

Should I Revive My Blog or Start a Substack_

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You're listening to business that Asri the audio advice column for your online business. I'm Kirsty Denton.

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And I'm Amy Posner. We're talking bite sized episodes that solve real world problems with a no holds barred tell it like it is kind of approach. Welcome back, we've got a question this week that reads like this. It feels like everyone who's anyone has a sub stack at the moment. I love caps writing. And I'm a content writer by trade and wondering what strategic or business value there would be in starting one up, I'm torn between reviving my blog or starting a substack. Okay, Kirsty, you and I were talking a little bit I have only the Vegas familiarity with substack. So So can you fill me in on the particulars as you see them? So we can kind of figure out what might make sense here.

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Yeah, sure. And I should also note that I don't have my own substance. So my knowledge is also relatively limited. But I feel like I'm maybe hopefully know enough to be helpful in giving this this person some ideas and some context and some pointers. But basically, it is an online platform where people can publish content, and also send that to subscribers on the platform. So it's sort of like a blog slash email list, I guess, but it's hosted on this third party platform, you can also charge your subscribers a subscription fee. So it can be a way to make money. And typically, the way that I have seen it used most commonly, at least for people in the copy and content writing world, is as a place for people to publish content that isn't so directly related to their work in their business, but it's perhaps of a slightly more personal nature. So definitely publishing stories and things about themselves that, I guess speak to, you know, the three dimensional personhood rather than just them as a business owner. Definitely not the only way you can use it. And I know there are a bunch of quite famous substack case studies where people have quite lucrative businesses just set up on the basis of having a bunch of paying subscribers. So that's hopefully a general rundown of what it is. Does that make sense? Amy?

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Yeah. And guess what? I am part of one, right to one. I'm thinking about it, and you're talking. I'm like, Hello. Yes, I do. So funny.

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So funny. For context, before we hit record, I mean, was like, Yeah, I have not on it. I haven't subscribed to any. And here we are.

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Yeah, I just wasn't thinking that. That's what it was. And all of a sudden, it's dawning on me. Hello. It's exactly what it is. And so I have some questions for you, though. So you say that it's, it's sent to subscribers? So does that mean, I go to a certain place and I choose what I want to be notified about? How does how does that piece work?

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Yes, I can. I don't know the like itty bitty particulars. But basically, you can subscribe to someone substack. So it would be very similar to signing up to someone's list in that you put in your name and your email address, and you get an email in your inbox whenever a new post is published. Okay. And

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the reason why I'm asking because I'm thinking, you know, in, in light of answering this question, I'm just, I'm thinking, Okay, what would this strategy be? So what would you be doing there? You said, when people can get to know you better, you could be more personal. But that wasn't what I thought that is. Would that be a situation where, like, say you had one and I wanted to know more about you, I would go there. How does it fit into a business ecosystem? Strategically, is I guess what I'm wondering.

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Yes, I'm such a good question. Because I also have pondered this because I have had a similar feeling to the person who's asked his question where it's like, oh, everyone's on there. Maybe I should start a newsletter, but I decided not to. But I think for people who do have online businesses, and are service providers, at least as far as the examples that I see pretty regularly, I think the main strategic driver for having a separate substack presence and newsletter is that you're then getting people to actively opt in to receiving content that's of a slightly different nature to what you would send to your own email list. So for example, like Sofia, or John who I know and love very much, she's one of my friends and the person I did the business after baby podcast with she has a substack newsletter and it's very much sort of sensory storytelling about her personal life. So about her family, you know, her holidays, those kinds of things, whereas the content that she sends out to her email list, which is hosted You know, via her own website is also about sensory storytelling but very much more in a business event. So in terms of how to use that, to connect with your prospects, you know, to sell your things, all those kinds of things. So I think that is probably the main strategic reason would be to get specific buy in

from people to hear from you about this sort of separate topic idea. But as I'm saying this, I'm like, well, actually, that's only the use case for having substack as an additional platform for your content. And I'm not sure whether this person is thinking about that, or just having that as the place for their content.

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So that's what I'm wondering, because they're content writer by trade. And I guess, I guess, for me, you know, as with my business hat on, I'm thinking, where will you get the most traction? You know, what, what does you the most good? And can you post whatever you post in one on the other? Or does that defeat the purpose? Because on some platforms, it doesn't mean it's actually beneficial. So I'm wondering what strategic or business value they're being starting one up? Well, I guess that's what we're asking to. And it feels to me, I'm thinking, well, this person is a content writer, and like you said, sphere is like, it sounds like maybe that's like a personal passion of hers are something that she really likes doing anyway, when I think about it, it feels like an extra thing to do. You know, like, if I had something maybe that I really wanted to speak about, I didn't feel like my business platform was the right place. I might do something like that. But it feels like strategically for your business. It's like, like, are those the people that are your potential clients that are? I don't know, does I'm not connecting this up? And maybe I'm just being daft here? No, no,

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no, I think these are exactly the right questions to be asking, you know, would this be a place where you would actually be able to find ideal prospects so that you could hopefully monetize that interaction with them at some point, you know, down the line by booking a project, or whatever that might look like? And I think too, like, if you're a content writer, you would obviously know about SEO? And I think there is a lot of strategic value in because I say the last question here is I'm torn between reviving my blog was citing a substack. Obviously, if you're publishing your content on your own blog, on your own website, you can then optimize the SEO, etc. And you can use that as a way to drive traffic to you. And people are therefore already on the site that presumably also advertises your services or how people can work with you. Whereas if you're publishing content on substack, you sort of lose that piece of the visibility puzzle, although, and you know, saying this, as someone who does not have a substack newsletter, so does not know it, could it be them that there's some visibility that you'd get from being on the substack platform that you wouldn't get from having a blog on your own site? Like, are there people who use substack? That would not be searching the internet for the kind of content that you're writing about?

