

Become A Blogger

Presents:



By: Leslie Samuel



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Introductions

[Intro by Guy Kawasaki, Gideon Shalwick, and Farnoosh Brock]

Hello, hello, hello and welcome to another episode of [Learning with Leslie](#), the podcast where you learn, I learn, we all learn about how to build an online business with a blog. No, I'm not talking about one of those blogs that will fall by the wayside when Google has a mood swing. I am talking about one that will thrive no matter what gets thrown at it.

I'm your host, Leslie Samuel from becomeablogger.com where we're changing the world one blog at a time. And, as usual, I have another exciting episode for you today. In today's episode, I'm going to be talking about *What I learned from Attending Social Media Marketing World in San Diego, California* just two weeks ago. It was about the future about the industry. There was a lot of talk about what's working and what isn't, where social media and blogging are heading. There is some fascinating new data out there about where marketers want to spend more time and how blogging fits into this whole equation.

I left there with a renewed motivation to step up my game and to take things to the next level and also got some very practical how-tos that I'm going to be implementing in my business. That's what I'm going to be talking about today.

All right, some exciting stuff. Just got back from Social Media Marketing World, actually two weeks ago. I was going to do this episode last week but, if you listened to last week, you know that I decided, based on everything that was going on, not to get into that as yet, but this is the episode that I'm going to be talking about it because it was really a neat experience and I'm excited to share that with you.

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But, before I get into that, I want to let you know something new that I am doing. It's something that I have been thinking about for a while and I just decided, you know what? I've been thinking about this for so long. I'm going to do it and I'm going to do it the easiest way possible.

I decided to start a vlog. Yes, I decided to start a vlog and if you are interested in following that blog, you can go to LeslieSamuel.tv. That's going to take you to my YouTube channel where I'm going to be recording videos on a regular basis because if you've been following along for a while, you know that I'm currently a University professor and at the end of this year, at the end of June, the school year, June 30th to be exact, that will be my last day on the job and I will be transitioning to being a full-time self-employed person doing the stuff that I do online, 100% full time. It's an exciting thing. It's a scary thing. It's a thing that I didn't anticipate myself doing anytime soon but, based on circumstances in life, I have decided to go in this direction and I will be vlogging this experience.

Now, my first vlog went out yesterday and the response was overwhelming. I think I have something like 115 comments and that's including me coming in and responding to people. But, people seem to be excited about this process that I'm going to be sharing. I'm going to be sharing the things that I'm doing. I'm going to be sharing how I'm preparing. I'm going to be sharing the way I'm feeling. I'm going to be sharing a whole bunch of stuff.

And, if you're interested at some point in transitioning to doing an online business full time, this will be a fascinating thing for you to follow. If you're not interested in that but, you're just interested in learning more about what I'm doing in terms of the things that I'm doing with my blogs, the things that I'm just doing in general, in life, this is going to be more of a personal thing. When I'm just sharing from my heart, I'm just sharing it. It's raw. It's a few minutes. I'm not promising that it's every day. I don't want to set any expectations because I'm just doing it. I'm just recording and it's not taking a lot of time. I'm not doing any editing.

So, if you expect a fancy intro, a fancy outro and music in the background, that's not what you're getting. You're just going to get the raw me. So, if you're interested in following, you can go to LeslieSamuel.tv.

My Social Media Marketing World Experience

Anyhow, two weeks ago I went to Social Media Marketing World. It's the conference, the annual conference, started last year and it's done by the people over at SocialMediaExaminer.com, Mike Stelzner and his team and I absolutely loved it. I've never

been to a conference that was as good as this one. When I say, “good” I mean in every aspect. And, I’m going to scrap the word, “good” and say, GREAT. It was awesome. It was THE most organized conference I’ve ever seen and I’ve learned so much from it, not only learned a lot but, I got to hang out with some really cool people.

I finally got to meet [Gideon Shalwick](#), yes, the guy, one of the guys that started Become a Blogger. He is from Australia. He came all the way from Australia. He said it was for the conference but, I feel, no, he just came to see me [*laughs*]. Okay, maybe not because I wasn’t planning on going. He actually spoke at the conference and it was my first time getting to meet him in person and that to me, was just awesome.

We stayed the same hotel room so, we really connected and now, our relationship has been taken to the next level. It’s not just online. It is also off. So, that was exciting.

