

Episode 51: Get More Website Traffic (Google Not Required) with Linda Dessau

00:00 S?: Welcome to the Neon Noise podcast, your home for learning ways to attract more traffic to your website, generate more leads, convert your leads into customers, and build stronger relationships with your customers. And now your hosts, Justin Johnson and Ken Franzen.

00:15 Justin Johnson: Hey, hey, hey, Neon Noise nation. Welcome to the Neon Noise podcast where we decode marketing and sales topics to help you grow your business. I am Justin Johnson and with me I have my co-host, Mr. Ken Franzen. Ken, how are you doing today?

00:28 Ken Franzen: I'm doing great, Justin. Just getting ready for this time change coming up. It's dark in the mornings.

00:34 JJ: It's really dark.

00:35 KF: And not looking forward to it, because that means it's gonna get dark early and I think they said last night somewhere, I read that in a couple weeks, it's gonna be sunset at 5:30. And that's just a little... [chuckle] Not quite ready for that yet, but hey, I guess we gotta get the shorter days before we can start creeping up to the longer days and the warmer weather. [laughter] At least up in this region of the country we don't get that beautiful weather.

01:02 JJ: Yeah, the weather's changing down here. It's awfully nice in Florida right now, so I feel that. But longer days will be nice, so. Anywho, let's get going, today we will be speaking with Linda Dessau. She is the founder of Content Mastery Guide where she helps wellness clinics and their practitioners attract new clients. Her "You Talk, I'll Write" blog-writing service and blog editing service has helped her clients get better leads and clients through inspiring and educational content. A highly-regarded expert when it comes to the blogging field, she has spoken at numerous conferences and publishes a blog with tips and tricks for business owners on her website, contentmasteryguide.com. Good morning, Linda. Welcome to Neon Noise.

01:43 Linda Dessau: Good morning, thank you so much for having me.

01:46 JJ: Absolutely. Would you do me a favor and fill in the blanks on anything I may have missed and share with us a little bit about your background?

01:52 LD: Oh, you did great. I've been helping other people with their online content since 2004 and launched this business in 2005, and in 2010 is when I really honed in on blogging as my area that I most love helping people with, and also just found so much potential for business owners, just to be able to share their expertise, help their audience and build up that credibility by doing that. So it really became my little area of the huge marketing puzzle that I wanted to solve. [chuckle]

02:31 JJ: That's great.

02:32 KF: Linda, we talk about this almost ad nauseam, but I love this conversation because I still think that blogging something that... I hear two sides, I hear there's so many people out there blogging, there's so many bloggers, the blogging market is absolutely saturated. And then I turn to a lot of business owners who aren't participating in the blog content creation, the act of blogging at all. And so while there are a lot, there are many that aren't. And so I wanted to just, let's start off, just kick this off with why blogging is so important, why should it be a key component of a marketing strategy?

03:18 LD: Well, it's true that there are a lot of people out there, there are a lot of voices, there's a lot of clutter, there's a lot of bad content, which is a really good opportunity for someone who's committed to writing good content. And the reason it's so important is because it really creates a conversation with your prospective clients, your prospective audience. And I like to talk about, when people ask me about SEO, I say yes, great, yes, blogging can help your SEO, and let's talk about some ways that blogging actually can help you without SEO. And I have this blog post on my site, it's all about, here's how to build your business, Google not required, with blogging. Google not required, 'cause if you think about it, yes, it's great to be discovered by a stranger. Absolutely, that's fantastic. But, really it's not the stranger who's gonna be your most ideal client or your most likely client. So I talk about three scenarios.

04:25 LD: The first way, from one friend to another. So if I'm looking for something, and particularly I work with a lot of wellness practitioners, so it's a very personal service, but really any kind of service-based business: If you're going into someone's home, if you're gonna be performing some kind of very personal service to them or with them, or business service as well, you want someone you can trust, you want someone who has some kind of connection with you, hopefully, someone you know has either worked with them or somehow has endorsed them to you. So, from one friend to another, if you're looking for something, you're gonna ask your friends, and your friends are gonna say, "Hey, go to this person." Or maybe you don't actually have a direct conversation with them but you see that your friend is sharing stuff from this other person and you say, "Oh, I see that so and so shared an article from that landscaper, or from that massage therapist, and maybe that's somebody I could check out who could help me with my needs."

05:23 LD: So from one friend to another, Google's not required for that. It's just your friend either telling you about somebody, or sharing something that that person has written. Something like a blog post. Next, you've got from one expert to another. So if I'm an expert in blogging per se or you guys with marketing, inbound marketing, so people are looking to you for other recommendations in that space. And they look to me as well. So if I'm following another expert and sharing stuff from that expert, or having them on to my podcast, or having them on to my blog as an expert that I'm interviewing, that's exposing my audience to this expert and we can do that as well for our own businesses. So today I'm lucky enough to be chatting with you and having this great conversation, which hopefully will be giving excellent information, but it's also allowing me to meet your audience. And if they have a need for what I offer, great. So blogging helps you to connect with other experts, to have a reason to connect with them. So if I wanna find out more about an expert, if I wanna connect with them, a great way is to reach out and say, "Hey! Can I interview you?"

