

Alisa Conner: [05:50](#) So if you'll help me welcome Cari Twitchell to the show. I'm so excited she's here and she is going to tell us all about the wonderful world of blogging. So welcome, Cari. Thanks for coming. Being on the show.

Cari Twitchell: [12:52](#) Hey Alisa. Thank you for having me. This was going to be fun.

Alisa Conner: [13:55](#) I'm so excited you're here and I just told the audience a little bit about you and how you got started, but why don't you just tell us a little bit more, not only about you, but what's going on right now in your business and in your world.

Cari Twitchell: [13:05](#) Oh man, business is great. So, um, as everybody's heard, I run a content marketing business and right now, uh, we're actually in growth mode, so it's really exciting. I brought on a couple of team members. I'm looking to bring on another writer here soon. Um, and you know, we're actually in the process of creating a course to help people write their own websites. Yeah, I mean we just have a lot in the mix on top of, you know, serving clients. So it's, it's really, it's really a thrill to be at this stage of growth and, and looking forward and seeing where, where the next year, even just the years going to take us. So pretty excited. Yeah.

Alisa Conner: [13:45](#) So I'm so happy you're here because I think content is one of those things that entrepreneurs really struggle with and I think that especially it's just something that gets stuck on the back burner, but it's so, so important for your online growth. So I kind of want to jump into getting ready for 2019 and starting up on the right foot and preparing, you know, how to blog, how to be successful and how to be consistent. And I know that you've got some tips for us. So let's just jump right in. And with blogging, um, I know one of the questions that comes up for me all the time is like, what the heck am I going to write about? Do you have any tips or something what to write about?

Cari Twitchell: [14:26](#) That is the biggest sticking point. I think a lot of people are like, you know what, I want to blog, I'm going to blog, I am going to blog once a week or once a month and they get set on it and then they sit down to write and they just freeze, right? I'm like, well, what, what am I actually going to write about and how, how much do I need to write about it? And all of that. And so the very first point that I express on people is like, look, impress upon people is you need it to just sit down for half an hour. Like literally all you need is 30 minutes to sit down and do some blog topic, brainstorming. Okay? And what you write about can come from any number of resources. The best resource honestly is your audience. So you probably already serving

people right now, whether you are on social media and having conversations with people, whether you have customers or clients and they have questions, um, whether you are, you know, out public speaking, right? Like wherever you are in front of people there, they're talking to you, they're interacting with you and they're asking questions and those questions are prime topics for blog posts and what you do is you just take one question at a time, one question per post, and I guarantee you if you sit down for 10 minutes, think okay, at stage one of my process with my customers, they always ask this question. That's your first blog post, right? So that's a really, really great place to start. Um, you know, if you have an email list or a fairly solid social media presence, you can go out there and just say, Hey, what questions do you guys have about x topic? And just survey them, right? You can send a quick email survey, you can go out on social media and put out a poll or just put up a quick post and see what people respond back to.

Cari Twitchell:

[16:13](#)

So tap your audience is point number one. Point number two would be to go on the Internet. There is so much information out there, okay, go ahead and Google. All you need to do is go and Google a really a really quick way to generate topics. Even just straight from Google is to in the search box type in the service you provide. So blog writing for example, when I write blog writing in that search box, Google does me a solid, but then providing a click generated list right underneath that have longer search phrases so you could pick one of those and hit search and then you can see what is coming, what comes up in the search, and then what you can also do is just like about a third of the way down that search page pages the people also asked for section which brings up questions that are similar to the one that the topic you've already brought up. Um, so that's a really great place to go. Um, and then I would say one more is answer the public. One of my favorite favorite websites out there, his answer the public.com. No joke. Check it out. There's a really creepy old looking guy who sits there and stares at you until you type in a question or a topic or something. Um, and then what he'll do is he will go out and pull back for you a ton of questions, comments, etc. Based off of the phrase you input. So, um, for example, we put in writing, right? And that generates questions, how writing leads to thinking and prepositions and such as writing formal emails and it just, it gives you a ton of topics around the term you put in. So that's a great resource. So I think those three are really prime places to start and just spend 30 minutes. You'll Be surprised at how many topics will come up in 30 minutes that you will be ready to write for the next several months with all those topics at hand.

