

Laura 00:00

In last week's podcast episode, I mentioned how much I recommend looking at trend articles. And a recent article on LinkedIn News called 41 big ideas that will change our world in 2023, number 21/41 was it social media users will turn their back on the algorithm turned off by the trolls and burnt out by the pressure of chasing likes, consumers began to reconsider their relationship with big social networks in 2022. And smaller sites will start gaining popularity like Geneva ,sub stack, Patriron. And these create safe spaces where people really miss the early days of the internet. And they want to go back to those intimate digital environments. This transitions nicely into what I predict will be the third trend that you really need to be aware of when marketing your business in 2023, which is a truth more than it is a trend. And that is the magic of human connection. I believe that it's the results through connection that's often missing from most marketing and sales efforts. And as a result, people are struggling, their launches aren't doing as well. enrollments are down. They think it's because of the way in which the world has changed in the last few years, and they're not wrong. But most importantly, what's often missing from this analysis is how much of the marketing and sales efforts that has taken place online in the last few years has become extremely impersonal and dehumanized. So in today's podcast episode, I'll be sharing with you the third and final truth that you need to know about marketing your business and 2023 and beyond. And that is results through connection.

Laura 01:51

Welcome to the Next Level Leap podcast. I'm your host, Laura Meyer top growth strategist to some of the country's fastest growing brands, and mentor to consultants. My signature leap methodology has changed the way 1000s of companies look at growth strategy, and this podcast shares, best practices, and inspirational interviews to help you make that next level leap in your business. Stick around and join me as I share the journey of how we as founders can multiply our income impact and influence by landing on the other side of our next big leap. Let's go.

Laura 02:33

In analyzing my most popular posts on social media in 2022, I was sorting the static posts by both engagement as well as likes. I'm always curious about what the audience, you, like to hear from me. And I found the most popular posts to be fascinating. It read, you don't need more Instagram reels, what you need is better relationships. I received comments from people that I wasn't familiar with and didn't even know saying things like truest statement on the internet. Best post I've seen in a while. That that's fascinating. It's on Instagram, where people are looking at reels, but I guess they secretly wish that they were just engaged in better relationships. This corresponds nicely with what I had mentioned in the introduction of this podcast episode is that social medias users will start turning their back on the algorithm, the algorithm mostly being on platforms that are more popular like Instagram, the prediction ism

that you're going to see a mass exodus from social players in 2023. But in 12 months time, landscape will look really different. And users are seeking out a safer, more welcoming community, an experience and experience that's based on the foundation of trust. Now I talk a lot about trust within my book when I talk about it a lot within the communities that I belong to. And when I see people posting things I know are not congruent with what's happening on the inside of the organization. So I cringe because I really dislike that anybody is contributing to the mistrust that happens in the online space.

Laura 04:17

But the truth is, it's pretty common. And many of us have gotten to know somebody on the outside and become very disappointed by what we've seen on the inside, and the lack of congruence between the two. And so as we are seeking to build trust through connection that's ultimately where we're going to see the results. So I have a funny experience to share with you that nicely illustrates this point. Many of you know that I'm on multiple tennis teams and have a little bit of a tennis addiction. Now if you don't play tennis Don't leave me at no go anywhere. Because I promise you that this analogy translates I recently this winter joined a mixed doubles team meaning that I play with a male player Most of the time, I don't know them that well. And we are getting to know each other on the court while also competing against other couples, my cohort and all of this, my partner is man a little younger than my dad, who's an engineer who I just recently met on another tennis team, really nice guy. But we don't know each other that well at all. Our first match was against a married couple, they played phenomenally well together. Although we were ahead in the first set, we eventually lost that match four six four six.

Laura 05:32

If you don't know anything about tennis, it's the best of three sets. So if you lose both of the first two sets, the game is over. And even though we played really well against them, and we had many of the points go to deuce, meaning that we were fighting for the game at the very end. The married couple ended up being able to communicate better knew each other better, and just had better trust between the two of them. The second match, which was just last week, we ended up playing yet another married couple. I was saying to my husband, maybe he could start taking some tennis lessons, because apparently this is the trend is to see married couples out for the mixed doubles, matches on Friday evenings. A nice Friday night out together, right? Well, this couple that we played, they were super fit, very agile, and Japanese so extremely polite, and then also ended up speaking Japanese to one another in between the points, probably talking about how they were going to beat us and conspiring against us as they should. And we ended up losing that match as well. It was really frustrating because we won the first set six, three, then we lost the second set three, six, and then we lost the tiebreaker. And if you play tennis, you know how painful this is. We lost the tiebreaker 1113. By the way, it's a 10 point tiebreaker. So the fact that we both went to pass 10 points,

and you have to win by two, just shows how close this match was, we left so disappointed we had played so well. But ultimately, when I look back on the interaction between myself and my partner, there's just wasn't enough communication and trust between the two of us.