06:46 LD: So yeah, another expert endorsing you, either by interviewing you, having you participate in their content, or just having you share their stuff, that is showing their audience that you're also a related expert in what they do. And lastly, getting checked out. So once somebody hears about you, from one of their friends, or from another expert, or a colleague, what's the first thing they're gonna do? I mean, it's go to your website. So, they go to your website, they see a blog or they see articles, or they see latest news, or however you decide to call your blog where you write about what you do, and how you can help, and they're gonna go there and they're gonna read what's there. Hopefully, they're gonna find a lot of great content and they're gonna be reading one post and there's gonna be links from that post to another post, or at the end of the post, that's gonna say, "Hey! Read more about this." And there's gonna be four more posts they can read. Next thing you know, five minutes has gone by and they're still on your site. Maybe they'll wanna find out more about you, maybe they'll sign up for your newsletter, or maybe they'll just remember you the next time a need comes up. Those are three ways that blogging can help your business, Google not required.

08:00 KF: I like that a lot because a lot of the main... I think that one of the main drivers behind blogging with a lot of business owners is the goal of increasing their search engine exposure. And I think sometimes that comes with the fault of writing for the search engines and not for the target audience.

08:19 LD: Mm-hmm. I see that a lot.

08:22 KF: And so these three points... Yeah, these three points are really great because it gives us this focal point that is different than I think what we've really looked at before. Now let's say we have a business owner listening. You just inspired them that they're going to embark on this blogging journey, what would be the first thing, because this is the question we get all the time. "That's great but I don't know what to write about." What would be the first thing you would recommend a business owner to write about or how do you approach or coach others on topic creation or just what they should focus on?

09:08 LD: That's a great question and it's an important question. And I encourage everyone not to just jump in willy-nilly, but to have a plan. So I teach people a Four-Step planning process, which I'm happy to go through with you now. People can also download it from my website, contentmasteryguide.com/plan. But I'm gonna tell you all about it right now. [chuckle] So, the first step is to look at your goals. Why are you blogging to begin with? What is your end? Do you wanna demonstrate your expertise? Do you wanna show people that in whatever industry you're in, you are an expert, you have the credibility and the capability to help them solve their problem? Do you wanna educate, inspire your audience? Do you wanna get wider exposure for your business? Of course, you probably want all of these things. We all do, but think about what's your most important. And also be really specific.

10:05 LD: So when you're coming up with your blogging goal, think about, "Okay, I want more clients." Well, we all want more clients. How many more clients do you want? Just throw out a number. Just be specific. And also, you might want more subscribers on your newsletter list 'cause we all know that newsletter, email is a very effective way to make contact to further the relationship, and eventually make an ask. Give them lots of value, lots of this wonderful content. And then you can say, "And by the way, hope you've learned a lot from this content. If you don't feel comfortable tackling this yourself as a DIY, or if you tried and you need a bit more help, we're here to help you", once you have that relationship and you've given that value. So, it might be to build up new subscribers, so how many? Just have a goal. Goals are really important 'cause that helps us to measure how we're doing and it also gives us a reason to keep doing it. 'Cause otherwise, believe me, blogging's not the easiest thing to keep up with. For myself as well. So we need to have that reason so that we can keep tapping into that and inspire ourselves.

11:16 LD: The next step, and you talked about this, what do you blog about? So the next step is really, really important and it's deciding what are your five to seven topic areas or categories? What are those gonna be, for you, your blog, your business? What do you wanna be known for? What do you want people to equate with you and your business? So think about the service that you provide, the particular target groups you might be working with, or whatever the topic area is that you know the most about, that you wanna be known for, that you have value to provide, and that can people are looking for that solve a problem that people actually have. So, choose five to seven. Not too many more than that or it gets overwhelming and cluttered. And you don't want to have too few, 'cause you wanna give yourself lots of different things to write about and you wanna get people enough information.

12:16 LD: So, I've got everything you need to know about categories and a blog post that I wrote, contentmasteryguide.com/cat for categories. Just go there. It's a complete guide to choosing the best categories for your blog. And again, these topic areas, they extend beyond your blogs. So when you're on social media, for example, and you're sharing things that other people have written from either major media sources or from other experts, whatever the case, you wanna make sure that what you're sharing has to do with one of those five to seven topic areas that you've claimed. 'Cause you want everything you do across the web to come back to those areas. 'Cause you really wanna be known for that and you don't wanna distract people or have them wondering what you're all about or have them forgetting what your core focus is. So you wanna keep, like I say, everything you do on the web, you want to come back to those core topic areas or categories.

