

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. If showing up on social media feels more like a time-sucking chore than a business-building tool, then you're going to love today's episode. I'm chatting with Katie Brinkley of Next Step Social. Katie is a social media strategist who has cracked the code on making social media work without posting every day or dancing on TikTok. She's here to break down her four-post strategy, which is a smarter way to grow your business online that's clear, doable and surprisingly effective. If you've ever stared at your screen and thought, oh my gosh, what the heck am I going to post today, or if you feel like you're burning out, posting every single day without seeing the results, this one's for you. So here's my chat with Katie. Hey, Katie, welcome to My Weekly Marketing.

Katie Brinkley: 1:14

Thanks so much for having me.

Janice Hostager: 1:17

So let's talk about the basics and we're talking about your four post strategy. So tell me a little bit about you and how you developed that.

Katie Brinkley: 1:26

Yeah, well, it's funny because when I mean like it's always crazy to people because I own a social media agency, right, and here I am telling people well you don't need to post on social media so much.

Katie Brinkley: 1:40

But you know, let me post on social media for you. We're not going to do it very much for you, but I always thought there had to be a better way when it came to social media. And it feels like with everything on social media it's like, oh well, the key is going viral. All you got to do is get that one viral video and your life's going to be completely different. But it's kind of like, well, yeah, your life can be completely different if you win the lotto too. All you got to do is just pick the winning numbers, right, yeah, and but that's, that's not a, that's not a strategy, right, that's, that's not, that's, that's, that's just getting lucky.

Katie Brinkley: 2:21

And I'm tired of kind of just getting lucky when it comes to social media, and I didn't want to just try and get lucky with marketing. So I spent some time looking to see what was working on each of the social media platforms, with different goals and different objectives, and I saw certain posts did better on certain platforms for certain objectives and I started to really kind of track those and I built out the four post strategy based on this entire framework of. Okay, if I reverse, engineer an entire framework to have people do this end goal at the end of the week, how can I post less? And that's when the four-post strategy was born.

Janice Hostager: 3:17

I love it. Well, I'll have you walk us through that, but prior to doing that, how did you get into social media marketing in the first place?

Katie Brinkley: 3:26

Yeah, so I got into social media marketing back in the days of MySpace. I was in college at the time and I was working at the college radio station and part of the duties at the college radio station was to get bands to send you their music for free. And we were, get this, we were writing letters and shipping them off in the mail. I know it tells you how old I am, but yeah, I was like I know I'm like a dinosaur here, but I was like man, there has to be a better way than this. You know, there has to be a faster way for me to get more music in.

Katie Brinkley: 4:13

And there was this new thing called MySpace. I was like, well, what if I just send messages to bands I like on MySpace and see if they send me their CDs? And then it started working. And so I was getting all this music into the radio station and I was like, what if maybe they start sending me some merch and I give it away on air when I have my show? What if I just pass their CD off to, you know, some of the other stations around here? What if? And as I kept asking, what if, I was able to get more opportunities for these bands and I was getting more opportunities for myself and kind of promoting them and it really showed me a lot of opportunities that can happen just because of a social media app and asking what if?

Janice Hostager: 5:09

you went out and we're about giving right. We want music so we can share it. We want to, you know, have some merch so we can share it and give it out. And you know, you started out helping, which I love, because so many, so many times we think about what we want and we don't really think about how we can give. You know, but why don't you

take a slightly deeper dive here and walk us through each of the four types of posts and what role they play in business growth for a small business owner?

Katie Brinkley: 5:38

Yeah. So I mean, if you think about it, all these social media platforms, they have a different feel, right? I mean, if you go on Instagram, you go on there kind of expecting a different experience than when you go on to LinkedIn. And then if you were to open up TikTok or Facebook or Reddit or YouTube, I mean you go to each of these platforms expecting a different experience, right? And if you're posting and I get it there's a ton of social media schedulers out there. They're designed to make it easy so that you can post everywhere and be everywhere.

