

S2: E174: A Roadmap to Ditch Social and Enjoy Easeful Growth

Tiffany: Hey there, and welcome back to the Make Your Message a Movement podcast. This is your host, Tiffany Neuman, and I'm here today with Sophia Parra. Sophia is a marketing strategist with a proven record for increasing a brand's following, engagement, and reach. Her clients have tripled attendance at their free events, gone from 800 followers to 50k followers, increased opportunities for podcasts, magazines, and even TV features, and one of her clients had a six-figure launch from her direct messages. She's the host of Marketing Unfiltered, where she and her guests share practical marketing tips coaches can implement without having a 17-person team and a million dollars in savings. Plus, she's the creator of an online membership, Pocket CMO, where she helps you cut content creation in half and design a unique-to-you marketing system that doesn't make you hate your business. So, if you've listened to me for any amount of time, you'll probably understand just by the introduction why I asked Sophia to be with us today. We were talking before the show started, and we just have so much in common and so many similar beliefs. So, Sophia, I'm so excited to have you on today.

Sophia: I am so excited to be here. I feel like we have been dancing around us having a podcast interview, whether it's on my show or your show, for so long. So it's happening, it's like a really good thing to finally be here.

Tiffany: Exactly. I always believe in the divine timing, right? So it's like there's a reason it's happening now. So I love that. So, one of the things that you talk about is how to grow without social. So I know like you are on Instagram, I am on LinkedIn, but both of us are not really loving social media. It's not like how we grow our business in a sense. So can you talk a little bit about what that means to you? And before you go into that, I just realized I forgot to ask you, like, how did you even become like the Pocket CMO and a marketing coach?

Sophia: Ooh, I love that. Um, okay, how did I become—good question. I don't freaking know. I like—I look back on my life and I'm like, how am I here, honestly? I don't mean that in a bad way. It's just so accidental. Do you know what I mean? I feel like I started out as an actor, you know, a TV actor. Um, yeah, and I was—I—I loved acting. I still look back on it and I'm like, oh, if someone just walked in and was just like, you have a role on a TV show, like one of the leads, I might drop everything and do it. But I hated the business of acting, right? I hated auditioning, I just hated everything that was required of being an actor outside of the actual acting on set. So I—I probably around the five-year mark kind of was like, oh, I think I'm done here. I also—um, this is kind of a long story, but I—my dad was really sick, he had cancer, and I just—I had this like—like I—I wanted to be there for him, but I was a broke, out-of-work actor. And I was like, I don't know like, you know, the stereotypical actor stories are true. It's really inconsistent to be

an actor, especially living in New York City when your rent is like a million dollars a month. So it's—it's just like—you—I—I had to like get something together, get money together to go be with my dad. And I had to just like kind of pull together a business that I was like, I just need this to live and work for 30 days so I can make some money, go see my dad, and then I'll come back and like continue my life as an actor. I apparently got the bug in that 30 days. Talk about divine timing—I actually made 10k that month. I don't think that's normal to make 10k your first month of a business, by the way. Um, I didn't make 10k the following month, so I like—I just had some lucky month, right? But I guess I needed the money and I—and it—it just happened divinely and I was able to go see my dad, be with him, and pay for my sister to come see him too. So I just—it just worked out. But it made me realize, wow, like there's a possibility here, like for a different kind of life. What happens if I actually focus on this? And so I did, and I never looked back. So that's kind of how it all started. And it started out in social media, which progressed into other forms of marketing, but I guess social media is where it started, which is funny talking about how much I really don't like it anymore.

Tiffany: I love that. Um, and I guess it's like divinely inspired too, like you said, that you made that money, probably because otherwise you would have just been like, oh, that didn't work, and then kept going, right? And so even though you loved it, it makes so much sense. So yeah, let's talk about the social media part. So you started in there, and I think too, like five, 10 years ago, whatever the timeframe was, you know, social media kind of was the thing. Like I started my business on Facebook, I was making a lot of money by posting on Facebook, and that was okay then, and so much has shifted. So yeah, what are your beliefs around that now?

