

EPISODE 56: HOW TO DETERMINE THE AREA OF YOUR AUTHORITY AND CREATE CONTENT AROUND

with **Melanie Deziel**

Marketing for Creatives Show
at **IntNetworkPlus.com**

Announcer:

Turn your hobby and freelance work into a profitable business! Make your marketing easier by applying the strategies of experienced entrepreneurs and have more time to do the work you love. You are listening to the Marketing for Creatives show with your host Marina Barayeva.

Marina Barayeva:

Hi everyone. This is Marina Barayeva. Welcome to another episode of Marketing for Creatives show. In this episode, we gonna talk about how to determine the area of your authority and create content that grows your brand.

Before we start, a short announcement, that starting today and for the whole summer the show will be only once a week on Mondays. Enjoy your summer time! We'll go back to the regular schedule at fall with a lot of new content. And for more personal communications let's keep in touch on Instagram at MarinaBarayeva.

Now, let's go back to our topic. It's often confusing for people how to combine different passions and interests into the strong personal brand and share it through your content.

What if you are a multi-passionate entrepreneur or you still have a full-time job and trying to completely transition to your side hustle business? That's what we will talk about today.

I'm super pumped to introduce you to our guest today Melanie Deziel.

Melanie has been recognized as one of the world's leading experts on native advertising and a leading influencer in Content Marketing.

She travels the world giving keynotes, presentations and workshops that teach marketers, publishers, creators and companies how to create the best possible brand storytelling.

Hi Melanie. Welcome to the show.

Melanie Deziel:

Thanks for having me. How are you?

Marina Barayeva:

I'm doing good and I'm so glad to have you here. We're so excited to hear your entrepreneurial story.

Melanie Deziel:

I'm excited to share it. I started out actually as a journalist, so that's what I studied in school. That's the job I always thought I would have. But I found that my skills were maybe more useful in a marketing context that helping to teach brands that basics of journalism, helping marketers and brands understand the way they can use storytelling.

Actually, it was more fulfilling for me. I've really enjoyed being able to do that for a number of different publishers and companies.

But about three years ago I got inspired. I realized that I could really probably have the broadest impact possible and help the most people possible if I sat out on my own.

I started my own consulting firm, traveled the world doing speaking to be able to bring that message to as many people as possible and help them learn how to tell better stories.

Marina Barayeva:

So, started as a journalist and now you transitioned to sharing the branding story. You know, when people are quite new in business, they often not sure what to focus on, how to grow their personal brand or the business brand.

But even for the experienced entrepreneurs, they have many interests and topics that they can share about. How to determine the area of your authority?

Melanie Deziel:

This is one of the biggest challenges I think because when we think of ourselves like marketers, entrepreneurs, we want to talk about what we sell. We want to talk about our products, we want to talk about, our services, whatever it is that we sell, but that's not always what our audience is actually interested in.

They often have interests that are more broad than just what we're selling. Nobody really wakes up and says, I want to be sold to today. We have to focus on some of the other things that are within that area of authority that can really add value, information and other kinds of value to our audience's life.

Broadly speaking, I think there are three things that every brand or entrepreneur can tell stories about.

The number one is a product. Your products or services, you can talk about what you sell and how it works, who your clients are, etc.

The next one is the role that you play in the customer's life. What is it that I'm helping them to accomplish? This is sort of like the benefits of the product. What exactly am I helping you to do?

This is often very educational content. So instructions, DIY or recipes. It's not about the ingredient, the product, but it's about the broader recipe, what you can accomplish with that.

Then the last thing, the third thing is the emotions that you can help evoke. That to help you remember is P for products, R for role and E for emotion, so PRE.

Those three things are the things that you have the authority to talk about.

- The product being - this is what I have, what I sell, what I create.
- The role being - this is why that matters to you, what impact it has on you.
- And the E the emotion being - this is why that's important, this is why you should care. It's sort of that deeper thing, whether it's confidence or happiness or safety. It's sort of a deeper connection than just a product or a transaction. It's that real thing that you're going after by using that product in that way.

