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180. Why Being Yourself Is Your Best Marketing Strategy with Maria-Katarina Johannesson

Janice Hostager: [00:00:00] One of the best summers we ever spent was when my professor husband got an opportunity to do some research in Sweden. It's a beautiful country, so I wanna say if you ever get an opportunity to visit, please do. But before we left the US, I practiced Swedish every day, and I learned a few words, but when I arrived, wherever I tried to practice my newly acquired Swedish language, such as in the grocery store or at a restaurant, people would reply in English.

I'm not gonna lie, it was a little disheartening. Perhaps my Swedish really wasn't as good as I thought it was. But anyway, in Sweden, there's a word, lagom, and it means not too much, not too little. It's sort of safely in the middle. And my guest today calls herself anti-lagom.

And honestly, with AI making everything sound the same, safe in the middle is exactly where you disappear. So here's the problem. Everybody's using AI to write their posts, their emails, their DMs. Inboxes are flooded, and it all kinda sounds the same, in the middle, and people are tired of it. My guest sends a lot of outreach, and she says the replies she gets keep saying the same thing.

People are craving something genuine, and I 100% agree. So how do you stand out as a real human in the age of AI and still get found? My guest, Maria Katarina Johansson does link building and digital PR, and she spent more than 10 years in sales before that. For her, it's about relationships . You'll learn how to decide what you wanna be known for, how to reach out to people without being transactional, and a super simple way to find links that you've already earned but aren't getting credit for. And stick around to the end.

Maria shares the fear that held her back for years, plus exactly what she'd do if she had just an extra 30 minutes [00:02:00] this week. Here's my talk with Maria

Hey, Maria. Welcome to My Weekly Marketing

Maria-Katarina Johannesson: Thank you so much for having me, Janice. I'm so excited to be here

Janice Hostager: Now you are Swedish, marketer, you're plant obsessed, you love to knit, and you're a new mom, right?

So was showing that much personality on your website a strategy or is that just who you are and you're just open about it?

Maria-Katarina Johannesson: I'm actually so happy you asked me that question because, sometimes when I go on these podcasts or in any other circumstance, I'm asked to introduce myself, it's very easy for me or for anybody, I think, to just go on and say, "Hi, my name is Maria Katarina Johannesson, and I do link building, I do this."

but I think it's so important that we tie it back and not, , or never forget the human factors, whether that is that you're into knitting or that you're li- enjoying specific music or that you're extra clumsy, I believe that people do business with people they like.

To answer your question a little bit more straightforward, I guess you can say it was a strategy, but for me it has n- never... I don't know what the alternative is. I can't do the alternative.

Janice Hostager: Yeah. Well, that makes sense. I mean --you are who you are, right? Yeah. So how does somebody stand out as a real human when there's so much AI going on right now? Everybody is turning to AI to write content, to write emails, et cetera. How do you stand out as being a real human in all of that?

Maria-Katarina Johannesson: Yeah, I think that's the million-dollar question, right? We're all trying to figure that out. But for me I think a good starting point is to define I like to say what you want to be known for. , and [00:04:00] because what you want to achieve in the end goal is topic ownership. You want to not only...

You don't want people not only to think about you when it comes to your products and services, you want that, you want them to tie what you do to, with a little bit of who you are. , and I don't necessarily believe that you have to do, go all in and just be Like pure in-influencer, go down that road.

But I do think a little bit goes along the way, but then I think you also have to do some good background research to really get a good understanding of also what, what what actually resonates with your target audience. Where are they currently paying attention? what do they like? Who has their trust, and why is that?

And is there a way that you can combine what your audience is all about to what you are all about and s- and in a way that feels authentic? Because I think it's also very easy that, and I think people are generally very very sensitive to the fact, that it sometimes feel like an, as a, a, a performance.

So we really want to, tap into even, like I said, like the quirky side of things. I jokingly say that I am anti-lagom, for instance, and for your international listeners, lagom is a term in Swedish that means not too much and not too little, just very safe in the middle. And that's something I s- keep saying, when I go to po- on podcasts.

I have written that in my LinkedIn, notes, or not, like in the About page. And, I try to [00:06:00] reference my soft values, the personality, assets, if you wanna s- call them that, in a variety of way, but that always feels true to myself because otherwise it's not then you're just gonna do it for one month, and you, then you're just gonna hop around, and that's not, that's gonna feel disingenuous both to yourself and to your listeners, and then you're gonna send out weak signals to AI search and Google.