Sophia: I just think—ah, I just think it's exhausting and it feel—to be honest, like I was actually speaking to someone last night about this. She's an extremely successful business owner, but she has this block in her inner head. She feels like she would be so much bigger if she was more consistent on her social media. She's like—feels like what's really holding her back is she's not consistent on social. And I'm like, I promise you that's not it. Like, I promise you. I understand why you feel that way because I think that there's that—that it—it's just what it looks like, right? We see a lot of these successful people who are talking about their success on social media, so we're just making the assumption that that's, you know, A plus B equals C. But there's a lot of things that go on behind the scenes that have nothing to do with social media and that isn't always communicated. So even people that are extremely successful, have been in business a long—a long time—and just by extremely successful, let me just give you some context here—this particular client, like, she made 80k in a month. Do you know what I mean? Like, I'm talking—like, I'm not talking about like a few thousand dollars here, which would still be successful, right? She's making 80k in a month, right? And she has this massive block in her head that because she's not consistent on social, she can't next level. So for me, who has seen

her try this so many times, right? She gets burnt out, or she pays so much money to have someone do it for her, um, and the results are so small, right? compared to these other things that she does, and for some reason she can't quite like just commit to those things, right? But these other things that she does that are getting her so many more results, but she just feels like, oh yeah, but that's not like—that's what's not going to make me a—like a bigger name or whatever. So there's this mindset block that I think people are just like brainwashed around, right? We just like believe so much that it's social media that is the key when it's not, right? It's—it's actually attention, and attention can come your way in a lot of different platforms and a lot of different ways. And I actually believe that some people are great on social and some people just aren't. And we have to know which one we are, right? And it's okay. It doesn't mean that you have no other options, but when you know if you are that person, that social media person, and when you know that you are not, you can release yourself and focus on the—and find where you are amazing.

Tiffany: Yeah, thank you so much for sharing that specific situation because especially, you know, I think we all feel that on different levels. And like you said, we're seeing these big names or these people, you know, that everybody knows, and we're like, that's the way, that's the only way to success. And it's so incredible to think about somebody who's making 80k a month, which is like almost—pretty much a seven-figure business, right? Still having that. And it also, you know, for people who are earlier in their business, to know that, you know, each level does have its own things. It's not like you're going to hit—I think we always think like, oh, we're going to hit this one level and then everything's going to be like golden all the time. And I—I don't mean that in like a Debbie Downer way, I mean that as like, the sooner you can realize that and say, okay, I'm playing the long game and it's like a consistent change over time and you're always upleveling, it just makes it easier to wrap your head around because I think otherwise we're always like setting these higher levels and it can be stressful. Um, so I love that. So let's talk a little bit about—and I—I talk about this on the podcast too, but obviously I'd love to hear your perspective and have the audience hear your perspective of, you know, what you like to suggest people or what you do instead of the social. So people are like, hell yeah, I'm resonating with this, but what do I do?

Sophia: Yeah, totally. I mean, the—well, first of all, I would always have a conversation with someone to—to make a specific recommendation to them. So I'm going to be speaking in broad strokes, right, just to kind of so people can kind of get an idea of what they can do, right? But I think again, like one of the main things that I said previously was that it's, you know, what is really worth—or what is really going to lead you to that next level is attention, right? And in business-owner-land, that really is about like your list size and again, people who—who know about you, right? And I think that again, people hear that and are like, I know, that's why I want

to be on social media. But again, the problem with social media is we're dealing with algorithms, we're dealing with a lot that we have absolutely no control over, which can really get us stuck if we don't know, you know, how to navigate those moments. And if we're being honest, most of us don't, right? Because like I said earlier, some people are actually built for social. Like, they are—and you know it. If you're sitting there being like, yeah, I think I'm one of those people, I'm just—I naturally think about content all day, I love posting, I don't take engagement like personally, I just have a good time on here—you're probably someone that actually could, you know, do really, really well on social. But if you're someone who's not thinking that, it's like, ugh, I dread it, I overthink it, I look at like my sweaty nose the whole time—I'm like, don't—like, don't put yourself through that, you know what I mean? But think about, okay, so if I—if I did want to build an audience, like, what are some other ways we could do that? Now, for me, the fastest way to do that is through your network. So the first thing I would suggest you do is literally write down every single person that you know inside of business coaches that you've worked with, people that you met inside of, you know, those communities, people that you speak to on—on social media—like, they don't even have to be like inside of your industry. They—but I think I would probably suggest that they know something—like they're either fellow business owners or they're just familiar with like how it works, right? And I—and literally ask them like, "Hey, I want to get in front of as many audiences as possible this year. I'm curious if there's someone that you would connect me to, right? Anyone." Right? Just like ask the—ask the question. Now, if you can be as specific as possible there, that—the better. For example, if you want to get on podcasts, mention that. If you have a talk and you want to do it for other communities, mention that. Like, the more specific, the better, right? And just see like who people come back to you with, right? Again, you might come back with no one, but all I want you to do is be able to tick that off the list. Be like, okay, I put myself out there, now I know what my network can offer me, if anything. Nine times out of ten though, we learn that—and actually I should say ten times out of ten, because every—no matter what results that that like gives you, you still need to build your network, right? Because your network can always get bigger, right? So the net—for me, the next piece is I would actually host a collaboration event. So you're probably familiar, the folks listening are probably familiar with guesting in bundles, guesting on summits, guest—you know, we have guested forever. And that's a great thing. Guesting is part of building a network. So please, guest. It's a great part of your strategy. However, there will come a point, and if you're kind of getting itchy about that next level, like you're feeling like it's time to really become a household name in my industry, right? It's probably time for you to start hosting those events instead of continuing to guest. Again, guesting is still a great part of your strategy, but if that's the only thing you do, you're basically acting like—like the best friend in someone else's growth event, right? We want to show up like the main character, not the best friend. Because the main character gets remembered, right? The best friend, like, we have a laugh with them in the corner, but then we

