

THE MARKETING HUDDLE

The Marketing Huddle Podcast #31 - Top Marketing Newsmakers of 2015

<http://themarketinghuddle.com/year-in-review>

LAURA CLICK: This is The Marketing Huddle, Episode number 31.

[Intro Music]

STAN SMITH: Hello everyone. Welcome back to another episode of The Marketing Huddle, where we give you proven advice to help you up your marketing game. I'm Stan Smith and I'm here with Laura Click and I am excited for this show today, Laura.

LAURA: You're excited? Because I'm feeling sad.

STAN: Oh yeah.

LAURA: I'm sad because this is our last episode of 2015, and I don't know, I mean I'm always excited to talk to you, but I'm a little sad thinking that the podcast is over for the year.

STAN: Wow, yeah, I think we're going to have to play our music, "I Never Can Say Goodbye" by Michael Jackson.

LAURA: [laughs]

STAN: Or how about New Kids on the Block?

LAURA: Wait, which New Kids on the Block song?



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STAN: Oh, which one? Let me see. [sings] How do I say goodbye to what we had? That one.

LAURA: That is amazing. I'm about to start crying.

STAN: Because my singing was that bad?

LAURA: No, it was like so amazing I can hardly stand it. I couldn't do it. You got the nice bass voice that you can, you're a baritone or whatever. I couldn't do it. You don't want me to try that, it would be sad.

STAN: Well folks, if we do not have The Marketing Huddle next year you'll know that it was my singing voice that totally just collapsed our audience.

LAURA: They're like, stick to marketing, so glad you're not in show business.

STAN: I know. You want me to stick to marketing, please review and subscribe.

LAURA: Tell Stan that we don't want any more singing. We're not turning this into the karaoke hour.

STAN: I know, I know.

LAURA: Although it's kind of fun.

STAN: That'll teach you to ask what type of music, or what song I'm referring to.



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LAURA: I know. You're going to have to sing it every time. So now I'm in a better mood, Stan, so thank you for that. So I will quit lamenting the end of the podcast for this year and we can go ahead and dive into what we've got in store for today.

STAN: Yeah. Yeah, so folks, here's what we're going to do. We're going to talk about 2015 marketing news in review. So we'll look back at all the hottest marketing newsmakers from this past year. And then that'll kind of set us up real nicely for our other episode, that's going to talk about marketing trends. So you have that little package ready for you here soon. So that's what we're doing.

LAURA: Yeah. It's good stuff. So and this might be a little bit of a longer episode, as I think there's a lot of stuff that happened this year, and who knows if we'll even be able to cover it all. But it's kind of crazy to start to look back. I don't know about you, but when I started looking back, it's crazy to think about how far things have come or how much marketing has changed this year. Would you agree?

STAN: Yeah, definitely. I think, you know, I feel like marketing is changing quicker and quicker and quicker every year. You know? So maybe in 2012 maybe there was four or five things that were significant. And then I feel like this year, we could probably talk for a few hours on all the things that have impacted the marketing space. But I just feel like the pace of innovation has quickened.

LAURA: Yeah, agreed. I think a lot of that has to do with the technology, and we talk about this a lot. But you know, you rewind the clock, I mean even ten years ago, you know? We didn't have all the, social media didn't exist ten years ago, you know? Or I guess it would have been in the very, very early stages. And so the channels available to us were still pretty limited, even though the web was alive and well at that point.



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LAURA: Really, you had digital advertising and email, and now there's umpteen ways to send it, to get your message out to people. So it's crazy. And every year, and that's one of the things I want to talk about, there's even new platforms being developed. The platforms that we have now been using for several years have been evolving a lot. So I just feel like we're almost in this stage of the ground is just continuing to shake beneath our feet. Like things just, it's almost unstable because the amount of change is rapid. And so you just can't plant your feet for too long or you're just going to get left behind.

STAN: Totally, totally. So let's kind of dive in. I think there's a lot of good things on our list, and I'm excited to hear your point of view on a lot of them. So you want to kick us off?

LAURA: Yeah. You know, I think one of the, when I think about this year and what's changed the most, I think the first thing that comes to mind for me is live video streaming has been, I think, one of the biggest breakout successes of 2015. And we look at, when you and I were together at Social Media Marketing World back in March, it was right around the time when Meerkat was making its debut at SXSW. And then right after that, Twitter bought Periscope and launched it into really huge success. And so I think the first two quarters of this year were really spent talking about Periscope and Meerkat. And then over the summer and into the fall, Blab has really entered into the space as well. So where Periscope and Meerkat are apps that you use on your phone to stream video live, so instead of recording and having to upload you can take video and stream it live to your follows. Then Blab is kind of elegant, it's kind of like Periscope and Skype had a baby. So it's live streaming but instead of it just being one person recording, live streaming some video, Blab is, allows, so if we wanted to, which who knows, we have to try this, Stan, we could, you and I could record video or we could live stream video of you and I chatting and allow people to watch and even join in on the conversation.



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LAURA: So that's been a breakout hit in this last two quarters of this year. So I think live video streaming is probably, when I think about 2015, probably one of the biggest new kids on the block, so to speak, in terms of new marketing tools and functionality.

STAN: Yeah, I would agree. And I think that if you are, if you're watching this space and you're looking for things to implement, probably the first of the year is probably frustrating for people, because they're kind of like, everything was kind of coming Meerkat then. Periscope, this was coming like right after each other.

