

# User Generated Content Playbook with Guest Lorraine Ball

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

user generated content, marketing credibility, social media reviews, business growth, customer engagement, contest ideas, email marketing, customer service, negative reviews, marketing strategies, video editing, AI tools, customer feedback, marketing mistakes, marketing tools

## SPEAKERS

Lorraine Ball, Monica Pitts

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Lorraine Ball 00:04

If you invite other people to create content, it helps amplify your message. It has way more credibility than you standing in a corner beating your chest saying, I'm great. All you need is one review saying you're the smartest person in the room and you got way more credibility. So that's really what user generated content is. It's It's reviews, it's posts on social media, it's all sorts of things that you can use to establish credibility and authenticity based on the words of others.



Monica Pitts 00:48

You're on a mission, and you just need more people to know about it. And whether you're brand new to marketing or a seasoned pro, we are all looking for answers to make marketing decisions with purpose. I'm Monica Pitts, a techie, crafty business owner, mom and aerial dancer who solves communication challenges through technology. This podcast is all about digging in and going digital. I'll share my marketing know how and business experience from almost 20 years of misadventures. I'll be your backup dancer so you can stop doubting and get moving towards marketing with purpose. This episode is sponsored by mayecreate design. Yeah, that's right. We sponsor ourselves and brought to you with love by our Marketing on a Shoestring mini course. Now our free beginners mini course is all about marketing on a budget. And contrary to popular opinion, you don't have to spend a million dollars or do something that you hate to market your business. Get ready to challenge traditional marketing assumptions, because this 101, mini course is designed to give you a rock solid foundation so you can make the right decisions for you with total confidence, you can check it out at you mayecreate.com that's Y, o, u, M, a, y, E, C, R, E, A, T, e.com, and the link, of course, will be in the show notes. Okay, now back to business. Hello again, and welcome back to marketing with purpose. I'm your host, Monica Pitts, and today we're talking about marketing. Yes, I'm sure you're super surprised about that. Actually, we're going to talk about user generated content in our marketing, which is pretty fun, because that is content that you don't actually have to create

yourself. But that doesn't mean that it magically appears it's something that we have to work towards as marketers and with me today to tell us just how to do it. I have expert and guest Lorraine Ball, an entrepreneur, author and professional speaker with 40 plus years of marketing experience and 14 years of podcasting under her belt. You've been podcasting since before podcasting was

**L** Lorraine Ball 02:58

cool. I've done a lot of things since before they were cool.

**M** Monica Pitts 03:03

That's awesome. Okay, so I really want to hear your story, but before we go there, I really want to address the elephant in the room, which is user generated content. So tell me what it is, and why the heck would anybody even do it? So

**L** Lorraine Ball 03:18

I love that question, because when you think about starting a business, let's jump big picture. One of the best ways to grow your business is with other people's money, with loans from banks and investments, and you use that money to grow your business. Well, when you're trying to grow your marketing, the same strategy applies other people's content. Now I'm not suggesting that, yes, scrape crap off the internet and steal stuff, but if you invite other people to create content, it helps amplify your message. It has way more credibility than you standing in a corner beating your chest saying, I'm great. All you need is one review, saying you're the smartest person in the room, and you got way more credibility. So that's really what user generated content is. It's It's reviews, it's posts on social media, it's all sorts of things that you can use to establish credibility and authenticity based on the words of others

**M** Monica Pitts 04:30

well, and then you don't have to sound like you're bragging, because they're doing it for you. Mm, hmm, yes, I just spent, I just spent, like, 30 minutes the other day, my brother sent me this link to a vacuum cleaner slash pet groomer. Okay? And he's like, you've got to try this. And I thought, I have no idea how this is going to work. So I'm on Amazon watching user generated content people literally grooming their pets with this vacuum. And I was fixated. I'm like. I'm buying one. I'm totally buying one

**L** Lorraine Ball 05:04

because you identified with the people you you recognize that they were real, that they were legitimate. When I travel, and that's one of the things I love doing right now. And we end up somewhere in the world we've never been and I'm trying to figure out where we're going for dinner. I'm reading reviews on Yelp or hotels.com or TripAdvisor, and sometimes the reviews

are a little too perfect, and you skip over those, but then you get those reviews that you're like, I know that a real person wrote this and they made this place sound amazing, and so I'm gonna go there and it works and you believe it,

**M** Monica Pitts 05:47

it 100% does. So now that we know what user generated content is, I wanna hear a little bit about your journey. I mean podcasting transitions into your marketing career. Tell us a little bit about your backstory. How'd you get where you are today?

