

-- Speaker 1 00:04 Make it right. The manufacturing podcast

Speaker 2 00:09 within crisis are the seeds of opportunity. That's a great quote and it's a great truth. And believe it or not, it comes from Marilyn Monroe. So what are you doing in this current covert 19 situation to find those seeds of opportunity that you can use to nurture your customers and your business? Welcome to the makeup right podcast. I'm Janet Eastman and this week my guest is branding expert Jeremy Miller of sticky branding. He's here to talk about crisis marketing, how to do it right, so you're being helpful and giving people what they truly need to build and move forward in this time of covert 19. So Jeremy, I'm excited to have you on the show to talk about this crisis marketing and nice to meet you over the airwaves.

Speaker 1 00:54 Likewise, thanks for inviting me today and what a timely moment that we're all going through. It's this after coronavirus world has changed everything.

Speaker 2 01:02 I know it, it is. Uh, it is kind of a brave new world. And I love talking about marketing, especially in a situation like this because there's a lot of marketing going on right now. So how do you do marketing, right? So you don't look like you're taking advantage of people in a time of weakness or in a time of fear?

Speaker 1 01:24 Well, I think the first thing to recognize is we are actually in a time of fear. If you were to look at Maslow's hierarchy of needs, you know that triangle. It's like we've been smushed all the way down the triangle into a state of fear where we're afraid for our homes, we're afraid for our jobs, we're afraid for our health and marketing tactics that might've worked, uh, beforehand where you would create a little bit of anxiety or fear or that fear of missing out. Those types of things actually don't work very well right now because we're already in a state of fear. So the simplest answer to the question though is be helpful that this is a shared experience. Every person and every company from the around the world is going through the exact same thing at the exact same time. And we all have a lot of needs that have been triggered by the, uh, the Corona virus and the lockdowns and everything that we're experiencing. So how can your business be of service? How can you help other companies or other people who are in need? And if you're truly helpful, you will never be perceived as opportunistic or Ricky.

Speaker 2 02:30 So how do you define or figure out what is going to be helpful for a prospect or a client?

Speaker 1 02:39 What's going to be different for everybody? And this is what I think is so interesting of the situation that we're in right now. So I like to ask people three questions when they're approaching their marketing. The first one is who needs your company and its expertise the most right now? And this is really being creative. Where can you be of service? And then when you identify a need, then the next question is, what products or services can you deliver to help them solve that problem? And this is key because in a crisis you need to sell. You need to generate cash in order for you to survive the crisis. And then finally, the third question is how can you proactively sell and deliver your services to the people who are most in need? So it's all about being creative and generous, looking out at the world around you, looking at your customers, looking at potential customers, and asking, how can you be of service?

Speaker 1 03:32 Where do they need, where are they having problems that you might be able to assist on? And some might be very technical type of things, like maybe, uh, people need personal protective equipment. And then the logistics is a problem that you have the ability to help with shipping, just like Amazon has done in Canada to support the government of Canada to get PPE out to the hospitals. But it can be much simpler than that. If you're a comedian, for example, just bringing laughter and joy to people who just need a break from it all could just be one of the best gifts that you could ever give.

Speaker 2 04:05 Hmm. I'm thinking about, um, you know, you're a company, you've got a product, you've got a way of selling it, you've got a way of looking at it and you know, in this particular moment you're like, you're trying to sell that same thing in the same way, but sometimes you have to totally rethink your business. --

-- Like there's, you know, vodka businesses up here who've shifted from making vodka to making, um, you know, hand sanitizer to be helpful and to keep their business going. I guess it's different for every business, but you really have to look at what you do and you may have to significantly modify your offering in order to hit that helpful spot. Right,

Speaker 1 04:46 exactly. And, and, and, and the reality is pretty much every value proposition has been forced to change in the last several weeks that I really think there is a dividing line, which is, uh, BCAC before Corona virus after Corona virus and after coronavirus. You do have to be sensitive to the times, both in not only how you market and sell your products and services, but also how they're used, where they fit all of that. It's so the companies that are truly tone deaf are the ones that are still trying to hold on to what was life BC and it is no longer life BC.

