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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 there and welcome back to My Weekly Marketing. Okay, quick question. If somebody read your Instagram post or your website copy or an email that you sent without seeing your name or your photo, would they know it's from you? If not, this episode is for you. Because brand voice is what makes your content instantly recognizable. And it's one of the most powerful ways to build trust and stand out online. Because let's face it, you can have the most beautiful website and the cleverest logo or tagline, but if your brand voice doesn't sound like you or it doesn't connect emotionally with your audience, then your marketing is going to fall flat. In this episode, we'll cover what a brand voice really is, how to define yours, and how to use it consistently so people immediately recognize your brand, even before they see your logo, or your face, or your name. And be sure to stay through to the end because I'm going to tell you how to grab your free Discover Your Brand Guidebook, a simple step-by-step resource that will help you uncover the brand voice that you've been trying to build. Okay, so let's start out with some definitions. What is a brand voice? So your brand voice is the personality of your business expressed through your words and the tone of your words. It's how you communicate with your audience. That might be through emails, on social media, through your website, anything that's written. Think of it this way: if your brand walked into a party, how would it introduce itself? Would it be bold and direct like Duracell Batteries? Or maybe a bit rebellious like Harley Davidson? Or soft and sweet like Victoria's Secret or L'Oreal. Each of these brands has a very distinct voice, and your voice should be distinct too. Your voice is what helps people feel something when they interact with your brand, and it's what makes it memorable. When your brand voice is clear, people don't just recognize your content, they start to trust you. They know what to expect from you. That consistency is comforting, especially in an online world that can feel noisy and unpredictable. So how do you find your voice? Let's start by thinking about your brand as a person. What three words would you use to describe it? Let's say you're a business coach. Are you encouraging, direct, and no nonsense? Maybe like a tough love mentor? Or maybe you're more nurturing and insightful and try to inspire your clients, more of a trusted guide. The way you describe your brand's personality should align with your audience's needs and expectations. So here's an easy exercise. Look at your brand values and your mission statement. Ask yourself, if these values could talk, what would they sound like? For example, if one of your brand values is simplicity, your

voice should sound clear and easy to understand, not full of jargon. If your brand values innovation, your tone might be a little more forward-thinking and bold. The goal is to define your brand voice so it feels authentic and attracts your ideal customer. If you're a solopreneur or founder, you might find the brand sounds a lot like your personality. And that's the idea. Once you defined your brand voice, the next step is keeping it consistent. You need to get it written down and communicate this to your team, even if you just work with freelancers periodically. It doesn't have to be fancy, even a simple Google Doc works. I know that's where mine is. Include examples of words, phrases, or descriptions of ways that your brand should speak. Are you more buttoned up or are you more easygoing and informal? For example, if the voice is friendly and conversational, you might say, okay, let's dive in, instead of, in this article, we will discuss da-da-da. So no matter what it is, you just need to be able to communicate that to the people that you work with. You also want to put in there words or maybe tones that your brand doesn't use. For example, some brands use curse words and others never do. So one of the best examples of consistent brand voice I've seen is MailChimp. Whether you're reading their website or their product updates, or even like error messages on their site, it always sounds like MailChimp. It sounds helpful, human, and a little bit witty or funny. That's what we're aiming for. A voice that stays steady wherever your audience encounters you. Next, you need to connect emotionally with your audience, right? So here's where brand voice really shines with that emotional connection. People don't buy from people that are the most professional sounding businesses. They buy from the brand that gets them, the people that they can relate to, even if those people are a company or a corporation. That's why storytelling is a powerful part of your voice. When you share a story, a real relatable one, it signals empathy. And people remember stories. There's an old saying in marketing, facts tell, but stories sell. Your about page or your website is the perfect place for your story. It's typically the second or third most visited page on people's website. So people have a genuine curiosity about who they're talking to in their business and who the founders are, or what's their story, how they got to where they are. People want to know your why. That's true in all of marketing. People really want to understand who you are behind the screen, behind the email, behind the microphone. So maybe you share how you felt when you were first starting your business. Or maybe a funny behind-the-scenes moment when things did not go as planned. Those small human moments will help your audience feel seen. Remember, nobody has times when everything goes well. So they're going to feel like, oh, I can take a deep breath. This happens to everybody, right? Remember that emotion is the entry point to trust. And part of buying, part of the sales process is a no like and trust factor. Your voice is how to make people feel something. It might be curiosity, comfort, excitement, relief, and they need to do that before they ever take action. Next, let's talk about authenticity because it's the heartbeat of a strong brand voice. Your audience can spot inauthentic marketing

from a mile away. I know a lot of new startups look at someone successful and try to kind of capture that same feel on their own website. And I get it, we all want to follow somebody that's successful because success leaves clues, right? But if you try to sound like somebody else or copy even what's trending, it really creates a disconnect and people can sense it. It's hard to pinpoint, but if you've ever heard somebody who's being inauthentic, you will know it. That's why sometimes I think politicians struggle, because one time at one point they can say one thing, another point down the line they'll say another, and people pick up on that. And it makes them a little lacking in trust. But that's my opinion. Anyway, authenticity doesn't mean oversharing every detail of your life. It means being real about what you believe, what you stand for, and how you serve your customers. And it's okay to evolve, to admit when you've changed your mind or learned something new. That kind of transparency builds credibility if it's authentic. Perfection doesn't create connection. Honesty does. And finally, remember that your brand voice isn't static. It grows as you do. When your business pivots, your offers will expand or your audience can change. Your voice can and should evolve too. Maybe you started out sounding scrappy and DIY, but now your brand has matured and you want to sound more elevated and strategic. That's totally okay. The key is to evolve while staying true to your core, the values and personality that made your audience fall in love with you and your brand in the first place. So think of Apple. Their tone has shifted from think different, which was rebellious and innovative when they first came out in the 80s, to something more refined and aspirational. But the heart of innovation remains part of the brand. Check in on your brand every so often. Does that voice still fit where your business is headed? If not, make some small, intentional shifts. Okay, so this was a short episode, but to recap, building your brand voice is all about defining your personality, staying consistent across all your platforms, creating emotional connection through storytelling, showing up authentically, and allowing your voice to evolve as your business grows. Your brand voice is one of the most powerful marketing tools you have because it is what helps people remember you, relate to you, and ultimately to know like and trust you. So if you're struggling with your brand voice or really anything about your brand, I want to invite you to download my free Discover Your Brand Guidebook. It will walk you through step by step what you need to do to create a strong brand and really define your own brand voice. To get it, you can go to the show notes for today's episode at myweeklymarketing.com. Thanks so much for joining me today. And if you enjoyed this episode, please share it with somebody that could use it, or DM me on Instagram at Janice Hostager Marketing. I'd love to hear your feedback. I'll see you next time. Bye for now.