Also, I met in person, well, I guess the other... I met [Pat Flynn](#), and [Cliff Ravenscraft](#) a number of times there in my Mastermind Group but, also Mike Stelzner from [Social Media Examiner](#) so, it was my first time actually meeting him in person and it was cool to be with the Mastermind Group in person. That was just awesome. We were missing one person and that is Mark Mason from [Late Night Internet Marketing](#) but, it was just great to be in one place. We took a picture together and that was just very cool.

I met a bunch of other people. I have to give a shout out to one person in particular that I met. Her name is Viktoria Portyannykova and she does a Russian blog. It’s called [FunRussian.com](#). So, if you’re interested in learning Russian, go to FunRussian.com or even if you’re not interested, go over there and see some of the things that she’s doing. It’s a video blog where she’s teaching Russian and I think she’s doing a great job. We got to hang out in San Diego. We actually went on a road trip because I was going to a friend’s house and she lived close by that friend’s house. It was a few hours away. So, I really got to know her. She was just cool, people.

I met so many other people there and it was so great to be there. But, in addition to meeting people, I learned so much from the event. That’s what I want to share with you. I learned a lot about the event itself. I mean, from just seeing the event and how it was organized, I’m going to talk about that, I learned a lot from the sessions. Usually, when I go to conferences like this, I don’t learn a ton from the sessions, and it’s all about the networking for me.

But, this one was way different because I learn a lot from the sessions and lastly, I learned about myself. Those are the three aspects that I want to go into, what I learned from the event and how that was put together, what I learned from the sessions that I’m going to be

implementing in my business and my blog and what I learned about myself from being at this event.

Things I've learned from SMMW

#1: The importance of building a team.

So, let's first talk about what I learned from the event. The biggest lesson that I learned from this event was the importance of **building a team**, specifically a team that has caught on to the vision of what I'm trying to accomplish.

Michael Stelzner who is the guy behind Social Media Examiner, he's the founder of Social Media Examiner, and the one that really spearheaded this whole Social Media Marketing world event because it's his organization that is doing it, one of the things that really blew my mind about going to this event is how relaxed this guy was.

Now, the reason why he was so relaxed is because there was so many people working behind the scenes, in front the scenes and all that stuff to make this event happen. That just blew my mind because everything ran so smoothly from the networking events to the sessions, to the keynotes. The keynotes were awesome.

These guys had people there specifically for the purpose of helping people network. They had networking ambassadors that would go around and meet people and say, "Hey, is there anyone that you would like to connect with? Can I open up those doors for you? Can I make that possible?"

They were there specifically to help you network. So, if you felt a bit uncomfortable about this whole process of networking, they were there to help you through the process.

I mean, every aspect, the hotel was awesome. There were tons of people working and he kind of gave me like a behind the scenes store to see the number of people and I didn't even see half the people but, the amount of people that were working to make this thing a success and that blew my mind. It showed me how important it is to build a team that has caught on to your vision.

Now, of course, if you're just starting out, you can't just build a huge team unless for some reason, you have a ton of money sitting around but, you can do this one step at a time and that is what I want to do with my business.

So, if you want to build something bigger than yourself, it is necessary for you to build a team that has caught on to your vision and to just grow that strategically. That is one of the things that I learn from the event itself.

#2: The importance of branding.

The second thing that I learned was the **importance of branding**. Every element of that conference had the same branding, from the booklets to the graphics to the presentations, to the website, it wasn't all identical but, you saw something and you knew this is from Social Media Examiner. This is from Social Media Marketing World.

They all had the core elements of the Social Media Examiner brand and that blew my mind. It's not that I hadn't seen that before but, seeing it come together with the conference, with everything, with the t-shirts, with all of the aspects of the conference, it really added something to the conference. It really added something to the brand and that for me, is something that I want to work on so that, when you see something that I'm working on, you know that that is something that Leslie is working on. It has that brand.

I think, that's an important concept that we can all take away from what I learned from the event.

Okay, so that's about the event.

What I Learned from the Sessions

Now, I want to talk about the sessions because to me, that is where the exciting part of this episode is going to be about.

At the beginning of the conference, they did a report, and this is something that Mike Stelzner does at the beginning of these conferences because he does an extensive report on the state of Social Media Marketing and based on their research, they surveyed over 2,815 marketers and this is something that they've been doing for the last six years.

Blogging – the next focus for Internet Marketers

They surveyed their audience which are social media marketers and asked them a ton of questions and put together a bunch of statistics from the results that they got. And, the most fascinating thing to me was that when marketers were asked what will be their big focus in 2014, the biggest answer was blogging. 68% of marketers plan on increasing their blogging in the year 2014.

