

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. Hey, and welcome back to another episode of My Weekly Marketing. Okay, friend, 2024 has been a wild year in the marketing world, am I right? Marketing trends are shifting and everyone is talking about AI like it's a new buzzword and spoiler, it's not really all that new, but it's never been more important.

Janice Hostager: 0:48

Whether you're currently feeling stuck, overwhelmed or just plain curious about what actually moved the needle this year, I want to share my top marketing strategies from 2024. The advice that's working right now or in this year for small business owners like you. Think of it as your ultimate marketing cheat sheet as we move into 2025. And, honestly, this is all good stuff, no matter when you're listening to this episode, so let's spill the tea. Okay, starting with number 10, start small and build consistency. Even Adam Mosseri, the CEO of Instagram, said the more you post in general, the more reach you're going to get, but try to come up with a schedule that you can sustain over the long run to avoid creative burnout. The truth is very little in marketing happens quickly. Sure, you might get a mention in New York Times that will skyrocket your business for a bit. This happened to a client of mine, but that's rare and then, after the buzz was over, her business settled down to her pre-mentioned levels. But why is consistency so important? Because when you show up regularly, your audience knows they can trust you and trust leads to sales. For example, let's say you have a great coffee shop in your neighborhood and they're open every weekday, except sometimes they close on Wednesdays, or maybe they randomly decide to stop serving coffee and only offer tea for a week. You'd be really confused, right? And you probably wouldn't rely on them for your daily caffeine fix. Here's another one. Think about your favorite Netflix show. If the new episode didn't drop when it was supposed to.

Janice Hostager: 2:23

When you feel a little let down, your marketing is the same. Showing up consistently helps you stay top of mind and builds trust. When your audience knows they'll hear from you either on Instagram, in your newsletter or on a podcast, they'll stick around. They start to feel like you're part of their routine and they get to feel like they know you, which

leads to liking you and trusting you. By the way, if they don't like you, they won't stick around, and that's okay too. They're not your people.

Janice Hostager: 2:52

Now, for each of these top 10 marketing strategies, I'm adding an action step that you can start on right now and move into the new year. Starting with this, find a rhythm and consistency you can stick with for the long term in all your marketing, be it newsletters, social media or any of your offers that occur on a regular basis. That'll allow your customer to depend on you and will help you better work it into your regular routine. Okay, marketing strategy number 9: Know your ideal customers inside and out. Oh, this is so important.

Janice Hostager: 3:27

All of the marketing that I do for any of my clients or in my own business starts with this question: who is your ideal customer? If you don't know exactly who you're talking to, your marketing will feel like shouting into a void. But when you know them, it's like having a secret decoder ring for your messages that actually resonates with them. Think of it this way; as a mom of two, when my kids were little and I was in, say, Target and I'd hear someone say, hey, mom, I would still turn around even if my kids were not with me, because it got my attention. The same is true with your messaging. I knew my name and anyone who said it got my attention, and if you speak to your ideal customer in that same way, you will get their attention too.

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Here's why it matters: your ideal customer isn't just, say, a woman in her 40s who owns a business. She's someone with specific dreams, fears and quirks. Maybe she's juggling work and a family, scrolling Pinterest at midnight for business tips or secretly worried that she'll never get on top of her own finances. When you really understand her, you can speak directly to those needs and build an instant connection. I once worked with a client who was launching an online course for entrepreneurs. At first, her message was super broad. Learn how to grow your business. Sounds okay, but it didn't grab anyone and her sales were pretty flat. We dug into her ideal customer and created an avatar for someone more specific to who really needed what she was selling. A solopreneur mom working late at night, feeling guilty for not spending more time with her kids. We shifted the messaging to this: grow your business while making time for what matters most. That's when her audience really started to pay attention and her course enrollment grew 10x.

Janice Hostager: 5:14

Knowing your ideal customer also keeps you from wasting time and money. If your audience is, say, a 40-something male bank executive, you don't need to chase trends like TikTok dances, but webinars, LinkedIn, white papers, email newsletters? That's where they hang out and that's what speaks to them, and that's where you want to show up. When you know your ideal customer, everything gets easier; your messaging, your offers, even where you spend your marketing energy. It's like chatting with a friend who gets you instead of trying to impress a stranger. And, trust me, that's where the magic happens. So your action step for this one: use surveys, polls or interviews to keep learning more about your ideal customer and have conversations with them to learn the words they use to describe their problems. Then you can use those words too.

