



how to create a

BANGIN' BLOG BUSINESS PLAN

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THE NECTAR
COLLECTIVE



Let's do this.

Oh hey. That's me. Melyssa. This picture was taken after the photographer instructed me to flip my hair over dramatically. So, the blowing-in-the-wind hair may be a farce, but that smile is all real, baby.

Perhaps I'm smiling because it's hard not to laugh at yourself when you're hair flipping in front of someone you met 6 minutes ago, but I'd like to think it's because I'm uber excited to see you here, getting ready to do big things.

Oh wait. I forgot to introduce myself. I'm Melyssa (with a "y") Griffin and I run a website and community called **The Nectar Collective**, where I help bloggers and business owners build thriving communities and earn an authentic income online. I'm stoked to have you in the crew, friend, and I hope this workbook helps you get a little farther, learn a little more, and be a little more awesome (though we both know you're already incredible).

Chat soon, pal.

WARMLY,



Melyssa Griffin



STEP ONE: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“Executive Summary” sounds really fancy pants, doesn’t it? It’s the very first section of your business plan, which is often written last, after everything else comes together. Here’s what you will want to include in your executive summary:

1. YOUR MISSION STATEMENT

This briefly explains what your business is about. What purpose does it serve? Why did you create it?

2. HIGHLIGHTS OF YOUR GROWTH

If your blog has been around for any span of time, then you can mention the growth that you’ve already received here. You can mention any sort of growth, from an increase in money earned from your blog, to an increase in social media followers or pageviews. All of your growth contributes to your overall blog business, so this section is important (and motivating, yeah?).



3. YOUR PRODUCTS OR SERVICES.

You'll have the chance to talk more about your products and services in a later section, but here, write a couple brief sentences about the monetization methods you are using or the ones you intend to use.

4. FINALLY, WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS?

Here, you get to do some planning for the future! Always exciting, yes? Where do you plan to take your blog business in the future? What are some holy-crap-I-want-to-accomplish-this-one-day goals you have?

HOLD UP. What if you're brand new to blogging?

In that case, you may not be able to fill out some of the sections above as easily. Instead, focus on your experience and how YOU are able turn your blog into a business. You can think of it as almost like a cover letter -- what kind of research have you done and experience do you have that will make your business succeed?



STEP TWO:

BLOG BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

*In this section, we're going to tackle the organization and culture of your blog business. You may not feel like you have a "company culture" just yet, but you are certainly building a brand, which is nearly the same thing. *hair flip* Let's do this.*

1. WHAT SETS YOUR BLOG APART FROM OTHERS?

Take some time to think about this one -- why would someone read your blog over another, similar blog? In Step 4, we're going to do some serious competitor analysis, but for now, just think about how you're different and what you can do to separate yourself from your competition.

2. WHO DO YOU SERVE?

Your Blog Business Plan basically revolves around your target market. Actually, just about everything that you do for your blog should revolve around them! Without an audience, it will be impossible to grow a community around your blog or turn it into a full-time business. So, get really clear about who you serve.

How old are they?

What do they do for a living?



What brought them to your blog?

How can you help them?

What are their future goals or aspirations?

What are their hobbies?

Keep in mind, even if you are new to blogging and don't have much of an audience to analyze, you can absolutely still take part in this section. Truthfully, blogging is not about creating content and trying to figure out who is reading it. It's the opposite -- deciding who you want to serve and then creating content that helps that specific type of person. Get it? ;)

3. WHAT IS YOUR “COMPANY CULTURE” OR BRAND PERSONALITY?



You may not be running a business casual office for your blog, but you still have a brand personality and culture to uphold.

When people interact with you or your blog, what do you want them to feel?

What words would you use to describe your blog's personality?

What purpose does your blog serve?

The answers to these questions will help to analyze what your brand personality is. Developing a true personality for your blog means that you are consistent. It's okay to try on different hats at first, but the most successful blogs are ones that have a distinct personality (perhaps similar to your own personality, you little blog hustler, you!).

4. WHAT IS THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF YOUR BLOG BUSINESS?



This may not be a concern for you at the moment, but in the future you may want to turn your blog into a recognized “corporation,” like an LLC (Limited Liability Corporation). If you are currently running a blog and accepting money as a blogger, then you obviously need to file taxes on that income. However, as you work with more clients and customers, turning your blog biz into an LLC or Incorporation (Inc) can protect your income and business from things like lawsuits.

*If you’re just getting started, I would recommend waiting to turn your blog into an LLC or Inc unless you are in some sort of high-risk blogging industry. *Casually puts on sunglasses like and walks off into the sunset.* When I started my first business through my blog, it took me about a year before I turned it into an LLC. If you are the only employee and choose not to create an LLC or Incorporation, then you are simply known as a “sole proprietor,” which is totally legal and fuss-free.*



STEP THREE: COMPETITOR ANALYSIS

Before launching your blog into a business, it's important to research your competitors and similar blogs, so that you can try to stay ahead of the game. A little warning for you though: When doing your research, make sure of two things:

You're researching with analysis eyes, not copycat eyes. It can be easy to look at a competitor's website and get a flood of ideas for your own blog. Don't do that, k?

