

59. Should You Hire a Marketing Agency? My Talk with Screws + Stiletto's Co-Founders

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. Do you need to hire a marketing agency? Many business owners think an agency is what will take care of their marketing and bring their business greater success, but our guests today have some words of caution you may want to hear before spending a lot of money using an agency. They believe that you may be able to handle your marketing in-house with the help of a fractional CMO or consultant, and I agree.

Janice Hostager: 0:54

On this episode I interviewed Courtney Hurley and Kelly Evans, who are sisters and co-founders of Screws and Stiletto's. They are marketing consultants who get many of their customers from the agency world and see the problems that can happen when businesses entrust their assets with an agency. We'll go wide in our conversation and talk about agile marketing, about defining your brand and the hidden benefits of social media. We also hit on a few myths that many entrepreneurs believe will be helping their marketing and a few mistakes many entrepreneurs make that may be hurting their marketing efforts. We had a lot of fun on this podcast episode, and I think you'll enjoy hearing our conversation too. Here's my interview with Courtney and Kelly.

So welcome, Courtney and Kelly. You are the founders of Screws and Stiletto's. First off, tell me how you get your name? It's very interesting.

Courtney Hurley: 1:48

It was a combined effort. We were in search of something that would demonstrate both kind of the back end our nitty gritty, foundational aspects of everything that we do marketing-wise, strategy-wise and really business-wise marketing-wise, strategy-wise and really business-wise. And then also something that was presented like the finessed,

flushed out, beautiful front-end version of the customer experience. And that's how we landed on Screws and Sledos.

Kelly Evans: 2:18

There is one saying that kind of always inspired me in this direction was that lips tick on a pig so you can make anything look good but it doesn't mean it works. It's still a pig. So if you don't have the back and the foundation the screws part of things, and you don't give as much value to that side, you just have lipstick on a pig and you aren't going to go anywhere with it.

Janice Hostager: 2:41

I love that and that kind of represents the two. That sounds bad, but the two of you. Could you bring different backgrounds to the business, right? So I want you to tell us a little bit more about that.

Courtney Hurley: 2:53

Sure, sure. So I'm Courtney and I started off in the digital agency realm. I went to school for marketing, went straight into marketing, have always been a marketer I really focused on throughout my career on SEO, paid ads and analytics. Those have really been my strong suits, as well as email marketing and social media. But my foundation, my like from the get go, was on consulting with SEO, paid ads and analytics. So that's really where I start and where I focus still today ads and analytics. So that's really where I start and where I focus still today. There's also some overlap when it comes to, like, email marketing or social media, where Kelly and I people have actually called us sorry, we're twins before they call it the twins. The twins. That's what we get all the time.

Kelly Evans: 3:38

We're not twins.

Janice Hostager: 3:39

Okay, I was going to ask.

Courtney Hurley: 3:42

Because we have worked so long together. I mean, the first time we ever worked together is when we were 14, and other than like a short stint of a few years, we literally worked together the entire time in between. Um, so it really comes down to we understand each other's realms so much that we're able to backfill each other's role at time. And people are like do you guys share a brain?

Kelly Evans: 4:02

I know you're opposite sides of the country, but this is so weird that you know what the other person is thinking and is going to say uh, and I'll go ahead and let Kelly jump in and give you a little bit background on what she does um, and just kind of tying into what Courtney was just saying, though I think one of the best things that we found in this research's little side in the sisterhood dynamics is, um, the ability to play devil's advocate and and disagree with each other without being offended or upset or like it's we can give. I always look for Courtney for constructive criticism on everything I do, and even though something I might be the person who does the a plus on it, I still want her way in, and there's other things that I'm the b plus person on it she's the a plus person, and I'll hand it over to her for the final way ending. So it's a great ability for checks and balances and a good dynamic, but in my background, to back up is right.

Kelly Evans: 4:54

In college, actually, I wanted to understand how to build websites in the whole world of the internet. I had this idea that I was going to be an editor-in-chief of a magazine or newspaper. But I had this idea. I was going to be an editor-in-chief of a magazine or newspaper, but I had a clue that that might have been a little dated in the way the world was going. So I went to a professor and he supported me in independently making up my own minor in web development and digital art and so I just learned that way and I went to a bunch of alumni and asked them basically if I could make them websites, and that's how I learned.

Kelly Evans: 5:29

So after college I went to TripAdvisor and I was started in marketing but they pulled me in the middle of going public and asked me to basically be the bridge of this new department called New Initiatives and really just strategically be the center, focal point of all the different moving pieces and help drive things forward. So not quite project management, but more like here's a new concept or a new project trip, revise or flight. So product management has to do this, email marketing has to do this, engineers, sales, all the components, but really being the strategic brain behind all. So that became the New Initiatives Department and I really developed that for a few years until I went off and built my own businesses and left and I've been an entrepreneur since I was, I guess, 25. But that's putting it in perspective. That's over two decades. No, no 10, one decade. Let me not age myself too much.