kind of like move on with our day, right? So we want to show up like the main character in our own business. So that's really why I—one of the—one of the biggest reasons I—I like—not just encourage, but like insist that we think about what we are hosting. So from there, I would host some kind of a collaboration event—a private podcast, a summit, or a bundle probably. Again, there's others. You could do a roundtable. I feel like we could talk about a couple of differences here because I think it would be different for each person. Like, this is really where you have to think about your offers. If you have a lot of low-ticket offers, bundles are fabulous. Yeah, because like, they come in, a lot of those people are—when I say freebie seekers, I don't mean that in a bad way. They're just like at a level where maybe they're not totally serious about investing yet, they're still shopping around, kind of seeing who's out there. So like, bundles are great. And especially if you have low-ticket offers to receive them, they're more able to like say yes to those than like a 10k offer, you know what I mean? So bundles are fabulous. If you look at how you convert and you're like, wow, when people hear me speak, when people hear me on podcasts, when people get on a sales call with me, people want to work with me—like, your voice has weight. Maybe you can't explain it, you've just—it's just something you've noticed—you probably would be phenomenal in summits and podcasts because your voice is going to be carried through that entire collaboration event, right? So probably host one of those. You could also do a roundtable, especially if you just don't have the time. Like, let's say you just had a kid and you're working 15 hours a week, right? The thought of hosting a summit, like, that's going to feel like another full-time job in your situation, right? But a roundtable is essentially a one-hour a live conversation with four other guests. You're not going to grow as much as in a private podcast or a summit, right? But you're still going to grow and you can probably do those more often, right? But again, they still hear your voice, so you—still that—that power of like, you know, bringing your thoughts forward vocally is still present, right? So consider your business, how you typically convert, and what you actually see for yourself in the future. Like if you want to be speaking on stages and things like that, again, the voice is really, really important. If that's not so important to you, um, for example, let's say you want to—you're like a writer, people really gravitate towards how you write, maybe you want to do what I call like a PDF summit, where it's like you and 10 other people collaborate on like a really cool summit where each of you basically contributes a strategy that you write out in a PDF, you know what I mean? And it's like a magazine, right? All 10—

Tiffany: I feel like that would be good for people on Substack, right?

Sophia: Totally. Yes. Totally. So it's like if you're someone who's like, your email list is poppin', right? It's like you're not really into podcasts and things like that, but your email list, man, when people read your emails, they are replying, they are hitting those link clicks. You might be actually like a good candidate for a magazine or something like that, right? So again, the idea is

like, how are we collaborating on another event? Now, here's why it's important. This—this is what this does, right? Not only are you and all of your guests going to be promoting whatever this thing is that you've created together—so you're going to grow your list that way—but you're also going to add 10 new people to your network, right? Now, these 10 new people are future affiliates, they are people that are going to bring you in to guest in front of their communities so that you can bring your talk in there, uh, they are people that are going to think about you when your next client comes through their door and they're like, "You know who you need to know? You need to know Tiffany or whoever," right? So it's—like there's so much power in building this event. Not only are you going to grow your list, but you're also going to grow a network that can add more growth later. And the best part as well is that once you do this once, doing it the second time and the third time is so much easier. So you're going to find yourself doing this, I would say, probably a minimum twice a year, which is going to grow your list so much faster. And with guesting, you are going to massively grow your network, which again leads to so many more opportunities. So now you are getting known way faster, you're becoming a household name, the trust and credibility is—like compounding, right? And you don't even have to post once on social media for all of that to happen. So for me, I feel like there's just faster ways to do it, and the cheat sheet is moving through a network.