Marina Barayeva:

I see quite often two extremes when people try to grow their business. One of them, you were talking about the business stuff, the focus on business, selling and all about focus only in business. Which sometimes is too much for people, they don't want to buy.

And another extreme they have a lot of interest. They talk about all of those things. You look at their social media profiles or their blog and you don't really understand what they offer or what they sell. So how can we find this balance and craft our content story?

Melanie Deziel:

It's a tough balance. I think it's different for every company or every person. Because for different people, the degree to which our business is our life is different. It might just be a side hustle.

Maybe you don't want to update your LinkedIn and tell everyone at work what you're doing and build a website because that's only something you do on the side.

Or if you're going all in maybe there are other parts of your personality or your life that you prefer to keep private. Maybe you don't want to talk about your kids or your religion or your health. Maybe there are lines that you want to draw.

That balance between business and personal, I think is one that every entrepreneur has to figure out where that line falls for us on our own.

But what I do think is, broadly speaking, you should aim to have at least 70% of your content be created and shared for your audience. It's not about you.

Gary Vaynerchuk has talked about this, the **Jab, Jab, Jab, Right Hook** that you shouldn't go for that right hook, sell every single time. You've got to provide value first. Give and then ask. And so for your social media, your blogs, etc., all of that you should try to have at least 70% really be focused on providing value to your audience in some way.

Then you've got 30 percent of those posts are those blog posts or whatever else to talk about your products, to talk about your new sale that you're having or a promotion of some kind too

Marina Barayeva:

What would you suggest do those kinds of multi-passionate entrepreneurs to pick one thing and kind of forget about all of the rest things and focus on this in their marketing and business staff and content?

Or they will go with their interests, they will bring the passions, their other hobbies and then they will post it everywhere on blog, social media, gives the speeches? What would you suggest?

Melanie Deziel:

I think the easiest way to combine when you're multi-passionate when you have those different interests, is to try to find a way for them to work together, to work in alignment.

If you happen to love social media, that's wonderful. That's going to serve you well promoting whatever the other side of your businesses. If you like to be around people and you can go out and speak about your topic, then that's great. It's going to help promote your passion.

But if you have I don't know, knitting sweaters and then a second side passion for rock climbing, I think you might have a hard time pulling all those passions together into one business or into one social media presence.

But I do think that there's more latitude than there used to be. We recognize now that celebrities or influencers or entrepreneurs, we're real people. We are real people with very different interests.

For me, for example, I post a lot about content marketing, about marketing in general, about how to tell better brand stories. I share a lot of articles and infographics. But I also post every now and then about random dinners that I'm having that I think they're delicious or about some movie I liked on Netflix that's really good.

I think the reason that it's okay is like we talked about earlier, it's a balance, right? If I was talking most of the time about random leads and dinners and other things that I like, people wouldn't really understand, well why should I follow? What's the value for me in following this person or subscribing to their channel or whatever else?

As long as you're consistent and that the majority of your content is the feeding into your business or whatever it is, the reason people are following, subscribing and engaging with you, then I think we kind of like when someone shows a rare glimpse of their personal life or their other hobbies, it's okay for there to be some variance.

You just want to make sure people understand what they're signing up for and that they're getting what their promise.

Marina Barayeva:

How would you do that? Let's say, for example, I'm a photographer and I do the podcast about business and marketing. I love this thing and it'd before I was a model and those three things were always confusing to people.

Again, on the podcast we had different people who were actors and now talk about selling and they also like actors or actresses till now, or they're musicians or they have those two little different hobbies or there were a photographer and business. How would you combine those two things? Can you give us maybe some examples?

Melanie Deziel:

Yeah, absolutely. At a very base level, it's what you just talked about, you have a photographer and model and business and entrepreneurship. Those things, if you crafted the right way, they make sense, right?

Through modeling you have this love of photography and that in being a photographer you had to learn how to market and run your own business. And so that's where you've ended up.

My story is the same way. I started out in journalism and then I moved into branded content, then I started my own branded content firm. Now I'm an entrepreneur and as part of my business I go out and speak.

So I often talk about being a speaker and what it's like to be a speaker. These things aren't totally random, just selected items that I'm talking about, but you have to find a way to help your audience understand how they're connected.

