

EPISODE 66

[INTRODUCTION]

[00:00:04.1] ANNOUNCER: Welcome to the Creative Empire Podcast. Each week, Reina Pomeroy, the life and biz success coach, and Christina Scalera, the attorney for creatives, are taking you up close and personal with successful influencers in the creative community and tackling your biggest business hurdles. Their mission is to help you, creative entrepreneurs, think beyond your daily biz so you can make the brave decisions that build your Creative Empire.

[INTERVIEW]

[00:00:35.4] RP: Welcome back to the Creative Empire Podcast. It's Reina here, and Christina is here with me.

[00:00:40.2] CS: Hey guys!

[00:00:40.9] RP: We are here with a very special guest. We have Maya Elious with us. She is a super-house, really amazing teacher, teaching women how to package their purpose into amazing magnetic content that's really irresistible, and to show you how to monetize what you're already good at. Maya and I had a chance to meet earlier this year, and I'm so excited to bring her to this conversation. Thank you so much for being here, Maya!

[00:01:07.8] ME: Thank you so much for having me, I really appreciate it.

[00:01:10.8] RP: Absolutely, so catch everyone up to speed. What have you been up to? What brought you to this point, and what are you doing now?

[00:01:18.5] ME: Yeah, so lately I have just been working with the people inside my coaching program, Master Your Market. Like I was telling you ladies earlier, I have a coaching call with them later. So I'm excited about that, helping them with their content, that has been so fun. I love doing that. I really have just been focusing on helping my audience. Whether people are paying me or not, just helping them with their content creation and helping them get clear on

how they can connect with their own audience, and engage with them, and inspire them, and educate them, and of course, make money.

[00:01:51.2] RP: That's definitely the important part, right? What is a little bit of your background? How did you get into the content coaching space?

[00:01:57.8] ME: So I've been doing this for about a year and a half now as far as coaching, but I started making money online and freelancing back in 2008. I started by creating Myspace pages for people, and that turned into...

[00:02:14.8] RP: Oh my gosh, that's so funny.

[00:02:16.6] ME: I know, right? So I started creating Myspace pages for people. Somebody asked me if I knew how to create a custom Myspace page, and I did because I am such a computer nerd. He paid me \$50 to do it, and I was like, "Oh my gosh, I could make money doing something that I like? Something that I was doing for free anyway?" So once I started getting consistent money from doing Myspace pages, I started telling people I was a web designer, even though I had never designed a website in my life.

I was like, "Well, I mean I code Myspace pages so, web designers code, so I'm kind of a web designer." So I told people I was a web designer, and this lady paid me \$300 or \$400 to design her website, and then I just went on YouTube and figured it out. I'm definitely the type of person who can just figure stuff out. If I can get paid for it and I like to do it, I'm going to just go to YouTube or Google it, figure it out, get paid for it. That's pretty much where I started.

A lot of the things that I know now has been through self-education or non-traditional education. Like, YouTube Academy is definitely it when it comes to starting, especially young, I was 18 when I started, so I didn't even know what investing in my business was. I was just like, "I don't know. I just want to do stuff for fun", so I did that for a while, and then obviously, I got better as a business owner.

I actually figured out how to make better websites, and create websites that were actually strategic and could help my clients make money, and then I realized that there was a need in

my audience where my clients have their websites up, but they didn't really know what to put in their website, and they didn't really have a clear strategy on how to get people to their website. So that's how I started transitioning into teaching people how to create content; create copy that would attract the right audience to help them make money.

[00:04:02.6] CS: And Maya in your opinion, how can someone find what the right content for their audience is? That's a really loaded question, so maybe we should break it down a little bit, but if somebody is just starting out, this is the number one problem that I see is people email me and they have no idea where to start. So where is that starting point? Is it just endless hours of research on YouTube, and maybe doing a course here and there? Or is there a more strategic way they could possibly go about it, where maybe we lay out a little bit of a road map for them?

[00:04:36.2] ME: Yeah, so when it comes to figuring out what type of content you should put on your website, obviously I always think it's really important to engage with their audience, but again, if you're just starting out, you probably don't have an audience. So it's kind of just like that "what comes first, the chicken or the egg?" type situation. Like if I don't have an audience, how do I create content for them? Well, you should be very clear on the type of people that you want to help, or at least the things that you enjoy talking about.

So start putting out content based on things that you're familiar with. Things that you have experience in and the things that you actually enjoy talking about, and then see who gravitates towards that. That's when you start building an audience that generally likes what you have to offer, and then once you start building that audience, pay attention to what they're more hungry for. Maybe you start out writing about three different topics and people are most hungry for one specific topic, chose that route and start building your expertise from there.

