Ep.100 Top Takeaways from 100 Podcast Episodes

With Maria Lloyd

Maria Lloyd (0:00 - 1:50)

Hello, and welcome to the My Local Marketer podcast. I'm your host, Maria Lloyd, and today we're celebrating the 100th episode of the podcast. I'd like to thank you so much for taking the time to listen to these episodes.

Your support and interest is much appreciated, and I hope that you found some takeaways that have helped you in your own business and daily life, especially if you're in the Reading, UK area. In this episode, I'm going to share with you a small number of key takeaways that I have really enjoyed, and also where and how you can use them if you're a business thinking about your customer journey. This is because, as I said before, I believe that the best results come from being intentional and understanding how all your activities align.

For example, there's no point spending lots of money getting attention if you don't have the right process in place to convert a customer. At the same time, you could have the best product in the world, but if you don't get in front of the right audiences with the awareness stage, it's going to be harder to make those sales. So, let's dive in.

As mentioned in the AI Car Funnel episodes, I divide the customer journey into five stages. Awareness, interest, consideration, action, and retention. My first two takeaways help with the awareness stage, which is how people find out about your business and offer.

In episode 71, Tara Dean, a radio presenter, promoter, and founder of the Inside the Music Scene podcast, shared how she was able to use collaboration to get reach quickly.

Tara Deane (1:51 - 3:11)

The biggest community I found was by going to events, inviting them into my little Inside the Music Scene tent, whether it's windy, raining, sunny, whatever, it's shelter for all weathers. And I'm going to take Wokingham Festival as kind of a case study here. So, Wokingham Festival, the team are so nice.

I covered it with my old radio station, that's how I got in there. And then for the last two years, I've been there as Inside the Music Scene. Last year, I did one day.

This year, I did the whole weekend. And I interviewed over 30 acts. And for the next week, I was solidly editing.

Every single waking moment, I was getting up at six o'clock, editing for two hours and going to work, and getting all 30 out within a week. And I tripled my following. Because through using the community, and the collaborative posts, that then got sent to all of their followers.

And the followers who really enjoyed that content, then followed me because they liked the content I was posting. And that is the importance of using the community. And it's amazing that every single person at Wokingham Festival, I think that's about 30 people, I interviewed backstage, front stage, and my tent, they all shared it.

And that really helped me grow my community.

Maria Lloyd (3:13 - 4:03)

I wanted to start with this takeaway, because collaboration is a skill that I believe is greatly underutilised, and something that I'm personally looking to do more of. Businesses working together not only give each other reach to new audiences, but they can also share skills to help each other fill gaps in their own systems to further increase their visibility. In this case, Tara gained access to new audiences who were interested in what she was doing, and the artists got free content that they could utilise on their own channels, saving them time and money.

The next takeaway is from episode 60 with Glenn Dinning, director of Blue Collar Group. In this extract, Glenn shares his early creative marketing experiments when he wanted to be a comedy agent.

Glen Dinning (4:04 - 5:00)

My background, I was a real stereotype at school. I was the one selling pens, watches, chocolate bars, that kind of thing. And then about 16, 17, you start getting into stuff like music, comedy, kind of arty, things like that.

And so I did my first event when I was 16, 17. I booked out a function room at an old labour club and booked comedians and then sold tickets for the show. So that was my introduction into the events world, if you like, and got to be creative because you haven't got any money.

And it was a different time in that social media was still in the early stages. So it was doing things like getting the comedians to perform half their set in the town centre, said, look, do you want to see the second half, then buy a ticket for Saturday night. It was one line of jokes on flyers, handing them out.

It was going on local radio, local newspaper was still quite big at that point.

Maria Lloyd (5:00 - 5:46)

I think this is a brilliant idea. Creative offline activities are a great way to gain attention and get in front of new audiences. Can you think of a way in which you could do something creative and offline to garner attention for your business?