Kelly Evans: 6:21

But really the consulting and the strategic brain started back in college when I started doing it for alumni just to really learn with real content the data-driven part of it kind of okay.

Janice Hostager: 6:48

I love that. That's really kind of a nice separation, because trying to do it all which is what I do I mean I have help, but I mean just trying to make all those decisions just to have somebody, especially a sister, to bounce ideas off from, I think that would be so cool. I mean, I bounce ideas off of my sister, who's not at all involved in what I do, and it is nice because she will give me her honest feedback.

Kelly Evans: 7:09

And I'll be frank, we are two of nine kids and we don't have the same dynamic with all of our siblings.

Janice Hostager: 7:14

So we have a unique dynamic.

Kelly Evans: 7:16

That is cool. We're number six and seven, so we at least are in line.

Courtney Hurley: 7:21

Okay, I think another thing that the dynamic really helps with too and this is just in general is the daily decision fatigue that we all face, because we're all making decisions all day long. I mean, I've seen different studies that say anywhere from like 20,000 to like some absurd number of decisions that you make on daily basis, whether or not you're thinking about it. And when it comes to work, having that other path, that other brain to just be like should I go this direction or that direction? Instead of you spinning your wheel, they just give you a straight answer and you move forward and it's like it conserves a little bit of that brain energy that you need to then make the next valuable step. That'll move the needle.

Janice Hostager: 7:58

Yeah, I mean, that is so real for any entrepreneur, not just in marketing, for sure.

Kelly Evans: 8:13

Especially small businesses. Nobody quite respects the overwhelming exhaustion of being a small business owner than somebody who is, because people don't understand everything, from a tax filing you don't even know you're supposed to do to getting locks changed. When somebody leaves to the smallest, most minor things to actually growing your business, actually servicing your customers, all the front end things that people see, it really comes back to what small business is. There's just so much more behind the scenes and that's what we found when I started my businesses was, at some point I stopped doing what I really liked doing, which was more the strategic, the development, the consulting, the um, the agility, the growth side, because I was doing just the admin of, yeah, of being a business owner, and so that's really where we went, shifted back

from being business owners, entrepreneurs, to being consultants, because then we can get back to what we really like and is the strategic growth and flexibility for people, being able to help them grow in the way that works for them and not what works for me.

Janice Hostager: 9:21

Right, yeah, I love that, and I can see that that's a perfect kind of segue from, you know, trying to do it all and trying to do everything for your customer, to just advising your customer, and so you keep your hands in the part of it that you really really like. So so now we want to talk a little bit about agile marketing. So why don't you first of all tell me what that is, so define that for our audience, cora do you want me to take that, I can start.

Courtney Hurley: 9:57

So really it's about leading by listening is one of the biggest things that is, in order to get ahead, you need to be able to work smarter, you need to listen, you need to tailor, you need to constantly be leading by doing these things, by optimizing, by always analyzing where you're at today, what your, your BHAGs are, your big, hairy, audacious goals, the smaller, smart goals that are going to get you there. And then, in order to, in every single one of those stages, also be defining what does my business need to look like in that stage in order to support that level of growth and really being able to then have those kind of base foundations, as well as all the marketing skills and stuff that we'll I'm sure we'll get into, in addition to also then planning out.

Kelly Evans: 10:48

So I can jump in on one thing that you triggered when you were talking is the toxic nature of small businesses in following their competition, in stalking their competition in being upset by their competition, and it's one thing that we talked about at one point that really stuck with me was you're never going to lead by following.

Kelly Evans: 11:08

If you follow your competition, you're just going to follow. You're never going to win. You have to stop trying to do what they're doing or stop following them and stop and listen to whose opinion actually matters, and that is your consumer, your customer, your user, whoever your end person is. That's the only opinion that matters, and if you listen to them and tailor and follow what their needs are and what their desires are, you're going to win. If you follow your competitor, you're always going to be behind them and you're just going to be so frustrated all the time because, naturally, no matter what they do, it's going to irritate you.

Janice Hostager: 11:45

Yes, I love that you said that, because I think, especially when we're starting a business and we don't know what we're doing, right, I mean, we kind of do, we're following some sort of direction, a book or whatever but really we're looking to other people to sort of guide us. And it's so natural and I see this all the time where people will kind of follow somebody else and the way they're doing it. And first of all, in marketing, you're not setting yourself apart by doing that. You're going to start looking like everybody else. And you see this on social media all the time. Everybody's going to Canva for the same templates, right? I love it? Yeah, I love it. Yeah, I've heard of Canva your vision and your mission. And define who you really are as a business and how it connects with your customer. Then you're not going to need to follow anybody other than your customer, because you're going to be going back to them and stepping in their shoes.

