

COURSE NOTES + ACTION CHECKLISTS

Launches are important and shouldn't be taken lightly.

In this course we'll cover why planning a launch is so much better than just "putting it out there", we'll develop a launch plan that builds pre-launch buzz, we'll discuss what types of content to create before during and after your launch, how you should invest the majority of your time, and set the date for your launch. In the later lessons we'll get into specific tips if you are launching something people will pay for, like a product or service, and we will even walk through a couple case studies of blogs we've launched or helped re-launched.

LESSON 1: INTRODUCTION

WHETHER YOU'RE LAUNCHING (OR RE-LAUNCHING) A WEBSITE, SHOW, PRODUCT, OR SERVICE THE ASPECTS ARE THE SAME.

- You need attention.
- You need people to understand.
- You need them to take action.
- You want to observe and share what you learned during the process of the launch.

ACTION STEP: ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS BEFORE YOU START PLANNING YOUR LAUNCH

- ☐ What value are you offering?



☐ What problem are you solving?

☐ What is your unique selling proposition?

☐ Why should people care?

LESSON 2: HOW TO SET GOALS FOR A LAUNCH

WHAT'S THE POINT OF LAUNCHING IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOUR GOALS ARE?

ACTION STEP:

Take a minute to think about what your goals are for this launch and list a few here.

(Note: Be sure to use actual numbers and values to make them tangible.)

1.

2.

3.



LESSON 3: CREATING A LAUNCH PLAN

WITHOUT A LAUNCH PLAN, AND SPECIFICALLY A LAUNCH DATE, YOU MAY NEVER LAUNCH. IN THIS LESSON WE'LL HELP YOU MAKE A REASONABLE LAUNCH PLAN AND GET OTHER PEOPLE ON BOARD WITH IT.

SOME TIPS ON SETTING A LAUNCH DATE:

- **Be realistic.** Setting a launch date for next week probably isn't setting yourself up for success, but setting it three months away makes it harder to motivate yourself.
- **Make sure you're not busy the week of (and the weekend before) your launch.** Launches always take more work than you think, especially if something goes wrong. Make sure you don't have many commitments right before and during your launch.
- **Tell people.** When you make your launch day public, either online or offline, you're more likely to actually launch on that date.

ACTION STEPS:

- ☐ Set a launch date.
- ☐ Create a physical or digital calendar to keep track of all your launch tasks.
- ☐ Choose a “launch team” of friends, family, and peers to keep you on track.

LESSON 4: BUILDING BUZZ INTERNALLY

IN THIS LESSON WE'LL WALK THROUGH A FEW WAYS YOU CAN BUILD BUZZ BEFORE YOUR LAUNCH, START BUILDING UP AN EMAIL LIST, AND ACTUALLY MAKE PEOPLE ANTICIPATE THE LAUNCH INSTEAD OF JUST HEARING ABOUT IT FOR THE FIRST TIME ON DAY ONE.



ACTION STEPS:

- ☐ Create a “coming soon” landing page with an email opt-in form.
- ☐ Publicly announce your launch date on your blog, social media, email list, etc.
- ☐ Keep your pre-launch email list in the loop with how things are coming along:
 - Launch date
 - Table of contents
 - Early access to content
 - Free chapters, videos, or podcasts
 - Pricing information
- ☐ Make your launch fun.

LESSON 5: EXTERNAL PROMOTION

WHAT YOU DO OFF YOUR SITE IS JUST AS IMPORTANT AS WHAT YOU DO ON YOUR SITE DURING A LAUNCH.

ACTION STEPS:

- ☐ List 10 places that you could potentially guest post on or be interviewed on.
 - 5 “stretch” places
 - 5 realistic places
- ☐ Warm up a relationship with these places before you “pitch” them by tweeting them, commenting on their blog, or replying to the email autoresponders.
- ☐ Write specific and customized emails for each place.



LESSON 6: LAUNCH WEEK PROMOTION

THE POINT OF LAUNCH WEEK IS TO COME OUT GUNS BLAZING WITH YOUR BEST CONTENT. THAT CONTENT WILL HOPEFULLY THEN BE SHARED AND WILL LEAD TO YOU GROWING YOUR AUDIENCE, MAKING SALES, ETC.

ACTION STEPS:

- ☐ Plan & create 2 to 3 pieces of content for your blog during launch week. Ideas include:
 - Expert Opinion Round-up Post
 - A Manifesto
 - “What Makes Us Different”
 - Launch Trailer
 - Case Studies
 - Demo Reel or Portfolio of Client Work
- ☐ Email your pre-launch list a day or two before launch to remind them of the day and time of the launch, plus any additional info you haven't shared with them.
- ☐ Email your list on launch day (once everything is live and fully tested).
 - Consider offering this list a special bonus, like a discounted price or an extra piece of content like bloopers or something else you haven't published yet.
- ☐ Email your list at the end of launch week one more time to thank them for their support, share or ask for testimonials, and tell what they expect next from you.
- ☐ Interact with as many people as possible on social media, blog comments, emails, etc.



