

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: 0:33

Several years ago my husband and I moved to a college town in Wisconsin and I fell in love with a 1920s colonial house I found. My husband, not so much. He's a turnkey residence kind of guy, and to say that this house needed some work was an understatement. Literally every room of the house had an issue, mostly smaller issues, but literally every room had something going wrong with it. But because my husband was working on finishing his doctoral dissertation, working full-time and trying to get tenure at the university, a lot of the fixing up fell on me, who can barely hammer a nail straight. So my lifeline was calling my dad, who lived in another state. He was incredibly handy and typically walked me through the steps to do any number of things, from replacing double-hung window weights to changing out a light fixture. But after telling me how to do it, he would usually say be careful so you don't do this thing. And then he lists the common mistakes that people make when they're doing it. And honestly, I probably make those mistakes anyway, and sometimes I didn't even realize I made the error until the light didn't work or the window didn't close. That's how I see marketing too. It's easy to make common mistakes and sometimes you don't even know that you've actually made the mistake at all, until it's too late.

Janice Hostager: 1:54

Over the years, I've worked with a lot of small business owners and I tend to see the same errors over and over again no judgment. There's a reason why there are common marketing mistakes. After all, marketing is about testing, revising and trying again. I wanted to hit on these five common marketing mistakes and how to fix them, and be sure to stay to the end to find out how to get a couple of free tools that will help you out. So, before we get started, ask yourself this question. On a scale from one to five, how effective is the marketing that you're doing right now? If it's less than a four or five, it could be that you're falling into one of these traps. So here are the five most common mistakes I see business owners make.

Janice Hostager: 2:36

Mistake number one not getting narrow enough with your ideal customer avatar. Why is it a problem? When you try to market to everyone, everyone tunes out. Your ideal customer avatar, or ICA, is a fictitious person that is the best customer for each offer. I have a free download for determining who that is for you and I'll put the link in the show notes, but it is scary to go narrow, I get it. It feels a little unwise to focus so tightly on a single avatar when you really want to sell to anyone with a credit card. But remember, your ICA is your goal. Others will come along.

Janice Hostager: 3:16

Let me tell you the story of the retailer Anthropologie. They, like many big retailers, know exactly who their avatar is. They know she is well-traveled, she spends a lot of money where she lives, what she reads, what she likes to do on weekends, they'll tell you quote most stores cater to a broad base of customers or specialize in a product category. We specialize in one customer and we offer her everything from clothes to bed linens, to furniture, to soap. They've even named their avatar Julia. So when they're looking at purchasing for their stores, or even paint colors or clothing or dishes, they ask themselves is this what Julia would like? That's the power of an ideal customer avatar. And let me tell you it works for this successful retailer.

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But here's the thing, I also shop at Anthropologie, even though I don't make as much money as their avatar, and I'm older than their avatar. So does my daughter. Their avatar likes cooking, gardening and wine. I kind of like to cook, but I'm a horrible gardener and I rarely drink at all. So even though they have determined their avatar, anyone is welcome in the store. They won't turn me away and not accept my purchases. But when their ideal customer comes in, that person will feel like the store was made just for them. That's the idea behind an avatar. You will leave some people out. Nobody sells to everyone but you get to decide who that is and that will attract that particular ICA like a magnet. That's the power of going narrow. Okay, moving along.

Janice Hostager: 4:53

Mistake number two: talking about the product instead of the problem. People don't buy products, they buy solutions. Look, I get it. You have an amazing product or service and you know it can help people. But I like to think about the old adage from Theodore Roosevelt who said people don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. That's true in sales too. If they know you understand the problem they have and the pain they feel, they're going to be a whole lot more receptive to the solution you have.

Janice Hostager: 5:24

In copywriting, there's a formula I like to use called AIDA, a-i-d-a. It stands for Attention, interest, desire, action. I use this whenever I'm writing any kind of copy, for any ad, for any landing page, etc. So here's what it stands for, the attention phase. You need to get their attention. That could easily just be the problem they're experiencing, something like, are you frustrated with low Instagram engagement or counting calories and you're still not losing weight? These problem-focused headlines will hook their attention of the person who is struggling with that problem. Perfect. Next is interest. At this point, it's tell me more. They want to know how you'd help them. This is a good place to put facts. Pique their interest by providing information that's relevant and engaging. This could involve sharing statistics or stories that connect with their needs. Then desire. Now it's time to focus on building a strong desire for your product or service.

