

THE **small** BUSINESS BIG **MARKETING**

show

INSANELY EFFECTIVE
MARKETING

Episode #456
Consumer futurist
Amanda Stevens on
how and why epic
marketing is the way
to go



www.SmallBusinessBigMarketing.com

Amanda Stevens Interview Transcription

Tim

Stev I would love nothing more than listeners having listened to this episode feeling re inspired about their marketing. Maybe we'll give them a little bit of tough love. Maybe will also give them a little bit of direction as to what they could be doing better than is that deal?

Amanda

Yeah absolutely.

Tim

So in order to do that. One of the great copywriting tactics is identify the problem first isn't it before hitting them over the head with a solution. So what you reckon small business owners are getting wrong in regards to their marketing in 2019?

Amanda

I think a couple of things. I think firstly a lot of small business owners in fact probably most small business owners are marketing the way they were 12 months ago and that's a problem because.

Tim

Or 12 years.

Amanda

Well yeah that's a bigger problem. But even 12 months is a problem because consumers are changing so rapidly now that what worked 12 months ago is potentially not going to work at all now. So I think that not evolving their marketing is probably the biggest issue. Not re-evaluating it and playing it safe. I think we're going to talk today about stepping outside your comfort zone with your marketing which is so necessary now. So I think that playing it safe and doing what they've always done and expecting to get the results that perhaps they have always got.

Tim

Good quote. That playing it safe. You know in one of my keynotes I talk about podcasting. I talk about video as you probably you do and I used to say as a call to action at the end of a chunk around podcasting or video marketing I would say maybe take a look at video or maybe start listening to some podcasts. I've changed those slides which now say start a

podcast and start Video Marketing its no more excuses. I'm not suggesting this conversation is all about those two forms of content marketing but my point is stop tiptoeing around. If they're longtime listeners to the show if they're consuming other marketing content. Reading books like yours they should be implementing some of these braver marketing ideas are going to lead to better results.

Amanda

Absolutely. I mean video is not a nice to have anymore it's just a must do. If you are trying to market your small business without using video you are climbing a mountain that's far steeper than it needs to be. That's just the reality. I talk about the six videos you need in your business but in a lot of people say I don't know where to start and I say just start. It doesn't need to be perfect.

Tim

It's such a cliché but sometimes clichés are clichés for a reason right. And just talking to a guy yesterday and Andrew banks from Shark Tank Pask guest to this show and he wanted to do some videos and he has this mindset it's got to be TV. It's got to be a Hollywood production so mate as you're boarding a plane and you need to get to shoot a video for some client or something. Get the smartphone out and say Hey it's Andrew here I'm boarding the plane. Just want to send a quick note because people love that there's a bit of kind of.

Amanda

Authenticity.

Tim

Authenticity behind the scenes. Bit of voyeurism. All that type of stuff so it is about just starting I want to get those six videos that people should be creating so just make a note and will circle back to that.

Amanda

We will get to that.

Tim

What they are getting wrong. The consumer's changing quickly. They're not keeping up. They're doing the same old marketing. I'll add to that they had these limiting beliefs. Many small business owners have limiting beliefs around great marketing its going to take a lot of time. It's going to cost a lot of money. It's complicated.

Amanda

I've got to outsource it.

Tim

I got to outsource it. I get to get funky mine. I've got to get a studio. I've got to get an editor a graphic designer I've got to do all these things. You know my wish around that is that if people like you and I can help them see marketing as a hobby it sounds a bit wacky I know but if they see it as a hobby when something is a hobby you love doing it. You can't wait to do it again you'll find some dough to throw at it some time to throw at it and it's just a fun thing to do.

Amanda

And also the more you do it the better you get at it. The better you get at it. So videos. Again coming back to that. It's just about starting and the more you do it the more comfortable you'll be with it and more naturally it will come to you.

Tim

Totally. And enjoy that uncomfortableness because people like that particularly if your service business. People buy from people right. So if you got to stutter. Stutter. If you are a bit nervous be nervous and you'll get better at it. I mean I look back to my first episode a little bit embarrassing.

Amanda

It is actually.

Tim

I go with that. I'm always open to constructive criticism anyway. I love it to have you on the show and see you later. So look they're doing a few things wrong. They could be doing things better we're not here to castigate them for what they're doing wrong we're here to inspire them as to what they could be doing.

Amanda

And I think that if there's one message for them to take out of this episode with their marketing it's time to be brave with your marketing. It's time to be brave to do the things that make you feel uncomfortable that take you outside your comfort zone that force you to tell your story a little bit more which makes small business owners feel uncomfortable sometimes but that is where the magic is and that's where their unique brand proposition is no one can compete with you and I think we're in an era where storytelling is just a critical fundamental part of marketing whether you like it or not and your story your why

is something that none of your competitors can compete with. So the more that you're injecting and incorporating that into your marketing the greater competitive advantage you're creating with your marketing.

