So you want to start a blog?

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I Think, Therefore I BLOG

So you're telling me I've got to blog, tweet, post AND pin? When do I work?

TO BE UNDERSTOOD, WRITE A blog
TO BE IGNORED, WRITE A BUSINESS PLAN.

WHY BLOG?
What blogs do you already follow?

• There may be blogs you already follow, how do you keep up with them? Subscription? Social Media?

• Why do you continue reading that blog, think about what keeps your attention?

• Build on what you know works.

• (To follow blogs all in one place try Feedly)
Brainstorm

• The first thing you should do before starting a blog is brainstorm which topics you feel comfortable writing about
• Will this be a co-authored Blog?
• How often are you able to update?
• What purpose will your blog hold?
• Picking a blog name.
Topics

• Writing about too many topics can hurt your fan base so pick only a handful that you feel your readers will enjoy.

• Consider having a different author based on the topic. Maybe your colleague is more comfortable writing about a different but related topic and that way you can have two voices.
Include blogging in your routine

• Once you decide to start a blog you need to stick with it.
• Search engines look at how often a blog is updated and will crawl it less if you update less.
• Make sure you schedule in advance or put a reminder in your calendar to update at least weekly.
Purpose

• Ultimately bloggers have an agenda. They are writing about something they are passionate about or they are trying to call to action specific items about their company and/or upcoming events.

• Figure out what role your blog will play and that will help you develop a voice that matches the purpose.
Platforms

- There are many blogging platforms out there but we will only discuss a few.
• Tumblr has gotten huge. It’s great for visual blogs. Many Tumblr blogs are just photos and very little verbiage.

• The Economist uses Tumblr differently than others, they actually push the visual elements of their news stories to Tumblr. (theeconomist.tumblr.com/)

• Publishing on Tumblr is as easy as choosing the post-type (image, video, text, or link) and hitting publish.
Due to the ease of using Tumblr there are limitations. It is not meant to be text heavy.

There are not plugins or add-ons to expand the blog overtime.

You have to pay anywhere between $10-$40/year to use a custom domain.
Weebly

- Created by 26-year-old, David Rusenko
- Weebly is Free and easy to use, to use it Free Weebly places an ad about their company in your footer.
- It’s a drag and drop interface which provides the ease but also makes for limitations.
- If you want a custom Domain instead of a weebly.com domain than you have to at least upgrade to the Starter Pack. ($4.83 per month for 6 months)
Limitations of Weebly include:

- It is available in six languages
- You cannot easily use a newsletter tool like MailChimp
- You can upgrade to have our own domain but right now they only allow .com .Net or .ORG domains
- To have an ad-Free site you must upgrade.
WIX

• WIX is less of a blogging platform as it is a static website creator, but it’s built to be free at the basic level.
• It uses HTML5 code which is relevant and necessary for mobile sites.
• It has a drag and drop interface which makes developing easier (but not as easy as with Weebly)
• Great templates offer more creativity
WIX (cont.)

- To remove the ads you must upgrade.
- To have your own domain you must upgrade. (Connect Domain: $4.08)
- Wix supports nine different languages
- There can be tiered navigation but only up to TWO levels
- Does not integrate with newsletter tools like Mailchimp
- Offers more freedom in design but requires you pay close attention
JimDo

- Jimdo Strives to be the Easiest Drag and Drop interface website builder out there.
- The interface is intuitive and you can edit with mobile devices.
- There is a Jimdo ad in the footer on free sites. There are options to upgrade to Pro or Business (Pro $7.50 Business $20)
- Supports 12 languages
- Integrates with Newsletters and Videos can be embedded
JimDo (cont.)

- Jimdo is more expensive per month than other drag and drop interfaces but it also offers more.
- Although they offer more third party options they are currently lacking in most creative templates.
SquareSpace

- Of the four blogging platforms mentioned SquareSpace requires the most knowledge of web development.
- There are many templates, some creative, some classy.
- NO ADS. Not even in the footer.
- Excellent SEO options.
SquareSpace (cont.)

