

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 you've ever thought, I've tried everything and I still don't feel like what I'm doing is working, please listen before you give up. This episode is for you. This is a short episode today, but I want to do this to encourage you. Because here's what I know about you. You're not lazy, you're a hard worker. You're not avoiding the work, and you're definitely not bad at marketing or running a business. You've taken courses, you've downloaded freebies, you've posted consistently, at least for a while, and you've listened to podcasts like this one. And yet marketing still feels harder than it should. So today I want to talk to you about why that happens and why trying harder is probably not the answer. Neither is blaming yourself. And worst of all, don't give up. Okay, so let's start out by naming the real fear. What most people don't say out loud is this. I'm scared that if this business doesn't work, then nothing will. So instead of slowing down, they push harder. You try more content and more ideas. Under all that effort, you're wondering, what if I already tried everything and I just can't get it to work? If that thought has crossed your mind even once, I want you to know that effort is not the same as direction. You can be doing a lot of marketing and still not be doing the right marketing for where your business is right now. I use this analogy a lot, but it fits so well. Marketing without a strategy is like hiking without a map. You can be moving nonstop, you can be exhausted, and you can still end up lost. Most small business owners don't have a motivation problem. What they have is a sequencing problem. They're doing awareness tactics when they need clarity. They're writing content before they understand their customer, and they're trying to convert people who were never warmed up to begin with. So they blame themselves when really they were never given a roadmap. Maybe that's YouTube. When I started my first business, I'd come out of 15 years in the marketing world. I'd worked with big corporations, agencies, and nonprofits. But when I had my own business, I no longer had a precedent that I could look to. I had a new audience, a new service, and no team of other professionals that I could rely on. I was totally on my own, just like a lot of us are when we start out. So I spent a lot of time thinking I just needed to do more, be more consistent and visible and do more social media, more videos. And yes, some of that worked, but my system always felt fragile. Like if I stopped pushing, everything would stop and my business would fall apart. And what's worse, the thing I was taught to rely on, the marketing funnel, did not seem to work the way I wanted it to. A marketing funnel, which you might or may not be familiar

with, is based on the theory that if you have a ton of people that go into the top of your funnel in the awareness stage, some would just turn into sales. It was developed in the 1890s, so it's possible at one time this worked like a charm. But in the social media internet world, it just wasn't working for me. In real life, prospects didn't just fall into being a customer. They needed to be nurtured and led. Sometimes they'd unsubscribe and leave altogether, but come back later. Sometimes they wouldn't. And the funnel stopped at the point of sale when the customer's repeat business or referrals can be a huge income generator. So it didn't take that into account at all. So I really looked at how my customers were actually buying and how I bought in our digital world. It wasn't really a funnel, it was more like a roadmap or a trail. So I called it the trail to the sale. It started with awareness where my potential customer could discover me. Then it moved to the consider stage where I could nurture that customer through email content and website content, and they could learn more about me and how to know like and trust me. But because I know that potential customers like to look around before they buy, I then addressed the compare stage and how to stand out in a sea of competition. From there, it was time for them to evaluate my offer, either through a conversion event like a webinar or a challenge, or a low-cost offer. Next, it was finally the sell stage, where I looked at the pricing and countered objections. But it didn't stop there because once you have somebody interested in buying, if you don't offer an Epsil, you're really leaving money on the table. So that's the supersize stage. And once the sale is over, you need to make sure that they're a happy camper. That's the serve stage after the sale. Then comes the opportunity to ask happy customers to tell others. Referral leads convert about three to five times higher than paid ads or other channels and are four times more likely to make a purchase. So that referral, what I call the send stage, is really an important part of the whole trail. The Trail to the Sale provided structure to my marketing and turned my business around. I want to say this clearly because some of you need to hear it. You don't have to hit rock bottom to invest in structure. The key to build a roadmap is before the chaos or the frustration takes hold. It's choosing sustainability. And needing a plan doesn't mean you failed, it means you're ready to stop guessing and that you're really on the right path. This is the same structure I use inside my modern marketing mastery course. Not piling on more tactics, but helping you see what's actually moving the needle and what's actually missing from your own trail to the sale so your effort finally starts to compound. We start by looking at some realistic goals and then move to really do a deep dive into your ideal customer to understand exactly what they're looking for and how to talk to them. Then we looked at messaging and the components they need to hear, not what they'll get from Chat GPT, actual messaging that moves them. From there, we go down the trail to the sale in the same process I just talked about. And after each trail stop, we look to see what the right answer is for your specific business, because it's not a one-size-fits-all program. Sure,

we you do use AI in smart ways, but ultimately you'll learn what to do first, second, and through the whole marketing process until your customers buy, buy again, and refer others. And what I want for you, if you're part of Moderate Marketing Mastery or not, is to know that there's a way forward that's worked for me, it's worked for my students, and has impacted the businesses that I've worked with. I'd invite you to download the Overwhelmed Entrepreneurs Marketing Strategy playbook for free. That'll show you the eight-step framework that I just talked about that you'll need to move forward your business. You can find that at JaniceHostager.com forward slash trail, or I'll put the link in my show notes for today. If this episode made you feel a little bit like, okay, there's a way out of this, or help you realize that maybe you're not the problem, that's my goal. That was what I wanted for you today. Clarity isn't some sort of luxury. Clarity is a strategy. You don't need more hustle, you need strategy, and strategy is what will move the needle in your business. Okay, so this is a short episode, but for more information about Modern Marketing Mastery or my free download or anything we talked about today, visit myweeklymarketing.com forward slash one forty three. Thanks so much for joining me today. I'll see you next time. Bye for now.