[00:05:30.5] CS: Yeah, you said something really key, which is write about or create content that you actually like, which is kind of a crazy idea, because I know when I first started, I was writing on my old blog. I was writing content that I thought people would like, not what I actually wanted to write about. Can you talk a little bit about the difference there, and what you see your clients are struggling with versus — like, writing what they think people want versus what they actually end up doing that's successful?

[00:05:55.4] ME: Yeah, absolutely. When I first started blogging, I knew blogging was one of those things that you should do to get yourself out there, to build your brand, to get people to see you. So when I started blogging, the only type of blogs I was familiar with were really lifestyle and fashion-style blog. So I would do outfit posts, and I hate dressing. I hate shopping. I literary wear my robe 90% of the time. So for me to do outfit posts, it was so pointless, because nobody was coming to me to see what I am wearing.

People are coming to me for advice on how to build their online brand, because that's what I did. I helped people build websites, and I did the graphic design and the visual branding. So after a while, I was like, "This is really strange for me doing outfit posts, it doesn't make any sense." So then when I started blogging about just things that I did in my business, like one of my most popular posts when I first started was "Seven Amateur Mistakes that I made in Business". That was one of my most popular posts, because people wanted to see how I ran a business as somebody that was 19, 20, 21 years old.

So you want to just blog about stuff that actually speaks to your heart, not just because you think you should write about it. We see that all the time now. We see a lot of people that will blog about branding, or will blog about blogging, or blog about business, because they see other people who are actually experienced in those industries to talk about it, and they're like, "Oh that looks successful, so maybe that's what I should be blogging about." But you can be successful in any industry or any niche.

There is lifestyle bloggers and style bloggers that probably make way more money than I do. They're successful in it because that's what they enjoy and that's where their experience lies, not because of the topic that they chose.

[00:07:40.3] RP: Love this so much. I hear all the time from web designers who have clients come to them, and they struggle with their timeline, because the client hasn't written any content and they're like, "Build me a website, and you're going to give me content, right?" So if you are listening, don't do that. Go find somebody like Maya first, and can you give somebody like that some tips on how to get started there?

[00:08:04.5] ME: Oh my gosh, yes, because that was something that I struggled with, and that's why I made that transition. I was like, "I don't want to do this anymore", and I've even been thinking about, "Well maybe do I want to design again now that I know how to coach and design?" I can put the two together, but as a web designer, to me, it was kind of like, "Okay, this is common sense. You should know enough about your business that you can answer these questions".

You need to be very clear about what you really want on your website outside of colors and outside of photos. People are like, "I want this beautiful website", and pretty websites don't get you paid. Having copy that connects to your audience is what is going to get you paid. So you need to decide what are the top three things that I want people to do when they come on my website? Do I want them to join my email list? Do I want them to view my products and services? Do I want them to look at my blog?

You need to be very clear on the goals of your website, or else it's just going to become an expense instead of an investment. You cannot get a return on an investment when you don't have very clear goals. So my advice for that is going to be very clear. I would even write down all of the pages that you want on your website, and then write down what you want on those pages, why those pages are even important, what you want people to do when they're on that page, because again, sometimes people are just like, "Oh let's create this page because I think I'm supposed to have it".

When it's just like, "Do you really need this page, though, or you're just kind of putting up more fluff?" You want to make sure that your website is fluff-free, very intentional and very strategic.

[00:09:34.9] RP: So good.

[00:09:35.5] CS: Definitely agree with that. That's probably the number one mistake that I see people make is that I go to their website, and I have no idea what to do. I work with a lot of calligraphers. They have beautiful websites, beautiful calligraphy designs, and I'm like, "But what do I when I'm here?" there's no prompt for an email, there's no prompt to read my blog, it's not directing me anywhere, and so I end up just leaving.

[00:09:57.6] ME: Right, exactly. I'm always trying to figure out ways to simplify my website. I know that I want people to trust me as an expert, that's why I have the blog there. That's what content is all about, building your brand, how you want people to see you. I have my freebie immediately when you go there. I want to be able to build my email list, and it's also very clear how you can pay me. I'm like, you need to make it extremely easy for people to give you their money.

People are already really hesitant about making investments, especially online with people that they don't really know that well. So if I have to go through a 10-step process just to give you my money, I'm probably going to quit at step five. So make things very easy for people.

[00:10:38.9] CS: Yeah, I think it's really interesting that — I mean, you have direct sales on your website. If you want to take one of your workshops, you can go to your workshops page and buy a course or immediately after you sign up for an email list. You can opt to join a very inexpensive branding course, and so I love that you do that for people.

