

New Business Podcast

Episode #13

Mastering Blogging for Business, with ProBlogger - Darren Rowse!

Chris Ducker: Hey, everybody. It's Chris Ducker here. And this is the [New Business Podcast](#) where insightful how-to business strategies collide with actionable tips and tactics. Look no further. You found the podcast that you need to tune into to catapult your business into the 21st century.

Well, hello there everybody! And welcome to another episode of the New Business Podcast. Thank you very much for tuning in. This is episode 13. And I'm your host, Chris Ducker. And it's nice to be back. I say that because it has been a few weeks since last the episode. I had a few things to deal with and had been wrapping up a couple of projects as well. So, it's all been good on the Ducker end.

But I must say, this is one podcast session actually that I recorded a little while ago and I've been just aching to get it out there not only to answer an absolute ton of questions that have been coming my way recently in regards to blogging particularly in regards to promoting your business online and that sort of type of thing but also, just because my guest on today's show is just such a rock star and as a bit of an introvert, he will probably laugh at that if he's listening in, but he's such a rock star in this space and I just know that you're going to love our interview and our chat together.

But before we go down that particular road, a little bit of housekeeping that I want to take care of, if that's OK with you. And we'll kick off with a voice message that was sent to me via email from a podcast listener, Daniel Hayes, who's based over in the US. He was tuning into an old episode where I mentioned that it was a bit of a pain to have my VAs collating all of the different reviews from my listeners from all the different iTunes stores and I was sort of complaining I guess and venting out that it was a pain in the butt that iTunes wouldn't sort of just put everything all in one place for us podcasters to be able to look at all of our reviews all at once.

Well Dan, has found a great work around and a great little resource for everybody out there that is podcasting to be able to do this exact thing. So, I'm going to let you hear from Dan right now. If you are podcasting, grab a pen and paper real quick. You're going to thank me and Dan for this fantastic little resource.

Dan Hayes: Hey Chris, Dan Hayes here. I was listening to episode 10 with Srinu Rao

from other countries. Like you, I wished that iTunes had them all listed in one place but they don't. But I want to let you know about a tool called CommentCast that you can find at Marti.ca, that's M-A-R-T-I.ca.

It lets you track all of your reviews and ratings in all of the iTunes stores from one app. It has a paid and a free version. And the free version has worked great for me so far. The other cool thing is that you can cut and paste from there when you want to talk about a comment in your show notes.

Anyway my friend, I hope this helps and saves your VA some time. So keep up the great work and the great content. Take care.

Chris Ducker: So there you go. Thanks again, Dan, for that fantastic little resource. My VA has been using it and is now our default way to be able to track all of the comments that people leave. So guys, if you haven't already gone ahead and left a rating and a review on iTunes, I would absolutely love to hear from you over there.

You can do it very easily by just clicking over to ChrisDucker.com/iTunes and you'll get forwarded directly to the correct page. I really love reading all of the reviews and the comments that everybody has to say. So if you haven't already done so, please go ahead and do so. I'd love to be able to hear from you.

Now, I want to sort of talk very quickly about something that I'm about to embark on a couple of days from now. I'm going to be traveling over to the UK. It's going to be the first time back in my mother land for about three years or so, a little over three years. And when I'm there, I'm going to be running some mastermind sessions with ChrisDucker.com subscribers.

And this was sort of an open blog post that I put out there expecting to hear back for maybe a handful or so of people that might be interested in doing it. I initially had reserved a conference room in a very swanky London hotel in the Docklands area for just ten people but there were so many people that wanted to get involved that I ended up actually extending it to a 2-day session of ten people on each day. So, if you're going to be in London on the 13th and the 14th of May, I really, really look forward to meeting with you.

These sessions tend to be based on my experience, unbelievably important to entrepreneurs and the way that they look at building their businesses and coming up with great ideas and just the ability and the opportunity to be able to sit in a room full of like-minded people is huge. It's just absolutely huge.

And actually, I'm going to be talking about this a little bit more in [episode 14](#) or the next episode with a friend, Justin Cooke, who is a permanent member of a mastermind group that I run here in the Philippines. And that's a great conversation. It's coming up next week. I know you're going to love it. So make sure you tune in for that.

So again, if you're going to be in London, I look forward to rocking and rolling and really crushing it when it comes to coming up with some great, great business ideas and putting some new strategies in place for your businesses. So if you're interested in potentially being part of one of these mastermind sessions, I do plan to do a couple more in the United States, one on the East Coast, one on the West Coast in July when I'm there for the entire month.

If you're interested in coming along, just email my PA, Jam, and that is as in raspberry, strawberry jam, Jam@ChrisDucker.com. Give her your name and your email and she'll put you on the wait list for that. No doubt, we'll have some information on those events at some point towards the end of May.

So, getting back to today's episode all about blogging for business. I'm a big fan of blogs and I just – I love the idea of being able to utilize this blog and the other blogs that I help run and maintain to promote and grow my businesses. And it's actually a subject that I talk about for an entire day on the [7-Day New Business Bootcamp](#) which is my free video course which teaches you how to really build a business today in today's economy.

If you haven't already popped over to the site and sign up and got access to that course, you'll get instant access, just go right over to NewBusinessBootcamp.com and you'll be able to get these seven days worth of video training absolutely free. Blogging for business is I believe day number two and it's a big, big subject for me to be able to get really involved in. And there are also additional blogging resources over on ChrisDucker.com/resources as well.

Now, today's session is one that I believe is going to be an incredibly important one for every single entrepreneur that is looking to build a business in 2013 and way beyond. Blogging has absolutely revolutionized the way that I grow my platform, my communities, my product lists, my mailing lists, and you name it. Everything else that I do really comes out of blogging and putting together the content for ChrisDucker.com and everything else that I do. So, this is a great, great conversation with a true legend in the field of blogging. And I very much hope that you enjoy it.