Janice Hostager: Gotcha. do you think that like human connection and AI visibility compete or can they work together?

Maria-Katarina Johannesson: That is good question. I do think so in a way. By saying that, I mean that I think it's very tempting. If somebody's holding, if somebody says like, "Hey, instead of d- doing this and it will take you one hour, this can take you five minutes," I think it's very... I think us as humans just want to... Who doesn't wanna save time?

But the downside of that is that it's a very slippery slope. It's easy to go down the AI slop road and, with that it is impossible, in my opinion, to make a real human connection. And, also if we think a, if we think a little, a few steps further, for instance, what does people's, inboxes look like?

I mean, they're flooded and I know this firsthand because I do a lot of outreach. I send so many emails, DMs, both, for, to attend on podcasts, but s- but also for link building campaigns. And I get this, the same sort of replies over and over again that peoples are so tired of this AI slop.

They have this really big urge of just [00:08:00] people being genuine. So when we use AI in a smart way and actually in a way that makes sense. So for instance, if I give you an example, I use AI sometimes to, look up people. If I pr- for instance, when I went on this podcast, I research- I asked AI to tell me a little bit about you and, so it told me that you like salad.

So, I was like, "Hey, yeah, we have that in common." So,

Janice Hostager: knew that, but okay.

Maria-Katarina Johannesson: Okay. But what I'm trying to say, if w- if we use it in that way, it can actually, we can plant like some really cool seeds. Seeds of col- collaboration, seeds of human connection, and, unity.

Janice Hostager: Right. So because AI is really is changing how people discover businesses or people, what does it really take to get found today? 'Cause I know that you, your background is link building. Has that changed a lot with AI, and how is that different from what used to work a few years ago?

Maria-Katarina Johannesson: Yeah. We could talk just about this question for hours and hours, right? But I think, what AI, AI has done is that it has basically forced, companies and brands to

build a real brand. And what I mean by that is that a real brand to me is a brand that has a soul, that has a face.

I think the days where you could go by and be a faceless brand, is over. People are gonna disagree, and that's fine, but I do believe that, the, to go back to what we talked just a few moments ago, the need, the urge for human connection, and also tying that into the entity, like we say in SEO language, the entity of the founder is a such a great way of standing out in terms of positioning to, in terms of [00:10:00] messaging.

So I think that's a, a huge, difference. But also, when it comes to, you need to put in so much more effort, I think, today than just, a few years ago because what AI has done is that all, we h- we all of a sudden have all these tools, all of these apps, we have all of these... The possibilities are endless, but that also means that there are so much more noise.

So the bar of actually producing and leveraging good content and authentic content and an, an authentic self and actually create a real message, I mean, the bar is just so high today

Janice Hostager: Hmm. Yeah, that's a really good point. I think there was a time where we had more trust in corporations especially, we're not talking about individual brands, but just larger brands. I think of, like Tesla, for example, comes to mind. Elon Musk, he lives here in, in my city, I think.

I mean, he bops, hops around a bit. But, well, he has a house here in my city, in Austin, and I think people either love him or they hate him. And it really made a difference in terms of sales for them too. I mean, it's like people who were, I think, very, very, planet-minded, Earth-minded, and they bought their Tesla and thinking it was really making a positive impact for the Earth, suddenly flipped their tunes when he became politically involved with the right-wing party.

I think understanding that impact, that no matter what your product or service, you're still open to the judgment of people , the founder is open to the judgment, and that will certainly impact the brand itself. So that's a really good point, and especially with personal brands, right? We [00:12:00] both have personal brands, you know?

And we'll talk more about that in a little bit too. But, but yeah, so yeah, like getting found, I think too, y- you really need to have that, ability to communicate that quickly and so that people can connect with that right away. Either love... They either love you or don't love you, and, I think sort of what I've seen happen here.

So my listener is a solopreneur. They have maybe a small website and probably not a marketing team. What are the most important things that they can do to build credibility and still be discovered on both search engines and with potential customers?

Maria-Katarina Johannesson: Mm. So the first thing, I would do is to ask myself or, ask your listeners, to, answer the question: What do you wanna be known for? Because what you want to achieve is topic ownership.

Janice Hostager: Mm-hmm.

Maria-Katarina Johannesson: I would define a couple of core entities. So if I talk about myself, just to give very clear... So it gets clear, I'm Maria-Catarina Johannesson.