LAURA: Right.

STAN: And I remember like even when we were at Social Media Marketing World, everyone was walking around with their phone, you know, with Meerkat. Then like, what was it, like a week afterwards when like Twitter came in then.

LAURA: It was like two or three weeks, yeah.

STAN: Two or three weeks afterwards, and then Twitter came in with Periscope and pistol whipped Meerkat. So it was kind of like, it was a time where I feel like you had to really understand why you would adopt a new platform, you know, for your company, because they were just coming one after another. But you know, I think the thing that went unnoticed about Meerkat and Periscope is that it moved the content production engine from your desktop to your phone.

LAURA: Yeah.

STAN: So you were using your phone, and then immediately uploading it. So it totally bypassed your desktop as the center of you creating content, you know? And it really made it very immediate.



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STAN: And I really think that's where apps came into their own as potential content production tools, you know, on your phone. So I think that's a really cool thing. And I think we're going to see that accelerate when we're getting more and more powerful, more and more versatile mobile devices. I think we're going to continue to see apps like these do very, very well.

LAURA: Yeah. Well, and to that point, I think a lot of that has to do with strength of signal and wifi availability. And so a few years back I think it would have been really hard for these apps to succeed because in a lot of places it would have been difficult to get a good live streaming feed out. So now I think based on how available wifi has become and how much stronger your 4G and all that is these days, I mean I think it makes all of that possible where that wouldn't have been a few years back.

STAN: Right.

LAURA: I will say, one point of that, though, Blab, although you can do it on your phone, that, from I listened to a podcast, I think it was on Social Pros with Jay Baer, who was talking to the Community Manager of Blab, and I think the predominant user base for Blab has been doing that on desktops. So that's interesting, because it's two way and there's multiple people and I think there is a real inherent desire for quality there. It's kind of the use case is a little bit different on Blab. And so I think you can use your phone, and I think people do on the consumption side, but on the creation side people are using more of their desktop to have good quality video there.

STAN: Yeah. You know, and I like to characterize Blab as being a step up and an easier form of Google Hangouts. Do you think that's fair?



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LAURA: Yeah. You know, I think it's not exactly like Hangouts, but it's very similar. I mean, Hangouts was used for a lot of different uses as well, not just kind of broadcasting. So you know, if you and I wanted to talk, we could use, Hangouts kind of served as a way to do Facetime, almost, with more people, right? But people could still tune in. I think Blab feels a little bit like a, it's like a live radio show that went video. You know? Or like a call-in morning show. That's what Blab feels like to me. So yeah, I think it is taking Google Hangouts and making that better. But I think that you're not going to use Blab for an internal team virtual meeting like you would have with Google Hangouts. I think Blab is more about broadcasting than Google Hangouts was.

STAN: Right. And Blab is recorded. Because you know, in my mind, at least for moving forward and helping people kind of understand how they can use this in their strategy, I'm thinking that this might be a platform that could kind of take over some of the webinar platform role.

LAURA: For sure. I mean, I think there's a lot to like about it. It'll be interesting to see how people move to that. I know a lot of folks are even moving podcast recording to Blab. So you're kind of getting a two for one deal. You can have people tune in live via Blab and have interaction that way, but then still record and publish through iTunes. So I think there's a lot of interesting possibilities there, and definitely on the webinar side I think Blab is a little bit sexier of a tool than using your GoToMeeting kind of thing. I think there's a lot of fun with Blab, I think. And it feels more personal.



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STAN: Right, right. I'm just a recent fan of Blab. You actually introduced it to me a week or so ago during our podcast. And I've been looking at it. And one thing I like is that I did attempt to really use and embrace Google Hangouts, and the connection required or the process a person had to go through in order to get connected to a Google Hangout, it was easy if you're comfortable with the Google ecosystem to a degree, but it felt hard still, for people to kind of use it. And with Blab, it seems to be very easy to get involved. So I think that's going to be helpful.

STAN: I wanted to talk a little bit about Vine, because I know Vine, it really, when I first saw Vine I was like uh, it's just an animated gif, right? But it really has taken on a life of its own, and I've just been shocked by it. You know, these short animated videos on Twitter, for example, seems to really kind of crossed over to mainstream. And I know at Social Media Marketing World, one of the most entertaining breakouts was with one of the guys who was very, very popular and very successful using Vine videos. So I think Vine is actually probably something that's here to stay. What do you think?

LAURA: Well, I think a lot of that depends on Twitter. You know, I don't know, I'm maybe not as bullish on Vine as you are. I think there's, I do think there's a lot to like there. But I mean, I feel like Twitter's an odd place which, maybe that's a, I think we might segue into that conversation in a minute, but I don't know that Vine stands well on its own. Vine works because it's part of Twitter, right? And I think Twitter is really struggling to find its footing. So where is Vine headed? I don't know. I mean, as I was thinking through this a little bit, I mean Twitter also owns Periscope, right? So you've got two kind of video functionalities. Would they ever try and combine the two? I can't help but wonder that. You know, that could be really interesting.



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LAURA: I think what's neat about Vine is that it is short in six seconds, but could Twitter combine the functionality of Vine and Periscope to make it be where you could live stream but then publish it to Twitter, like you would at Vine? I don't know. I mean, that's kind of one thing that's rolled around in my head because those two kind of fit together in a way.