**L** Lorraine Ball 06:05

Wow, so I'm gonna give you the very short version, because it's been a lot of steps along the way. I started out as a teacher that is my undergrads in education, and figured out very quickly that I really didn't want to be around that many children all that time. So I was in sales roles. I was in marketing roles. I spent the first half my career in corporate America, and I would recommend that anybody try it for a while. I don't necessarily advocate that you spend your whole life there, but I learned a lot. Had some really cool assignments, and one day, woke up and said, You know what, I really don't fit. I really don't fit. And I was always doing entrepreneurial projects while I was in corporate. I'm going to go do my own thing. I started what was, at the time, a traditional marketing agency. We did postcards and direct mail and radio and television commercials. And one day I discovered email, and thought, wow, my small business clients could really use this. And then there was social media, which did not exist when we started the business, 19 years later, when I sold the company three quarters of our revenue was coming from things that had not existed when we started. We were a digital agency, and the podcast started as a my intern walked into my office and said, you know, Lorraine, you you like to talk? And I went, Yeah, actually, I do. He says, you'd be great at a podcast. And I'm like, it's a podcast. He says, Well, it's kind of like internet radio. And I went, let's give it a shot. So we started, and there were lots of bumps along the way. There were some really strange episodes. But I really like it. It's fun. It's a fabulous way to meet people. It's a great way to learn what's new. What are different people doing? And so we, I just released Episode 1000 Whoa. And I I think I'm gonna keep doing it for a little while. So these days, I have the podcast, I still do a little bit of consulting work, and I teach, and that kind of came full circle, you know, to kind of where I started, and I'm really enjoying it, and that's kind of how I got here.

**M** Monica Pitts 08:47

I feel like educators make good marketers, though we actually one of our favorite things to do at mayecreate is hire teachers who don't want to be in the public school system anymore and make their lives easier. I have three on my payroll right now, and they are incredible. And I am like, Thank you, but not thank you, because my kids are part of the public school system, so meh, but yes,

**L** Lorraine Ball 09:12

you know. So I think the thing with teachers is that their primary objective is to break down

you know. So I think the thing with teachers is that their primary objective is to break down complex ideas into manageable bites. And as a marketer, that is such a critical skill being able to take this and serve it up in little pieces so that customers get it

**M** Monica Pitts 09:40

well. And how many classes did you like, because I have a minor and education, how many classes did you sit through that were like? You really have to think about your audience. You really have to think about what they know and what they don't know, and how they're going to hear this information so that they'll remember it. And is that not marketing?

**L** Lorraine Ball 09:58

You know it is. And I think. That's why, when I went back to school, it all felt very familiar. It all made sense to me.

**M** Monica Pitts 10:08

Awesome. So, okay, so you're, you had a digital agency. Now, coming back to this topic of user generated content, I really feel like when people think about user generated content at this point in time, they think, Oh, I'm going to convince my audience to make a post on social media. But I feel like it's more than that after speaking with you. So can you give us some examples of, like, ideal user generated content?

**L** Lorraine Ball 10:35

So the first thing, and the first thing is, you do have to ask people, but you have to kind of give them some guidelines. So some of the some of the best ways to do it is maybe create a contest with specific rules. You You know, we want this kind of picture, or we want this kind of picture. One of my favorite ones was an optometrist. He had a goal. He wanted to introduce his pediatric practice, and so we had a contest share a photograph of your kid wearing glasses to be entered to win a ride on a Zamboni machine. Now, every kid wants to ride around the ice on a Zamboni machine. What parent is not going to take a picture of their kid. So that was part one, and we got, you know, 150 pictures, and he was disappointed. He's like, I can't run. I mean, I can't build a business. And I'm like, no, wait, here's the other piece of it. We're going to invite people to vote, but in order to vote, you have to give us your email address, and we picked up probably four or 5000 email addresses, because what mom is not going to reach out to every Friend, every family member, to vote for the kid, we had two things that we two feels you had to give us your email address and your zip code. Why? Because grandma lives in another state. They're not a good target for him. So we immediately separated out. So having a contest with a great prize was one way to do it, but the truth is, you don't have to have a great prize. Sometimes people forget that social media is just about ego, that the best thing you can do is acknowledge me. I don't know if Jimmy Fallon does it anymore, but for years, he would throw out a question on Twitter and get hundreds and hundreds of responses, and then he might read two or three on the air. So why did people do it for the chance that Jimmy Fallon might read their story? So the prize can be big, the prize can be small, but contests are a great way, one way to to do it, something that we just did recently, and this was really fun. I was at