Janice Hostager: 6:06

Okay, marketing strategy number 8: repurpose content to save your sanity and reinforce your messages. Marketing can be incredibly overwhelming if you don't already know that. That's why repurposing is your lifesaver. It's easy to forget this. My recommendation is to make it a routine and then just build repurposing right into your process. For example, for every blog post you create, look at it with fresh eyes or send it to somebody who does your social media and have them break it out into bits of wisdom that you can share that week. Then link it back to the blog post on your site and you can get traffic back to your site as well.

Janice Hostager: 6:45

You can also combine posts that are related to each other into a comprehensive ebook checklist or like a downloadable guide. Not only does that give you content, but it will also build your email list in the process. You can even do this with webinars and workshops. Just use video clips from the events and share them as static images or reels or in YouTube Shorts. The same holds true with videos and podcast episodes. Break them up into bite-sized pieces and use them in other places.

Janice Hostager: 7:15

You can also repurpose content across other media. For example, you can turn the blog post into a script for a short explainer video or a live session, or you can use tools like CapCut to create videos with text overlays from a larger video. And don't forget about Pinterest. You can share any content that's on your website to Pinterest and it will stay there forever. That's one of the things I love about Pinterest. The other great thing about repurposing your content is that most of us need to hear something between five and seven times to truly remember it and learn it. Essentially, repetition plays a key role in memory retention, so repurposing content is good for everyone. Okay, your action step

on this one: make a process in your company to repurpose your blog or your key content in social media and on other platforms.

Janice Hostager: 8:05

Okay, top marketing strategy number 7: build relationships, not just funnels. I have a little hook book of funnels that I can use to sell just about anything. I see bro marketers doing this all the time and I'm sure it works for them sometimes. But I also think building that relationship that know, like and trust factor is also so important. I think it might be even more important when your ideal customer is a woman. I think we women are hardwired for relationships, so being transparent, letting your personality come out, these are all important things for letting your audience see the real you.

Janice Hostager: 8:44

For so many years when I was young, I thought I needed to be perfect for people to be my friend. I think that's in part by how I was raised, but then I realized that it was my imperfections that made me relatable. Nobody likes cold, sterile, perfect, because we all know we're not like that. So that element of transparency is so important for building relationships. So do I still use funnels? Absolutely, but I also interject my own personality in my writing and in my podcast, in my emails, in all aspects of the funnel. That's what I love about communication; so much the real you can show through and that's what builds genuine connections. Remember, people buy an emotion so they may justify their decision with logic, but something about why they bought was rooted in emotion. So your action step for this one: send one personal email to a client or send a DM to a follower on social media this week. Okay, and that leads me to number 6: harness the power of storytelling in your marketing.

Janice Hostager: 9:51

I had a client who had a small kind of boutique skincare line. Her products were great but her sales were stuck in kind of neutral and her marketing focused on markdowns only. Her marketing focus was fine but it lacked heart. Her Instagram feed was full of polished product shots but generic captions like perfect for dry skin. Then she made a big shift: storytelling. Instead of just showcasing products, she started sharing the why behind her brand. She told the story of her struggle with eczema and how nothing on the market really worked for her. She showed raw, unfiltered pictures of her journey and introduced followers to the tiny apartment kitchen where she mixed her first batch of lotion. People loved it. They understood what drove her to create it and they connected with her frustration that drove her to create it in the first place. And they connected with her humble beginnings by inviting her audience into the why, she built trust and loyalty.

Her sales skyrocketed and customers started sharing their own stories about how their product, how her product, changed their lives. The lesson? People don't just buy products. They buy connection, purpose and the chance to be part of a bigger story. I also did a whole episode about storytelling, episode 51. Check it out if you'd like to learn more about it. Action step for this one: practice telling one story about your business or product this week. Bonus points if you can do it in a video format. Nobody has to see it, it's just for you to practice telling your story. Okay, marketing strategy number 5: test measure and pivot as needed.