STAN: Right, right. Yeah, trying to figure out exactly where Vine fits, especially if you're looking at all your content, I think that is going to be a continue, I think that is a question mark, to be fair. But you know me, I kind of believe that video still hasn't come into its own. I think that's still on shaky ground because of the, how much it takes to produce video, you know? And I think Vine makes it a little bit easier, but I still have a question mark in general about that.

LAURA: Well, yeah, 100 percent, especially on Vine. And that's why I'm not as excited about it, because I think it is hard to come up with creative, valuable, entertaining videos that are six seconds long. You have to be a ruthless editor to really come up with something that conceptually will work in six seconds, and learn how to convey a message really succinctly. And let's be honest, most people don't have that skill. I think that takes someone with a credible communication and marketing chops to be able to deliver something there. So you know, and I don't know, again, kind of back to the Twitter point. Vine would not be the first place I would spend time. Or not even the tenth place, I don't think. It's interesting, and I think if you have a way to do something that's really a way to stand out there, certainly go for it. But I don't know. I'm a lot less excited about that than I am, say Blab, for instance.



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STAN: Right. But I guess if you look at it this way, if you're trying to find a way to make your tweet stand out in that waterfall, that torrent of activity stream, then Vine provides that interruption, you know, that can probably get your tweet two seconds of thought. And I think that's going to be an ongoing problem. As a matter of fact, I think that's Twitter's main problem, is that the activity feed is so cluttered, you know? So Vine is just another, I think is another way of kind of breaking that up a bit. But yeah, the jury's out.

LAURA: Well, so this is a good segue into the conversation about Twitter. I think that's the other thing this year. I have felt maybe for the first time Twitter is, I think it's got to get its act together or we might start...

STAN: Uh oh.

LAURA: I don't want to be like the people who say Twitter is dead. I'm not that, you know me better than that. But I definitely feel like it's kind of on the edge, on the brink a little bit. They've brought in Jack Dorsey this year to come back as CEO. He was one of the original founders. They've kind of, they've had trouble from a making money standpoint. They need to bring in revenue. Their stocks are not doing well, you know, and so investors are really saying, you know, you need to get more users. I think they've been comparing themselves to Facebook a lot, and I don't know, they followed that playbook a little bit. It's been a lot of copying what Facebook is doing. So I think Twitter has lost a little bit of itself. I think it's trying to figure out who it wants to be, how people use it. I think the reason why Facebook is so popular and why they have more than a billion users, compared to Twitter, I think they're what, maybe 300 million or something like that? I think people, the firehose that you mentioned, it's just too strong. Like you can't drink from the firehose of information on Twitter, it's so much. And Facebook, for better or for worse with their newsfeed, does all the work curating for you.



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LAURA: It predicts what you are going to like based on where you spent time and what you've been liking and clicking and commenting, and how long you've been spending with information. So Facebook is doing the heavy work for you. Twitter is not, and so you have to do the heavy lifting to kind of cull through the crap to find what you want to pay attention to and who to follow or how to create lists, or how to use third party tools to make it less of a firehose. So I think where Twitter, it certain has, it was the place where news broke, and it really was a tool for that and real time social media. I think as it's grown, it's become harder to spend time there. So I don't know, I'll be really curious to see how Twitter continues to iterate going into next year, because they've made a lot of changes already since Jack Dorsey came on. They rolled out Moments, which was interesting, but is it enough to get people to stick there? I don't know, that's the question.

STAN: Yeah, yeah. And you just broke it down brilliantly in the sense that I'm feeling like we are seeing a strategic, I don't know if it's a misstep, but we do have a strategic quandary with Twitter. Because in my mind, Facebook is to Google as Yahoo is to Twitter, in the sense that I see Twitter doing much better in the future in the pure media space. For example, to me, if I heard HBO buys Twitter, I will say that makes sense. Right? Because really, Twitter is kind of an adjunct, an extension of viewing experience. And you can kind of interact with other people who are watching The Walking Dead right now. Right? Or I can interact with people who are watching the Super Bowl right now in my hashtag Patriots.

LAURA: Right.



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STAN: Right? So to me, that feels like a much more cohesive experience, where the firehose is advantageous, right? Because you have taken the whole network effect and you've boiled it down to a really nice niche that I can interact with. While I think them trying to chase Facebook, Facebook has won that battle. It just really has at this point. And what Facebook did, I feel like in my opinion they said, we are going to focus our experience around the user, while unfortunately Twitter focused its experience around 140 characters. And I feel like that was a strategic misstep at that point.

LAURA: Well, I think there's, Twitter had its own vernacular, too. I mean, I think for the average person it wasn't nearly as intuitive as Facebook. You know, and so you mentioned the 140 characters. You have mentions, like retweets, there's this whole kind of language and culture that Twitter has had.

STAN: Which is a little opaque, too, you know?

LAURA: Yeah, and so it just takes a lot more to get your head around it. Because it's way easier for a grandma to sign up for Facebook, right? And so she can see her grandkids there, than it is for that, that grandma isn't going to sign up for Twitter. It's way too complex, way too cumbersome. And most importantly, there's not a reason for her to be there. And I think that's the challenge with Twitter, is like what is, it doesn't have the same stickiness that Facebook does. The other thing that I'll mention in terms of changes with Twitter this year, one of the most recent things they've done in the last week is they've removed support, or they've eliminated support for showing tweet counts on publishing sites. So blogs like yours and mine, those tweet buttons no longer show how long an article has been shared, whether it's on a blog or a new site or whatnot. And a lot of bloggers and media publishers are up in arms over this, because every other social platform has this ability.



