

EPISODE 109

[INTRODUCTION]

[00:00:04.1] ANNOUNCER: Welcome to the Creative Empire Podcast. Each week, Reina Pomeroy, the life and biz success coach, and Christina Scalera, the attorney for creatives, are taking you up close and personal with successful influencers in the creative community and tackling your biggest business hurdles. Their mission is to help you, creative entrepreneurs, think beyond your daily biz so you can make the brave decisions that build your Creative Empire.

[INTERVIEW]

[0:00:35.4] CS: Hello, welcome back for another episode of the Creative Empire podcast. I'm Christina Scalera, joined by Reina Pomeroy, of course, and today our guest is Lauren Grove from Every Last Detail, a blog that has been running since 2009, and Aisle Society. She's one of the founders.

We're so excited to talk to you today, Lauren! Thanks so much for coming on the show and let us know, how did you get started in this crazy world of blogging, and how have you had such a successful blog for such a long time at this point?

[0:01:05.0] LG: Thank you for having me. I'm super excited. I actually did not get started in the traditional way that a lot of professional wedding bloggers get started nowadays. I started Every Last Detail shortly after I got married, and it was because I figured out after my wedding that a lot of things had gone wrong, and the reason why they went wrong was because I didn't know any better.

I wasn't educated, I didn't have any friends who — I married my high school sweetheart, so I didn't have any friends to tell me like, "Hey, don't do this. Hire this person, don't do that. Look out for this," and so I was kind of just like flying super blind, and I found myself Googling things all the time. The dumbest questions ever, but I'm a millennial, so like, you Google everything when you're a millennial.

Like, everything. You should see my history. I couldn't find any of the answers that I wanted, and so therefore I was just kind of running around like a chicken with my head cut off. Once I pinpointed that the reason why my wedding didn't go super well was because I was uneducated about weddings in general, I decided that I wanted to help other brides and grooms from making the same mistakes that I did.

I took a wedding planning class a couple of months after I got married. It was like my birthday present from my parents or something, they paid for it. Shortly after that, I got a part-time job with an event company. They did cleaning, and flowers, and décor, and rentals. That quickly shifted into a full-time job, and along the way, I started Every Last Detail, because in these consultations with brides, I was realizing that they also knew nothing, of course, and so I would literally take these consultations and turn them into blog posts. Educational blog post of like, why does a photographer cost so much? Why can't I get a photographer for \$500? Things like that.

After about, I would say probably a year and a half, two years of working for this company, planning fairly high-end weddings and just getting the experience in the industry, I decided to take the leap and quit a job that many girls would kill for, basically, it was an awesome job, and go full-time with Every Last Detail. That was in April of 2011, so that's like my full-time anniversary, and it's been full-time for me and supporting my family ever since.

[0:03:44.0] CS: That's amazing. Tell us how much work it is to run a blog?

[0:03:51.5] LG: It's nonstop. It never ends. I actually, about two years ago, just started adding people to my team, because I realized that I couldn't keep working 16-hour days. I do kind of still work 16-hour days, but I'm also about to have a baby. I'm in full-on "be prepared for baby" mode. I've been adding more people to my team, thanks to a lot of recommendations from Christina, and the Savvy Business Owners group, and just realizing that you can't do everything yourself.

It's a lot of email. I always say that it's basically, like 10% blogging, actually, and 90% sales and marketing. In turn, sales and marketing has kind of become what I'm super passionate about. I still love writing blog posts to educate brides and grooms, but my shift has kind of gone into

helping wedding professionals and educating them on how to market their businesses online, and how to best work with people like me, who have these platforms where these brides and grooms are coming to, and how to get a hold of them.

[0:05:08.3] RP: Lauren, something that you said at the beginning is kind of like popping up in my head, that you basically took consultation questions and then turned them into blog posts. I think in the online world now, we talk about how to turn, how to make a service out of like, asking people what questions they have, and you basically did that intuitively. I'm so in awe of that, because I didn't know how to do that, and you've just like, done it. That's the basis of the business that you built.

So what are some of the ways that the blog has changed, I guess? Is it still, I mean, I'm guessing that you're not doing those consults anymore, obviously. How do you get new content into your business and the blog?

[0:05:51.3] LG: Actually, that's a really good point. I never even really thought about that, because I just kind of did it. I obviously, design wise, things have changed a lot. Reina, I think you said that you had been looking at Every Last Detail since the beginning, and it was horrible. Oh my gosh, it was so bad.