Now, when I started my first blog in January of 2010, if you've had asked me three years later if I'd still be blogging, I probably wouldn't know what I would have said literally. However, here we are three years later and I'm a very happy blogger. I'm also a podcaster and I do online video as well. I might not have hundreds of thousands of subscribers like my guest today has but I do have what I believe is one of the most passionate communities of real action-taking business people that's available online today. And it all started with my blogging and blogging more specifically for business.

So, when I started thinking about bringing on a guest to discuss this very subject, there's only really one person that I could think of. He's been blogging for over ten years. He's published literally, thousands of posts in that time, spoken in front of tens of thousands of people live, written a bestseller, and he continues to shape the

blogging landscape one brilliant blog post after another. So, I'm very excited to sit down and chat with someone that I not only classed as a friend but also, as a mentor in part as well.

So without further ado, it's a massive pleasure to welcome ProBlogger himself, Darren Rowse on to the New Business Podcast. How are you doing, mate?

Darren Rowse: Well, thanks. Good to be chatting to you.

Chris Ducker: It's nice. Now, we were actually hanging out a little bit a couple of weeks ago in Melbourne.

Darren Rowse: I know. It feels like yesterday but it has been a few weeks.

Chris Ducker: It has been a few weeks. We had glorious weather. Darren took me to some amazing little lunch spot in Melbourne and we chatted for a couple of hours on everything from pizza to I don't know, blog – I think we mentioned blogging once or twice, didn't we?

Darren Rowse: Maybe it came up a couple of times.

Chris Ducker: All right, mate. Now look, I wanted to get you on the show here. The New Business Podcast crowd are all about taking action, getting going, starting things, building things, and for me, blogging has a got a very close area next to my little heart when it comes to being able to utilize this particular medium to build my businesses.

And I often get asked myself, what are the kind of things that I would have done differently if I could start all over again business-wise? And pretty much always, I say, "I wish I got blogging sooner. I wish I started my blog sooner."

So I want to kick off this with a bit of a general question but I'm sure it's going fuel our conversation here today quite well. And that is, how important is it for small business owners today to be blogging do you think?

Darren Rowse: Yeah. It's a question I get asked all the time. And whilst on one hand, I think it's something that everyone should at least consider, I don't think it's something that every business is going to be able to do. But there are many benefits of actually experimenting with it if you do have the time and the resources to really be able to dedicate yourself to it.

For me, it can really extend any of the channels of your business. Say, it can help you with your marketing, it can help you with your customer support, it can help you with research and development of new pullouts. It can be used for a whole heap of different things. I guess one of the things that I do advice is to start with one of those things when you're starting a blog.

Don't start to do marketing, customer research, customer service, storytelling, becoming a thought leader in your niche, all those things on the one blog, it maybe that you need to start a few of them. But really, any channel in your existing business, a blog can tap into that and support that in one way or another.

Chris Ducker: Yeah, you're right. And I love the fact that you brought up storytelling there because it reminds me a couple of years back, we were both speaking in LA at BlogWorld and I dropped in on your session and saw you speaking about storytelling and taking the reader through that past experience of yourself or someone that you knew and stuff. And it really hit home with me actually.

And I've told many stories on my blog since then. And I've always enjoyed a lot of really, really nice feedback. I mean people like stories obviously. But what do you think it is about that storytelling approach to blogging that enables particularly business owners to kind of touch their customers and their prospective customers so well?

Darren Rowse: Yeah. Look, I think there's probably a whole podcast on storytelling because there are so many different types of stories that you can tell. But I guess a lot of people have skepticism or distrust towards business particularly in the online space. Internet is known for being a scammy, dangerous place, all the media here in Australia and pretty much anytime the Internet is mentioned that's in conjunction with someone being ripped off for, someone being hurt in some way.

And I think one of the ways to combat that and to breakthrough that and to build trust with people is to tell stories rather than thinking about what can we use our blog for to do marketing? Tell a story and you'll build trust so that when you do do that marketing, people are actually far more open to hear about the things that you do.

I think blogs can be used to – each post that you write can be a story in and of itself. But in many ways, the blog itself becomes your story. And as I look at my blog, [ProBlogger](#), really if you go right back to the beginning of it and read it from the start to the end, and I don't recommend you do that because it will take you a year or so, but it tells my story. And the people who have been reading my blogs since 2004 have kind of grown up and I guess experienced my own story with me as I've told it on the blog.

And so, yes, it's a series of stories and there's lots of little stories there that in and of itself has become the story. And I think – I go to conferences like BlogWorld fairly regularly and it's amazing how people would come up to you that you've never met, you don't know their name, you don't know their face, yet, they hug you and they feel like they know you and they've connected with you and they know about your life.

And that can be a little bit freaky to me as an introvert but at the same time, it demonstrates the power of sharing yourself on a blog on a daily basis or a weekly basis for the long term. People feel like they have a connection with you and that's a very powerful thing.

Chris Ducker: Yeah. And I mean, I always talk about my philosophy of P2P or people to people in business rather than B2B or B2C. And that communication right there, that loyalty, that relationship that is built up over a period of time, a lot of the time is obviously at arm's length but like you said, when you get to meet people face to face for the first time in the flesh so to speak, I just want to clarify, Darren doesn't do his public speaking gigs actually in the nude, but I would remember that. I would remember that.

Darren Rowse: I did do one recently in a dress.

Chris Ducker: You did?

Darren Rowse: The whole [inaudible].

Chris Ducker: Yeah, it is a completely different story but it's such a cool one. Let's tell it very quickly. Go on because it's such a great little story.

Darren Rowse: Well, we ran an event in Melbourne called The ProBlogger Training Event. It's actually just moved to the Gold Coast here in Australia. And we usually try and partner with a charity. And the charity that we partnered with at last year's event was called Do It In A Dress and it's a local organization. A couple of people who support girls in Africa and these girls are more likely to be sexually assaulted than to go to high school.

