myweeklymarketing.

Episode 26

Your Marketing Questions: Best Website, List-Building Funnel, & Strategy

Janice Hostager: 0:04
I'm Janice Hostager. After three decades in the marketing business and many years of being an entrepreneur, I've learned a thing or two about marketing. Join me as we talk about marketing, small business and life in between. Welcome to my weekly marketing.

0:28
Hello and welcome to another episode of my weekly marketing. Many years ago, when I was in college, I was majoring in both art and communications. But, like a lot of young college students, I didn't know exactly what I wanted to do with my life. And then I took an advertising class and I just knew I was in the right place. Something about the intersection of design and writing and psychology and statistics all together told me that I had found the perfect profession.

And it took a few years before I was able to work my way into the field and as an art director. But I really did love it, and I still do. But it took me a long time to learn the nuances and complexity of marketing, and that was just at the beginning of the internet age in the late 80s and early 90s. Since then, marketing has changed so much and continues to change really daily.

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So when you're starting a business, it's no wonder that marketing is something that people get hung up on. I do sometimes too, and I've been doing this for more than 30 years. So this week I want to do my second installment of a Q&A episode. So here we go.

1:37
Saba asked. If I'm getting ready to relaunch my freelance writing business after a year or so away at a full-time gig, I'll be building a new website from scratch. In the past I've used Wix and recently Squarespace, but I'm wondering if there are any other newer or more niche tools that might be better suited to my needs, which can be boiled down to having a place that prospective

clients can go and make a decision as to whether or not to hire or work with me on a potential product. Thanks in advance.

2:03
Well, saba, I am so glad you asked this. I used to have a design agency, so I designed a lot of websites over the years and, as a marketing consultant, my recommendation would be the same as it was back then. Yes, there are better platforms. I always recommend WordPress for small to mid-sized businesses, and here's why.

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First of all, it's open source and it's free. That means it can be customized to fit your particular needs that you have as a growing business. So if you have special content in mind, like if you want to do an online course or you just want to do something like sell t-shirts, you can customize WordPress for that purpose.

2:40
Second, wordpress has a huge ecosystem of plugins. Plugins are add-ons that expand its functionality. Some are paid, but many are free. For example, there's a plugin that'll help you do an automatic backup or will check your pages for SEO compatibility, and there are plugins for turning your site into an e-commerce site. If you want to sell t-shirts or coffee mugs or pre-written templates. Those and many plugins can be just plugged into your site.

3:13
Third, you can find literally thousands of themes that will change the look and feel of your site. Some are free and come with a platform and others are paid. You can also have it custom designed or add a plugin like Elementor, which is what I use to design your site the way you want it to look. And if you get tired of the look of your site, you can just change the theme rather than changing completely or redoing your site completely from scratch.

3:39
Then WordPress also has user-friendly content management. You may have heard of a content management system, also called the CMS. The term was developed in the early days of the internet, when websites were super complex, but businesses needed to change their own content without going back to the coder or the original developer. So that's where WordPress started to shine. It's super easy to use and you don't even have to see the code unless you really want to. But if you're code savvy and you want to make some tweaks on the back end, you can access it. That's something you could never do with Wix or Squarespace.

4:10
Reason number five Google likes WordPress. 43% of all websites on the internet are WordPress. That's more than 800 million websites. They are SEO friendly, which means that they're designed to help you boost your page ranking, because you're always designing a website first for your visitors, but also for the search engines. You need to keep SEO top of mind when you're putting your website together.

4:38
Reason number six it's scalable. You can build an infinite number of pages on it for no additional charge. Those other companies will charge you for additional pages.

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Reason number seven WordPress will probably also be cheaper. I say probably because you do have to pay for hosting and your domain name, but there is no additional charges unless you have paid plugins. Those are yearly charges. The hosting charges are yearly and they cost less than a year of Squarespace for sure. I think I pay about $60 to $80 a year to host a website.

5:09
And reason number eight there are loads of online support. So WordPress has a huge following, huge community out there, and most questions are quickly answered through just a Google search.