What is your rationale, because I feel like there's a trend in the industry away from the direct sales, so what's your rationale for letting people do that right away versus people telling us, "We need to have funnels and on the third email, you can give them the ask to buy". Yours is much more direct than that, so what's your rationale behind that?

[00:11:19.7] ME: Oh that's a really good question. So after people opt in for my freebie, there the "thank you page" is where they can actually buy something very inexpensive for \$7, and this is what's called a trip wire, or some people even call it a welcome mat. The whole point of this is to sell something at a no-brainer price. \$7 is not something that you would sweat over, or you would have to go pray over, or just be like, "Oh do I really want to do this?"

There's not a lot of risk when you're investing \$7 into something, and so the reason people do this, and the reason marketers do this is because it's a quick way to get somebody from subscriber to customer in a very short amount of time. Once people start to trust you as a customer rather than a subscriber, they're more likely to be a repeat buyer. So if I can get somebody to trust me at \$7, then I could probably get them to trust me at \$40, and then get

them to trust me at \$200, then get them to trust me at \$1,000 one-on-one. So the whole point is to get people to buy from me immediately, and then press them at that price point.

[00:12:29.0] RP: I love it.

[00:12:30.0] CS: That's so interesting, yeah.

[00:12:32.1] RP: Yeah, I think that it's such a good strategy, and a lot of people are probably taking notes furiously right now, but one of the things that I loved when I was visiting — or stalking you — to prepare for this call was “The Three Things that are Missing in Your Business to Make You Feel like You are Broke and Burned Out”, and I was like, “Dang, that's a really good title for a blog post”, but can you walk us through what those three things are and why people might be feeling broke and burned out?

[00:13:01.7] ME: Yeah. So the three things that I talked about were processes, strategies, and systems. Those were the three things, right?

[00:13:10.2] RP: Sure were.

[00:13:11.2] ME: All right, so the three things that I mentioned were processes, strategies and systems, and this is the nerd part of me when it comes to content creation. My brain loves to organize content, and this is why I love helping people with their content strategy, their content organization, because we get so overwhelmed with all of the information that is put in front of us. We're like, “Oh my gosh, I have so much that I need to do”, and we don't even take the time to really process all of this information.

So all of that overwhelm, number one, is what has us burnt out, but then what keeps us burnt out is not really taking the time to figure out how to lay those things out in a way that our brain can really process them. So your processes are basically just like your step-by-step tasks. So my process for writing a blog post is deciding “what question do I want to answer for my audience today? Okay, what headline do I want to create? Okay, what are main bullet points for this blog post?”

Whereas sometimes, when people are thinking about everything they have to do, they're like, "Oh my gosh, I have to write five blog posts. I have no idea where I need to start", and they're just so frantic, because they don't have a step-by-step on what they should be doing, and I literally have this. This is something I sell on my Smart Content Toolbox, but I use this in my business too. I have a check list that I can refer to. I don't think it makes any sense for me to try to memorize my process. I can just refer to a sheet, so that way my brain is cleared up for when I actually want to create the content for my audience.

So the first thing is processes. Now the second thing is strategy. So we talked about just having things on your website just for the sake of having them, and that can cause you to burn out as well too, because you're putting in all of this energy into something that's not going to give you a return on your time investment, on your energy investment, right?

So your strategy is deciding what is the goal of this step in my process? So for example, one step in my blogging, my blog publishing process is to make sure that I have multiple headlines. So why am I taking the time and energy to create 10 different headlines for this one blog post? Well the strategy behind that is when I share it on social media, it doesn't seem robotic, or having different headlines is going to attract different people.

So somebody might not be enticed by the "Five Reasons You Should go Vegan" headline, but maybe they'll be enticed by the "Five Things that Happened to My Body after I went Vegan" headline, right? So it's going to the same post, but it's going to intrigue somebody more when you word it differently. So that's the strategy behind it. When you write down each step for your process, you need to decide, "Is every single thing on this step strategic?" If there is no strategy behind it, eliminate it. Because then you're just wasting your time.

And then the third thing systems is basically trying to decide "how can I automate some of these things?" So again, I am not taking the time to manually do all of these steps. So the systems in my business, some of them are either automated, or some of them are delegated, or some of them are operational, which I would just do on my own. So for example, I write all of my own posts, so that's a step in my process that I do on my own, but if I want to schedule it out on social media, I know that scheduling it out, the strategy behind that is so obviously people can go to the blog.

But I know that I can have my social media manager schedule it out for me. I know the system in which these processes are running. So those are the three things that's really important for me to be clear on so you are not burning out and doing everything by yourself, and even if you are just a one man team, you need to know how everything is done in your business for it to run smoothly and effectively, or else your brain is just going to be filled with a whole bunch of stuff. You're going to miss really important steps, and you're not going to see, again, a return on that time and energy investment that you're making.

