

myweeklymarketing.

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.

Janice Hostager: 0:29

Hey and welcome to another episode of My Weekly Marketing. So as I record this, it's the day after Halloween and I'm sitting here with my leftover Skittles and Snickers from the candy bowl and, just like that, the holiday season is already underway. Black Friday is coming up and by the time this episode launches, it'll be about three-ish weeks away. If you're a bit of a procrastinator, or if maybe you're not someone who typically thinks about holiday promotions like maybe you're a coach or a designer, well, this episode will help you get on track. So, regardless of why you've encountered a deadline, we're going to get you through this because there's still time to get everything together. So I'm setting up this episode like you're starting from scratch today to have a Black Friday or Cyber Monday promotion. So hold on to all those hats you wear as an entrepreneur, because we're going through all of it. The first step is to kind of pave your trail. Before we speed ahead. There are a few important basics to be aware of that will set you up for success. First of all, you might already be familiar with promotions, or maybe this is a new territory for you. Simply put, a promotion can be anything like a short pop-up sale, a limited time discount, or even the release of a new product or service. You don't need to be lowering or discounting the price, although that is something you may want to be doing, especially for Black Friday. So why are promotions a good strategy for your business, you may be wondering. It's a great way to keep your current followers engaged and get some new eyes on your business. If your followers are seeing the same things over and over; guess what? They stop paying attention and get bored. But if you keep them surprised and refreshed with new and valuable content and limited time promotions, like a Black Friday or Cyber Monday sale, they're more likely to stay hooked on what you have to offer. And even if you're offering a special discount that you don't typically offer, it can be a great way for people to try you out.

Janice Hostager: 2:31

So I cut my marketing teeth at a Midwest retailer company; Dayton's, Hudson's, and Marshall Fields where we were planning out for the holidays in July. Now, obviously, we're a little past that month right now, but that doesn't mean you can't still put together an excellent promotion for the holidays. Retailers like the ones I worked with typically

work 12 weeks out, so we're obviously going to have to speed up that timeline a little bit. Successful promotions are built within a framework of sequences and the timeline depends on what kind of promotion you're hosting. For a shorter sale like the one we're talking about today, I recommend at least two to three weeks, although you can extend this framework for a longer period of time. In fact, that would probably be preferable. Like I said at the top of the episode, I'm setting this episode up like you're starting from scratch today to have a Black Friday or Cyber Monday promotion. So, here's the nitty-gritty details of promoting your offer in two or so weeks. The roadmap we'll be providing is easy to apply to both product and service-based businesses and of course, that means it will work for you no matter what you do. So, today I want to help you plan a profitable holiday promotion so you'll wrap up the year strong. So, we're thinking in terms of campaigns today.

Janice Hostager: 3:49

Think of multiple ways to reach out to your ideal customer with the same message using different media. There used to be something called the Rule of Seven, where we needed to be touching someone with a message seven times to make that person buy or to make a conversion. In today's busy, noisy world, that number is likely much higher. But here goes. The first thing we want to talk about is preparation. So, number one, we want to choose your core offer. It could be a bundled product, a free gift or maybe early access to a discount that fits with your brand's holiday vibe. Of course, besides knowing what you're going to offer, you need to decide how you're going to discount it, if you're going to discount it at all. This boils down to your revenue goals. Revenue goals are a topic for a whole other episode, but you'll have to make a decision on if you can discount your product or service and still come out in the black at the end of the year.

Janice Hostager: 4:43

Another thing to think about is what is called selling your sawdust. What that means is that you likely have things that you've created in your business that you can sell separately. This might be a template, a system or a framework that you use that you don't typically sell separately, or it's included as part of a package that you offer. If you have a retail product, you're more attuned to thinking in terms of sales, but if you're a coach or consultant or if you have an idea that's not at all related to retail, there are options for you, too. Here are some ideas.

Janice Hostager: 5:17

You could run a holiday power hour session if you're a coach. This would be like a discounted one-on-one session or mini coaching slots to give potential clients a taste of

what coaching with you is really like. Or it could be a giftable coaching package. You can create holiday themed packages that clients can buy for themselves or give to a friend, a family member or colleague. You can include a specific type of seasonal bundle, like New Year, New Goals or Holiday De-Stressing Coaching. You could also offer seasonal group workshops or masterclasses. You can host a one-time holiday-themed workshop that's either as a freebie or a special rate. You can cover seasonal topics like planning your best year or staying motivated during the holidays, and then you could offer a discount for attendees who sign up for ongoing coaching. You could also offer a limited time access to a mini course or a resource bundle, or even offer a planning party, like a vision board party or goal setting party. The ideas are absolutely endless. There's also gift cards that you could offer, flash or pop-up sales kits and bundles, and also think about pre-selling offers for 2025.