5:21
Number nine security. While no platform is completely immune to security threats, wordpress has a strong security team and a community that regularly releases updates and patches to address any security issues they find. For a website like yours, wordpress will be just fine. There are certain websites out there, like WhiteHouse.gov, that require a different platform because they are super Uber secure, but for businesses, wordpress is definitely secure enough.

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And number 10, you own your site. If places like Squarespace or Wix ever went down, you would lose everything.

There's a saying in marketing that says never build on rented land, and that is absolutely what you're doing when you have a Wix or a Squarespace site. Keep in mind that when you're doing WordPress, there are actually two platforms WordPress.com and WordPress.org. Wordpress.org is the one I'm referring to. Wordpress.com is available and I think it's free. It's easy to use, but it's basically a blogging site. If you just need a simple blog to put out there. It has limitations, I think two. Unless you pay for it, you can't monetize your blog or website, install plugins or use themes unless you have one on your own platform. Wordpress.org is free software, but you have full control and handle the maintenance.

If you go to a hosting site and you pay to have a website hosted. It will ask you if you want to just upload WordPress to it and kind of access it that way, rather than trying to do a Google search for WordPress and download it on your own. Just access it through your web post.

7:05
Okay, question number two. This one's from Jeff. Me and my business partner have launched a cybersecurity beta product and our marketing guy insists on collecting emails from the web and doing email marketing. However, we're not sure that will work because we can disturb our

potential customers. They may not want to learn about our product and our offer. Second, none of us read marketing emails. Last but not least, it can even be illegal in some countries. We are not sure whether all countries sending marketing emails are legal. What do you think about marketing emails? Do you have an email marketing campaign? Do you read email marketing? More importantly, would you want to know an offer from a startup related to your services?

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Okay, Jeff, there's a lot here, so let's unpack it. First of all, I'm not sure what you mean by collecting emails from the web. I'm assuming that if he's a marketing professional, then he's talking about obtaining them with a lead magnet or a freebie through a landing page and then an email form and getting those names and emails in a legitimate way. If he is considering buying a list or finding one online, that indeed is a bad idea, since it's the definition of spam. Although it's not technically illegal in the US to buy a list and email people, it can get you blacklisted by your email service provider. There's a law in the US called the Can Spam Act, and if you Google that, you can read the details of it. Generally, most email service providers, such as MailChimp's or ConvertKit or many others, will walk you through setting up the account so you don't violate anything in that act. It's important for them to do that because spam gets them in trouble too.

8:44
In other countries you're right there are additional privacy elements that you need to consider, like in Europe. In the EU there's something called GDPR, which has some stricter laws about who you can email and the steps you need to go through to obtain and keep those email addresses on file. In Canada and even in California, there are additional laws too. So, assuming he's talking about getting marketing emails in a legitimate way, no, you will not be disturbing your recipients if you obtain the addresses through a lead magnet, if your lead magnet is relevant to the interests of the subscriber and they're getting what they want to learn more about and your product is something of value to them, then they're going to want to hear from you. So if you include some information that would be useful to them in your emails, people are going to look forward to receiving them Legitimately. There are emails I can't wait to get each week. If all you do is try and sell to them over and over again, you're right, they're going to unsubscribe. But if you're offering value, they will want to receive them. Yes, you want to sell to them too, but they'll understand that if you're offering a product and they want to buy it right? So people understand that businesses need to sell things to make money.

People like to buy and need to buy things that solve their problems. So I would email them something of value each week, say a cybersecurity alert or something that would be timely for them and relevant to them, to keep your business top of mind for your customer. If it's just one week, it's not going to bother them, or one a week, rather, it's not going to bother them. Your recipients are warm leads. If they've already indicated through their download action that they're interested in your product and if your free download is relevant to the product that you're selling, it'll all be fine. So what you want to do to offer them to begin with is a lead magnet For a cybersecurity company. It could be a free security scan or a security checklist. Free offers

convert 10 times better than regular offers, so you do want to make sure that it has actual value to your future customer.

