

myweeklymarketing.

Janice Hostager: 0:00

Hey, hey and welcome to My Weekly Marketing. I'm Janice Hostager, your marketing strategist and coffee-loving co-pilot, and today I'm putting together just a shorter episode, so we're gonna get right to the point. If you've been doing all the things posting, emailing, showing up and still wondering why is this not working. Well, this one's for you. Here's the truth. Most small business owners are building tactics, not momentum. They're spinning their wheels, making a reel here, writing a blog post there, maybe tossing out a freebie, and none of it connects. It's like throwing spaghetti at the wall, then cooking another batch of spaghetti and throwing it at the wall too, and without understanding why it's not sticking. I know weird analogy, but bear with me here. It's really when everything feels scattered and you don't really understand what's going on, it's because your audience is confused, and confused people don't convert. Yep, a confused mind doesn't buy. So let's flip the script. What if, instead of a bunch of disconnected tasks, your marketing became a clear path? Every post, email and offer becomes a stepping stone on what I call the Trail to the Sale. But before I jump into this topic, I want to tell you that I have a free guide that will walk you through all the steps. So listen to the very end of the episode and I'll tell you how you can download that. Okay, so there are eight stages to the Trail to the Sale: Awareness, Consider, Compare, Evaluate, Sell, Supersize, Serve and Send. I know it sounds like a lot, but this is actually based on your customer journey, so it's important to kind of hit all of them. So let me review really quickly what's in each stage.

Janice Hostager: 1:52

The awareness stage is where it all begins. Customers discover your business or realize they have a problem that you can help them with. For example, somebody might stumble across your blog post or a social media ad, or your business will appear in a Google search thanks to good SEO. Next is the consideration stage. This customer starts exploring whether your product or service fits their needs. They might find your podcast, your blog posts and maybe download your freebie. That helps them solve a problem, which is good because you want to get them on their email list here too. But just because they have your freebie doesn't mean they're ready to buy. They might stay at that point for a while and when they're ready to buy, they'll probably look around a bit. And that brings us to our next stage, the compare stage.

Janice Hostager: 2:39

The compare stage is where your customer weighs their options and they look at your competitors. This is where your good reviews and testimonials and your website come in handy. It's also where it really pays off if you have a unique aspect to your product or service that nobody else is replicating. But if they're still not sure you're a good fit, they'll probably move to the next stage, the evaluation stage. This is the point where your customer might want to give you a try with a low-cost offer. So if you have a trial version, a low-priced product or a discounted version of your product or service, this is the perfect thing for that customer.

Janice Hostager: 3:17

And then it's on to the sell stage. And then it's on to the sell stage. At this stage, we also look at things like pricing and countering objections, which is huge but an often missed aspect to the sale. But if all goes well, this is where your customer buys your premier offer from you. But your work isn't done. You don't want to leave money on the table. So then it's on to the supersize stage. Having an upsell gives you a chance to offer more value to somebody who's already buying, increasing the price of your sale with no additional marketing or cost to you, since they've already got their card out ready to buy, for example, you might offer a complimentary product or service or a slightly different version of your current offer, maybe offering free coaching or additional services for a small price bump, just like McDonald's used to do when they supersize your meals. But just because the transaction is complete doesn't mean that you are. A big part of the sale is the after-sale experience with that customer.

Janice Hostager: 4:17

I call this the serve stage. At this stage, you want to impress your customers with your outstanding post-sale service. On average, 60 to 70% of sales come from repeat customers, depending on the industry, so you want that customer to be happy. That might be as simple as a follow-up note, an email or providing them with additional support. I was in a hotel last week and I got a text asking if everything in my room was acceptable. It was short and simple and probably even automated, but it didn't matter because it was effective. I felt like they cared, like they didn't just take my money and run.

Janice Hostager: 4:57

One of the things that a lot of people miss about marketing is that it costs five to seven times more to acquire a new customer than to keep an existing one. So this is such an important but overlooked part of the sales journey. And finally, if a customer is happy, we want to send them to the send stage to tell others. In the send stage. You want to

empower your satisfied customers to become your best fans, your advocates. You can encourage them to write a review or share their experience on social media. You could even incentivize them to refer your product or service with a referral gift or an affiliate program. Now a lot of people call this a sales funnel, but I really feel like the marketing funnel is somewhat obsolete, and here's why. First, it sounds like customers just fall down into a funnel, but I really feel like the marketing funnel is somewhat obsolete, and here's why. First, it sounds like customers just fall down into a funnel, but in reality, they need to be led down in a very strategic way. Real people zigzag, they pause, they ghost you and then they come back months later.

Janice Hostager: 5:58

The Trail to the Sale honors the relationship, not just the transaction. It maps a customer journey that mirrors how humans actually buy, which is a messy, emotional and non-linear way. Second, it focuses on momentum, not manipulation. Funnels are often optimized for pressure, such as act now or lose out. The trail focuses on building momentum through understanding, value and trust. It's about guiding people, not hurting them. Third, it covers the whole journey, not just the first sale. Most funnels end at the point of sale, but there's more to the process. The Trail to the Sale includes post-purchase stages, when you serve your customer after the sale and then send them to refer. That's where long-term revenue and loyalty live. You're not just building a one-time buyer, you're creating raving fans. Best of all, it gives strategy to the whole ecosystem. Instead of just plugging offers into a funnel, you're connecting the dots between your content, email, social media, website and your offers.

Janice Hostager: 7:03

The Trail to the Sale turns your marketing into a full-on experience, not just a sequence. The genius part of this is that it's built around the customer journey map and it's based on human behavior. This isn't a fad or an algorithm. Human behavior is fairly predictable. So once you figure out what works for your product and your ideal customer, it takes a lot of the stress and overwhelm away from your marketing. So you're not having to reinvent the wheel all the time. You don't need to do more. You need to do it in order, with intention. That's how you stop marketing in circles and start creating momentum.

Janice Hostager: 7:39

So here's your action step. Look at what you're currently doing in your marketing and ask where does this fit in the Trail to the Sale? What's the next logical step for someone if you can't answer that time? To rework the flow. If this made you do a head tilt and think,

oh, that's why it hasn't been working, then you're not alone. Let's turn your marketing from random to revenue generating. And the good news this is fixable and I've made it really easy with my free marketing playbook download. Just go to janicehostager.com forward slash trail and you can get it there. I'll put the link in the show notes for today as well. You can find the show notes at myweeklymarketing.com forward slash 106. That's 106. Thanks so much for joining me today. I'll see you next time. Bye for now.