Tim

So by being brave let's explore that because I love the idea of more and more business owners being brave. Does that mean that they need to stop their Facebook ads and going to networking events and cancel the local paper. You know 10 by two they've been running. Or do they continue to do that but they also look an edge out of that square into things like what?

Amanda

Content marketing. So making a video that tells your story about why you decided to become a financial planner. Why you decided to start your business. What you do that's unique. You and I talk about video content. There's so much you can do with it. Frequently asked questions and really leveraging that content and being brave enough to put it out there knowing that not everyone's going to like it. And I think that as small business owners now more than ever we need to take the risk with our marketing knowing that sometimes it might be polarizing and we need to be comfortable with. We need to have the courage to be disliked. Because I think playing it safe.

Tim

Boring.

Amanda

It is just not going to get cut through. So I think being a successful small business owner marketer now is about being brave and producing marketing that literally cut through the noise.

Tim

Yeah. Okay. So I'm going to just go through those six videos you talked about was clearly video is one aspect to being broke. Why is video brave? It's because you've got to put yourself out there in front of a camera and that feels awkward. It's potentially complicated I suppose. It's not. But many think it is. Potentially expensive it is not. Many think it is. So what are the six videos that all small business owners should be creating run through those.

Amanda

Yeah. So they all start with P's. Easier to remember

Tim

It was just like your OCD kicking in? Or was it just totally coincidence?

Amanda

So I can remember them.

Tim

So the first one is a pretty good story?

Amanda

It will be your positioner. So your position of video is your story. What is it about you or your business that is unique.

Tim

Yeah.

Amanda

So yeah it's about the video that positions you in the unique part in the unique stop it.

Tim

Sorry I'm making faces trying to make her laugh.

Amanda

So immature I know. Yes positions you in your sector. In the hearts and minds of the audience.

Tim

I'm guessing you've done each of these six videos you have an example in your own business. So what yes what's an example? What's your positioning video? What are you going on about?

Amanda

Yeah. So last year I produced a video which actually was a game changer for my business and that's a video that I called 2018 the year of the customer. Position. I wanted to be

position as an expert in anything to do with customer. Customer service. Customer experience. The future of consumers. And so I produced a video that was called 2018 Year of the Customer.

Tim

And so the positioning video the question you need to ask in order to go and record that is what do I want to be known for.

Amanda

What do you want to be famous for.

Tim

Love it. Yep that's a great idea. Because again some small businesses owners will cringe at that. Someone I know I won't name names because it would be unfair but they would. But I remember when I worked in advertising my boss Peter Clevenger at the time said to me one day Tim do you know why you are here and I said I'm here to create advertising for clients he goes No you're not you're here to make your clients famous. And now as small business owners you can make yourself famous so love it. Okay positioning.

Amanda

And remember that you don't need to be famous. You don't need to be famous you just need to be famous to the right number of people. As Seth Godin says don't try and be famous to everyone just be famous to the 3000 people that matter. You don't need to have an epic number of people in your tribe you just need to be epic to the people in your tribe.

Tim

So the idea there is identify your tribe. Let's go back to marketing one to one here go back and identify your tribe. Understand who they are not just demographically but what keeps them up at night. What does success look like for them. How can you make them feel good. What is the biggest question they have that you can solve and in knowing that then your positioning video will soon sort of flow out. I would have thought.

Amanda

And be helpful.

Tim

Nice.

Amanda

To them and be very clear who you are and what you stand for and what you can do for your tribe.

Tim

Next video.

Amanda

Next one is what I call point of view so that's having a point of view. I know it could be a current topic. It could be what you stand for. It could be an opinion piece. And again this is about producing content and marketing that potentially polarizes people. Ah but that's where we get traction and that's where you get attention and that's where we cut through the noise.

Tim

Your position video goes on the front of your website. I'm guessing. Where is point of view video go? That sounds like a blog to me.

Amanda

Video blog.

Tim

Right.

Amanda

Absolutely. There's a number of ways you can repurpose that as well. So yeah obviously across social channels.

Tim

So it is a one off that point in time you've gone and you might have a number of point of views. Yes like I know you want to talk about the Nike ad shortly in regards to being brave and being epic in your marketing but so that can be a point of view. Just seen this ad you have a point of view on it how it can apply to other businesses.

Amanda

Yeah. So it's a point of view is more about this is what you believe about a particular topic

and the next one that I talk about is perspective. So this is a little bit different so this is your perspective on a current issue. So for example we're recording this podcast today on International Women's Day which is a topical date or an event that happens and you might record a video. That is your point of view on a current event or it could be something that's newsworthy. Something that's come out perhaps the royal commission reports come out. So if you're a mortgage broker you might produce a video on what your point of view is on that. Your perspective on that particular topic.