I go by Links Maria. My core entities, are, relationship marketing, link building, digital PR, SEO, but also more soft values like anti-lagom, internetting, plant mama, human mama. So what I'm trying to say here is that, ideally y- we, like we discussed, you wanna tie what you do to something that is actually makes you and not like just any generic brand.

So that is very important. And then, get a super good understanding of, who has your audience trust. Where are they paying attention? And, I would also recommend to think in a way, like what does a normal work week look like for your target audience? Because that's a very good way of, getting into their mind.

Like, what problems do they have on a regular basis? What, what keeps them up at night? What [00:14:00] challenges do they have? And create just a... It can be even be like a Word document, a swipe file where you just throw this in, and this we, you could use later for ideation when we do maybe for your content for your social media backlinks, content for your website.

But we can also use this, information, when we do prospecting. And when I say prospecting, I mean finding relevant people for you to establish relationships with. like you ha-have mentioned, I am into link building and, I like to actually do the comparison that link building is actually more relationship building because there are humans involved, and we need humans, and we should honor humans.

So, if your listeners are thinking, "Okay, but, this sounds, maybe a little bit confusing. What can I actually do, like hands-on?" So I would, I would swap things around and, ask yourself who shares a part of your target audience but are not competitors?

Janice Hostager: Hmm,

Maria-Katarina Johannesson: So, because there is some sort of common ground. You could use these, non-competing, companies or groups later f- when we do prospects. Sorry, prospecting. So, those are opportunities for to create really good relationships with.

And I would also s- want to ask, leave you, or tell your audience to think about what can you offer to other people. Let's say... I know if you have a podcast, that's a fantastic way. That would make your value proposition very strong if you would go out and maybe ask and establish a relationship with a website, and you [00:16:00] want to, you wanna to, write a case study about a certain product on their website.

So if you could phrase, frame that as, "Hey, I have this podcast. I think it would be a good, fit for this. This is what you would gain. I have so and so many followers, and et cetera, et cetera.

And, would it be possible if I can, write a case study on your website about how much your product has helped me?

It's helping me daily or weekly and my team, and in return get a link back." That is a really strong value proposition. It's gonna be hard for them to say no. And when you target the right type of websites that make sense in your neighborhood, because not all relationships or backlinks are created equally

Janice Hostager: mm-hmm.

Maria-Katarina Johannesson: You are gonna, you are gonna send clearer signals to both Google and AI search that you belong in this neighborhood.

In SEO, we talk about, high proximity in the knowledge graph, so that is what you ultimately want to achieve. But I would think about that, and then, that would be a good starting point. And, I would also, I would recommend looking at your current website and really think about what kind of content do I have at this very moment that I could perhaps use to target some of these, prospects that I just mentioned a few moments ago, that when we, divided the, the, the groups of that has a part of your audience, but they're not competing.

So do you have any content, right now sitting on your website that you think this, the, these people, these companies would be interested [00:18:00] in? And if you wanna go a little bit further, ask yourself, if you could go into Google Search Console to see are you currently ranking, like what are you currently ranking for, and how aligned is that with your most profitable products and services.

Because I keep saying this over and over again, that backlinks or any marketing effort should never be built in isolation. The goal should be to get more leads and, conversions and sell more products and services. Of course,

It's become harder to just produce self-serving content, so we have to put in more effort. But, go and look at your website and see do I have any, do I have any, ... The more controversial or personable or unique take, the better, in my opinion.

do you have a- access to any first-hand data, either through the existing content or do you have the...

I mean, even just like people you talk to, clients, prospects, what people write in your Facebook if you have a Facebook group. Can you do a case study, about that and present it as a statistics piece? Like this is how,

I'm just throwing out an idea, like this is how many business owners get clients.

most of them, wish they, ... Oh, that was pretty, pretty bad. But, this is h- how, w- like this. We asked business owners how they get client. The results may shock you. Whatever. The point I'm trying to make is that Statistics pieces generally work very well.

And, of course, there's a big, caveat here. If you wanna use this piece for link, in a link building campaign and actively trying to build links to it, the... You have to have, of course, the foundations in place with the website that is crawlable, [00:20:00] Google can index it. There's a logical site structure and a consistent message across the web, of course, and social media.

And the, and the specific, destination page, if you find something that you think, "Hmm, some of these groups may be interested in this," then go to the, go to these pages and analyze, is it a clear search intent? Do I cover this topic in depth? Is it clear who is behind this article?