Janice Hostager: 12:58

I'm sorry, go ahead.

Kelly Evans: 12:59

No, I was going to say, one exercise I've always enjoyed doing with people and I always help myself, is when I get in that rut which we all do and I either can't find my new spark or I'm getting hooked on somebody else. That's not the right direction, is I stop and think about who I really respect from brands like Apple as a brand? Then I look at what they do somebody completely outside my realm, completely outside my scale but then look at them and just open up apple.com and start going around and say why do I like this brand, why do I like this website, why do I like this experience? Why is Apple literally made for me? And then I take what my learnings are from that and I translate them to my own brand or my own needs, and that's one of the best ways I motivate myself to do something and to find my core again, rather than go and just go down the toxic funnel of finding, of chasing competition over social media.

Janice Hostager: 13:56

It's a really good way of just kind of separating yourself out from, like you said, your competitor, but also it's a great way to get ideas. I mean, especially in marketing, you kind of want or any kind of you're running a business at all.

Kelly Evans: 14:12

Every business has marketing. I don't care if you're an insurance agent or a lawyer, you are marketing. Every person is marketing. It's intertwined in everything. Yeah, whether you like it or not.

Janice Hostager: 14:23

Yeah, I mean I can get ideas from Netflix or going for a walk around my neighborhood or whatever, and I think um Disney plus just changed the background of their logo, their icons, their logos.

Kelly Evans: 14:34

everything went from a darker blue to now a gradient. I immediately noticed it and started thinking about it. My five-year-old said mom, why is it different? It's all over the place in these tiny changes and you can really learn and be inspired by all different avenues and the best thing to do is just not look in your own industry. Look elsewhere for the inspiration and for the motivation.

Courtney Hurley: 14:57

When it comes to building a website or redesigning a website and this goes back to what Kelly is saying one of the things we will always do is we'll say give us who you think are your top closest competitors and what it is that you think they do really well not well that sort of thing. We will address that and then give us one to three companies totally outside your industry that you just aspire to be, like it can be for their aesthetic, like it can be for their aesthetic, it can be for their values and their mission, and to give us a better gauge of who you are intrinsically as a brand and that is based on.

Kelly Evans: 15:34

That is my pride most. They're a great brand.

Courtney Hurley: 15:36

Yeah, completely random yeah, but it's the most valuable thing that we find in designing a website is being able to get to really the core of how these people perceive themselves in the future to be able to help them get to that future persona.

Janice Hostager: 15:54

I love that. I was just going to say that really tells you where they're in their mind. They're headed those big, scary, scary goals and you can just like help them get it there. I love that. So now you work with your clients. When you work with your clients, you set them up in order to reach the point where they don't need to work with you anymore. Is that right?

Kelly Evans: 16:16

That's our goal, fire us please.

Janice Hostager: 16:23

Talk a little more about that, like how did you come across that? Because so many agencies, I mean, they lock you in for life, right, so not for life, but you know, for no, they

do not literally. But you know, and that's one of the hard things about being a small business owner and working with an agency is that besides the cost, but also that you know they own so much of your marketing, right yeah.

Courtney Hurley: 16:50

So we really started off back when we decided to pivot back towards the consulting round. What we were finding was all of our clients were coming to us word of mouth. We didn't do any outreach, we didn't do any advertising. Everyone was coming to us word of mouth. We didn't do any outreach, we didn't do any advertising. Everyone was coming to us word of mouth, mainly from current clients, and it varied from local daycares to large global companies to other marketing agencies that needed help.

Courtney Hurley: 17:13

But the biggest common denominator that we were finding is a lot of these people were either business owners or marketing leaders and a lot of them had been around and in their industry or various aspects close to their industry for years and they were. It was a combination of things. So they were feeling very stale in. They know all the foundational aspects of marketing, but there's just so much changing and evolving into the landscape that it really was like. They almost felt like like a 55 year old dad trying to keep up with their 16 year old's language type thing, and that's how they're starting to feel, but in the marketing realm. So what they would come to us with is beyond the fact that they are trapped in these agency contracts, they're not able to edit things on their website. They've lost their ability to be agile and grow or even to fire these agencies and take everything back in house, because their assets are ultimately owned by these agencies, and that's an intentional move.

