

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

*show*

INSANELY EFFECTIVE  
MARKETING

**Episode #451**  
**Snot! Yes snot!**  
**That's what Laura**  
**Klein is building her**  
**empire on**



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## **Laura Klein Interview Transcription**

**Tim**

So let's go and meet the woman behind the battery powered snot sucker Laura Klein.

**Laura**

I was a primary school teacher and I took leave and had one baby in 2008. Second Baby in 2010 third baby in 2012. So it was a busy time. And as you can imagine there was a fair bit of snot around our house with three kids under the age of four and a year earlier I was looking through parenting magazine in Brisbane and I saw this ad for a snotty aspirator and even thinking about that now is so old school. I mean who even reads parenting magazines anymore like there was no such thing as Facebook ads and shockable Instagram links back then. So here I was reading this magazine and I saw this gadget and I thought it probably won't work but the baby is so sick I've tried everything else. I'm just going to buy one. So I did and it was brilliant. It cleared the baby's nose and the toddler's nose and they could breathe and sleep better and I just was like wow this product is amazing. And I spent the next year telling all my mum's friends about it you need to get one of these and it's really good. And then I lost the little nozzle thing that goes on the top. And so I rang the distributor who is on the Gold Coast and I needed to buy a new nozzle he sent me my new nozzle and he sent me a brochure about being a work from home rep. You know a bit like you can avon lady you know you buy a box of stock and you sell it to your friends. And I thought Oh God I never really sold anything before and that's when I realized all teachings are a bit like a sales pitch you know you need to communicate with your audience and you need to make a connection. I just went look what have I got to lose. I'm just I'm a stay at home mum so I may as well as what. Bought a box of stock and I sold it to my friends. I got my first sale in a week and away we went.

**Tim**

Was that an awkward thing selling to your friends? Because I mean whilst it sort of like network marketing although it is really in your situation. Was that an awkward thing because you're a teacher you're not a salesperson?

**Laura**

Well I guess I just say they heard me rave about it for so long before and at playgroup we're all standing around drinking coffee and talking about snot which is so lovely. So I just put it out there I said look I have these for sale you want one and they bought one just because they were curious and they had babies it was. So look I had no website I had no flyers I had no e-mail marketing I had no Facebook page. I was just putting it out there

**Tim**

At that point you bought a box of battery powered snots suckers and you've sold them. You were looking for an out right of out of teaching because your creativity being stifled. Did you think at that point was there a moment where you have an epiphany? Did you go this is it the snot sucker is going to save my everything my life my marriage my kids noses?

**Laura**

Yeah well I sort of did but I didn't sort of take it as a serious business I suppose. I still was thinking now once the kids are a bit older I'm going to go back to teaching because I loved teaching. It's just so wonderful but I was only with the kids so I actually did in 2015 and 16 the kids are a bit older and the business is still running part time and I decided I want to go back to teaching just part time and I did that for 2015 and 2016 whilst still being a mum and running this little business on the side.

**Tim**

What was running a business on the side looked like a side hustle was that something where you get home you can't wait for the bell to ring like all your students and your racing home getting all the jobs done and then working into the night. Is that what it looks like?

**Laura**

Yeah it does. I was only part time teaching a couple of days a week so I still had days at home where I'd be feeding a baby a vegemite sandwich at the kitchen bench and then wrapping snotties at the same time. So it was multitasking on steroids. It was crazy. And then I'd go and do my teaching days and after about a year I thought something's going to give here and look it pains me to say but teaching has lost its creativity and flexibility and it's a really hard gig when you have to be at a school where you teach by 8am and someone else has to drop your own kids at their school and the business is growing steadily. So at the end of 2016 two years part of teaching I said look I'm going to have to let that go and I've decided that now is the time I was going to give the business my full attention.

**Tim**

What was that like? Because I know in a previous chat I had with you. You said you're not a complainer and you probably did you find it hard to resign despite the fact that you knew you're on to something?

**Laura**

No. It was hard. It was still hard. I absolutely loved being a teacher. But teaching in 2016 or even 2019 is a very different game to what it was in the late 1990s when I started I always sort of say I didn't leave teaching. Teaching left me and I think once your fire goes out and you're just drowning in data and assessment

**Tim**

Beyond teaching. How many people are doing that.? We know there's a whole lot of cubicle escapee's listening to this show and there's probably a whole lot of business owners listening to the show who the fire has gone out and they are looking for that kind of next thing. What do you say to them?