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And it's, you know, I, this is gonna sound slightly cynical, but I have to ask is like it would be? Would we have been answering the same question a year ago about a Patreon or Patreon, however you pronounce that, like, is this just the latest cool place to be? And that, you know, and also, I mean, there's been a, you know, there have been a series of ways or series of platforms where you can monetize your content sounds like this is one, which I don't think is an entirely bad idea if you can get followers. And if you're actively marketing, I think it can give you I can give you some advantages, but I can't see wondering what strategic or business value there would be in starting one up, I'm not finding one so far. I'm willing to be missing the entire point, by the way.

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I mean, we both are all the time, which is something I love about us. But I just I love so much that you brought up like, is this just like, the hot ticket platform right now? Because you're right, there have been so many platforms for sharing content, you know, including, like, I think threads is like, the most recent one that I joined was on for a hot minute, and then I've never logged back into. And, you know, I think there is proven strategic and business value in creating assets that live on your own website and assets that drive people to signing up to your own list, because then you have a really reliable way to reach them. So yes, I just love so much that you brought that up. So thank you for saying that. Amy.

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Yeah, well, you're welcome. I couldn't help but think like, let's see blogs had been around since the start of internet. And then like, you know, still it's still valid, still viable. And then there's, you know, then there's all the shiny things. And I just let me be clear, though, this I mean, this may be much more than a shiny thing, and there's, you know, worlds of things I don't understand, but I'll tell you, you know, this resonates with me, because at the particular moment when we're recording this, which is October of 2023. There is so much conversation about about promotion. and promoting yourself and people are so torn and so no, like running around, like trying to do this and this and this and this and that. And I feel like, like, choose one steady thing and stick to it. And so that's part of where this is coming from. I feel like, like, I mean, right now, it's a tough economy. And I feel like during a tough economy, like shiny objects in some way, are even more appealing. Because they feel like quick fixes and they feel, you know, they give you that sort of satisfaction. I guess what I'm saying is, I, I've been saying this a lot lately, and I just, I feel like, the bottom line is, you need to have something in place where you have a voice, and you're getting in front of your audience. And if substack is the way to do that, right on, that's the way to go. If it's not like the blog is the way to go. Because it's you know, it's old, faithful, it just, it just works. It's, you know, it works, you own it, you can tweak it, it builds all kinds of things. So we know, we know that work. So maybe, I don't know, maybe that's the most logical place to start, if you're starting. And then, you know, keep an eye out for what else makes sense. And or I will say one more thing. If you go the blog route, then take pieces of your blog, you know, in person around, you know, use other platforms, find out which which platforms work for you, but do it from a central location that you own, you know, that can be a really great way to get out in front of the people that you want to be seen by what say, Kirsty? Yes,

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you're so brilliant, Amy. And I think just to add my probably final two cents, I think, to answer this question, really concretely, like, get really clear on what your goals are for publishing content, whether that's on substack, or on your website, you know, if it is that you want to reach more ideal prospects, then you know, you can probably knowing who those are, and what tools you have at your disposal to do that making make a good call about whether substack is a better place to do that, then your blog, where you control the SEO, etc. I also think it's important to think about opportunity costs. And I think that's something new is sort of sideways talking about that Amy, where it's like, you know, all these shiny new objects and all these shiny new places that you can show up on, you know, if you're busily creating content for those spaces, what does that mean? isn't getting done enough for your business? Because I think we can often think that like, oh, no, just add this to the plate. But the

reality is that we have a finite amount of capacity. So thinking about where your energy will best serve your goals, I think is always a really good point to ponder when you are considering something like this, whether it's Yeah, where to publish your content, or, you know, some other parts of the business puzzle. So possibly some like, esoteric kind of points for me to end on. But that's just where my brain wanted to go.

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No, I think it's good. I think that's, I think that's a really good way to sort of tie it up and sum up what we, what we talked about, too, in terms of making a decision and, you know, hopefully we've given you some some things to think about that won't make you roll your eyes entirely thinking why did I ask if, whether that is the case, or isn't I would love to know what you decide and why. And I'd love to follow you. So reach out and let us know we'd really appreciate that.

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We would Yeah, so we love when we like get to close the loop with people so yet please don't be shy. We promise we're not scary. We are a bit weird, but we're not scary. And on that note, on that note, thanks so much for listening. If this episode has spread any questions for you head on over to businessbadass.co/podcast where you'll find the questions submission form waiting for you to

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catch the next one and then next bye for now. Hey, it's Kirsty

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