Tiffany: Yes, that is—you are speaking my language. And it's so funny because I think just intuitively, um, you know, that's the main way I've built my business. Maybe not initially, and it is—it's just so much easier and more fun for most of us. And again, I know like you said, some people love the social and there's nothing wrong with that either. And—and some people like doing the combination. So it can be, you know, to each their own. But I've seen that and—like you're making—I used to do summits and I haven't for a little while. I'm like, ooh, I need to like start that back up or a private podcast again. Um, we'll see. So maybe next year. So I love the idea too of hosting and not just guesting. Because I think that's the huge thing, like—like you said, we've all been, you know, doing summits maybe, doing those bundles, and to position yourself—like I talk specifically to thought leaders, you know, people who are speaking, writing a book, um, coaching on a higher level. And oftentimes they're at that same similar level that you mentioned of like, they're at that cusp, right? They want to really be seen as that household name, they're ready to get out there. And I help them really get their brand looking and feeling and sounding like that. But this is the point that you're saying of like, almost putting that identity on is like, hey, I'm here now I'm leading instead of following, which is so incredible.

Sophia: 100 percent. Again, it's a—comes back—I like—for some reason this analogy works so well for me, and it's probably because I was an actor, right? But it's really like showing up as the main character in your business, right? Because when—when we—we all know what we mean by the best friend in movies, right? It's like comic relief, but like at the end of the day when

we're thinking about the film, we're not thinking about them. We're thinking about the main character and their story, and that's who we remember. So when you are the main character in your growth strategy, again, it's like people think about you in a different way. You're not in the room—like, you created the room. So they associate with you differently, and I actually have seen that work wonders in terms of credibility and really like expediting that trust.

Tiffany: Absolutely. So one question that comes up for me, because I always tell the story that I was the girl that was like afraid to ask for ketchup in a restaurant from the waitress—like super shy, not an actress, like all the things. I've done a lot of work, overcome all of that. And—so what would you suggest to someone who, you know, doesn't love being in the limelight and they're like, ooh, that sounds awesome to be main character energy, but there's that disconnect of like where they want to go but actually how they're showing up now? Like, what would you recommend? Because I'm sure you've probably helped some clients through this. And I do too.

Sophia: Yeah, yeah. And I think like—I think when I—when I come across someone who is like, "Oh yeah, like this sounds really great in essence, but I am a little uncomfortable with what I have to do to get there," I do often ask like what—what exactly they're envisioning, right? Because sometimes it's like the big deal quote-unquote for them looks a little bit different. Like it's a big deal because like they wrote a book and it's a bestseller, it's they're not—it's not a big deal in that they're on stages everywhere and pod—you know, there's a different vibe there, right? So in that situation, I come back to like really getting clear on like where exactly do you want to see yourself? Because I actually think we need to reverse engineer from that. Because again, back to like how we started this conversation about social media—like, we know if we are made for social media and we know when we are not, right? Because it just—it just doesn't feel right.

Tiffany: Exactly. And why try to force it? Like it doesn't make any sense.

Sophia: Exactly. Exactly. So reverse engineer from like what you actually see yourself and like what that quote-unquote big deal looks like. I—I say big deal again because I was telling Tiffany this earlier, like when—like I—I'm considering—no, not considering, I am doing, I just like have to—I'm on maternity leave so I have to figure out when this is happening, but my next program's going to be called "She's a Big Deal." So I've been thinking about what people's versions of being a big deal looks like, because I understand that that will look different for everyone, and some people won't even resonate with that. They don't want to be a big deal. They want to have their business with 10 clients and that is phenomenal to them and it is—like, trust in whatever that is for you. But there will be some people that are like, "I want to be on stages. I want a hundred thousand people on my email list. I want everyone knowing my name

and taking photos of me in the street"—like, I don't know, whatever it is for you. And then there will be some people like we were just saying, who want a bestselling book, who, you know, they—they want to be behind the scenes in a big way, they don't necessarily want to be in front of camera in a big way. Both are valid, both are okay, but I do think we need to know what—what our big deal version is because you're going to be reverse engineering from there, right? If you see yourself with the book, again, we're back to that magazine, we're back to focusing our emails, we have that Substack, right? It's just a different energy, different—or a different way of showing up, and that's what we're going in on. So I think for that person, that's what I would—I would ask initially and then I would help them make a plan uh by reverse engineering from there.

Tiffany: Ah, love that. And as always, we are so on the same page. So, yeah, let's talk a little bit more about that. Um, you have a—an offer for people today to go into that's around visibility. So whatever that level is for you, like yeah, if you're excited and you want to be like way in front of the camera, you know, everybody knows—like an Oprah maybe, um, or maybe you want to be more behind the scenes like Brené Brown. I mean, she's still out there, but at the same time it's more like educational, like deeper dive work. And sure she shows up because she does need to be visible, but it's like a quiet visibility, right? Um, so anyways, can you tell us a little bit more about that?

