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How to Properly Manage Multiple WordPress Sites

Table of contents

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Introduction

Managing multiple WordPress sites is something I've done for around 10 years, from looking after the sites of small local businesses to large national corporations.

I've tried using different software to help me, as well as different team structures. Full time employees and freelancers, both overseas and in-person. I've tried different pricing models and service mixes.

And now, in my role as Founder at Glow, I've spoken with hundreds of WordPress developers and agencies across the world about how they manage their clients' WordPress websites and the challenges they face in doing so.

I created Glow because I want to help more WordPress developers and agencies to grow their businesses by delivering the best possible ongoing maintenance service to their clients.

In this article I'll explain how you should be doing WordPress maintenance.

The problem

Just as I've spoken with lots of developers and agencies, I've also spoken with lots of clients – those on the receiving end of WordPress support and maintenance.

The fact is, there are too many clients out there receiving a poor service from their developer or agency and this shouldn't (and doesn't need to) be the case.

Put yourself in the shoes of the client for a moment.

They've likely invested a few thousand (sometimes more) dollars into their website already.

It's a huge part of how their business is represented online. It generates regular leads.

They've hired you to look after it, to make sure that they can continue to grow their business from it.

But if the client is receiving a poor maintenance and support service, their ability to grow is being hindered.

The thing is, **WordPress maintenance can be a great little earner**.

Recurring revenue being generated from comparatively low human time.

However, too many developers managing multiple WordPress sites simply sit back with the recurring income.

What they should be doing is diligently supporting their clients and constantly convincing them of why the ongoing investment is a worthwhile one.

I've heard a number of excuses from developers and agencies over the years:

- It takes too much time
- It's not a priority for us
- Clients are constantly asking for help

All of this leads to clients questioning what they're paying for

When they start doing this, you haven't got long to convince them that it's a worthwhile investment, before they start looking elsewhere.

WordPress maintenance should be a really profitable part of your business that strengthens your relationship with clients.

Yes I understand (unless you're a specialist WordPress maintenance company) that it isn't always going to be top priority.

But there are lots of ways you can improve the way you're providing the service to ensure that your clients get the care and attention they deserve and you and your team are efficient and profitable at the same time.

Ongoing website support is so important to clients.

Do it really well and you'll retain them for longer.

Do it poorly and they'll leave.

Simple as that.

There's tonnes of other developers and agencies out there.

I could throw a tennis ball and hit 10 of them from the desk I'm sitting at writing this article.

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Ok, now that we know what the problem is, let's look at a few ways to help you deliver WordPress maintenance better.

Importance of communication

Quite simply, nothing is more important than the quality of your communication when you're managing multiple WordPress sites.

Nothing.

You have to consistently provide an outstanding level of communication with your clients.

Their website is too important to their business for you to respond 6 days later or fix something 3 weeks later that should've taken 2 hours.

The thing is, the vast majority of clients don't understand the technical aspects of website maintenance.

It's unlikely that they even know what a plugin is.

They certainly won't be sat at their desk on a Tuesday afternoon wondering if you've updated the Yoast SEO plugin on their website.

What they all recognise however, is the difference between good communication and bad communication.

If you take days to respond to their queries and/ or show a lack of empathy for their position, they won't be a client for long.

Reply quickly and with emptathy

On the flipside, if you always reply really quickly, show care and understanding for their position, then they will have no reason to leave.

As you know, there are lots of things that go into managing multiple WordPress sites.

However, the part that most clients understand best, is the bit where they ask you for assistance.

This might be them asking you to add a new page.

It could be when something has broken and they're asking you to fix it.

Or they may be asking you for some advice.

Whatever it is, they will judge you on your ability to handle these requests far more than whether you're updating their plugins or keeping backups.

And that's because they don't understand the technical side.

And why should they?

They're accountants or construction companies or estate agents.

They're not web developers.

Read that again.

They are not web developers.

So when they contact you for assistance with something that seems extremely simple to you, please, please have empathy.

Don't insult them or tell them they should know how to do it themselves (believe me, I've seen messages from developers to clients saying this).