13:18 LD: So, once you have that, you know why you're blogging, you know what you're gonna be blogging about, now you wanna create some kind of plan or calendar. They call it editorial calendar. So that's where you decide, "Okay, I'm gonna post once a month. I'm gonna post twice a month." Maybe when you get really comfortable with blogging, you can start posting once a week. I don't suggest you start with that because until you get the hang of it, it's gonna be really intimidating and overwhelming. So, start with once a month, start with twice a month, see how you go. And the other thing about planning with a calendar, so yes you can plan out, "Here's what I'm gonna write about this week and here's what I'm gonna write about in two weeks from then." But also, what you can think about here is what type of post you're gonna write. So this is a big area that I like to teach people about because most people think that when they write a new blog post, it has to be this epic content. We hear about this epic content, viral content, long form, 3,000-word, everything you need to know about x. And you know what? That's the clearest, surest way to burn out from blogging really, really quickly.

[laughter]

14:33 LD: And so I actually suggest... Or I'm kind of giving you all my answers to the frequently asked questions in the first 15 minutes here but...

14:42 KF: Sure.

14:43 LD: I suggest, when you're starting, 500 words. That's your sweet spot for a feature article, a how to, a DIY, "Here's how to do this". Whatever, depending on what kind of business you have, whatever your ideal client is struggling with that you can help them, here's how to do it, 500 words. See how that goes. And then, I say, okay, so maybe do one of those once a month and then if you wanna do a second post that month, or eventually you could get to posting three or even four times a month, you can write different kinds of posts. They don't all have to be a full-length article. The next one could be, maybe you're writing about something else that you saw on the web. You're doing a commentary or just letting someone know, "Hey, here's a really great piece I read about this thing that's important in our industry or this task, that this job that you might wanna do. Here's a really interesting way of looking at it that so and so wrote."

15:49 LD: And maybe spend a paragraph or two, talking about the expert, talking about who wrote it, how you discovered them, why you think they're even worthy of looking at. So, "Hey, you know I've known this person for few years. We connected at a conference. They helped me with such and such" or "They helped someone I know. Here's an article that they wrote about this particular topic. I thought it was really interesting because X, Y, Z." Or you can even say, "I agree with this. I didn't agree with this. What do you think?" Just give your own commentary. Don't let them forget that you're the expert. You're an expert and you're sharing this other piece of content with them and then you're the one who discovered the content and you're the one who's telling them why it's so great. So, that's maybe 250 words or 350. That's a much shorter effort, or a shorter number of words that you need to put out, put out, put out.

16:50 LD: Another type of post that might be easier or shorter could be a post about someone else in your industry. Or, similar to what I just talked about, but without the link to someone else's post. You could interview the person, or you can just simply talk about them and maybe link to their website if you want. It's just giving people a resource. So, it could be a product or it could be a person. It could be, depending on your business, it could be a product that you've used and recommend. Something that you use in your services that they might wanna know more about. A vendor that you deal with in your company that they might be curious to know more about. Could be a profile on one of your staff or somebody that you worked with in your business. It's something that's, just telling them about someone or something that they need to know. And again, this could be shorter, it could be easier to produce because it's not all coming from your head. It's not all, "Here's what you need to know about this." It's like, "Hey, here's a person." And then you're getting the person, by talking about the person. You've got the facts right there. Or you've got that person to collaborate with you, to create the content. So, just a few different ways that you can create a blog post that doesn't have to be about you sharing your expertise. You definitely wanna do lots of that. But not every time you write something does it have to be one of these full length articles.

18:16 KF: And I think that's something that intimidates a lot that are getting started. I like how you encourage the slow start, smaller posts, less frequency. Because I look at this as kind of a muscle that you need to build, just like an exercise routine.

18:32 LD: Mm-hmm.

18:32 KF: And you start going to the gym two hours a day, every day, [chuckle] you'll be burned out by the end of the week, you'll hate the gym and things will not be rosy as you had originally planned. What should I, if I'm getting ready to create my editorial calendar and I'm gonna put blocks of time in my calendar, how much time are you spending on the types of posts you just described, vary in time commitments and research and writing? But on average, what would you say that you would spend on a 500-word blog post? Just to give a frame of reference to someone considering, "Okay, great, this is what my current calendar provides me. I can put a block here and a block here, and a block here to devote towards this"

19:27 LD: That's a great question. And I won't give you my answer, because, I mean, first of all, every blog post takes me a different amount of time. And second of all, I'm coming at this like I've been writing blog posts for many, many years. So, it's gonna be different for me, but I would just say, what I recommend is actually setting aside a little bit of time every day. And the reason I recommend that and I have a whole blog post about that as well, I call it "Your daily blogging habit." And there's a lot of reasons I recommend that. First of all, it gets, like you say, it gets easier to do something when you build up the muscle. So if you spend 15 minutes everyday doing a little bit towards a blog post, it's gonna be easier and less intimidating than saying, "Okay, I've got two hours, I'm gonna start it, I'm gonna finish it, I'm gonna publish it, I'm gonna promote it, and then I'm done."

