

Laura 00:00

If you're a local business owner, or even online business owner, and you've been running around developing collaborations and partnerships, and you've been wondering, is it worth it? Is this worth my time? Am I doing it the right way? Is there something that I'm missing that could make it work better? Today's video podcast is really going to help you. I have helped many business owners like you. And when I had my own local brick and mortar chain, I was an expert in community marketing. And I'm not just saying that to toot my own horn, I'm saying that because it was the only way to survive. There was no social media, there was no paid traffic, there was blog optimization back then. And that was pretty much it. And if any of you have ever invested in SEO, you know, it's a little bit slow. It can be a little bit like watching paint dry, and it's just the way it is, right. So, if you want things to happen quickly, relationship marketing is one of the best ways to accelerate lead flow. But doing it the right way. And going about it strategically is critical in ensuring its success. So, if this is something that you want to do more of, and that you want to do it in a way that's creating a stronger overall business for your organization, today is really going to help you.

Laura 01:17

Welcome to the AI-Driven marketing podcast. This is a place where we deliver quick and insightful weekly tips about 10 minutes or less on what's new and groundbreaking in the world of marketing AI. I'm your host, Laura Meyer, a 20 plus year entrepreneur and marketing expert. If you are excited about staying ahead of the curve and harnessing the potential of AI in your marketing strategies, you're in the right place. Let's go.

Laura 01:46

If we haven't met yet. My name is Laura Meyer, if you're watching this video, I really appreciate you being here. If you're listening to the podcast, this is also available on video on YouTube. And I literally wrote a book on relationship marketing. I'm not going to say the book, but a book on relationship marketing called Win that was a five-week Amazon bestseller. And when I was writing that book, I went back on the years of experience in relationship marketing and community building and collaborations and tried to look at what did and didn't work on that journey of learned lessons of many collaborations over the years. Now back when I had my brick and mortar starting out, it was all about creating blog traffic, one of the things that we did to create blog traffic is we partnered with our customers. So, everything that we did at that point was a partnership or a collaboration to bring new customers in. And in this day and age of paid traffic. Now more than ever, I hear from so many of our clients and our customers of catalyst AI, which is our AI based software, how frustrating it is because they say the paid traffic leads don't convert. Or, you know, they find they say, well, I called back that lead that got in touch with us from a paid traffic campaign. And they were like, why are you calling me? How did you get my information? And I look at the campaigns myself. And I often see comments

like that. And there's a part of me that wants to write back and be like, because you gave it to us which can be really frustrating.

Laura 03:22

But the truth is they're going through Facebook or Instagram, they're filling out, you know, inlay lead forms is what we call them. And they don't even remember what it is that they filled out, and then they can't figure out why you're contacting them. So, it can be kind of tricky. Now listen, paid traffic works, we integrate with paid traffic with Catalyst AI, I'm a big fan of paid traffic, many of my clients have completely blown up their businesses on paid traffic. But if you are not getting the results you want from paid traffic, it may be that you're just not doing enough community building, which I know can feel tough, because you're like I'm spending so much time on marketing and sales, Laura, what could I be doing more of and what I want to suggest to you is that maybe it's a matter of doing more of it a little bit differently. And this is something that I learned through trial and error and then also helped many of the brands that I've consulted to pull together plans and strategies and playbooks that we found to be incredibly effective.

Laura 04:22

So first, I want to talk about what is community marketing. Community Marketing is not just about creating partnerships, even though on the surface, that's what it could feel like. It's about creating value. It's about creating value for another business's clients in the way that you create value for your own clients. And then within that value exchange, a partnership ensues, evolves and you end up serving your clients together better. And this is a very much an art as much as it is a science where you're brainstorming and coming up with ideas. And in my last Podcast episode I talked about that ideation process, how to establish that connection and create value for one another's businesses. But ultimately, it's by building those strong relationships and collaborating with like-minded businesses that grows your list of interested, qualified leads. Now, why are they more qualified when they came from a relationship or referral, because it's a warm lead, when a lead comes to you from another relationship or from a business or brand that they know like and trust, it is a much higher converting much warmer lead than somebody who comes off of cold traffic where you have to earn their trust, it's much more difficult to earn their trust long term. And what's nice about paid traffic is that it's much more predictable, you can do it in volume.

Laura 05:49

Once you know your cost per lead, you can predictably spend money on marketing and know how many leads you're getting. But you tend to see a lower conversion percentage from those colder leads. What does this mean for your business? Spending, the time that AI frees up for your organization, on community building and relationship building will multiply the effect that you get from a software like catalyst, because it gives you more time to develop warmer leads,

those leads convert better catalyst takes care of the booking for you, and it creates this flywheel effect in your business. And so I can't emphasize enough. What do you do with that freed up time that technology and AI provides, you invest it in relationships and community building, it will transform your business, I know it because I've seen it. And so when we're thinking about how we can tap into this network of potential customers and collaborate with other businesses, in order to grow our warm leads, which is the goal I chatted about in the last podcast episode, how to approach those business owners some tricks in order to get started, the ways in which you can develop trust and credibility and maintain those relationships over time.

