ADD MORE <u>DEPTH</u> TO YOUR CHARACTER FOR CUT-THROUGH CONTENT

We can only move fast in our marketing and cut through the noise when we have a clear direction, so we don't get bogged down in overthinking.

Why is it so hard to settle on a direction?

Why do we get stuck on marketing, and content creation as a coach or creative business?

Is it lack of engagement with the stuff we do put out?

What about if we aren't clear on how our 'character' shows up in the business story, so we're left flapping around on social media looking for ideas on what to say?

The other day I was talking about content with a coach who works with women.

We opened up Instagram and looked at a bunch of women who are in her 'space.' You could count the number of posts before there was either one of those boring Canva tiles with a quote on it, or a shot of them in a bikini or with their top off on a cliff or beach. It's like, is this still happening? Are we not bored of this same thing yet?

In my experience, compelling marketing and a strong business brand is driven by a bunch of different things.

One common thread is an unfolding story.

And for coaching and creative businesses, this is what's called 'Character Driven' story, or a 'Character driven business', which is basically the opposite of a plot driven story.

Do you have a character driven business?

The way I think about this is if you plucked you out of the biz, and put someone else in, would it change the business significantly?

For most people we work with, it would, right? Their business would be totally different without them. A couple of months back I talked to a woman who bought an online coaching business - but the previous business owner was kind of an influencer. So what happened was, he sold them this business, then walked away, but he was the main overarching character.

So when he left the scene it makes this huge gap in the business.

You see this when a lead character leaves a business, or passes away. Occasionally the business can recover, but it's tricky.

The way most people solve the content or marketing problem, is by downloading some kind of planner. Just the other day I was hit with an ad on social media to download a planner with a bunch of 'done for you' content. I couldn't think of anything more stupid. That has to be the fastest way to eliminate all independent thinking and character building. Or they outsource their marketing to a social media manager. And this puts the creator into what's called a 'content first' mindset. Meaning, if I could just get my content right, then I would see success. Or, "my content just isn't resonating".

But when you see engaging content, consider that it's the *output* from the character, the business story and their world.

Cut-through 'content' has to come from this core of the business.

Come back to your character first, to drive cut-through content.

A while back I was watching a show about how Quintin Tarantino developed the characters for his movies. I think he was talking about Pulp Fiction at the time. In my view, Tarantino creates some of the most compelling characters in film, and it's our nuanced relationship with his characters *alongside* what those characters do, that drives so much engagement and creates a cult-like following with his stuff.

Basically what he does is, he writes out twenty or thirty pages of dialogue between the characters in some random situation.

Say, talking about some current events.

Now, he knows he isn't going to actually use this dialogue *for* anything in the film.

It's basically thrown away.

But what it does is lets him get to know his characters.

And from there, he does something wildly effective.

He let's the characters drive the story.

We'll simplify how this happens below, and how it relates to your business.

But great marketing, and a great brand, has very little to do with how 'polished' the colours are. It has very little to do with having the right Canva branding package. And it even has little to do with what is being 'said', but it has a LOT to do with who is saying it, what they stand for, what they want, and what they do.

So,

If we get stuck on content, or if we want to power up the marketing to create a more compelling story, we can always come back to the characters in the business, and world. Where are they going? What do they want to create exactly? And what events are out there on the timeline?

QUICK EXAMPLE

Let's say you're a yoga teacher.

And you're trying to figure out what you want to do for content or marketing.

Well you've got some educational stuff you could do.

You could do the classic yoga pose on the cliff top with the yoga pants on.

Or, you could come back to what you really want, how you want to help people, the future you want to see, and what you are doing about it?

If you want more people to live a less stressed out, balanced life, with more energy, what are you going to *do* about that?

You could run events? What kind of events? When are they held and why are they different because you are running them?

Now you have a timeline, and you are *doing* something in a *certain* way.

This character driven content is less of a stand alone piece of marketing, and more about a 'sliver' of interesting information that is documenting how part of the story or work is moving forward. Your content shows how your world is developing.

Questions that can help drive compelling content

Let's look at the Joker from The Dark Knight. I'm aware I'm using film examples here… But understand that your business is a story very much like a film or novel. Sure your offer solves a problem, but it does that through a compelling story, that people *want* to be a part of.

So when we think of the Joker, we have a very clear, and compelling character.