Tim

And let's bring a stake in the ground standing for something. Yeah polarizing people.

Amanda

Potential polarising but potentially to your tribe being very clear on what you stand for and having an opinion.

Tim

Amanda.

Amanda

Yeah.

Tim

Happy International Women's Day.

Amanda

Thank you.

Tim

When is International Men's Day it's more important to me.

Amanda

Wouldn't it be great when we don't need international women's day can be international everything day.

Tim

International People's Day.

Amanda

Yes.

Tim

Which is kind of everyday. Really. Yeah. And the Martians looking down and go why are they kind of just separating that 50 percent of the population and having a day for them. They wouldn't talk like that they would have martian voice.

Amanda

What would a martian voice sound like?

Tim

I don't know if we'd have to put some kind of audio kind of weird sound effect over it. But anyway so video number four?

Amanda

Video number four is promotional so this is where you shot form video to promote a particular event could be an offer that you have. It could be some sort of promotion or discount or percentage or something that has a short term offer around it so I use promotional videos for example to promote events that I'm speaking at. So these obviously have a shorter life span.

Tim

On all these videos. When you said six videos every business must have I was thinking six sorts of evergreen videos that sit on your social on your Web site. You know in your email signature but know some of these are quite tactical and have a short life. Others are evergreen right?

Amanda

Yeah. Others you can repurpose ongoing for a long time.

Tim

This is brave right here.

Amanda

Yeah absolutely. Doing video even for someone like me who you know I speak for a living. I sometimes get anxious around doing video because it is particularly if you're doing a point of view or perspective video it is putting yourself out there.

Tim

Can we just talk about that for a minute the anxious thing the nerves thing. You speak all the time. I podcast every week. Speak occasionally. The nerves are there. I'm glad they're there.

Amanda

It's a good thing.

Tim

To make you show up. If anyone's listening thinking Oh it's alright for Tim and Amanda they could go and smash these videos out. No we can't. No we can't. We plan them. We run through them in our minds. We know that we're going to be nervous when we get to that when someone hits record there's a certain weird changing your body chemistry that you kind of have to control in order to not speak like this as soon as the record button goes on and allocute every word with an inch of its life. The nerves are good and again just be yourself.

Amanda

It's a challenge. I sometimes when I'm doing videos I find if I'm doing a few in a row you start to get into my newsreader voice. I've got to pull myself out. Everyone has their own idiosyncrasies and challenges and fears when it comes to video and I think the biggest fear is not the recording in the making of the video it's sometimes the releasing of the video.

Tim

Yes.

Amanda

That's where the nerves and that's what stops a lot of people wanting to do video because they know they've got to release it into the ether, whether that's on a social channel or on their blog and then it's that waiting and fearful of what will people think.

Tim

And this mindset is like oh there's all these people waiting for the launch button and the post and publish. Actually there is no one so just go for it and be brave.

Amanda

But sometimes you do get lucky and you have a video or a piece of content that goes viral and we'll talk about it in a moment.

Tim

So Steveo the fifth video every small business owner should be creating?

Amanda

This is the one I think that a lot of small business owners struggle with and that's their personal video. So this is what I mentioned before about your why. So what is your story and sometimes your customers will engage with why you do what you do. Just as much as what you do. And this is again this is your opportunity to create a competitive advantage through your story because no one can compete with that. So I think that this is about getting very clear on what your story is what's your why and telling that in a really emotional way and that often gets really incredible cut through. And this was actually a real surprise for me. I recorded a video I was finding that a lot of people were asking me how I got into speaking and when I told story though like I that's really interesting and so even though I was talking to audiences about this the importance to tell your story I was not doing it myself so it was a real aha moment for me and I recorded this video called Meet Amanda and it was a story about how I got into speaking and you know just my journey really and what's been really interesting for me is that when I send proposals out I get the software I use really gives me real insights about how people are interacting with the content in that proposal and what surprised me even then is that all of the videos that I put into my proposals the meet Amanda video gets the most engagement. So it's not the expensive show fancy show. It's actually this quite inexpensive bit raw video about my story and how I got into speaking.

Tim

And you know again many listeners are going oh but I don't have a story I just got into accounting because that's what I study at university. They wouldn't talk like that. That would be demeaning of my accounting based listeners. And but they are

Amanda

Everyone has a story.

Tim

Everyone.

Amanda

Really doesn't matter what you do. There is a story there about your why your how you got into it or what it is that gets you up in the morning.