**Laura**

I say back yourself and if you have a passion you will make it happen whether it's a product or whether it's the service. If they're in saying that there has to be a need for it you've got to

do some amount of research to make sure that there is a need for your product or service. And that was the thing with the Snotty I could say that there was a need for it there wasn't really anything else like it on the Australian market. And look there's a thousand babies born every day in Australia and they are going to get 6 to 10 sniffles a year. I mean my my target market is just never running out. There will always be people that need our help.

**Tim**

So 2016 you leave teaching and at this point you're still selling Snotty suckers. You have your website at this point?

**Laura**

Yeah very quickly actually. So when I started in 2013 with nothing within six months no not even that within two months I was like oh I'm selling a few of these people asking how they can order online boom. I've got a website and I've looked back to my first web site now. Oh my gosh. It wasn't optimized for mobile. Back then it was clunky it was chunky.

**Tim**

We're not talking about long ago it's not like 30 years ago you're talking three years ago.

**Laura**

Yeah six years ago 2013 and it was a different marketplace a different way that people shopped. People were still nervous about buying something on their smartphone. They just didn't and now it is just so commonplace that's where everyone shops.

**Tim**

You've go from sharing this idea at mothers groups doing flyers and letterbox drops in the local parks and suburbs to actually having a website. You get that website up is that then did it go quiet again because you've lost all your face to face traffic. What did you do to get get traffic?

**Laura**

Well that has just been a slow progression of learning. What are the best ways to get traffic to your website. So in 2016 I made a couple of big decisions that really were a game changer. I outsourced my website to get a professional eye over it and it was the best money I ever spent. It was optimized for mobile. It was optimised for SEO and they are the sort of thing that I do believe you need to spend money on to outsourced to get it right and straight away. We could start to see a rise in conversion rate which was fantastic.

**Tim**

Once you got your website up and running it's all optimized. You got some product coming in. By the way the name snotty noses. Was that a challenge? I mean it's fun. It gets attention. Was it a challenge on agreeing on that or for you was it like this is a no brainer?

**Laura**

It was a no brainer. I spent my research market for the name of the business with like 10 of

my mate. So what do you think. Which web site name should I pick. And they all went back to snotty noses because they had a giggle they said it's memorable. It explains what you do. And yes it's the one to go forward.

**Tim**

I wonder now that you've got 25 products at snottynoses.con.au Is the name limiting because you go beyond just products for snotty noses?

**Laura**

Yes that's right. So our catchphrases gadgets for good health and good sleep. I'm still happy with the snotty noses name. I think it is memorable. It usually gets a reaction. People either laugh or they go ooh. But as a parent with a child under 5 years of age man can they relate to it. So I'll always think that was a good decision to stick with that name.

**Tim**

Yeah well I must say reflecting over the years of guests that I've had on this show. I have had one fellow who registered health.com.au For his health insurance business paid a lot of money for it and it worked very well for him. I've had Australia's leading should know what the terminology is what do you call it when a bloke goes and gets the snip he calls himself Dr snip and I spoke to a lady a few months ago who is creating an amazing chili sauce that is almost beating Sriracha on Amazon sales and she called shit the bed. There is something in a name and I think when you name something and you're proud of it it brings something to the party when you talk about it to others.

**Laura**

Yeah exactly. And the thing is it is such a common term for me now I don't even register. I face snottynosed.com.au A million times a day for someone who just sees it. Yeah they're laughing or they're curious or they're putting it in their memory banks for the next time their baby gets sick.

**Tim**

So you got this website up you got a great name a great product. You're a new business owner. Was there a moment where you've woken up in a cold sweat going hey hubby I dont know if I've done the right thing and I might go back to the old primary school.

**Laura**

No look there really wasn't and because the great thing is my husband's got a good job. You know we were financially quite secure. I never had to make money from this business instantly if I did make a little bit or even a lot. Well that was great but there was no pressure on me to sell 10 snotties so we can pay the mortgage. So not having that pressure was great.

**Tim**

Just hypothesising here what if there was pressure to Snotty noses to perform. Would you still be here today?

**Laura**

Oh wow. I'm not a quitter. So I reckon I would have made a really good shake even if I was under pressure to build really quickly and start getting a really good income from it. In those early days.

**Tim**

Interesting. Not a quitter. Is that a trait of Laura Klein?

**Laura**

Pretty much. You have to give it a crack. Whatever it is whether it's business whether it's life in general you just have to try. You have to back yourself and you have to know at the end of the day well I did everything I could to succeed. That doesn't mean every day is a success. My goodness. The day you succeed are winners and the day you don't succeed well they're called experiences and you learn from it and you get back up and you go again the next day.