- Alisa Conner: [18:10](#) Alright. One of the answer the public and I'm just so everybody knows if you haven't used to answer the public, they actually have a free option and then um, you get a certain number of searches. I can't remember how many it is. I don't know if you don't off the top of your head, but it's not. No, it's quite a few. It's like 20 and then they want you to either upgrade to the paid version or you have to wait till the next day to do more searches. So just be aware of that and I can't imagine you'll use up all your searches, but if you do just go back the next day and you can do some more.
- Cari Twitchell: [18:38](#) I've never run into that. Like I, I'm a writer and I don't really ever run into that cap. So it's, it's nothing to worry about. You don't have to use the tool. Right.
- Alisa Conner: [18:49](#) And it's um, so that leads me to my next question, which is, you know, people get a little overwhelmed with like, how often should I be blogging? Should I be blogging everyday? People are blogging everyday. I need to do that. Or you know, what's a consistent. Yeah. Time and scheduled to be blogging that you're still gonna see some traction.
- Cari Twitchell: [19:07](#) Yeah. Uh, the biggest thing you just said is consistent, right? Um, I don't put a number out there for people as far as how many times they need to post. I tell them you need to choose a number and then you need to stick with it. That consistency is more key in blogging. Then constant churn, okay. Um, high quality posts that you put out once a month even is a ton better than really short posts that you're putting out almost everyday because you're just trying to publish something, right? Um, so if you're looking at writing one blog post, let's say 800 words versus three blog posts that are 150 words apiece, the 800 posts will perform better for you. That's just how it goes. So I would say at a minimum though, once a month, you get on the calendar once a month, maybe it's the first friday of every month, or maybe it's the 15th of every month. Just pick a day or date every month that you are going to publish a post on my team. And I overhear at custom content solutions. We post once a week and we consistently published our posts out on fridays. And then, you know, we'll share them on social media on mondays and so we have a schedule and we stick to it. So set a schedule and stick to it.
- Alisa Conner: [20:22](#) Now are you seeing a particular day that you're publishing that works better? Because I know you mentioned fridays, but did you test other days to see if they worked better or did you just.

- Cari Twitchell: [20:34](#) Sorry about that. We're not testing right now. Um, what we're doing is going off of the schedule that we can hit, right? Uh, I would say that it's hard to get a lot of action at the beginning of the week. Um, some people swear by Monday mornings, but there is so much out there on Mondays that your stuff could get lost. Right? Um, what, what I would say is no matter what day you publish your post, make sure that you maybe share it on social media a different day or a couple days a week, you know, and see what you're doing from pulling in traffic. So not necessarily the day you post, but how you're sharing it. Maybe you, maybe you let everybody know on social media, you know, a couple of days later, like we do, we let social media now on Mondays, um, and the people who subscribed to blogs get 'em on Fridays and then once a month we always send an email newsletter out to our audience and we also let them know to go ahead and check out all the posts that we published the following or the previous month. So it's more about how often you're letting people know that it's there than it is just about the day you're posting.
- Alisa Conner: [21:55](#) Right. Well, and I think it's important to point out that even if you share it on a Monday, you could share it a week or two later. Yeah. And most likely people aren't going to see it because there's so little traction with social media right now if you're not paying to play.
- Cari Twitchell: [22:10](#) So true story. Social media is a beast in and of itself, right? That's a different topic for a different day.
- Alisa Conner: [22:19](#) Like me, I have a podcast and I also have a video show. So you know, I'm doing a lot of content creation. Do I also need to be blogging as well or you know, how should I be repurposing that content or what does that look like?
- Cari Twitchell: [22:32](#) Yeah. So number one, the fact that you're getting out of podcast, that you're putting out a video podcast that you're doing. All of. That's fantastic, right? Here's the thing, people prefer to digest content in various forms. So if you have a podcast, awesome, that's great. Some people just like to hear, hear you in their earbuds, right? Uh, if you have video, sure. Some people just like to sit and watch a video. Other people like to read at their leisure. So should you have something in addition to the audio and the video? Yeah, you should show notes are the obvious first step. Um, but I would encourage you to not stop there. So with your show notes, you know, you have timestamps, show notes, you have highlights, it's kind of a summary of the conversation. You could take it further with one blog post or several depending on what you cover in your

podcast episode by breaking down individual topics per post. So you could end up repurposing one podcast in five to eight ways, depending on, on the conversation you're having. So you just, you just want to be cognizant of the type of content people are taking in and what they're asking for. If no one wants to read your posts, so if you're not getting any traffic on blog posts, but you're getting a ton of traffic on your podcast, then focus on your podcast and your podcast show notes, see if you can't, you know, I'm pulling more traffic that way. Right? Yeah.