[0:06:08.7] RP: It was such a good resource. Maybe it's changed, but the content is still great.

[0:06:15.6] LG: The funny thing is that the beautiful thing about content is that ideally it should be evergreen. I have blog posts that I wrote literally seven years ago that I'm just tweaking now, and adding to, and making to look prettier, but the information is still relevant, so that's a big difference between me and other wedding blogs, because a lot of wedding blogs out there are pretty pictures.

That's a little bit of what makes me stand out and what makes me a little bit different, but in terms of other things that have changed, honestly, I think the audience has changed. I say that because I always say as we all get older, brides and grooms get younger, and therefore they are more adept to using the internet. I mean, obviously, now with millennials, they're on their phones all the time. They're using their phones like 50% of the time to access content.

I know myself and a lot of my blogger friends, we've been seeing a shift in how people are consuming our content. For example, Instagram. Everybody just scrolls, and you always do the call to action to try and get them to click over to the link in your profile. Whether they actually do that or even know that they can do that is another thing like with Pinterest. Pinterest was the first thing before Instagram, and they — a lot of people, like my sister included, who is younger than me had no idea that you could literally click on the pins and be taken to a website with more information.

That realization for me was of something that has made me continuously look at how I'm presenting my content, where it's being presented, and it's actually probably going to be creating more change in the next couple of months on my blog as well for how I'm presenting the blog posts and the most recent blog post, because people are just used to different things.

That's a big thing about websites in general, is that you have to stay up to date with what people are getting used to.

[0:08:33.9] RP: Yeah, I love that point too, because we typically talk about those social platforms as like, "This is fun," or, "I want to get the likes," but you're talking about business conversions, how people are acting based upon the call to actions, or you're trying to get people to your website, and so that's a great refrain. We want people to go to our website and stay there for a little bit longer than they might not have before or whatever.

What are some of the best practices for getting people there, or how do you start to think about social media? Maybe the question really is like, how do you use different platforms, because people starting out get really flustered by how many platforms they are and how to use them well?

[0:09:18.4] LG: That is a good question. I myself have put a lot of focus on Instagram, just because I had to take a look at where people were spending their time, and I think that's something that all business owners need to do. Where is your target client spending their time? Facebook is still very popular, but again people are just scrolling.

I call them lazy internet users. My husband included. He'll be like, "Hey, here's a headline of a dog that was like, a crossbred with a cat," or I don't know. Some people are like that. I'll be like, "Okay, how did they do that? What was the scientific backing behind that?" He's like, "I don't know, I didn't click on the article."

[0:10:02.5] CS: I think it goes to the point, you're so curious, and I love it. It really shows, you know, you talked a little bit about how you educate brides, and you've been doing that for a long time through Every Last Detail, but one of the other things that other people may not know about yet is your dedication to educating the industry, too, through the V-list.

Can you talk a little bit about the difference between — I think one of the things that comes up a lot for many people that listen, and we have questions about this is like, "I want to do XYZ, but I also want to do ABC. How do I merge those together?" I don't think it's appropriate to merge it together in many, if not most instances, but you've done a really good job of finding the common thread between the public facing Every Last Detail, and then, not like private, but you know what I mean. You have to be a vendor to be part of the V-list.

How have you found that common thread of education, and how have you decided to incorporate that into your mission and what you're doing this year with Every Last Detail and the V-list.

[0:11:08.9] LG: I guess one thing that I didn't mention the very beginning that I think I should preface with is that as a wedding blog, I have two audiences. I have the brides and grooms who are engaged and they're looking for wedding inspiration primarily and then I also have the wedding professionals, who pay my bills, quite frankly.

I have to — it's a huge challenge. It's like, it's always on my mind, because I have to keep both parties happy, and I have to market to both, and I have to speak to both, and so with that, I have something called the V-list, where it's wedding professionals who have been vetted and verified. That's why it's called the V-list, and they pay a — I think it's a pretty small fee to be on the list, but also to be marketed to my platforms, which my audiences are larger than most wedding professionals.

So they're basically paying for marketing, plus a listing on my website that indicates that they've been — that they've verified and approved by me. I reject a lot of people, more than I actually take. Which I know a lot of people don't do, because a lot of people are all about money.