**Tim**

I love it. You could be a philosopher.

**Laura**

We have these little philosophy memes all around the office. And my girls my coworkers just sort of now here she is again with another another meme for the day.

**Tim**

So Laura the business is humming along your creativity. I'm guessing now that you're a business owner is no longer stifled. And if that's the case how are you expressing your creativity inside the business?

**Laura**

Well just in the content that I create I write blogs now who knew that I was a little writer. So creating helpful content for my customers creating cool graphics and ads for Instagram and Facebook although I do outsource a little bit of that and just being able to when you run a small business. One of the greatest thing is I can listen to your show and get a great idea from another business owner about e-mail marketing or making this sort of video or doing a referral program or whatever it is. And instead of having to run it through 20 minutes meeting put it through a swot analysis then analyze the buggery out of it. I can just wake up tomorrow go I'm going to do that I'm gonna try that. I'm going to see if that works. So being able to decide for yourself. Yes I'm going to try that or I don't know whether that might work is my business right now but geez I'm going to put it on post it. And leave it on my office wall and maybe come back to that at another time. So that freedom to just try things you just have to try try something. So yeah.

**Tim**

You went through a whole lot of things. I totally agree with you all those things you

mentioned I think that's the fun part of business. I mean and particularly if you're an creative soul like you or I mean we love creating all that's stuff.. It sounds like you're blogging and creating little posters for social media and responding to people prospects and clients on social media. Are you really hands on are you stuck in the in the meat and potatoes of the business and not getting sort of a high enough bird's eye view to look forward to the next five years or that's just how you are?

**Laura**

That's just how I am in terms of like the meat and potatoes and the running of the business and I mean I haven't pack a parcel for a really long time except when we're really busy it's all hands on deck that's what my staff do. And they answer e-mail messages and they wrap and they pack and they dispatch and they do all of that in the dispatch office which is great. So I do get a chance to get that bird's eye bigger picture of in saying that I'm not a great planner. That's probably terrible for a former teacher to admit but I am not a great planner. People always say saying business you need to have a five year plan and you need to get out your social media post and plan them for the next month. No no I can't do that. If I see something I like I'll do that sort of social media post tomorrow.

**Tim**

Did you listen to the interview I did with Janet DeNeefe who owns a number of businesses in Ubud in Bali. Just recently. So she's not a planner I mean that lady has so many incredible businesses from cafes and restaurants to resorts travel business. Like everything and the idea of planning is just not in her vocabulary so there's two schools of thoughts on it. I've talked about it on the show many times. I'm not a planner. It bores me. You know things change too quickly.

**Laura**

Things do change in business quickly. Oh my goodness. What I'm doing now was not what I thought I'd be doing 12 months ago. And who knows what I'll be doing in February 2020 hopefully sunning myself on a beach in Hawaii somewhere.

**Tim**

Can I tell you a funny story. I just got booked for an optometrist to speak at an optometrist's conference in 2020. You get that 2020 Vision. Tell me at what point did you go from having one product in the battery powered snot sucker to 25. Where was that decision?

**Laura**

Pretty quickly actually. So by early 2013 I could see that there was traction with this product. And I just sort of took a step back and said okay well what other gadgets have I used as a mother. That's actually really helped me. What else can I bring into my product range. And so obviously when you've got to sick baby you often need like a vaporizer in their room releasing the mist. And I thought about that right. Let's find the best one of those in Australia and let's see if we can stock those. So I do and I have a great relationship with the distributor of that whole range of those aroma blooms and aroma snoozers that

are now available on the website. The essential oils that go with it. I'm a big fan of good sleep for kids. I think parents can't function unless they're getting good sleep and kids can't learn and grow unless they're getting good sleep.

**Tim**

Are you tempted to go broader and simply stock products for kids and young families are we going to go to snotty noses in a year's time and see toys and travel and all sorts of things. Because I imagine that would be an absolute temptation where you be all of a sudden become the portal for young families but you lose the niche.

**Laura**

No.. One of my favorite interviews of you was that beautiful hairdresser business coach. Her name escapes.

**Tim**

Lisa Conway.

**Laura**

Oh my gosh. I have told so many people about that interview. And one of her favorite sayings was an niche is an inch wide but a mile deep. And for me I think I need to stay. There are already thousands of Australian websites selling lunch boxes toys backpacks hats clothing shoes for kids they can have it I am going to stay true to my business name.