Alisa Conner: [24:00](#)

Perfect. Perfect. And so I know I just heard recently that, you know, podcast show notes don't perform well with seo and is that kind of your thought process between behind, you know, create a podcast to go with all of those different components or you know, dig deeper, I guess is what I'm trying to say. Dig deeper on that podcast subject and creates a real true, you know, how to blog post or whatever it might be. Is that what you're seeing too, is that the seo rank is not as great for show notes?

Cari Twitchell: [24:35](#)

Well, yes, absolutely. Seo for search engine optimization, right? For your audience here to get any traction with seo, you need quality stuff. Okay? Quality content, information people are looking for with your podcast. Show notes, like I said, you know, they're like time stamped, show notes and maybe a few bullet points or summary of what the conversation was about. And, and obviously links, you know, things that you discuss, resources for people who listen to the podcast to say I want that linker, I need to find that person or what have you. So they go to the show notes to find the resource or find the link, but they're not learning anything from the show notes themselves. So from that standpoint, from an seo standpoint, there isn't much value. That's why you dig deeper. That's why you make a, you know, a lead magnet. That's why you create a longer blog post about how to, or 10 reasons why or something that just takes the conversation further, right? Where you can engage with your audience on that same topic in a different way. Um, and in that way, you're adding more value. Your content is, you know, bigger, longer, better, right? Um, and, and in that way, you'll attract better search.

Alisa Conner: [25:54](#)

Well, and I know the, you know, playing devil's advocate, it's, you know, our people, there's so much content out there that if I'm creating content to are people really going to read it, like how am I going to compete against these people that do, you know, like in the branding world, the Marie Forleo's of the world who consistently put out content for 10 years. How do I get it ranked above her if I'm just starting out and I'm barely

getting going and, you know, what are the benefits of me even blogging if nobody's going to read it or, or are people going to read it?

Cari Twitchell:

[26:25](#)

People will read it, right? Um, but you, you know, this isn't a situation of if you build it, they'll come, you've got to work for it, right? You have to do the work. And so what that means is making sure that what you're writing about is what people want to read about or what you're blogging about or blogging about or talking on your podcast, you know, and that way your competition is a great place to start from a research standpoint about what should I be working on, right? When you're looking at what your competition is doing. Say Marie Forleo, right? Amy Porterfield, you know, you want to see what their top traffic posts are. You know what's getting the most attention on their website, okay? How can you do it better, right? You're never going to their content, to their website, to their blog. You're never going there to copy please, for the love of Pete, don't copy right? Says the former attorney in me, don't copy it's plagiarizing. It's against the law. Don't do it. So you want to make sure that what you're doing is looking at what they have and then assessing, well, this part is missing, or this is the thing I do differently than what she does and this is what makes me great and I'm going to focus on that. Am I focusing on that? Your piece is different, but it will come up in search right then. Then it's kind of a competing, competing thing, but that's where you want to be. Awesome. Yeah.

Alisa Conner:

[27:53](#)

And I, um, I just heard recently as well that you take the, like if somebody does a top 10 list of something, you know, 2017, top 10 lists of email service providers, will you do the updated version and add one? And so because people want to know 11, they don't want to know 10. Um, and so it's kind of always doing that one upmanship that you talked about. And so I think that's a really good tip. Now leading down that path, I'm also curious, you know, you're like, oh, 800 words. Well to me 800 words is just this empty number and I'm just like, how long do blog posts need to be? Like, do they need to be 10 pages? Do they need to be, you know, I mean how much are they going to read and do people even read it or you know, what's more important headings? Um, so can you just walk us through a little bit more about how to actually create those blog posts and what they look like and how long they should be, all of that stuff.

Cari Twitchell:

[28:50](#)

All right, so here's your prescription for a blog post. It needs to be 973 words long and headers need to have the rewards and no more than that. There's no good answer for that question.