Janice Hostager: 6:35

So, as we talked about earlier, promotions don't need to involve big purchases. Either it might be a giveaway or a free discovery session, a BOGO, or a buy one, get one, or a gift with purchase. Lots to think about, right? So, once you've planned what you're promoting and how you'd like to frame that promotion either with a discount, a BOGO, special event, etc. then it's time to move to the awareness stage. Now I always recommend starting with your ideal customer, and I have a free download to figure out who that is, if you're not sure yet, which I'll put in the show notes. There's countless ways which your ideal customer can become aware of you, and a lot of that depends on the type of business you have.

Janice Hostager: 7:15

But since we're focusing now on just getting to the nitty gritty of a quick promotion for the holiday, we're going to stay extremely focused with this plan. So, I'm largely going to talk about social media, ads, email and websites and, with just three weeks before the promotion starts, we're going to start week number one with a warm-up sequence. This week is really all about preparation and some teaser content that hints at your upcoming offer. So let's start with your website. On your website you want to start creating banner ads and add some festive touches to your homepage and your product pages with some holiday themed visuals and messaging. Also, make sure your search engine optimization is on point by researching the keywords people are looking for. These words can change over time, so make sure it's updated for right now and includes words that are like on sale or on promotion. Then head on over to Google Search Console and have them crawl or recrawl your page so it will show up in Google search results. I'll add that link to the show notes too.

Janice Hostager: 8:20

On social media, plan a daily posting schedule. I know posting every day seems like a lot, but it will make a difference with the algorithm later when you start that now. Increasing your organic traffic now will make a difference when you start really promoting for this sale. So, if you are on Instagram, that means posting on the feed and in stories. This builds awareness while making followers feel like they're in the know of something new and exciting that's coming up. Now is the time to start batch creating reels as well, and also b-roll footage and promotional graphics to share on social media in the next few weeks. I like to use my social media planner for that, which I'll also link in the show notes. During the first three days,

Janice Hostager: 9:05

warm up your audience by reminding your followers about who you are. Introduce yourself, share your journey and how you got to where you are, and let your personality shine through. Also, remind people of what you offer and the transformation that you can make in their life. This is all especially important if you haven't been as active on social media lately. Make sure to respond thoughtfully to all the engagement you receive on your posts, stories and reels. Then I also would recommend leaving a thoughtful comment when I say thoughtful, I mean several words on two or three or four ideal clients, posts, stories or reels. You're building relationships here, and who doesn't appreciate comments on their posts and reels?

Janice Hostager: 9:49

Next, here's what you should do with email that first week; try offering a free training, free download or free discount to help you draw the right people on your email list. As they say, the money's in the list because they're warm leads that you can communicate with directly and they're already interested in what you're selling. That's why they signed up. Just a reminder here do not buy an email list. That's not going to benefit you and it could get you blacklisted as a spammer. It's also a good time to start putting together email text for the next two weeks too. You're going to get busy, so having them ready to go is really smart.

Janice Hostager: 10:26

You should also have email automation set up for a welcome sequence. A welcome sequence is a drip email campaign where they get an introductory email every two or three days to welcome them as a new subscriber. I'd also recommend an automation for people who click on your emails but don't purchase anything. These are some of the most powerful emails that you can send, because it reminds them of something they've

already gotten interest in. We know they're interested in it because they've already clicked on learning more about it. So, it's just a quick email that will remind them of how they will benefit from what you're offering and that there's a limited time deal coming up. After all, scarcity sells.

Janice Hostager: 11:05

This is also a good time to set up targeted ads. You can set up ads to build your email list and run those right now, which actually convert better than ads directly for sale items. At this point, you should also start preparing the ads that you're going to run in the next couple of weeks for your promotion. So I'm talking here about Meta ads or Pinterest ads, depending on what you're promoting. You want to gather photography, video and start writing text for these ads, so they're ready to go in the next couple of weeks.

Janice Hostager: 11:35

Okay, moving on to week number two, the nurture sequence. On organic social media during days four through seven roughly, you'll want to acknowledge the pressures your ideal client faces and let them know that you understand their frustrations and you're able to help them. This puts you in a position to address their concerns and nurture their interest in you and your product. Think of this sequence as priming your ideal customer for what's to come. Creatively brainstorming or using ChatGPT for this to get ideas is a really smart way of going about it. You can address them creatively in reels, posts and carousels.

Janice Hostager: 12:15

This is your time to shine and show your expertise and build credibility and also gain some new followers. You can also create some excitement with countdowns or polls. Everybody knows Black Friday is coming up right, so this is a good time to share customer testimonials or bestseller highlights. You want to build that know, like and trust factor before you ask for any type of a sale. You can also keep building excitement on social media by sharing some behind-the-scenes content, like product prep or gift wrapping ideas to keep your audience engaged. This would also be a good time to reach out to potential collaborators who have the same audience that you have to help you promote your upcoming sale. You can return the favor or you might want to pay them a commission. It's up to you.