[0:12:24.0] CS: That's so interesting. I just want to like, pause and stop there, because a lot of — If you guys haven't noticed this, even if you have like 50 people that follow you on Instagram, you'll start to get approached, just by these robotic services that are asking you to promote their products and things like that.

It becomes really important right from the beginning to decide, "How am I going to stand behind something and how am I not, when does that happen?" I just want to pause and say like, you've done a really good job at not just vetting and verifying people, but sticking to your mission of — even when it's hard financially, possibly.

To make sure that the overall, I guess, mission, and overall success of the business is not compromised. Can you talk a little bit about like, how you kind of walked into that, and how you found that truth in your business, and what that looks like to really stay true to your audience and not waver, even when it could be a really nice financial payday.

[0:13:22.3] LG: Absolutely. It all started with basically wanting to be a resource in general for brides and grooms, and knowing how other directories are. There's a gazillion vendors, and how the heck do you choose out of all of these vendors, and how do you — people just end up inquiring with all of them, and it doesn't bode well for them, because they're not choosing based on personality, and they're not choosing based on what's going to work best for their wedding.

Also, my own experience when searching for vendors. I was I pretty clueless, and directories weren't super common then, but I myself was a little weary of them because they were so just saturated. I took that and decided that I wanted to be pretty specific and intentional with who I approved and who I worked with.

My requirements are, I mean, they're pretty simple, but it's basically that they serve couples who are planning weddings with over a budget of — or with a budget of over \$25,000, and their website is going to convert. That's a big one for me, because what I'm doing is, the service that

they're paying me for is sending traffic to their websites. If their websites are not good, then it's not going to work for them.

[0:14:46.2] RP: Can you break down what you consider to be like a website that will convert for a wedding vendor?

[0:14:52.7] LG: Absolutely. I mean, first, just like design aesthetic. Not having like a Wix website or something like that. I see a lot of that, and having information that is going to draw the user or potential bride in to want to find out more information. If it's just like a splash page or something, that's not going to do very well, because it's not giving the millennial bride or groom the information that they want. Because that's what they want. They want information, they're turning to the internet to find information.

They're pretty simple guidelines, but I know a lot of people, they end up doing like a Wix or whatever, freebie website first when they're first getting started, but I always encourage people to take that step and make an investment in a good brand and a good website, because that is your first impression all the time.

Then a couple of the other requirements that I have in place are just that their work is good, that's a given, and that they've been in business for two years or more. A lot of people do contact me when they have first started, and even if their work looks amazing and their websites are amazing, I still have to reject them, because there's a lot of turnover in the wedding industry once people figure out how much work it is to put on weddings.

Those are my requirements and you know, I have had a couple of people that have reapplied after their two years, which is always really exciting for me, and also to see their growth, so yeah. Those were those stringent requirements. I don't think they're very stringent.

[0:16:32.6] CS: You know, they're not stringent in the fact that you know, you have this like — necessarily checklist, but those are pretty hard requirements for a lot of people that are just starting out, to me, and obviously the two years is hard.

The website thing, I feel like because it has gotten easier, fortunately, there's a lot of really nice templates that don't look like templates for WordPress, or Squarespace, or whatever it might be, and they just tend not to break. I totally understand that, and then the other thing is like, if they're paying you, that makes a lot of sense to make sure that it's a good value for their money because I think a lot of — not I think, I've seen a lot of people that are looking for clients.

Do what they feel like is something, I don't want to say that they're desperate, but they just want it so bad that they will just put money, like bad money after good, right? They'll just invest in like a brand when they've never even had a client that's been interested in their services, or they'll invest in a website when they don't even know if this is like an avenue they want to pursue.

It sounds to me like while they're stringent, they're at least in the best interest of what you feel like is a good fit for, again, the vendors on your list, who are public facing to the brides that you're serving, right? It's kind of like cyclical thing that's happening here. As far as like how you're helping the vendors beyond that.

Once they're on the V-list, what are the kinds of things that they could expect to see a change in their business? What's the kind of education that they could expect from you, and you know, what kind of client experiences could they expect now that they're on the V list?

[0:18:07.7] LG: The first thing that I always tell people in my sales emails and things like that is that I do not guarantee bookings, because there's no way that what I do can make somebody click that payment button to book them. So I always make that super clear but what I can guarantee is that I will be sending traffic to their websites.

