

Welcome back to the called to both podcast. I am your host joy, and I am so excited that you've joined me for this episode. I love talking all things content and audience building authority building. And I think this is a very natural next question that I hear a lot in my coaching. And I actually just got this question on my YouTube channel this week.

Someone commented back to one of my videos and said, I love this. But how do you actually get your audience to engage with you, to respond or um, DM you, do whatever it is that you're asking them to do in your content so that your content feels a lot more like a dialogue and you're building a community rather than just broadcasting information and it feels one sided.

So that is what I'm going to unpack for you here in today's episode. You're listening to called to both the podcast for ambitious women chasing both business dreams and little ones. I'm your host, Joy Michelle. I'm a wedding photographer turned. Business coach and founder of photo boss. I have helped thousands of photographers and creatives grow their businesses here on the show.

I teach about topics like visibility, marketing, mindset, productivity, and going after your dream life. So if you're a photographer or an entrepreneur, there is something here for you. This is not another business and marketing podcast telling you to do more, but rather how you can build your business and your income in less time and with greater ease.

Join me here each week for bite sized and actionable episodes that will encourage you on your call to both journey.

So before I share some of my strategies and my secrets that have helped me to foster platforms and content that actually solicit real conversations and a community that actually talks back to me. I do want to quickly talk about why this matters and why this is important. And I think that sometimes we we can think, oh, but it looks really good.

You know, the vanity metrics of it look nice, like when someone comments back or, um, it feels good as the creator, when someone responds to you or DMs you or answers back to one of your email newsletters and said, like, I really needed this this week. Like that is all very real, but there's a whole nother layer to this that goes beyond It feeling good for you or looking good for your brand.

The other really valuable part of this is that some of the best market research that will happen in your business is going to be engagement and questions and

responses to your content. Um, and so you really will learn so much more about. What your audience wants from you, the questions that they have, the worries, the fears that they have surrounding what you do and how you answer those fears and worries in your product, and you're going to refine your messaging by doing this.

And so there's more to it than just the vanity metrics, although it does look awesome, right? Like, it's a nice feeling to create content and have people engage with you, but we always want to keep in mind. The. Overarching purpose of better serving these clients better serve understanding even our customers and ultimately converting to sale because that is the point and I do think that there's a direct correlation between our abilities as a content creator, a business to create that content, engage the audience, get them into, um, a response of some kind.

And we're going to unpack more of that in this episode. for tuning in. And the actual purchase, like those two things are connected because when they take that micro action of saying yes to your, your content, your brand, when they give you the thumbs up, when they subscribe to your stuff, when they respond to your questions, and You know, maybe send you a DM, whatever this looks like, they are actually taking a step closer to your business, and that's exactly what we want.

So this is actually a part of a sales process. And so I really wanted to point that out before we jump in, that there's a non ego filled reason as to why we would actually want to create strategic content that invites growth. Real response and engagement to that content. All right, so let's jump into the meat of what I have to share in today's episode.

So the first thought that I really want to bring to you as you think about how you're going to train your audience to respond, to engage, and to talk back with you is to first consider the platform that you are creating on and just ensure that it is one that actually fosters real engagement and that they can respond.

And the reason I say this is that As a podcaster, I can't have you comment below on most platforms. Now, I know Spotify has some features that are really cool that you can now ask a question beneath an episode and people can respond. I think that's amazing. And platforms do change and add this in at a later time sometimes, but for the most part, this is one of those things.

This is a type of content where You know, you, you're able to do something else while you're listening to it. So a lot of times when I'm absorbing like a podcast

episode, I'm cleaning, I'm folding laundry, I'm on a walk, I'm in, like, in the middle of something, right? Like I'm doing something else with my hands and that way I can listen and I can also do something else.

And so this is a great example. This type of content is a great example of one that is not a very Dialogue driving piece of content. Like, it is very unlikely that you are commenting right now as you're listening. Like that you're pressing thumbs up that you're interacting with my brand very, very actively.

So while you're listening, you may not be in a position where you can actually respond. So think about that when it comes to your content. So that's not a bad thing. Like I'm still here. I'm creating this podcast episode. However, I realized that we have a little bit of one sided thing going on in this particular format.

So typically what I'm going to do is drive the listener to somewhere that a conversation is like so much easier, you know, like whether that is, um, my Instagram, I say like, just shoot me a DM if this resonated or I drive people to somewhere that they can actually respond. And so that's a really important filter to just start with as you are sitting down to think about, okay, where is the content that I'm creating?