If your competitors are farther along than you, don't feel let down. It's okay if they have a larger following, earn more money, or have some other statistic that has got you feeling like a failure. Remember, you're here. Right now. Putting in the work. This isn't about looking at other people and playing the comparison game. This is about being analytical and doing your research so that you can build your own empire. You got this, yo. Promise.

*Lastly, I just want to mention that analyzing your competitors is an important part of starting a business, but it doesn't mean you have to operate from a "competition mindset." In fact, I'd discourage it. You will get much farther in your blog business if you focus on collaboration and relationships than if you focus on competing with other people. This section is simply another important way for you to do research so that you can build a strong foundation for your future online biz. *fist bump**

Now, when doing your competitor analysis, you'll want to take the following steps:

1. IDENTIFY WHO YOUR COMPETITORS ARE.

Make a list of all of your competitors. Which other bloggers are in your niche, doing something similar to you or to what you want to do? Which other bloggers have potentially similar products or offerings? Write down who they are, with a link to their website.



COMPETITOR

WEBSITE

Now, if you're brand new to blogging, then you may not know who your competitors are. Here are a few ways to find them:

- **By being active on social media.** The more active you are on social media (so long as you're sharing content for your niche), the more you'll naturally discover who your potential competitors are. Observe. See who people are talking about, sharing content from, and engaging with.
- **By joining Facebook groups.** Facebook groups are a fabulous place to learn more about your market and competition. Again, observe in Facebook groups. You're obviously welcomed (and encouraged) to participate, but make sure that you are also observing what people say. Who do they mention? You can also start a new thread in a Facebook group (so long as it's not against the group rules) to ask who



people's inspirations are in _____ niche. That should deliver some stellar results!

- **By searching for relevant keywords on Google and seeing what pops up.** This is one of the easiest strategies. Think of a few “keywords” to describe your blog or niche. For example, if you write about hand-lettering, then some of your keywords might be “hand-letting for beginners” or “best calligraphy tools.” If you type your keywords into Google or Pinterest, whose content pops up first? These may very well be some of your competitors.

2. RESEARCH YOUR COMPETITORS' STRATEGIES AND GOALS.

Now that you know who your competition is, take some time to research their strategies and goals. Go through their websites and social media accounts.

What do they promote and how do they promote it?

Are there any strategies that many of your competitors seem to use (for example, are most of them hosting webinars)?

What sets each competitor apart from the other competitors on your list?



What goals do they have? Of course, you may not know the answer to this, but based on your research, what do you feel they are trying to achieve?

3. KNOW YOUR COMPETITORS' PRICE RANGES FOR THEIR PRODUCTS.

If your competition has any products for sale, then write down what the price ranges are for those products. This will give you an overview of how much is typical for a product you may create one day and what your target audience is used to paying.

4. CREATE A LIST OF YOUR COMPETITORS' STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES.

Finally, after reviewing their websites, strategies, and offerings, you'll probably have a good idea about what exactly "exists" in your niche and how people are creating their businesses and blog communities. Now it's time to dig a little deeper. Choose 3-5 of your competitors and make a list of some of their strengths and weaknesses. What do they excel at and what can they improve? And how can you use that knowledge to craft your own, well-rounded strategy?



COMPETITOR #1

strengths

weaknesses

COMPETITOR #2

strengths

weaknesses

COMPETITOR #3

strengths

weaknesses

Again, the competitor analysis is a great way to get more tuned in to the trends and strategies that are alive and kickin' in your niche.

*After you've done your competitor analysis? **Don't visit your competitors' sites again.***

Yup. Seriously serious. You will not reach your goals if you spend your time checking in on what everyone else is doing and trying to replicate it. So, do your research, decide what works for you, and then create your own path.



STEP FOUR: **AUDIENCE RESEARCH**

In Step 2, you identified who your target market is. Now, we're going to dig in a little further!

1. RESEARCH YOUR AUDIENCE BY DOING A SURVEY.

Surveys are a killer way to understand more about your audience without having to guess. You can use free sites like SurveyMonkey or Typeform to create your survey, and then you just need to share it with your peeps. I recommend sharing it with your email list, on your blog, and on social media multiple times during a 1-2 week span of time.

What will you use to create your survey?

What are three of the most important questions you can ask that will help you learn more about your audience?

1

2

3

How will you deliver your survey to your audience and get people to take it?



If your audience is small or currently non-existent, then rather than doing a survey, you can put on your observation glasses and pay attention on social media. Again, things like Facebook groups and Twitter chats are amazing ways to gain more information about your target audience. Just make sure to join groups and chats where your target market would be hangin' out.

2. HOW CAN YOU HELP YOUR AUDIENCE SPECIFICALLY?

Going back to the Brand Personality that we talked about in Step 2 and the Competitor Analysis that we did in Step 3, how can YOU help your audience? What sets your blog apart from others and allows you to help your peeps in a different way? You don't need to reinvent the wheel here! You can use many of the same strategies that others do, but it's just about adding your own flair and personality to the things you create.