That is first and foremost my goal is to make that clear, because that's the only thing that I can guarantee as a publication, and I track all of our social media post and know how much traffic we're sending to people, and on top of that they get like 12 social media post throughout the year.

Instagram, Twitter and Facebook per quarter. It's four of each basically, it actually comes out to like over \$2,000 worth of social media post, if somebody were to want to purchase a la carte. In addition to that, we have a community, so there's a Facebook community page where

sometimes there will be some conversations started by me or started by other vendors that have said, “Hey, has anybody encountered this before?”

It seems to be a pretty safe space for a lot of people regarding what they’re asking. I don’t tend to see the questions posted in like, other communities, and I also, we do post that feature, kind of like quotes and tips and advice from our vendors, then again like, within the blog post, linking directly to their websites. So I’ll post those prompts in our Facebook group, in addition to emailing vendors and saying, “Hey, we want your tips regarding this topic.”

It makes it really easy for them to basically get publicity on every last detail, because there’s no other opportunities for wedding vendors to be able to do that with us, beyond getting published in what I call a “pretty picture feature.”

[BREAK]

[0:20:11.8] CS: How would it feel if someone laid out a business plan, a road map, or some kind of strategy that would get you started or get you closer to the goals that you dream of accomplishing in your business? Well, Reina and I actually have done this. So all you have to do to get this totally free resource is head to creativeempire.co, that’s creativeempire.co, and click on “free workbook.” We will deliver to you 50 of our most potent, powerful strategies and proven tactics to getting our businesses visible, booked and profitable. So if you would like to have this in your business for totally free, you can grab that at creativeempire.co. We’ll see you there.

[BACK TO INTERVIEW]

[0:20:55.2] CS: I think probably that’s the question that is on everybody’s mind, if you haven’t even published yet, is what are you looking for as an editor, and how do they get their work published? Do they have to become a member of the V-list, what does that look like on their part, and who are you like, “Oh my gosh, I have to have this. This has to be published,” and who do you see or what are the kinds of things that you see that you’re like, “Ehh”.

[0:21:19.6] LG: There's a lot of bad. There's a lot of, "Ehh," but the problem with the "Ehh" is that a lot of things that are perpetuated by Pinterest, and that's a whole other conversation, just because brides don't know that they can think outside of the box. Especially if they don't have a designer, but yeah, I feel like...

[0:21:37.6] CS: But in certain places it's two years behind, right? Like, the wedding blog to the cutting edge, where we have styled shoots and stuff, and it gets filtered into the brides and real weddings, and then it get featured and then it's on Pinterest. So yeah, I think you're dead on with that assessment of Pinterest.

[0:21:55.6] LG: Well not only that but their algorithm pulls forward the things that have the most pins, which has been on Pinterest for years, for six years. So it was great at the beginning, but now it is not the best tool for brides to find new inspiration, because they're seeing stuff from years ago. So it's kind of sad. The interesting thing is that there was just a, I think on Rising Tide Society, a conversation thread that I saw about somebody was asking for a recommendation on where to submit something.

She's actually one of my friends, so that's why I saw, because I only have this app to notify me when my friends posts in there. A lot of people were commenting saying that, "Oh, well if you're not an advertiser somewhere, then you're probably not going to get chosen by them," and I thought that that was very interesting, because I myself do give priority to my V-list members, in regards to when I review their submissions, I review their submissions first, and when I publish them.

So I will actually — this might be bad, but I'm a pretty loyal person, I actually will move a non-advertiser, their publication date, further out in my calendar to make space for a V-list member to be published earlier. Sooner rather than later.

[0:23:18.9] RP: I think you're giving them exclusivity. I think that's a great thing, right? And access to your calendar is a really important thing, and ultimately, it's for the benefit of your reader so...

[0:23:29.4] CS: Yeah, you are not taking the other ones out, like, really not publishing. Yeah, I get it.

[0:23:33.4] LG: Right and to me, it's something that, they're paying me, they're supporting me, so I need to do all that I can to support them. In terms of what I look for and what makes me usually know immediately that I am going to approve something, is if there's something unique about a wedding. Yeah, if there's not burlap.

[0:23:57.1] CS: Yeah, because I almost say "yeah," but no, I'm totally kidding. Hopefully, that's gone away.