The next stage is the interest stage. So this is where you can attract people into your ecosystem so you can stay in touch with them until they are ready to buy or you have something to offer. In order to do this, though, you need to give them a clear reason to stick around.

Ferhan from Episode 98, an owner of Reading Web Agency, advised business owners to utilise their websites to highlight what makes them stand out.

Ferhan Janjua (5:47 - 7:13)

If I was going to tell someone generally what you want on a website, you want good assets. So you want good imagery and you want good media on there. So like videos, things that are really, really hard to replicate from other people.

So if, for example, you run a restaurant, say it's like three Michelin stars, then you need really good photography of your food because something like that is something that would be really difficult for a restaurant down the road to replicate. If you're in a really good location, you would want to basically demonstrate that. So you would show people really good photography of the location that you're in, maybe the kind of interior of the restaurant, if it's like really decked out and a lot of thought has gone into it.

So a website should really show people the parts of your business that are really, really hard to replicate. And the best way to do that is through imagery, is through testimonials. If you provide a service and you have like, you know, a hundred reviews, then because that's something that not everyone can demonstrate, then you should definitely say that you have a hundred reviews.

If you engage with the local community, again, because a lot of people don't do that, then you should definitely talk about it.

Maria Lloyd (7:14 - 7:56)

Once you identify what your audiences will find interesting or helpful, you can then use a newsletter or your social channels or similar activities to keep them in your ecosystem. Next, Hugo and Rupal, in the early episodes of the podcast, provided some great advice on how to help people who are considering purchasing your product or service. In episode nine, Hugo, a video specialist and founder of Graal Films, gave an

example of how video can be used effectively as part of your sales process to help your customer visualise the process and the outcome that they want.

Hugo Tickler (7:57 - 10:28)

This was a really good process for me, actually, is think about which of our projects are more successful than others. Obviously, broadly speaking, I'd say all our projects are successful to a point. There are certainly obviously standout ones and one that we haven't done any videos in for a few years, but we had about a three- or four-year period where we did a series of videos, again, harking back to that ongoing relationship where it kind of just gets more effective and better.

In short, they were a wholesaler of toys, but broadly, some high-ticket kind of those ride on like branded cars, you know, like an Audi or whatever that a five-year-old can go on. And so those are not cheap. I can't remember the exact ticket price, but you know, let's say a couple hundred quid upward, some of them depending on the size.

And their key thing actually was, you know, these things they import, and then they sell them online. But they don't create the project, they don't create the instructions. So they had a lot of customer service issues.

People were saying, how do you put it together? The battery's not working or this thing's not pairing, you know, the remote or whatever. And you know, the spend on manpower to man that for a small, relatively small setup was a lot for them.

So the initial goal was reduce staff time needed to spend on this annoying issue of answering these things. We created a series of videos, you know, five to 10 minutes broadly each person assembling the product, you know, and they had multiple products, multiple videos. And so the goal was to reduce that time, we were told explicitly by the person who engaged us, who was the CEO of the company, it reduced the time massively, they didn't give us exact figures, you know, in terms of spend, but I know that the videos didn't cost the earth, they were very affordable.

So they made a massive ROI in that respect. And then there's an added element of, I was just looking the other day, that actually the videos have already got in total, you know, over like 20 odd videos got three, 400,000 views. And this over multiple years, you know, some of the videos were five years old, but clearly they're popular.

Now, an argument could be made. So again, are they vanity metrics or not, that, well, they've already bought a product might have not been from you, they might have just searched how to assemble on that. However, you're building that brand equity, it wasn't the original aim, so anything else is a bonus.

And, you know, if 0.01% of those goes through and buys another toy from you, because they now trust like and know you, then your ROI is just exponential on that series of videos, really. So I think that's, that's a good element, sort of a good case study, really.

Maria Lloyd (10:29 - 10:57)

Connected to this is a great piece of advice from episode 11 with former CIA agent turned CEO, Rupal Patel, which is a helpful reminder that life gets busy for all of us. And sometimes the simplest actions such as following up can be more helpful than you think. This is something that I haven't been very good at, to be honest, in my own business, although I now have a process in place to do this much more intentionally, thanks to Rupal.