Janice Hostager: 13:04

Next, let's talk about your website on week two. On your website, make sure that your sales page is ready to go. If you're not sure what you should include on your sales page, you can grab my sales page bundle where I'll walk you through all the process step by step. If you have a product page, such as with Shopify, make sure that's all up to date as well. Also, the last thing you want to happen is for your website to crash on sales day. So, it's a good time to reach out to your web hosts to alert them that you're going to be having a big promotion with increased web traffic, and find out if there's anything that you need to do in advance so that you can forego a crash or disaster on your sales days. You also might want to make sure you have a chat box or a phone number on your site for people who have questions. It's no fun to lose a sale when people are ready to buy if they just have a question you could easily answer. Also, make sure your checkout system is working so there are no snafus or friction during the checkout process.

Janice Hostager: 14:04

Okay, let's talk about week two ads. Since your offer isn't live yet, make sure your ads are ready to go, and it's good to keep running a list building ads at this point. The more people on your list, the better. Also, it's a good time to double check and make sure you've got everything ready to go for next week's ads. With week two's emails, now's the time to start prepping email content. Use the text in the emails to paint a word picture of where they are now and where they'll be after buying your product or service. This is also the week to send out some teaser emails. 10 to 12 days before Black Friday, you can send out a teaser email that says something like holiday surprise coming soon. And six or seven days before Black Friday, you could send out an email with something like a sneak peek that you're going to love. If you're offering several products, you can also send out a gift guide email that highlights the top picks and compare the benefits and make it easy for customers to understand their choices. A subject line like VIP preview can help your open rate too. Okay, now we're on to week three, the deadline and the sales sequence. On social media,

Janice Hostager: 15:15

you want to get out there and make social media announcements. You want to announce the promotion with eye-catching visuals and don't be afraid to double up by sharing stories, reels and even a few live Q&A sessions. On your website, you want to make sure that you updated your sales page with the new promotional price and the promotions themselves. Make sure to automate the time to switch it back or set an alert to do it yourself, so that you're not extending your sale inadvertently into next week. Be sure to manage your chat box that week too to keep customer questions answered. You might also want to add a countdown timer to your website page to let people know that

your offer has a very limited time frame. That will motivate a sale. You might also want to add a cross-sell or an add-on offer as customers check out, suggest complimentary items or an exclusive gift wrapping option for them at a small additional cost. For your ads,

Janice Hostager: 16:11

if you're running ads on Meta, you want to start them this week. I'd recommend a lookalike audience ad set on one and another ad set using Facebook's Advantage Plus. That allows Facebook to find your audience for you, which has been helpful and very cost effective for the ads that I've been running. You also might want to run retargeting ads. These are ads that show your products to people who have already visited your website or clicked on an email and that will give them a sneak peek to your sales as well. You want to focus ads on conversions. Ramp up your ad spend to highlight the main promotion to both new and returning customers, including urgency messaging with like, end soon or limited time offer.

Janice Hostager: 16:57

Last but not least is email marketing. This week you want to launch the main email promotion. Send the big holiday sale is here email. Make it visually engaging with clear calls to action and the reminders of any exclusive bonuses. You also want to send a countdown email one day before Black Friday with a subject line, something like 24 hours left to be first in line. And on Black Friday morning you want to send the sale is live email and or something like your holiday deal awaits. On Saturday or Sunday after Black Friday, send an urgency reminder, something like last call to save or only 24 hours left. It's okay to send more than one email on this day, and it's okay to send more emails than usual on this type of weekend. People understand it's a promotion. If you're offering valuable information throughout the year, they're willing to put up with a few more emails than usual.

Janice Hostager: 17:55

Then, the Monday after Black Friday, which is Cyber Monday, you may want to extend your sale by a day, or just thank your subscribers. For those who bought, let them know what to expect next and make them feel like a VIP. Also, if you have a text list, by all means, send out an SMS reminder this Black Friday weekend too. Okay, the day after the sale, you might think it's all over, but no, no, it's not. You want to make sure that your customers feel personally thanked, so I like to send out a thank you email with an order confirmation. You also want to make sure and send out any shipping emails that are part of your purchasing process, and you also want to encourage them to share their

purchase on social media. You also want to include a short post promo survey to gather feedback and get some insights for next year's promotion.

Janice Hostager: 18:49

You also want to take notes of what went well and what didn't go as well this time around, as my coach always tells me, the magic is in the debrief. Take a long look at your numbers, your conversion rate and all the metrics to see what worked and what can be improved for next time. If it didn't go as well as you hoped, that's just information for next time. It's never personal. So, I've just given you a ton of information. But to make things easier, I put together a free Black Friday promotional checklist that you can download right now. If you go to janicehostager.com/sale.

Janice Hostager: 19:27

Of course, I'll put the link in the show notes as well. So, a shorter focus timeline doesn't mean less impact. With the right offer and a bit of early excitement, you can create a holiday promotion that not only drives sales but also creates genuine connections with your customers. Even with a last minute promotion, you can add value and revenue to your quarter four with just a little planning. So, for more information about anything we talked about in today's episode, visit myweeklymarketing.com/82. Thanks so much for joining me today. As always. If you found this helpful, please leave a review or go ahead and forward it to somebody who could use this information too. Thanks for joining me. See you next time. Bye for now.