

THE BRANDING, BLOGGING & SOCIAL MEDIA SERIES FOR THE HANDMADE BUSINESS



This ebook is designed & compiled by
Janet Walker

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Quote Time

The background features a complex geometric pattern of overlapping triangles and polygons in various shades of teal and light blue. The central area is a large, light blue diamond shape. The word "Introduction" is centered within this diamond.

Introduction

Introduction

When starting & growing your business it's so beneficial when you can find others with a similar path as you. It's even better when you can find those that have much more experience in the areas you are learning or struggling with like -

- Branding your business
- How to use social media effectively?
- How to see results using social media?
- Blogging
- Why blogging is a good tool to use
- How engagement is key

The list could go on and as you learn more, the questions continue to appear.

Plus it doesn't help that you can choose from millions of sites all sharing information. When I started out online I had questions but i found the internet marketing world first. The creative world was not an option for me because well, I did not know it existed. Yet my card business came under this umbrella. So all my knowledge & experience came from internet marketers, & i still follow & learn from them today.

Introduction cont...

Eventually I found and learnt about the handmade community. That was a blessed day, to finally find the creative home for my design skills.

Today the handmade movement is ever increasing. Now more than ever you need to stand out & be different in an ocean of uniqueness. So learning the new and building on those steps & more is a must. This is why to help you get ahead I created a blog series, which is compiled in this e-book.



Branding is a Big Deal

written by
Megan Eckman

Branding is a Big Deal

Visual artists and musicians would call it 'style' but each of them has a very distinctive branding that sets them apart from their peers. Andy Warhol had the electric pop of color that complemented his electric-outlet-accident wig. Adele has the deep, soul music that plays off the deep emotions of her lyrics. Their styles reflect both their work and their personality. Now, sometimes that personality can be a fabrication, like Lady Gaga or Banksy, or it can be the artist's real personality. Either way, their style is instantly recognizable by their fans and anyone with working ear drums could tell the difference between Mozart and Mumford & Sons. Why? Because branding is a big deal.

Branding allows companies, no matter their size, the ability to be recognizable at a glance. It conveys the purpose behind their business and allows customers to connect on an emotional level. It also helps a business owner differentiate their wares in a crowded market, whether in a physical location such as a fair or online.

When we think of branding, we automatically think of logos. But branding is so much more than a swoosh or a lightning-shaped scar.

Branding is:

The colors you use.

The tone of voice in your copy.

Branding is a Big Deal cont...

The word choice in your copy.

The mood in the photos on your blog.

The mood in the photos for your shop.

The way you dress at a fair to sell your wares.

The way you interact with people on social media.

The way you package your product.

In other words, branding (should) seep into every aspect of your business. It allows you to stand apart and it also helps people remember you. The adage about needing to see something 7 times before you buy has been proven true so why not make it easier for people to come back and see you over and over and over again? Why not make your packaging unique enough to remember? Why not make the process of buying from you something special?

The best way to create a cohesive brand is to get to the heart of your business. How does your product or service help your customer? What does your product or service mean to your customer? What emotions do you want them to feel when they come to your site?

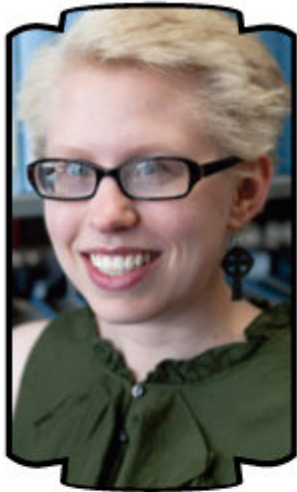
Better yet, what do you want them to think of when they come to your site?

Once you know that, it's easy to see how you can alter the wording on your site or the filter on your photographs to consistently convey the same message across your entire platform.

Branding is a Big Deal cont...

It might be that your branding is different than your personality. That's fine! Embrace the idea of having your business be your alter ego. Build your site like you're sewing your superhero costume. What special gadgets do you need? What material will you use? What powers will it have? The people you 'save' should know what you're all about when you drop them off safely. Even better, they should be able to remember enough about you and your costume to tell all their worried friends and family about you.

Branding is a big deal so aim high and be a branding superhero!



Megan Eckman blogs at Studiomme.com

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Megan, the artist behind Studio MME. I believe that the world is full of wonder and if you look for it, you can find joy and magic everywhere! I also believe that YOU feel that same wonder, though it may just be a small ember. I believe my work can rekindle your wonder and make your world more magical.

After earning my degrees in art and creative writing from Minnesota State University Moorhead, I kept a promise to my parents and set out to be in that 10% of graduates who make a living from their work. I packed up my belongings and moved to the California Bay Area for 3 years. Here in a sunny state, I am on a mission to help people like you take back their imagination. You need magic in your life to be happy, healthy, and enthusiastic about the world around you and my pen and ink illustrations can provide that magic!