Laura 07:11

Now, I want to talk to you about how to actually leverage those relationships and turn them into growth opportunities. And so ultimately, it's always about looking at what are the local trends, events, activities that are happening in your community? And how could you leverage those trends, those events, those activities, into new partnership opportunities, or into new opportunities for collaboration with your existing partners. And this is where we start creating what I call a win. So a win for all parties involved. An example might be that there are local real estate agents that are looking to gift their customers, new homebuyers with local services. And it might be that you have a local service that you would love to introduce to new homebuyers about creating those relationships and those synergies with local real estate agents.

Laura 08:14

Another one might be that you together create social media content. So, for example, let's say you have a beauty business and somebody else has a fitness business, or you have a beauty business that's complementary to somebody else's beauty business. Together, creating content where everybody's tagged on social media is another way to leverage trends that are happening on the internet, but using them in a collaborative relationship building context. A lot of times to creating self-care packages or silent auction items that include your item, and other like-minded business items can be a fantastic way to get together, serve clients together, build brand awareness and also meet new prospects. One of the things that I always really enjoyed doing when it came to donating silent auction items, is we had a silent auction machine at our old studio where we had specific setups that were all branded, they were all ready to go very much a checklist of what was included, and then always included postcards or a signup sheet to learn more information if somebody was interested in the silent auction item, and either lost the silent auction and still wanted a session or still wanted services, or now was just not the right time. And we would always get so much brand awareness and so much new business from those silent auctions. We had to auto rotation and they were out almost every weekend. Most years we were doing between 50 and 60 silent auctions to the community. And I attributed that to our massive explosive growth as a business. And then again, looking at other

types of service providers, other types of events that you can partner with that complements your business.

Laura 10:13

So I hope I'm getting your juices flowing in terms of where to look for these collaboration opportunities. Another thing that I often recommend is that business owners just get out of community calendar, start looking at local websites, and looking at what events are coming up that you could attend. Here's also a really important tip, in terms of attending local events, always go with a clipboard, or a little form to fill out for a raffle, you really want to leave those events with a list again, of warm leads. And if they met you, and they chatted with you, and they gave you their information, that is somebody that you want to be following up with almost immediately. And our system can automate a lot of that. But if you're doing it manually, make sure that you're reaching out on Monday morning with a special offer or promotion. Because if you think about it, if on Facebook, you're paying \$5, \$7 per lead, and you just left an event with 100 leads, that's \$500 in your pocket, versus support handing out a postcard where you have no idea where that information is going to go. So I'm always a big fan of looking at those events, looking at local trends, looking at what's happening within your community, and seeing where you can insert yourself in a way that is very much focused on lead generation. The second is to try to find those collaborations. I mentioned that in the last podcast episode, but really looking at the groups of businesses that serve your clients in the same way that you do from a values perspective. And partners that really cater to the same level of affluence in terms of client base.

Laura 11:56

And this is where I see again, a lot of times business owners will partner with another business, but it kind of falls flat. And this is often because you're not serving the same level of clientele. And I typically am working with premium brands, most of the brands that come my way, are looking for elevated marketing, forward thinking marketing, and they tend to be in a premium market position in the marketplace. And so looking at okay, what other businesses are also serving that affluent or premium client, that's not going to give us a hard time when it comes to our pricing that isn't going to nickel and dime us that isn't going to try to cancel and then you know, and then start their membership, again, who's going to be relatively price insensitive, but they're going to care a lot about quality, and making sure that you're aligning yourself with those other types of business owners that care about the same level of quality for their client base. And it's this is not about targeting rich people, right? This is about knowing that you have a premium level value to offer. And that you are providing white glove service or that you are providing that extra care and concern that people who are less price sensitive, tend to care deeply about and looking at what other business owners in my community are doing it the same way. Because again, as I mentioned in my last podcast episode, that value alignment is such an important process part of the process of choosing an ideal partner.