I think that's really the thing is just speaking to your journey and explaining why are these things relevant.

If you're going to be talking about... you know, for me, journalism and marketing and speaking, why is that? What's the connection between these two items?

I think we're the same way as people when we seek out any sort of interaction. If we're going to a store to go buy something you want to know what's in the store before you take the time to go in there and look through the aisles.

For our customers, it's the same way. They want to understand, what does this person do? What they share content about, what do they post about on social media? Because otherwise, why am I going to follow them?

Not just as a favor, it's because I'd be getting some value for myself that they're sharing the kinds of things that I want or producing the kinds of things that I want.

We have to help craft for an audience just a clear story of how those different parts of ourselves are connected.

If they're not connected, then I think that's okay to acknowledge it every now and then. You see models all the time where their feeds are full of glamorous photos of them in exotic locations.

And every now and then they might post a photo of they're wearing no makeup, they're wearing sweatpants and they're saying, "Hey, you know, I know this isn't what you usually see, but this is what I do on the weekend."

You're kind of acknowledging, "I know that this is not what you necessarily came for, but it's still part of me and I hope that you'll accept my indulgence of this kind of posts that might not be what's normal, but still part of me."

If people are feeling a connection with you, then hopefully those glimpses of different parts of you are a relief and they're interesting and they're not a disappointment or not something that's confusing for your audience. Because they know you. They know who you are.

Marina Barayeva:

How would you tell the story based on the picked area of the authority?

Melanie Deziel:

I think the wonderful thing about storytelling is that it's really different for every single person. Without an extremely specific example, it's hard for me to make a prescription of exactly how they should tell that story.

But I think if you were to ask yourself some key questions:

- Which of my experiences are relevant to what I'm doing today?
- What are the things that I've done have brought me to the point where I am today?
- How do those experiences contribute to the skills that I'm using today?

It will help you find the connections between all those different parts of yourself. You can spend more time too thinking about what are the parts of me that I want people to perceive? Do I want people to think of me as a family person or a mom or someone who's very edgy or someone who's very creative?

If you spend some time from a branding perspective to think about how you want to be perceived in the world, then that will help you figure out which of your various experiences and your roles in life you want to bring forth through content.

And you can do that with everything from social posts to writing blogs, to sharing photos to starting a video diary or creating a podcast. All of those things will give you a chance to tell that story in whatever way makes the most sense for you.

Marina Barayeva:

So basically, we can start with just writing kind of the story for ourselves, what parts of our expertise or personality we want to show to people, right?

Melanie Deziel:

Yeah, exactly. And I think this is true whether your brand is a personal brand or whether it's a company.

- How do I want that company to be perceived?
- How do I want this person to be received?
- If my brand were a person, what would they share? How would people talk about them?

Really understanding the essence, the personality of the brand or even your personal brand allows you to make really intentional choices about the types of content you create and the types of content that you put out into the world.

Because, for example, if I have decided that I want my brand to be very polished, that I want people to think of me as very professional and yet my content that I'm putting out has a lot of typos and mistakes, the link is dead sometimes, the website is kind of poorly laid out and my social posts sometimes are cropped in the wrong way, what I'm showing my audiences that I have a lack of attention to detail. Maybe that I'm too busy and I'm not spending enough time crafting content.

I'm not giving my audience that impression that I'm a professional person with attention to detail. So sometimes what we create, if we don't have intention behind it, we might focus on the wrong things.

Understanding how you want your brand to be perceived by people will help you figure out what are the ways in which I should best share content with them.

Marina Barayeva:

What would you start with? We created for ourselves the story. We know what story we want to share about our brand or business. We have the ideas. Where would we go next?

Would we focus on the blogging or social media? How to combine them together, but keep in the same message so people will really understand what it is about.

Melanie Deziel:

I know this might sound like a cop out here, but the answer is different for every single person in every single brand because you have to question a few things.

Number one:

- What do you know about your audience?
- Who are you trying to reach and where are those people?
- What do they like to consume?