Okay. Um, so I, I get a little sarcastic about it because everybody asks, how long should my blog post be? Here's the real answer and you're going to hate it as long as it needs to be [inaudible]. And what does that mean? Well, look, like I said earlier, very short content. They call it thin content that's not going to rank, right? If you're publishing a ton of blog posts with 100 words a piece, you're going to get nowhere. Okay? It's just, it's not valuable. You can't offer any value in 100 words. Okay? So what you want to think about is what about this topic matters to my, what would they find useful?

Cari Twitchell:

[29:43](#)

What would benefit them when they read this post? Okay. And from there you move on to. Okay, so when I'm writing my post, I want to make sure that one, if that, if I'm answering your question, I answer it right away. Okay? Um, that's that. Oh, so that's like a location zero on search engine results pages, right? Is the answer box the google answer box, which is by the way, what alexa and other assistance use when I'm answering questions for you, right? Voice activated assistant. So the google answer box is a great place to land when you're doing question based blog posts, but you have to answer the question right away, up front. So people are getting that information and then what you do is you just break down the answer in sections with short headers to help people as they're reading the post to skim. Nobody reads word by word ever. It's just not what we do. People are impatient. They want to get the information they want as fast as possible. So you need to make your blog posts scannable. So by doing that, you use short paragraphs, use short sentences, you use headers, you use bullet points, use bold sparingly, mind you, um, but you, you, you, you use your formatting to help people's eyes scan the page. Um, and so a really good way to write a blog post is to answer a question quickly in the very first paragraph in a sentence or two, and then you break down that question in more detail as you go along the post and you'll be surprised at how quickly, you know, 400, 500, 800 words come out because all you're doing is just picking your own brain and you're just putting it on the page. Now, if you struggle to write, here's a tip for you, use your voice recorder on your computer, right? Just record yourself speaking. Um, you know, you can use google docs will automatically transcribe as you're talking to it. It's great. Like there are, there are tools on your computer that can allow you to do that. If you just freeze up when you stare at a blank page, but you can talk about any topic, no problem. So start recording yourself, answering questions, and if you can't do it by yourself, have a friend sit in your office with you and have them answer, ask you questions, keep your recording on and answer the

questions as they're just asking, and you'd be surprised at how much content you can come out with in five, 10 minutes.

Alisa Conner: [32:10](#) That's a great tip to record because a lot of people do. That was going to be my next question actually, is, you know, you're struggling with writing and you don't feel like you have the, you're not a writer, like deep down, you don't feel like you're a writer. How can you get this done because it's important. And how do I make it happen if I don't feel like I'm a writer? And that was a really good tip. Do you have others?

Cari Twitchell: [32:31](#) Oh man, this whole, I'm not a writer standpoint, everybody can right now, can everybody right? Well can, right in a way that their audience connects with it. Maybe not. But you can start somewhere, right? Um, there is, there's always the idea that if you feel like you can't do it on your own, maybe you were just so technically minded that it's hard for you to write a blog post in conversational style, um, you know, going to law school, conversational writing, beaten out of you because you needed to learn how to write a legal brief. It's just how it goes. So if the conversational tone of writing has been just totally kicked out of you, and by the way, that's what you really should be using when blogging because that's what people want to connect with. Um, reach out for help. That's my next. That's my next tip. You can get your blog post started, you can come up with your own topics and then you can tap someone like me or my team or someone on your team to help you write your posts, to fill it out, to add the meat of the subject, right? Um, I would, I would encourage you to never just let that information sit in your brain. There's some serious value there and you have something really amazing to offer your audience. they want it to give it to them. That's. No.

Cari Twitchell: [33:56](#) So since you brought that up, I think a lot of people are. I'm kind of leery to hire somebody to write their blogs for them and I think it's because you know, it. They're putting it out there as they wrote it. And so do you have suggestions for hiring a writer that can actually write in your voice or what kind of process that they should be looking for are going through if they're going to hire somebody to their blogging for them on a regular basis? Like what are some characteristics or process steps that they should be aware of or that they should be looking for from a qualified writer?