Tim

So I was speaking at a conference a few years ago a bunch of insurance brokers bloke at the back of the room about 70. He looked like Bob Katter for overseas listeners that's an Australian politician a bit of a whacko. He's name was Jack. We started talking about why everyone's got a story Jack goes I've got a story he'd probably have I said why do you become an insurance broker. He goes I like helping people I go that's not your story Jack and I think there's something deeper. And he paused got a little bit emotional and he reflected back on when he was a young man in late teens his father passed away. His brothers sisters taken out of school had to sell the family house. Didn't know where their next meal was coming from. He said the reason for that is dad never had insurance and Mum wasn't working so as a result we were left destitute. He made a point when he was 17 that he was never gonna let that happen to his family if he is ever lucky enough to have one. And that's why he sells insurance. Right there. Who is not going to buy insurance from Jack.

Amanda

He's not selling insurance. He's actually in it for the emotional reason. And this is again what we as small business owners have to come back to is what's the real business you're in. And the answer to that question is often how you can make that personal video. And again it's just such a powerful marketing tool. There's so many ways that you can use it and it's your story none of your competitors can compete with that or touch you when you're brave enough to tell that story.

Tim

Video number six.

Amanda

This is proof. So this is a testimonial videos. Using case studies again really really powerful. Really under utilized strategy in business. Some people have testimonials on their video on their website but it's a big difference between a static testimonial that says you know Tim R. from Noosa says da da da. Yeah and a really beautiful video that tells the story. More of a case study format so that proof videos. Again that is epic marketing right there. It's storytelling at its finest.

Tim

You and I didn't come together today to talk about video marketing but it is a great example

of being brave in your marketing. It's a great example of forcing small business owners to step out of their comfort zone and start to do some things around their own personal brand and their business brand that are going to challenge them. Make them feel uncomfortable. But at the end of the day it's actually not about them or about us it's about their customers. Let's talk about customers and by the way I am having a chat and you are listening to that chat with Amanda Stevens. How would you describe yourself Stevo. I was going to say.

Amanda

The consumer futurist.

Tim

I like that the consumer Futurist and I know you've put a bit of work into that. And again great example I mean you can say you're a marketing speaker but you've put thought into it and position yourself. I mean the thinking around that is are you want to be known as the person who represents the consumer on behalf of the business owner. And you also know the word futurist in the world of speaker bureaus and the word of people who book conferences is a kind of hot word. Right. Well it's interesting to know. What are the hot words in your industry? So you combine those and as a result you're charging about 50 grand a keynote which looks fantastic.

Amanda

I wouldn't be sitting here if I would.

Tim

Really?

Amanda

Of course really would. Yeah. Look I think this comes back to I think a really critical piece of the jigsaw that small business owners need to get right now more than ever which is your positioning. And I think that in this noisy world that we're living in business and things changing so rapidly we need to get cut through and it has got to start with our positioning. So I've worked pretty hard in the last almost 12 months and I've consulted external experts and really have nailed have landed on consumer futurists as an evolution of where I've been. So it wasn't a huge shift from what I've been doing or what I've been known as. But it's just a very clear position of I'm the one who understands consumers and also can help businesses look to the future which is what we're all needing to do.

Tim

So let's talk about the consumer. You said they've changed and many business owners

aren't keeping up in regards to how is the consumer changed in the past 12 months. That's a very short period of time.

Amanda

Things are changing so rapidly mainly driven by technology. Consumers the way that consumers are purchasing now the way we're interacting with brands the way we're forming brand loyalty is very different to what it was even 12 months ago. We look at certain industries I talk about some trends that are really interesting trends that are happening with the way that consumers are purchasing. One is the kit economy for example. So we're now looking for convenience. Convenience is driving a lot of purchase decisions. Now more than ever because we're all so time poor. We view our time now as consumers as far more valuable than we did even 12 months ago were valuing our own time more and more because we've got less of it. So really smart marketers are coming up with solutions that not only save their customers time but potentially give them time and do that in a really clever way that gets cut through. So for example Hello fresh is a great example of a brand that hasn't been in Australia for that long. 2011 they delivered their first box in Australia. So for those of you don't know Hello fresh is a meal kit service where you get a delivery once a week which has meal kits in it that make preparing a meal a delicious meal really easy. It takes out the two most time consuming aspects of cooking one is deciding what to cook and secondly is the shopping. There's probably a premium that you pay for that. Say hello fresh delivered its first box in Australia in 2011 and last year they turned over 200 million dollars.

Tim

Wow.

Amanda

Kit economy is alive and well.

Tim

So you mean kit as in like literally a kit like hello fresh comes in a box does it?

Amanda

Yeah.

Tim

Okay.

Amanda

So it's tapping into the convenience economy really.

Tim

Okay. Can that applied to a service based business? How could an accountant or a masseur or a chiropractor embrace the kit economy?

Amanda

By making it easy to purchase that they might look at a more of a subscription model which is essentially a kit.

Tim

If you look at this literally like it has to be a physical kit?

Amanda

Does not have to be a physical. It could be a service based kit.

Tim

Or a package like the travel industry package things up so it's not just an airfare and a 10 nights accommodation. They give it a romance package or the kids escape package or whatever it is.