Because if you're creating content for YouTube and you're trying to reach an audience that's not on YouTube, then you're not going to accomplish your goals. The first thing you have to ask is where is my audience that I'm trying to reach and how do they like to consume content.

Because again, we're showing up with our story in service of the audience. That we want to add value to them and if they can't find our content then we're not doing that.

Asking where are my audience and what kind of content do they like is first.

And the second is to really reflect on what kind of platform, what kind of format is best for telling the story that's important to you, is best for telling the stories that you want to be telling. Because different stories lend themselves to different formats.

If for example, say I know that my audience is on YouTube but I am not comfortable being on video, then maybe making a video series is not a viable option for me. How else can I create content that fits on YouTube? Where I know my audience is?

You really have to ask those questions first. I think having a solid understanding of

- Where your audience that you want to reach?
- Where do they hang out?
- What kind of content do they consume?

Then secondly, what's the best format for the story I want to tell? Is it a story that needs audio? So it must be a podcast or a video.

Is it a story that's very visual? So it needs to have photos or be an infographic or be a video.

Kind of understanding what elements are important for that story and how you're going to deliver it to your audience should determine where you'll be.

I think many times entrepreneurs, we have a little bit of shiny object syndrome and we think, "Oh, Instagram is all the rage right now. Everyone's doing" or "Snapchat is really in and we need to have a Snapchat account" or whatever else other new shiny platform pops up or gains popularity.

That might not be where your audience is, which means all that effort will be wasted if you're reaching the wrong people. And it may not be that that's where your story shines.

I've seen a lot of very active Instagram accounts that are only posting product shots with a white background every single day and they're not getting engagement.

Now they're putting in the effort they're trying to post and trying to meet what they think that platform needs. But they haven't figured out that their story is better served in a different format because maybe taking personal lifestyle type shots is not their strength given their product.

You really have to understand first, where is my audience, what do I know about how they consume content and what format is best for the story I want to tell. Because different

people's stories will be more visual or more auditory or maybe you're better at writing and you're not comfortable in front of a camera or a microphone at all. And you have to stay true to that.

Marina Barayeva:

If people want to grow their personal brand based on this authority, do you have any specific strategies or steps which they can follow to do this? Maybe we can give people an example.

Melanie Deziel:

Sure. I can talk about my own experience. One of the things that I've done as I talked about is I do a lot of speaking and so for me obviously building a speaking business as a business in and of itself it takes a lot of time.

I've been doing it for a number of years now, but when I go up on stage and I can say, "Here is how you as a company, I'm usually speaking to marketers, can create content to reach your audience."

Then that helps them understand that this is something that I've got the authority to be up there on stage. I can do the same thing by writing a guest blog. I've written blog posts that have appeared on Inc, Entrepreneur or other websites, Social Media Marketing World or Social Media Examiner.

Being able to create posts that live in these trusted environments where your audience lives help again give you a good signal of authority. I think you can do the same thing with influencers.

If you know that your audience already know, likes and trusts someone, and you can somehow be associated with that person, whether you're sharing photos together or sharing quotes of that person or best yet getting them to share your content all that helps give you credibility and authority on the subject as long as you're doing it with intention.

Marina Barayeva:

In the beginning, you had a mix of interests and different areas of authorities. We missed the part between those where you started and when you are now, everywhere on Inc, Social Media Examiner and on the stage. What was in between for you?

Melanie Deziel:

A lot of hard work. I don't know that I have a secret formula for you. I've been doing this for years. It's a slow process of continuously examining how do I want my brand to be perceived?

Each time that changes, that means all the rest of it changes. When I changed from journalism to brand content, then I said, "Hey, I don't want to be perceived strictly as a journalist. I want to be perceived as someone who knows the brand content."

That means, as a result, I need to share less about journalism and more about brand content. Instead of guest posting journalistic pieces, I need to be guest posting on sites that talk about advertising and marketing because that's where my audience is.

I know that they happen to be active on Twitter, so I need to make sure I'm posting relevant content for my audience on Twitter.

As I moved into the speaking world, video becomes much more important. I had never been doing much video before that because as a marketer it wasn't important for my audience. I'm much more comfortable writing, so I'd spent a lot more time writing.