We know *exactly* who he is, how he evolves, and how he behaves.

Any 'content' from the Joker isn't just driven by what he says, but that we know what he wants, what he needs, what he stands for, and therefore *HOW* he does something. This is what makes the Joker the Joker.

EXAMPLE:

In the scene where he's walking out from the hospital after blowing it up, with a smile on his face, although he is evil, we are immensely satisfied. Why?

Is that the darkness in us resonating with the event?

Maybe. But I don't think so.

It's that *how* he walks, *how* he executes his plans, and the fact that *his* wants and needs are being met (for now) bring us closer to the character.

What does your character want, exactly?

When we get stuck in content, we can come back to what your character wants and how they are evolving. Because it's the character's desires that drive the story forward. But this has to be specific.

In the Joker's case, it is to create total chaos in Gotham city, and continue the battle with Batman. This is specific. This isn't just "I want to commit crimes." That wouldn't be compelling or specific for us to resonate with, because any *obstacle* that pops up would be too easy to overcome, and it would be boring.

In Tony Robbin's case, it's about wanting to end poverty and wanting people to be empowered. His desires drive his world forward.

Another example, let's say you're a bit of a gun personal trainer, and you love your training:

** You might want to master a particular movement yourself (infinite fodder for story)

** You might want to help a particular demographic of people in your town or online get healthy in a certain way

** You might want to win the battle against some industrial food company that you think is making people unhealthy

** You might want to help people look and feel great so they can meet their dream partner

As you can see, the want is personal, but in a business setting, it's going to involve creating some kind of change for your clients.

For me, my *wants* could include:

** Giving small business owners the supreme skills to build their world and their business

** Teaching them the basics of marketing so they can succeed

** Supercharging small business so it can defeat the slow, technocratic, big business giants

** Helping and inspiring others to be strong, creative and successful in their businesses

OK, so now what do I do to satisfy those wants?

** Write "All in" a book that is a guide for coaches and creative business owners

** Run live events both online and offline

** Offer coaching for small business owners through Creator Club

** Write frequent emails, and release podcast episodes with tips to grow a business
And on and on…

So one thing you can do, is take some time, and write out what your character wants, being very specific.

What does your character *need?*

This is much deeper. It's rooted in our identity, and our values.

The Joker needs chaos and carnage. He *needs* the battle with Batman, and even in his own words, he would be lost without him.

These are literally what he stands for.

For me, my values are strength, success, integrity… These are the things that I work for each day, and together with my *wants* drive how I actually do what I do.

So some people try to come up with these values, or what your character finds really important, or 'needs' by writing things out.

But the real way to do it, is to watch your behaviour.

We only know that the Joker needs chaos, because he is always *doing* things that create chaos.

We only know that I value strength, because I train each day. It's what I *do.*

So take some time to look at your behaviour, to see your unique set of needs.

It could be to be loved, to have comfort, to be creative, to make progress…

If I want to help people get strong, and I have a *need* for love and creativity, I'm going to have a very different coaching business than if I want to help people get strong, and have a need for progress and efficiency.

Your wants plus your needs give us *how* you do something.

How you run an event

How you teach a class

How you exercise.

How you do a podcast

How you buy online

How you create a coaching program

And even *how* you dress, look, walk and talk.

This is why as business owners, we can learn so much more about our customers by watching their behaviour than we can by listening to what they say that they want.

When you are clear on these, you can exaggerate them in your content.

Each article, podcast, or post you make is a chance to show more of your character, what they are doing, thinking, and working on. This will bring cut-through character and personality to your content, so your audience can build a relationship with you.

And all of this is to say, just like in Tarantino's films, this creates a big chunk of your own character, and can drive your content forward much easier.

Conclusion

If you're stuck with your content, or aren't sure how to stand out… instead of leading with "I have to create content"

Ask the question of

"Who am I, what does my character want, what is happening on my timeline, and what can I share from that?"

Your content will now have:

** Desires that we can resonate with because we have desires ourselves

** Much more story and internal narrative

** Nuances and quirks in how you do things, which create relatability

** Conflict and obstacles that get in the way of you getting what you want, which creates engagement

** Personality comes through as you deal with it all

** Story unfolds through the events on your timeline…

You'll notice straight away that you start to stand apart from the crowd, and will be on your way to building story driven marketing campaigns and a horde of raving fans.