Rupal Patel (10:58 - 13:38)

For me, the reality and for many others that I know has just been consistency and persistence. And a lot of what that entails is just a numbers game. So as you said, in the beginning, when I was growing my business, both of them, actually, it was constantly pitching, being on the phone, putting myself in front of potential clients or customers, having conversations, not with a pitch, but just putting myself out there, planting lots of seeds, doing all of that cold calling, that cold pitching, that cold introduction, and then sort of following up, following up, following up, following up. And the reality is most conversions don't happen after the first, not even after the second.

You have to be, you don't want to become a pain in the backside, right? So that some of theirs, there's this sense of, okay, again, for me, this is an arbitrary number, but this is what I found works for me. I will try someone three times.

And if I don't hear from them after three times, I'm going to let that one go. Because the first time, you know, we all get busy, things get lost in your inbox. The second time, it's just a gentle nod, a nudge or a prod and just, hey, by the way, did you see this?

And P.S., as a recipient of many of those unsolicited emails or messages, there are times where like, oh yeah, that sounds really interesting. I want to follow up. But then life gets in the way or you get distracted or something else happens.

So I always appreciate it when someone follows up with me at least a second time. And for me, my personal limit, both in receiving and giving those sort of follow-ups is three. Because after that, it starts to feel like you're being hounded if you're receiving those, or if I'm giving it, it makes me feel a bit like, oh, I'm being annoying.

So that for me was what I sort of landed on as far as how many touch points, how much follow-up you need to do. But every single time I have secured a new piece of business, whether even now or 10 years ago, it has been through the follow-up. It was never through that first connection or that first conversation.

So follow up, play the numbers game. And by that, all I mean is you're going to have to reach out to hundreds of people and potential clients and customers or whatever it is that you're looking for before you start building that momentum. So most people don't want to stay in it that long, or for them, it feels a bit uncomfortable.

But for me, the reality is it's just numbers game. And you've got to be willing to put yourself out there, not in a way that's pushy or in your face or like, hey, buy this thing or do this, whatever. It's about understanding the other person.

Do you have something that can fill a need that they have, a service, a product, whatever? And then communicating the value. It's not about the sales pitch.

For me, the way I have made my piece with, quote unquote, sales, because it feels really awkward and really icky, is never, hey, here's this thing I have. You should buy it because of X, Y, or Z. It's always, so what's going on with you?

What are some of your challenges?

Maria Lloyd (13:39 - 14:14)

The penultimate part of the customer journey is the action stage. This is where a customer wants to make a purchase with you, and you now have to ensure that the process is as easy and enjoyable for them as possible. One of my favourite concepts for this stage is the helping of frontline staff through sales enablement tools.

This is done brilliantly by Double Barrel Brewery. Back in episode 48, Becky, taproom supervisor at Double Barrel Brewery, explained how they do this with a book behind the bar.

Becky Nallon (14:15 - 15:08)

So we've got a little book behind the bar now, which is brewer's notes, marketing notes, and then any extra information from Matt, our head brewer. And we get to read through that, learn from what we've got in the book, and then take on your own experience of the beer as well. There are some beers that have slightly more berry flavoured hops or some beers that have slightly more citrus flavours.

And I think when you first start, it can all be quite overwhelming. There's 10 taps behind the bar, and then there's guest cans, and then there's other cans that we've brewed. And it can be quite daunting, but I think once you get into the swing of it, and once you've tasted a few beers, and once you've done it for a little while, you start to realise what those flavours are, and you go, oh, I recognise that from this beer, or this has got citra hops, which is very similar to Parker, and your learning grows just from being behind the bar and pouring stuff and tasting it.

