

The Startup Survival Podcast by Peter Harrington

Series 2 Getting Better, Going Further

Transcript: Episode 10 – Startup Marketing: What works and what wastes your money and time



June 2021

Speaker 1 ([00:12](#)):

Hello. And welcome once more to the Startup Survival Podcast with me, your host, Peter Harrington. In this episode, episode 10, I'm going in search of startup, marketing tactics and strategies that work. And with the help of my expert, guest Victoria Bradley, I'm going to be calling out the marketing stuff that wastes your money and your time. On the face of it, startup marketing is fun and exciting, but it is also a game of trial and error. Because as an entrepreneurial leader, brandishing your brilliant new product or service, you are breaking new ground. Nobody has ever done what you are doing. You have to venture and discover, mistakes are inevitable. And so success is linked to your speed of learning. However, there are some key principles, some rules that if you apply with care and attention, your business has a much greater chance of winning through.

Speaker 1 ([01:17](#)):

I'll be talking with Victoria in a moment, but for now, let me take you back to the turn of the century. I still find that's a bizarre phrase, but in practice, all I mean is going back 21 years back then when websites were only just learning to walk and social media was little more than a twinkle in technologist's eyes. I knew I needed a marketing mentor and whilst I was aware some of our company marketing campaigns worked I also knew several had little or no impact at all. Our agency needed help. With a successful career in the ad industry behind him, Chris was hired and went on to advise me for several years. And very early on I remember him sharing three invaluable principles, which I have applied to all marketing since. And the first principle Chris highlighted is this: Your marketing is as weak as its weakest link. To succeed everything has to be right. For example, you can create a first class product, but if your target audience doesn't know about it, few, if any will buy. Likewise, you might have a great consultancy business, for example, and you've connected with your target audience. But price yourselves out of the market, few, if any will buy. Of course, you might get the product promotion and price, right? But if people can't access what you offer when they want to purchase a few, if any will buy.

Speaker 1 ([02:52](#)):

Chris's second principle concerns simplicity. As I have just mentioned, your marketing is as weak as its weakest link. Many small businesses make the mistake of over-complicating marketing. To demonstrate the point, let me share Gordon Ramsey's program, Kitchen Nightmares. I've lost count of the times Gordon has gone into a failing restaurant only to find a menu that reads like an encyclopedia. But once his work is done, the revamped and re-energized eatery has a menu, barely covering a page, and everyone loves it. Many businesses, and I've been guilty, fall into this catch-all trap because they think the bigger the net, the greater the customer appeal. In truth, the bigger the customer net, the greater the customer confusion. Keep your marketing focused and simple. And Chris' third principle all about how a product or service unpacks for the customer reinforces why you need to keep your marketing focused and simple. Startup owners are not renowned for putting themselves in their customer's shoes yet when Chris did this for us and shared what he found, it became clear how inconsistent and confusing our branding and promotional messages were.

Speaker 1 ([04:11](#)):

I have no idea how many customers we lost because we confused them. But I have learned that when a product or service unpacks consistently, well, the customer becomes more confident and enjoys the buying process. By way of example, the odds are you've bought an iPhone at some point in your life. Everything about the way an iPhone is made, presented, and then wrapped is ruthlessly consistent. Even when lifting the box lid, you sense that delightful friction as the moment of product discovery and full ownership, nears. It's all in the design and part of their carefully crafted and highly consistent customer journey that generates a simple, enjoyable, and memorable customer experience.

Speaker 1 ([05:02](#)):

Well, to help me make this podcast memorable and enjoyable, I'm really pleased to be able to introduce you to my special guest Victoria Bradley. Whilst much of my marketing experience has been in the business to business or rather B2B space, Victoria brings huge experience from working with business to consumer or B to C businesses. Victoria, or Vics as she also likes to be called is an award winning Scottish based entrepreneur. With over 10 years' experience, starting new ventures, she particularly loves working to create the first 10 customers and thus validate a business. And she employs thought-through marketing tactics, which I know she's going to share to win over those vital early clients. Importantly, Victoria also works as a university business advisor and startup coach. Victoria, through the magical connection made possible by zoom. Welcome to the startup survival podcast.