LESSON 7: BEYOND THE LAUNCH

AFTER YOU LAUNCH YOU'RE FAR FROM DONE. IN THIS LESSON WE'LL TALK ABOUT A FEW WAYS YOU CAN KEEP THE MOMENTUM GOING AFTER LAUNCH WEEK.

ACTION STEPS:

- ☐ Create an editorial calendar for your content.
- ☐ Add a way to share what you launched (blog posts, products, services, etc.) with an email in your autoresponder series for future subscribers.
- ☐ Add a link to your launch in your social media and guest post bios.
- ☐ Share byproducts of your launch on your blog, podcasts, videos, and interviews.
- ☐ Do a post-mortem on your goals from Lesson 2.
 - Did you meet your goals?
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - Why or why not?
 - What lessons did you learn?
 - What would you do differently next time?



LESSON 8: PRODUCT SPECIFIC LAUNCH TIPS

THERE ARE A LOT MORE CONSIDERATIONS WITH PRODUCTS BECAUSE THERE ARE SO MANY MOVING PIECES INVOLVED WITH THEM. IN THIS LESSON WE'LL TALK ABOUT PRICING OPTIONS, WHETHER YOUR PRODUCT SHOULD ALWAYS BE AVAILABLE TO PURCHASE, AFFILIATES, DISCOUNTS, REWARDS, UPDATING, TESTING AND MORE.

ACTION STEPS:

- ☐ Decide on the best pricing structure for what you're offering.
- ☐ Decide whether or not you want affiliates to sell your product.
- ☐ Decide what payment processor to use by watching the Fizzle course on choosing one.
- ☐ Before you launch, test all potential ways of payment (credit, debit, Paypal, etc.).
- ☐ Before you launch, notify your payment processor of your launch day (or risk your account getting shut down during the launch).

LESSON 10: EXPERT ENOUGH CASE STUDY

There are hundreds of millions of blogs in existence today. Thousands more are started every day.

Some blogs become hugely popular, but the majority of blogs go almost completely unnoticed.



Here are the 13 factors we've found that make blogs successful (in no particular order).

1. SUCCESSFUL BLOGS SOLVE A PROBLEM OR ADDRESS A NEED OR DESIRE

Success in blogging always starts with a solid reader focus.

What does your blog offer your readers? Education? Entertainment? Inspiration? The answers to burning questions? A community of like-minded people? Do you help your readers solve a pressing problem?

There are lots of ways to provide your readers with value. Whatever you decide, the value has to be strong enough to keep those readers coming back.

Your content has to be so insanely useful or entertaining that your readers will tell their friends about you.

We'll explore how to make your blog incredibly valuable in the upcoming weekly action plan lessons.

For now, consider what you were planning to offer your readers with your blog. If you thought you'd create a popular blog just by talking about your cat or what you ate for dinner, you might want to reconsider.

It is possible to create a popular blog based on your life, but you have to be ridiculously entertaining to pull it off (and you'll need to reflect on your life and what your readers can learn from your lessons).

2. SUCCESSFUL BLOGGERS CHOOSE A TOPIC THEY'RE INTERESTED IN

Creating a successful blog takes so much effort and dedication that it's nearly impossible to put in the time unless you love the topic.



There's a balance you have to make between blogging about something a decent sized audience might care about and something you personally really love. Ideally, there should be a big overlap between the two.

3. SUCCESSFUL BLOGS ARE DIFFERENT

To stand out and build a big audience, you'll have to do something different with your blog. You have to differentiate your blog from every other blog on the web.

When visitors come to your site, you have to answer the following question quickly and succinctly: "why should I read your blog vs. the hundreds (or thousands) of other blogs out there?"

It isn't good enough to produce great content. Great content is just the price of admission in blogging these days. There are plenty of blogs with great content that have tiny audiences.

Think about the blog you're planning to create. What will make it different from other blogs?

4. SUCCESSFUL BLOGGERS STUDY BLOGGING

One characteristic of a successful bloggers is that they spend time studying blogging success. They observe other blogs, they think about why they're successful and they build on others' success at their own site.

Successful bloggers read about how to create compelling content, how to be a better writer, how to write great headlines and how to market a blog.

They learn and they grow as bloggers. If you're new to blogging, you have to adopt a growth and learning mindset to succeed.

The fact that you're in this course already puts you in this category, but you'll need to do much more than just read the lessons here to become successful.



This is just the beginning. After this course is over, you'll have a lot more to learn. To me, that's part of the fun of blogging.

Every day is an opportunity to learn something new.

5. SUCCESSFUL BLOGGERS EXPERIMENT

It's not enough just to learn new things. You also have to apply what you learn and experiment with different strategies and techniques.