- Interface is only Available in English. Bad.
- This is as close to WordPress as you will get in terms of how the blog ends up looking and functioning.
- No newsletter integration.
- Most expensive to upgrade. (Standard $8/month)
The Blogging platform I Use and faithfully recommend is Wordpress.

There is the free version at wordpress.com or the open source version which is free but you have to install it somewhere so there is a cost for the storage and it is at Wordpress.org

It’s Multilanguage Friendly, Incredibly Intuitive, Widgets are Drag and Drop.

You can upload and Edit via their mobile updater.

Thousands of themes and plugins, many are free.
WordPress (cont.)

- To use the open Source in the most unlocked way you will need a domain/Server to host your files. This will cost anywhere from $5/month to $20/month depending on how much space you need.

- Wordpress.org is completely Unlocked and always updated. Developers share Themes and Plugins daily.

- Sometimes Developers never update and the plug becomes obsolete so do your research. Face value it’s easy to use, behind the scenes you need a developer for anything not already built in.
Prepare To Blog

• What do you want your web address to be? Depending on the domain you will need to choose an option that allows a custom URL.

• Recommended host – BlueHost.com which would be an upfront cost of about $72 per year or just under $6 per month. Although they often have deals better than that.
After You Find a Host

• If you have an IT department they will help you with hosting. If you do not have an IT department than you will rely on the host. If you choose BlueHost they make blog installation easy.

• Example – With Bluehost.com you sign up, scroll to website builders they work with and click “Install Wordpress” it does all the hard work for you.
Design your blog

- The first thing you will do is to pick a theme or design. Wordpress calls this themes and you can search from within the Wordpress dashboard to find themes. Many are free.
- Paid themes typically include extra customization options. They are a one-time purchase. Some themes cost $10, some can cost $75. Try ThemeForest.
Adding content

• Blogs typically appear in chronological order. Newest post on top.
• With WordPress you can choose to have a static page as a welcome page and your blog posts located elsewhere.
• Add in some posts so you can see what they look like and figure out how to add links and images. This might lead you to choosing a new theme if you don’t like how your posts ends up looking.
For the most part a blog is frequently updated and content becomes archived, but in some cases a static page is needed. Examples include:

- Contact Page
- About Page
- Other Resources
Once Your Blog is Ready

• Create a survey to find out how user friendly your blog is
• Ask questions about future content your readers must like to find
• Set up Google Analytics to track your blog and see what is most popular
Moderation

- You can turn off commenting, but if you want reader engagement and you leave comments on this means you will need to moderate.
- If people do comment they often leave an email or link. Take the time to respond, thank them for their comment or answer their question.
Beyond the Blog

• Many blogs also have a Twitter account or a Facebook page although sometimes people create an account per author if you have multiple writers.

• There are plugins and widgets you can place in the sidebar of your blog to show your readers that you are also on social media sites.

• Make sure your posts are shareable, include photos and videos when possible.
Guest Blogging

• Back to the blogs you already follow. If they share a topical interest with you they may be looking for guest bloggers. Send a quick note through their contact page and let them know you would like to guest blog.

• Guest blogging is a great way to network and connect with people.

• If you guest blog, ask them if they would be willing to link your name to your blog site.
Newsletters

• Many blog platforms allow you to connect your blog feed (this is built into blogging platforms) then people can subscribe to get daily or weekly email digests of your content.

• MailChimp allows you to set up a campaign that will run itself. It will add new subscribers from a form on your blog and anytime you update it will know to send out an email.
VLOGGING

• Some people turn their blog into a vlog. This means they post or embed videos into their blog rather than long written posts. This puts an additional personal element to what you are talking about if you are comfortable enough to put yourself out there.
Blogs Evolve

• You do not want to change your theme or template every week but Blogs do evolve.

• You may notice ways to improve blog usability from feedback or from analytics and this may guide you to tweaking your blog look. All of the blogging platforms discussed allow for these tweaks.
Time for Questions

BLOGGER UNIVERSITY

Upon the recommendation of the Faculty, BloggingMBA does hereby confer upon,

YOU

The Degree of

Masters of Blogging Awesomeness

with all the rights, honors, and privileges therunto appertaining.