

9 Best Practices for Managing a Multi-Site Web Publishing Business

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Operating a web publishing business with a portfolio that has over 20 websites is quite an endeavor. I know because I've been doing that for the past few years.

Fortunately, not all of the sites in our portfolio are of equal weight. For all practical purposes, we focus our efforts on six sites: our revenue locomotives and sites where we see significant potential for growth.

But even managing only six sites on a daily basis can feel like a juggling act. In fact, many successful publishers focus on a single site for years and shudder at having to deal with as many as two sites.

Each of our sites is different, covering specific niches and catering to varied audiences. The challenge lies with ensuring each site receives unique attention while keeping operational efficiency across our company.

Here are nine battle-tested best practices that help me give each website the attention it deserves.

Related: [How to Write Website Content That Sells](#)

1. Establish brand guidelines

We have branding guidelines that help our content creators use the same language and express the same values across entire

sites.

For example, our cat-focused site's brand guidelines focus on promoting the core values of responsible pet ownership. They guide our content creators towards encouraging practices such as spaying and neutering while condemning declawing.

This unified messaging elevates the site's credibility and simplifies the job for our content teams.

2. Centralize key tasks

In many ways, our team operates a web content assembly line. And just like with any assembly line, specialization increases efficiency. That's why we have dedicated teams handling specialized tasks.

For example, we have a media team solely focused on image optimization across all our websites. These media specialists know how to choose the right stock photos, optimize and edit them, and add them to our articles. This kind of streamlining speeds up workflow and maintains quality across different websites.

3. Leverage shared databases and online tools

The tech stack you use can make or break your operational efficiency. A centralized task management platform or shared databases like Google Suite are vital when the same people collaborate in managing multiple websites.

For example, our setup employs Google Classroom to create training routines that benefit teams working across different websites. Information is stored in a company-wide Google Drive, where team roles determine access.

4. Automate where possible

We make ample use of platforms like ClickUp to automate task routing between our various teams. Each article goes through a uniform workflow, reflected in automated changes in status, assignees and dates.

Each one of the sites has its own space on Clickup, where we utilize the same automation to create a unified streamlined workflow for all our content production operations.

Related: [3 Things to Consider When Automating Your Workflows](#)

5. Foster open communication

In a remote work setting such as ours, open lines of communication are essential. We have weekly Zoom check-ins and Google Chat channels dedicated to different project streams, ensuring everyone stays in the loop.

These channels of communication allow our team members to continuously learn from one another. When something works – or doesn't work – for a specific site, the information flows around so it can be implemented on a different site if applicable.

6. Create detailed strategies

We aim to create unique strategy playbooks for each site, focusing on their specific audience and content themes.

Strategies can range from aggressive SEO tactics for our tech blogs to user engagement for our lifestyle websites. A visual niche could be a good candidate for Pinterest promotion, whereas one with community aspects could work better with shareable content pushed across multiple social media platforms.

Tailoring the strategy to the site is key when managing a large portfolio. Not doing so leads not just to mediocrity but sometimes to utter failure.

7. Have dedicated site operators

To make sure each site gets individual attention, we've organized our operations into "pods." Each pod manages a cluster of websites.

The sites in each cluster aren't necessarily thematically related. The idea is to balance the workload, allowing each pod manager to effectively act as a site operator for one or more of our sites. Site operators can be like having mini-CEOs focused on micro-goals, which roll up into our macro-objectives.

8. Stay organized

With so many moving parts, being organized isn't just a virtue; it's a necessity.

We use task management software where each site has the same structural format, making it easier for team members to switch between projects without missing a beat.

The key here is not to drop the ball on anything important across all of the sites.

Related: [This Highly Rated App Could Help Business Owners Stay Organized](#)

9. Remain flexible

In the ever-evolving digital landscape, flexibility is key. We don't just adapt to new technologies; we embrace them. From AI-generated content to emerging social media platforms, our agility allows us to stay ahead of the curve.

This is important even when managing a single website. It becomes dizzyingly crucial when juggling multiple ones.

Related: 3 Principles for Scaling Content With AI Without Sacrificing Quality

The challenges are always there

Running a multi-site web publishing business comes with its own set of challenges. Establishing these best practices and being nimble in your approach can help you meet some of these challenges, mitigate risks and ultimately benefit from the rewards.

The digital landscape evolves rapidly, and new tools that enhance efficiency are on the horizon. I'm eager to test management AI solutions and other emerging technologies across our multi-site operations when viable options become available.

By staying nimble and keeping an eye on the next waves in web publishing, we can continue to optimize our processes. While the platforms may change, the best practices of organization, automation and communication will remain fundamental to our success.

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