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LAURA: And Twitter has said the reason they're not doing that is because they want to focus their engineering support elsewhere. And so I think a lot of people are calling bogus on that. Is this a move to get people to pay for that data? Is this a revenue play? Like what are they up to? For now it's not incredibly clear, but I know that people are fairly upset about that change. And so your argument about Twitter being really geared towards media, so you mentioned entertainment or media, I think news and entertainment is really where Twitter can excel. Taking that away doesn't seem to make sense in looking at it from that lens.

STAN: Yeah.

LAURA: Do you agree?

STAN: Yeah, I do, I do, but it's almost like what choice they have. They really are trying to figure out what part of that experience is monetizable, you know? And I think that's what you're alluding to, is kind of like take it away to give it back behind a pay wall. And that may probably make sense from a Wall Street standpoint, but I think as strategists, we have to question what was the value. Is the value of having your tweet count from a social credibility standpoint, is it worth as much in 2015 as it was in 2012? And I have to say no, it hasn't. So for me, it would be like OK, from an analyst's standpoint, bravo, you're trying to find a way to monetize this tweet count. And from an analyst's standpoint and a strategist's standpoint it says you're too late. You're way too late. If you did this back in 2013, there's real value to knowing how many people retweeted this. Not so much now.



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LAURA: I mean, I think there's still value there, but I think as the landscape's changed so much, it's maybe becoming, I don't know. I go back and forth. I think you're right that the world, maybe it's going to pay less attention to that. But I think there was some level of seeing those numbers lended some level of credibility to a piece of content, or at least it showed the virality of it. So

STAN: You know what's funny to me, is like within Facebook, I actually do pay attention to how many people liked it, and I want to see who liked it. I really don't care on Twitter.

LAURA: Really?

STAN: Yeah, I really don't care, because I feel for some reason like a retweet is a throwaway. I feel like people don't curate their networks as carefully as people do on Facebook. So when I get a like on Facebook from people that I interact with on a daily basis, that means something to me. So I just really see the value as different.

LAURA: Yeah, that could be very true. Well, I think it is true. I think this is something that folks have done for a while now, is that with Twitter it's like you're just kind of throwing content out there just to do that, and everyone's scheduling everything. Is anyone actually ever there to read it? And so that retweet might be one of ten things you share, but on Facebook you might only share one thing a day, and so that one thing is going to be way more carefully thought out, perhaps, than it would be on Twitter. So I think you're right there. It'll be, I'm really fascinated to see what happens with Twitter in 2016 and where things are headed there. I feel like it's like they've got to figure things out, or maybe it is the end of Twitter, or at least it's the end of Twitter as we've known it. I think they need to maybe shed its skin a little bit.



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STAN: So let's talk about the relatively new kids on the block, right? Instagram, Pinterest and Snapchat.

LAURA: Yeah.

STAN: And the thought I had when I think of them is time to get paid, right? So I feel like especially during the early part of the summer, these folks were just rushing out their business offerings, their advertising offerings. So I really think that that really defined the year for them, in the sense that OK, let's start to monetize our audience. I think Snapchat is still wildly expensive to do it, so I'm kind of wondering about their platform or their strategy there. But I think it makes sense, Pinterest and Instagram, I feel like Pinterest probably did the better job of it because they kind of have an audience that kind of lends itself to advertising. But that's how I kind of would, I guess, typify or describe what I saw from them. What do you think?

LAURA: Yeah. I mean, that makes a lot of sense, and what's interesting, especially with, I would say both, with Pinterest and Instagram, but Pinterest in particular the buying intent on Pinterest is really high. So when someone pins something, a lot of times they're pinning it because they are making buying decisions. So if I'm looking for Christmas gifts, you know, Christmas is right around the corner, I might create a Pinterest board of ideas for my husband, you know? And he's not on Pinterest so I know he's not going to look.

STAN: Until I send him an email.

LAURA: I'm making it a private board.

STAN: Oh geez.



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LAURA: But you know, it's a way, it's a digital scrapbook, it's a way to collect ideas and bookmark them. And I don't have the stats on me, but everything I've read as it relates to Pinterest is that it's one of the most, the buying intent is the highest on Pinterest. And I know that when we were building our house, I used Pinterest a lot as I was looking for things like light fixtures, and I don't know, different furnishings or decorations for our house. And I pinned things and then went back and bought them. So I can certainly attest to that. So all that to say I think you're right, I mean, having advertising and promoted pins there just makes a ton of sense and a really smart move for Pinterest and then for businesses that have very visual, product-based businesses. I mean, it's a no brainer to invest in that platform.

STAN: Yeah, I think of all of these, if you had to tell me to put on my strategist's hat and say who actually has the best advertising model, most enduring advertising model, I would say Pinterest, because for what you just said. They've been able to position themselves at the bottom of the funnel. You know, I think that's key.

LAURA: I would say Instagram might be up there, too. I've seen and heard of a lot of companies, especially stuff that's very creative, so stuff in the kind of crafty, maker kind of culture of folks, they've been able to sell and make a ton of money through Instagram.