Janice Hostager: 11:35

I love to cook. I don't have a lot of time to cook right now, but when I get the chance, I like to try out a new recipe. When you're cooking, you follow the instructions, taste it to gain some data and determine that the dish needs maybe a little more flavor. So what do you do? You don't toss out the whole thing, right? No way. You tweak the recipe, add a little more salt, maybe some spice. A lot of you like hot sauce. You might throw some of that in, but generally you play with it until you're happy with it. The same goes for marketing. Marketing is like trying out a new recipe. You test an idea, maybe a social media campaign, a landing page or an email subject line. Sometimes it works perfectly, but other times, crickets. It's happened to me for sure. Instead of throwing in the towel, you need to pivot.

Janice Hostager: 12:28

Look at the data. Did the message land? Did your audience open the email? Did they click? If not, tweak it and test it again. Maybe it's the headline, the timing or the call to action. The great thing about marketing is that you can see the data. If the email wasn't open, start by reworking the subject line to make sure they have a reason to open it. If it was opened but not clicked on. Take a look at the text and the call to action and the offer itself. Be a marketing detective. Every bit of data is a clue. It's not personal, remember. It's just data.

Janice Hostager: 13:04

Marketing success isn't about getting it right the first time. It's about learning, adapting and trying again. My friend Tammy always says that all marketing is testing, and I think she's absolutely right. Every failure isn't a dead end. It's data, and the more data you gather, the closer you get to creating something that really works. Your action step for this one: Choose one area of marketing to experiment with in the new year. Okay, heading down the list.

Janice Hostager: 13:32

Number 4: don't chase every trend. Chasing every marketing trend is like trying to drink from a fire hose. You'll drown and overwhelm before you ever quench your thirst. Sure, trends can be exciting. Remember TikTok dances? But if they don't align with your brand, they won't land with your ideal audience and they might even do you more harm than good. Instead, focus on strategies that reflect your brand's unique voice, your values and your vibe. Ask yourself: does this trend help me connect with my ideal customer? Does it make sense for my business goals? Can I execute it without losing my mind? Here's the deal, your audience doesn't care if you're doing the latest thing. If a strategy doesn't feel authentic to you, it won't resonate with them either, and when it doesn't resonate, all the effort in the world won't bring results. Stick with what works for you and your people. Build trust, show up consistently and remember the most effective Marketing isn't about being trendy, it's about being real. So your action step for this one: audit your current marketing tactics to see if you can drop a trend that isn't working for you.

Janice Hostager: 14:45

Okay, number 3: embrace video to gain connection. I just recorded a podcast episode that will drop next week, episode 89, where I talked to my guest, Lauren Magenta, about the power of embracing video for connection. Perfectly polished videos are nice, but they're not what builds connection. What draws people in and keeps them coming back, is you, your quirks, your energy and your unfiltered moments. Authentic video is like sitting down with your audience for coffee. It's personal, it's real. It's the opposite of what a perfectly curated highlight reel shows on social media. When you show up authentically, you give your audience permission to connect with you on a human level. They see your passion, hear your story and feel like they're part of your world. Here's the best part: you don't need fancy equipment or a scripted performance. In fact, the more real you are, the more relatable you'll be. Just grab your cell phone, shoot a video. Be raw. People crave connection, not perfection. An authentic video is the fastest, most impactful way to build that connection. So hit record, be yourself and watch how your audience responds to the real you. I know this isn't easy I struggle with this one myself but try it out, get comfortable with the idea and you'll be on your way. So your action step for this one: create a simple, unpolished video that shows your personality or expertise. You may want to skip this one, but I promise it's a good exercise. Okay, we're almost down to the list.

Janice Hostager: 16:21

Number 2: focus on email over social media. Social media is great for connecting, but let's be real, it takes a lot of time and on most platforms, your post is gone in 24 hours.