Maria Lloyd (15:08 - 15:32)

As well as helping staff so they can assist customers in making the right decisions, sometimes you need customers to do something as part of the process. For example, in episode 17, Mark Thwaites, Managing Director of Thames Lido and Bristol Lido, shared how they encourage customers to shower before going into the pool.

Mark Thwaites (15:32 - 17:52)

In our massage rooms, in our showers here, all the products are our own recipes. There's two shower gels. One of them is a pre-swim, and one of them is a post-swim shower gel.

And the whole idea was, Arnie and I from day one, we did some research. We want to reduce our chemical usage, and chlorine in swim pools and hot tubs is bleach. It's not a very nice substance.

So we wanted to reduce the amount of chlorine in pools. And the research we did, yes, you can get ozone treatment and so on, but you always need a little bit of bleach or chlorine in the pool. So we have got ultraviolet light disinfection here, but you still need chlorine.

And what we found out was that the best way to reduce your chlorine levels was to get people to wash. And that's it. It's the bacteria that we have on our skins, on our bodies.

So we have this, what we call a wash naked policy. You've probably seen, we don't have a communal changing room. We've got individual shower cubicles.

And there's two reasons for that. One is, with a grade two listed building and a limited space, it was hard to get communal changing rooms. But also we felt that, why don't we give people their own private shower room to get changed and washed in.

And hopefully that will encourage people to actually wash before they get into swim pool. You know, I tell people till I'm blue in the face about our policy. And I remember

once in Bristol, and there was a group of three ladies, and I was walking them around and explaining about this wash naked policy.

And this lady, oh, that's wonderful. I wish my swimming pool would do that. I said, well, maybe you can talk to them and encourage them to do the same thing.

And I thought it was a really positive conversation. And I thought these three ladies are going to be washed and showered before they go into the pool. And I saw them two minutes later, jumping in the pool, dry as a bone.

They hadn't washed at all. And it's like, she was a real advocate for this, but she obviously feels that her body is very, very clean. And it's not just about the bacteria, it's about the deodorant, the moisturisers.

I spoke to Richard about this and I said, how can we really encourage people? And then we came up with this concept and said, well, why don't we provide them with really nice, luxurious shower gels and tell them that one of them is pre-swim, and then post-swim, one is very cleansing before you go in, the other one is really moisturising that will really moisturise your skin.

Maria Lloyd (17:53 - 18:42)

We've now come to the final stage, the retention stage. This is where a business ideally retains the customer, so they will come back to make future purchases again and again. This is where the classic business metrics of customer acquisition cost, or CAC, and customer lifetime value, LTV, come into play.

How much are you ultimately going to get back from each customer for every £1 that you've spent on acquiring them? This is where I think the hospitality industry comes into its own, as they have great lessons for how to deliver experiences that will keep people coming back. Firstly, Pete Hefferan from Shed Cafe shared that the product may only play a small part in the bigger picture.

Pete Hefferan (18:43 - 19:29)

For cafes, it is all about the story. You know, you can have a cheese sandwich anywhere. You know, there's the holiday effect, isn't there, when you're on holiday and you have some food and then you get home, you make exactly the same food and it isn't.

And so I think that's true of cafes, it's true of anywhere that you go like this. I think we've got this lovely building, we're slightly off the high street, and I think that's it. That just adds to the whole vibe.

Someone said to me, good coffee is 10% beans. And I went, what do you mean it's 10% beans? But what they meant is that you make a choice on the bean, but you also make choices on what chair they sit on, how you talk to them, how much it costs, how they pay, you know, all these different choices that you make when you're providing a coffee for someone.

Maria Lloyd (19:30 - 19:37)

Next, Meena from Angel Bar also shares great insight on how some touch points matter more than others.

Meena Arch (19:37 - 20:18)

And I think one thing I've learned with hospitality is a staff turnover is quite quick because it's usually a transient job unless you've got a massive career path for somebody. So yeah, you're constantly on the recruitment roll. But I've been so fortunate, I think I mentioned to you earlier, I've got some amazing girls that work for me.