STAN: But answer this. But think about this. How does your answer change if I say Pinterest is good for transactions while Instagram is good for branding? So you're in two different areas, from a media planning standpoint. So for example, the fixtures. Like if I'm selling in a really cool Delta competitor for faucets, bathroom faucets, I probably will gravitate towards Pinterest for folks like you who are building their house, right? And I probably wouldn't put it on Instagram because it just doesn't feel retail to me.



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LAURA: Yeah. It's not, I guess it is, not what works and one is certainly not going to work on the other. I think a lot of it is very dependent on the type of business. I think there's a real culture around Instagram, and a real style to it. So I think you may be right in terms of it could be a little bit more of a branding play, but if you create interesting enough content there, I think you can really build business off of that. So it's not just branding. It's like if you reel people in the right way, with how you develop content there, I think you can use Instagram then to sell. It's just maybe they, it's a little bit more on the top end of that funnel as opposed to the bottom end, at least initially. I don't know. That's an interesting point.

STAN: It'll be interesting to go back to, I think we talked about this in our news section in episode number 8. So I'm wondering what we thought back in March and April. So it's interesting.

LAURA: We'll have to go back to that.

STAN: Yeah, go back and check that out. I want to talk a little bit about, I guess within the same realm, is social media advertising. I think this is probably quick, but I think everybody pretty much understands that there's no more free lunch, you know? To really go after an audience, I mean like Facebook basically cordoned off my audience really quickly. So to talk to your own people that you don't talk to every day, I mean you can still talk to mom and dad and your close friends and your very close network, but really to talk to a lot of people on Facebook, any of the social networks, you're going to have to pay for it these days.



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LAURA: Right, unless you look at going about things a different way and you're looking at maybe Facebook groups instead, or even LinkedIn groups. You know, I think kind of creating things along those lines I think is how some people are skirting that idea. But as a general rule, you're right. I think the free lunch is over.

STAN: I like free lunches.

LAURA: I know, I know. I mean, here's the thing. We all knew that was coming.

STAN: Yeah, we did.

LAURA: And people keep crying about it. I mean, I don't think anyone's incredibly surprised. These social networks exist to make money. All that investment money is going to run out eventually. They need to drive revenue and monetize the platform. So it only makes sense that there's now advertising vehicles to do that. And I think they're getting more and more sophisticated and better, and there can be some really great things that you can do there from a targeting perspective. So I think if people would quit whining about it and start figuring out how to use it, I think people would feel a little bit better about that, about that move. I think it's still way more effective than a lot of other channels. It's way more targeted than some other channels. Way more cost effective than some other options, as well. So just because organic social isn't what it used to be, don't dismiss the idea of looking at the advertising route.

STAN: Stop your whining, yo.



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LAURA: That's the theme a little bit. Speaking of advertising, to kind of switch the conversation a little bit, one thing that I've seen a lot of, especially in the last few months, is ad blocking has been a real big conversation in the marketing and advertising space. And so ad blockers have been around for a long time, but I think where the conversation has really stepped up is that now there are ad blockers on mobile devices. And I believe in the last couple of months, the latest iOS version for iPhone allowed ad blockers on Safari as well. And so I think you've got advertisers kind of freaking out about this idea of OK, all these publishers and all these brands are relying on, brands are relying on advertising to reach their customers and these publishers are relying on the ad revenue, and there's this whole segment of apps and tools that are just totally throttling that. And so I think there's a little bit of a freak out there to some extent. So I think the industry's really kind of wringing its hands, figuring out what's the best way forward? And so you've got folks saying, on one hand, advertising needs to not be so intrusive, you know, the screen takeovers and autoplay videos and the blinking crap that you see. There's a reason why you've got these ad blocking services out there. So advertising has got to get better. But then I think you also have advertisers saying look, I think there's questions about is this ethical? Should these ad blockers even exist? It's kind of wiping out an industry. Could it wipe out an industry? And so I think there's a lot of, it'll be interesting to see how this shakes out in the coming year.

STAN: Right. Well, I just did a little sleuthing. I feel like the first ad blocker was the VCR in 1975, right? So I mean like the moment we were able to forward through a commercial, we had an ad blocker. It wasn't elegant, not convenient, but it was there. And really when it comes down to it, I mean like if you have a problem with your advertising being blocked, then you probably should try to figure out how not to be in the advertising business anymore.



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STAN: Because what is going to that point, I mean, like I can't tell you the last time I actually looked at a commercial. And I know people like try to force it upon you, I know when you DVR a TV show now you have to watch the advertising, which to me sounds like that's just ripe for it getting blocked. So really when it comes down to it, I mean I think this is no surprise to anyone who's listening to this podcast, you and I believe that content marketing is the way to actually insert relevant promotion into people's lives. It has to be in line with what they want, and if you are interruption marketing, just isn't, I believe it doesn't work. I think that people who have billions or companies that have billions of dollars in advertising might dispute that. But for the vast majority of businesses, trying to rely on interruption marketing, which ad blocking stops, it was not a good call to begin with. It's a non-starter.

LAURA: Well, and I think some of it is, some advertising I think, there is good advertising that exists. I don't think all advertising is bad. But I think that...

STAN: I tend to. I believe all advertising is horrible.