Courtney Hurley: 18:17

These agencies are trying to secure their pipeline, and I understand it. I come from the agency world, but that is something that, like in the agency world, I had a hard time like a moral dilemma with is that I was trying to rope in these pharmaceutical clients into these \$20,000 a month SEO contracts or whatever. It might have been to know that. On my end, outside of project management and account management, there was the reporting aspect and the analytics that happened every month, but beyond that, it was only like three to four hours of hard work that went into their SEO, but all of the strategy behind it was gatekept and people weren't able. The client doesn't know exactly what happened and it was for a reason. It was to intend it was intended to secure those pipelines, so I got it, but I wasn't comfortable with it.

Courtney Hurley: 19:04

That's one thing that we have really integrated into. It is essentially our main purpose is to flip that on its head and give all these companies back their control of their strategies

and teach them, instead of gatekeeping. All of these strategies, these skills, these initiatives, these tactics that have we've between our 30 plus years combined of experience, we've tested over and over again and we have proof that it works. Instead of gatekeeping, all these things teach people that teach them how to do it exactly the way we would do it. There's nothing being held back, essentially, and so what we we've done with our clients is we were, we were training them over and over again and we found that we were training them on the exact same thing. So, ultimately, we decided to create a course where we literally, Kelly and I basically brain dumped all of our what's in the last five years?

Kelly Evans: 20:00

what are the common denominators or the common themes? People always need us to cover, to teach, to give them best practice, for guides, to walk through 1000s of hours of web, of web zoom, share screenshots to show them the same thing. Or they're paying us to do it when, ultimately, they don't need to pay us. We can do the first step, or we can teach them how and they can do it themselves and just grab us when they have something that's new or or more more complex, or they're looking for different strategic directions. But other than that, they can manage their own own day to day. And so it's kind of where we came up with the three C's, which, for us, is the benefits. And the reason why you would want to regain and take back control of your own initiatives is once cost. You're going to save exorbitantly in not having to be tied to these contracts Up the bat. You're going to have to keep the agency for a little bit as you transition, but in the long run you are going to have complete control as to what your costs are and you're also going to understand where your money is going and you can say I really want to use a subscription or I really need to invest more in this piece because you know now you're actually spending where your costs are Second. So cost is number one. Number two is control, which is essential To be able to say I have this new opportunity to do tomorrow or next week or next month, and to be able to do it, to be able to go in and you decide that you're going to change.

Kelly Evans: 21:27

You have a new staff member, you have a new product or project, to go in and just make, add that new person or add a new page yourself or have a staff member do it and spend a half hour an hour doing it, rather than having to have it become a three-week lead time with dozens of hours racked up, because that's how it works.

Kelly Evans: 21:46

You just can do it. You have control and capabilities, which ties into control. So cost control, capabilities and capabilities is really what opens the door for you to change how you function as a business and how you succeed and grow. And that's in by being able to listen, being able to analyze, understand and automate your systems to do the job for

you. And that's in the capability side, by having control of your own systems, the capabilities of what you can do, especially with AI and all the different automation technologies out there now. Really, a lot of the tools you have in your baseline tech stack can all do a lot of the work for you and you can just come in for the strategic angle of the new initiatives piece but keep the foundation running. But you can only do that if you have control of your own situation, and that opens up the doors of what you can do in the capabilities realm limitless.

Janice Hostager: 22:44

I absolutely love that philosophy. Do you find, though, that, because I'm always dealing with clients that are I mean, you mentioned it earlier overwhelmed is? I mean it's a lot. Do you feel like your clients have a good handle on what's going on with their marketing after you know? You kind of teach them, you set it up for them and you kind of teach it to them. Do you feel like? Do they still feel like they're overwhelmed, or does that help that they have a better understanding of it?

Courtney Hurley: 23:19

so we've really done, gone into um, we really got focused with what we developed with the course and it's. We've sifted through all the taxing strategy and found the things that drive the most results, that have maximum impact, and those are the areas that we focus on. So, for instance, in email marketing, you will find because, beyond the fact that you want people to click through, a lot of people don't know that it's not just about the fact that someone opened your email, it's about the fact that they click through to your website and having that click-through rate isn't just good for your website. That actually improves the ability for your email to be delivered into inboxes, so that improved deliverability rate allows you to make sure that you are excluded from spam filters and that sort of stuff. So, instead of just saying this is the email design that you should go with, we went into detail on.

Courtney Hurley: 24:16

These are the top 12 things. That are, 13 things that will improve your email click through rate, starting with, like, for instance, ps the second most read part of an email is the PS, and people don't realize that. Or things like including the same exact call to action throughout your email, but using different language to to resonate with different preferences, because people just want to see it in different forms and different languages, that sort of thing. So you're making sure that you're grabbing their, your audience, wherever they are and whatever their preference is.