Laura 07:14

On the tennis court. I'm a pretty quick player, I played singles in high school and college. So there's times where he just kind of watched the ball pass him thinking there's no way Laura is going to get to that. And then I would get to it. And he was in the wrong position to receive the next point. Or there was times where I hit the ball in a certain spot thinking he would be there, or he thought that I would be there. And we just, we hadn't played together enough yet to really communicate at a level where a married couple does. Now some of you might be thinking to yourself, there's no way I would play tennis with my spouse, we would probably argue the whole time, which again, I have a lot of friends that won't play with their spouse for that very reason. But at the level that I'm playing, which is a pretty advanced intermediate. These are the couples that figured out that they needed to communicate really well and trust one another on the court in order to play together. And so we're getting the couples that I guess made it through the initial vetting process. So as I'm thinking about this podcast episode, it's kind of a funny analogy about how much trust matters, and how little we can trust each other. When we first get to know one another, even if we're on the same team, even if we get along really well, even if we respect each other's game, that trust takes time. And really being able to have somebody else's back and know that they're going to do that no matter what happens during a game during a match is something that we can we can fast track to a degree, but it needs to be part of our sales and marketing process if we want to win the game.

Laura 08:52

So how we fast track trust is all about making that connection. People want to feel seen and heard and some of the things that we are already doing accomplish that goal. But an intentionality around that will make it even more effective. So moving into 2023. Our primary focus as business owners should be about developing systems that allow us to humanize marketing and sales experiences for our customers at a higher level of intention. What does that mean? It means that we have to go past what's obvious what's the natural order of things or what's on the surface and start digging deeper about what we understand to be true about the people that we are serving. And we need to be thinking about their emotional well being and how we're selling to them in terms of a compassionate sales process, the conversations that need to be happening and that really center around Are we willing to ask the right questions until we come upon a solution that resonates In asking the right questions to understand the implications will help us sell with intentionality. And the solutions, the solutions to how we humanize the sales and marketing for our customers will appear when we map out the customer journey with a deep empathy for what our buyer is experiencing, combined with key elements of trust.

Laura 10:22

The most important element of trust is benevolence, which is kind of a paradox within itself. And it's a concept that I talked about in my book when benevolence is transparency, and what is accurate about the promise, not anything extra in order to get paid more or to hit a quota or to increase our conversions. Because ultimately, people want to do business with companies that leave them with the feeling of being cared for. And benevolence is hard to fake. As intelligent creatures as human beings, we're pretty good at sniffing it out. When somebody seems untrustworthy. Sometimes our problems might be dark enough or hard enough or desperate enough, that we're only willing to see what it is that we want to. But for those of us who are generally in a pretty good headspace, when we're making decisions, we can tell when somebody's trying to pull something over on us. And it might be just an intuition, something we can't really even fully articulate. But many of us have learned to trust that over time. And know that just the tone of somebody's voice or the way that they show up or the way that they appear, or the bulging of their eyes when they're saying something, or the way in which you kind of feel bad about yourself when they're talking to you or whatever it is that we've learned as a species to begin trusting that and to begin making decisions based on intuitively what's happening inside of us when the other person is speaking. And from that pure place of benevolence, knowing that our intentions are the best for our clients regardless of if or how it benefits us. That's when we can start to humanize that marketing and sales experience. Because ultimately, whether someone buys from us or not, we leave them with the feeling of being cared for.

Laura 12:22

So how do we practice benevolence in our everyday business? How and where do we apply it? Because ultimately, we do need some people to do business with us. That's what's going to keep us around in the long term. But we want the right people to do business with us, when it's the timing is ideal for them. And when they're ready to step forward, and when they want something more. And ultimately, I'm such a strong believer in this. I use this practice in all of my programs, coaching programs, fractional freedom, consulting certification, the mastermind that people ascend into, it's on their terms, there's no fake scarcity. There's no me trying to convince them or cajole them or follow up a million different times to try to get them to do what it is that I want them to do. Because the truth is, that doesn't really work that well. Following up and staying top of mind for your contacts does work really well, because out of sight out of mind, but following up with people to try to get them to make a decision that you want them to make typically only works on the wrong clients. Generally, it's not very effective.