pop con, which is a pop culture conference, kind of like Comic Con or Gen Con, but specifically a local event, and you have 1000s of people walking up and down the halls dressed like hobbits and do trolls and princesses. And I would go up to them and I'd ask them, you know, Can I Can I take a picture? Can I ask a few questions. And so I was, I was creating content, but then the last thing I did before I walked away is I would be like, Would you like me to take a picture of you with your camera? And all of a sudden these people like, Oh my God, all I have is a crappy selfie of me in this great costume. Yes, thank you. And you know what the next. They shared it on social media, and they I told them the hashtag to use. So part of the game is finding creative ways to get people to do it and and getting them excited about it and sharing it, I think is, is really critical

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Monica Pitts 14:33

so for testimonials and reviews, because those are other types of user generated content. Do you have any suggestions for motivating folks to do those, because people are always like, Yeah, but I don't really know how to do that, and I would love to. I'd love your advice on that. So

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Lorraine Ball 14:51

we did several things. Part of it is getting into the habit of always, always asking. We. Had we did a lot of work for home service companies when I was running the agency that was plumbers and roofers and HVAC contractors, and so after every project, we would send an email that said, thank you so much for trusting us. If you have any questions, here's the name of our customer service person. If you have any technical questions, here's you know this person to talk to, and please take a moment and leave us a review. Now we didn't just say leave a review and leave it up to them. We embedded links in the emails that we sent. We divided people into two groups. If we had a Gmail address, they got on list A and we sent them right to the Google My Business page. But if they didn't, we couldn't guarantee that they they were a Google user. We didn't want to send them to a page where they couldn't leave a review. So we would alternate our Facebook page or the Yelp or some other review site, so it was right there. It was right in that email. And the trick was it, you know, that email would get there in three to five days. Well, the other thing is, I could also see who clicked the advantage to using one of our email tools students, I could see who clicked on it, and then I could go and speak. Did they not write a review or not? If it was a really big project, I could have my customer service person hop on the telephone real quick and say, Hey, I don't know if you saw that note, but your review would mean so much. Can I send you, or can I send you a sample of what other people say about us? And that's always really helpful. You have this next strategy you have to use cautiously, because if you overuse it, it will burn you. You can offer to give people depending on the size of your project. Hey, if you write us a review, we'll send you a \$5 Starbucks gift card. But if you send too many of them, and too many people respond, Google gets wise, and they won't show all the reviews. So use that sparingly. The other thing I saw this with a hotel, and I thought it was brilliant. We checked in, and when we were checking in, the hotel said, Hey, we're relatively new, and we really need reviews. And, oh, by the way, here's a complimentary glass of champagne.