So it's more important that I expand and move the business on to keep them engaged and with me. You can ask any of them and the only thing I say to them is just greet the customer as soon as they walk in. That's all I ask because we can recover from a not so great drink or if we've dropped something, but you can't recover from that first interaction into the bar.

And I think that's where we win most of the time.

Maria Lloyd (20:19 - 21:04)

So there you have it. Top tips from nine local business owners that you can apply to each stage of your customer journey. However, this wouldn't be a special without a couple of bonuses.

So here are two more of my favourite takeaways on general business advice. The first clip is from Kevin Harrington from Exit Factor on ensuring that you're targeting the right clients. What I particularly like about this extract is how Kevin demonstrates how you can use data to work this out.

Now, if you know me, you'll know that I love data. So this is a great example of how you can start adding metrics to your customer journey process to ensure that every part is working as effectively as it can.

Kevin Harrington (21:05 - 22:12)

I was talking to someone the other day and they were talking about having just told Amazon to sling their hook. There were suppliers into Amazon and it was a big bit of their turnover. But do you know what?

When they really looked at the data, although there was a slim margin there, they actually were losing money looking after that business and they had to have a resource level that was quite high to do it. So the business became quite risky. So they actually worked their way out of the Amazon contract and suddenly their profit shot up.

And there's no great kudos in being an Amazon supplier. It didn't help them get more business particularly. But they only realised that when they were encouraged to get into looking at the data.

When the question put to them was what channels are delivering you the most profit, which channels consume the most of your customer support time, which channels argue the most about the invoice after or want returns on things or whatever it might be. And suddenly you go, do you know what? Some customers look lovely from a distance, but really we could do without them.

The only way you get to that is by using data.

Maria Lloyd (22:14 - 22:23)

Finally, let's listen to Diana Finch, former CEO of the Bristol Pound on checking that your values and your goals are aligned.

Diana Finch (22:24 - 24:06)

I think it's often the case with social movements rather than early adopters of gadgets. If you narrow yourself, you set a higher and higher ideological barrier and that stops people joining. So I started to try and change that.

And we were changing the branding, changing the framing and trying to make it easier for people to use against the backlash of current users who didn't much like that change. I remember going and talking to a big business and saying, oh yeah, I want to talk to you because I'm hoping you could change your procurement. Given that you've chosen set up in Bristol, you use some Bristol businesses in your supply chain.

And he looked at me. I think he accepted the meeting just so he could have this moment. And he got out one of our leaflets.

He said, why should I even talk to you? Look, you say here that you hate big business. Why are you here?

We can't make friends with us with that out there in the public domain. So I realised, you know, what a big job it was going to be to try and change our spots, if you like, to change

how people saw us. It would have taken so much money and so much time to try and change that and think of a new way of selling the idea.

It was when we were thinking about, well, what could we do next after we had decided that the Bristol pound had to go? It was one of the big learnings that we were taking into the next phase of thinking is, how do we make this not have an ideological starting point? How do we frame this completely differently and have a very different proposition, if you like, for people and businesses?

Maria Lloyd (24:07 - 25:24)

If there is something that has piqued your interest today, I highly recommend taking the inspiration and thinking about how you can apply that action to your own business. Remember that all your actions ideally feed into each other to form a coherent customer journey overall. Although, work on only one small action within this journey at a time to ensure progress happens in the right direction.

In other news, I'm just about to launch another podcast on Connection, so there will be one episode a month of the My Local Marketer podcast going forwards. If you have any questions about marketing, especially around systems and processes or relationship marketing, please don't hesitate to get in touch and I can do an episode on that for you, or we can have a catch up over a hot drink. As always, thank you so much for your time today and to my wonderful guests, without whom this episode and podcast wouldn't be possible.

You can find out more information about them on the episode landing page and please do look back over the previous episodes, they're loaded with value. In the meantime, I hope that you found this useful and I look forward to catching up with you next time on the My Local Marketer podcast. Bye for now.