Speaker 2 ([06:03](#)):

Thank you, Peter. I'm really, really happy to be here. Thank you for having me on today.

Speaker 1 ([06:07](#)):

Thanks. Great to have you here on the show. To give listeners a better idea of your startup marketing experience, can you share a bit more about your work?

Speaker 2 ([06:17](#)):

Sure. Peter. My background in startup and marketing is quite varied. I've been running startups for the past 10 years across different industries, mostly business to consumer. I usually have an itch that I want to scratch myself, which is the catalyst for starting a business across different industries. I also work as a business advisor at a university, so I work with startups on a day-to-day basis to help them through the process of idea generation, to launch to the first couple of years in business. So that's a really fun thing I get

to do. I'm also a mum. While on maternity leave, I started my last business, which is called Boob Bling, which is a breast milk jewelry business. And I'm sure I'll get a chance to tell you more about that later.

Speaker 1 ([07:05](#)):

Boob Bling. Wow. Sounds fascinating. Out of interest. What does Boob Bling do?

Speaker 2 ([07:12](#)):

So, Boob Bling brings up many connotations. I'm sure. Boob Bling is a breast milk jewelry business. So what happens is breastfeeding moms will send us a little testtube vial of their breast milk, and we will encapsulate that to create our breast milk pearl out of resin. So what we do is we treat the breast milk in a certain way that it becomes from liquid to powder, and then we're able to set it in a resin piece and a piece of fine jewelry. So they have a keepsake to remember their breastfeeding journey for the rest of their life.

Speaker 1 ([07:44](#)):

Okay! What an idea. And how long have you been working on Boob Bling?

Speaker 2 ([07:49](#)):

So Boob Bling started during the pandemic. I launched it in March, 2020 and the first nine months, it was an incredible business. We went from zero to 50k in sales during a pandemic. So I'm very proud of that startup.

Speaker 1 ([08:03](#)):

So you've built up a customer community of mums, I imagine?

Speaker 2 ([08:07](#)):

Absolutely. And that feeds into our marketing discussion today Peter. Community is one of the most key things when it comes to developing a strong marketing go-to-market strategy. But yeah, we have a community of about 3,000 to 4,000 mums on Instagram, highly engaged, commenting on our content on a daily basis. We have a really great relationship with that community. And I think the good thing about Boob Bling is it's so niche that it taps into really important nerve with breastfeeding moms. They want it, they can relate to it.

Speaker 1 ([08:45](#)):

Boob Bling. I love it. Clearly. Victoria has excellent credentials in terms of knowing how to spot an opportunity and how to get a business off the ground. So let's get into the heart of this episode, what startup marketing works and what waste your money. And of course, what waste your time. Given my limited time with Vics, I'm going to get her views on the waste issues first.

Speaker 2 ([09:09](#)):

So Peter, and in my opinion, startups go really wrong with marketing in three key areas. And those are product market fit, wanting to only do the sexy things when it comes to marketing and also brand equity. So number one, product market fit. And I think this relates to episode three with Diana Kander, she touched on this in a bit more detail. So I'd recommend your listeners to that episode as well. Startups can get carried away with creating products or services that meet their needs or that they get really excited

about. It doesn't necessarily mean that there's a customer at the end that wants to buy it. So I think the first thing that startups need to consider during the marketing process is who is my customer and how do I find them? And how do I make sure that this product or service is marketed to them on the right channels? That's the fundamental thing that startups need to address straight away.

Speaker 1 ([10:10](#)):

So what you're saying is that people get very excited about what their product or service offers, but many fail to validate that thinking with actual customers?

Speaker 2 ([10:20](#)):

Absolutely that's completely right. They just don't do the validation stage because the validation stage is a stage as once again, Diana mentioned where you're going to get feedback that you're maybe not going to like to hear, and you might have spent six months working on your baby, you know, getting it ready for a launch, launching it. You've got all that excitement and you know, that hope and you've invested time, money, and effort into this business. It can be scary to get the validation, especially if it's not what you want to hear. So a lot of startups end up kind of just stepping over that segment of the product market fit, which can be really damaging as you move forward.