Sophia: Yes. Okay. So, um, it's very much reiterating what we've talked about today, but we'll—it'll be taken—putting into action. So I—there's—this comes in two parts. The first part is a—it's actually a podcast episode that I recorded where I'm staking—like I'm—I'm describing—no, it's not staking your claim or describing your case, it's what—saying your case? What is it? Saying your case? Just justifying your case? I don't even—I can't speak English these days because I don't sleep because I just had a baby.

Tiffany: You are fully justified on that. So I—I have that—this is why we don't edit the podcast, I say all the time, because like, I'm in perimenopause and like I'll just forget the words. So—

Sophia: It—it happens all the time and I use the wrong words and my husband's like, "You're lucky I've known you so long and I know what you're trying to say."

Tiffany: I'm like, you're lucky we could kind of like read your mind.

Sophia: Yeah, exactly, exactly. But I'm basically like explaining why I believe hosting is so important and I'm walking you through that step by step. I also—I ask you a few questions to kind of get you thinking in terms of, you know, what kind of host and what—what you should be

hosting. But then I take it one step further in step two of the offer, which is again a total—totally free, my gift to you. We have a custom GPT that is actually going—it's trained on helping you, you know, evaluate your business, evaluate your goals, evaluate your needs, evaluate like all the things that like would make you show up super powerfully in your collaboration event, and it'll—it will recommend the best collaboration event for you and just get you started on bringing that to life. So, um, that's what you're going to find inside. So again, if anything in here is feeling like, okay, I definitely—like this feels like the direction I need to go, I think this is a really powerful first step because I think you'll feel really confident about the recommendation it gives to you because it's going to be looking at all, you know, all aspects of yourself and your business.

Tiffany: So good. So everyone, we will have that link down in the show notes as well as um how you can connect with Sophia, whether it's on Instagram or her website. But thank you so much for offering that. I feel like, again, we are so aligned, our audiences are very similar and kind of at that similar stage of like knowing—whether it's big deal energy, mainstage energy, taking those stages, having the book, um, they have some level of, you know, they've—they've had the business, they're getting traction, and they know there's so much more possible. So I'm so excited for our audience to have access to this. Um, thank you for your generous um offer of letting them take this and go—run with it because it's so important and especially, you know, for those of us that don't love social media, it just sounds like the perfect fit. So—

Sophia: Thank you. I'm so excited that you guys have it and also I'm just so thrilled that we are so on the same page because honestly from like literally the beginning I knew that was going to happen and I'm just so happy that through and through our conversation it was completely confirmed. So I'm really happy we got to make this happen.

Tiffany: Absolutely. All right, well, thank you so much for being on the show, Sophia. And as we wrap up today, are there any words of wisdom for the people listening—um, we do have some men, but it's mostly women here that typically listen. So any words of wisdom for these women who want to like lead with that main character energy, really step into that next level of their business as we move through the rest of 2026?

Sophia: Yeah, I mean, I think probably two things. I mean, first I would—I would do that exercise in terms of considering like what your big deal energy looks like, right? Like what—where do you see yourself in five years in terms of how you're showing up? Like, do you see yourself on a stage? Do you see yourself hosting your own podcast that's doing really, really well? Like what does that look like for you? Because again, what you do today should be aligned with that, right? And so I think being able to audit yourself inside of your business today and ne—and

being able to confirm for yourself that yeah, I—like the actions that I am choosing, the decisions that I am making—like they are in line with getting me to that point, or they are not, and then we know how to make changes, right? I think that is the first thing, I think it's—it 100 percent necessary and it will probably be the most powerful thing that you do for yourself and for your business. And then the second thing is I just want to reiterate, like, meet people. Like do not stop. I think it is so, so, so important. I think people forget about it and I also know that some people feel awkward about that, but to the best of your ability, right, meeting people and building your network is by far the most powerful thing you can do and it will also grow your business the fastest. Not to mention the more you do it, the easier it becomes, and you'll actually find out that a lot of these other people that you meet feel awkward about it too. Totally. Yeah, you're—I—like the amount of people that I have met that started off as business relationships and now we're just friends because we realized we were both like experiencing the exact same things, and it is so fun and less lonely, right, to go through business with people that get it because this is an isolating thing we've all committed to. Yes. So isolating. And just meeting new people really opens up your world and makes it a—makes it much more enjoyable. So I think those are the two things that I think will make the biggest impact to your year.

Tiffany: Such good advice. Thank you again, Sophia, for being here, and thank you all for listening. We'll see you next week back on the Make Your Message a Movement podcast. Bye for now.

Sophia: Bye.