Laura 13:25

So how can we follow up with people? How can we have a marketing and sales experience that's human but also effective, I'm going to share some strategies with you that will help you

put your money where your mouth is, because if you're sitting there saying I really do care about people's experiences, I want them to be positive. And ultimately, I want my company to have a greater purpose. And we also need to bring in the money, this is really going to help. The first is to be willing to provide proof that your product or service is trustworthy. This will fast track the trust building process that naturally happens on the tennis court when I do run and get that ball that my partner didn't really expect me to be able to reach. And that happens over time. But it also happens through action. And how do we prove that our product is trustworthy? First of all, we want to mitigate the distance between where they are now and where we want them to be. One way of doing that is to reduce the cost of uncertainty. The way in which we can reduce the cost of uncertainty is simply by asking for less upfront, this helps to change the conversation. So for example, if you have a only have one very high ticket program that can be effective, but what I'm finding is that for many clients, it's becoming less effective over time by dividing out your programs into initial front end program and then a back end offer. It reduces that cost of uncertainty. So if somebody's out a couple \$1,000 versus 10 or \$20,000. A little bit easier for them to stomach that, try out your product. And it's up to you to prove that's effective enough to move them into a longer term program.

Laura 15:08

This also helps any potential client shrink upfront costs, and lower that barrier to entry. And when I think about an example, in this arena, I often think about Zappos and their free shipping example, as many of you know that Zappos was put on the map when the founders realized that people were spending a lot of time shopping for shoes. And maybe if there was an online store, where there all the different brands and all the different styles available, will be much more convenient for people to be able to go online and buy new shoes. Well, today, we can look at that example and think, yeah, of course. But back then there was a lot of uncertainty around shopping online for shoes, what if they don't fit? What if I don't like them when they arrive? What happens then? How do I handle it? What if I waste money and time by shopping online versus just going into a store. So Zappos decided to include free shipping, and not just free shipping, but free of quick shipping, with any shoe purchase. This reduced the uncertainty of working together and covered the upfront cost of doing business. Test drives like that just make it cheaper to experience value, and it allows them to rent or try out experience or pay a smaller fee upfront, in order to build trust, things like month to month contracts, or lower costs upfront, just lower that barrier to any type of upfront cost of working together.

Laura 16:39

Something like smaller sizes, or samples or trials, increase the amount of trust that people have with their product, because they're thinking to themselves, if the initial entry level offers this good, or the free trial is this good, or the smaller size is this good, then what is the paid product like It must be really good. As consultants to growing organizations, I always look at what's happening outside of what's typical for that industry, and try to borrow the concepts and

bring it back to other types of categories or industries. One example that I often think about is Software. In this case, when we look at Canva, or Dropbox, it's what's called the freemium model, we can try out the software, make sure we like it, and that it works for us. And then if it's really good, then we pay to upgrade. We need to be thinking about this in a way in which that builds trust. It humanizes the experience, it takes the barrier to entry lower, and it puts the onus on providing value on the company, which honestly is where I believe it should be.

Laura 17:49

Another way to humanize the sales and marketing experience is simply to make the decision reversible. Now, this may depend on the type of program that you offer. I don't offer money back guarantees for any of my programs, but I make it really easy for them to be able to get a result with me. And my consulting even at the level in which we provide it is generally a month to month contract. So you could do something like that a return policy, a trial period, lenient return policies, or a guarantee that if people grow with you a certain amount, they will be able to get their money back. Money Back promises, performance guarantees anything on the back end, that shows that you are willing to share in the risk of working together will generally help build trust and make people feel as though you care more about them than you care about bringing in new revenue.

Laura 18:45

Why this works is that people really don't like uncertainty very much. In case you haven't noticed, they generally detest change, they don't want to get into some kind of new situation that might be unexpected or harder or more time consuming than what they have right now. It's probably why our parents are still hanging on to the old cell phone even though it'd be almost free for them to upgrade. The cost of trying something new is real. And we've all experienced it. So any way that we can reduce the uncertainty make it easier to try makes it more likely to buy. And this is generally very effective in reducing the need to provide as much pressure as possible and push push until the person gives in. We can get them to agree to a smaller ask and then the big ask is within the zone of acceptance. This moves though to a new possibility for the person who's considering and it gives them stepping stones along the way towards a transformation or a new purchase.