M

Monica Pitts 17:42

Yeah, you know, drink the champagne and leave a review, please. And

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Lorraine Ball 17:46

there was a QR code right there. And that's, you know, again, at the point of service. How do you how do you get people to do it? For a long time, I poo poed QR codes, but because you needed a separate app to read them. Now, you can just do it with your phone, everybody's QR coding restaurant menus now, so we know how to use them. Put them everywhere. Put them on the bottom of the invoice. Put it right near the cash register. Put it if you are a hotel you know, put put it in, in the bathroom, wherever. But if you're going to do that, you better be sure you're doing a good job. And the other thing is that, and equally important is, is the whole How do you respond, and when someone is unhappy, you know, do you acknowledge and then invite them offline for a conversation? And that's a whole, you know, a whole different class, but I think that's really important. But, you know, people wonder. I think sometimes, is it worth it? Is it, you know, this sounds like a lot of trouble, but user generated content gives you an authenticity that you just can't fake. I think I told the story a lot, but the movie The fault, The Fault in Our Stars, it was, it's the story about a teenage girl who is who is ill, but it's very much about kind of what's going on in her mind and her emotions. And the promo for the video, they had this idea, well, we'll sort of make it look like a teenage girl's bulletin board. And if you've been a teenage girl, you know what your bulletin board looked like. There were sketches and magazine clips and pictures, and there is no way that a 30 year old male Hollywood producer could fake that. And so what they did is they invited girls who loved the book and told them this movie was kind. Coming out and ask them to send in, you know, things that should be on their wall. And when you look at the video that they created and you see the camera pan over each and every image, you're like, yeah, that's real. That's totally real.

M

Monica Pitts 20:21

I had those magazine clippings all over my walls, all over them, anything that made me feel something I put on my walls, and I'm still equally as crazy and just put all kinds of stuff on my walls. Obviously, you can see behind me that my latest interest is lights. Yeah, I'm an interior illumination specialist. Now i i love to put up lights everywhere, hey, but I read the reviews before I bought those lights. Absolutely, so absolutely like that too. You know, now some of my clients are like, they don't want to do the reviews because they don't know what to do with the bad ones. And we interviewed a Google Business Profile specialist recently on the podcast, and she was saying, you know, when the bad ones are up there, they're just up there, you're not going to get them taken down. So I do feel like it's a real thing, but I also tell them, you do great business. So I don't know what we're freaking out about here, right? Like, if you like, if you sucked, you wouldn't still be in business. So what do you do about the bad ones? What do you do? Well, there's

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Lorraine Ball 21:29

two things. Number one, everybody makes mistakes, everybody has an off day. And people who read reviews know that, okay, they had an off day. What they're looking at is not, you know, because there's the wackadoodles that are just like crazy. Ignore them, you know, do not engage whatever. But the people who have a legitimate, you know, they had a bad experience, what the average customer is looking for is, how did you handle it? And so acknowledge you

don't have to admit that you were wrong, because maybe you weren't, but acknowledge it and provide a way for that person to continue the conversation. And the example I give is imagine that somebody comes into your place of business and they're screaming, they're just screaming, your first instinct is going to be to say, I'm sorry you're upset. Let's go sit in my office and we can talk about it. You take them off, you know, out of the main area, you go somewhere, and you close the door, and then you have a conversation. What everybody around has witnessed is you are compassionate, you are empathetic, and you address the issue. So how do you do that online? I'm sorry that you were disappointed. I'm sorry that we didn't meet your expectations. Here, I'm going to send you a DM and with my phone number, and please call me. Let's talk about it. You know, give us a chance to work through this. You do not solve the problem publicly. You do not defend publicly, because you get into this spiral. You simply acknowledge, take the conversation offline. What everybody else sees is wow. You know, there's 10 reviews. Nine are good. One is crappy. I have a one in 10 chance of having a crappy experience, right? But if I do have a crappy experience, I have 100% chance that they'll take care of me. There's this old study the federal government did it back in 1992 the tarp study, they looked at customers attitudes towards product and services after they had a problem. So everybody rates you about a six. You're doing fine. You're a six, they have a problem, you shift down to a two. But if you solve the problem within reasonable time, in different businesses differently, but usually 2448 hours, you actually jump up in their esteem to an eight. So you actually, if you have a problem and you solve it, and you solve it well, people will actually think high, higher of you than if they never had a problem at all. Now I'm not advocating don't go out and screw stuff up just to fix it, but, but it is that whole if you solve it, you you can be the hero, and so I would not be afraid of it. The other thing is that if somebody is angry, if you've screwed up, and you don't let them leave a review where you know, where people will see it, they'll find a place to put it, and they may put it somewhere where you have no recourse. So the. Very like Google, like Google or or their website or their Facebook page.

**M** Monica Pitts 25:06

So oh yeah, that's bad too, yeah.