**Tim**

I totally admire that I think it will be a challenge may be going forward. You've just got to keep a lid on it. You've got a business coach I think you were telling me it was one of the great tipping points of your business so hopefully he or she will keep you honest around that because it would be a little bit seductive to go hey boy oh boy snotty noses grown you're already doing you did one point seven million turnover in the last financial year and it's growing. You've got the attention of mums and their kids in Australia it would be very tempting I guess to at some point just expand the range an offering but hopefully you don't and you maintain that niche. Let's talk about marketing. How which I know you love because you listen to my show and I knew there was someone out there and there might just be one listener and it's you and you have to listen to your interview next week which would be weird but we'll go with that. How do you stay connected with your customers? It's an online business. You have no shopfront. How do you do that?

**Laura**

All right. Well from my business coach that I signed up with back in 2016 her main focus is email marketing. That's her thing she says. That is the silver bullet that can really scale your business. I was skeptical. I have to admit I'm like oh really. But she said yes. Email is the way to go. So I found her through the mompreneur network and I started learning about email marketing and now all about is set up it's all automated and it constantly brings in new leads and sales and I can check the return on every email that I send to both new and existing customers.



**Tim**

So what's the platform you're using Laura?

**Laura**

Active campaign.

**Tim**

Okay so using active campaign you've got that. Did you set it up yourself because sometimes these things can be a little bit complicated. I actually went to an Infusionsoft meeting only yesterday and I was talking to one of the Infusionsoft experts on this and in fact they've just launched a product called keep which is a lighter version of Infusionsoft they can be quite complicated have you set the whole flow of emails and email responses up yourself?

**Laura**

The quick answer is yes I did and it was daunting when you don't know a technology platform. This is too hard for me and I'm not sure what to do but I just created a couple of little workflows and email welcome sequences and all of that for new customers and got it going so I started to understand it and then I did pay some money to outsource the set up of a couple of more complicated automations in the email marketing program. Best money spent because now based on what product a person buys. They go into this particular sequence and through to make another offer and then they come out the other end either having bought and then haven't looked back that follow up product. Then they go into another sequence so it's all sort of connected.

**Tim**

I think the thing with e-mail marketing like what you're saying at the start people view it as a small business owners view and I get too many emails already in my inbox I don't want to be contributing to other people's inboxes but I think that's flawed thinking email marketing is alive and well. It is effective and I think the challenge is to make sure that the emails you send and correct me if I'm wrong but they're helpful and they add value to someone's life whether that be educating them around a product or a service or whether it be making them smile or telling them a story that leads to them taking them to your website.

**Laura**

Email marketing these people have given me their email address and they said yes I want to sign up to what you have to offer me whether that information product offers etc. That's my intellectual property that I have for capturing someone's email address is the most important information.

**Tim**

You do that simply because you're an e-commerce store so by the simple fact that someone buys from you you're gonna capture their email but notify the people who come to your website aren't buying. So what are you doing to capture their email address? And what percentage of them are you capturing?

**Laura**

Called lead magnets. So it's one of those I've been on my website for 30 seconds you'll get a little pop up. Hopefully it's not. Sell sell sell. You know considering our ideal customer is a mom with babies and toddlers. Our lead magnet is a combination. It lets them download a free sleep guide and also gives them a ten dollar coupon to use on their first order. And so that little sweet nugget is yes entices a decent percentage to type in their email address to get those goodies for free. And then they might keep browsing. They go into a welcome sequence of over two weeks just a journey of this is the business and this is what we do. And just explaining a little bit of my story. And at the end of that two weeks they're usually ready to buy something but if they're not that's okay they can just go on. They go off that welcome sequence and they go on to just the regular I hate the word weekly newsletter email but I don't know other words those ones that I just send every week or two with a special offer a link to a new blog etc.

**Tim**

You could call your weekly newsletter on the nose.

**Laura**

I'm writing that down.

**Tim:** Thank you very much. And the invoice will be there tomorrow. Tell me are the marketing because you do a lot you've given me a long long list of things you do but I'm interested in a couple of ones you've done particularly for a small business you did a flash mob video.

**Laura**

Yes. The first day of winter last year I thought well let's start off winter with a bang. What can I do. So I reached out to my email list segmented by geography so I knew who lived in Brisbane who would like to bring their baby along to Southbank in Brisbane and we are going to do a dance a flash mob that's just going to suddenly start in front of the Brisbane sign and we'll record it and send it to the news channels. So we did. So it was fun. We had like 15 mums and babies. All the best thing holding one of the snotty aspirators in their baby's nose as they wiggle and giggle would you believe the song I chose for it was Marky Mark. Good Vibrations. Was just a bit of fun but the news channels picked it up. We got to newspapers. We got on TV. It was worth it. It was creative. You know the news channels and newspapers are looking for cool stories and ideas about businesses to fill their shows and their papers. So PR is important. If you've got a good story or something new that's happening send them a press release.