Do You Struggle with Blogging For Your Business?

written by
Kerry Burki

Do You Struggle with Blogging For Your Business

Do you blog for your business? Do you find it exciting or daunting? Or both? I fall into the both category. Many of our posts here on Handmade Success are written by guest contributors; so when it is my turn to write a post I often get nervous about whether or not it is going to be received as well as our guest posts. Here are a couple of things that have helped me write posts that create a connection:

1. Share what you love:

Any time I find an e-course or links I love that I want to share I always pause and wonder if anyone else wants to hear about it. I push aside any doubt (difficult but rewarding!). Then I write what I love about it and why I wanted to share it. Every time I get a warm and enthusiastic response. People love discovering new ideas, items and classes so share away! This can even include your own work. Be proud!

2. Be vulnerable:

This one can be challenging but can ultimately help you make strong connections. In the past year, I have lost my husband's grandmother, moved across country and started my boys in 3 new schools. Every time I shared on the blog how I was struggling with time, energy or emotions it was received with a tremendous amount of love and support. I also discovered

Do You Struggle with Blogging For Your Business cont...

that many of you were going through similar experiences. It made me feel less alone and more connected. Don't worry about looking perfect. More people will relate to the real you.

3. Share what works for you:

Last year I shared my new approach of reaching my goals on the blog and that post got some of most comments ever. I also learned more about my readers' approaches to goal setting from the comments which in turn helped me. People love learning about something that you have tried and found to make your life easier or better. This could be a technique related to your craft, this could be a way to simplify shipping or something not specifically related to your business but that benefits your life in general. We want to know about it!

Start with a piece of paper to jot down ideas or start bookmarking or pinning things you want to share. Soon enough you will be overflowing with ideas. After that, just be yourself. The right people will connect with you and you will then be able to grow more than your business, you will also grow your group of friends and supporters!



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Kerry grew up attending craft fairs, shopping vintage and taking ceramic classes with her mom while growing up in Arizona. Her passion for handmade grew and her eye for style was sharpened while working at Waste Not Paper (the wholesale side of Paper Source) and Green Paper Company. She loves to add her own DIY elements to parties, gifts and decorating.

She understands what it means to leave a 9 to 5 job to pursue your dreams, she knows how difficult it can be to stay motivated and positive when working for yourself, and she truly values creating a supportive community.

Kerry blogs about life, yoga, handmade at kerryburki.com



Twitter Is An Endless Cocktail Party

written by
Jess Van Den

Twitter Is An Endless Cocktail Party

So many crafty people tell me – ‘I love Facebook, but I just don’t GET twitter’!

You know, I understand. When you first look at twitter – before you understand how it works – it can look a bit overwhelming.

But when it comes to getting your head around twitter, there’s really only one thing you need to focus on.

Twitter is about conversation + connection, In small burst.

I use the analogy of a cocktail party. Imagine the most enormous, endless cocktail party ever. It goes on as far as the eye can see, and it never stops.

If the thought of that terrifies you, just make sure you arrive with friends. So – when you first join twitter, add people who you already have a relationship with, and start using it to talk to them. Just like a real cocktail party, once you arrive with your friends, you’ll all start out together, but slowly, as the night progresses, you’ll move out on your own.

While you’re at this party, you will drift between groups of people, dipping in and out of conversations as they interest you. You’ll share your thoughts, your insights, interesting bits of information you happen to know on the topic, maybe a joke or two, and you’ll mention what you’re up to.

Twitter Is An Endless Cocktail Party cont...

You will never hear all the conversations that are going on at this party.

You will never 'keep up' with it all. But you will make your small contribution to the conversation that drives the party along and makes it fun to be at. This is exactly what twitter is like.

It is not purely a broadcast medium, so don't treat it this way (only tweeting your latest products etc). You will simply look like a spammer, and no-one will be interested in connecting with you.

Never be afraid to send someone a tweet. Anyone! Just imagine that you've spotted them across the room. You're both at the same party, right?

HOWEVER, don't ever, EVER spam someone – i.e. don't tweet 'come look at my blog/shop' etc at them. That's the equivalent to walking up to someone at a party and saying 'hey, I think you'll like what I make, do you want to buy some?'. You would never start a conversation at a party like that in a million years, right? So don't do it online, either.

The best way to start, just as at a party, is to 'walk' up to them and say something nice – compliment them in some way to kick off the conversation in a positive light. Start with the focus on THEM.

Twitter Is An Endless Cocktail Party cont...

You can either reply to something they've tweeted, or thank them for a great blog post/book/thing of theirs you've enjoyed. That is the best way to make an initial connection with someone.

Also – never try to 'keep up' with twitter. This goes for all social media, really. Dip in and out regularly, but don't try to read everything – you could spend your whole life on twitter if you tried to keep up!

Just like a great cocktail party, you'll never be privy to all the conversations going on – but that's okay! You'll leave at the end of the night (hopefully) enriched by your conversation with other people, and with the knowledge that you've started a few new relationships, as well as growing old ones.