That fascinated me, not just because I run Become a Blogger and it's kind of cool that everybody wants to focus on blogging, or that so many people want to focus on blogging but, also because it was something that I didn't expect.

In my mind, often, I think, everybody knows about blogging and everybody is blogging but, that's just not the case and the more I speak to people in real life, the more I realize that that is not true.

Now, there are a bunch of blogging courses out there. I have a blogging course and a ton of people have blogging courses, so I would think that marketers, especially those that are into social media, are very comfortable with the concept of blogging. They've been blogging so, they understand that very well.

But, it's obvious now from the research that they have done that more people want to learn about blogging. They want to use blogging more for a number of different reasons in 2014 and that to me is exciting because I think blogging is extremely important in 2014 and it will be even more important in the future.

Another thing that was brought out from their studies is that it's more important now than it has ever been to own a platform of your own. When it comes to things like Facebook, Facebook has a huge reach. However, they are now charging you significantly to reach your own audience. If you've been building an audience on Facebook, which is something that I have been doing, you probably noticed that your ability to reach your audience has decreased significantly and Facebook is pushing you to pay now to reach the audience that you've accumulated.

I have [Interactive Biology page](#) and that page has over 10,000 likes on that page but, over the last two weeks or maybe a little more than two weeks, I have been very inactive on that page because I have been traveling, because my son has been sick, and so on. And, as a result of that, the engagement has gone down significantly. Now, if I want to get people active again, I have to do a lot of work just to get those people active or I have to pay money to get those people active again.

You don't control what happens on Facebook. They change the algorithms all the time and it's important to have something that you own and this is one of the reasons why so many marketers are starting to focus more on blogging because this is their platform. This is what they own. This is what they fully control and that is extremely significant.

So, it's good to be on Facebook. It's good to be on Google+, good to be on Twitter and Pinterest and all these sites depending on what you're doing specifically with your blog and your brand and your business.

But, it's also important to own something and that thing that you own is our blog. That is where you can have the biggest effect if you do it the right way. So, blogging is important. It's important to own your own platform.

The Importance of Visual Storytelling

The next thing, and this is going to be something big for me because I am seeing it more and more and it is the importance of **visual storytelling** and there are two important aspects to that phrase – the visual and the story-telling.

This is something that Gideon and I were speaking about a lot in the hotel room and it was confirmed with the sessions that I've attended. The Internet is becoming more visual. Visual spreads significantly more than other forms of content. This is the reason why infographics are so successful these days. Charts, for sharing data, visual is important. They say a picture is worth a thousand words. That is so true and it's true when it comes to what's happening online. So, I want to be more visual. I want to use more images, more infographics. I want to start creating infographics because those are really great ways to get your content out there in a way that people can consume quickly and in a way that people love to share.

There's one resource that I have not been using that I actually used a little bit when I started my [Interactive Biology blog](#) but, not really for these purposes. That is called [Slide Share](#). I don't know if you know about Slide Share but, Slide Share is a place where you can go online and you can, if you have like a Powerpoint or something of that sort, you can upload it to Slide Share and they will show it in a nice way visually. You can use that on your blog to show content.

What I have seen from this conference is that a lot of marketers are using Slide Share very successfully to drive a significant amount of traffic to their books, to their blogs, to the things that they are doing online. A number of marketers that have best-selling books, what they are showing is that the number one traffic driver to their book sales is Slide Share which to me was extremely fascinating.

So, you can make nice little slides about specific concepts relating to your blog, and put it up, make it nice and appealing visually and get shares on that and get people to engage with that content. That's something that I'm going to be testing out.

Next thing, the next part of that is video. **Video** is very important today when it comes to visual story-telling. And, this story telling concept is very important, too. People are much more into stories than they are into facts. If they buy into the story, they are more likely to buy in to you. That's something that I strongly believe in because one of the things that I enjoy watching is the Cosby show. The reason I enjoy watching the Cosby show so much is because of how you get caught into the story. You feel almost a part of the family and because you feel a part of the family, when things happen, when Sandra gets married, when these different things happen, you feel as if, "Oh man, my family member is getting married," and you get so excited. I found myself shedding a few tears at some of the episodes. I shouldn't admit that but, it's true because you get caught into the story and I think this is going to become even more important with what we do online.

What is your story? Not just, what do you teach? Not just, what are you selling? No. What is your story. People want to know that and this is one of the reasons why I've started doing this vlog because I want to share my story, because I think the story is more interesting than just the facts, or just the information.