**Tim**

I agree Look on your website you been in the Sydney Morning Herald you've been on the Sunrise TV show 7 News studio 10 TV plus the small business big marketing show I don't know what price to put on that but \you have have what you've probably got tens of thousands of dollars of pr coverage just through some simple little things like that. I'm

interested in what role blogging plays in your business. Could you quantify the effectiveness of your blogging?

### **Laura**

Blogging is in one part about keeping your website fresh and updated when Google takes a peek at your website through you know bot. Whatever Google does to look at your Web site they want to see that new pages are being created and information is being updated and that you have keywords that your customers might be looking for on Google. They are embedded in your blog so there's a marketing reason why I do blogging but blogging often comes as a result of the questions that I get asked all the time by customers and I'm thinking well if 10 people are asking me this. If 50 people are asking me this I might write a blog about it and answer their questions. So now it actually is a really smart workflow because when someone says to me can I use essential oils in a vaporizer with a newborn baby. I just send them the link to the blog explaining why you should only use plain tap water in a vaporizer from newborn to three months and then from three months on you can gradually introduce the essential oils. I think it helps me by answering questions that I get asked all the time and I just send them to the blog that answers the spare question does that make sense?

### **Tim**

It makes absolutely total sense. I love the idea that whilst blogging has a mass appeal and Google love it because it sees the website as being updated and containing helpful information. The one on one power of sending one prospect or one customer with a question on a blog that you've written. They just think you're an absolute legend and that you develop trust with them and they're going to be coming. They're going to be a long term customer and they're going to be an advocate basically talk about your business to others. One last thing I want to talk about Laura before we wrap things up is collaboration I love collaboration with other businesses and you are about to embark on one. What is it?

### **Laura**

International Women's Day is coming up. And I'm a woman in business and there's lots of other fabulous women in business. So I reached out on Instagram to a couple of businesses that I know and then a couple that didn't just saying look you want to give away. Combined give away we all put the price. And we send it out. We advertise it on all of our Instagram pages. We've got a parcel of three thousand dollars worth of prizes that everyone's come together 30 businesses some being 50000 followers on Instagram some a little. I only have 1000 followers on Instagram but on the 6th of March we're all going to blast that competition out to our Instagram followers. And so that gets new eyeballs on my business people that have never heard of me before are going to start following me in order to enter the competition and then it's up to me to deliver and delight them with great content on Instagram that they can follow and one of those days they might just click through to my Website. And buy product from me. It costs me 100 dollars in a prize donation it costs a bit of time to put it all together and that's it. So it's just you can do collaboration with email marketing as well. The Black Friday classic example 12 of us all came together created an email with all of our offers and links and we all blasted that out to our thousands and

thousands and thousands of people on email. And it was the biggest sales day we ever had. Last Black Friday 27 November.

**Tim**

The magic behind that idea is that the amplification. So you did that just alone you would get to your database and the people that you have the attention of. But when you start partnering with all these other businesses some as you say some have got a hundred. Some of who've got 5000 that the amplification of that and you're still just sending the same message. It's massive. So I love you thinking. Laura I love your love of marketing I love your respect for it and I think to me it feels like that's why you've had such success because you've got a respect for marketing and not only a respect for it. You just enjoy it and it's fun right and it should be fun part of running a business.

**Laura**

Yeah definitely definitely. And I just want to say also that the key to a sustainable business is also your repeat customers. It costs a lot to advertise on Facebook and acquire a new customer. When they first find out about you but the money is in the follow up so\ they buy snotty and they love it. So they know and like and trust you. And so they're open to buying all the other complementary products that you have. So it's just you have to follow up and using a reward system to reward loyal and follow up customers is just a no brainer. There's so many easy apps out there. You just plug into the back Web site and you have an instant reward system. Everyone likes reward or they like a free ten dollar coupon once they purchase a certain amount. It just is the gift that keeps on giving and reward programs.

**Tim**

Laura Klein snottynoses.com.au Is where you'll find it. Thank you for A listening to my show for such a long time and B coming on and sharing your marketing gold.

**Laura**

It's been a pleasure. Keep up the great work Tim