And so, a powerful sort of story, and the way that Do It In A Dress has raised money is to challenge people like myself to do something in a dress, in a high school uniform. And so, I got up in front of my conference, 300 people in a dress with my mate, Shane Delia. And I think we raised possibly \$1500 or something like that for this charity. So, there are a lot of photos in the Internet of me in a dress and on a very bad wig.

Chris Ducker: Right. Now, did you go to the whole hog – I can't remember seeing – was there any picture with lipstick involved?

Darren Rowse: We didn't go there. We didn't raise enough. We put an issue – a series of challenges there which included lipstick and shaving legs and all kinds of things. But we got to where we can end the dress.

Chris Ducker: That's awesome. But it's good that you can give back like that. That's obviously a whole different podcast of what blogging can do for non-profits and charity and everything. But it's good that you – and it's also good that you can stab a little bit of fun at yourself at the same time. I think that's – it shows a certain quality that anybody has if they can do that.

Darren Rowse: Which is the bit playfulness I think is the blogosphere and that's one of the things I would encourage as a business owner. Often, business messaging is very serious. It's all on brand. And I understand that on some levels. But the

blogosphere has been ten plus years, a very playful place where you can experiment, where you can write in a different voice, where you can do all kinds of things. And it's very forgiving in that way as well.

And so, if you can find fun things to do on your blog then I think it will be well-received generally.

Chris Ducker: Yeah, I couldn't agree more about the voice and things because I remember, when I first started blogging with Virtual Business Lifestyle, I knew my client base were going to come across that as a blog, as a platform and I was pretty – I mean, there was a lot of Chris, the real Chris in there but I did tend to kind of pull back a little bit and not sort of completely share my entire personality because I always knew that my clients, some of them very corporate clients were listening in or reading or watching or whatever.

And so, when I made switch over to ChrisDucker.com around September of 2012, I really promised myself that I was going to be very true to my own personality. And I'm a pretty, I mean we spend enough time together in person, you know me, I'm pretty forthright kind of brash from time to time, a little in your face every now and then, and that's just my style. That's what I'm like.

So, I really kind of developed that online and in the last – I tell you, I've heard nothing but positive things about it. I love being me now, which is not what I did before. Have you struggled with that because you are somewhat of an introvert and blogging is obviously very public? Have you gotten over that maybe that little bit of shyness and things like that?

Darren Rowse: Yeah, I'm not sure. I've never really struggled with it. I am an Introvert and I would – I don't share things person to person easily. But I have no trouble sharing pretty much anything online for some reason and maybe that – maybe it is a safer, more measured way to do it. I don't really know why. But it's interesting.

When I go to a conference and people come up to me and them being a long-time reader, they'll usually remember two types of posts that I've written. One will be a story, "I remember when you tell the story about blah, blah, blah." Or they'll tell me about something that I did that was a surprise to them that was in a different voice so that was some sort of an April fool's joke that I did or I wrote a post once about – in the voice of my 2-year-old son, [5 Things You Don't Know About My Dad, the ProBlogger](#). So it was written from his perspective. And that's a post that people always remember.

Chris Ducker: Right.

Darren Rowse: So stories and the playful things that you do. They create a lasting impression for people and that's your brand. And they are the things that people will remember about you. They are the things that people will tell other people about you.

So, create an impression. If you just write in a boring stilted voice, people aren't going to remember that and they're not going to tell others about you either.

Chris Ducker: Yeah, absolutely. So, let's get in back a little bit to the business side of things. And I think one of the big things for me anyway, one of the big exercises that I did and I worked with a good friend of mine, Corbett Barr from [ThinkTraffic](#) on this, and that was putting together or defining my perfect reader so to speak.

Darren Rowse: Yup.

Chris Ducker: And he actually made me go through – this was just as I was making the transition from Virtual Business Lifestyle to ChrisDucker.com, he sat me down and he sort of mentored me through – because sometimes, you're so closed, right? You can't see it so you need someone else's opinion. And I asked him as somebody that I really respected in what he's been doing and everything online and he got me to put together three completely different reader profiles. And it helped me immensely.

What do you think is the best way to try and start defining who you want your reader or your customer to be?

Darren Rowse: Well, that's exactly what I did. So my biggest blog today isn't ProBlogger. It's [Digital Photography School](#) and I blog about photography tips. And when I started that in 2006, I sat down and I did that exact exercise. I've just heard an advertising executive talked about how he created these profiles for the type of people that they wanted to reach with their ads. And so I thought, "I'm going to do that."

So, I've got it in the Word document and I began to write a page on each type of person that I thought might want to read my blog one day, my target reader. And I think I created four or five of them. One was a mom who photographed their kids and in that, I talked about her needs, I talked about her demographics, her age, how she used the Internet, and what her problems were, what her dreams were. That were kind of the main things that I included in there.

And what I found is as I write that document, I suddenly had this picture in my mind of my reader. And so when I began to write my blog, I was picturing her. I was actually writing a content for a person rather than just content. And what I found is – the feedback I got was from people saying, "I felt like you are writing to me in a very personal voice."

And so, I've refined those profiles over the years. And now, I gave them to my writers. I gave them to potential advertisers for our blog. I gave them to all of my team, my customer support team. They now have those profiles in front of them when they're doing their jobs. So when an email comes in, someone complaining, my customer support team knows the type of reader that I'm trying to reach. And so, they know their problems. They know their dreams. They know their budget. They know – they understand where they're coming from a lot more.

What we then have done over the years is created surveys. So we use a tool [SurveyMonkey](#). And once a year, we send out an email to our readers saying, “We’d love to just learn a little bit more about you and how we can serve you.” And that identifies a whole heap of things for us. One, what topics we could write about. But it also tells us, are we on track with our reader profiles and our target audience? And then we’re able to refine them a little bit more and talk a little bit more about who they are.

