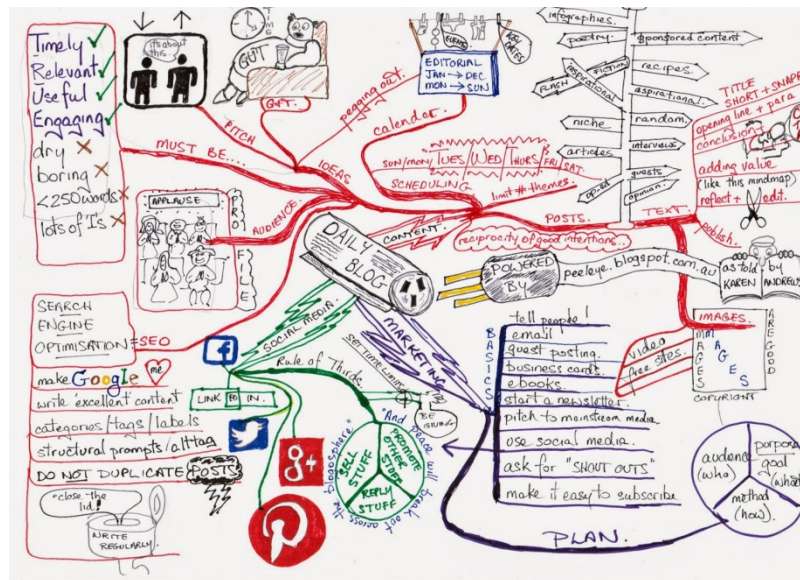


Monday, 7 July 2014

Powering my blog (by Richard Gilzean)

What you see below is a mindmap of the "Powering Your Blog Workshop" that I attended last Saturday at the NSW Writer's Centre. Six hours of discussion, Powerpoint slides and my notes compressed onto one page.



Value-Added - Powering Your Workshop. The Mindmap

Always nice to get back to the Writer's Centre in Rozelle. All that verdant landscape, high-ceilinged colonial charm and the black and white framed photo-portraits of established writers lining the staircase. How would Peter Carey feel having to look through his thick-rimmed glasses at a mug shot of Clint Greagan, the creator of the Reservoir Dad Blog, or Drusilla Modjeska leaning against a eucalypt alongside the presenter of the workshop, Karen Andrews who posts under the Miscellaneous Mums blog?

Karen hits me with a warm smile as I approach the training room. "You must be Richard," she says, before whipping off a name-tag. The answer to the question as to how she knew my name is soon answered as, one by one, the other participants arrive to take their seat and I am joined by ten ladies. Their skill levels range from "I'm a technophobe" to "I can help you design your own site." While not a technophobe, I would be hard-pressed to tell the difference between a hashtag and a hash brown. So this blogging 101 workshop is pitched at about the right level for me.

Karen tells us that she has been blogging for about the past eight years and is therefore an old hand. "Who is your audience?" she asks as, before we put pen to paper (or fingers to keyboards for those with laptops at the ready). Here's my first pass at a reader profile.

Emmett Gaga: a peeleye reader profile

Thirty-two year old public servant returns to his workstation with his regular flat white and - while still on his break - dips into his favourite blogs. He follows the Rabbittos and drives a ten year old BMW. Lives in a Leichhardt townhouse and is on a first name basis with the ladies at the local Polish deli. Work requires a fair amount of interstate travel. Comfortable with technology although regrets his first attempts on Facebook and now keeps FB on the 'private' setting. Likes to holiday AirB&B in New York and European cities and always Skypes his mum every couple of days when he is away because she worries a lot. He worries about his weight on occasion and knows that the right girl will show up one day, but he is not going anywhere near those on-line sites.

So next I'm standing in an elevator with the commissioning editor of (insert name here) publishing house. I have between the Basement and Level 21 to pitch him/her my best ideas. Here are my short and snappy blog post titles.

1. Cycling etiquette for the lycra challenged ... (okay that's just a warm-up)
2. Is it just me or do all nine year old boys act like this?
3. It's no longer a job for life.
4. They're getting up in arms about a tattoo parlour next to my kid's primary school.
5. To be a good juggler you have to be prepared for some balls to fall.
6. Give me Schweinebraten over szechuan anyday
7. the bald and the beautiful
8. What am I grateful for today?
9. How Tony Abbott improves my German.
10. I wish I had been a primary school teacher
11. Why I'm giving the 5:2 diet two out of five stars

Just like a newspaper, the workshop reinforced the need for excellent content if you want your blog to be read and seen by others. The nuts and bolts of using social media, Search Engine Optimisation and scheduling are also important. But you've got to have something to say in the first place. All of which leads me to the final exercise of the day, the marketing plan.

Peeleye Blog Marketing Plan

"My audience are the middle aged souls who woke up in the middle of the night and couldn't get back to sleep as they dwelled on the lost opportunities, the missed chances, the myriad ways in which they could be better at something: better parents, better cooks, better parents, better bloggers. My mission is to ride shotgun with you into the fecund realms of self-mastery of whatever you desire by means of my own travails, observations, hits and misses. The goal is to gather a loyal following of social media savvy readers, twitters, facebookers who will enjoy my stories and together we will spur each other on; so that when I get my book, blog, film deal their chests will collectively swell with self-satisfaction in the knowledge that they got me over the line.

And there you have it. Refer to the mindmap or sign up for one of Karen's workshops.