LAURA: Ooh. I think there is some good advertising, and I think ad creative has gotten better in some ways.

STAN: You mean like for PBS? I'm trying to think about what advertising is good, Laura. Come on.

LAURA: Maybe I'm a romantic.

STAN: Yeah.



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LAURA: I mean, I think that, look at even Super Bowl ads, right? I mean how some of them have done a great job. They've released them on YouTube even before the Super Bowl, you know? And I think some have done a good job of being creative about that. And the creative, the ad themselves, have become more entertaining. So I think that's what I mean where there's some advertising that is still very good because they've created entertainment.

STAN: I see. So eight ads out of millions makes sense.

LAURA: [laughs] Maybe so. But the bad part of advertising, the screen takeovers, I think the autoplay stuff where, I don't know about you, you go to an article and something's playing and you can't figure out where it is, and you're trying to stop it. That kind of stuff. It just feels like a lot of the practices around it have become really shady, you know? It's like we're trying to hoodwink your audience and find a way to connect with them. I think you and I can both agree on that. Like find ways to have meaningful connections and how can you be creative and reaching your audience without having to do a full screen takeover on a website?

STAN: Right.

LAURA: To get your message heard. So maybe I think this is the call to be a little bit more innovative with your messaging and how you reach people.

STAN: Yeah. I can go with that. I just feel that, yeah, over time I think you have to find a way or retool your advertising perspective to make these ad blockers irrelevant. So, and I think that's really, really hard. I think it's super easy to go ahead and just throw the money at traditional advertising and hope it sticks. But it's getting harder and harder.



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LAURA: Yeah. Maybe it means more push towards content and PR, so more earned media, more owned media. So creating something that's really interesting and valuable and entertaining on your own instead of relying on an ad to get that message out. So I think you and I will probably stand firmly in that camp.

STAN: Which is, again, a nice segue into content marketing matures, in my opinion, in 2015. I feel that we're kind of in this phase where you really have to evangelize for content marketing. You had to say that this is why content marketing works, or this is what content marketing is. And I think that, I wouldn't say it's universal acceptance, but I think that the business community is seeing that content marketing is an alternative to traditional advertising, in terms of getting out a message. So I like to say that it's in its teenage years. We still have some quarters where content marketing needs to either be developed in a different way or defined in a different way to make sense to some organizations, but I feel like we're past that point where we're trying to convince people that educating their consumers, or educating their future audience is a good way to go.

LAURA: I would agree, but I think where this is why it might still be in the teenage years, because I think there's still a lot of crappy content out there. And so now you might be able to get a business on board and say OK, we'll blog.

STAN: But then the blogs are crappy.

LAURA: But the blogs suck, you know? So no one's going to read it if it's terrible. So you can't just spit out 300 words once in a blue moon and hope that people are going to pay attention to it.

STAN: Right.



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LAURA: So I think content has definitely evolved, but I still think there's so much room for improvement. I think because it's so noisy now, because promoting your content, because social media is so fragmented and noisy right now, I feel like it's a lot harder to get attention. So your content has to be excellent, beyond excellent. Or if it's not, it's not even worth creating in the first place. I mean, creating content is not easy or cheap. So if you're going to invest in it, you have to invest in doing it well or don't do it at all.

STAN: Right.

LAURA: I mean, that's where I feel like it's matured in that way, the crappy stuff, it's just like you're throwing money away, if you're not going to take the time to invest in really doing it well.

STAN: Right. And it's almost like the content has to be great, and I also think your connection with your audience has to be great so they will even continue to read your content.

LAURA: Right.

STAN: So it even goes beyond just the blog post. It's how are you kind of staying relevant in the lives of your readers so they do come back again and again? That whole process starts with great content, though.

LAURA: Well, and it's creating value. And so you have to know your audience well enough that you are creating something that's valuable to them day in and day out, or week in, week out. And that makes them want to come back and say what is, what can we create that our audience just can't live without? And I think that really becomes the question as it relates to this.



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LAURA: And that could be, the same could be for email. The delivery mechanism doesn't necessarily matter, whether it's email or blog or whatever it might be, video, Blab. But it's how can you create something that's so valuable that your audience just can't wait to see the next post or email or video? So it'll be interesting to see that, too. I feel like we can't talk about this year without, we mentioned Facebook a little bit, but I think there's some big things that happened there this year that are worth mentioning, and I'm sure that this list is not all inclusive, because Facebook I think changes by the day.

STAN: Yeah, sometimes twice a day.

LAURA: That's right. So staying on top of that can be tricky. But from where I sit, I think there are a few things that are really big. One of the things that has just really kind of started rolling out now is the instant articles. And I feel like Facebook is really making a move towards becoming more of a publisher. People, Facebook wants to own the content. Instead of it being a vehicle to send people to other web properties, I mean Facebook's desire is to keep you on Facebook. And so they are testing out instant articles with publishers like the New York Times and The Atlantic and National Geographic, and I believe they've just started showing up on people's iPhones in the last, I think, month or so maybe. And so that I think is a big move, and it'll be really fascinating to see how that evolves as they open it up, what becomes of that. But I think between that and then they've also enhanced the Notes feature, and so it's almost really begging people to create and publish content completely on Facebook, as opposed to sending folks to your blog or your website. So I think that's a really huge change in how Facebook has gone this year.