Having those reader profiles informs the content that we write. It informs the way that we build community on our site. It informs how we’re going to find those readers. So, where do I find those readers? Well, we look at our reader profile. They hang out on Twitter or this type of reader hangs out on Google+ or this type of person doesn’t go online. And that’s why I have to go to a real-life event. And so, we’re able to understand how to find them. And then it’s also helps us informs the way that we monetize our site as well.

So really having those reader profiles is probably the most powerful thing I’ve ever done in starting my main blog today.

Chris Ducker: Yeah. And the thing that really strikes home there above and beyond everything else that you just mentioned and there are a lot of golden nuggets in with that answer for sure, but the thing for me that really kind of smacks me over the head there a little bit is the fact that you began this new blog very clearly with building it up as a business in mind.

This wasn’t just going to be a journal. It wasn’t going to be a place for you to just brain dump ideas regularly. It’s very clear from the outset that by putting those reader profiles together, you were in the process of building a business. And it has developed into a huge business, right? I mean this is a big deal for you.

How many subscribers have you got now?

Darren Rowse: I think across email and the RSS, there’s about a million now. Actually, it’s probably one 1.1 million.

Chris Ducker: Incredible, incredible. So I mean, do you sometimes look back? I mean how much of that is just being in the right space at the right time or do you really class it or do you really rather put it down to getting very, very focused right there from the outset? Do you think that made a massive, massive difference long-term?

Darren Rowse: A combination of factors. I think we were a little bit lucky in the time we started. But more than that, my whole – right from the start, my goal has been to solve a problem every day for my readers. And those problems come from those reader profiles. So what were our readers want to know, what are their problems? We

solve those problems. And I really believe that if you solve one person's problem every day, then they're bound to tell another person about it.

Chris Ducker: Yeah.

Darren Rowse: And so yeah, being useful, solving problems, meeting needs, inspiring. So we do a lot of posts that are more about inspiring our readers than teaching them. That combination of inspiration, interaction, and information; they're the three I's that I kind of focus on, information, inspiration, and interaction. Every day, they're the three things that I want to be doing in one way or another. And I think if you do them on a regular basis over the long haul, it can't help but grow.

Chris Ducker: Yeah, I completely agree. I mean, I want to go on to this a little bit. And that is, let's say, we're just starting out, let's say you're a small business owner regardless of what industry you're in whether you're an online business owner, whether you're an offline business owner, whatever the case maybe, and you're getting going with the idea of blogging and setting up a blog for the first time. What do we do? Do we keep our blog on our business website or do we put it on another domain name? What would you suggest is a good idea? Or maybe there are pros and cons to both.

Darren Rowse: Yeah, I think there are pros and cons. But I would say, with a business, an existing business, if you're blogging and it's on the same topic and the main goal of your blog is to grow your business, I'd probably keep it on the same domain and integrate it. There's probably a case for having a different brand. But really, as soon as you start having another domain, then you've got two brands to juggle with.

Chris Ducker: Right.

Darren Rowse: To me, that seems a bit silly. You could be building one instead of two. There's also a search engine optimization benefits of having it on your domain because you will find you'll get a lot more links to post on your blog than you will to the rest of your site; and that will help your SEO. So generally, I'll say, keep it all on the one domain unless you got a really good reason not to.

Chris Ducker: Yeah. I mean the only reason – and I actually have blogs on all of my business sites but they're maintained by my team obviously and things like it. But the main reason why I wanted to have the ChrisDucker.com away from everything else was it truly was going to be built up around my personal opinions, my personal experiences and my brand, and things like that. So to put it on one of my business sites wasn't really going to make a whole lot of difference. So I guess you have to sort of weigh up the options as well.

Darren Rowse: Sure, yup. It really comes down to the purpose of what you want to do with that blog.

Chris Ducker: Now, I mean we talked a little bit about looking at our reader profiles and spending some time figuring out who we're going to write for, let's look at maybe a slightly – the bigger picture before we get into a few more nuts and bolts discussions. But defining your goals as a blogger overall.

Now, you've talked a little bit about that with Digital Photography School where you sat down. It wasn't just about the reader profiles. It was about customer service, and growth, and monetization, and stuff like that. Especially when you start out, what type of tips can you give maybe first-time bloggers in relation to just defining a few of your goals overall?

Darren Rowse: Yeah, I guess probably for me, it comes down as a business blogger back to which of the channels in my business or which of the areas of my business do I want my blog to support. And really, trying to find maybe one or two rather than ten goals, I think having one or two goals for your blog is probably enough when you start out. And you may find that you're able to expand that over time or you're able to start another blog that helps in those ways.

Yeah, and I guess it's about being realistic as well. A lot of the goals that I see bloggers making are massive goals. And whilst on one hand, I think that's a good thing, the blogosphere and the online space, it takes time and it's an evolution for most people.

Occasionally, people blast on to a scene and do really well quickly. But it's about being realistic I guess and understanding that you're competing with literally millions and millions of other blogs for the same audience. And so, it's going to take some time on that front as well.

Chris Ducker: Yeah. I think – go on. You were going to say?

Darren Rowse: I was going to say, I usually say, what is my goal? Why do I have that goal? And being really critical about is that just because it made me feel good or is it actually a tangible thing that's going to help me with the bottom line of my business?

Chris Ducker: Yeah.

Darren Rowse: When do I want that goal to be reached and actually setting that? And then for me, it's about probably more critical than setting the goals as the how. So, what is the goal? Why do I want it? When do I want it by? And then how am I going to do that? And what steps am I going to take? This is probably the key one for implementing it.

Chris Ducker: Yeah, I believe you're right. And I was going to say that I believe I read somewhere recently that there's something – that something like every six seconds, there's a new blog started or something along those lines.

Darren Rowse: Yeah.

