#) for you. You can add it to your Google Drive or download it to Excel. Link in the show notes.

And that's where I recommend you start. There's a podcast you can listen to on that page on ["How to Create a 3-Month Content Calendar in 1 Hour."](#) Then go read the blog posts I mentioned. Then listen to the podcasts on SEO. Or read the transcripts.

Then start or resume your blog!

Have fun with it! Thanks for listening. And I'll see you next time on the Marketing Chat Podcast.

Links mentioned in episode:

BLOGS:

["Best Practices for Blogs and Podcasts"](#)

["How to Create a Blog Template in Squarespace"](#)

["How to Start a Blog in Squarespace 7.1"](#)

["Ideas for Creating Content for Blogs and Podcasts"](#)

PODCASTS:

["How to Improve Your SEO with Ling Wong"](#)

["What is SEO and How to Set it Up"](#)

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<https://www.angelakellysmith.com/contentcalendar>

STATS FROM:

<https://ahrefs.com/blog/blogging-statistics/>

<https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/why-do-people-read-blogs>

<https://optinmonster.com/blogging-statistics/>

<https://www.ryrob.com/blogging-statistics/>



Angela Kelly Smith is a marketing strategist, Squarespace website designer, and the founder of the Women Podcasters Academy. Her mission is to help women entrepreneurs create the successful business of their dreams through strategic marketing that establishes them as authorities in their field and helps them attract more of their ideal clients.