Laura 19:50

And the final way to see increased results through connection is just to increase the amount of human interaction that anybody receive during the selling process, I've talked a lot about my love for video ask I think it's a great tool. And it's interesting, we've gone back and forth on whether or not to do sales calls for our fractional freedom consulting certification. And the truth is, is that many of the people that are going into that certification are looking for less meetings on their calendar, not more. And I tend to be very meeting adverse as well. I only really like meeting with the clients and the people who are part of the paid programs, I really don't like

adding on unnecessary meetings on my calendar, either. So at the present time, video ask, it's been quite effective, I can answer it when in between meetings, or at a time that's convenient for myself or my family. And they can get back to me when it's convenient for them, particularly for people who are in a different time zones. And by being able to chat back and forth on video, I'm able to get their questions answered. But most importantly, I'm able to honestly tell them whether or not the program is for them.

Laura 20:55

Now, if you've a bigger company, and you're like, I can't imagine getting on video chat with every single person that has a question about my program, this is something your team can easily handle. And then every now and then you can surprise and delight by popping in yourself and being the person to answer the question. But I love this software, it's so simple to use interface is great. People are always really impressed. And every now and then, when I answer and it's me, and it's not what they were expecting, they are so happy. Sometimes I just get messages from people who are like, Laura, I read your book, and I really like it or I've been following you for a while and I just want to let you know, I appreciate your content. And I will send them a personal video back, no ask right, they may never buy from our organization. And that's just fine. Part of creating the goodwill and an audience and in a community and in the listenership like all of you, is for us to be able to have a relationship and for it not just to be a one way communication, I really appreciate that. I'm always happy to send back an audio on an Instagram direct message or a LinkedIn message. In fact, I think it's one of the few ways in which I can still show up in my business and be incredibly effective. And what I mean by that is a good thing.

Laura 22:05

A lot of our business systems and processes are being documented or operationalized. I'm not needed for a lot of those things anymore. A lot of the task elements of the business administrative is being handled by our operations team and our client success team and our marketing director. But what I am needed for is the human connection. So for those of you even those of you who are listening with multimillion dollar organizations, my question to you is, what can you hand off? Like, what's the behind the scenes stuff that you really somebody else could be doing? Maybe you've been doing it forever, because there's no process or you don't have the right hire in place or whatever? And where can you start showing up more in your sales and marketing process to actually help people feel seen and heard and cared for doesn't mean that you get on a connection call with everybody who requests because I almost always say I can't, because the truth is, I can't. But it does mean that when people reach out to you, there's a way in which they can experience your genuine and authentic care. And it's not again, because you're in a sales cycle, you're in a launch or because you're trying to reach a quota or you're trying to fill a program, it's because they know that you're available for that human connection. And people can feel that intention. And when we come from it from that

place of intentionality, of knowing that there's going to be a subset of people in our audience that will always just remain audience members never buy from us. But they're important.

Laura 23:33

They're important to be to hear our ideas, to spread the concepts and to share about what it is that we do with other people. And then there's people that buy from us or customers. And that's always going to be the minority of our audience. And those people are also important that we show up for them and show up for our business that we deliver and even over deliver what it is that they were expecting that we helped them get a result faster, easier than they could have ever done on their own. And the human connection in both areas of our business is just, it's always been so important to me. And I think it's part of why no matter what industry I've been in, or what category I've been in, it's always produced a surprisingly pleasant result. And that doesn't always happen in every single way. But for the most part, I can look back on 20 years of entrepreneurship. And that's been the trend. And when I've been part of partnerships or part of organizations where we've put that into the backburner, we always see it in the business. And so that human connection that human touch is something that I think is going to become more and more important. As we progress in our industries and our categories. Whether we're a product or service, no matter what type of business that you own. It's really important that people leave with that sense of this company cares for me. And it's my belief that companies will never outgrow the need to communicate that, whether it's in the little personal touches that show up in unexpected ways, whether it's the fact that when I walk into Chick fil A they have, they've thought of everything that I'm going to need for my messy toddler.

Laura 25:12

No matter what it is, it's thinking about the ways that help our customers think to themselves, Oh my gosh, they knew what I needed before I even knew that I was going to need it. And clearly, they care about my experience above and beyond making a buck. So as you're starting to brainstorm those ideas, let me know what you come up with. Let me know what questions you have. And social media message me now, you know, I actually do reply to all of my messages. And most of the time, it's a voice message, because I just really liked that that piece of communication and making that human connection. And know that our companies again, will always anytime that we can include that anytime that we can incorporate that we will see a result particularly in 2023 and beyond. So that concludes the series of the trends and the secrets that you need to know about going into the following year. And let me know which one resonated the most. Where did you hear an AHA idea that you're implementing in your business? And what other questions do you have that you want me to cover in my podcast? I love hearing from you and I'm so appreciative that you're here. I'll see you soon.

Laura 26:22

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