Katie Brinkley: 6:14

But if you're posting the same content everywhere, really are you going to get the same outcome or a good outcome everywhere? Probably not, because there's a different culture and there's a different way of creating content on these platforms. So I mean, if you think about it, tiktok, I mean short form video, right, short form video does the best on TikTok. LinkedIn, you can write articles over on and newsletters on LinkedIn. Instagram, the carousel post you know the swipable image that's killing it over on Instagram. Facebook, you can go live. You can have just the bold sentence with a different colored background.

Katie Brinkley: 6:58

I mean there's so many different ways to create content on each platform that if you're copying and pasting and just posting the same type of content on all the platforms, it's really content for nobody, and this four-post strategy is designed to really create the content for the customer or the person that you want to take action. And so the very first thing I want you to do, listener, is say okay, what platform do you enjoy being on the most? So tell me, which platform do you enjoy being on the most?

Janice Hostager: 7:38

Me?

Katie Brinkley: 7:39

Yeah.

Janice Hostager: 7:39

I like Instagram.

Katie Brinkley: 7:41

Instagram, okay, cool. So, like you're in the Starbucks lane and the line is long, you immediately regretted this decision and someone pulled up behind you and you're stuck there now for at least 15 minutes. So you opened up Instagram, right? Okay. So on Instagram, you're on here and you have a feed of short form video. You have carousels, you have pictures, you have stories. You have a ton of different ways to consume that content.

Katie Brinkley: 8:09

Now, if you are going to spend your time on Instagram, your clients are on Instagram as well, and so the very first post for your audience is going to be an awareness post. Now, depending on what your end goal is let's just say, for simplicity purposes now is to listen to today's podcast episode. That's your end goal at the end of the week is you want people to listen to this podcast episode? Your very first post for the week is going to be an awareness post, and maybe it's an Instagram reel of you doing something with trending audio, where it's you saying something like biggest misconception is that you need to post 42 times a day on Instagram. What if I said you only need to post four times a week? Something like that? You caught the right people's attention. You said a bold statement, you stopped at the scroll, you got in, you got out. People are going to say, huh, you're lying, or, yeah, you're right, or they're going to like it, whatever it is. You made an awareness post, you made people problem aware and you used a trending audio, which again is working in the algorithm so you're going to get shown to a larger audience, and you did a reel which is going to get seen in the feed more. So that was the awareness post and we just chose Instagram. We're not talking Facebook or LinkedIn or TikTok or anything else. We're only talking about one social media platform, right? Right?

Katie Brinkley: 9:46

The next post that you're going to do tomorrow will be an elaboration post, and this post will be a carousel post. And a carousel post again. A carousel post again are those swipable images. I'm going to say the 10 ways I grew my Instagram by posting three times last month. And then first was you know, I did this and I did it. So, like each slide is a tip, so every time someone slides, that counts as an engagement. Everybody is going to be going through there and engaging with it and it's going to be helping you with the algorithm. You're educating people and you're elaborating on the thing that you made people problem aware of yesterday.

Janice Hostager: 10:33

Love it.

Katie Brinkley: 10:34

The next post is the community post, so this is kind of the storytelling post. Are you familiar with Donald Miller at all?

Janice Hostager: 10:41

Yes

Katie Brinkley: 10:43

So listeners that are not aware of Donald Miller, he is the story brand guy. He also wrote *Hero on a Mission*, which is this book here. It's another great book. Highly highly recommend it. But this is where you place your audience member in the hero journey. So how have you overcome this problem? How have you helped the client overcome this? It makes it so that you are relatable and your audience can say oh man, I can trust Janice. She's been there too. I had no idea that she hated social media as much as me, or I had no idea that she, you know, wanted to grow her Instagram to 10,000 followers and she did it in 60 days or whatever. Oh, and she did it this way. This is where you tell your story.

Janice Hostager: 11:41

So just to be clear with the hero's journey, you are the guide, right?

Katie Brinkley: 11:45

Yes.

Janice Hostager: 11:45

Your customer's a hero, right.

Janice Hostager: 11:47

But as a guide you have experience.

Katie Brinkley: 11:50

Exactly.