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You need to highlight the benefits and how it can solve their problem or fulfill their desires. Paint a picture of what their life will look like after buying your offer. Something like you'll never need to count calories again with this new method. And then, finally, action. This final stage encourages them to take a specific action, such as making a purchase or signing up for your freebie. This is where you can provide a clear call to action. So did you notice how far along I got before I started talking about the offer? It wasn't until the desire stage of the process. When you hit first on their problem and the pain you solve, it will get people's attention faster than talking about your solution. Also, there are a number of copywriting solutions. That's just the one I use most often, but with any of them, if you can lead with the transformation you provide, you'll get their attention and keep it. Okay.

Janice Hostager: 7:23

Moving along to mistake number three: trying to be on every social media platform. Why is that a problem? Because it dilutes effort and causes overwhelm. When I opened my first business, a design firm, I jumped on every social media platform that existed at the time and I immediately regretted it. Why? Because overwhelm is the real enemy of a small business owner and because my ideal customer isn't on every platform. So why am I spending time and money if you have a team creating content for you on the wrong customer? No matter who you are, you only have a finite number of hours in the day and finite money in the bank.

Janice Hostager: 8:05

Business is all about identifying your ICA and focusing on that one avatar for each offer. For social media, I recommend only one to two platforms. The one where your ICA spends the most time. If you're not sure what platform that is, you may have to test a few to see where they are, but then settle on those one to two platforms and focus your energy there. And here's another tip. We spend a lot of time trying to reach new audiences with social media. Remember to start with the audience that you already own your email list before diving into trends. The adage never build on rented land applies to growing a huge social media audience that could go away overnight with one tweak of an algorithm. I have seen it happen. Focus more time on driving traffic to your website, your offer and your email list.

Janice Hostager: 8:57

Okay, mistake number four: ignoring data and analytics. Oof, why is it a problem? Because you can't improve what you don't measure. I am definitely not a numbers girl, so I wanted to make sure and put this one in here, because it's the one I like to ignore too. But the numbers tell a story of what's working and what's not working, and we can't make decisions without that information. Checking analytics can be something that's easy to forget. That's why I put an analytics report day on my calendar for my own business and for each of my fractional CMO clients. Here's what I pay attention to Look at Google Analytics or other analytics platforms to see website traffic.

Janice Hostager: 9:40

Look at the total visitors that you've had, the top pages that's drawing them in, visitors that you've had the top pages that's drawing them in. And the traffic sources. Where are they finding you On search, social email or something else? Then, email performance. Take a look at the open rate. Are your subject lines grabbing attention? How's the click-through rate? Are people clicking on it and going to your website and engaging with your content? And what's the unsubscribe rate like? Are you losing subscribers after a specific type of content? Those are all really good things to know. Next, social media engagement. What are your top performing posts? How is your follower growth? Are you gaining or losing? And how many of your posts are actually driving traffic to your website?

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Next, sales and leads. Take a look at new leads or subscribers. Did your lead magnet or call to action work? Did your conversions work? Did a campaign or a piece of content result in a sale? And then, of course, if you're running ads, you want to pay attention to the analytics for that and the return on investment that you're getting. Getting in the

habit of checking this data will help your marketing stay on track and help you know how changes that you're making are being received. It's like brushing your teeth, just you don't have to do it twice a day. Just get in the habit of doing it and put it on your calendar and it's done. Right, all right.

Janice Hostager: 11:07

Mistake number five, the last one, doing random acts of marketing, which means you don't have a strategy. Why is it a problem? This leads to burnout, confusion and wasted time and money. I see this so often with small businesses. So if this is you, you're not alone. Without a marketing strategy, we tend to do whatever seems like we'll bring in business. You might run an ad, do social media and maybe attend a networking event or maybe send out a press release, but none of those are going to be part of an orchestrated effort and sales are unlikely to happen without a plan in place. It kind of just becomes marketing soup.

Janice Hostager: 11:48

Every tactic should support a stage of the customer journey. Create a clear, consistent strategy using my Trail to the Sale framework. This framework is built on something that doesn't change the customer's journey. It's not based on trends, it's not based on tactics. It's based on research and human behavior. It's focused on how people buy and the steps they take at every step of their journey, from discovering they have a problem until they buy and refer to others. I have a free download for that and I'll put the link to that one in the show notes for today as well. Okay, so I hope I've hit on something that you're doing and that this has helped. As I said earlier, no shame, this is just more about awareness and knowing where to turn next. We have all made one or more of these mistakes. For more information about anything we talked about today, including the free downloads, visit myweeklymarketing.com. Forward slash 116. That's episode 116. Thank you so much for joining me today. I'll see you next time. Bye for now.