20:25 KF: Right.

20:26 LD: It may be appealing in some ways, but you get it all done. But boy, that's a marathon. [chuckle] That's a marathon blogging session, and honestly, the quality is not gonna be as good if you do that. Because you're not gonna have time to think about it, you're not gonna have time to read it over. You're not gonna have time to get all the different pieces together that you might need. So, I really strongly recommend that you not try to do it all in one sitting. So, I'd break it down into seven steps, actually, and we can go into that if you like, my seven steps.

21:02 KF: Please.

21:03 LD: Yeah. So, I break it down into seven steps. Sometimes you might do one step every day, and other times you might combine them. I often combine them, but again, that comes with experience as well. But also, if you're in a flow, you definitely wanna do as much as you can. Where I find that the steps really help is, the more stuck you are. [chuckle] So, the more stuck you are, the better it is to say, "All I have to do today [chuckle] is find a photo, that's all I have to do today." So, that's when it becomes really helpful, to have those steps in place, 'cause you can get yourself slowly into the process and then you can say, "Okay, I did it. Now, I can stop for today," and that can be great. That can be really encouraging. So, the seven steps, the first one that you do is brainstorming. So here's where you're looking either at your editorial calendar, you're thinking about your five to seven topic, you're thinking about conversations that you've had in the last week with some of your clients or potential clients. You're thinking about things you've seen on the news, or at a conference, or on TV. You're just brainstorming, you're just thinking about all the ideas you can think of, and just dumping them down on to a piece of paper or into a document and just getting them all out.

22:38 LD: The next step is outlining. So, that's where you hone in and you say, "Okay, of all these topics, here's the one that I feel most juiced about writing." 'Cause that's the thing too, you wanna feel some sort of enthusiasm or excitement or confidence about what you're choosing to write about. You don't wanna just write something because that happens to be on your calendar, or that happens to be what you said you were gonna write this week. You can always set it aside and come back to it. For the most part, your audience, you're not publishing your calendar, they're not gonna see what's coming up. I do not recommend saying, "Next week, we're gonna talk about X." if you haven't written the post yet. [laughter] If you've written the post then go for it, [23:19] \_\_\_\_ if they were for the two-parter that you're doing, and you've already got the skeleton of it, then go ahead. Otherwise, I do not recommend doing that because you never know what's gonna happen. You can always add it in later. You can always say, "Hey, I wrote about a related topic and here's the link." You can always add that back. But otherwise, I don't recommend doing that, because you don't wanna box yourself into a corner and force yourself to be writing about something that you're not feeling and you're not inspired, 'cause that's gonna come across in the quality. So, once you've honed in, you said, "Okay, this is what I wanna write about this week" then you do step two, which is outline.

23:58 LD: So, again, you're not writing at this point. Don't worry, you don't have to write anything. You're just gonna outline. You're gonna say, "Okay. What are the main points I wanna cover here? Am I gonna write, is this a top 10 list, or a top five list?" So what are the five things? What are the 10 things? Or, what's my main argument or my main point and maybe some three sub points. So just a basic outline of what you're gonna cover in your post. So that's the second step. The third step, and again you might wanna flow right into this. You might wanna come back to it the next day or the next week, whatever works, whatever is working for you. That's the draft. So that's when you're actually starting to write now. [chuckle] So you're gonna fill in the holes, fill in the blanks. So you've got your main points, your list, if you're doing a list, and now you're just gonna fill it in a bit and say "Okay, what does my audience need to know about this?" or "What else do I have to say about this?" or maybe pull in some research, if you've done some research. What are some quotes or some statistics or something that you're bringing in to supplement your own expertise? So just drafting it all out, putting all the pieces together.

25:12 LD: That's your draft. So by the end of that, you're gonna have a very rough draft of your article. The next step, number four is shaping. So here is where you're really pulling it together, making sure that what you've actually written, answers the premise or the promise that you've put in to the title. You might still be tweaking your title. In fact, you're definitely gonna do that in this part. So in the shaping process, this is where you're finalizing your title and saying, "Okay, what am I trying to say and what appeal is this going to have to my audience, and what words are gonna show them that this is what they wanna read in order to solve this problem or to satisfy this curiosity, or inspire them, or educate them", whatever you're trying to do. So that's where you tweak the title. And then make sure that the article is actually answering that question or promise. And look at your introduction, your conclusion and again asking yourself the same questions for the introduction and conclusion.