Kelly Evans: 24:52

And also strategic things, like the other side of not doing where click here is not. You don't want to write click here. You don't want buttons to say click here, you want the

button to tell what's going on. But not only from a SEO perspective and from a trusted source perspective, but more than anything, if you have clicked here five times in email, you're now considered a high-risk spam. Not because what you're clicking to is wrong or the content email is wrong. It's the frequency of same words new sale, discount, click here, those common words that don't mean that they're spam, but if you use them too many times in the same email, then you have a very high risk of spam.

Kelly Evans: 25:34

And some systems especially now the changes in Google and Gmail in February they won't even allow you to get through. So it's not the person's rejecting you. Their mail server won't even let you go through. So having the variation that it's not just about what to do but also what not to do and you wouldn't think that saying new product is a bad thing well, even because it's brand new, let's tell them. But if you do those types of um characteristics too often, then you are at risk of becoming a spam. That that email alone, but then your whole domain and you could start to get blocked. Where we had a client who sent out with 70 000 emails and they're very trusted source and 20,000 of them immediately got blocked and it was their newsletter. These people had all signed up for it 20,000 immediately just with the content, in the way that the wording they use, and these were as a trusted source to people who actively subscribe to it.

Courtney Hurley: 26:30

Wow. So I guess one thing beyond the simplification that we've done within the course, another thing that we really addressed in the beginning. So I would say the best option is only to go through a module a day and really absorb each one. And one thing that we start off with talking about is mindset, and how 80% of your success is going to be on your mindset and 20% on action. And really what it comes down to is this is we emphasize that we don't want you to take all of these tactics and implement them all today 4% every day. What can you do for 15 minutes every day to get towards that high, that goal, that next goal? What today would move the needle in 15 minutes? And that could be you spend 15 minutes analyzing your campaign, or you spend 15 minutes regrouping with your team. You say come ready with where you are today, what you're working on, what did well last week or like you spend 15 minutes.

Kelly Evans: 27:30

Setting up an A-B test, something you already have. You have it, you clone it, you make some tweaks to it, you launch it and let the numbers tell you what, let people tell you what they want, and just setting up those simple things. So one thing with Courtney is talking about is in the modules just because there's 120, 150 videos doesn't mean you watch all of them ever. You want to go through and pick what makes sense to you, what types you. Just because there's TikTok out there and tomorrow's going to be the next new platform, doesn't mean you need to be on it, doesn't mean you're going to be good

at it, doesn't mean it's the right platform for you or audience. So think of the same thing. When you're doing course, it's really you control the time, timeframe, you control how quickly and you control which facets make the most sense to you, and success comes in in focusing, simplifying and listening, not in trying to do it all, because if you try to do it all, you're just gonna fail.

Janice Hostager: 28:26

And that's something I work with my clients on too is just really developing a roadmap of of. You know you're at this point in your business right now. Start here and just take a spoonful of this. You know, don't try, and you know, set up an app, for example. If you're just starting out, you know you don't need that, and so. But it's amazing to me, because there are just so many options out there, it's really amazing that we don't all get derailed. I mean, you know there are so many things to do with marketing that, in fact, I do struggle with that in my own business too.

Janice Hostager: 29:04

It's like I'll see something and I'll think, oh, that's a great idea. I wonder if I should implement that, you know.

Kelly Evans: 29:09

And then you find out three months later when your credit card has the third charge for the month that you're like oh my gosh, I downloaded that tool and I never even used it. Then they're done that Absolutely To all of us.

Kelly Evans: 29:23

So, when you're saying that, though, I think one of the you originally talked about the agile playbook, and so I think that's a mindset that's really been effective for our clients as well. And it's an acronym. Agile stands for assess. Look, where are you, where are you at? Where do you want to be? Your goals? Number two assess goals. So what are your business goals? What are your marketing goals? What are your business objectives? How do they talk to each other? Because just because you have business objectives and goals and marketing goals and they're not, they're not translating to each other, then you're not going to succeed. So assess goals, integrate. So start integrating the tools to do the job for you. Take the tools you have, automate them. Take your team and assess and integrate. Invest in education. It's your people to be able to do things. So you're not outsourcing because, no matter what, it's going to be a lot cheaper having your own people do something than paying a third party to do it. And then the fourth one. So assess goals, integrate. Then listen, listen, I can't push more.

Kelly Evans: 30:21

The whole world of marketing has changed. You're no longer going to be the next new Nike Swipe or the big Macy's store. You're never going to come up with the next biggest marketing initiative. Anymore, that's not what a marketer does. The marketer listens. They listen because now the whole world is set in the TikTok realm, where everything is tailored to them, it's custom, curated to them, it's immediately serviced by them.