Speaker 2 05:28 Hmm. Can you, I know we're really early into this, but you've been through crisis as before. So can you share some stories where you've seen something like this really work

Speaker 1 05:40 well, this approach really came back from my origin story. I in many respects, I feel like I've been training my entire career for this moment. Uh, and, and so my background and, and where people know me is that through sticky branding, I'm an author and a speaker. I've written books like sticky brand new name and, and I've told my story many, many times in that. But what I haven't talked about very often is that I grew up in a family business that was in the recruiting sector. And our business would go up and down with the economy. And I can tell you in vivid detail what every recession started with 1989 look like, because every time there was a spike in the unemployment rate, our business suffered as a result. Our family finances suffered and that cascade effect that wa that many people are going through today.

Speaker 1 06:26 We have gone through multiple times. And what happened when I joined the company in 2004 is we, I joined the business at a point where we were in a growth market. But from the moment I started, we had the fear of the next recession always lingering. And we made a commitment to ourselves not to fall down as we built a strategy or a contingency plan early on and what we would do when the next crisis struck. And what it was, was to be very agile and adaptive to replace the customers that were being taken. And the net result of that was in the Oh eight Oh nine recession, which was at that point before the great depression, the largest spike in unemployment. Uh, we, we grew while the rest of the recruiting sector was, was cratering. We brought on a new customer per week. And it was a deliberate strategy to replace big clients with little clients.

Speaker 1 07:19 Um, but we're, but that kind of mindset is taking place. Even today, there were lots of companies, and we can go through a couple examples, but there's lots of companies that are being really proactive and bold and they are looking at the lockdowns as, as a real restriction and, but they are being truly innovative and creative to find better ways to serve their customers or ways that they can serve their customers within this crisis. And as a result, they are proactively replacing the revenue that was taken from them. Well, let's talk about some of them. Share somebody. So I'll give you a one that I think is a really dramatic example is element fitness, which is one of Canada's largest CrossFit gyms. Now you imagine going to a gym at the start of the crisis, everyone would be locked out of this whole thing and they were no different.

Speaker 1 08:13 You'd go to the gym to get sweaty and uh, and that doesn't work in a pandemic. So they were, we, they were shut down like everybody else. But Alex Subbury, the founder and his team moved really, really fast. And within 24 hours of the announcements around, uh, March 11, 12 they had put their programming online with videos and content. But what's really remarkable, and I'll give you the end of the story and then tell you how is where they're at today. They have a 92% member retention rate paying full fee as the same. They were before the crisis with a 9.8 net promoter score. So they are getting member satisfaction of 9.89 point out of 10 and so it's remarkable, right?

Speaker 2 08:59 That's astounding. And they're still p --

-- aying the same membership as they were to do everything online and not be allowed to enter the facility

Speaker 1 09:08 \$200 a month. They're not cheap. Uh, so what happens? So the F Alex reframed his business. He said, you know what many gyms think of themselves as a rental business. They give a membership, you use the equipment, you come and you leave on in hours. He said, we are not a rental business. We're a coaching and community business. So they, they said that and then ask the question, how do we create the community online? So they put their programming online like everybody else did. They gave all of their members equipment to take home. And then they assigned everybody a home coach. And that provided accountability and someone to check in on you daily. They then created multiple zoom classes through the day so that you could do your workouts. But at night they created all these community events. So they have a dance night where one of the members teaches dance class and they have a games night and a wine tasting night and every, every night, seven days a week at seven 30 they have programming going on. And as a result, they have actually created an even more dynamic community experience than what they did

Speaker 2 10:13 for coven. Hmm. So the next question is what happens to all their bricks and mortar?