Speaker 1 ([11:03](#)):

And as an advisor Vics, do you find startups make excuses for not completing customer valid?

Speaker 2 ([11:10](#)):

I think as an advisor, when I speak to startups who haven't done, that I get a mixed reaction. I think there's a lot of people that are quite naive. So they just like a say, get so excited and invested in an idea, want to bring it to the market that they've not actually thought about who their customers are asking their customer. I think a lot of people do just kind of gloss over it because they see it. It's perhaps not something that they want to hear. So they just kind of avoid that altogether, which is detrimental to their business at the end of the day. Those are the products or services that are, are not going to go anywhere.

Speaker 1 ([11:49](#)):

Ah, got it. And, and can you give an example of this in practice?

Speaker 2 ([11:53](#)):

Yeah. So product market fit, I can give you an example of a student that came to see me recently in my role as a business advisor who had developed an app. He'd invested about 12 months in this app, and about £5k of his own money. He developed this app, he brought it to me and he said, we've got this amazing app. We've put it on the app store, but nobody is buying it. So my first question to him was who's your customer? And his response back to me, was, well, I think it's this kind of person who works in this organization. And I asked, well, have you spoken to that customer? Have you ask that customer to test your products? Have you given that product to those customers for free so you can get feedback? And his answer was no. And it was apparent right there. Why no one was buying his app because he'd created something that he thought there was a market need for, but hadn't actually asked market. And I see that on a regular basis through my role as a business advisor.

Speaker 1 ([12:56](#)):

This is good. This is great. So it's also been so valuable, but we need to move on. What's the second area where you find startups waste money and time Vics.

Speaker 2 ([13:07](#)):

The second point that I mentioned with this question was that startups only want to do the sexy things when it comes to marketing. From my own experience, through several different businesses, the things that have the biggest impact are the things that take time and mean you have to roll your sleeves up and really grind. The reality is you're not going to launch a business and people are going to come flocking to buy your product or service because no one knows you even exist. Right?

Speaker 1 ([13:36](#)):

So why are people drawn to the sexy marketing stuff?

Speaker 2 ([13:40](#)):

People are drawn to the sexy marketing things because it's just human nature, to be honest, right? You see a brand that's really a cool high tech video and you think, oh my God, I need one of those to look, to look to that level as well. I think when it comes to startups, we always aspire to be at a level higher than we already are because we want to be seen as the market leader rather than maybe just starting from the playing field that we're at. So I see businesses all the time thinking that they need a £2k video, a £5k video for their website to launch. The reality is you can do something on your iPhone, get edited on a program, such as Fiverr. It's not going to cost you much money at all. It's probably going to cost you 50 to a hundred quid and we're going to start up every penny counts. So I think it's natural to feel like you need to do everything that bigger businesses are doing, whether that's video Facebook ads, but the reality is at startup level, you have to test and validate and test and validate and iterate. And it's only then when you really understand your customer, that you're ready to make those kinds of investments that might impact business. You need to have an audience to be able to watch those videos, right? So what's the point in investing in a £2k video when there's no audience to watch it?

Speaker 1 ([15:01](#)):

And can you give an example of a business being drawn to the wrong type of marketing?

Speaker 2 ([15:06](#)):

So I can give an example with my own business, what am my previous businesses Desk Union, which use to provide co-working space to small businesses in central Edinburgh? I built a really great brand. I got a little bit of investment for winning a startup competition, and I decided to invest that in a video and why did I do that? That was because there was a number of other well-funded startups that were creating cool videos. And it was that kind of me too feeling. So instead of using that money to, I guess, do some of the more tactical things where £2k might have gone a lot farther and got me a lot more traction and actually finding customers. I spent it on a video with a great video production company and yeah, it was a really nice video, but it didn't lead to sales. And at that stage of startup life, we're not looking so much at developing, you know, the brand equity we're looking at, how do you get sales? That's fundamentally how your startup's going to survive.