26:18 LD: So what are you trying to tell people? What's important for them to know? What do they wanna walk away with? You wanna be bringing all of those kinds of questions and answers into the introduction and conclusion 'cause that's where you really, you grab people and say, "Hey, yeah. I do wanna know more about that" or "Hey, I didn't realize the impact that was having", whether you share a statistic or ask a question, tell a story, depending on the problem that you're solving, you may wanna describe what life is like for someone who has this problem. You might somehow get that across in your introduction. And then in the conclusion, very similarly. So "We've been telling you about this, here's why we wanted to tell you, here's what we told you and here's what we suggest you go and do about it." [chuckle] So maybe some kind of action, and that action could be to read something else that you've written about it or it could be to contact you. Not every time. You don't wanna say that every time, but it could be. Or it could be some kind of exercise you're gonna suggest them that they do some kind of task or process that you're suggesting that they take as the next step. So all of that, what you're doing in the shaping process is really bringing the article together and making sure that it's cohesive and it comes together. The next step is my favorite 'cause I love doing it and it's one of the most important ones, and it's one that most people leave out. Any guesses?

27:49 KF: Photos?

27:50 LD: Nope. [chuckle] That's number six.

27:52 KF: Swings and misses.

[laughter]

27:55 LD: One more guess, and then I'll tell you. What do most people not do before they publish a blog post?

28:01 KF: Proofread?

28:02 LD: Hey! There you go.

[chuckle]

28:04 KF: Alrighty.

28:05 LD: It's the editing.

28:06 KF: Batting 500. I'm good. I'm...

28:06 LD: Yeah. It's the editing stage. So that's where you're editing and proofreading. And they're really two different things. Editing is, you're really, again, kind of like what you were doing in shaping, your making sure everything's coming together and you're also making sure it's readable. My favorite way of editing is reading out loud. So I sometimes read it myself but more often than not, I use the text-to-speech on my computer. And it's fun 'cause it's not me. I actually use a male voice just because I'm even more likely to notice if it doesn't sound like me 'cause inside my head, this is what sounds like me.

28:49 KF: Sure.

28:49 LD: And I can be reading something, even if a female voice is reading it or I'm reading it, and I still see what I want to see versus what's on the page, 'cause I know what's supposed to be there. So I'm gonna fill in the missing words, I'm gonna skip over the typos. But if I'm hearing a male voice read it, somehow it just really helps me to spot things: Repeated words, run-on sentences, errors. It really, really helps me. So that's what I do for the editing is I hear it out loud. I made sure that it sounds like me. It sounds like how I would talk to somebody about the topic, not like how I would write.

[chuckle]

29:28 LD: Because often, we'd write differently and we write... We wanna sound smart, we wanna use big words, we wanna use a lot of jargon 'cause we think that it makes us sound more credible. But if you hear how it sounds out loud, how you might say it to someone then that really tells you that you've produced something that someone's gonna have an easier time accessing. And it's gonna make you feel more approachable. Most important, it's gonna get the information across. 'Cause when you used a big word or when you have errors or typos, then that's gonna block your message. That's gonna distract somebody from getting your message. So you wanna clear the path so that there's nothing between your message and your reader. So that's what editing and proofreading really does, clears the path to make a simple connection for your reader so they can actually get your point, they can get the information that you're trying to share with them. Very very important.

30:31 KF: Okay.

30:32 LD: So the next step is the one that you mentioned, which is decorate. So, decoration now, you're gonna decorate your post with a photo. So you wanna find a photo. There's different ways of going about choosing your actual photo. First, I'll just say what not to do here. Don't Google picture of X and then choose the first one that you see. 'Cause more than likely, that image, it belongs to somebody else. It's on their website, they own it, you don't have permission to use it. And I'll say something else, there are very unscrupulous people out there in internet land who have placed photos that they know people are looking for, so that they'll be found in these searches. They wait for you to take it, put it on your website, then they come after you with... They threaten legal action if you don't pay them X number of dollars because they've copyrighted...

31:32 JJ: I'm so glad you brought that up.

31:33 LD: Pardon?

31:34 JJ: I'm so glad that you brought that up. We've talked about this in the past quite a bit and people just don't realize the negative effects of doing that.

31:43 LD: Absolutely. I mean, so yes, you wanna protect yourself against lawsuits and really, really expensive mistake. But as a writer myself, where my heart goes is, you don't wanna steal something someone else has produced. I'm a content creator. So you wanna have respect for other content creators. So that's always my primary argument or rationale for encouraging people to do it the right way is, you wanna showcase people who've created content, and you want to honor and respect them and not just use their work without their permission. So you look for royalty-free image, you look for, yeah, royalty-free. Or you look to purchase a license. You can look at, there's free sites, lots of free sites out there. There's Creative Commons, that's another thing you can look at which gives you very specific guidelines how you can use the photo. So some people it might be, "Go ahead, use it however you like, you don't have to give me credit, you can change it, you can have it on something for sale, whatever you want." Others may have more strict guidelines. "You can't use it for commercial use, you must credit me, you cannot change or modify the image."