Chris Ducker: It's insane, no matter what it is. But we both know and anybody else that's involved with blogging for any period of time will know that a lot of those will kind of filter out quite quickly in the first two or three months or so because people, they start blogging with the best of intentions.

But it's like anything else, it takes some time to build up the momentum and unless they get a boatload of comments or feedback and things like that in the first month or two, a lot of people just saw the wayside on that.

Darren Rowse: Yeah, for sure. I tweeted a few minutes ago that the two mistakes I see people making with online is not starting and then giving up too early. And really, that is the key. Start it. You've got to start it. That's obviously the key. But so many people have an idea that one day they will and then giving up. Don't give up. You've got to push past that magical three-month part. I find this is often the time that they will give up.

Chris Ducker: Yeah. No, absolutely. So, I know a lot of people have come to me before in relation to blogging and some of them say, "Well, I'm not a very good writer. I'm a bit scared almost to start a blog for the first time. Will people even read my content? Is it good enough?" How would you suggest they perhaps try to attack that and get over that initial hurdle?

Darren Rowse: Yeah. I find a lot of people say, "I don't feel like I'm an expert enough or that I know enough. What would I write?" And really for me, in the early days, what I've discovered is trying to put myself in the shoes of a reader who is a bit behind me. And so, one way to get over that is to think about what problem did I have a year ago that I don't have now? And write about how you solve that. And go back further, you might find ten years ago.

Now, a lot of the content that I write at the start of my photography blog was so basic. It was things like how do you hold a digital camera. And for me, that just seemed like a stupid post because everyone knows how to pick up a camera and hold it. But the reality was that when I write that post, it had hundreds of comments on it because people didn't know how to do that.

Chris Ducker: Right.

Darren Rowse: That basic stuff that you've forgotten is actually the stuff where a lot of people will find really useful. So yeah, it's about identifying problems and solving them I guess in many ways. And you've just got to start. Your first post won't be amazing but don't let that stop you from publishing it because you'll learn so much in publishing that first post. It's an experiment in many ways.

And what you learn about, the feedback that you get, or the feedback that you don't get, that will inform your next post and that next post will be better again.

Chris Ducker: Yeah. And then before you know what's happening, you've been going for ten odd years. You got no hair left.

Darren Rowse: Yeah, that seems to be the way.

Chris Ducker: All right. So, let's talk about publishing schedules because you did a video recently. And actually, I brought this up when we were having lunch in Melbourne a few weeks back because I thought it was really interesting to hear about how you have been working with your team to not only plan out blog posts but also, actual product releases.

You got together. And you'd basically developed in a course of a day. You developed this sort of almost a publishing schedule per se for the entire year of 2013.

Obviously, it's important. If you're going to take this seriously to look at doing these sort of types of things, but let's say you're just starting out and you don't have this big team in front of you to help you out and brainstorm and put all these things on the calendar, what's the best way to get started with sort of developing a little bit of a blogging schedule?

Darren Rowse: Yup. So I'd probably start by thinking about how often can you post on a realistic basis? A lot of people say, "I want to post every day." That may not be realistic. And so, you may want to start with every second day or three times a week to get going and then increase that over time.

It maybe that you want to write a longer type of post that are meatier and they take longer to write and so, you may want to publish twice a week or once a week even. The frequency doesn't really matter that much. I think it's the regularity that perhaps matters a little bit more.

So, work out how often and then begin to identify those problems that you want to solve. And those problems could be anything from educating people to entertaining them. A problem that someone has this on board so that's the legitimate is to be able to entertain them in some way.

And by beginning to understand your potential readers or customers' problems, you then begin to see things that you could be writing about. And then it's just a matter of scheduling them in and scheduling the time to do the writing in that type of way.

One way that I think a lot of bloggers find useful in the early days is to set a different type of post for everyday of the week. And so you might say, "On Monday, we're going to post a tutorial. On Tuesday, we're going to post a review of a product that we sell or that someone else sells in our industry. On Wednesday, we might do an interview with

someone in our industry or one of our staff. On Thursday, we might do a case study. On Friday, we might have a discussion post where we ask a question and let our readers discuss something.”

Having that sort of schedule in that sort of way, a lot of bloggers find that really useful particularly in the early days just to get into that regularity. And it also helps you to explore different types of posts as well. And it gives variety to your readers as well if they’re getting interviews, case studies, tutorials. It will vary from blog to blog but that type of regular type of post on a weekly basis can do quite well.

Chris Ducker: Yeah, I think I will agree with 100% in regards to the regularity of it more than anything else. I mean I have found myself being somewhat at times a sporadic blogger where one week, I’ll blog on a Tuesday. The next week, I’ll blog Monday and Wednesday. The next week, it will be Friday and Tuesday. I mean I’m a little all over the place.

But I have found that at the times where – and a lot of that – and I know these are obvious either procrastination or excuses or whatever way you want to put it, but I also find that because I run a few different businesses and I travel quite a bit and things like that, I sometimes struggle a little bit with keeping that regular posting schedule.

But I have noticed in the times where I haven’t had problems with it, and I have posted say, every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, my traffic as a blogger, as a publisher of online content has really – you do that three or four weeks in a row, people almost start coming back every Wednesday because they know that’s when you post.

Darren Rowse: Yeah. And you find, the more you post, the more easy it gets as well. So quite often now when I write a blog post, I’m making notes of other topics that I can write about because I’ll be writing and make a point and think, “Well, there’s a tangent that I could take here but I’m not going to take that tangent but I’m going to write a post about that.”

So as you write, you need to train yourself to be thinking about what’s the next post after this one and thinking about creating momentum on your blog so that your posts begin to build upon one another, which is great for your search engine optimization again because as you’re writing the next post, you can link back to your first one and which builds internal links as well on your site.