Some bloggers spend month after month and year after year producing the same content. They have virtually zero audience, and they wonder why.

Smart bloggers know that if what you're doing isn't working, you have everything to gain by experimenting.

Trying different types of content, different promotion techniques, different posting schedules, different points of view, different formats, etc. is imperative if you want to grow and learn what works best for you and your audience.

6. SUCCESSFUL BLOGGERS PUT CONTENT FIRST

The most important thing in blogging is the content itself.

Design, branding, marketing, social media, relationships, social proof, comments and everything else we'll talk about in this course are important, but content always comes first.

You can waste days and weeks tweaking little aspects of their designs, when you should be putting that time and effort into your content.

A great design is important and can make a difference, but you should set it up in the beginning and leave it alone. Don't get in the habit of tweaking your site's layout and theme endlessly.



Spend your time on things that matter.

7. SUCCESSFUL BLOGS CONNECT WITH READERS

You'll be working incredibly hard to attract an audience to your site. Once they arrive, you have to do everything possible to connect with your readers so they'll come back.

The best way to grow a site's traffic over time is to build your own internal audience. You can't rely on external sources of traffic forever.

Connecting with your audience means chatting with them (in comments and in social media), responding to email you receive, and getting people to subscribe for updates over RSS, email, Twitter, Facebook, etc.

When you convert visitors to regular readers, your audience grows. Those people will come back when you publish something new, and hopefully they'll tell their friends about you too.

8. SUCCESSFUL BLOGS HAVE OUTSTANDING CONTENT OR BETTER

There's a scale of content quality you can produce on your blog, from mediocre to viral:

- mediocre content
- good content
- great content
- outstanding content
- epic content
- viral content

You can't build a blog that matters with mediocre content or even good content. That won't get you noticed or keep people coming back.

You have to aim higher. You have to work to make every piece of content you produce at least great, if not outstanding.



This isn't to say you'll create outstanding content or better every time you publish, but you give it your best shot. Try to create at least outstanding content every time and you'll occasionally publish something epic or even viral.

Sometimes your content might be just mediocre or good, but on average it will be much better if you aim high.

9. SUCCESSFUL BLOGS HAVE KILLER HEADLINES

Headlines are one of the most important aspects of building a popular blog.

Without a fantastic headline, your content will probably go unnoticed. The headline has a very important job to do. Usually your readers will see your headline first, and that may be all they see before deciding whether to read your post.

The headline has to pull your readers in and make them curious. A poorly written headline will sink your blog post before it even has a chance.

We'll talk much more about headlines in the upcoming lessons.

10. SUCCESSFUL BLOGS ARE WELL DESIGNED AND BRANDED

You've heard the rumors, and they're true. Having a great looking blog is important if you want to attract a big audience.

Your design is your "first impression." People typically spend just 10 to 20 seconds on a web page. A great design can buy you time because it stands out and puts your visitors in a comfortable frame of mind long enough for them to get hooked on your incredible content.

The same is true of branding. Your site's name, domain name and logo are all factors that can draw first-time visitors in. Poor branding can repel them just the same.



11. SUCCESSFUL BLOGGERS FOCUS ON OFF-SITE PROMOTION

The “if you build it they will come” model doesn’t usually work in blogging.

An audience doesn’t come out of thin air. The people you want to read your blog are already hanging out online somewhere.

Your job is to find those people where they already spend time and bring them back to your site.

There are several ways to do this, and we’ll discuss them in detail in upcoming lessons.

For now, just realize that you have to get out and about online. You can’t just stay at your “home base” and expect to build a big audience.

12. SUCCESSFUL BLOGGERS DEVELOP RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER BLOGGERS

Relationships with other bloggers can lead to breakthroughs for you and your site. Other bloggers can help you create better content, link to your site or even just be there for you when you’re feeling stuck or down.

The best source of quality traffic your blog can get is links from other quality blogs.

To get linked to by other blogs, other bloggers have to know who you are. Those relationships don’t happen by accident. You need to reach out to other bloggers, link to their stuff, share their content on social media, comment on their blogs and more.

13. SUCCESSFUL BLOGGERS PERSEVERE

Finally, to be successful as a blogger, you need a long-term mindset. Don’t expect magic to happen overnight.

Creating a successful blog isn’t easy. At times you’ll feel lost, you’ll question yourself and your abilities and you’ll wonder if blogging is right for you after all.



But you have to stick with it.

I know several “a-list” bloggers who very nearly gave up before they became successful bloggers. They could have thrown it all away in a moment of frustration, but for some reason they kept going. They persevered and their lives are much different now because of it.

Work hard and do everything you can to create early success, but realize that it could take a year or two before you see significant results.

The important thing is that you don’t give up. Give your blog and your strategy time to work. Give yourself time to learn.

Enjoy the journey along the way. It’s all worth it.