Speaker 1 ([16:08](#)):

Okay Got it. So in developing your startup marketing expertise Vics it's fair to say, making mistakes, you know, has been part of the journey?

Speaker 2 ([16:17](#)):

Pizza. I have made so many mistakes along the way. I mean, I don't think you can be a success unless you've failed. I think it's so important to make those mistakes because it means that you're just going to get stronger as an entrepreneur and as an individual. I think as you grow as a, as an entrepreneur as well, you develop almost a sixth sense and you're, you're able to trust your intuition a lot more. And all of that experience, all of that failure, all of that intuition comes together and just means that your next startup is so much stronger.

Speaker 1 ([16:53](#)):

For the record. I completely echo what Vics is saying. So much marketing work is an experiment and you have to be able to measure the results. Don't mentally run away if a campaign flops or fails the value of the campaign failure is what you learn from the experiment. As Victoria says, the whole experience of running your own enterprise helps you to develop a sixth sense, but you have to tune into the lessons to allow that sixth sense to work for you. Anyway, the lesson for me here is to get back to Vics and ask her about her final point. So Victoria, what's the third thing startups get wrong when it comes to marketing.

Speaker 2 ([17:33](#)):

Sure. So the third one Peter is brand-building and I think this is important at startup level because your brand is your DNA. It's how people perceive you. And although I've just talked about brand equity and building brand equity, you still have to have a really strong brand. People are not going to buy your product or service and they, unless they can relate to it in a really strong way. And I think for my example, Boob Bling, the business, I've just started, I really focused first on developing the brand, understanding the customer, what their needs were and developing a brand that fitted those needs. And I think this is something that startups often gloss over and don't spend the time doing.

Speaker 1 ([18:17](#)):

Okay. And do you think part of the problem is the fact people misunderstand what branding is? For example, some people I meet think the brand is, is the logo.

Speaker 2 ([18:27](#)):

I think that's definitely part of the problem, Peter. When I speak to startups on a daily basis, the first thing they say is, oh, I need a local that's their focus for their website? So they'll get a logo, they'll throw it up. They wouldn't think deeper than that, but it's really important that you do because your brand is the fundamental foundations that your business stands on. And that doesn't just come down to the logo, the colors that comes down to your values, you know, who your target customer is, what language you want to use and having all of that stuff really well-defined means it will be so much easier for your ideal customer to find you and to relate to you.

Speaker 1 ([19:07](#)):

Well, a great quote. I like is products are built in the factory. Brands are built in our customers' minds. Vics. Does this resonate with your experience working with startups?

Speaker 2 ([19:19](#)):

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I've not heard that quote before Peter, but I have to say, I think that's very true. I think anyone can really sub-product. We can have two products safe to say that completely the same identical, but what's going to define them in the market as the brand that goes behind them. That could be the difference between paying 10 pounds for that product or paying 50 pounds for that product. People buy into brands. And that's why it's so important to establish the brand foundation right at the start.

Speaker 1 ([19:49](#)):

Yeah. Agreed and Vics. You mentioned the importance of community and research earlier on should startups work to continually get customer feedback from their community so they can make informed decisions about how they position and promote their brand?

Speaker 2 ([20:03](#)):

I agree with that Peter. I think community is essential to building a brand and having a successful business. And this is why niche actually is really important. And niche is something that a lot of startups shy away from because they're scared that if they drill down into a specific type of customer base, that they're going to lose sales from other places. But if you think about it in a logical way, developing a niche around your brand and your DNA means that you will have so much clarity that that specific customer type will be unable to say no to your product or service, because it will relate so precisely to their needs and wants.

Speaker 1 ([20:46](#)):

Now you've highlighted three key areas where startups waste money and time, Victoria. You made it clear to many businesses, focus on building a product rather than finding a market problem that needs to be solved. Thus creating product market fit. You also said people are too easily seduced by expensive, sexy marketing. And as a result, spend money unwisely. And finally you highlighted how people get their brand and branding wrong. If I may, I'd like to offer up a fourth issue. To what extent do you think startups go wrong when it comes to social media Vics?