What am I doing right now? Is this a good fit? Do we need to completely pivot or do we just maybe need to make some tweaks? So just make sure that The platform that you're creating content on actually allows for very easy engagement capabilities for your people. The next thing that you would want to consider is the type of content that you create and that making sure that you're actually opening up.

For dialogue in a way that is really intentional, so some content feels more like a broadcast and like an announcement, whereas other types of content feels like an invitation for the audience to join in, feels like an invitation for them to participate or even like say their opinion and take part in some way.

Asking questions is a really obvious call to action, but I know a lot of people try. And sometimes, you know, we ask a question, nobody answers. And one of the reasons for this is that we need to make sure that the question that we're asking is relevant to the piece of content. But It would also be something that the person would want to share and that it would make them look good.

So a good example of this is I've had YouTube videos where we are talking about gear, like as photographers, and just talking about different investments that we've made in business, whether that be marketing or strategy or different

things. And one of the questions was like, what was your first camera body that you shot on?

And And I think everybody, I mean, that was like a really, I still get comments to this day where people are like, Oh, I had the Canon rebel, you know, whatever. And it's relatable and it's fun. And you get to see like who started on Sony, who started on Nikon, who started on Canon. It's kind of this universal uniting experience for photographers.

And so when you're thinking about how you're inviting the actual. Interaction. Really be thinking about like, is this something that's quick? Is it easy for them to just shoot off a quick comment so that they can participate in a way that's not a big ask? Sometimes I do see calls to action that are like, tell me your top 10 goals for 2025 or, you know, whatever.

And I'm like, it's a, it's an interesting question, but like, no one is going to stop and take the time to do this. Truthfully. Like, they really won't. So really putting this. Additional filter in thinking like, okay, how am I creating content that number one opens up dialogue, but also I'm asking questions that are easy to answer that kind of help them to be like, get a moment to be the hero.

They get to talk about something that's personal to them. And just playing around with this is really, really helpful. So like you, you're going to experiment and you're going to try things. It is not always going to work. And that leads me to tip number three, point number three, be okay. With it being quiet at first, this is not immediate, but just know it is not immediate for anyone.

It really isn't. It can be very easy to go online and see the dozens of comments that other people get, or you see other people like screenshotting DMs and you're like, wow, they're getting so much interaction. They get people asking them questions. They seem, it seems like for them, they have a totally different situation that is available.

To me, and that's that really can feel true, but it's not there. Nobody just opened Instagram and had a full fledged brand and people that trusted them. It does take time. So when you see people whose audiences seem to engage a lot, just know that that was nurtured. And I like to look at this very much in the same way of like, if you were at a coffee shop, And you saw like two friends, like two women having coffee and they are just like connected.

Like you can tell they're like, they're listening. They know each other's lives. They're asking about each other's kids by name. Like those are friends and they

are true friends. They're letting each other like have take turns. It's not all about one person. You're like, I'm seeing this really beautiful, deep friendship.

That friendship likely Was built on small connection points over time, and this is exactly the same thing. We have got to build the relationship with those people, so it's okay that it's a little bit quiet at first. The next thing I want you to do is always comment back, especially if it's a public thing.

I mean, private, yes. Like, I think we know, like, to respond to a DM or an email. If you're not doing that, definitely do that. But always respond back to public interactions with your content. Sometimes, you know, So in my years of coaching, I have done so many audits on people's content, their businesses, just really digging into like what's working, what's not working.

And I've had clients come to me and I'm not even thinking of like one person in particular. So if you're listening to this and you think it's you, I'm literally not calling you out. I have seen this so many times where people say, you know, I just, I'm kind of deflated with Instagram. It almost feels pointless.

Like I just don't get that much interaction. But when I sit from where I'm sitting and I look and I pull up their information, I do see some comments now. Do they have 20 comments? No, but they got two or three and they didn't respond to any of them. This is a really great way to signal to people that you are available.

It's like you're there. If people don't see you commenting back or answering a question or even responding with gratitude, they won't comment. And I'm one of those people too. Like if I'm on someone's account and. I see a little bit of comments or some interaction or to any degree and the creator doesn't respond.

It's been a few weeks. It's been a few months. Like I can see that they don't interact with their audience. I'm a little less likely to ask my question. Like if I had a question about what they said or like a, anything, anything about that piece of content. If I had thoughts, I then think, Oh, they just don't, they don't do the common thing.

And you don't want someone to think that about your business. If you're actively pursuing. More of a community feel, and you want people to actually respond and talk back to you. The easiest way to double your comments is to respond to every single comment. The other thing to think about is that you, if you want people to engage with you, you also need to be somebody who comments and engages.

on other people's things. So I do think finding a platform that you actually would want to engage on other people's stuff is key for this. And this is why we can't be everywhere on all the platforms. Like, I would not tell you, okay, you need to grow on TikTok and YouTube and Instagram and also have a Facebook group.