So, make sure your communication is outstanding.

There are lots of ways that you can improve your communication with clients

Top of the list – always show empathy.

Always put yourself in their position, then respond calmly and accordingly, no matter how simple or even frustrating their request might be.

Next, move away from email.

Start using a dedicated support ticket system. It'll help you to handle multiple support queries far better than email.

There's loads of decent ones out there –
Freshdesk, **Zendesk** to name a couple.

Even better, get a **modern WordPress management app like Glow** that prioritises client communication and has a support ticket system built in.

Constantly prove value

I can't stress how important this is.

You must constantly prove the value of your WordPress maintenance service in order for clients to continue investing in it.

As I mentioned earlier, many clients will only 'see' or understand the part of the service where they ask you for some help with something.

They won't see everything else: backups, uptime monitoring, **security (WordPress core, plugins, themes) updates**, PHP monitoring, malware removal, speed optimisation, email delivery.

They won't see it because they don't understand it.

So, if they don't contact you very often for assistance with something, it's even more vital that in between times, you're constantly proving the value of the service.

It's your job to educate them on the importance of all these things, constantly.

You can do this by:

- Sending regular emails (these can be automated) with data points showing how you're looking after their site
- [Sending regular reports](#) (these can be automated) written in plain English, not developer speak

- Giving them **access to a dashboard** where they can view data that they'd see in the above emails and reports whenever they want
- Send them tips on how their site can be improved

Note in the above list how I've mentioned the word automation quite a bit.

This is really important in helping you run an outstanding and profitable service.

Automation should be one of your best pals.

All of those things above will hammer home the value of the service to your clients but you must use automation.

There are hundreds of pieces of software now that help you with this. **Zapier**, for one.

However, if you're managing multiple WordPress sites, the management software you use should have automation built in, without you needing external services.

Be as efficient as possible

The final point is your ability to be efficient in the delivery of the service.

Why is this important?

Firstly, the more efficient you are, the more profitable you'll be. Specialist WordPress maintenance companies aside, this service is never top of the list.

Larger web development companies and digital agencies prioritise higher fee paying activities like website projects and digital marketing (SEO, social, content marketing etc) retainers.

Whichever type of company you are, profitability is obviously super important.

And this is why you've got to pay attention to how efficient you and your team are.

Ask yourself some of these questions:

- Are you charging the right amount?
- Have you **structured your maintenance plans efficiently**? Is your service mix right?
- Are your highest paid employees carrying out menial tasks?
- Could you **outsource some of the work overseas**?
- Are you **tracking the time spent** on client account activity?
- Can you quickly download reports and data on a client by client basis to assess profitability?
- Are you **still using things like email** to provide support to clients?

Thing is, if you're inefficient, your clients will notice. You'll miss deadlines you committed to for sending them reports.

You'll be late responding to their enquiries. You won't have important data at the click of a button to assess how this service is affecting your business.

Spend time honestly assessing the efficiency of your service and make changes accordingly to ensure your clients are receiving the best possible service and you are profitable in your delivery.

For now at least, most support requests from clients will need to be handled by a human from your team.

But for almost everything else, you should be using software to automate the process and **drive up your profitability**.

Conclusion

In conclusion, managing multiple WordPress sites is an awesome way to increase recurring revenue in your business.

And who doesn't love more recurring revenue?

However, recurring revenue only works when your clients are convinced by the ongoing investment that they're getting something worthwhile in return.

You can't just take their standing order each month and get in touch once a quarter.

When it's done really well, as you grow, WordPress maintenance revenue will easily start covering the basic running costs of your business.

But it's got to be done well.

As a recap, here are those 3 things I mentioned to help you improve your service:

- **Communication** – make this unbelievably good

- **Value** – constantly prove the value of the service to your clients

- **Efficiency** – make you and your team an absolute delivery machine

And a final word about software.

Stop using outdated WordPress management tools that do nothing to hold up the image of your brand.

Focus on the modern tools that strengthen your business and allow you to deliver the most amazing service with as little human time required as possible.

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THANK YOU

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