Cari Twitchell: [34:31](#) Yeah, that's a brilliant question. Not all writers are created equal, right? Not all copy agencies or freelance writers are created equal. Um, I think, uh, first thing you need to figure out is can this person write in my voice? It's the biggest thing that's

going to matter to you because when you're putting out content, whether you wrote it or not, it needs to sound like you. It needs to sound like it's coming from you like it's coming from your company like it makes sense that it's on brand, that it matches your voice and tone, all of that. You need to start with someone who can match your voice and the only way you can do that is to get on the phone and talk with them and see if they get you. That comes from a conversation though. I know a lot of people will just try to go online and hire someone you know there are. There are any number of online writing resources, right? You can go to fiverr, you can go to e lance. You can go to all sorts of different websites where you can get writing for cheap and all you do is you submit this form, fill it out with the topic and due date and all of that and we'll just create it for you, but no one ever talks to you. No one ever understands what your goals are, what the purpose is behind your blog, what the point is, and who you're speaking to and why you're speaking to them and why they care. That's the stuff that matters, you know, and that none of that is getting communicated by, you know, those, those kind of cheaper online solutions. Um, So I would say find someone you can actually get on the phone with during business hours, see if they get you, if they get the process, if they have a process for what it's like to write, um, you know, and see how collaborative it is. Do you want it to be hands off? Are they okay being hand in with you being hands off. Do you want to be involved? Are they okay with you being involved? You need to figure out what you're willing to do on your end and what you can and can't do with your time. And then see if that writer can match. You don't ever sell with the first writer you speak to, right? I mean, this is, this is the same thing you do, whether you're hiring a lawyer or a web designer or a writer or edit. You should always speak to a fuel at least a few because only by doing that will you really understand, oh, well, I actually connected better with that person, or man, thank goodness I made this third call because this person gets me. You find that perSon, glve them a shot, see what they can do for you.

Alisa Conner:

[36:59](#)

Awesome, great advice. Great advice. So one last question and then I'll ask you if you have anything else that you want to add, but um, you know, often will write content and we still, people will read it but they don't engage. So do you have tips for getting better engagement and getting people to like and share and comment and all that kind of stuff on your blog posts?

Cari Twitchell:

[37:24](#)

You know, I, I know that commenting on blog posts has kind of become a passe thing, right? So most blogs don't have comments. Most of the engagement is coming from social

media now. Um, so what I would say is go where your audience is first. You know, if they're not going to comment on your website, they don't want to log in and they don't want to do it, and then don't make them do that, right. Meet them where they are. That's step one. Step two is try a few different formats. Um, you know, it's possible that if, uh, you just share your blog post with an image, nobody's going to pay attention, but if you do a short of gif or if you do a little video of you or something that maybe that will get some more traction. So see what works with your audience. Like you're going to have to test it. Okay? Um, but I would also encourage you to start the conversation yourself. If you can post your post your blog post and then comment on it and share it, right? You need to get the conversation started and then maybe maybe you have a friend or you tap someone in your audience to join you because once you get one or two posts or one, two comments on a post, right, it's going to start showing up and feeds. And if people start liking it or people start engaging, you're going to do better. Um, you know, and then if there's a post on your site that you feel is super worthwhile, um, boost it, you know, put a little bit of money behind it for an ad and see where it takes you. I would only encourage you to do that if you have something of real value to offer. So maybe that's a post that has lead magnet tied to it. Maybe you know, there's a content upgrade there. Maybe it's just a really exhaustive posts with every resource anybody could ever want for your specific service. And it's amazing boost that. Right? So be cautious about that. You don't want to just drop money into it, but if there's something, a little bit of money behind it will get you further. Awesome.

Alisa Conner:

[39:28](#)

Good tip. So anything that I missed or that I didn't, you want to offer the audience for additional suggestions on how to get started or how to write content consistently or anything like that?

Cari Twitchell:

[39:42](#)

Yeah, I think we've covered a lot of good ground here. Um, what I have done is I've put together a resource for, you know, some of the, the places where you can go to get blog topics and other ideas. So I put together a short blogging resource, so if your audience wants that, they can come get it. We're going to have that live on our website. So that would be@customcontentllc.com forward slash feed you for you. Okay. Um, so we'll create that link and get that up and running so they can have all the resources that we talked about with a few extra tidbits.

Alisa Conner:

[40:19](#)

I will put the link for that in the show notes so that you guys can go and grab that is a really awesome and generous offer from

Cari and her team. So I can't imagine it will not be beneficial for you to go over and grab that to your plan out your 2019. so one thing I do at the end of my interviews is I asked him to these fun just silly questions so the audience can know a little bit more about you. So let's dive into that. And then we'll end with you sharing where they can find out more about you and how to connect with you. Great. So my first question is, do you have a favorite business book that you'd go back to time and time again?