And, is it a way I can make it a little bit more controversial or a little bit more newsworthy or a little bit more appealing, to someone? Because again, it's about creating a really strong value proposition.

there is a big advantage , I know it's not for everybody, but if you dare and if you can lean a little bit, lean into a little bit your personality and maybe go on podcasts and, show your face, there is a big advantage of that because when you do outreach, and whether that is for link building or any other marketing efforts or any business effort, people are gonna Google you.

They're gonna go into ChatGPT, and they're gonna be like, "Hey, who is this Maria Katarina Johanneson?" And when it spits out that, "Oh, she has been on this podcast, and she is all about this," da, da, da, da, you are more likely to get a reply

Janice Hostager: Great ideas. So back up here a second. Explain to me link building. Like a lot of my listeners don't necessarily have a background in SEO, and they don't really understand the whole process and why it's important. So link building is a credibility marker for Google, for AI. It shows that you're a legitimate company because other people are talking about you, right? So when you go to do [00:22:00] link building, and I am terrible with getting backlinks. I they happen organically, of course, but I haven't really made a concerted effort to go do that. Let's say I'm a nutrition coach or I'm a health coach,

Maria-Katarina Johannesson: Mm-hmm.

Janice Hostager: and I wanted to do some backlinks. exactly would I start?

Maria-Katarina Johannesson: Yeah. So, I would start and think about who do you do business with on a weekly basis? Like, your existing relationships

Janice Hostager: Okay

Maria-Katarina Johannesson: your man- if you have any software tools you use. It can be, I don't know what other tools you can use, but maybe even like CRMs.

It can be reporting. I don't know if you would have any staff. I would basically look at your existing relationships.

Janice Hostager: Okay

Maria-Katarina Johannesson: Go for the low-hanging fruit first, but I always recommend that. This is one is super simple. Everybody can do this. Just Google your brand name, because I can guarantee you that it will , nine times out of 10, a bunch of, articles or mentions will come up where you can see that your brand is mentioned, but it has no link to it.

And then you c- then you can just email the website owner or the editor or whoever is in charge, and you can ask them to just give you a link because the work is already done. Nine times out of 10 people are gonna give you the link.

Janice Hostager: So there's follow links and there are no follow links right type of link should they ask for

Maria-Katarina Johannesson: I would just ask for a link and I w- I would not even bother to, to be quite frank because most of the time you will get a no-follow link. So I would just recommend not say anything.

Janice Hostager: Okay

Maria-Katarina Johannesson: yeah

Janice Hostager: Okay so I have my health coach company or my coaching company and I recommend a form of protein powder right So that's something that [00:24:00] I have on my site that I recommend a lot

Maria-Katarina Johannesson: Mm-hmm.

Janice Hostager: If I link to that protein powder which is good to have an outgoing link on your blog for example should I reach out to them and say Hey I did this expect somebody to do something in return Or what are your thoughts on that

Maria-Katarina Johannesson: Hmm. I think it can be a, it can be a little bit tricky if you do something, just if you reach out to someone in a very transactional state of mind. I think it's just, I think it's just better to constantly talk to people. But let's say that you reach out to them and to go back with a, to the podcast example and to be like, "Hey, I'm a big fan of your protein powder and, I've even, I've even mentioned it on my website and I have a few girlfriends and we all taking it and we are all like feeling the difference.

Do you, do- would you be open to the, to come on my podcast and, just we can have a conversation about this?" I think those kind of relationships would be more, would m- make

more sense to me because that can also lead to something more than rather than like, "Oh, I did this link for you and now you're gonna give me this link."

Janice Hostager: Okay

Maria-Katarina Johannesson: does that make sense?

Janice Hostager: It does Yeah yeah I've been on both sides of it I mean I've

Maria-Katarina Johannesson: Okay

Janice Hostager: For clients who have a very high-ranked website in their niche I I would oftentimes get requests from people to to maybe write a blog post and have it placed on our site And I-- Well first of all we didn't accept gu-guest posts for that the the client that I'm thinking of right now But oftentimes it was, "I'll do this for you but I want this in return" kind of thing It was very transactional So that's an interesting way of doing it where you're just offering You're giving first before asking to get

is

Maria-Katarina Johannesson: Yeah. A- and, to go back, w- sorry, [00:26:00] what was the imaginary company? I just have to... My mama brain is sometimes a bit slow.