[0:24:02.8] LG: I mean burlap fits when it's a rustic country farm wedding, then okay, that's great, but yeah. Basically, if something has not been perpetuated through Pinterest and you have seen it a million times, then that's going to catch my eye.

[0:24:17.1] CS: What are some examples that you can talk about?

[0:24:21.4] LG: I love escort card displays. Let's say you have a wall with escort cards hanging on there or something, done in some unique way, those always catch my eye, because they're one of the really great ways to infuse personality and style into a wedding day. I love table numbers that aren't just like a piece of paper on a nasty hotel stanchion, metal stanchion thing. Details, obviously, so that's Every Last Detail that catches my eye. I also love really great color palettes. I love color, like Reina, so I love her office set up, it's so pretty. I'm still working on mine. I have a little bit of color.

[0:25:02.4] RP: I love your painting there.

[0:25:03.3] LG: Yeah, it says something. I don't know what it says but it says something on it. But yeah, I love color. I love unique color palettes, I love glitter and sequins, which I used to not, which is weird, but now I do. Patterns, usage of patterns in weddings always gets me. So basically, anything that has some kind of unique design element, pretty much. So that's why wedding planners and designers are so important when it comes to weddings. That's why I love

them, and recommend them all the time, even though they're not always on the top of people's lists

That's basically it, because a lot of blogs, they feature very specific styles of photography, and early on, because I am working with brides, and because of seeing that they like different things, and everybody has a different style that they gravitate towards, I decided that I was not going to only feature a specific style of anything.

So my only requirements are that the photography is good, that there were enough vendors that worked the wedding for it to be a wedding that is not DIY, and that it has some kind of unique design elements to it. The thing about publishing weddings and inspiration sheets is that brides and grooms are coming to blogs to find inspiration. So it has to be somewhat inspirational and unique for them, so then they'll continue to come back and actually get something out of it.

Another thing, though, regarding submissions, because I mention something about my v-list members, and giving them priority, and things like that, and I don't know, this might be bad to say. I haven't written anything about it yet, but submissions had become the freebie in the wedding industry, and getting features. It's become the freebie, and something that I am actually starting to take notice of is how many times somebody has been featured with me.

Whether they are submitting too much and taking advantage of it, and if they are not an advertiser, then I may not accept their submission if they've already been featured with me for four times last year, or four times this year, or whatever. Just because submissions, and reviewing submissions, and cropping publications, and writing the blog post for publications, it takes a long time. It's become very evident to me that it's not super fruitful in regards to, quite frankly, making money. So that's something that this year I am trying to take a step back and really look at it. So...

[0:27:59.0] CS: Yeah, I mean at the essence of it, I think there is something wrong, and I'm sure there's some people listening to this and they're like, "Oh, I worked hard for that styled shoot," or whatever, but at the same time this is your business and this is how you make a living, and now how you're about to support a baby, and so I applaud you for just taking a look at your bottom

line and drawing the line. Again, I think that helps foster that authentic loyal spirit that you do have.

So talking about these submissions and how hard it is, and now you are bringing on team members to help you manage, that's a cost. Now it's time plus money. Is there anything that people could do when they submit, when they have a submission is there something that you could do to make it super easy for a team like yours to process?

[0:28:45.7] LG: Absolutely, there's some submissions that I get and I'm like, "Done, done, and done," and I can approve them and schedule them within two seconds, and there's some that I have to track things down and ask for more things. So every wedding blog out there is going to have a submissions page, and they're most likely going to have directions of what they need and what they want. So first and foremost, I would recommend to follow directions.

Secondly, part of following those instructions will be providing all of the information needed. For instance, on my website I use a form where people can go and they can submit all the information that I need, but sometimes people don't put everything in, because I haven't made all the fields required. Instagram handles are amazing, and it can literally, having to look up 20 vendors Instagram handles on a daily basis is so frustrating.

Sometimes I just feel like I spent all day scheduling Instagram posts and working on Instagram posts for promoting my post for that day. So providing that information, first and foremost, is wonderful. If somebody is using Two Bright Lights, they don't have a place for that information. So my recommendation would be to add it into the description, just add a block of all of the Instagram handles. That will get you 10 points for using that.