Amanda

Yeah. So I'm working with some hairdressers at the moment around how they can tap into the kit economy so bundling their services with their physical product and adding value into that and then giving or offering basically a monthly subscription where people know their customers know they're getting incredible value. But from the hairdresser's point of view it's delivering them a very predictable ongoing revenue stream. So I think if you think about our own purchase behaviors how many subscriptions we're a part of now particularly tech products but that's we're starting to see that permeate into all sorts of industry.

Tim

Okay. So convenience is a key factor in the way consumers are changeable. We're chasing convenience because we're time poor. How else are we changing? I mean technology in terms of the way the media has been so fragmented these days. I mean I'd hate to be the boss of a TV station or a TV network because 10 years ago. Good job. Everyone's watching telly all of the sudden you know. How often do we watch television? We got Netflix.

Amanda

I was at a dinner party last night with five girlfriends. So there were six of us at the table and we had this very conversation. We worked out that there were a minimum of six weeks since any of us have watched commercial television. So back when you and I worked in advertising. It was if you wanted to target high income earning women 25 to 40 it was relatively easy.

Tim

Pick the programs.

Amanda

You picked the programs.

Tim

Charge hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Amanda

Yeah. And now it's really really hard for big brands but that's really good news for small business owners because it means that you're able to now compete with your biggest competitors think of the biggest operator in your industry and it's now easier for you to compete with them than ever before. Ten years ago they could just outspend you but now it's about being very very clever and there's ways that you can actually outsmart your biggest competitors because you're far more agile. You're able to reach the same customer base basically and you can potentially do it in a much smarter cost effective way.

Tim

Yeah. I mean I I turn the TV on sometimes at night and I think I'm going to flick through the channels because that's still what's in my psyche. Having grown up that way but within two minutes I am stuck in the deepest most far reaching YouTube black hole that has been ever known to man I go from watching behind the scenes Rolling Stones footage to listening to what Brian Cox has to say about whether there are Martians somewhere out there. And then everything in between. It's quite hilarious. And you know then I might go and read a blog or listen to my show I don't often listen to my show and listen to other podcasts. But it is very fragmented and it's great because as you say all these changes are playing right into the hands of the small business owner because we the small guys can now compete against brands with much deeper pockets.

Amanda

Absolutely and compete in ways that sometimes we don't realize just the opportunity and advantage that we have. I talk to a lot of small business owners about marketing. Creating epic marketing from the inside out. And what I mean by that is realizing that your customer experience is such a huge part of your marketing it's no longer marketing exist here and your customer service sits over here. The experience that your customers are having with your brand is now an integral part of your marketing strategy. Much more so I think than even what you're doing with your brand externally. And that's where small business owners have an advantage over big businesses because I'm sure we've all been into big retailers recently and had an awful customer experience.

Tim

They bore me.

Amanda

It's awful.

Tim

I'm gonna say it because they're never going to sponsor this show. David Jones I mean.

Amanda

If you are lucky you can find someone to serve you to take your money let alone actually help you.

Tim

It's just boring.

Amanda

But this is where small business owners need to get really excited particularly for the retailers who are listening. You know I know for a fact that it's pretty rare for big retailers to invest in their staff because their view is well if I train because retailers viewed very differently as a career here compared to say in the United States where it's a career you go into retail and you literally that is your career path. Here it's a stepping stone.

Tim

Here it's an inconvenience.

Amanda

It's an inconvenience. So retailers and the big name any big retailer and their view is well.

Tim

You name one.

Amanda

What if I train my staff and they leave and I say what if we don't train them and they stay. And so this is where again I keep saying it. But small business owners have an opportunity to create a competitive advantage through delivering epic experiences for their customers.

Tim

Well let's talk about that. You know one of my most popular episodes of All Time almost is with Joshua Nichols from platinum electricians who goes through the 21 step customer mantra. It's all about the customer experience. In fact I replay that only about a year ago. Customer experience just redefined briefly what it is and how can a small business owner go about creating one that is going to completely separate them from their competition.

Amanda

Yeah I mean Josh is a good example where he's built his entire business on the customer experience as his competitive advantage. And my whole mantra is I guess in business. What you need to be doing is not striving for satisfied customers. Far too many businesses strive for customer satisfaction and customer satisfaction just doesn't cut it anymore.

Tim

Just not to get a complaint would seem like a good outcome.

Amanda

For a lot of big businesses. So I'd talk about having a customer experience that's literally worthy of a Friday night dinner party conversation. So everything in your marketing whether it's your customer experience or your content or your videos the question you have to ask yourself as a small business owner. Is this shareable? Would I share this would I share this video? Would I share this experience? Would I tell my friends? Would I write a review? You know what is it that's epic about your customer experience.

Tim

So there is not a great question to ask. As more and more our listeners sit down and think about how can I be epic how can I be brave. So instead of thinking what can I do. Think about how can I make what I'm about to do be the conversation of a Friday night dinner

party.