Kelly Evans: 30:47

You have 20 seconds to get that person to understand that what you do is exactly what they need and there's nobody else who's better than them. And you solve problems they didn't even know they had and they are hooked to you. 20 seconds to do that, otherwise you're lost to the next one and if it's generic or it's stale, you're going to lose right off the bat. There are always 20 seconds on you. You're going to your. Your page bouncing is two seconds, three seconds, because you didn't listen to what they wanted, which is tailoring to the audience.

Kelly Evans: 31:20

So add, assess, add the goals, integrate, listen and, last one, evolve. You have to be willing to change. You have to be willing to adapt what people are telling you, what the data is telling you, and not what you're reading on another blog. Look at your own analytics, look at your own reaction, look at that A-B test you set up by cloning a page and making a few changes and, if it's statistically significant, listen to it, even if you don't agree to it. It's work. The people are telling you what they want. Your opinion doesn't matter anymore. Their opinion matters and evolve. They want your opinion doesn't matter anymore. Their opinion matters and evolves what they are wanting so your business can actually grow, because without evolving anymore, your businesses aren't. You're not going to succeed, because that's where the competition is going to win, because they're listening right I love that you talked about.

Janice Hostager: 32:05

So, um, you're probably too young for this, but I do remember when social media first came out Prior to college, when Facebook launched Okay, but prior to social media and really prior to the internet coming into the world, it was all push marketing. It was like you develop an ad, you put it out there and you test it and you try and measure for recall and all of that, but really it's all about pushing your product onto them. And suddenly the tables were turned, especially with social media, because now they were telling you what they wanted and that's still the case and it really makes it easy.

Janice Hostager: 32:48

In some ways. It's a real advantage for small businesses because we can just go, even if we don't maybe we're just starting out, maybe we don't even know who our audience is yet or really have a firm grasp on that you can go and look at, look at facebook

groups or linkedin groups and get feedback and what people are thinking and what they're looking for. Or read reviews on Amazon and I mean, yes, reddit is really good and I think it's kind of undervalued for marketing because people will put their questions out there, you know, every day.

Kelly Evans: 33:23

And what's a funny one is one of the most interesting ones I think we ever found is and this gets down to just the nitty gritty which it doesn't it's not. You don't have to have a degree in doing this, you don't have to spend a lot of time. But looking at keywords, one of our clients the biggest shift we ever made for them was uncovering that people search their business brand name wrong. It's a typo, one vowel is missing. But they don't. For 30 years in business they never knew.

Kelly Evans: 33:49

When people search on the internet, they spell their name wrong and so you don't change your brand name. You don't change how you present it. But in your backend, in your system, you add that, in you expand for it to allow people Because people did not search the correct brand name. Now that they started searching the incorrect and they connected the dots for the search engines I can't even tell you how much, especially their image. They went from hot next to no images to what was like 140,000 images were indexed and driving traffic month one.

Kelly Evans: 34:23

Those biggest growth was just in indexing is people didn't know people were searching incorrectly and it's in order to do that. It's not. You don't need anything beyond, go into whatever analytics tool you have or in Google search console and just type in Google ads. Look, yeah, google ads. Look at keywords that people are searching for, the information's there and listen to what they're saying. If they're spelling your name wrong, or they're putting that song, or they're not, I don't know or they're using different verbiage, listen to what they're doing, adapt to it and then it's just going to work towards your advantage and you're going to be able to grow that way, not by trying to force the term you like more down their throat.

Janice Hostager: 35:03

Gotcha. Yeah, that's brilliant. Yeah, I think anybody with a hard-to-spell name, myself included, probably should do that, and that's really a smart idea. First of all, I want to also say that we're having a huge thunderstorm here, so I don't know if you can hear that, but like no hitting my window thundering and lightning and all this stuff.

Kelly Evans: 35:26

So anyway, for a second I will be honest.

Janice Hostager: 35:31

So what's a common myth? So you have businesses that come in? Is there a common myth that you encounter with your clients something that they believe that maybe isn't the case?

Courtney Hurley: 35:46

I would say one of the biggest things is that outsourcing and getting a custom product like this Ferrari of a product is going to set them apart from their competitors. So, for instance, one of our clients, a big blockchain company, thought that this highly secure Ferrari of a website was going to be their defining moment. And what ended up happening is they were again stuck in an agency where they literally couldn't make a single edit to a blog, a word edit, any type of edit whatsoever, because it was under this secure, custom built platform and CMS that they can't talk and it would take their lead time for a single word edit is three to five business days. And so when it came to being blockchain, when it came to the shift, major shifts in blockchain and crypto and AI, they all of a sudden couldn't keep up because they can't adjust their site and their product and their front end and their representation to their customers fast enough. So they actually saw themselves fall off their pillar and fall back down and behind and see like they're. And this is in a few months.