**L** Lorraine Ball 25:08

So let them put it on Google and treat the feedback as a gift. I'm sorry you were disappointed. Take care of them and then ask yourself the hard question, did you really screw up? Did you make a mistake? Or is that person being overly sensitive, whatever, and if they're really just trolling, if they're just a horror I mean, when you're in the service business, you are going to have wackadoodles that comes with the territory. You're going to have that customer that nobody can please, and when they put up a review, this is where you need your loyal friends and followers. Hey, look, I've got this negative review. Will you do me a favor? Put up a positive comment, put up a review and help me drive it down.

**M** Monica Pitts 26:06

I think that's actually a very motivating thing to do with your friends and followers. Like, it's like, whenever you fail at something and you post about it and you're like, Whoa. This sucked. This was not the way I thought it was gonna go and people come out of the woodwork saying

they had the same challenge, but you're still awesome. And you know, don't give up, because we love you. I think that that is actually a great way to manage it too. I'm because then all those other people are gonna come out and finally give you the review that they've been meaning to give you forever. They just haven't done it yet, absolutely,

**L** Lorraine Ball 26:41

and you can't again. You can't overuse it, but building that community, creating those relationships, so that when you need them,

**M** Monica Pitts 26:53

yeah, that they're there for you, that they're there

**L** Lorraine Ball 26:56

for you, absolutely.

**M** Monica Pitts 27:00

So two questions that I love to ask marketers, actually, there's three that I love to ask marketers, so I'm gonna, I'm gonna end with those today. Okay, number one is, what is the biggest mistake that you see people making in their marketing today?

**L** Lorraine Ball 27:19

Okay? This is my new this is my new pet peeve, the word Okay, the word and let me explain, we serve small and mid sized businesses. We serve this and that no pick one, pick one, because the needs of those two customers, even though you think, well, they all need a website, yes, but what a small business needs and what a mid sized business needs are different. You cannot create marketing messages for audiences that include the word and

**M** Monica Pitts 27:59

I think that you can have a page dedicated each one of them on your website and have the specific conversation with them that you need to have with them, but I do not like the ending either. We have multiple landing pages, even though I could have said the exact same thing on the nonprofit landing page as on the small business landing page, I did not, because they don't view things through the same lens that they see it differently. Even though their price point is the same and the product is similar, they see it. They see it differently, but

**L** Lorraine Ball 28:30

the questions that they have and the things that what's their top priorities are going to be different. You can sell the same product to multiple people, but you can't create one marketing message that will resonate across the end spectrum.

**M** Monica Pitts 28:50

Love it. I love it. I 100% agree, even, even when I'm watching a commercial and I have no idea what they're doing or why they did it, I think to myself, now that was good marketing. You know why? Because I didn't get it. So that meant they were marketing to someone else. Thank you people for taking the risk. Okay, so what is the one marketing strategy that you can't do without, like, the best investment of your time and money to, like, move the needle for your business.

**L** Lorraine Ball 29:27

I think right now, investing time and effort in discovering the questions and using not just your customer service team or your salespeople, but also using Google to help uncover the questions and really, really investing in answering those questions and answering them over and over and over again, answering them on your website, answering them with video, with podcasts, with social media. You. You can let a lot of other things go, but if you don't learn how to answer the questions, you ain't gonna sell anything. Well,

**M** Monica Pitts 30:08

that's 100% true. We used to make note cards before Stacey and I would go out to conventions or even networking events and like, practice our note cards to make sure that we had the answer down, and we could say it concisely. I I agree with that. And you know, I actually use chat GPT to do initial research on that, because if I can read and be like, chat GPT, if people are worried about user generated content, what are some of the questions they would have? And then I read it, and I'm like, oh, yeah, yeah, but I have that question, you know what I mean. And then there's other ones where I'm like, oh, chat GPT, you're so superfluous. Go on, yeah, but i That's why chat GPT isn't my boyfriend and GT metrics is, but yes,

**L** Lorraine Ball 30:56

a frat boy. Have you ever written like it? Like if you ask social media or you ask it to write stuff, what comes back, if you don't coach it, it sounds like it was written by a college frat boy. Yeah. No, no, no, like that, no. It

**M** Monica Pitts 31:16

keeps using words over and over again that it thinks is in my voice, and I'm like, you cannot use these words. Stop it. Stuff like, I did not say those words. Okay, so, speaking of marketing tools, because chat GBT is a marketing tool that I use. But like I said, GT metrics is my

boyfriend, which GT metrics tells you how your site loads. Okay, for those of you who don't know he's a he's a geek. He's the captain of like, the robotics club. That's why I love that guy. Yeah. Anyway, what is your favorite marketing tool?