Amanda

Is it worthy. Is it shareable. Is it epic enough for people to talk about it.

Tim

Okay do dinner parties still exist is that like 80s thing or dinner parties are a thing? Are they coming back.?

Amanda

Yeah they are.

Tim

You went to one last night. Well six women there last night sounds like a bit of a chick fest. Was that like International Women's Day eve?

Amanda

No.

Tim

Like the Eve eve party?

Amanda

No it was just Margarita Thursday

Tim

Was there fondu on the table?

Amanda

No.

Tim

Okay

Amanda

But yes dinner parties are still a thing but you know whether it's a dinner party or a

Tim

Barbecue.

Amanda

Or a barbecue or an online whether it's Facebook that's essentially one big dinner party when you think about it whether it's online or offline. Are you doing things that are shareable.

Tim

Okay so this is easy to say. This is where I get a little bit kind of I don't know almost a bit. I feel guilty saying well okay guys do shareable stuff make sure whatever you do you're at a dinner party conversation. But how?

Amanda

Alright well let's let's break it down and let's what I would like to leave the listeners today with is a bit of a model. Using the word epic because that's the theme really is we've got to be epic with our marketing. We got to be epic with our customer experience. What is epic actually mean. So epic. Let's break it down so E stands for engaging and enthusiastic. So is your content engaging and what I mean by that is it interesting I know that sounds really obvious but to most of the marketing that I see is boring.

Tim

Yeah. Yeah.

Amanda

And again it's what worked maybe works 10 years ago. So we've got to be literally willing to be to do things differently to be authentic and to be funny

Tim

Not necessarily funny but funny is a nice strategy.

Amanda

So being engaging and enthusiastic again I know this sounds really obvious but I'm just amazed at how many people when they are asking about their business. So I'm a mortgage broker and I just go really.

Tim

Boring

Amanda

And then I say to them you know

Tim

Don't you help people to realize the biggest purchase decision of their life and move into the home of their life and happily ever after but they're probably kind of got this mindset that I create debt for people but they want to. So I'd do it. Which is not it.

Amanda

That's not the enthusiastic Yeah. So our enthusiasm for our own our marketing has to start with us as our own ambassador. So you've got to catch yourself. And again using a mortgage broker for example I often say to them don't live in your world live in your customers world you're doing this numerous times a week and sometimes the way that you have conversations with your customers reflect the fact that you're doing it numerous times a week doesn't reflect the fact that this is perhaps potentially the only time this person is going to take out a mortgage. It's the biggest financial decision. So have some enthusiasm around that for them.

Tim

And to that point understand. Be in your customers head understand where they're at. Are they excited. Are they nervous.

Amanda

Fearful.

Tim

Fearful. You know plus example a friend of mine called a doctor recently she was in New area bit nervous about calling setting up appointment at the doctor the person at the other end of the phone was anything but engaging or helpful or not enthusiastic. This person working for doctor when you're answering the phone you probably should be cognizant of the fact that a lot of people calling because they're really scared or they're really sick. So be a bit empathetic towards them and understand where your customer is at and pitch your messages accordingly.

Amanda

Did you say empathetic Timbo because that begins today as well. Engaging. Enthusiastic and empathetic.

Tim

Yeah. Or we would like go epic. And that like a South African epic.

Amanda

Any empathy I think is so important. I went to the optometrist recently it was actually funnily enough mystery shopping for a optometry client so I decided to have the whole experience and had my tests and so I'm just mystery shopping. I didn't expect this to be the outcome that the optometrist said you actually do have a bit of an issue you need glasses. And so I was sort of a bit taken aback because this is not how this was supposed to go and he could tell it I was a little bit surprised and his exact words to me I kid you not was don't feel special. This happens to everyone over 40. Look from his point of view he was probably trying to say look it happens to everyone but the fact that he started the sentence with don't feel special.

Tim

Yeah. There's a double whammy.

Amanda

Yeah. Don't worry I didn't feel special.

Tim

Not at all. Wow.

Amanda

Yes. So again that's a really good example of a conversation and a customer experience that's coming from his world not his customers world.

Tim

Correct correct. And it is how many business times it is hard we forget we get stuck in our own little world in our own little ways and it's great to have that tap on the shoulder every now and then and go hey you know represent the customer who is paying your bills and you want to make sure they love what you're doing talking about you at dinner parties. What's the P in epic?

Amanda

P is positive. So being positive in your marketing I see far too many marketing campaigns where the message is negative and it's either comparing to competitors or negative using negative messaging or fear based messaging. And the research is showing that's just not what consumers are resonating.

Tim

We turn off.