Speaker 2 ([21:22](#)):

So what I've found from my experience is startups get paralyzed right at the start of social media because they think that everything needs to be perfect from the get-go. One of my favorite activities to do Peter is to go to a brand that you love, to scroll right down into the book, through the Instagram feed, that might take you a minute or two, and to look at the first 10 posts that, that brand on Instagram that reveals to every person that's done this, that everyone starts from zero and everyone starts not really knowing exactly what they're doing. The most important thing when it comes to social media is to start and to not look for perfection, to just get going, because you're not going to build your audience or generate sales without starting.

Speaker 1 ([22:10](#)):

That's great. So Victoria, by all means reference your own businesses when answering this question, but how would you suggest startups go about getting their social media right?

Speaker 2 ([22:21](#)):

So when I speak to startups, when it comes to getting your marketing, right, I suggest you pick a couple of channels, but not channels that you like, channels that your customer users and your customer likes. That might mean you have to learn a new marketing channel. You know, it might be your customer hangs

around on Tik Tok. Learn Tik Tok. Don't shy away from it, as you do and understand it, do that work first, understand the platforms that are going to bring the best value for your customer and are going to ultimately generate sales for your business. For me, for my last business Boob Bling, that was Instagram. And there's some really good practical tips that I can share regarding Instagram that are free. And just take time.

Speaker 1 ([23:05](#)):

This is gold dust. Please do share some low cost top tips that have a proven track record.

Speaker 2 ([23:12](#)):

So when it comes to Instagram, one of the first things that I always tell people to do is every time you get a new follower, leave them a voice note. I did this for the first six months of Boob Bling and the engagement was incredible. A voice note costs nothing, maybe 20 seconds of your time. It can be a little terrifying at first, but I used to go on a dog walk. I would look at all the new followers that had people following me. I'd click on the message icon. I'd put my thumb down on the voice called and I just say, hi, it's Viks from Boob Bling. Thanks so much for following me. As an independent business. I really do appreciate it. And I'd add their name in there as well. If I could on a dog walk, I'd maybe do that a hundred times, but the engagement I would get back was incredible.

Speaker 1 ([24:02](#)):

Love the precise words you are using in that free to share voice message. So how long would a typical dog walk last Viks?

Speaker 2 ([24:11](#)):

A typical dog walk would last about an hour?

Speaker 1 ([24:14](#)):

And, and out of interest, why do you think people respond better to voice messages?

Speaker 3 ([24:19](#)):

Voice messages on Instagram are so powerful because people don't expect it. They interact and engage with brands all day on Instagram, but they never hear anyone's voice. It feels like such a personal experience to receive a voice note from someone on Instagram, especially a brand. And that's just such a small differentiator between you and a competitor. The customer will always remember that you made the effort to do that.

Speaker 1 ([24:45](#)):

Victoria, this is intriguing. And you mentioned the word unexpected, which I am definitely going to come back to later when I share my recommended episode read, but staying with this theme, this thread, do you have any other top tips you can recommend to startups when using social media?

Speaker 2 ([25:03](#)):

So another top tip, I always recommend for your startups is Facebook groups. And Facebook groups are really useful at the validation stage and also at the sales stage. So you can search for Facebook groups.

You'll find a group for absolutely every topic and niche in the world. Simply request to join. And then use that as a platform to try and either test and validate your idea or to get sales. There's a couple of gorilla ways to do it as well. A lot of groups you can't sell on directly, so you could get a friend to go on and post a picture of your product or service and just review it and say, oh my God, I bought this from blah, blah, blah. It's amazing. This is what it does. Facebook groups are just such an easy way to find a large portion of your niche audience in one place. And I think they're really undertreated as a region, as a resource.