Janice Hostager: The protein powder

Maria-Katarina Johannesson: Protein. Okay.

Janice Hostager: it's

Maria-Katarina Johannesson: Okay. But wasn't it a dietician first or no?

Janice Hostager: Yes she was a she's a health coach

Maria-Katarina Johannesson: Okay, Hazel. Okay, thank you. So to- if we c- stay with that example, and go ba- and also, incorporate AI to it because I do believe that you can create some amazing link, what we call linkable assets with AI. So let's say that you have this dietician, company.

And I position... We just pretend that I am, just because I'm a new mom, let's say that I am a life coach for new, new moms. So if I was gonna reach out to you, because there is some sort of logical crossover between my business and you business- your business because moms, I mean, just j- myself, you know, it's hard to find time to cook and eating nutritious meals and not eat like carbs every day.

So there are a lot of challenges. So if I was gonna reach out to you, I would really have to think about what would a good value proposition be. If I was just to f- reach out to you and be like, "Hey, I am a life coach for moms, and Your content really resonated with me. I wonder if I could write an article about this and this topic.

Would that be okay?" I mean, I would probably not even get a reply. And the value proposition is very bad. It's very low. So instead, if I were to phrase it like, "Hey, I run this so-and-so company, and I thought we both have a sh- we share a similar audience, and I think it would be beneficial for your audience.

It would be really cool if I could create this, if I could create this really cool interactive mood [00:28:00] menu. Instead of just like going down the traditional, what to have for dinner, you, I can help you create this interactive menu for moms." we could create this mood menu where you click on it, and it would be like, "Oh, I just have 10 minutes to cook today."

And you select different moods, and they will spit out different ideas for recipes.

Janice Hostager: Oh. Fun is that a real thing a mood menu I'm just unaware

Maria-Katarina Johannesson: came up... No, I'm just came up with that. So,

Janice Hostager: I thought I was like Oh I've never heard of that That's

Maria-Katarina Johannesson: no. But you see, that is very different.

Janice Hostager: Yes

I

Maria-Katarina Johannesson: I'm thinking about you. I'm thinking about your business. I'm not just thinking about like, "Oh, I wanna get a link.

Oh, I wanna get a link." I'm thinking about how can I lead with value? How can I position myself as a, a, a helpful human being that actually thinks about your audience, and a little bit of my audience, but I'm not just making it about all about me

Janice Hostager: advice So let me ask you a few questions too just about building trust because I know we started on that topic and then I jumped into link building so I'm gonna back up a little bit here But what would you say to someone who's afraid of sh showing too much personality on their site or on like on social media because they think it might make them look less professional

Maria-Katarina Johannesson: I just say feel the fear and do it anyway

Janice Hostager: I would imagine it depends on the industry

Maria-Katarina Johannesson: Yeah, that's true.

Janice Hostager: If you're an attorney for example it might be different than if you are a coach for

Maria-Katarina Johannesson: Of course. But then you're already, you already know what kind of, the boundaries within your niche. So I agree with you on that, but I also think people notice when something unexpected happens and there is a real, there are hidden gems in that

Janice Hostager: Mm Gotcha So do you [00:30:00] think a really private or an introverted person can stand out oversharing

then what kind of w like what kind of details would build trust versus ones details that are just like random

Maria-Katarina Johannesson: Yeah. I think it's gonna depend on the target audience, who are you speaking to, what, what resonates with them. So I think it will be hard to give one solution for all, one size fit all. But I just quickly wanna mention that if you feel that, "Oh, I definitely do not want to be on camera," do something else. you don't have to.

I've seen these, things on on YouTube, and speaking of AI, there's so ... You can even do a, like a, a virtual you. That can be your thing. You can do sketches of you speaking, and you can just do the voiceover. So I do think that we have this idea that one has to show up in, in a certain way, but there's so many ways.

You can even hire someone, to do it for you. I think the, the most important thing is that people associate your brand with the type of values that feel important for you

Janice Hostager: Do you feel like using an AI-generated person on a video gets in the way of authenticity

Maria-Katarina Johannesson: I think it can. I think it can be a little bit problematic. But if you are using , and combining it with your, like human, like your voice, and you're actually like ... If, let's say that you would make fun of it "Oh, here I am. I am, yeah, me again." And, if you could make it into a little story perhaps, and you'd be like, "Oh, yeah, I'm finally soon can come out of my shell, but I'm not like..."