And we're trying to nurture this in all these places. So you find your, your platform. You're like, this is going to be my focus platform. But also, Dedicating some time where you're going out and you're being someone who comments and asks questions and engages and sends other people at DMs. It is like that, that same energy of I'm going to be someone who engages in comments.

It shows people that you're active, but it's also, it's, I, I feel like there's a reciprocity in this where if you're not really engaging on a platform, like you show up, you post, you leave, it's pretty unlikely that people are going to like constantly ask you questions and see you as somebody who's available.

So I think those two things are very connected. The other layer to this that's really important and kind of interesting. So I wanted to mention this is that engagement and interaction is going to look really different for each person, each buyer type in your audience. And that is okay. So I'll, I'll, I'll share from my own audience.

So a lot of my audience is a quiet consumer. They are listening. They are learners. They're really, um, intent on being better, like always learning and growing and refining their skills, like highly ambitious, busy, successful women, and they are absorbing this content quietly and kind of just calculating, like, How are we going to make our purchases?

What are we doing next for education? And a lot of my buyers don't comment on my stuff and are not active in my Facebook group and don't respond to my Emails either. So this is just a great reminder that while community interaction is wonderful, it is absolutely not everything and that you can still build a very successful and profitable business without the majority even of your audience engaging in a way that you would hope they would like, especially publicly.

So I want you to think about ways that you can cultivate A more private interaction with people as well. So this might be DMs, email responses, something where they can talk to you or even like tap and vote on things that not everybody else would see their response, but you can see their response. So on Instagram, we have the polling feature.

We have response, like they can tap on an emoji and like it gives a reaction. There's lots of ways that we can get a private response from somebody where they're not. Putting their name publicly on a comment, but they may be more inclined to actually interact with your brand in this way. Okay, so an example of an audience where you would wanna do this Boudoir photography.

Is it boudoir? Is it boudoir? Boudoir? I don't know. I think we all know what I'm talking about, . This is a more private purchase. This is a more private experience, and this is something that not everybody would want. their friends and family to see them publicly comment on, right? So somebody might say like, raise your hand, drop your favorite emoji if you want to get boudoir work in 2025 or 2026, right?

Like we might have that as a call to action and people might not respond because they don't want their name attached to that. Even though they're, they're interested in your work, they're already following you. You're getting more visibility than you think, but you're asking something like it's a behavior that Somebody wouldn't want to put their name on even brand photography.

I think this could fall into because sometimes we don't want to show our competitors who we're investing with. We follow people we lurk. We're being considered like very considering quiet consideration happening in the background. However, family photography clients, wedding photography clients, design clients, like Those might be a more likely audience to publicly comment on something completely depends what you're asking them to say, but think about ways that you could actually have them engage privately if you think your audience might actually be a little bit more of that quiet background consumer or somebody that doesn't really want to have their name all over everything, but.

If you gave them a way to engage that was perhaps a bit more private, they actually would respond to you. Okay, there's so much more I could say here, but in an effort to keep this brief and bite sized for you, I'm going to stop here. Now, if this resonated with you and you're like, we need a part two, just let me know.

This is me asking for engagement from you. See, I'm doing it right now. Send me a DM on Instagram or wherever you want to chat with me, where you like to chat with me. And let me know if this resonated with you or if this kind of gave you a new perspective on training your audience to engage and talk back with you and gave you anything new that you might try in your business.

And speaking of content, there is another episode that I did want to mention here that I think would be a great next listen for you. And that is on the topic of pushing past perfectionism in your content and how this affects your business and your life. And really some tools that have helped me to deal with.

That perfectionism. So I think this is a great conversation to have on the heels of how do we get people to interact? Because sometimes the biggest thing that's stopping us is that we're in our own heads about our content. We're not actually giving our content enough time and space to grow and create the Brand authority and the people that you want to be because you're not showing up consistently and part of this could be perfectionism holding you back.

So if you're interested in listening to that episode, scroll down to the show notes or just scroll back to episode 45 here on the podcast. But again, that's going to be done in the show notes and that's probably gonna be a little faster because we're 45 at this point. Okay. I hope this was helpful for you and that you got some value out of this here today.

Thank you so much for joining me here on the podcast. And as usual, I will see you next week. Thank you so much for listening to the show. If you enjoyed this episode, please help me get the word out about the call to both podcast by taking a screenshot of this episode right now and sharing it on your social media.

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