Katie Brinkley: 11:51

And you can use and this is super easy post to make. It can be a selfie picture. It can be a picture of you and maybe we got together like in real life, Janice, and like snap a

picture of us together, whatever you and your customer or your client that you're sharing the story of, whatever it can be a picture of, maybe the lake, whatever you want. This would take two seconds for you to make this post because it's a picture of whatever. And then the last post is the action post. If you notice, we didn't mention that this podcast exists yet. We haven't asked them to leave social media. We've told them nothing. All we've done is give value with all these other posts.

Katie Brinkley: 12:34

Now this last post is asking them to take action, asking them to leave social media, to go listen to the podcast, to go one step further with us, you know, and say, hey, you could include maybe a cool, maybe a snippet from this podcast episode. Maybe I say something really smart. Who knows what's gonna happen in this episode here where I say something smart and say, hey, if you want to listen to the whole episode, comment podcast below and I'll send you the link. Or maybe you include a cool picture, or who knows. And this is where you ask people to leave social media, to go one step further with you and listen to the podcast, go to your website, whatever it is. But now you have the right people who have been seeing your content all week, are actually interested in your content and are willing to leave social media to go one step further.

Janice Hostager: 13:25

That's really great. So you gave me Instagram as an example, and so it would work on any of the platforms, right? As long as you were platform specific with your content.

Katie Brinkley: 13:37

Yes, yes, exactly. So, like, I chose Instagram for you because you said Instagram is your favorite, so I basically did an entire weeks of content for you, if you just go back and listen to the episode. But I mean, like, if you would have said Facebook, I would have given you different examples of, like the best performing kind of awareness post, or LinkedIn, it would have been, in you know, a poll for your awareness and then the elaboration would have been a LinkedIn newsletter and, yeah.

Janice Hostager: 14:01

Gotcha.

Janice Hostager: 14:03

I love that. It's very simple. Now did you do, you did four days in a row, right?

Katie Brinkley: 14:09

So this is where, do you look at your metrics regularly?

Janice Hostager: 14:14

I have an assistant that takes care of that.

Janice Hostager: 14:16

She does a great job.

Katie Brinkley: 14:17

Well great, then it'll be really easy for you to say, hey, what are the best days for posting?

Katie Brinkley: 14:22

and there's I mean Instagram, LinkedIn, Facebook. They give you the metrics. But there's tools out there like Agorapulse or Metricool and they give you all the analytics and a nice, real easy to understand report. Look at your metrics at least once a month and just be like, oh okay, it looks like my audience is on X day at this time. I should probably do my awareness post on this day and then do my you know elaboration post this day and then kind of follow it out that way. So for me, I do my posts Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and then Friday, Saturday, Sunday. I just take off. But I mean, for some of our clients we do Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday. Other clients it's Monday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday. It all depends on what your best days are.

Janice Hostager: 15:16

Do you feel like the algorithm, it doesn't like, so, I've had this drilled into my head for so many years that you want to post daily, if possible, right, or do whatever you can, that's within a reasonable amount of time, and I felt like if I post daily, if I'm posting the stories on weekends or whatever, then the algorithm is going to reward that. Right. Do you do the four posts just because it's more manageable or do you feel like it's beneficial?

Katie Brinkley: 15:48

So I do it because I want to create content that people want to see, and I know that all those posts are designed with purpose. They're designed like okay, this is who this is for. This is what I want them to walk away with, as opposed to just like here's another post, come buy from me or you know anything like that. Like here's more fluff, that's what my stories are for. My stories are 100. Like, if you want, I think boring content, check out my stories. Lots of pictures of my kids in there. That's just 100% fluff material right there. Like is what I'm up to as a mom is my stories. But like if you want to see my personal life, that's what stories is for, and I kind of just keep everything else. Like

business is in, like we're actually focused, getting helpful and getting new leads and getting, making quality stuff. If someone's going to see anything, it's in my feed.

Janice Hostager: 16:47

But through that personal stuff, your audience learns to know, like and trust you as well. Like, I follow people that I know through business and then I get pulled into, you know them looking for a new house, or you know their kids, just whatever you know, it's just, it's nice, because then I feel like, oh, they're not just somebody I follow on social media, they're somebody that's a friend, because I feel like I have inside knowledge of their life, I don't know. So I think those have value too, right?