But more useful than that is you’re actually giving – taking your readers on a journey through your blog over time. So you might write ten posts over ten months that all relate to one another. Suddenly, your readers have sort of travelled on this journey with you and say how you’ve grown in your understanding but also, hopefully, grown in their understanding as well.

Chris Ducker: Yeah. Now, you bring up the word, “grow”. Let’s focus on that for a minute. That’s good timing. Obviously, blogging is just one platform, right? And we

often hear that you need to sort of be everywhere. Our good buddy, Pat Flynn, talks about being everywhere and things like that. And I mean, I get it that things like guest posts and things like that are a great way to be able to get more of a new or a fresh audience across to you and things like that.

But I have found personally with myself that social media has played such a big part in creating new followers and subscribers for me personally. I mean Facebook and Twitter for example – actually, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube are in my top five or six referring sites all the time week in, week out. And what I tend to do is I prefer to use Facebook for kind of taking the conversation off the blog, if that makes sense. And I might share some – a little bit more kind of personal stuff on there and ask questions and that sort of stuff.

What's ProBlogger using social media for mostly nowadays to grow the blogs?

Darren Rowse: Yeah. So, it kind of changes and I'm not the best on being disciplined with my social media. I'm pretty good at keeping posts going live on the blog. But I'm kind of – got a very short attention span. So, I can flip between one and the other. But probably the constant for me is [Twitter](#). And that for me, Twitter, on my ProBlogger account is a bit of a combination of just – it's my personal Twitter account in some ways which is a bit messy but it's kind of what my followers seem to like it. And it's also the new stuff that's happening on the blog, the new stuff I'm thinking about on entrepreneurship.

And then I use [Facebook](#) partly for announcements but also, asking questions. I prefer to ask questions on Facebook because my followers can see what each other answers a little bit easier than on Twitter.

Chris Ducker: Right.

Darren Rowse: You can use a hashtag to pull all the answers together but it kind of becomes messy and tangled whereas on Facebook and on Google+, you get that thread of conversations which I think is really good.

[Google+](#) is something that I'm increasingly using and I'm almost using that as a test blog where I often will write about the things that I'm thinking about on Google+ and those things will often then turn into a blog post later on. So I'll throw out some ideas, it might be five or six paragraphs, ask people for their feedback, and then go then write the real post for the blog which I guess gives people an insight into what I'm thinking. And it also makes the post better hopefully as well.

The advantage of Google+ is that you can write longer form of content there than you can on Facebook. Facebook I think has a limit of characters. It's certainly longer than Twitter but Google has no limit in that way. And you can format your post to bold them and that type of stuff as well. But it really depends on your audience as to which one you use.

On Digital Photography School, Facebook is the biggest thing, Twitter is probably number two, and Google+ number three. Yeah, it really depends on who you're trying to reach, your reader profile, and how that person uses the web. You want to position yourself in the places that they hang out.

Chris Ducker: Yeah, and I think what's really important to take away from that tidbit of info right there is that you're using the different types of social media, in this case, Twitter, Facebook, and Google+ for very different types of activities. And you're playing on those strengths I believe. Actually, with Google+, it's almost as if they're trying to build their own blogging platform to a certain degree, right?

I mean with the way that you can bold in your words and things like that that you can't do that on Facebook. And I think that for me is actually the eye-opener from that part of our conversation is that you're using different channels for different activities. And that's just – if nothing else, that's just smart.

Darren Rowse: And the other thing I'm trying to do is push people between them as well. And so, if we're having a discussion on Google+, I'll tweet about it. If I ask the question on Facebook and it's really hot, I'll push people to that. In our newsletter, if we have a hot discussion on Facebook, I'll push people to that. So, I'm trying to get people to connect with us in the different places but also, on our email, subscribing to our RSS. I think the more places of connection that you have with people, I guess the stronger the brand is and the more connection they'll have.

Chris Ducker: Yeah, I'll agree. I'll agree 100%. So I mean, one thing that you've done really, really well over the last couple of years, I mean you've always done well with monetizing your blogs obviously, otherwise we probably won't be sitting here talking about it right now. Being a family man, you have to bring home the bacon as they say, right? Obviously, I mean you've made some pretty big changes. And I've heard you speak about them in interviews and things like that before.

But your monetization particularly with ProBlogger initially and then Digital Photography School has just gone through the roof over the last couple of years particularly with your eBooks. And I mean I know a lot of people I think that eBooks have gone the way of the dodo. I don't believe that's the case. I mean the one e-book that kind of began it all for me from you was [31 Days to Build a Better Blog](#). And I know that this e-book came out of actually a series of posts from the blog. Great story behind it. Would you care to share it?

Darren Rowse: Yeah, sure. So, *31 Days to Build a Better Blog* was a random idea that I had while talking to a friend one day. We both grew up in Christian families and we were given as children these little devotional guides where every day, you would sit down and read a Bible verse and have a thought for the day and then have a little prayer. And I was joking with my friend one day that we need to do this for bloggers. We'd set up a little devotional guide for bloggers and we'd give them a thought for the

day and then something to go away and do and we probably wouldn't give them a prayer or anything like that.

But we kind of laughed about it. We thought it was kind of funny because we had this shared childhood experience. I was lying in bed that night at 2AM thinking about it. And the idea wouldn't go away. I'm like, "What? This is a stupid idea. It's laughable." But I thought, "OK. I'm going to test it."

And so, I got up at 2AM that night, put a post up on the blog saying, "I'm going to start this series tomorrow." First day of August I think it was. "And I'm going to call it, and I've just came out with this random idea, *31 Days to Build a Better Blog*. And every day I'm going to give you something that you can do on your blog that will make it better. I'll teach you something or give you an activity to go away and do. If you're interested, please leave a comment. And if there's enough comments, I'll do it tomorrow."