But as you become a speaker, you need to be able to prove that you can stand on stage, engage an audience and have a conversation. I had to get better at learning how to edit video, how to share video, how to create my own videos, showing me speaking.

The photos I share now tend to be photos of me on stage instead of just photos of me doing anything else because I'm trying to give that impression that I'm a professional speaker.

Whatever it is for your brand, you can follow that same process, whether it's your personal brand or your company. How do I want to be perceived? What do I need to share as a result?

Then remember those two questions we talked about where is my audience? And what is the best format to tell that story so that you can make sure that you're delivering them the right kind of content to create that perception you want?

Marina Barayeva:

Then in the process when you grow and kind of transition from one area of expertise to another one, or maybe you want to expand your audience, what do you do with the previous accounts or previous content?

You've been the journalists and then you started talking about different things. You already have this content.

Melanie Deziel:

Sure.

Marina Barayeva:

How did you start to position yourself also as a brand expert? Like, "Oh, here I am from nowhere. I was a journalist and today I'm the expert in branding?"

Melanie Deziel:

Well, I wasn't an expert, not my first day. It was a slow process. I think coming back to the very first thing we talked about is understanding that it's going to take time and you don't have to be everywhere.

But you've got to acknowledge what is my story and how are these things connected. I didn't just delete all my accounts, start full new accounts with the new BIO because I'm not a different person. I'm the same person with a new job.

As any person, you announced that you have this new role, you're going to be working on these new things and you're going to be sharing this kind of content as a result.

I think a big mistake that people make is to think that every chapter of their life needs a complete reset. You are still the same person and your experience unless you've made some dramatic shift from one industry to another.

If you went from marketing to coal mining or from being an apple farmer to starting an SEO firm, there's going to be some connection between what you were doing before and what you are doing now.

If you were going to tell a brand story, it's going to flatter your brand. You need to be able to connect those dots. I didn't simply pretend I was never a journalist. I said that my experience as a journalist has allowed me to become a storyteller. Now I am using those storytelling skills to help brands learn how they can do the same thing.

To wipe clean my old job or my old background would have been doing a disservice to my brand because I was able to find out how does that job, that phase one impact and even improve phase two.

You should do the same thing. Make it a slow growth. You don't have to sort of like relaunch and rebrand your entire humanity, all of your accounts or delete and start over.

You just want to start making those changes slowly over time so that people start to understand what's new about you, what's the new adventure that you're on, the new job that you have.

Marina Barayeva:

How do you talk about those previous things after that? Like, "I was in journalists and now I'm this?" That's it?

Melanie Deziel:

You don't want to hide who you are. Unless maybe you do. If that first chapter is something that you're ashamed of, then maybe it's an intentional rebrand and you never wanted to talk about it. But for me, it's not.

Like I said, my journalism led me to become a marketer. So I talk about it in the same way when I was a journalist, referring to stories back then or something I learned when I was a journalist.

I think every person has chapters in their life. You were in school. You maybe had your first job. You may be dated. You were married. You have kids.

Like the story of life is going through different chapters. So all of us as brands have those different chapters too. When you first started out, you got big clients, you changed your logo. Every brand has a life story and chapters in the same way.

You just have to find out how those chapters are connected and use the relevant examples from each chapter of your life that as they apply to your current chapter.

Marina Barayeva:

Yeah, but what I mean that sometimes people transition, let's say from accountant to fashion designer. Those are quite different areas.

When they start post fashion stuff on their accounts, how they can combine, how can they show in their content that they are fashion designers but they still have those job?

Melanie Deziel:

I guess it would depend. Are you saying they are still an active accountant working as an accountant and also designing a fashion?

Marina Barayeva:

Yeah. If she transitioned to a fashion designer.

Melanie Deziel:

Well, I think that to me, if you were launching a fashion line than your brand would probably have its own accounts where you could be an incredibly fashioned focus.

If you as a person are known as an accountant, then maybe you have your personal accounts that say accountant focused and you post the same way you would post randomly about your vacation or your kids or your dog or your dinner.

You can post about your fashion side project. I think what I'm referring to is in most cases people transition from one to another as it was for me. I wasn't living two separate lives.