[0:30:09.6] RP: Big in points. Well, can I pause you for a second, because I think that this is a really good point about pitching anything in general, right? Is that then you want to be considered for something, you have to make the job of the consider-er much easier, and if you do, you get mega points. Because if you're submitting one, just pretend that they're getting a hundred more of those, and what's going to put you at the top of the pile is if you make their lives easier, if it's a super easy yes for them, right?

And so I think even if you're submitting a wedding, or if you're trying to guest post for something, or whatever other content you are trying to get your work featured on, I think it's so important to make Lauren's life easier.

[0:30:51.1] CS: I know, and I have to echo that, Reina. It's like, if I can just — because Reina has a team, I have a team, Lauren you have a team, if there's something that I get an email and it's a great little email, I can just forward it to the right person on my team and they can take it from there, that is perfect. You will see it show up on my Instagram, you will have your picture on there, you'll have everything. Don't everybody go spam me now, but for real, that will happen. We will make that happen for you because it was so easy.

[0:31:18.5] RP: Just do the work for us, basically.

[0:31:20.6] LG: Right, exactly.

[0:31:21.8] CS: I've got pay an assistant, \$20-\$30 an hour to go track everything down, and now I've spent money promoting you. So that is not going to happen. So, yeah.

[0:31:29.7] LG: Exactly.

[0:31:30.2] CS: I'm just so glad that you said that about pitching in general. So continuing pitching to these blogs, is it a good idea to just plaster your stuff everywhere, or are you exclusive? What are some things that people, like how could they maybe be strategic about approaching blogs? Or even if you are not a wedding planner or a photographer, if you're pitching anywhere, Lauren, what are some tips that you might have to be strategic about these pitches?

[0:31:56.3] LG: I would recommend to look at a blog's audience. Look at the other things that they're publishing, and that should give you a good picture of okay, who are they speaking to? If it's weddings, or if it's a health and food blog, or whatever, and then also, half the time people will have the ability for you to inquire for a media kit, and then those media kits will then have additional information regarding their audience within that media kit.

That's always what I recommend, because I see people submitting to places where there's certain blogs that they promote budget DIY weddings, and that's great, because they're usually the more highly trafficked blogs, because 75% of weddings out there do have a budget of less than \$25,000, but seeing people who are doing high-end weddings submit their work to those blogs, it breaks my heart and drives me crazy because I'm like, "What?"

Somebody might find you, because they do have a lot more traffic, but wanting to really reach brides and grooms who are planning a wedding, when they know that they are going to be using professionals, and if you are that professional you want them to hire, then I would always recommend to look at where those blogs are, and who those blogs are, and submit to them first before submitting to the mass quantities.

I live in Florida, so bear with me, but I always say it's like let's say, you go grouper fishing. Because there's special outings to go grouper fishing, but yet instead of using a fishing pole, you throw a net into the water and hope to catch a grouper. That's my little analogy, but everybody knows in Florida that to catch a grouper, you're supposed to use a fishing pole on a certain time of day. I don't know, I've never been on one, but that's kind of what it's like though.

You can't just have all of the things and then expect for one of them to work, and it's the same with where you're spending your marketing dollars as well, because there's a lot of places out there who do cater to those 75% of brides and grooms who are planning a budget wedding. But if that's you, and you're just starting out, that's great. Advertise with them, and that's what I've seen along the years is a lot of people start there, and they start with the masses, and then after a couple of years, once they've refined their craft and once they have specified their ideal audiences, then they might go and start getting away from the masses and start really honing in on where their ideal client is.

[0:34:42.0] CS: Yeah, I just want to interject a quick little story that reminds me, when I left the yoga world, when I thought I was going to be a yoga teacher. Long story, if you haven't listened to it, go back to another podcast, but I had previously signed up to pitch, to talk about blogging to yoga teachers on this really big platform, and what I thought was going to be a dream scenario where I get a thousand emails on my newsletter list actually happened.

But it was such a nightmare, because all of these people, here I am talking about blogging for yoga teachers, because I had a health and yoga blog two years ago when I pitched this idea to them, and now, here I am back to what I was doing before. Legal work, working with creatives, that kind of thing and they're signing up for that email list, which is so misdirected and wrong for that audience, and all I'm getting is questions about blogging, and that's time out of my day that I have to answer that and everything, and people are unsubscribing like crazy.

