

Craftsman Creative Audience Growth Blueprint

What we all need as we strive to grow our businesses is *consistent sources of new audience members*.

That's what this ebook covers.

A few assumptions:

- You're a content creator, meaning that as your audience grows, so should your business
- We'll use email subscribers as our measuring stick, as we want to avoid "building on rented land", meaning we only have our audience on social media platforms.

With that in mind, this book outlines a simple system to generate consistent new followers.

Paired with the revenue blueprint, you will be well on your way to growing both your audience and your revenue into a resilient, sustainable creative business.

The System

Here's an overview of the parts of the system we will create from this book.

1. Awareness - How people discover you, where they discover you, what content works best to achieve these outcomes.
2. Engagement - How are you getting people off of platforms and onto your email list?
3. Conversion - Once they are a subscriber, how do they become a customer?

This system is not of my own design. I've taken 15 years of study and reading and research and courses, and am presenting what has worked best for me, and what I've taught to other creators.

My experience has been that without a system, it took me 12 years to grow to ~800 social media followers and an email list of ~500 people.

Since implementing this system, I've 3x'd my social media following and 4x'd my email list in 15 months.

Not to mention the tens of thousands of dollars in revenue I've earned from a very small audience (less than 2,000 people).

(That has been documented [here](#)).

The following chapters will outline what to build and how to build it so that you can achieve similar results.

Awareness

There's no point in putting out content day after day, week after week, month after month if no one reads or "consumes" it.

Part of your responsibility as the business owner is not only to *create* the content, but also to *distribute and market* your creations.

I spent **12 years** writing content for the sake of writing, without any focus or outcome in mind.

And the results spoke for themselves. My content never reached a wide audience or led to any revenue.

I lacked awareness, engagement, *and* conversion.

If you're experiencing the same, let's start with awareness.

A quick google search will net you 10 or 20 or even 100 different ways to get "eyeballs on your content", or, said differently, to get traffic to your website, people to see your content on social media, etc.

What *most* people get wrong is that they look at what their favorite creators are doing and quickly realize that they are EVERYWHERE!

They're on every social media channel, putting out daily content across blogs, newsletters, a podcast, and YouTube.

And then they try and emulate it. Which leads to overwhelm, anxiety, and burnout.

We'll use a different approach.

Pick one social channel, and one form of weekly content as your foundation.

For example, when I entered the creator economy last year by writing my book, I focused on Twitter and a new blog.

That was it.

I put out content every day on Twitter, and published chapters of my book as blog posts a few

times a week, and then settled into a once-a-week newsletter cadence after the book was written.

That led to a 300% increase in my Twitter following and 400% increase in newsletter/blog subscribers.

Again, after 12 years of no growth, I experienced 12 months of massive growth by doing *less* rather than trying to be everywhere at once.

So, what two platforms will you choose?

Choosing your Social Media platform

I use these two questions to decide:

1. Where is your audience?
2. Where do you enjoy spending time?

If you're targeting CEOs of small businesses that are generally in their 40s and 50s, it's unlikely that they are on TikTok.

Similarly, if your audience is aspiring creators in their teens and 20s, they probably aren't doom scrolling LinkedIn.

I'm overgeneralizing, but you can typically narrow in on one or two platforms where your ideal audience members hang out and spend their time.

That's only half of it, though.

If you *hate* the platform that your audience is on, then you're setting yourself up for failure if your strategy is to show up there every day.

This is what happened to me. My audience is easier to find on Facebook and Instagram, but I just don't spend time on those platforms.

There are *millions* of people (in some cases, hundreds of millions or even billions) on these platforms. So I looked at where I already spent most of my time on social media. That was Twitter. I found the people who had the audience I wanted, followed them, engaged with them, and started adding their followers to my audience and my email list.

Find the overlap between where your audience is, and where you like to spend your time. That's the sweet spot for your social media content strategy.

I'm *not* a social media strategist, but the people I know who are, recommend the following:
Show up every day with helpful content, and
Prioritize engagement over original content.

Especially when you're starting out, you can get more awareness by using the "Walmart Principle" than by putting out your own content.

The Walmart principle - if your business would benefit from having Walmart customers come into your store, the best place you can build your shop is inside a Walmart. The second best is in a Walmart parking lot. That way you're capturing existing traffic, rather than having to create it from scratch.

Even now, with ~2,500 followers on Twitter, my reply to a tweet from someone with 200,000 followers will get seen by thousands of people, where my own tweets will get seen by a few hundred.