So I always tell my clients, before you spend a lot of time on social, build your email list for several reasons. Number one, the people on your list have opted in to learn more about you and your business. That makes them warm leads, poised to buy, because if you have a freebie that's aligned with your product or the product they need down the line, they're way more likely to buy than someone you don't know on social media. Number two, you own your list. We're all one algorithm change away from losing followers on social media. I can't tell you how many stories I've heard about accounts being taken down, hacked or engagement just dropping off. The platform is not owned by us. It's owned by TikTok or Facebook or whoever, and, as the saying goes, never build on rented land. Number three, email still has the highest ROI of any marketing platform. According to HubSpot, you'll average \$36 for every \$1 spent, and that's something we cannot say about social media. You own it, you control it and it's one of the most powerful tools you have in your business.

Janice Hostager: 17:47

But an email list is just the start. The real magic happens when you nurture it, and here's how. Number one show up consistently and don't ghost your subscriber for months and then pop in only when you're launching something. Treat your list like a conversation. Regular, real and share valuable content. Which leads me to number two, provide valuable content. Your subscribers gave you the golden ticket: their email address. Honor that by sharing tips, insights and stories that they can't wait to read. If you're providing regular value, they're going to want to stay on your list if you're a good fit for them. Number three, be human. Write to them like you're talking to a friend or, better yet, get to know your ideal customer so well that you are their friend. Share your personality and let your voice shine through. And number four, build trust. Over time, your list will become a loyal audience. When you take the time to connect, they'll be the first to cheer you on, share your offers and buy from you too. Your list isn't just a tool, it's a relationship. So nurture it, love on it and remember every email is a chance to strengthen that connection. So your action step: Set a regular cadence for emailing your list and sharing value.

Janice Hostager: 19:08

Okay, we're down to number 1: the top marketing strategy from 2024. Here it is. Number one, have a solid plan, your personal Trail to the Sale. So give me a minute while I step on my soapbox here, I see so many business owners who do what I call shot in the dark marketing. We try a little of this and a little of that just to see what works. They might try social media or get some reviews, all good things, but unless they all work in unison, it's not going to move the needle for your business. A marketing plan and a marketing

strategy is your roadmap. It gives you clarity, so you know exactly who your audience is and where to find them and how to speak their language. It gives you focus, so you don't waste your time on shiny objects and instead only invest in the actions that align with your goals. It keeps you consistent, instead of random bursts of efforts. A strategy gives you a clear, repeatable plan that keeps your marketing running smoothly and, finally, it produces results. When you know your goals and take intentional steps to get there, you stop guessing, you know what metrics to track and start growing. In short, you're working smarter, not harder.

Janice Hostager: 20:24

This was something I really struggled with on my own business when I first started. So no shade here. I knew there had to be a process and system I could follow to get clients and move them to purchase and refer others, and I wanted to include every tool that I use, from website to social media, and really understand how they got together and how they integrated, not to mention the ideal customer and what they wanted and what they needed and what triggered them to buy. So I created my own system that I call the Trail to the Sale. You can learn more about the trail to the sale process in my free marketing playbook by going to janicehostager.com/trail. I really encourage you to do this because this will make a difference in all your marketing in 2025. So your action step for this one is I want to encourage you to map out your marketing goals for the year with a strategy first mindset. Go to the show notes for today or visit janicehostager.com/trail and start planning a marketing strategy for your business.

Janice Hostager: 21:37

Okay so, in conclusion, top 10 marketing advice for 2024 is number 10, start small and build consistency. Number 9 know your ideal customers inside and out. Number 8, repurpose content to save your sanity and reinforce your messages. Number 7, build relationships, not just funnels. Number 6, harness the power of storytelling in your marketing. Number 5, test, measure and pivot as needed. Number 4, don't chase every trend. Number 3, embrace video to gain connection. Number 2, focus on email over social media. And number 1, have a personal Trail to the Sale. If you get on top of these 10 actions in 2025, you'll see your business grow and it will be a whole new business at the end of the year.

Janice Hostager: 22:21

So to grab the transcript for this episode or get the links for anything I talked about today, visit myweeklymarketing.com/88. And since it's the end of December as I record this, I want to thank you for an amazing year and if you have any questions, feel free to

DM me on Instagram at Janice Hostager Marketing. Thank you so much for joining me today. Have a happy new year. See you soon. Bye for now.