Speaker 1 10:21 Well, this is going to be one of the most interesting questions I think so many businesses are seeing right now is they're be exposed to opportunities that, uh, are going to reframe their business at the end of this thing. Now, Alex had said to me, uh, that, look, we are actually growing and they're selling these programs now to schools and sports teams and others where they're delivering virtual training to two groups and creating a new revenue stream they didn't have before. But maybe this virtual piece will continue on afterwards. Obviously people are going to want to go back to the gym but maybe they don't need as large a facility. The expansion plans before Kobe were to open another gym. Maybe that doesn't make sense anymore. So this is, and this is a repeating story right now, is that we are getting exposed to new needs and new opportunities that will likely stick around after this crisis. And for that this has become one of the most golden entrepreneurial opportunities of, of in history that the playing field's been leveled. We have access to capital and you've got customers that want you to succeed. You really can't ask for a better moment. Even with all the carnage and bad things going on. The the, the, the, the entrepreneurs and the leaders who are, are taking the risks and are going for it are being rewarded.

Speaker 2 11:40 And there there's a, there's something really important here and it is that ability to really sit down and examine your business, rethink your customers, what it is you're providing to them, and how you can, you know, turn that this situation into value. Like, as you said, this fellow Alex, he, he has completely transformed his business. Now his marketplace isn't just whatever the cities are that he's in, but really he's global now if he wants to be from the sounds of it. Right? Yeah. So yeah. What kind of tips do you have for somebody to, to sit down and really re-examine their business? Now you said you've got these three key questions, but how do you get started? Like who needs your company and its expertise right now? Like how do you really break that question down?

Speaker 1 12:37 Sure. Well, at sticky branding, we have a program called crisis marketing where we are working with companies through these types of questions. And the very first part of this is w is ID is need identification. And what I encourage listeners to do as a starting point is to look at, at yourself, your customers and your competitors, and look at where the needs may examine you. You can look at what's going on in your company, what's going on with your customers and what's going on with your competitors and try to create a list of all the potential needs that you are seeing around you. And as you do that, try to assign what could be products or services that you could deliver or adapt to solve that need and put a value on that. And this is a simple way of getting your creative juices flowing to all the varying ways that you could be of service right now.

Speaker 1 13:36 So I'll give you a very specific way to look at this. One of the --

-- things that we are seeing right now are significant disruptions in supply chains. Uh, if you are competing with say, manufacturers that are in Northern Italy, well, they've probably been offline since February and they're unable to ship their products and services. Same thing with, uh, with manufacturing that's going on in Asia, that they, there might be supply chain issues preventing products from getting to say Europe or North America. If that's the case and you're able to actually serve those, those markets, then you have an opportunity to go to customers and say, I recognize you might've been using this, but this is a product that we have that could help you solve that problem. And it's not that you're being opportunistic, you're actually being very helpful because they still need those products and services. You're just helping them navigate a new opportunity or a new vendor to buy from. But it takes that first step to really just be wide thinking and creative to say what are all the possible areas that we could be of service.

Speaker 2 14:45 I think that's, um, that's a brilliant idea and you really have to put your thinking on to, to break that down. And I guess it's sometimes very useful to have a guide who can pull those questions out of you to make you rethink. Because I think oftentimes business owners, we all get kind of in our own little box and go, well this is kind of what I do, man, and I don't know how to, I don't know what to do right now. So you need somebody to kind of poke at the box and go, well what about this and what about that to help you sort of move beyond those walls that you've put around yourself?

Speaker 1 15:22 For sure. Yeah. Co coaching and perspective is huge. But the other part of this whole equation is action. This is a, an environment is moving incredibly quickly. Uh, all of your competitors are acting at a pace that is, that we keep using this word unprecedented and it's overused, but it's true. We are seeing companies executing programs in weeks that would have taken the months or years beforehand. And as a result that the companies that are acting first and adapting fastest have the advantage. But that means everybody is leveling up at an incredible pace. So when you identify a need, then my primary recommendation is build a simple sales sheet, build an offer, and go and pitch it 10 or 15 times and validate does the need exist? It's going to be in the work you do in the sales work you do, whether you are serving customers, selling to customers or delivering to customers, that is going to tell you if you're on track or not. If you think you can ride this out on the sidelines and time one to come into the market, this opportunity is going to pass you by big time.