33:09 LD: So you need to be sure of what you're buying or what you're using and what permissions that you have. So, absolutely. So I've used fotolia.com a lot, I've used Depositphotos, I have used... Let's see there's... I don't have it in front of me but there's a lot of different ones, you can search and you guys might have recommendations that you can share. So once you find a reputable site and you know that you can use what you're finding here, as far as searching for your image, sometimes you might wanna be literal and you might wanna actually have a picture of whatever it is you're talking about, other times you might wanna tap into emotion. And I think, more often than not, that's a really effective way to go. So think about the person who has the problem that you're solving with this article, and you can either think about how they feel when they have the problem, you can show... 'Cause I've done this a few times, if I'm talking about writing clearly, I might find a picture of somebody looking at a computer and looking really confused. [chuckle] Because it just taps into that and this is what you don't want.

34:30 LD: You don't want your blog reader to look totally confused when they [chuckle] were trying to read your post or look around your website. Or you might wanna find a picture of the after, the solution. When the person has happily solved their problem, this is how they might look, or this is the expression or this is a picture of them with whatever it is that they've accomplished behind them. So yeah, so that's just one way of looking for images is to tap into the emotion. And other than that, I mean the whole purpose of having an image is to catch someone's eye. So you do wanna find something that's eye-catching. Especially on social media when you're sharing a link, it's so much more appealing and attention grabbing if there's an image attached to whatever is that you're sharing and in this case you're sharing a link to a blog post, so you wanna have that image there that's gonna grab their attention if they, "Hey, why is that person confused?" [chuckle] or "Hey, why does that person look so happy standing in front of their freshly manicured lawn?" [chuckle] or whatever it is that you're blogging about.

35:50 KF: Sure.

35:51 LD: So that's the seventh step. Sorry, the sixth step, we have one more and that's the seventh step. And that's tease. The big tease. So in this step, and I encourage you to do this while you are in the writing process and not later as a separate project. And this is where you're writing a teaser text that you're gonna use on social media. I talked about having the image there, that's great. But you also need to have some words. And the title of your blogpost might be one of the things that you share but it's not necessarily the most captivating. So, I suggest that you write a series of messages, especially for a site like Twitter, 'cause you're probably gonna wanna share several times about this particular post because things move so fast on Twitter that people may not see it the first time, or the second time. So, I suggest you write a series of messages. Also you wanna write a series of messages for the different platforms. You don't just create one and put it everywhere. You wanna create different ones for the different settings. Every social network has a slightly different culture and in some cases, a very different culture. Facebook is very different from LinkedIn, and Twitter of course has the character limit although, I've heard that it's [chuckle] expanding, I'm not sure when that's rolling out for everyone or for anyone but in the meantime there are character limits to Twitter.

37:26 LD: And I don't think it's ever gonna be as long as what you can do on Facebook or LinkedIn. And again, it's a different culture, it's a very different culture. So, you wanna be writing something that's appropriate for each of the platforms and not just sharing automatically. I strongly recommend disabling any kind of automated posting that you may have going on with your blog on your website. There's plugins that do it also within social media networks. There's ways to do it, you're posting on LinkedIn, it says "Hey, you can also post this here", I suggest not doing that. First of all, it makes things look really automated. If someone is checking you out, and they're checking out all your different platforms, they just see the same message repeated everywhere. Your platforms are like your website in a way. People are gonna check you out there too and they might be sitting there because they wanna know more about you. They're gonna look. First at your website, then at your LinkedIn profile, then at your Twitter profile, then at your Facebook page and if they see the same thing all the time repeated, repeated, repeated, it just makes it look like you're just calling it in.

38:37 LD: You are not making any effort and you are just posting things automatically, you're not really showing up there. So, definitely, vary what you're posting, vary the times if you can as well, so again, if someone is following you in a bunch of different places, they're not just seeing, "Oh it's 8 o'clock [chuckle], there's all your messages coming on my different screen." As far as writing the teaser posts, I suggest that you look at... You can start with the title certainly and the title might be a good place to start because hopefully you've crafted a title that does speak to the benefit of why someone's gonna be reading it, what problem that you are solving, which you might also then look in your introduction. Introductions and conclusions, if you've written them the way that I suggest, are great places to find teaser text. Because it's where you've summed up thing, and where you're captivating people to keep reading. So, these are great places to find your teaser text.

39:40 LD: Also just look in the body of your post, look for quotes, interesting quotes you might pull out, maybe one of the statistics that you've shared if you have any of that, just little quotes here and there to just capture the meat of the post or make people really curious about, "What's she talking about there?" or "What else did they say about that?" Just think about different ways that you can tease people to wanna know more, as long as you're actually delivering. You don't wanna use what they call a click bait, which is where, it sounds like something that they wanna know about, but when they get there, you're not really answering that question or it's something completely different. So those are the seven steps.