Amanda

Yes. Yes. We see enough negativity in the news. And the second big one is personalised. So this whole trend that we're seeing around customization and personalization is just so powerful. I know you've had mon purse. A business that's purely built on personalization. So yeah we're seeing this real trend where consumers are wanting the customized experience the personalized experience and this is whereas small business owners again we have an advantage because we can literally bring in the best of high tech and the best of high touch. And I think that the intersection of high tech and high touch is where the future of the customer experience.

Tim

Let me understand that high tech high touch. So when you're talking about personalized I am thinking you've got these beacons in store in retail outlets now where and if you've got the app for that store and you walk into that store then the beacon the little black box in the store is going to know a man is in here and it might send you a notification that say hey we know you love you know the pink pom pom beanie. Don't know why I thought that. But you're not going to believe it the beacon tells you they're on sale. So that's high tech.

Amanda

That's high tech and I think you can bring it back to small business owners we also have access to amazing automation I mean isn't it incredible that we live in an era where we can automate and leverage technology to be more productive and to scale our businesses in ways that weren't even possible five years ago. But I think that we're seeing a real pendulum swing back where customers consumers are really resonating with brands that offer that highly personalized service. So it might be for example that your database program your CRM gives you rich data on when people's birthdays are when they first were a customer of yours. And so this whole concept of personalized milestone marketing I think is really important. So taking even on LinkedIn when you get the birthday notifications I've just been experimenting with that recently where I get a birthday notification but rather than send them or work anniversary. Who wants to get those

messages on LinkedIn like happy 11 years for working at this company borin. Take it off line and send them something. The high tech high touch I think that the combination of that is really powerful.

Tim

Okay so we've got positive and personalized the I?

Amanda

The I is being interested rather than interesting and involved. Now what I mean by that is being interested in your customers rather than interesting.

Tim

Show curiosity.

Amanda

Yeah. So rather than talking about your brand your product your service actually making it about your customer. And I'll give you a really simple example I was in a hair salon in Perth recently and you when you go into hair salons and often on their walls or have their awards and awards they've won and all that sort of thing in this salon I thought was really clever. They had a wall of fame and it was photos professional photos of all of their customers who'd been a customer for more than 10 years. And I thought that is so clever. No 1 it makes those customers feel really special and probably reduces the chance that they will leave the salon. But secondly what it did for me as a first time customer was saying this is a business.

Tim

That keeps their customers.

Amanda

And also values their customers and values their customers more than they value their own awards.

Tim

Can we even do it for less than 10 years a long time. Couple of years.

Amanda

Yeah absolutely.

Tim

Just small photos like this little passport photos for the two years like 10 years those massive A1 print.

Amanda

But it also just says that this business not only that they value their customers but their business is about relationships rather than transactions. And I think that your marketing needs to reflect what it is saying. What is your marketing saying. What is your website saying. Is it saying that you're a business that transact with your customers or that you have long term relationships. I think the answer to that very much can dictate not only where you choose to market but how you market.

Tim

The C in epic?

Amanda

The C is being customer centric and we've sort of touched on that already but being consistent. So again ask yourself are you living in your world or are you living in your customers world. And how consistent is your marketing. And this brings us back to this content issue that you know so many small business owners and I know I struggle with it is just it feels like a chore to be having to produce content all the time. Gary V talks about producing 100 pieces of content a day.

Tim

He's got to shut up that bloke way too much. He is just too above me on the iTunes ladder which really pisses me off and I just I can't. What can I do.

Amanda

So you know being consistent with your marketing and you know one thing that Gary V does say that I think has a lot of merit is that you are not the one to judge your content. The market will judge your content. So again we are too focused on is it perfect. We are too scared of what people think. We are too scared of polarizing people. I think small business owners more than ever now. It's not really about being brave. It's also having the courage to be disliked.

Tim

Yes.

Amanda

And you will get far more cut through by having a point of view and that's why whether it's videos or non video. Having a perspective. Having a point of view that's what gets cut through and makes your marketing epic rather than vanilla hey this is what we do and this is just not going to work now or in the future.

Tim

I'm amazed I'll go out and if I am speaking at a conference or someone comes up with I listen to your show listening for a while say what episodes of your love and it's always like you know when someone gives you positive feedback I think that's great but where's the construct. So what did you like what didn't you like and they'll say oh I love that episode. I'm like wow I really didn't like that episode. I felt I was off point. I thought my guest was low or whatever it was. So yeah for me to sit here and judge my content. you got to put it out there and let the market judge and get that feedback that's who you are doing it for.

Amanda

Absolutely and you've also got to be brave enough to be future focused. One of my favorite sayings is you're allowed to look in the rearview mirror but you're not allowed to stare. Now I don't think that applies just as much as with our personal lives as with our marketing. We're focused on what worked yesterday rather than what's going on in our consumers world. What does our customer of tomorrow look like and how what are their needs going to be and how can we deliver on those in exciting and anticipatory ways. So I think that more than ever small business owners need to almost be their own consumer futurist.