Speaker 2 16:31 And this really is, is the perfect opportunity now to try things and find out if they work or if they don't, right? Because what if you got to lose, I mean,

Speaker 1 16:41 Mercer, so generous right now is this is like the, the elephant example. Uh, their members want them to succeed. But I'll give you another very simple example. Uh, I, I work, I've been working for several years with one of Canada's largest ice cream manufacturers called central Smith. And at the star of the crisis, their factory store was closed down, but they had all this overstock. So Jillian and Megan, two of their young employees PO put up a Shopify account in a week and they put up all the overstock there. And in the span of a week they sold out all the overstock and they actually did in one week, 10% of last year's revenue on the store. And since then it has leveled up multiple times.

Speaker 2 17:26 Wow.

Speaker 1 17:27 And, and why is the community the chain, the local chamber of commerce promoted it for them. The local food, uh, association promoted from them and they had lineups of cars driving to the factory and they were putting the tubs of ice cream into their trunk.

Speaker 2 17:43 And there is, there is a community sense there. Like if somebody is using your services and they like your business, they are going to try very hard to keep you in business. So you're around when this thing passes.

Speaker 1 17:55 Exactly. And, but there's another side to this. It's also how you treat your employees. That those good vibes, the employers and the companies that are working hard to keep their people employed are also being rewarded by the community. And central Smit --

-- h is one of those companies that have really done a great job on that. They've even given their employees uh, raises after the, the, after this because of the kind of work they're doing and, and the risks and everything else that they, they are so appreciative of the contributions that people are making that they are giving back not only to the community but to their people.

Speaker 2 18:35 <inaudible> you did mention this but I want to, I want to just sort of dig into it a bit more, but you, what do you say to those people who are sitting here holding out until this past is thinking that they can time the market and get back out in front of clients and prospects? Again, once this is passed,

Speaker 1 18:53 you can't, so realistically there's three paths sitting forward to all businesses right now. You can exit, you can hibernate or you can innovate. Now exiting, we probably would never have talked much about this before coronavirus but today in certain sectors, for example, restaurants and hospitality, the economics of that business model have been changed and the restrictions on it are so great that it might be a moment in time where you take your chips off the table. No one needs to be a martyr and lose their house over their business. So that's a horrible thing to say, but I think that is a truth. But for everybody else, hibernation is probably the worst option because waiting for this thing to recover is going to really set up your competitors and alternatives to rise up and innovate at this moment in time. One of the things that element of observed was many gyms at the start of the crisis just closed down for three weeks and thought they could come back, but by the time they came back, they were are the members had already moved on and found alternative sources. So elements speed gave it its advantage and why it maintained that 92% member retention rate. Uh, whereas other gyms who couldn't act as quickly or didn't act as quickly have basically lost their businesses.

Speaker 2 20:18 So you had mentioned this, um, when you were talking about your experience with the recruiting company, and I'm thinking there's probably a bit of this in the, in the element story as well, but they must have been preparing just a little bit in advance because you can't turn things around in like 24 hours and start putting videos out and things like that. They must've had a sense, especially if they were giving equipment to some of their members and things like that, they must have had game plan sitting

Speaker 1 20:48 in the background somewhere. The irony is they didn't really the, and this happened, so I even can say this was sticky branding and how we launched and created the services we do today. Uh, in many respects the, it is using everything you have at that moment in time. So it is true that element was thinking and working on creating video content for an online platform. And they had been thinking about this and they had invested in the lighting and the cameras, but the tyranny of having a successful businesses, it was too busy to ever move the projects forward that they thought they could move forward. But when the crisis started, they dusted off things that they, they, they could, that they'd been thinking about and they just executed on it. And that to me is really what so many entrepreneurs are doing right now. I did the same thing at the start of this crisis, the first couple of days of this.

Speaker 1 21:45 Uh, I was advising my clients on crisis communication, but by the 15th of March, we could see that. Or I could see all of my, my, my programming for my family business kicked in. And I saw that we were being thrown into a recession. And I approached my clients that said, look, we're probably gonna see a decline of 30 to 50% of revenue in this calendar year based on what's happening. And I showed them and we introduced the a, the, the leap job playbook. But more importantly, we began innovating and adapting all of our services. And within one week we launched crisis marketing and began promoting it. And since then we have been bringing on a new client per week. And so my business has actually been growing because we are doing work that's so important. But it's like that line I used before, I feel like I've been preparing my whole career for this moment.