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STAN: Yeah, you know, and I appreciate, this is even kind of weird hearing me say this, but I appreciate the leadership that Facebook has shown here. And also, for that matter, Google has shown in terms of content quality, right? So what Facebook is doing, especially with instant articles, is that first of all it's going to give you a proof of concept that its audience does appreciate great content. And I'm hoping that they will create guidelines of what good content is, based upon what their audience wants. And I think that will raise the bar for all of us. So if you want to play in this space, you're going to have to give more thought to what great content looks like. And we've already seen it with Google with search engine optimization. Basically, Google says you can try to game us or you can just write great content. So I kind of see that as a good move for us all here.

LAURA: Well, they've already done that in a way in terms of how they reward content that shows up in the newsfeed. And so one of their big announcements this year was they are giving priority to content based on how long someone spends on that content. So they're saying that there may be great content that you don't necessarily hit the like button on, but you took the time to read that really long post that someone published, or you watched that two-minute video that someone uploaded, you know? And they are taking note of that and rewarding how long people are spending looking at the content, looking at the comments, regardless of whether you like or comment yourself. And so I think they've already kind of shown that they care about and they're rewarding content based on that. I mean, you said it earlier, but I think this just kind of merits all of that out. Facebook is all about delivering, all about the user experience. They want to keep you coming back because that helps them pay the bills, more advertisers will spend money there. The longer you stay on Facebook, the more money they're going to make. So it behooves them to be incredibly sticky and want to be there and want to stay there.



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LAURA: So that's why they're so ruthless about making your newsfeed something that feels so intuitive, like it's exactly like what you wanted to see.

STAN: That's exactly it. You know, and I think too is that I know, with my clients I've been really, really working hard at understanding the Facebook advertising space. And one of the things I'm most impressed by is that how spot on they are in terms of aggregating an audience based upon interests. And if you look at it, Facebook instant articles gives them another tool for them to continue to segment their audience based upon what type of content they like to read, and the quality of the content they like to read. So to me, I mean you did a great job of kind of listing some of the bigger changes Facebook makes. And this is one of those situations where they're using their network to separate themselves from everybody else. You know? I mean, like at this point, with one and a half billion people, they're at the point where they're saying that a billion people log in every day.

LAURA: Yeah.

STAN: And they have still held this 50 percent active engagement metric of theirs, where you're actually doing something, you're not just logging in. It's still at 50 percent. And it's been that way for years. They just are getting flooded with amazing information. And this is something that frankly, Twitter or LinkedIn can't match.

LAURA: Yeah, for sure. I mean, it's fascinating. It's fascinating and then scary when you think about all the data that they have on all of us. I mean, it's incredibly exciting as a marketer, but then as a user you go, holy crap, they know so much about me, that's really scary.



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STAN: But you know, and I've talked to Tammy a lot about this because she is an avid Facebook user, and I should be paying her as an employee of Pushing Social because I get all my data pretty much from her. And you know, the thing about it is I ask, "Why Facebook?" When you think about all that data that they're getting on us, right? Why continue to use it? Aren't you scared? And what she is saying is that you know what? The convenience of staying in close contact with a wider group of people is worth it. And that is really compelling to me, because I kind of ramped up my Facebook usage, and yeah, really, when it comes down to a busy life, and if your mode of communication is just calling someone on the phone, then you have three or four friends.

LAURA: Yeah.

STAN: But if your mode of communication is sharing that photo of your kid in his basketball jersey or the race you've run, or commenting on somebody else's picture, now you're really, you have a larger group of quality contacts, quality connections. And that's why people are willing to use Facebook. So the saga continues.

LAURA: Absolutely.

STAN: One more.

LAURA: One more?

STAN: You know, I wanted to, well, I guess two things. Maybe not. Maybe we're running out of time because you and I could go on forever, especially me. But I did want to bring up growth hacking.

LAURA: Your favorite topic.



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STAN: My second favorite topic after marketing tools and automation.

LAURA: How could I forget the tools?

STAN: I know. But growth hacking I think is not firmly in the social media space. As a matter of fact, I think it's poo-pooed by social media thought leaders, but growth hacking is this approach, really this marketing approach and analysis approach that has been popular in the software service space and the startup space. And you know what? I really believe that if you have been looking at growth hacking, the best practices that has come out of that movement I think is available and is applicable to all marketing niches. So I kind of, I was happy to see it mature in 2015, and I think it's going to really continue to evolve in 2016. So I just wanted to throw in my props, my growth hacking peeps over there.

LAURA: Yeah. I think there's a lot to be said about growth hacking. I mean, we had a whole episode about that, so we'll link to it in the show notes if people want to listen more about it. But I think there's a lot marketers can learn from growth hackers, and how to iterate quickly and really focus on quick growth, quick user acquisition. I think there's a lot of practices there that marketers could stand to learn. So I think that's a good one.

STAN: Yeah.

LAURA: Cool. Do we want to talk about some of our favorite episodes of the year? I mean, one of the things that I think, as I said at the top of the show, is that I'm just sad because we're ending our first year of The Marketing Huddle, and crazy to think we're now in episode 31.



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LAURA: We started back in March of this year, so it's been really fun doing this with you and getting to share ideas. I always think it's fascinating at the end of the year to look back on some of the episodes or content that resonate most with people.