Speaker 1 ([25:58](#)):

Great Vics. You clearly enjoy using different channels in unusual ways. Moving on from social media. Can you share any other low cost uncommon and surprising channels to reach prospects and clients?

Speaker 2 ([26:10](#)):

Peter? One of the most underrated marketing channels, especially for business to business marketing is post. Snail mail. As I used to, as I, as I call it, you know, actually physically to someone doesn't that seem so old school now. But one thing I like to do, what I'm doing for one of my current businesses is I've got some nice cards printed with my brand and my logo one. I write a personal message to the person that I'm targeting. I post it to them. And it's amazing. The engagement that you get back via this is via LinkedIn. Generally I get the engagement back, they'll repost the thing that I've sent them. And it's quite incredible. I think it's such an underrated method for marketing because people just don't receive post anymore. It makes it even more impactful and powerful when they receive something through the mail,

Speaker 1 ([27:07](#)):

It's applied common sense when you stop to think about it. But snail mail is both personal and surprising.

Speaker 2 ([27:16](#)):

That's right. Peter, if you think about email marketing, for example, how many emails do we get a day? How difficult is it to get someone's attention with email marketing? However, how many lovely cards do you get a day? Probably not one, but you probably get 50 emails. So the ratio of success with sending a physical card for the post and the impact it can have is going to be a little higher, generally speaking than email marketing.

Speaker 1 ([27:45](#)):

And Victoria, can you say anything about how messages are best conveyed when using social media, snail mail or any other channel for that matter?

Speaker 2 ([27:54](#)):

Yes, Peter, I, I'm a fan of Gary Vaynerchuk and I really like his mantra, which is give, give, give and ask. Another way of looking at that is give 51% and ask 49%. So when it comes to physical mail or email, my approach is always flattery. I will always compliment and flatter the subject that I'm emailing with some personal information about, wow, I'm so impressed with this thing that you did or that thing you did. And I will always do that before I go in for any ask, because then automatically you've got that person that client bought in. They've enjoyed the feedback you've given them. They're flattered. They have seen that you've taken the time to understand or acknowledge what they've done. And then you're asking for something after that. So it's never, when you're selling, it's never going in with the cold sell, it's always warming your

subjects are making sure that you're acknowledging and flattering them and making them feel warm and fuzzy inside.

Speaker 1 ([28:59](#)):

I'm sure it's important not to come over as insincere, but what you are emphasizing is the importance of thinking carefully about the person receiving the message.

Speaker 2 ([29:10](#)):

Yes. Thank carefully about the person you're communicating with make it personal. I think it's really important to make it personal and build a relationship, not just to the cold sell your product or service.

Speaker 1 ([29:27](#)):

Whilst all her marketing tips are low or no cost. Victoria has demonstrated the importance of difference using surprise and always retaining customer focus. Hopefully this all makes sense, but when it comes to working everything through in practice consistently, you need to form a marketing strategy and have a plan that can be implemented over time. For many startups, the idea of writing a strategy and plan can be daunting, and you may feel the need to hire a consultant and expense that goes completely against the grain of this episode's title. So here's a zero cost solution. I've used for many years by addressing these four questions, you will be able to frame and write your own business marketing strategy and plan with much greater simplicity, clarity, and confidence. So, number one, where has your business come from. Two. Where is your business now? Three, where is your business going? And finally, four, how are you going to get there? I suggest you write these four questions down and over a couple of weeks, think scribble and formulate your ideas by answering the fourth question in appropriate detail, you will create your own plan and your plan must reference time costs and show how your various marketing tactics interact. When you start the work, you may feel overwhelmed by the scale of the task you have set yourself. But the importance is to start and to do a little every day. If you read Steve Jobs, biography by Walter Isaacson or Shoedog by Nike's founder, Phil Knight, you will quickly discover the world's greatest entrepreneurs started in exactly the same place as you. So far with Victoria's help. We have considered what wastes money and time and how best to use marketing resources efficiently and effectively. So with Victoria's help, let's move on to the next part of this podcast. Even early stage business have money in the bank. How does it get best bang for its marketing buck?