Katie Brinkley: 17:16

Yeah, and I mean like, and that's where, like stories, like Instagram and Facebook have stories, and that's where I do think it's important to add the stories, like I said, kind of the personal stuff, because the only people that see those are people that follow you, and so it allows you to kind of show the personal, your personal side. Strangers don't see it unless they're like actively like "who's this person I follow" You're not just showing a bunch of randos unless they actively seek you out.

Janice Hostager: 17:50

Right, right, right. Love it. So do you use any tools for posting or do you just post directly?

Katie Brinkley: 17:57

Like I said, I like Metricool. Metricool and Agorapulse. We use Agorapulse for our clients, and then Metricool is what I use for all of my posts and my reporting. Those are two phenomenal tools that I highly recommend.

Janice Hostager: 18:13

So I'm just going to go in and because I have clients that ask me social media questions all the time and I feel like I have tried a lot of different strategies over the years and I'm not a social media strategist and, frankly, social media changes so much that you know what worked a year ago isn't necessarily going to work today anyway.

Janice Hostager: 18:32

So I don't feel terrible about doing this, but really it is just a matter of communicating with them and writing the changes in the algorithm, because, heaven knows, I mean, it's changing all the time, right? So some of the questions I get is like I've got clients that are

posting four or five times a week. They're trying to put out valuable content, they're just not getting traction. They think that the algorithm hates them, and I'm sure that you've encountered these clients as well right so what do

Janice Hostager: 19:05

you have to say to them?

Katie Brinkley: 19:06

So with the four post strategy.

Katie Brinkley: 19:09

It's designed to feed the algorithm what it wants. If you noticed, all those were different types of posts. If you're only doing reels, then you're not giving the platform what it wants. If Instagram wanted only reels, it would only give you the option to create reels, but it gives you the option to make stories. It gives you the option to make carousels.

Katie Brinkley: 19:36

Honestly, at the time of this podcast recording, carousels get the best reach. That's why I said you should do carousels for your elaboration posts, because those are the thought leadership posts I mean. But I mean, like, this is where, like, you're giving the platform what it wants, You're giving the algorithm what it wants and kind of saying like, OK, you want a reel, here you go. You're wanting a carousel, here you go. You want a single image, here you go.

Katie Brinkley: 20:02

I've given you everything that you want a variety of posts, and I mean, like heck, on the action post, if you want to go live, that's your wild card. On the action post, if you want to go live, that's your wild card. You do what you want. You know you can do a reel if you wanted to. I mean, whatever you want to do, it's the mystery, the mystery post, whatever the poster's choice. But that way you're giving the algorithm a little bit of everything. You're posting a variety of days, You're posting a variety of ways and you're looking at your metrics, you're looking at your insights and posting on the days that your audience is already on, so that you're getting the boost already from your audience that's already there before the algorithm comes in to help you.

Janice Hostager: 20:47

Love it. So how do you come up with post ideas?

Katie Brinkley: 20:52

Well, it helps a lot if you have a podcast. I mean, if you have a podcast or if you guest on podcasts, you're like golden. Especially if you want to use the four post strategy, I really recommend anybody that owns a business should have a podcast or should guest on podcasts. I think that it is one of the best ways to really get clear about what it is that you're passionate about. It's how I was able to get clear on the four post strategy. I mean, it really was. So I think that podcasting is a great way to create more content. If you have a podcast, you can have blogs, you can have social media content, you can have newsletter content. The world is your oyster. But if you say, Katie, that sounds great, I just don't have the time. I don't really want to talk into a microphone. It's not my jam.

Katie Brinkley: 21:50

Go to your website, go to your frequently asked questions. Start there. That is a week's worth of content. I promise you Just that one frequently asked question. Move down the list and then you can move on and then micro content out off of the very first question.