40:29 KF: I love it. What would you recommend as far as a number of teasers to create? Twitter, you're right, the feed moves very fast and I don't think that any of us can wait until we get to 280 characters, because I think we're all excited for that, even though [chuckle] once we get there, we're gonna be like, "This isn't enough", but [chuckle] at any rate...

40:53 JJ: You need more.

40:54 KF: Twitter, the feed moves very fast and because of that, you feel the need to feed the feed more than maybe Facebook or LinkedIn. But how many teasers would you write for each platform?

41:08 LD: Yeah, it definitely depends on how active you are. For example, typically, what I do is three tweets, and then just one each for Facebook and LinkedIn. Until you know how the post is doing. When a post gets really popular then definitely, you wanna start repeating it. And I've also used different... I've toyed around with Meet Edgar, which is a particular scheduling tool that keeps recycling the posts that you've shared.

41:43 KF: Yes.

41:43 LD: Which is great. So, over time, you definitely wanna keep sharing them. But in that first week, I just do typically three for Twitter, one for Facebook, one for LinkedIn. And again it depends on how active you are. If you're really active on Facebook and LinkedIn and you are posting a ton of updates, then definitely you can sneak in one or two more. Because again if someone's looking at all your profiles all at once, they don't wanna see just repeats. "Here's an update about my blog post. Here's another update about my blog post in slightly different language. [chuckle] And then the next post." You don't want that. So it depends on how much you have filling in. Social media is about content and conversation. So, my area is the content part. But in between the content part, you need to be having conversations. You need to be doing other things on those social... They're called social media networks. [chuckle] So my typical answer would be three and then one and one, but it depends on how active you are. I have one client, and so we were doing three for a long time but then I started to recognize, he's not posting anything else. [chuckle] So, I had to pare back and just do one Tweet and maybe try to get him to pipe up now and then on Twitter so that it's not just looking at, if someone looks at his account, they're not just seeing all of my teasers. But, yeah it depends on how active you are. But that's sort of where I start.

43:18 KF: Okay. Great advice. Great advice, I'm just loving your multiple steps to everything and...

43:26 JJ: [43:26] \_\_\_\_.

43:26 KF: I can't wait to drop in these links in the shownotes for everyone to be able to go to your website and reference these things you've spoke of. Because these are great and I'm a methodical person, so checklists or step-by-steps makes me feel warm and fuzzy. [chuckle] So I appreciate that.

43:45 LD: Me too, me too. [chuckle]

43:48 KF: Now when we get to the... We've written the post, we have this great content created but it has to have a home. So a website. What platforms do you use? Or where do you like to publish your content? Lots of WordPress sites out there, WordPress is the, you could say, the "go-to blogging platform", but you have other sites out there, LinkedIn, you can post your content directly to LinkedIn. You have Medium. What is your recommendation maybe for the beginner? Or even, to give you a second part to this question, once that blogger has established, they have the content going, would you recommend leveraging any of these to other newer platforms like Medium?

44:38 LD: Yeah. Great question. So as far as the home, I do think it's really important that your blog post have a home that you own. [chuckle] So, definitely your own website, preferably the same home that the rest of your business website is. So, not a separate blog but actually on the same website. Because that way, first of all you're not competing with yourself. You're not competing with your own website by having a different location that people are going to. And also, so that when they're reading your blog post like, "Hey, this is awesome", they're one step away from your services page, your contact page, your sign-up for my newsletter page, about me page, all that stuff is right there, when they're reading. So, definitely, definitely, definitely want your content to have a home that you own, that you control and that is the same as your website. So for that purpose also, I recommend a self-hosted WordPress website. So, not WordPress.com but WordPress.org and with a theme. I actually do have a blog post about this. I don't have a short link for you. [chuckle] But I can get it you later.

45:52 KF: Sure.

45:53 LD: And it explains, why I don't recommend sites like Wix or Weebly because you don't own them. You don't have as much control and unless you're a designer, which I suspect you're not, unless your business is design, it's probably not gonna look as professional and the way that you want it to. And you can spend a lot of time doing it yourself and I know people that do. But in the end, you've spent a lot of time and I don't think you're gonna get the same result as you would from a professional, either professional designer or professional themes. That's the other thing I recommend, is if you are going with WordPress.org that you do purchase a premium theme because these themes, they've got it all figured out for you. [chuckle]

46:44 KF: Sure.