Speaker 2 ([31:44](#)):

So if a startup has some investment behind them, once, once again, they understand their customer because fundamentally that's the most important mechanism when it comes to where you're going to spend your marketing dollars. Generally Facebook ads, Google ads are an interesting and successful platform. As long as you either invest the time in learning how to use them, or you find an expert who can, because otherwise you're just pouring your money down the sink, PR as well, can be really useful for startups depending on the industry once again, but just to get word of mouth and your name out there. And I touched on video earlier as well and the right hands with the right strategy behind it. Video is such a powerful content creation tool, putting a little bit of thought about into it, what your customer would like to see, you know, what's going to make people watch it. So those are the three areas I would probably spend money on if I had some as a startup, but the caveat really there is if that's where your customer would want you to spend the money.

Speaker 1 ([32:49](#)):

Now I agree with Victoria about videos. The SimVenture team now uses video extensively. These free in-house resources, underpin so much of what we create, but going back to the issue of consistency, always remember that all aspects of any film you make have to be good quality. Don't put out a video that has great imagery and script, but awful sound. Everything has to be consistently good. Otherwise you are in danger of turning off your target customer. Now, back in episode five, you heard Chris Titley talk about creating and managing a website that attracts large numbers of people being a key element of any startups marketing. I wanted to ask Victoria, what features she felt underpinned an excellent website.

Speaker 2 ([33:37](#)):

So from my experience, so developing websites, you have to have a really strong call to action to make sure your website is going to work to make sure that people are going to understand what you're doing. Visuals, the photography spend some time or invest a little bit of money on getting some really great photography. I think when it comes to websites, put yourself in your customer's shoes or think about the websites that you like and why you like them. And then try to replicate that some way on your own site. Would you go on a site that had really badly lit photos? Would you buy something with a bad description? Whatever you would not do, make sure that your website doesn't do it either.

Speaker 1 ([34:23](#)):

You mentioned call to action. For anyone new to this phrase Vics, can you say what it means?

Speaker 3 ([34:28](#)):

So a call to action is a key phrase that you would use throughout your brand on your website or on your social media channel that draws people in to buy your product or service. It's the key phrase that makes people say, ah, that product or service is for me.

Speaker 1 ([34:46](#)):

Thank you. Now, when the marketing is all working well, what is the impact on the, on the business?

Speaker 3 ([34:53](#)):

So when a startup gets the marketing, right, the fundamental impact is sales, and that's what we're all aiming for. I think it's so apparent when you see a startup, that's getting it right. Not just from sales, but from the bars, from the engagement on their social media channels and from their growth.

Speaker 1 ([35:13](#)):

Out of interest. For me, Vics, when the marketing is wrong, it's like pushing a rock up hill yet when it's right. It's like guiding a rock down the hill. Does that ring true for you?

Speaker 2 ([35:24](#)):

I think that's a great statement. PR. I think if you're, if you feel like you're trying to push a rock up a hill, then that's a really good sign that something isn't quite right. And that might mean that you need to go back and visit your target audience, product market fit, or just your marketing message or the channels that you're using. You know, use those kinds of feelings as a guide. Because fundamentally, if you are feeling that way, then something's not quite right for your customer. They're not getting it yet. And fundamentally they have to get it.

Speaker 1 ([35:56](#)):

Now you mentioned the word guide there Vics. Before we close, I want to ask you about this role entrepreneurs often don't see or accept their marketing problems, even if they are staring them in the face, in your opinion for startups, how important is it to have an advisor or mentor someone who can act as their speaking mirror?

Speaker 2 ([36:16](#)):

So I think it's really, really, really important to have either a peer group or a mentor of some kind to help guide you through the process. I think mentors are great, but you can tick and leave their advice. Please remember that just because they say something doesn't mean you have to take onboard, you have to think about what's right for you and your brand. I think more important than a mentor is having peer support. So startups can be a lonely journey. There's a lot of stress that can be a lot of angst and having a group of maybe three or four people who are at the same stage as you going through the same thing is transformational to your journey. It's just incredible. So I would always recommend that you develop some kind of peer support.