Katie Brinkley: 22:07

Okay, so now that we answered this question, you know, of how we help, what makes us different? And now let's answer what makes us different for ideal client one. What makes us different for ideal client two what makes us different? You know, you can go down the list like that and again using the four post strategy of awareness, elaboration. Believe it or not, Reddit is still around folks and Reddit is a great spot to go and find what people are talking about. So if you take your frequently asked questions and put it into Reddit and then put your ideal client in there, you'll find that there's a lot of things that people are talking about and you can say, oh OK, I could rework that in there. That's how I could turn this into social media posts. It's a gold mine, but I like my first answer better of starting a podcast. I think you should start a podcast.

Janice Hostager: 23:14

Yeah, I agree. I think there's always good content that comes from podcasts, even blog posts, for sure, because I mean they're important for SEO reasons. You don't want to totally abandon the blog because people are, you know, even AI is using blogs.

Katie Brinkley: 23:27

Oh yeah.

Janice Hostager: 23:27

Do you use AI?

Katie Brinkley: 23:29

Oh, yeah, in fact, a number of our clients who, we have a lot of clients that we are launching AI podcasts for. So one of our clients she has a podcast, but she has launched a Spanish division of her business. She does not speak Spanish, but she has Spanish speaking employees, but none of them wanted to do the podcast, so we just re-translated her current podcast into Spanish with her voice, so now she has an entire podcast that's in her voice, spoken in Spanish, that we've used AI to do. So, yeah.

Janice Hostager: 24:07

Crazy right?

Katie Brinkley: 24:08

Yeah.

Janice Hostager: 24:10

So obviously you're a client, so you probably are a fan of outsourcing social media, right?

Katie Brinkley: 24:16

Yeah, yes.

Janice Hostager: 24:18

Yeah. Yeah, when is it a good time for a small business owner to start outsourcing their social media, or when it may be just to take a break?

Katie Brinkley: 24:42

One of the biggest mistakes that I made as a business owner was waiting to hire, because I've, nobody could do my job as good as I could. Right? And whether it's social media, bookkeeping, I don't, I don't care what it is, can you do it? But could your time be spent doing something else that you're probably better at? Yeah, so I mean, I think that really one of the best things I did.

Katie Brinkley: 25:04

There's this tool called Toggl, t-o-g-g-l, and it's free, and I tracked myself for a month with every single task that I was doing, and even like when I took bathroom breaks and stuff,

and it blew my mind how long certain tasks took me, and that was how I figured out one, how long certain tasks took me and two, what tasks I enjoyed doing and which tasks I didn't like doing. And that's how I figured out. You know what? My podcast, I'm thinking it's taking me an hour a week. It takes me six because I'm editing it, I'm booking the pre-interviews, I'm creating the social media assets.

Katie Brinkley: 25:49

I'm doing this, I'm doing that, and I was only saying it takes me an hour a week. That's crazy. I should probably hire somebody to help me with this, because I'm not giving it up. I love my podcast but like I really shouldn't be spending all this time doing this part of it. So I mean again, like I would whether it's social media, like I said, social media, bookkeeping, whatever it is, look at where I would track your hours, literally everything that you do, and say like I'm spending a lot of time doing this. This would be a great thing for me to outsource, because maybe it is social media and you're outsourcing it for \$1,000 a month, because that's \$1,000 a month that you could spend doing a sales call a month, because that's a thousand dollars a month, that you could spend doing a sales call a month to bring in five thousand dollars a month.

Janice Hostager: 26:40

There's a really good book called Buy Back Your Time by Dan Martell. Yeah, I recommend that to every entrepreneur I meet. I think I've done, I've done full podcast episodes talking about this. But absolutely, the reason I was asking about social media in particular is because I feel like sometimes we're a little inauthentic if we have somebody else doing our social media. You know if it's, I'm posting a picture of myself and maybe even my family or something I did. I kind of feel like, well, this really wasn't from me.

Janice Hostager: 27:09

You know I was like I have somebody else working on it and she's doing a great job, but at the same time, you know, I'm just wondering how. If you know, maybe nobody can tell, I don't know, Probably nobody can tell. I just feel like I can tell sometimes. But so I'm just curious about that one. But yeah, you have a business to run. You cannot wear all the hats. It is impossible to grow while you're wearing all the hats, so you do have to decide what you're going to outsource and what you're going to keep in.

Janice Hostager: 27:41

So now you have a book about this. I see it in your video. I see the social shift and does that talk about the four post formula?