Courtney Hurley: 37:06

Yeah, yeah their organic traffic plummeted.

Kelly Evans: 37:11

Their social interaction started plummeting because they've lost their Email subscriptions skyrocketed or unsubscriptions excuse me, unsubscribes because they were no longer relevant. But when we first met them, we really pushed them to break up with the agency world and they thought we were nuts and that was fine. They can think we're nuts. So we spent probably maybe three to five months just doing everything outside of that that we can help them just get their business going and get back in line, until they came back and said we were crazy to even try to do this and we ended up migrating everything back off of the Ferrari onto HubSpot as a platform for them to be able to handle it themselves. The website from the front end looks identical to the Ferrari version. Nobody knows. The security is all there. It's just that now they can edit it.

Kelly Evans: 37:59

And I think, when you come to myths, the biggest myth that people have is that they need a level of expertise to now manage their online digital marketing and they don't, as you're saying, saying early canva.

Kelly Evans: 38:12

Everybody can do canva. Yes, everybody can do canva. Make a design you do want to try to, like you know, bury it a little bit so it doesn't look like everybody else's, but there are tools out there to do it. More than that, just figure out what is, what is the necessary differentiation and then, other than that, get it to 80% of what you think is perfection, get it out there and then listen and the next 20%, optimize and evolve with it. Don't ever try to get to a hundred percent of anything, because when you get to a hundred percent you've just failed, because your opinion at the other day is never going to be whatever the end result, and you have to be able to cut off at 80% and say this is good enough and then know that on the other end, you're going to continue to iterate and evolve based on the learnings of what the user is actually telling you.

Kelly Evans: 39:02

Yeah, and that's hard for recovering perfectionists like me to go just, I'm not recovering.

Janice Hostager: 39:16

I'm still full on in there, and you do kind of need that because you need somebody to say you know it's good enough, we're just going to try it out and let the market decide. And she calls me my rabbit hole.

Kelly Evans: 39:24

She's like you're in a rabbit hole, get out and then she cuts me off and she's always right, but it's hard to see myself like it is.

Janice Hostager: 39:31

Yeah, oh, and it happens because you have to go in and out of rabbit holes all the time in marketing and maybe not in rabbit holes, but we have to go so in depth with things and then at the same time pull back out and have that 30,000 foot view as well. So we have to kind of go in and out. Especially when you're on your own business, you have to see the minutiae, the data, but we also have to see what people are saying or how it looks or how it combines with your strategy overall. So it is definitely challenging.

Courtney Hurley: 40:05

So another thing that I definitely that we we push in the course as well is the need to integrate amongst teams. So one thing that we really find over and over and over with our clients is that marketing is marketing, sales is sales. Like these departments are treated as almost different limbs on the body, instead of having this whole systemic

approach and really so. When I going back to the 4% of every day, what can you change for 4%? 15 minutes, that's where I even at times, I'll suggest get in a meeting with sales and marketing. Say marketing, you have five minutes to go. What are your goals right now? Show us the assets. Sales, show us your assets. What are your goals right now? Show us the assets. Sales, show us your assets. What are your goals Now?

Courtney Hurley: 40:59

Are there any gaps? How can we work together? Is there any information? I mean, oftentimes sales is so much information that marketing can then use to automate, to make your lead list more tailored, to get your ads to be targeting the exact quality lead and not just by did that person fill out a form? But what level of quality was that form? Can we develop scoring based on that and bring that scoring back into google ads? So now we are optimizing towards a level of quality, not just quality. So it really comes down to also making sure that departments are integrating, and I feel like they've been so. Like so often, we see that these businesses, as they start to grow, they separate, the everything gets like compartmentalized and they lose that fluidity across departments to be able to share and learn from each other, and that is hugely invaluable to be able to share and learn from each other, and that is hugely invaluable.

Janice Hostager: 41:54

Oh, absolutely yes. And especially you're right sales. I mean they're on the phone all day with their customers. They know exactly what the customers are asking for.

Kelly Evans: 42:02

Yeah, the best feedback that you can get from your customers. Yeah, and if marketing, you're collecting all these forms, all these leads, but then you're not translating it to some sales might not even know that they're coming through, or they're coming through and they're not weighing in on what was good or bad and different to then marketing, go back and adjust. Having that communication is fundamental. And that's funny that you guys are saying this central nervous system type thing, because that's what I end up doing at supervisor when they went public with that exact thing. It's having a central nervous system that's talking to all these things. I wasn't doing engineering, I wasn't doing marketing, I wasn't doing sales. I was being the bridge to connect all these things, to make sure the systems all talked and were as efficient as possible. And it happens at all levels. It's a two-man team, a three-man team and even one person.