- Cari Twitchell: [40:54](#) Oh my gosh, I have several. Um, I am, uh, I'm a book nerd. So that's a hard question, but let me tell you one of my favorite business book authors. How about that? We'll do it that way. Mike Michalowicz what's so he's got The Pumpkin Plan. He's got Profit First. He just came out with a couple of, with another book. I mean he has numerous books. His books read quickly, uh, and they are full of smart insights and action items that you can actually move forward with it. They're beautiful. They're beautiful. So I would, I would put forth Mike Michalowicz anytime and then, um, here's another one, Building a Story Brand so I can't give just one. I'm sorry.
- Alisa Conner: [41:36](#) That's all right. That's a great book. I actually have it on my desk right now. Oh, that's not it. It's this one. I have to branding. Building a Storybrand on my desk. It's a great book. It's fantastic. And it will change your world word. Okay. Now I know you're up in midwest. So this, uh, this, I probably already know the answer to this, but do you prefer mexican or italian food?
- Cari Twitchell: [42:01](#) Oh. Oh. Um, I'm actually going to say Italian food, but only if I can eat it while in Italy.
- Cari Twitchell: [42:10](#) Oh, I'll go with you anytime.
- Alisa Conner: [42:13](#) Let's go. Let's try. Okay. Halloween or Christmas.
- Cari Twitchell: [42:20](#) Oh, Christmas. Okay.
- Alisa Conner: [42:22](#) Almost everybody says Christmas wine or beer.
- Cari Twitchell: [42:24](#) Wine.
- Alisa Conner: [42:26](#) What kind? Any particular flavor that?
- Cari Twitchell: [42:29](#) I'm a white wine girl. Um, I am partial to Pino Grigios as well as moscatos. And I'm dropping my stones over here. sorry about that.

Alisa Conner: [42:41](#) \Oops. All right, last question. what are three things you do to start your day? So that you're off and rocking and rolling it.

Cari Twitchell: [42:49](#) Alright, these are, this is good. so the first thing I do to start my day to make sure that I'm wide awake. This is really funny. I brush my teeth and I down a glass of water. If you're sleepy, like those two things will wake you up so fast. A yoga, yoga, if it's one minute of yoga or an hour, it doesn't matter. Any bit of yoga just really helps open me up for the day. Um, and then my other thing is my Panda Planner. I have my Panda Planner, so I will sit down and review my schedule for the day and I will write out my top three priorities for the day. What's really great about the Panda Planner every day is you get an option or in a space to write in what you're grateful for. I'm so it reAlly helps set you in a mindset of gratitude and it just puts you in a really positive space to get moving because I know we all have just \$50 million things pulling at us as entrepreneurs, as business owners, you know, they're just everything to do everyday, right? So sitting down highlighting, okay, the three must do items of the day, no matter what my to do list looks like, my three must do's. And then kind Of focusing on what, what am I happy for, what am I grateful for, and what are the things that are that are making me feel good about life right now? Because if you think about that, you can tackle anything on that list.

Alisa Conner: [44:16](#) I love it. Yep. I have a similar planner. I have the Danielle Laporte. What Will You Do To Feel The Way You Want To Feel Planner? And it's very similar. So. Well, thank you so much for being here. I would love for you to tell my audience where they can find out more about you and how connect with you if they are in need of having their writing taken care of.

Cari Twitchell: [44:35](#) Fantastic. Come to my website and my friends a customcontent llc.com. So that's c u s t o m c o n t e n t llc.com. Uh, that will be in the show notes. I guarantee it. And um, you know, hit up that contact page. My bio's on there. You can also find me on linkedin a Cari twitchell on LinkedIn. Awesome.

Alisa Conner: [44:59](#) Well, I so appreciate you being here and sharing your wisdom and your content strategy and your behind the scenes like how to make a blog happen and I know that my audience will appreciate it as they jump into 2019 to be successful with their blogging. So thanks again for being here and I really appreciate you.

Cari Twitchell: [45:16](#) Thanks for having me, Alisa. This is great. Great.

Alisa Conner: [45:18](#) Take care.