I think being candid, to be a full-time accountant and a full-time fashion designer, I think it would be very challenging for you to sort of live your life that way because we're not separate people. We are one person.

People aren't only fans have half of you or one thing that you make. And if they are then that needs to be a separate thing. Your fashion line, we can be a fan of Nike without being a fan of the person who designed the shoe.

If that is the way people engage, do people usually follow the designer or the brand? You'd have to decide what makes sense for you.

I think at some point if you're truly trying to dedicate yourself to growing a fashion brand, then you're doing yourself a disservice by not going all in and telling people who you are and being the face of your brand and making that happen.

I think trying to do a side hustle and a dramatically different life and still dedicating all of your time to being someone else on social media says to me that you're not truly dedicated to that side hustle. That you're dedicated to this first persona you've chosen so to speak.

At some point, your focus just has to be reflected in your social media like we talked about. It should be an honest reflection of who you are.

If you want to become a fashion designer, if that's what you want to be, then that's what you need to be sharing because otherwise, people are going to perceive you as an accountant. They'll just continue to perceive that if that's what you continue to put out into the world.

Marina Barayeva:

You said this is a long process, but do you have any shortcuts or tips for people, how to make it faster or maybe easier? How to grow their authority through the content?

Melanie Deziel:

I think you could use any of the tips we've talked about today. The different ways that you can ask these questions to make sure you're approaching your content no matter what platform it's on with intention.

I think that's going to be the key thing is most people think that this stuff just happens, that I just post whatever I feel like it, whenever I feel like it and at some point, I'll be famous. It doesn't work like that.

You've got to have a strategy. You have to have intention. Really the best way to accomplish this is to from the very start, from today, from the day you hear this, sit down, create a strategy, decide how you want to be perceived, and then immediately start taking the actions that would lead your audience to perceive you that way.

If that means you have to change what you're posting, change what you're posting. If it means you have to post more often posts more often.

If it means you need to be doing more guest posting on the blogs that your audience already frequency, start coming up with pitches. Reach out to those people. Send a pitch.

If it means you need to network with a different group of people to kind of get your ins, then start reaching out. Start following different people. Start engaging with different people. Go to those industry events. I think you really just have to dedicate yourself. It's not going to happen on its own.

You have to just have intention behind what you're doing. Ask the right questions of yourself. Have a clear understanding of what you want to accomplish, the authority you want to be perceived, and then go out there and take the steps to make that happen. Help your audience see you as the authority on that topic.

If you can do that quickly and consistently, that's the best way. You have to demonstrate it. You have to show your audience that this is who you are that you're really good at it. If you can do that, then you're going to get that respect and that authority in your area of expertise soon.

Marina Barayeva:

Amazing. Thank you so much, Melanie. Please share you with us now how can we connect with you and find more about you?

Melanie Deziel:

Absolutely. If you want to see more about my speaking journey and all of my adventures as a speaker, you can find me on Instagram. I'm [@MelDeziel](#), M-E-L-D-E-Z-I-E-L.

On Twitter, I tend to talk more about content marketing, about advertising and marketing, and there I am [MDeziel](#). You can find me there.

If you want to learn more about how to grow your brand, how to tell better stories, and I actually have a free guide if anyone wants to learn like how to come up with story ideas. Maybe you're really struggling like I don't know what to tell stories about. If you go to mdeziel.com/StoryIdeaGuide.

It's just a free PDF download that you can download. It will give you a great walkthrough of how to come up with the exact brand stories that are going to be a fit. It'll walk you through a worksheet to come up with those. So hopefully that will be super helpful for you guys.

Marina Barayeva:

Fantastic. Guys, the link will be in the block post. Check it out and check this guide. Thank you so much, Melanie. It was so much pleasure to have a here.

Melanie Deziel:

Excellent. Thank you for having me.

Marina Barayeva:

That's all for today. Thank you for listening. For the show notes and the full transcript of the episode please go to intnetworkplus.com.

And when you have a minute, please go to iTunes and rate and review so we can bring you more amazing guest to talk about how you can market your business.

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