Kelly Evans: 42:49

You're an individual with your own business. Your tools are your systems. Your tools are your team. Those tools need to talk to each other. You do not need to export from something and import it somewhere else. If those two systems cannot talk to each other, then one of those systems or both those systems are not working. You need to

have your systems be able to say here's a new lead, send it over here, do this with this, send it out here. If it's good, then go back this way. And mapping and automating it's not rocket science. The system is very. The tools have made it very user-friendly. But using those tools to do a lot of the work in the legwork for you is only going. It's going to move mountains for you. If you have them all sitting on their own island, then you might as well not have them at all.

Courtney Hurley: 43:39

Right. And another thing too when it comes to something like paid ads and ROAS, it's so important to not just consider so oftentimes marketing results will be measured on your ROAS or your ROI, so your return on ad spend or your return on investment and oftentimes it's looked at in just such a narrow vision or view of this is marketing's impact, but people forget that marketing is 50% of it. You can drive leads, you can drive good quality leads. They can lead to an open deal, but it's on sales side. It's on them to then close that. So if your ROAS isn't where it is, is that it's not just about marketing. Marketing is only 50% of it. It's also the other 50% is sales. And if your ROAS isn't where it is, you need to start digging down into that customer journey, that step-by-step breakdown of where you are losing people, and determine is it a marketing effort or is it more on the sales side? And how can we optimize? Because it's not just one or the other. They have to coexist and work together.

Kelly Evans: 44:48

And sales is no longer just a cold calling like a person knocking on your door. Sales is also lead nurturing. It's very gray between marketing and sales now. It's the lead nurturing to then become a sales. It's customer service, it's growth, acquisition, all the different terminology you want. Ultimately, all it is is leading to the closing, leading to the sign up, whatever it is, and you don't have to have a salesperson to do that. A lot of times in smaller businesses, the marketing, the owner, whomever it is, is bringing it to fruition. But you need to think of it from a marketing to getting the lead, acquiring a lead, to nurturing it, to becoming a customer. And that transition is very important to see it from a holistic picture and not as segmented of marketing. Got the person, okay, sales, close the deal, because it's no longer about picking up a phone and cold calling 2 000 people a day and seeing where you go with it.

Janice Hostager: 45:42

Yeah, yeah, and sales involves more than um in. At least kind of how I have it divided up with my clients is that I include, say, pricing and price anchoring and countering objections. All of this, I believe, is kind of something that we do at the sales stage and that's something you know as a marketer. I like to think that, oh no, we don't need sales.

Janice Hostager: 46:06

We can just you know move them directly from marketing to purchase to you know to being done, but that's not the reality. I love that you said that, because even if you do have your own business, it is important to understand sales concepts in addition to marketing concepts. Very, very true.

Courtney Hurley: 46:25

And I think sales is one of the. It's a hard one to tackle because you really you have to start testing and testing, and testing until you find that messaging and that language that is good, that clicks with your target audience. And really every single time you're creating anything for marketing, you always have to go back to that persona and or your personas, and how are you tailoring it to them?

Kelly Evans: 46:49

And then then there's a shifting conversation from informing them to getting them to actually feel heard, to then purchase, and that is, it's just such an art, the funny part is sometimes we have people who are like my persona and my target audience is 35 to 45 females with this income, and then you go and look at their stats as well. Your most successful audience and the most like, where you resonate the most, is males 25 to 35 and high income. Like whatever it is and really like what you're, what you believe is your target and your success and your persona, versus what the stats.

Courtney Hurley: 47:29

they can be different and understanding looking at it in both directions and you need to be able to pivot and adjust towards that.

Janice Hostager: 47:36

Right, right, love that.

Kelly Evans: 47:38

So I know that we've covered a lot of basics, but what other clarification points, questions or anything you have on our end?

Janice Hostager: 47:45

I don't actually. I think you've just covered so much of it today, and so where can people learn more about your business?

Courtney Hurley: 47:53

So you can visit us at marketlikeacmo.com. We offer free solutions calls and it's a call, really, where we ask you to come ready with your biggest challenge and we will help you resolve it and come away with it with a strategy, with a step-by-step resolution to

how to get you out of the rut that you're in or how to face that challenge that you have head on. So we offer free solutions call. We would love to have you come join us. It's

Janice Hostager: 48:26

So did this interview open your eyes to what goes on in the agency world sometimes, and were you able to rethink how much of your own marketing you can do with the help of a consultant like Courtney or Kelly, or with some proper training? For more information about screws and stilettos, including their course and their free call, visit the show notes at myweeklymarketing.com/59. That's episode 59. Thanks for listening today. If you enjoyed this episode, we'd love it if you could tell others or give us a rating on the Apple Podcast app. Thanks again. See you next time. Bye for now.