That being the case, I post 1-2 times a day, and reply to 20-50 tweets per day.

So a 10:1 to 25:1 reply:tweet ratio.

The same goes on other platforms. LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, you'll be rewarded for prioritizing engagement over original content until you hit the 10k follower mark.

Choosing your foundation

Now that you have awareness from a social media channel, you want to think about what *owned* content you can direct those followers to.

The question to ask yourself here is what content is most natural for you to create on a consistent, i.e. weekly, basis?

If you're a writer, you might choose a blog and/or newsletter.

If you prefer video, then YouTube might be a good option, but be sure to get people on an email list and share new videos with them over email rather than only relying on the YT algorithm to notify your subscribers.

If you prefer audio, you might create a podcast, and then have show notes and links on your blog that you share over email.

Whatever you like creating the most, do that!

Then, figure out what content you can create that allows you to post weekly.

Big, Mr. Beast style videos are way too large in scope to produce weekly, so he and his crew create other videos like reactions and interviews to fill in the weekly slots between their tentpole content pieces.

If your content takes longer than a week for you to produce, think of a second, simpler version that you can post in between the longer pieces.

Your social media and your creative content work hand-in-hand to generate awareness and engagement, which we'll talk about next.

Use social media to get distribution and discovery, to increase awareness for the creative work that you do, and to pull people to your owned property—your website, newsletter, blog, or other content.

TO DO:

- Choose ONE social media platform that you will focus on going forward, and put the other platforms on hiatus or maintenance mode until you hit 10k followers and/or have enough revenue to afford a VA or social media person on your team to help be on multiple platforms.
- Decide what your core content type will be, what day and time you will post new content every week, and let your existing audience know what's coming.

Engagement

How will people join your platform? Do they become subscribers, or followers, or listeners?

That's what this section is about.

Because of the importance of getting people *off* of the social media platforms, we'll focus on email as the place for people to engage with us.

You could also use a blog, or a YouTube channel, or even a podcast, but with those other platforms you often don't "own" your audience. You don't control the distribution, you don't have direct contact with them, and the algorithm can change at any time on a whim and completely decimate your business.

The **engagement** part of the system includes:

- A landing page with an email capture form
- A lead magnet or offer that you will give in exchange for an email list
- Weekly delivery of your core content

To simplify things even further, we'll use what I consider to be the best platform to accomplish all three of these steps, ConvertKit.

I've been a paying user of ConvertKit since it launched in 2013, I've spoken at their Craft+Commerce conference, am friends with their CEO, and am a die-hard fan.

All for good reason - it's the best email platform for creators. (See why)

You can get set up with a free account which will handle everything that we'll build in this book. (Go do that now.)

Once you create an account, the first thing you need is a landing page with an email capture form.

All of their pre-made templates include an email capture form, and these can either be hosted by ConvertKit, or you can link them to your domain. If you have your site built on Wordpress, you can even link a page to the ConvertKit page and it is a very seamless experience for your potential subscriber.

On this landing page, you're presenting an offer to a visitor.

Give me your email address, and in exchange I'll send you _

What should you offer them? Great question!

I like to offer them something that is in the same format as the thing they will get from you in the future through your weekly emails.

So, if they are signing up for a newsletter, give them something else that is *written*, like a short email series or an ebook.

If you are sending them new videos each week, send them a video of you teaching them how to do something, or a video that they can't find for free anywhere else online.

If you are sending out new podcast episodes, offer them a private feed, or enhanced show-notes, or a short audio course.

Try and offer the same thing that they are going to get every week.

Now, this shouldn't be a *huge* project. You can create a lead magnet in a day or a week, but anything beyond that and it may be too big in scope, Plus, you may want to hold onto that bigger project so that you can charge money for it.

Make something that you'd happily give another creator your email address to get it, and then be done with it. Add it as a download in the settings of your landing page inside ConvertKit so that it automatically sends it to them when they sign up.

Once they put in their name and email address and hit the button to submit that info, they get a confirmation email (to prevent spam and bad actors), and then once they click the confirm button they are on your list!

They have now given you permission to email them going forward.

Some will sign up, get the free thing, and then unsubscribe. That's ok. They aren't going to become customers in the future, so there's no reason to keep them on your list.

Now, to connect the dots between your awareness system and your engagement system, you simply need to direct people from your social media to your landing page with your offer.