Speaker 1 22:41 Alex would say the same thing. He feels like he was preparing his whole career for that moment. All those --

-- things they'd been thinking about all that infrastructure, they invested in, all those things that didn't quite make sense all the sudden made sense and they could apply at all. So for, for those companies who have were in that mindset or we're sitting there, I mean this really is the opportunity. This is like the goose that laid the golden egg in many ways, isn't it? <inaudible> one of the things I'm observing within this, Janet, is that there is a, uh, there's a mindset difference here. And I think there is an entrepreneurial mindset that the companies and the people that are thriving have a warrior mindset. They're thinking they are behaving like this virus is not going to get me down. We're going to conquer this. We are going to overcome these obstacles.

Speaker 1 23:29 We are going to rise up and we're going to fight and we're going to move fast and we're going to be great and it's this challenge that they got punched and they're punching back and that warrior mindset is is something so powerful. And then there's another group that I would just as other, and they might not have gotten that yet, but everyone has it in them intrinsically. The thing is we have been knocked down and affected in a way that is really jarring that this is not a business crisis. It's a health crisis. And so while some of the the early innovators and and and seasoned entrepreneurs are punching back really quickly, that doesn't mean that the market has passed you by. You still have an opportunity to stand up and to innovate and to be of service. The economy is just starting to reopen again. Now is the time that there was so much, so many green shoots. So how can you be of service like you? You don't have to worry that, Oh, I haven't done anything now you still have time.

Speaker 2 24:30 <inaudible> okay, so, um, Jeremy share some key takeaways that can help listeners really grab hold of this opportunity and run with it.

Speaker 1 24:42 So I think the first thing to recognize, and it's what we've been, is the theme for this entire conversation is be helpful that every person, every company in every country is going through the exact same thing at the exact same time. So how can you be of service? And this is going to take some creativity or some, some thinking, but you have an opportunity to be helpful. So how can you change your value proposition or adapt your products and services for this moment in time and then proactively go out and sell it? If you don't blow your own horn, nobody will. And in a crisis, the most important thing you can do is to sell your services so that you can generate cash because you need cash to survive this. Do you have enough cash to get you through to June to September and then January. And so it's that connection of when you're helpful, you will never be perceived as icky or gross. And when you are selling a proactive, you are actually being helpful because you're insuring the people who need you are hearing from you.

Speaker 2 25:44 And you also did mention earlier treat your employees well

Speaker 1 25:49 for sure. Uh, well the only answers I think you're gonna find are not external. They're internal and inside every organization has immense creative potential. Uh, so ask your, your team how they can help. Uh, everyone's in this thing together so they will, they, if you trust your employees, they will trust you.

Speaker 2 26:12 Jeremy, really interesting conversation, lots to think about and I really appreciate your time today. Thank you so much.

Speaker 1 26:19 My pleasure. Thanks for having me on the show.

Speaker 2 26:21 My pleasure. Jeremy Miller is a branding expert and he's the bestselling author of sticky branding and brand new name. Brand new name is fairly new, isn't it, Jeremy?

Speaker 1 26:31 Yes. It was just released October, 2019

Speaker 2 26:34 okay, so it's available on Amazon and when bookstores open again, et cetera, I'm guessing, right,

Speaker 1 26:40 wherever books are sold, but Amazon's probably the fastest. Yeah.

Speaker 2 26:43 Okay. Uh, that is our show this week. Please check out our Twitter and LinkedIn feeds that are on our podcast page. Subscribe and share the podcast with your friends and colleagues through iTunes, Google play, Stitcher, Spotify, and YouTube. The mega bright podcast is brought to you by Kevin Snoop, leadership advisor and author of the bestselling book. Make it right --

-- . Five steps to align your manufacturing business from the front line to the bottom line. I'm Janet Eastman. Keep in mind what Marilyn Monroe said within crisis are the seeds of opportunity. That is our show this week. Thanks for listening to make it right.

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