Laura 13:29

So, I want you to really think about as I as I mentioned, these ideas of where you could find collaborations. So potential categories might be health, wellness, fitness, beauty, aesthetics, other types of networking, or mentorship groups, and collaborating with them in order to be able to find that Win. So, for example, let's say this is something that I've helped an organization do recently, let's say that you're networking with a women's empowerment or collaboration group, and they have a photo shoot that day headshot day. And let's say that you are a lash extension provider, you could do on site lash extensions, or do a pre party at your location prior to the headshots taking place. Maybe you do it at a special discounted rate or extend your intro offer to a special discount just to get people in the door you host cocktails and hors d'oeuvres are whatever your center allows. And that gives you the opportunity to fill your location with a really fun pre party. Most of the people that go will attend because of the relationship they have with you and how much they like you and they're much warmer leads they're much more likely to upgrade into a membership because of that connection with you and then the extension of that connection into the brand. So really making sure that you're Looking at, again, what events are happening in my community? what's trending, what's popular, and how do I creatively insert myself into it, so that we can extend that brand awareness and again, build our list of warm leads, any type of partnership with other boutiques, again, wellness studios, any type of collaboration on social media or shout outs. This is where also you may consider hosting your own event. This is something that I used to do when I had a portrait studio chain, we hosted a pregnancy event specific to attracting women who have who are pregnant, but who have what are called Growing bellies. And it was our growing bellies event. And we had stations and tables, everybody came at no charge, we did not charge for the event or to have a table, but we did require is that they promote it to their audience. So in order to apply to attend the event, they had to let us know their list size on social media and email, they had to be committed to sending two dedicated emails and three social media posts. And because it was our event, we got to control that. So if somebody who applied didn't have much of a list or wasn't willing to promote on social media, they didn't get to attend. This was amazing in generating warm leads for our newborn photography services. So again, thinking about your location, what type of beauty or wellness event, could you host that specific to your target audience.

Laura 16:36

So it might be specific to athletes in your area, for example, where you might have something this is actually another concept that I created for a different brand. But what I called it was cheat meal, it was the cheat meal night, you know, where athletes and people who lift a lot tend to have like a cheat meal. And so we had like a cheat meal event, this was actually for a food concept. But then lots of athletes came and had their cheat meals together. And that was really fun, kind of cheeky, very much on trend. And if you don't know what I'm talking about a

cheat meal is the meal that you have that's outside of your typical fitness and wellness regimen. If you're a hardcore CrossFit person or athlete, and it's the kind of thing where it's very celebratory, you don't worry about how many macros are in it, or calories or sugar or whatever, you just eat it, you enjoy it. And then the next day, you feel awful. And you start over again with your typical regimen. And so again, that was really fun, because we were able to bring in those types of buyers that are the best fit for your brand.

Laura 17:42

So it's really important to know that it's important to know who are the best type of customers for us, not just people who like fitness, but maybe people who are looking for who have experienced a fitness plateau. And now they're looking to change up their routine, or not just wellness, but moms who have multiple young children, and are looking for this type of service or this type of collaboration to make their lives easier. And the more that you can notice, not only the demographics of who's coming in, but the psychographics of the people who are coming in most often, the easier it will be for you to brainstorm collaborations. And then finally, like really engaging with other networking organizations, I know this is something that sometimes we feel like we don't have time for. But it can very much help to spread the word on your brand locally. So looking at having tables at women's networking events, local conferences, not big huge conferences that just have general audiences. But with a more specific targeted networking events, that you're not only likely to meet your customers, but you're very likely to meet your partners.

Laura 18:53

A lot of times when I would do these types of tables, or when I have my clients do these types of tables. They're not always meeting their ideal client. But they're often leaving these events with three or four great partners. The smaller the group, the better, about 100 or less, because then you tend to talk to everybody, and somebody knows somebody that you need to be collaborating with. So I hope this gets your juices flowing and just some creative ideas for community marketing strategies. In the last podcast, I talked more about how to approach people how to make sure that it's a great fit, how to maintain that relationship long term. And today I really wanted to give you some ideas on how to get started creatively on different types of events, activities that you can support with and collaboration with other local business owners to again grow that warm lead list. That is 100% the goal here. It's nice to have friendly chitchat but at the end of the day 100 warm leads is way more valuable than 500 cold leads all day long. So it's all about quality over quantity when it comes to developing these partnerships and creating these events. If you are wondering, I've mentioned catalyst a few times in this video and podcast. If you're wondering, What am I talking about, you can go to get more sales with ai.com. That's get more sales with ai.com. To learn more about our catalyst software, and how we help local business owners health, and beauty, wellness and beauty to free up more

time so that they can participate in these local marketing activities. You can visit that free training, get more information and learn how to get in touch with us.

Laura 20:34

Thank you for tuning in to the AI driven marketing podcast. Before we wrap up, I just want to remind you that you can learn more about how to make more sales with AI by going to makemoresaleswithai.com. This is where I dive deeper into the AI revolution in marketing with our free training. And if you've enjoyed today's episode, please share it with others who might find it valuable. And if you can also just take a moment to leave us a review I would greatly appreciate it. Your support helps us continue to bring you the top insights in the field of AI driven marketing. Until next time, remember AI is here and it's transforming the marketing landscape. Stay Ahead, stay informed, and most importantly, stay excited. I'll see you soon