Tim

Stevie we are going while loving this conversation. Couple things before we wrap up. We both agree the marketing world has changed and I will ask you is anything else you kind of want to just kind of really. That's a really bad interview question by the way it's like and before anything else you'd like to say that's like that opens the floodgates but I know that you are a pro and I know that you're just going to leave us with just a little bit of gold. However bright shiny object syndrome we've commented the marketing world has changed the consumers moving at a rate of knots. There is always something new in this marketing world whether it be a new social media platform or a new way. You know Facebook are allowing to do this or in-store or allowing to do this or whatever it is do we chase those bright shiny objects or do we stick to the fundamentals?

Amanda

I think we've got to constantly bring it back to what is going on with our customers rather than what's the medium. Because there's so many new things and we all guilty of bright shiny things syndrome because there's so many cool new things to do and be across and leverage. But I think it needs to come back to what's going on in our customers world and

rather than the medium what message is going to really resonate with them. And one of the simple strategies that I think any small business owner can do to ensure that you are constantly maintaining that sense of customer centricity whether that be with your marketing your content your customer experience is put a customer advisory board together as more business owners we make far too many decisions that are subjective and having a customer advisory board is a really powerful tool.

Tim

What is it?

Amanda

Simple you recruit eight to 10 existing customers. You officially appoint them to an advisory board you meet with them monthly it's always a good idea to have an external facilitator and use it as a sounding board to say hey this is what we're doing with our marketing. What do you think. This is what we're thinking about doing with our marketing. What do you think would really help you. What could we do to be helping you. What could we be doing to up our customer experience from your perspective what are we doing that's not as good as our competitors. What could we be doing that's better and you'll be amazed at the level of insight that you will get.

Tim

So I think these are great ideas. Theoretically sound brilliant and I can see it working real time practically Steve Jobs would have hated it I reckon didn't know jobs. But I reckon if Steve Jobs had gone out to his customer advisory board maybe you going to tell me he had one. I don't know but I think back when they invented the iPod. He has gone out to the customers and said hey listen you can throw away all your lp's and cd's now in his little white box you can put them all. I would have thought people would have gone nuts. There's too much emotional attachment to lp's and cd's so I guess my point or my question for you is. Out of the Advisory Board do you then listen to everything the customer has to say or do you just go. Thank you. I'm going to take it on board and use your intuition to then.

Amanda

Absolutely. I wouldn't use it. I wouldn't suggest using a Customer Advisory Board as your sole platform for innovation in your business. You know as Henry Ford says if you ask people what they wanted it would have been a faster horse. So I'm not saying that that's your platform for innovation but I am saying it's a way for you to have a constant to be able to view your business through the eyes of your customer which as a small business owner when you're wearing so many hats is the biggest challenge because you get so close to what you're living and breathing you can't see the forest for the trees and it's very difficult particularly from a marketing perspective to make clear decisions when you've got so many options. What do I do. Where do I spend my money. What do I dial up. What do I dial

down. So just having that advisory board is a really good way to sense check the decisions that you're making. But certainly I think you've got to combine that with looking at external research for example look at external customer research and as I said Be Your Own consumer futurist look at what trends are happening that are not only in your industry but peripheral to your industry and then use that as a platform for innovation.

Tim

Stevie I going to wrap things up. I hope that out of this there is a sense amongst those listening that there is hope in their marketing stopped doing what you've always done you'll be getting the same results. If they're good results keep doing it. But if they're kind of meh results then it's time to do something different and keep doing 75 percent of what you're doing but stopped 25 percent and replace it with something brave or epic or a question that's going to allow you to get spoken about at a dinner party or a barbecue.

Amanda

Absolutely being epic in your marketing is about an evolution not a revolution.

Tim

-singing-

Amanda

Stick to your podcast.

Tim

You know I just love having you along. It's like having a little friend in the studio just bantering about marketing.

Amanda

Yeah I love it I love it and I love it when you see small business owners take that leap of faith and do something that's outside their comfort zone. And it just reveals their authenticity in their story. Tell your story that's kind of the message I want to leave.

Tim

We love your work. Amandastevens.com.au Probably you can find all those videos. You've got a nice blog. Your prolific in your blogging. How many books have you authored?

Amanda

Five working on my sixth book at the moment.

Tim

What's been your favorite book just out of interest.

Amanda

To write or to read?

Tim

To write.

Amanda

Turning customers into advocates.

Tim

You love that one what's the new one.

Amanda

It's called Epic.

Tim

Clever.

Amanda

How to build an epic brand.

Tim

Right. You should have talked about that oh wait we did.

Amanda

It's all about epic being epic be epic. Be epic or go home.

Tim

That's like a song you could write that be epic be epic.

Amanda

A rap version.

Tim

AmandaStevens.com.au love your work.

Amanda

Thanks for having me.