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I had a client a few years ago who offered a free iPad as a way to build their email list and she got tons of subscribers. The only problem was that her service had nothing to do with technology or iPad, so she just ended up with a lot of unsubscribers when she started following up with them with her emails, because their product wasn't relevant to her subscribers. So just make sure that what you're offering them is going to be attractive to that potential customer. Then, after you've decided on your freebie, I just want you to create an optimized landing page, or in other words, a dedicated landing page that's just focused on your freebie, that you can run some ads to. Don't just send it to your website homepage. They'll get lost and they won't find the right page. So when you do an ad, you could probably do Facebook ads, but you might wanna try ads from LinkedIn, since your customers are probably B2B customers. Right?

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Cybersecurity isn't something that you think about until someone reminds you of it or until you get hacked. Typically, if it's a problem-based product, then I recommend going to Google ads, since that's where people go when they have a problem. They go to Google to find the solution. Right, and you can do those too. They tend to be a little more expensive and a little more complicated to run than, say, a Facebook or social media or LinkedIn ad. So social media is a place where you can remind them about cybersecurity before they have a problem, so I'd probably start there with your freebie.

So, after they click on your ad, I want you to send them to your landing page that contains the benefits of getting your free thing and maybe a compelling photo and then a form connected to your email service provider, and then, when they click to subscribe, rather than sending them to a thank you page, send them to another page first, where they can get a product at an incredibly low price for a one-time offer. I would put a countdown timer on it so that they would know that it's only available for a certain number of hours, let's say 24 hours. So then you have the opportunity to get some of that revenue that you put into your ads to begin with. So if you're paying $5 a click for your ads, if you're offering a one-time security assessment for a low one-time price, you're getting some of that revenue back right away. I have to give Russell Brunson credit for this idea. If your goal is to get $1 back for every dollar that you put into your ad spend, then you're actually advertising for free, right, and you can even follow up with this offer with an email. But the one-time offer is only available for 24 hours. Does that make sense? Otherwise, businesses spend money just to build their list before they make any money on sales and they go into the red with their return on ad spend. Hope that makes sense. Of course, if you make money on your one-time offer, then that's a good thing too.

10:33

Okay, my next question. This is from Delilah. She asks what's the difference between a marketing strategy and marketing tactics? I hear you and other people refer to both of them.

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That is an awesome question. Strategy is the roadmap, or what I call the trail to the sale. Tactics are the individual parts of that strategy. Strategies can include a lot of different tactics within it. For example, part of your strategy might include something like Instagram, email marketing, among other things. Think of your strategy as the frame of a building and your tactics as the bricks. If you don't have the frame planned out ahead of time, you'll spend a lot of time laying bricks for nothing. What I see a lot of small business owners doing and I mean a ton of small business owners doing this is focusing on the tactics before they plan out a strategy.

So they'll start their business and decide they're gonna get a website and jump on the social media marketing. Your website and social media are tactics, same with email marketing, advertising or anything else you're doing to drive business. Marketing strategy, however, is determined by your sales and other goals. Those goals are related to your product, your audience, the market and many other factors. Those factors go into creating a full marketing plan. The problem with jumping into tactics without going into a plan is that you can get off course and start marketing to the wrong people or the wrong time and just finding yourself lost in what I call a marketing rabbit hole. You end up doing a lot of different things without seeing a lot of results. Social media is a good example of this. People can have like 10,000 social media followers, but if nobody's buying, they really don't have a business. It's because they didn't set up their strategy. It's kind of like driving somewhere without a destination in mind.

15:25
So on my website I have a free download that'll help you plan your marketing strategy. I call it the trail to the sale download and I'll put the link in the show notes.

15:33
So that's a wrap on this week's Q&A. I hope you enjoyed it. I hope it was helpful to you. I wanna invite you to send any questions to me that you have on your mind about marketing. You can send me an email with questions at myweeklymarketing.com and I'll try and get these Q&A episodes up on a regular basis.

Thank you so much for listening today. If you know of someone who has a business and a benefit from this episode, please forward it to them. I would also really really appreciate it if you would leave a review for me on the Apple Podcast platform or whatever platform that you choose to listen on. Thanks so much again. Take care Bye for now. I'll see you next time.