I teach Biology online but, what's the story behind what I'm doing. And, that's something that I want to share even more. So, definitely visual story-telling is a huge thing. Actually, there's a report that I just saw on Shareaholic, the [Shareaholic blog](#) where they were ranking the amount of engagement that people are getting from Social Media sites and they have a network of over 200,000 sites with more than 250 million unique monthly visitors.

What they saw was that the number one social media site for engagement is YouTube. That kind of fascinated me. It confirmed some of the things that I felt. Yesterday, I posted a video and it got 115 comments. I haven't gotten 115 comments on anything in a very long time. So, it's interesting to see that YouTube is the number one for engagement when it comes to Social Media sites.

Fascinating enough, number two is Google+. Number three is LinkedIn. Number four is Twitter, and number five is Facebook. That fascinates me. I'm going to be getting into that even more in the future. So, stay tuned for that.

Yes, so visual story telling. Very important.

Google+ Engagement is higher than any other social media site

The next thing goes along with something that I just mentioned from this study that was done by Shareaholic but, Google+ is what marketers want to learn about, not Facebook, not Twitter.

In 2014, in terms of Social Media sites, marketers are fascinated by what's happening at Google+ and there are a number of reasons for that. The search engine benefits from that are huge. The engagement is actually huge. There are not as many people on Google+ but, if you get something going there and you get it going well, engagement is higher than Twitter. It's higher than Facebook. And, that is fascinating especially because of their integration with YouTube. I think that's a big factor there. I'm excited to explore that even more.

Hangouts. Obviously, Hangouts a huge feature that Google+ has and it's a great way for you to engage your audience, engage your community and that's something that I've said that I'm going to do more of but, I'm definitely going to be doing more of it in the future especially now that I'm leaving my job. I'm going to have more time to focus on these things.

So, these are some of the things that I've learned from the sessions. I've learned a lot more and I'm going to be sharing more in the future as I implement things but, those are the major points that really stood out to me.

Things I Learned About Myself

And then, I learned some things about myself. I love going to these conferences because you get to meet great people. You get to meet people that are passionate about things that you are passionate about.

But, I started to realize that I get much more from meeting, and I'm going to put this in quotation marks but, I think you're going to understand what I'm talking about, meeting regular people than just meeting these big bloggers, those people that are out there that everybody wants to get to know. People come to conferences just because they are going to be there and they want to see this person and shake this person's hand and tell this person how much of an impact they've had on their lives and all that stuff.

I'm not devaluing that. I think that is significant but, for me, I found that I get so much more with just the people that are there that are maybe trying to build their audiences, trying to build their blog, and are not the people that everyone is coming to meet.

I enjoy that. I am passionate about that and I found myself at a certain point seeing the big name bloggers and think to myself, "Oh, okay. Cool."

I don't necessarily need to get to know those people. It's great to know them but, just from the one on one and the people that you actually get to spend more time with because there's not a bunch of people fighting for their attention.

I love that. That is what excites me the most about these conferences now and that is why I want to attend more because you get to meet regular people and spend significant amount of time with them, talk about what each other is doing and in many cases, it's not even about business. It's not even about blogging but, it's just about life, it's about family, it's about what you're passionate about and I had a number of those conversations with a number of people and that really got me going.

That's something I learned about myself. It's not as much about the big guys but, it's about the regular people that are out there trying to do big things.

Outro

So, that's pretty much it for this episode. I hope you got some value from it. These are some of the things that I'm going to be focusing on, social media. In terms of social media, I'm going to be doing my vlog at LeslieSamuel.tv. I'm going to be focusing more on Google+. I understand the importance of blogging even though I knew that it was important before but, it's kind of renewed my view where that's concerned and this visual storytelling concept.

How can you tell a story using pictures, using videos, still creating the written content if that's what you're doing or the podcast, if that's what's you're doing but, also getting people to buy into the story.

Anyhow, I hope you got value from that and if you're enjoying this podcast, you know, I always appreciate it if you can head on over to iTunes, becomeablogger.com/itunes and leave an honest review. It makes me smile and it helps to get additional exposure for the blog.

And, if you want to start a blog where you can create content, inspire others, and even change the world, freebloggingvideos.com is my free course. You don't have to opt in, you don't have to sign up. You don't have to do any of that stuff. You can just watch and I will show you how I've built my blogs into successful online businesses, how many others have done the same, and most of all, how you can do the same. Freebloggingvideos.com.

That's pretty much it for this episode, Leslie Samuel from BecomeaBlogger.com, changing the world one blog at a time. Until next time, take care and God bless.