STEP FIVE: BUILDING COMMUNITY

Before you launch a product through your blog, it's essential to first grow your community and audience. If you want to grow a blog business, then you can buy all the e-courses and books you'd like. But if they only give you strategies for creating and launching product, without strategies for first building a strong audience and growing your traffic, then it's just unlikely you'll get the same results. For a successful blog, you totally need both: a community and a product.

1. SOCIAL MEDIA

One of the best ways to build community is by harnessing the power of social media. Social media is a ridiculously helpful space for growing your tribe and increasing your traffic. You can focus on Pinterest for traffic growth, and Twitter/Facebook/Instagram for finding your potential audience members and engaging with them.

So, for your blog business plan, it's important to create your social media strategy.

On which platforms will you put the most emphasis?

Where does your target market hang out the most?

What strategies will you use on each platform in order to grow your audience and community?



How will you find your target audience on social media?

2. EMAIL LIST

In addition to partying on social media, you also want to put a large focus on your email list. Not only will your email list be essential for selling your products, but it will also be an incredible medium for connecting with your audience.

Which strategies will you use to grow your email list?

How often will you communicate with your list?

Which types of things will you send your email list?



What will you use for your email list's lead magnet?

3. HUMANIZING YOUR BRAND

If you're going to build a true blog business and community, you have to "humanize your brand." In other words, what steps will you take so that your audience feels connected to you and can relate to you? Remember, people don't buy from faceless corporations; they buy from people.



STEP SIX: YOUR SERVICE OR PRODUCT

Woop woop! It's time to start planning your monetization strategies. Exciting, right? Now's your chance to decide how you will turn your blog into a biz. Will you launch services? Will you create an e-product? Here are some steps to get you started.

1. WHAT DO/WILL YOU SELL?

What is a product or service that would help your target market or is something that you know they need (because you did a survey or observed them!)?

Don't be afraid to get a little detailed here. Think about these questions when responding:

Will it be an e-course?

How many modules will it have?

Which topics will it cover?

How much do you plan to sell it for?

When will you launch it?

Will it be a set of services?

What kind of service packages will you offer?

2. HOW DOES YOUR PRODUCT OR SERVICE BENEFIT YOUR PEEPS?

Remember, your blog business plan is all about serving your audience. They are the people who can turn your blog into a community and a business, so we want to serve them! Think critically



about the monetization method you chose in the previous step...how will that product or service impact the lives of your tribe members? Why do they need or want it?

3. HOW IS YOUR PRODUCT OR SERVICE DIFFERENT FROM WHAT YOUR COMPETITORS ARE SELLING?

Lastly, go back to your competitor research and take a look at what your competitors are selling and promoting. How is your offering different, or how can you make it different? Is there anything you could add to your offering that would make it feel even more valuable than whatever else is out there?



STEP SEVEN:

MARKETING AND SALES STRATEGY

Holy moly. You are such a trooper for making it this far. Who knew planning a business could be so much work? ;) But really, you are putting in the effort right now and I am straight up impressed. Finally, we're going to talk about your marketing and sales strategy, because once you create your products or services, you actually need to promote them! Let's get started.

1. HOW WILL YOU MARKET YOUR PRODUCTS, SERVICES, AND BLOG?

Take a moment to write down the methods that you will use to market your products, services, and blog. Will you use Facebook ads, schedule tweets, create a robust Pinterest strategy? Write down all of the methods you'll employ when promoting and marketing your content.

If you're looking for ways to market your e-product or service, then [check out this blog post](#) where I share a variety of ways to market and launch your offerings.

2. HOW LONG WILL YOU SPEND ON MARKETING AND PROMOTION PER DAY?

We're all busy, right? But turning your blog into a business does take some time. Make sure you analyze how much time you'll realistically be able to spend on marketing and promotion each day



and week. You may need to make some sacrifices or move your schedule around, but it will be worth it when you sell your first e-product and realize you've got what it takes to create your own business. :)

3. IF YOU HAVEN'T STARTED YOUR BLOG, WHAT STRATEGIES WILL YOU USE TO LAUNCH IT?

Now, if you're a new blogger, you may need to start by creating a "launch" strategy specifically for your blog! How will your blog come into existence? What are some things you can do to launch your blog with a bang and get people excited about what you create and do?

One simple technique is to launch your blog with 5-10 pre-published (and freakin' awesome) posts. If you only have one or two posts for your new visitors to browse during your launch, then they might not find anything that's relevant to them. Creating multiple pieces of content gives them the chance to browse your site for a longer period of time, find something that interests them, and potentially subscribe and get hooked on your brand.

4. WHAT IS YOUR GROWTH STRATEGY? IN OTHER WORDS, WHAT TECHNIQUES WILL YOU USE TO CONTINUE GROWING YOUR AUDIENCE AND INCOME?

Finally (finally!), you want to come up with some strategies that you can use to grow your brand. Imagine that your blog has been around for a few months or even years (maybe it has!) -- what types of marketing and promotion strategies will you use to keep your growth on the up and up?

Will you do monthly webinars? Biweekly guest posts on bigger sites? Hire an assistant? Launch a



new course every quarter? Think about some things that you can add to your tool belt, which will keep your blog business growing and thriving.

WAS THIS HELPFUL?

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