Katie Brinkley: 27:53

Four post strategy. Yes, it does so. It's The Social Shift: The Road Back to Community. It's you know I was actually just talking about this today at lunch with somebody was that. With social media, it was designed to help us find connection with people all over the world. You know, think about I was able to make connections with people, all these bands, and it was amazing. And now we're building these connections and it's hurting our in-person relationships. You know, we're more interested in spending time like this than we are like this, you know. So look for people that are listening. I was making eye-to-eye contact as a symbol of emotions.

Katie Brinkley: 28:47

And it really makes me sad because I love social media and the relationships it's built, the connections it's given me, the community that it's given me, and I think that all these platforms, they all exist for different reasons. They all exist for a reason, especially with AI. If we're all just having computers, talk to computers and we're all just AI, I mean, like what is happening here, you know, like there's a person behind the screen and it'd be amazing if we can have that person make a connection and go and talk to the person in real life and have a great in-person relationship. You know, and it happened. And how can we make that happen? Well, it's through social media and it's by showing up less and building a business and by spending less time on that screen to have more of an impact. So I talk about that in The Social Shift: The Road Back to Community. You can get it at [katiebrinkley.com slash book](http://katiebrinkley.com/slash/book) or on Amazon and hopefully it will give you the keys to getting you know, getting back to the way that social media was originally intended, so that you're not spending all your time on social media, making a bunch of dancing videos and just wasting away in front of a screen. Yeah, and I mean like I get it. Like I have. I have a social media agency and I speak on a lot of stages about social media.

Katie Brinkley: 30:18

I actually just was at Social Media Week and it's it's one of my favorite conferences. I've gone three years in a row now and I love it because I get to see a lot of my social media friends that I only see on like Facebook and stuff. But it's so funny because I was just talking with my social media manager and she's like I really want to post some pictures and stuff from the event and I was like I think I have like three and she was like what? And I was like I didn't take any pictures. And she's like why? And I was like I don't know I was having too much fun, like I didn't take any pictures, I had my phone in my back pocket, I wasn't doing any, I was just enjoying the moment, you know, and that's I mean

like kind of like screwed things up for my social media person, but like I was making memories, you know.

Janice Hostager: 31:06

So yeah, yeah, yeah, I 100% agree with that. I think we remember those interactions so much better too, and you actually can make real-life friends.

Janice Hostager: 31:15

I feel, like I've made a lot of connections, especially through my podcast and just reaching out to people on social media. But I love those events like Social Media Marketing World. I was at this one and just saw so many people that I had interacted with online and it was so nice to see them in the flesh, you know, and to really make that connection and I really feel like that. I think social media can be a stepping stone to that.

Katie Brinkley: 31:41

Totally.

Janice Hostager: 31:41

You can reach out to people, find somebody that you'd like to work with or that can. Maybe you could help each other and so much of that.

Janice Hostager: 31:52

I think we're getting so isolated in our little offices or in front of our screens and we forget that we can just reach out to people, talk to them. If they reply, great, if they don't, that's okay, and, you know, make plans to meet up to, you know, gather in some day, some place and really make connections that can help each other, because we all are connected to other people and you know, I think, especially as women, we are hardwired for relationships, so I love that idea for that too, yeah, but this is kind of off on another tangent, but anyway. Well, where can people find out more about you, Katie?

Katie Brinkley: 32:35

Yeah, go to katiebrinkley.com. That's where you can get the book, you can listen to the podcast, you can connect with me on social. Do all the things, katiebrinkley.com.

Janice Hostager: 32:44

Love it. Well, thanks so much for being with me today.

Katie Brinkley: 32:46

Yeah, thanks for having me.

Janice Hostager: 32:49

How amazing does that sound? Katie just gave us permission to simplify and get better results, and I don't know about you, but I'm already planning my next four posts. If you want to learn more about Katie and the four-post strategy, then head on over to katiebrinkley.com and check out her resources. I'll also link everything we talked about today in the show notes. You can find those at myweeklymarketing.com/117. Thank you so much for listening today. We'll see you next time. Bye for now.