I have no idea what 31 days of things were or whether anyone would respond. But I got it off my chest. Went to bed and went to sleep. Woke up the next morning and there heaps of comments, more comments than I've ever had before. This little spark that I've had of an idea, this joke had turned into something that my readers wanted. So, over the next 31 days, I've came out with an activity every day and a bit of teaching every day around that activity. And it just went crazy. It was our biggest month of readers for the month. And I had a lot of positive feedback from that.

The next year, I've decided to do it again. And again, it grew again as a series of posts. On the third year, I did it again. And my readers began to say, "This is great information. How can we get it all in one sort of edition, if you like?"

Chris Ducker: Right.

Darren Rowse: And so yeah, my readers started to say, "Can you put this into a PDF? We'll pay you for it." And so, I thought, "OK. Well, I've been thinking about creating an e-Book." Because eBooks were starting to happen back then and so, I put it into this little e-book and it was mainly repurpose content. It was a content that we'd already had up on the blog. I had to do a little bit more to each one so there was something unique about it and added a few more questions and activities for people. Got it designed very quickly and put it out there to my readers.

And I was really skeptical about whether people would buy it. And found very quickly that they did and they did it in quite large numbers. I can't remember how many got sold. It must be 20,000 or 30,000 copies of the thing now.

We're now in the second edition of it. So, we went back and redesigned it and put a whole heap of new content, seven extra days into it. And it's just had a life of its own. We now find bloggers going through it together in their own little communities. So my whole group of mom bloggers went through it last year. A whole heap of Christian

bloggers went through it a couple of years ago. A whole heap of business bloggers have done it together.

So these little communities have taken a hold of the book and run with it themselves and almost created like a little book club.

Chris Ducker: I love it. I mean I personally put myself through it with Virtual Business Lifestyle I think maybe, it must have been maybe about a year and a half ago, maybe a little bit longer than that but not too much. And it helped me immensely to grow that blog without a doubt. And I believe I probably will go through it at some point again with ChrisDucker.com as well.

And I want to clarify, for those of you who haven't heard of this, and we'll put obviously, all the links and everything will be in the show notes over at ChrisDucker.com/episode13 for everybody listening in. But this is not literally where you're writing a blog post every day. There are several days where they got nothing to do with sort of publishing anything, right Darren? It's more planning and things like that.

Darren Rowse: Yeah. I guess I wanted to come up with these 31 activities that you could do almost every month. And so, some people actually go through it every month and they keep going back to these older activities. And some of it is around planning your content and some of it is about thinking about where I can find readers and leaving comments on other people's blogs and yeah, the whole heap of different things that are not just about writing.

Chris Ducker: It's awesome. I love it. It's good stuff. Now, another book that you've done which has also done very well, and you didn't personally write this yourself. This was done by one of the ProBlogger community family member, whatever you want to call him, Mark Hayward, [ProBlogger's Guide to Blogging for Your Business](#). Tell us a little bit about that as well because that was a real eye-opener for me as well.

Darren Rowse: Yeah. So, increasingly over the last few years, I've seen more and more businesses start to use blogs. And ProBlogger had very much been about starting a blog and making money directly from the blogs so through selling eBooks or through putting ads on your blogs. But increasingly, I started to get questions from businesses.

They didn't want to make money from the blog directly but wanted to use the blog to support their business. And that wasn't something that I really had a lot of direct experience in so I began to look around for someone who could write a guide to that. Mark was someone who had been using blogs to build his offline businesses for quite a few years.

And so, I approached him and we decided to publish this book together. I think it's about 12 chapters and it really runs through everything from setting your goals for your

blog, thinking about how to get started and choose a domain name, and installing WordPress which is the platform that we recommend right through to finding readers for your blog, publishing your first post, developing content ideas, using social media, and that type of things.

So, it's really designed as a – for someone who has a business that wants to explore what blogging can do for their business and how to actually get going.

Chris Ducker: Yeah. And I think that there's certainly some crossover between those two books there for sure. But I think that if – particularly if you're a business owner then obviously, the *Guide to Blogging for Your Business* is a great place to start but honestly, for everyone listening in, if you've not got started with your blog yet or if you have got a blog and you're thinking about starting to really sort of take it much, much more seriously, these three books in either one of your two hands is going to be like Muhammad Ali 1, 2, bang punch.

This really will help you get to the next level. Trust me, I've sat through both of them, I know them both well and Darren and his team put together some, not only some extremely informative stuff but very nice and very easy to follow eBooks as well.

Now, this stuff we could talk about all day. You've also done a lot of great stuff over at Digital Photography School which I guess could be another – that journey actually, I'd love to get you back to talk about that at some point in the future and how you've grown that if you fancy spending another hour with me. But ...

Darren Rowse: Anytime, anytime. We'll just space it out a bit so I can recover.

Chris Ducker: Right, right. Yeah, like four years a bit, right? No. But I mean that is another conversation. And I think as a ProBlogger yourself, and this is a nice way to maybe wrap up the conversation just before our last and final regular question, but as a ProBlogger yourself, I mean this is how you make your living, this is exactly how you put food on the table for your family.

I'm sure that there are a lot of people listening in that would love to know how a ProBlogger or how Mr. ProBlogger himself actually structures his day Monday through to Friday or whatever the case maybe when you're working. So how does the normal day look for Darren Rowse?

Darren Rowse: It's an interesting one. It's evolved over the years quite a bit. These days, I have a team who works with me and they're all part-timers and they all work remotely so I guess my work is a little bit more managerial in some ways. But generally, I spend the mornings in cafés working not as a waiter or a boss.

Chris Ducker: I was going to say, "What do you do? Making cappuccinos or something?"

Darren Rowse: I'm taking a part-time job. No, I work in cafes, a couple of local cafes. They know what I order and they just bring me coffee. And that's where I – I try and get out of the house because I work at home and we've got young kids and so, there can be distractions around. So, I work in café in general. Really I try to use my golden hours if you like, that's the time that I seem to function the best and most creative, if you like, and create content and do the most important things.