It was such a nightmare scenario, so I love that your tip is to be really strategic in finding that right audience and doing some research ahead of time, and then, if you don't get published the first time, what should they do? I know you said you're starting to notice people are submitting all the time for the sake of submitting. What if they really, really want to get published? They love your blog, and they just haven't been able to get something through yet?

[0:36:05.9] LG: Oh man, that's a question. Well I am...

[0:36:09.7] CS: Like, is it a good thing to reach out personally, or is it a good thing to follow them on social media, or what would be something where you take notice of a vendor? Maybe they're not eligible, or they can't afford the V-list yet, but they would really like to be featured on your blog. What would be like, "Oh yeah, this would be a great fit" at that point?

[0:36:30.0] LG: I've had a couple of people reach out to me before and just be like, "Hey, what are you looking for? What do you want?" Because sometimes I do have something in my head that I wish I could feature, and I just haven't gotten it yet. So that's always a great thing to just reach out. It might take me a couple of weeks to respond, but even on Instagram, interacting on Instagram and commenting on my stories or something, things like that are going to put your name in the forefront of my mind and establish that relationship, because I'm a very loyal person.

I really like establishing relationships, so if I met somebody in person, or if I have connected with them over Instagram or something like that, then I'm way more apt to remember your name when I'm going through submissions. In terms of getting published anywhere, I would recommend doing the same thing, because all editors love connecting with vendors, for the

most part. Maybe some might not, but all my friends love it, and even when you do send in a submission, don't make it general. Have a certain message for each editor.

Don't ever, ever mass submit. Always submit one thing at a time, because ideally, when you're submitting, you want to start with the higher and exclusive blogs first, and then if it doesn't get accepted by any of those, then you can go ahead and you can submit to non-exclusive blogs, which means that they don't have any kind of period of exclusivity regarding when you can be featured on other blogs. So it's a process, but yeah, that's what I would recommend and doing that.

[0:38:16.4] CS: Yeah.

[0:38:16.7] RP: That's like, Pitching 101, so thank you for walking us through that.

[0:38:19.8] LG: Yeah.

[0:38:20.7] CS: And just to wrap things up, if you could go back and look at yourself in 2009 when you just started Every Last Detail, what are some things that you maybe would have done differently to build that creative blogging empire that you've built today? What's one thing that you would have done differently, or you wish someone had told you that would have set your trajectory in a much faster or a different path that you're really excited about?

[0:38:48.1] LG: I would have set up systems earlier, because at first, when I started blogging, it was still a pretty new concept. So there weren't a lot of things out there about how to make a full-time income blogging, and not to mention that wedding is so different than any other blog out there. So anything that was out there, I really couldn't take hold of and use. But yeah, I would have started with systems way earlier, because it literally took me until probably 2014 to be able to add people to my team and take things off of my plate so I wasn't working until 2:00 in the morning every night. I totally would have done that.

So I think that is a really good thing for any business owner. If you're starting out, figure out what works, and then implement systems for that, because when you are in a bind and you need help, it's a lot easier for you to ask for help and figure out how to get help instead of being like

me and being like, “Oh I need help, let me hire somebody,” and now I have to go back and figure out how to teach them how to do all of these things, so that’s what I would recommend.

[0:40:00.0] RP: Yeah, for sure.

[0:40:00.9] CS: Where can people find you on Instagram, the web?

[0:40:03.6] LG: My website is theeverylastdetail.com, or theeld.com. My Instagram is Every Last Detail Blog, and I also have a special Instagram account for wedding professionals called ELD for Pros. So on there, I post different tips and advice for wedding professionals, sometimes a little ranty and educate-y regarding different topics.

[0:40:31.5] RP: Honest truths, right?

[0:40:33.0] LG: Yes, lots of truths there. I try not to upset anybody, but it’s got to get out there.

[0:40:40.1] CS: Thank you so much Lauren. It’s been great talking to you about blogging, and just the transformation that you have seen in yourself and the wedding industry. Everybody that’s listening out there, I hope you go do one thing today that build your creative empire.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[00:40:54.0] ANNOUNCER: Are you ready to build your own empire? For more information, show notes, downloads, and tips on how to do it, head to www.creativeempire.co, where you can find out more about this week’s episode and the two lovely ladies behind it all, encouraging you to build your own creative empire.

If you enjoyed this week’s show, it would mean so much to Reina and Christina if you could take two minutes to go to iTunes and leave a review. It’s a little thing that makes a big difference for the show.

[END]