STAN: Yeah. Let me give a quick list here. And we kind of say top marketing episodes based upon how many people have downloaded them or listened to them. There's a couple of these that I really, really liked, and there's a couple of surprising ones in here. But I think our top one was on Marketing Integration Done the Right Way, and that was our inaugural, really, episode, where we talked about topics. So that has remained one of the most popular episodes that we've done. That was a lot of fun to have, a really fun topic for us. The second one was How to Make Sense of Your Marketing Numbers. And this was really about, we dove into some of the analytics of really understanding what your marketing is telling you and how to react to that. And that was actually surprising to me, Laura. You know, you would think that analytics and numbers is not people's hot spot. But it did edge out our third topic, which was How to Effectively Repurpose Your Content. And that's where we kind of went straight on with the problem, the challenge of how do you continue to feed the content marketing beast with content. I remember that episode. We really went into a lot of nitty gritty tactics on how to turn one piece of content into four or five pieces. So that was really useful. After that one, we had Better Blogging in Less Time. And of course, I got my start in blogging. We met over blogging, so blogging is near and dear to my heart. And that was a top episode. And ironically, my favorite episode Top Marketing Tools for Your Business. It was like one, two, three, the fifth top. So I really enjoyed that one, we enjoyed doing it. We have a really good, really great, actually, e-book on our expanded list of marketing tools that of course you can get at TheMarketingHuddle.com. But that was like, it rounded out our list of the top five.



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LAURA: Yeah. And doesn't it, when we're recording this, there's still a few episodes that haven't been published. I think one of my favorites is our conversation with Andy Crestodina, which was fantastic. So not that talking to you isn't great, but Andy is super smart, so it was great to have him on the show.

STAN: Yeah, Andy rocked it.

LAURA: So who knows, he may blow all these numbers out of the water by the time we publish that episode. But yeah, there's some good stuff. So if you're a new listener, we'll put links in the show notes to those episodes as kind of being some of the top ones of this year. I don't know about you, Stan, but before we sign off, I just really, gosh, want to thank you. It's been a pleasure getting to do this with you, and thank all of our listeners. It just really means a lot that folks tune in and listen to us gab about marketing and sharing our thoughts and insights, and I just hope that folks have been getting value out of that. But it's been super fun for me, and we're just so thankful that people have been listening.

STAN: Likewise, likewise. From my standpoint, we kind of started off the year and I brought you on board as the co-host, and I'm getting choked up here. I think that I've just been impressed with the level of expertise you've brought to the show, and The Marketing Huddle definitely is a co-owned and it's a brand that really reflects you as well as me. So I'm just super excited that, what 2016 is going to hold. And I have to say that our listeners, you guys have been awesome. You've provided great feedback, you've stuck with us, you've shared us, and I can't thank our listeners enough for sticking with us.



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LAURA: Yeah, yeah. Likewise, Stan. You're super smart. I feel like I get free consulting from you every time we talk, too, so I learn something almost every time we talk. And I'm quite confident if I do, our listeners are as well. So this has been a lot of fun and we're excited to come back with more great episodes for you in 2016. But, we are going to take a short break, our first break since we launched the show. We are going to take some time off to spend time with our families and rest a little bit over the holidays, so we're going to do that and come back on January 18th with a new, wait, is it the 18th? 13th, I'm sorry.

STAN: 13th.

LAURA: 13th, sorry, January 13th. So we're going to take one month off with the show and we'll be back with some new episodes then. So if you can't stand living without us for a whole month, I encourage you to go back and listen to some of the great shows in the archives and the ones we're listing in the show notes. Hopefully you'll get your fix then, but we'll be back with new episodes on January 13th. Really look forward to talking with you then. Thanks as always for listening. We appreciate you. We also want to thank our sponsor, S2N Design, who's been our sponsor throughout the start of the show, this whole year, we are just really grateful for them as well. So thank you so much for listening. We appreciate it. We'll be back next month, next year, 2016, with more great episodes of The Marketing Huddle. We'll catch you next time.

[Outro Music]



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Links & Resources:

- ◆ [Episode 29: Marketing Trends to Watch in 2016](#) - The Marketing Huddle
- ◆ [Periscope vs. Meerkat: What Marketers Should Know About Live-Streaming Video](#) - Blue Kite Marketing Blog
- ◆ [Instagram Offers Big Data, but Pinterest Has Purchase Intent](#) - Adweek
- ◆ [How Pinterest Drives Online Commerce \[Infographic\]](#) - Shopify
- ◆ [Episode 8: Getting Started with Social Media Advertising](#) - The Marketing Huddle
- ◆ [Episode 21: What the Heck is Growth Hacking?](#) - The Marketing Huddle
- ◆ [Episode 25: What is Marketing Automation and Why Do You Need It?](#) - The Marketing Huddle
- ◆ [Episode 1: Integrated Marketing Done the Right Way](#) - The Marketing Huddle
- ◆ [Episode 4: How to Make Sense of Your Marketing Numbers](#) - The Marketing Huddle
- ◆ [Episode 5: How to Effectively Repurpose Your Content](#) - The Marketing Huddle
- ◆ [Episode 6: Better Blogging in Less Time](#) - The Marketing Huddle
- ◆ [Episode 10: Top Marketing Tools for Your Business](#) - The Marketing Huddle
- ◆ [Episode 30: How to Get More from Google Analytics with Andy Crestodina](#) - The Marketing Huddle