**L** Lorraine Ball 31:50

My new favorite marketing tool, because I have they come and go. My new favorite is something called Opus Pro. It is okay, all right. Well, for those of you that tell me that don't know why we're both geeking out over it, you take a video and you give it to Opus Pro, and what comes back are clips with captions. And, you know, on a good day, it takes, you know, three to five minutes. Sometimes, if you do it in the middle of the day when everybody is trying to work on it. It might take a little bit longer, but you can take videos and turn them into 32nd one minute, two minute, whatever you need, shorts and right now, right now, this week, everybody, everybody, everybody is looking for shorts. Yes, tick tock is that's not where my customers are, but you My YouTube channel is blowing up because of my shorts. And LinkedIn has just introduced in their mobile version, essentially a reels feed. So no matter what business you're in, shooting video and turning it into those little, little snippets, is where it's at. And I love it. It's there is a free version I immediately upgraded. And even so, the paid version is not very expensive, and it's my new best friend.

**M** Monica Pitts 33:16

It is really fun. The only thing that I don't love about it is, as someone who does have to edit video, I get a little nit picky, and I'll be like, Oh, I gotta take that out. And then sometimes it does, like this weird bleep thing in the middle that doesn't make any sense. And so I do have to say that if you just take your video and it's not editing right a if you tell them, they will refund you. Hey, see, like you said, this is user generated content right here, they will refund you. And they've done that for me before. And then the other thing that I do a lot is I take that and I just upload it into Adobe rush, and then I can really quickly just suck like the crap out of it. And that sounded terrible. Suck the crap out of it.

**L** Lorraine Ball 34:05

I'm sitting here, and I'm nodding because I did not like the way Opus pro put my logo in weird places. And so I take the videos, I drop them into premier rush. I have a template already there, and it just does the the little it is the little extra. And I think that's a really good rule of thumb whenever you're using AI generated content, if you whether it's from chat, G, P, T or Opus Pro, if you want it to look unique and distinctive, take that extra step. Do that little extra so that your video doesn't look like everybody else's. Yeah, 100%

**M** Monica Pitts 34:49

I love it, even if it's just changing the color or the fonts of the words. I think it goes a long way. And I do like Opus. I do and sometimes I still gotta. To use my my rush to make things work. And Rush is great for that. It's not great for everything, but it's really, really great for that. Okay, so we have now learned all about user generated content. We've heard examples. We

know how to how to get people to do it, and we've even geeked out. So this is like a full fledged episode here, friends. So if people want to hang out with you, Lorraine, where can they find you? LinkedIn,

**L** Lorraine Ball 35:25

I'm on LinkedIn. That is, that's where I'm hanging out these days. I'm having fun. I'm having good conversations, and I'd love to talk to you

**M** Monica Pitts 35:34

and tell us your podcast again, more

**L** Lorraine Ball 35:37

than a few words, and you can find it wherever you listen to podcasts or at more than a few words.com

**M** Monica Pitts 35:44

and before I let you go, I want to give one more shout out to our mayecreate resource sponsor Marketing on a Shoestring. It is the free beginners mini course to marketing on a budget. It lays the foundation of creating the right messaging to connect with your potential customer and prime them to buy. It unlocks the four part framework for making confident, budget, conscious marketing decisions, so you can stop second guessing and get a clear path forward. And it outlines the highest converting tactics that I know of for new marketers, so you don't have to waste time on strategies that will never reach your goals, hop on over to you mayecreate.com for instant access. That's y, o, u, M, a, y, E, C, R, E, A, T, e.com, so thank you so much for joining me today. Make sure to subscribe wherever you're listening so you don't miss out on our next episode. And don't be afraid to use that link in the show notes to go over and enjoy the fully formatted blog post with all the pictures broken down, covering every single thing that we talked about today, because your next step is to put this information to action and until Next time, go forth and market with purpose. You