Speaker 1 ([37:05](#)):

Thank you, Vics. Now, is there one final marketing tip you'd like to share?

Speaker 2 ([37:11](#)):

So before I go, I think there's another really useful Instagram hack or tip that I could, I could share with, with everyone that's listening. When you are kind of at the start of your journey with Instagram, look at where your competitors are. You can click on their followers and you can start following their followers. The great thing about that is they're already an engaged audience of people who are looking at the same product or service that you offer. So it's so simple to follow them, to like their posts, to leave them a voice note and to try and build a relationship with them. So you can piggyback off the success of the followership of your competitors. And I think that's something that people don't do, but it's free and can be done relatively quickly,

Speaker 1 ([37:59](#)):

Really helpful. And again, free to apply. And just before we say our goodbyes, are there any marketing resources, free resources that you'd like to recommend?

Speaker 2 ([38:11](#)):

Yes. Loads of resources. I used to be really big on reading books. But recently I just love to listen to podcasts. My favorite podcast is how I built this by Guy Raz and he interviews successful entrepreneurs of various different levels and takes you through the journey from the very inception point of their business, to where they are now usually selling for multimillion dollar multi-million dollars. So that's a really interesting one and you get to see the roller coaster through that podcast. So it's really worthwhile listening to that. If you're and to start, ups are interested in startups. The other one is The Future by Chris Do. Chris Do specializes in freelance, but the content and information on that podcast is incredible in terms of, you know, branding, how to charge, product market fit, et cetera. I really love all of his YouTube and his his podcast stuff. And another great one is not so much just business related, but just really good in terms of failure because that's something that a lot of startups struggle with. And that's a podcast called How to Fail

by Elizabeth Day. And she takes you through the journey of failures that her guests have had and how they've impacted or shaped their lives. So those are the three podcasts I really enjoy less than two. Brilliant.

Speaker 1 ([39:36](#)):

Now your suggestions completely fit with the ethos of this podcast series and this episode, and of course, listeners will be aware that Elizabeth Day was also referenced in episode five. It's been great having you on the show, Victoria, but sadly we have to leave it there. Thank you so much for being my expert guest on the startup survival podcast.

Speaker 2 ([39:59](#)):

Peter it has been a pleasure. I could talk to you all day on this subject. So thank you for having me for this hour.

Speaker 1 ([40:08](#)):

Well, there you have it. My hope is that having invested time with Victoria Bradley, you will save your business noticeable amounts of money and time going forward. And in addition to the resources that have been mentioned, let me now share my recommended read for this episode. Avid listeners will know I referenced this book in series one, but because it's so good and relevant to what Vic's discussed, I'm highlighting it again to build on Victoria's marketing recommendations, go and buy *Made to Stick* by Chip and Dan Heath. As well as using the art of surprise, you will learn the secrets about how to convey information to customers so they remember what you say and want to get back to you.

Speaker 1 ([41:00](#)):

Hopefully this get better go further podcast has opened your mind as to how you can make more informed and insightful marketing decisions. But before closing the door on this episode and looking ahead to the next show, let me recognize our expert guest Victoria. I am so grateful to you for sharing your insight and understanding. Doubtless, many startups will be taking advantage of your ideas, tips, and advice. And thank you to, to Duncan and Chris for your research. And one more well-deserved grateful nod to the music sponsors Seajam Moths. Finally, without the support of LJ at the London School of Economics, as well as the SimVenture team who allow me time out to do this, this podcast would not be possible. In the next episode to be published on Thursday, the 17th of June, I'll be examining why, what you sell is not what people buy. If selling or making sales is proving problematic, the next episode with a seasoned sales professional and trainer is not one to miss. Until then, your podcast feedback is not just welcomed it's needed. Share what you really like. And let me know the truth about what needs to be improved. And of course, whatever you're listening channel of preference, please remember to rate, review and subscribe. Until next time. My name's Peter Harrington, and this has been your startup survival go well, stay safe and thank you.