46:45 LD: And it looks good and it works properly. It works with other plug... You don't get a lot of plugin conflict, that kind of thing. I explained all of this in my blog post. I will definitely get you the link. But for the absolute beginner and really not tech savvy, not wanting to spend a lot, or do a [47:06] \_\_\_\_ block right off the bat, I do suggest WordPress.com because that way you can then later transition to WordPress.org a lot easier. And it is still part of the same platform. You're gonna be more equipped to use WordPress.org as self-hosted if you've already gotten used to the platforms, so that's the one [chuckle] hosted platform that I would suggest if that's where you need to start. So as far as leveraging and as far as posting on the other platforms, depending on your business, I definitely recommend LinkedIn as a place to blog. Again, I still recommend having it on your own site first and then reposting it. And for myself, I usually wait, sometimes a week, sometimes a few months. It just depends on where I'm at. But I have other clients where we do it almost simultaneously. Either way, and you can experiment. What's always amazing to me is people in my network who really should have seen my updates and who also get my newsletter [chuckle] and really should have seen these posts. And I'm like most of us, I think everyone reads everything that I put out, why wouldn't they? [laughter]

48:27 KF: Sure.

48:28 LD: But in reality...

48:29 JJ: They have to, right? [laughter]

48:30 LD: In reality, people don't always look at the stuff we put out. We post something on LinkedIn and I'll get these people commenting, liking, it's like they've never seen it. [chuckle]

48:43 KF: Awesome! [laughter]

48:44 LD: It is awesome. However the algorithm works and whatever LinkedIn is showing people, I can never figure that out, I don't think any of us can, but they do seem to get out there. So, when I put something up, when I post something on my LinkedIn blog, it does seem to get out there, it does seem to get some attention, so I do recommend doing that. And as far as Medium, I have experimented with Medium, I don't post there quite as often as I do on LinkedIn, but I have definitely gotten some attention there and the nice thing... There are Medium experts that you can, I'm sure, talk to, that know a lot more about it than I do, and there's ways to succeed on Medium that I just haven't delved into. You can actually create a blog, your own publication on LinkedIn, which is a very cool feature that I think looks really interesting. I haven't done it myself, but I think that's definitely something to look into. And what's nice about Medium is that, what I did notice is I was attracting new people. Completely, not a ton, but people who never ever would've seen my work otherwise have found it on Medium. That's a really nice... As a writer... And I think Medium is a good site for thought leaders, for writers, for people who are really interested in having a global conversation, really delving into issues and that's not all of us.

50:24 LD: You know what, if you're a business owner and you're blogging 'cause you wanna get more exposure for your business, you wanna help people, you wanna provide this service, that may not all be as important to you, so I wouldn't put quite as much stock into the time you spend on Medium. If you've done everything else, if you're blogging regularly, if you're posting on LinkedIn regularly, then maybe start on Medium. I wouldn't make it a priority at the beginning 'cause there's too many things to do. There's just too many things to do. They do have a fairly good import function, but you will still have to go in probably and do some reformatting, maybe put the picture back in. So it's still gonna take you some time. Like I said, if you're really into the writing process, into having that conversation, into having those dialogues, then by all means, it's a great platform. But if your main goal is getting more business and getting your content out there so that the people who need you can find you, then I'd say stick to the others first until you're really, really consistent with that, and then maybe look into Medium.

51:38 KF: Okay, so for clarification for everyone, start off with a WordPress site that you own and have that ownership there because I think that's super important, is not depending on another platform out there to house in your information. It's like putting all your money in a bank that you're not certain if it's going to be there in a 100 years or not. You wanna make sure that you have ownership in your content. So you're stating WordPress site you own, and then reposting to LinkedIn and then as you get comfortable with that, move it over into Medium and reposting your content there.

52:21 LD: Yes.

52:22 KF: Perfect. Awesome. Love it!

52:26 JJ: Beautiful! Hey, Linda, if you have one piece of parting advice for our listening audience, what would that be?

52:33 LD: Just do it. [chuckle] Just start. If this has been awe-inspiring for you, I hope that I have made you understand that it's doable. I was gonna say easy, [chuckle] not necessarily easy but it's doable, you can do it, so please just give it a try. Stick to your main topics and just start 'cause you're gonna get so much better at it over time, so please just give it a start and then see how it goes.

53:04 JJ: That's great advice. I think that we hear that quite a bit, it's just, take action and get started and do it. What is the best way for our listeners to get in touch with you?

53:14 LD: Contentmasteryguide.com.

53:16 JJ: Perfect. Neon Noise nation, we hope you enjoyed our conversation today with Linda, be sure to go over and check up her website at contentmasteryguide.com, Linda, thank you so much for being on the show today.

53:29 LD: My pleasure.

53:29 JJ: As always, the shownotes from today will be available at neongoldfish.com/podcast. Until next time, this is Justin, Ken and Linda signing off. Neon Noise nation, we will see you again next week.

[music]

53:42 S?: Thank you for listening to this episode of the Neon Noise podcast. Did you enjoy the podcast? If so, please subscribe, share with a friend or write a review. We wanna cover the topics you wanna hear. If you have an idea for a topic you'd like Justin and Ken to cover, connect with us on Twitter @neongoldfish or through our website, at neongoldfish.com.