The afternoons tend to be more back at home and that's a little bit more administrative. I am based in Australia and so my audience is largely in the US. So I have quite a number through Asia and Australia as well but the bulk of my audience is in the US. So quite often, the start and the end my day is when the US is sort of awake and so, that's when I do a lot of my social media stuff as well and that's when I schedule all my posts to go out during the US daylight hours.

Chris Ducker: Yeah.

Darren Rowse: But yeah, I look at – it varies a lot from day to day but it's usually cafes in the morning and home in the evening and sitting in front of the couch. I sit in front of the television, sort of doing a little bit of social media stuff in the evenings as well. So, my days are long but it's fun. And I love it.

Chris Ducker: And that's what it's all about, right? Doing something that you truly enjoy as well as obviously, being able to be able to create a good living and a nice life for your family and things like that. I find as well myself as an entrepreneur, this is one of the main reasons why I will – I could just never see myself going back to working for someone else. It's just too much darn fun.

Darren Rowse: It is. It is. I can't believe I'm being paid to have fun.

Chris Ducker: Yeah, it's good stuff, isn't it? Now, we know how all those – this is what pisses me off. If we can just – as a little side here, when you see all these big movie stars that are making like \$20 million a film and Tom Cruise this and Brad Pitt that and everything, and they must be having fun. I mean that would be one of the most funnest things in the world to do for a living. And then you hear all, oh they're taking a month off because they're stressed out and all this sort of stuff. And I'm like, "They got no idea what stress is." Surely, these multi-gazillionaires, you know.

Darren Rowse: Yup. Well, maybe they're stresses that we just don't know of.

Chris Ducker: I know. There's Ducker's rant for this episode. So Darren, let's wrap up. I always ask my guest one particular question right at the end of the podcast sessions, and here it is for you. What is your number one tip to doing business in today's economy?

Darren Rowse: It's a tough question. I've been thinking a lot lately as I look back over the last ten years for me, at the key things that have been the beginnings of my most

successful things and what I've noticed is that in almost every case, the successful things I've started as sparks as very tiny burst of energy that could have gone out very quickly. This fleeting burst of energy. One of the sparks was [31 Days to Build a Better Blog](#) when I had that crazy – that was a joke with a friend that wouldn't go away in my mind and I decided to act on it.

And so, I've been thinking a lot lately about training myself to notice the sparks of energy and acting on them. And so, I'm trying to watch something at the moment on this at the moment but I guess that would be my number one tip in today's economy is that a lot of the people are looking for the next big idea. But the next big idea might be a little spark, a joke, it might be someone – a comment that someone makes that resonates with you or a comment that you make that someone else resonates with.

When I put that post up on ProBlogger, I literally didn't think anyone would leave a comment. And I thought I probably wouldn't end up doing those 31 days of posts. But I put it out there and it resonated with people. So the spark can be something that you're passionate about, an idea that wouldn't go away, it can be something that resonates with other people, it could be a tweet that you put out there.

I tweeted while sitting in an airport one day and I tweeted about Queensland, Australia and how wonderful it was and how it would be great a place to have – to take some of my readers. And a couple of minutes later, a tweet came back in from Tourism Queensland, the government authority saying, "We should talk."

And it was a spark. It was this little moment that I could have ignored and just laugh off and thought it's probably someone from a PR agency who's got no authority to make decisions but I immediately tweeted back and said, "He's my email address. Can I get yours so that I can send you an idea?" I didn't know what the idea was but I knew that there was this potential collaboration there. It was a spark.

And so, on the plane on the way back to Melbourne, I wrote a pitch to Tourism Queensland about how we could run this competition together to bring my readers from overseas into to Tourism – into Queensland and we'll do this little tour of Queensland. It was a spark. I didn't think it would go anywhere.

But a year later, they emailed back and said, "You know that idea you sent us, we'd love to do that." And so, we ran this major competition on ProBlogger. There have been ten bloggers from around the world to see the area. I've got paid for it. The bloggers loved it. My readership loved it. It was one of the best things I ever did but it started with a tweet and someone responding to that and then me acting upon it.

So yeah, I guess it's about putting things out there, experimenting with things, watching what happens, and then running with them if a spark fans into a flame a little bit.

Chris Ducker: Yeah, yeah, and I like that, recognizing the sparks. That's what it's all about. So, and I do remember that competition. It was a big deal and you have an amazing amount of stickiness from that, right? People were talking about that for a long, long time.

Darren Rowse: Yeah, exactly. It was a win-win-win for us. It was a win for me. We've got paid for it. It helped our brand. Win for Tourism Queensland because they've got a lot of attention. But it's also a win for my readers as well and they got to – ten of them got to come but the rest of them got to be a part of I guess the story and everything as well. So it was almost like the perfect storm for me. It was great.

Chris Ducker: All good stuff. All right. Well, for everybody else listening in out there, thank you very much for tuning in. That was Darren Rowse. And Darren, thank you for sharing, I don't know, how many value bombs did you just dropped in the last 45 minutes? I don't know. Let's count.

Darren Rowse: Thanks, Chris. It was nice. So I hope something in it made sense to people.

Chris Ducker: I'm sure it did. So, if you want to find out a little bit more about Darren, Problogging, blogging for business, doing whatever you want to do online in relation to blogging, ProBlogger.net is the place to go. You can follow him on Twitter@ProBlogger as well.

I look forward to seeing you guys back very soon on another edition of the New Business Podcast. Until then, go write a blog post preferably in a café somewhere because that's how the professionals do it. I will see you very, very soon. Bye-bye for now.

If you want to catapult the growth of your business in today's economy, you need to join my free [7-Day New Business Bootcamp](#) for actionable tips on blogging, online video, outsourcing, podcasting, social media, and much, much more. Just visit [ChrisDucker.com](#) for more details and instant access. I'll see you on the inside.

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