You can put the link in your bio. You can talk about it every 5 to 10 posts on social media. You

can add it to your email signature.

Put it everywhere and see what works. As you get more advanced, you can set up ways to track which links are sending the most people to your list, but we don't want to get into the weeds yet. We need to get the system working, then we can improve it with that data.

Now, the last piece of the system. Conversion...

TO DO:

- Set up a ConvertKit account.
- Build your first landing page.
- Create a lead magnet and include that offer on the page.
- Use your new email service to send out weekly updates with your new core content.

Conversion

What we're setting up in this step is something that will help you grow your business through paid channels like Facebook ads, Google ads, newsletter and podcast sponsorships, and more.

At the end of your lead magnet, you're going to include a "call to action", another offer that costs \$20-50.

It's another sample of what you do. It could be your album, a video, a paid newsletter subscription, a piece of art, a tool you created, anything.

Anything, as long as it's valuable to your ideal audience.

(Look for my Call To Action at the end of this blueprint, as an example.)

Again, this should be a similar format to your main content and your lead magnet.

You don't want people to sign up to get a video, then send them a newsletter as the core product, and then try and upsell them a photo print. Those are too different, and only influencers and celebrities can get away with that sort of thing.

When you're starting out, keep it simple. An ebook to a newsletter to a book. An audio course to a podcast to a paid podcast.

The reason we're including a paid offer at this stage is because when you start spending money to acquire new subscribers and grow your business, you want to have this product cover your costs.

Take a look at the math:

Say it costs \$3 to acquire a new email subscriber. One out of every 10 subscribers buys your "thing" for \$29. That means it cost you \$30 to get 10 subscribers, and one of them gave you \$29.

You just got 10 subscribers for \$1, instead of \$30.

Now, what if you add one more product that is a natural "upsell" from your lower-priced product?

A strategy call for \$250. A course for \$150. A paid membership community, an hourly or project-based freelancing offer, anything from the revenue blueprint?

Now you are *making* money every time you spend money to get new people on your list.

This *linear approach* to audience and revenue is how you quickly scale your business. Companies like The Hustle and Morning Brew have used this model to get millions of people on their list. Creators like James Clear have sold millions of copies of their books and then made millions of dollars selling online courses.

The reason that I have been able to do \$30,000 in a month with a small list is because of this system. And the best part is that it all works in the background. All I need to do is set it up once, then make it better over time.

Increase the number of people seeing the signup page. Improve the conversion rate to my low- and high-ticket offers.

Spend more money on getting new leads. Make more money as they buy my products.

It all works in the background.

That's the complete system. Once it's working, meaning that it's generating at least a few thousand dollars a month, or selling one of your main products once per day, *then* you can add new landing pages, more lead magnets, and other products.

I made this mistake early on. I created too many products and wasn't selling any of them. It led to frustration and disappointment that I somehow had failed as a creator.

On the contrary, I just built the system in reverse order. Don't make the same mistake.

Build awareness online, direct that awareness to your website where they can engage with an offer and continue to engage with your weekly content, and then offer them products in a linear fashion.

This is the start of your minimum viable business, and you can have it up and running in a matter of days or weeks.

There are too many possibilities when it comes to lead magnets and offers to cover here, but this system will help you grow your audience and your revenue together.

Start with free methods that bring new people consistently to your site. Once that is working, consider adding paid methods like sponsorships and ads.

TO DO:

- Create your low-ticket offer.
- Add a call to action at the end of your lead magnet.
- Create a more expensive product or service that you can “upsell” to those that buy the lower priced offer.
- Optimize the system and grow it week over week until it’s selling one core product per day.
- Add new products and services and grow your business.

Now, this is just a small piece of the pie when it comes to creating a resilient, profitable business for yourself.

There are so many other considerations like your mindset and ability to be a leader. Mastering finances and sales and marketing. And learning how to truly optimize this system, identify the constraints in your business, and grow.

I cover all of this in my book *Craftsman Creative*, how five-figure creators can build six-figure businesses.

The next step in your journey is to get the full picture of where you are, where you're going, and how to get there. My book is the map that lays all of this out in front of you so you can confidently take the next step to creating the business you've always wanted.

You can get your copy at craftsmancreativebook.com

Questions? Shoot me an email at daren@craftsmancreative.co

Daren

Special thanks to [Sara Campbell](#) and Sena Gürdoğan for their help editing this resource.