Jessica Van Den blogs at CreateAndThrive.com

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I'm Jess Van Den, I make my living from making and spreading the word about handmade. Yep – I'm a full-time crafter – my online business is my full-time gig, and I sell thousands of dollars worth of handcrafted (by me!) jewellery each month under the Epheriell label.

As a multi-passionate entrepreneur, I wear many hats (some of which I wear AT THE SAME TIME on a regular basis, how's that for an amusing picture...).

I'm a maker, teacher, entrepreneur & blogger behind CreateAndThrive.com, a blog dedicated to teaching how to turn your handmade hobby into a full-time business.



5 Items Your Blog Should Have To Help Visitors Stay Longer

written by
Janet Walker

5 Items Your Blog Should Have To Help Visitors Stay Longer

Someone new comes to your blog, where do you think they will start 1st. Which places are going to call them over? These answers and more can be answered by having some software on your site called analytics. However even without this tracking software, there are 5 places they will visit for sure. If you make sure you have these 5 areas on your site covered, you are helping turn a visitor into a potential customer.

What i want you to remember is your blog space is as important as your shop space. When you are updating your shop are you also updating your blogging space? No I don't just mean with your blog post. At least once a week, something should change on your blog, excluding your blog post. Are you searching your brain thinking what you need to be changing all the time, well you will find out soon as you read on.

Once you get these 5 places organized, set and ready for your potential customers, you will have a better chance of them coming back and maybe buying. What i can say is if you follow what you are about to read, they will come back because you will make them want to back.

5 Items Your Blog Should Have To Help Visitors Stay Longer

cont...

New – Start Here Page

Ever see this title on the menu or in the sidebar of a blog? Have you ever looked at the page to see where to start? I love these pages, I get a quick insight into the style of blog I'm exploring. Does your blog have one? If not, you are missing out on a clever trick that these pages can do for your blog. Many use these 'New-Start Here' pages to share the best posts on the site. Helping the visitors see an overview of what's on the blog, and directing them to what you want them to read first.

The clever trick this page can do is help you share your older, older, older posts. You spent time working on all your posts only for them to disappear to the bottom of the list as you continuously add new content. This page if used correctly can help you show your content from right across your blog. Your list can be as short or as long as you want but if you do go for a long list, breaking your blog posts into sections, categories will help.

Also another golden tip, you can also share products that you have had for a while. If you have blogged about your products, you can link directly to your product in your shop. You are now renewing older products that really deserved a second look.

5 Items Your Blog Should Have To Help Visitors Stay Longer cont...

The About Page

I want to learn about the creative business owner who this site belongs to. Sharing why you started your business and a little bit of information you would tell your friend helps me warm to you. This page allows you to create a virtual connection or relationship with your potential customer. Look at this page like your kitchen table where I can come in, take a seat with a cuppa and you tell me about yourself all nice and cosy:)

Contacting You

How do I get hold of you? Many only use a contact form on this page and nothing more. Remember you want this person to part with their money to buy your products, so don't they deserve a few other ways of contacting you other than a form. Displaying your email address is a nice contact, yet I also understand the spammers also love a good ol email address. So to combat this create your email address in the form of an image, this stops spammers because they can't read images. Here's my email image.

I checked the following places to see what they share for their customer:

5 Items Your Blog Should Have To Help Visitors Stay Longer cont...

Amazon.co.uk: E-mail | Phone | Chat

Harrods.com: Email | Phone | Snail Mail

Give your potential customers more ways to get hold of you other than a contact form. Also what about all the places you hang out like your social media sites. You sharing your icons on your contact page is a great place to have them. It's all about reaching you, so make it super easy for them.

Get An Optin Form On Your Site

This one may scare you a little, but make it a scare you choose to embrace. Having a optin form on your blog to catch emails is where long-time loyal customers communication lies. Even if you don't know what to share with those who choose to optin in on your list, you will still be able to contact them when you are ready.

What's New In Your Shop

When you have new products do you update your blog's side bar? Are you thinking that's a lot of work. Well you need to keep your side bar current with new products that you are

5 Items Your Blog Should Have To Help Visitors Stay Longer cont...

selling in your shop. As you keep changing or updating your products, visitors will come back to see what's new, along side reading your content.

Also make sure your product images are either linked to blog post that talk about the product in more detail or directly linked to the product at your shop.

By looking at these 5 items on your page and maximising them for your visitors experience, you are making sure you help create new relationships with your new visitors and strength the those connections with your loyal repeat visitors.



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Janet Walker is a digital designer, Internet marketer, single mom & a mean smoothie maker. She has used her talents, thirst for knowledge & applied them to many successful projects.

Best2KeepitSimple is her place where she teaches, motivates, inspires & supports creative | handmade business women. She is a listener, a reader & a do'er. Always learning different marketing concepts & strategies, adding her own twists, to then share with fellow business owners.

Continuous education is key to growing herself and helping others to share their gifts with the world. Janet is a Quiet Gal with a Warrior Mindset.



~ the end ~

“Every great dream begins with a dreamer.

Always remember, you have within you
the strength, the patience, and the passion
to reach for the stars to change the world.”

Harriet Tubman