If you could,

Janice Hostager: Hmm

Maria-Katarina Johannesson: show your humanness while you're doing it, I think it's great. But if you're just doing it because you're lazy, I think it's bad. A- as, and I think it's, [00:32:00] I think it's poor that people just write AI automated emails just because they can.

Janice Hostager: Mm-hmm

Maria-Katarina Johannesson: I don't understand that

Janice Hostager: Yeah Yeah I I only bring that up because I know I've seen some videos on YouTube and it's like are they a real person or are they not a real person And just having that feeling like it's AI I will pass right by it And I think I don't think I'm alone in that I think I wanna know if they're AI I don't have a problem with seeing a cat singing or tap dancing on Instagram because I know it's AI and I know that they're not trying to fool anybody But when it's somebody that's speaking with authority and you start realizing they're not a real person I think that's r-really off-putting and I think that is maybe some of the issue, but I see your point like I think there is a place for it and I think there is a place where it's not gonna c-go over well and I think if you're trying to pull the wool over somebody's eyes so to speak-- it's gonna come back and bite you

Maria-Katarina Johannesson: Yeah, and I think if you are very uncomfortable on camera, and you still force yourself doing it and you just keep feeling uncomfortable, that's not gonna serve you and it's not gonna serve your audience. so it's just

Janice Hostager: Mm

Maria-Katarina Johannesson: you shouldn't do it

Janice Hostager: Yeah I'm one of those people that hates being on camera so

Maria-Katarina Johannesson: Oh, okay. Okay, I understand.

Janice Hostager: No we're good though I mean I

Maria-Katarina Johannesson: Okay.

Janice Hostager: to it I think that's it You've gotta get used to it and I think there's a

learning

Maria-Katarina Johannesson: Yeah

Janice Hostager: a skill and the more you do it the better you become And I think p especially m people my age because you grew up with smartphones and being on camera and you're very cust accustomed to that where a lot of us did not So

Maria-Katarina Johannesson: Yeah, to go back to the feel the fear and do it anyway, I've, I think for me, one, one huge thing has been that, English is not my first language and, I just so many times I've been like, [00:34:00] "Oh, I know what I wanna say in Swedish", but then I cannot say it in the way I want to exactly, and that is super frustrating.

And it even took me years until I went internationally j- internationally because I was having all of these doubts, "Oh, my English is not good enough," but I just felt the fear and do it anyway. If I say something, whatever, like if people g- I, I think that people are gonna like me or dislike me even if I make some, grammatical errors

Janice Hostager: Absolutely

okay So, If somebody had 30 minutes this week to improve on their visibility some and build trust how would you recommend they spend those 30 minutes

Maria-Katarina Johannesson: Hmm, that is a good question. I would probably Find and look for a bunch of people, that I can try to lean into and borrow their authority.

Janice Hostager: Mm-hmm Mm-hmm

Maria-Katarina Johannesson: So I would reach out to micro-influencers. I would look at industry-specific websites, see who writes there continuously.

I would reach out to them. I would also offer them the opportunity to come and give a quote, on an existing piece on my website, because that's a great way also for your listeners to tap into someone else authority.

Janice Hostager: Love it. Love it. Where can people find out more about you?

Maria-Katarina Johannesson: So they can find me on LinkedIn. Just Google Linkson Maria, in one word. You can also email me at maria@linksonmaria. No, linksonmaria.com. Forgot the .com, so

Janice Hostager: And we'll put those, links in the show notes as well. Thank you so much for being here today. I appreciate it, and I love the fact [00:36:00] that you did this in spite of the fact that I could tell that sometimes you were translating in your head, which is so exhausting. I've been on the other side of that and, you did a very nice job today, so thank you.

I appreciate it.

Maria-Katarina Johannesson: Thank you so much

Janice Hostager: Okay, so how do you stand out as a real human in the age of AI? Here's what I took from Maria. First, decide what you want to be known for and not just what you do, who you are. Maria's list includes link building and digital PR, and also knitting and plants and being anti-lagom.

That combo is what makes her memorable. Second, build relationships, not transactions. Lead with something valuable for them, like her made-up mood menu idea, instead of just asking for a

favor. And third, show up as yourself in whatever works for you. On camera or not, perfect English or not, feel the fear and do it anyway.

And don't be lagom. Be yourself. You'll find the links to everything we talked about today at myweeklymarketing.com/180. Thank you so much for joining me today. I'll see you next time. Bye for now.