[00:17:10.5] RP: I love that. Are you writing down all your steps for your processes, or do you have it memorized, or do you have it documented in some way, shape, or form? What's the tool you use?

[00:17:21.0] ME: Yes, so again the tool I use is actually a product I sell called Smart Content Toolbox, and this is written down once. So the whole point of having a system, basically, is that you're doing these repeatable processes. Nothing changes when I write a blog post. It happens all the time, and that's why I have a checklist that I can refer to, because I never want to have to start from scratch every time I want to create a new webinar, or every time I want to do an email challenge, or every time I want to do an email course.

These are some of the things that are inside the Toolbox. When I know I want to do a webinar, I'll go inside of the Toolbox, and I grab the checklist. Okay, I know that I need these very specific graphics, and I can assign it to my designer. I know that these very specific emails need to be written, and I'll go out and write the emails. I know that it needs to be scheduled and promoted from this timeframe, and then I'd let my social media manager know okay, it needs to be promoted from these times.

So anytime I'm going to create a piece of content, whether it's a webinar, master class, email course challenge, blog post; the process is going to be the same. I know who I need to delegate it to, I know what graphics need to be created, I know what emails need to be written. I don't have time to memorize all of this stuff, because I already have so many ideas in my brain. Because as creatives, we just have ideas in our brain all the time.

I need my head space to only have ideas, and I need all of the administrative stuff to be in a checklist that I can just go grab for my Google drive.

[00:18:48.2] RP: Yep, love that. So go find the Smart Content Toolbox. It sounds like a really great resource. That's how I delegate and operationalize my blog as well, and I love that I get to do only the part that I love to do rather than, "Reina, you can't create graphics, so please don't do that." So that's pretty much me. Can we apply this similar strategy, and systems, and processes into maybe a wedding planner, or a graphic designer, who might not be content creating? I want to show them that this is possible for any business. So could you take us through maybe a different type of creative?

[00:19:23.7] ME: Yeah, absolutely. Processes, I would even say they're definitely are equally or even more important when you are running a service based business. So processes are something that I had to get very clear on when I was working with clients as a web and graphic designer one-on-one. So I had to decide, instead of my content creation process was, I had to decide what my client on boarding process was. This is something that is really important if you want to build trust with people that want to make an investment with you.

People need to feel very comfortable that once they submit that payment, or once they email you, that you are going to be able to deliver on what your promise is. So a process for somebody who wants to sell websites would be having some type of form. So the first thing you want to do is obviously have some type of sales page. Be very clear on what it is that you offer. The second thing that you want to do is you want to qualify your client.

This is really important, because when you are selling a service, you're going to have a lot of people that are going to want to waste your time, and they're going to want to hop on calls with you and ask you a bunch of questions, and if you do find that this is happening a lot, you want to jot down these questions and have a frequently asked questions place on your website, so you can always direct people to there.

I'm so specific on who I get on the phone with that any question possible that can be answered on my website, I have it on my contact page. I am very specific about that, and we need to be somewhat stingy so to speak on how we are using our time. Not everybody should be able to

have access to us if they are not making an investment. So you want to qualify your client, and you need to understand what qualifies somebody to be your client.

So what does their budget need to be at? What type of projects are you only willing to work on? Where are they in their business, or where are they — and so if you're a wedding planner, where are they in the planning stages? You need to be very clear on that, and then ask them these questions in a specific questionnaire. The reason you want to have that questionnaire is so when people are reading these questions, if they're like, "Oh I'm not even really able to answer some of these questions", they know that they are not ready to hire you. Then you don't have to read any emails that are going to waste your time. So that is the second step.

And then the third step is if you get this email from the client, they filled out everything on the form, it looks like a good match, you want to respond to them. Let them know, "Hey, I got your email. I'm so excited that you're interested in working with me. I just want to let you know I got your email, and you should hear back from me within the next 48 hours with a proposal". So this is how I did it, I let people know that I at least got their email, but I don't have a quote for them yet.

Then I took the time to decide "Okay, what is it that they want? How much is the investment going to be?", and then I created a formal proposal like, "This is what you said you wanted. Here is what the results are going to be if we work together. Here's how long the process is going to be if we decide to work together." Maybe it's going to be six weeks, maybe it's going to be eight weeks, and then "Here's the payment schedule. Here is the budget for it. Here is the contract".

All of those things, you send it over, and then if they accept it, then you guys go through the process of whatever was inside of the proposal. Like the first week, we make sure that we have your domain and your website, and then by the sixth week, we make sure that your website is up and live and you have all of your social media graphics done or whatever. So that's long and drawn out, but hopefully that was helpful to somebody, because it is really important to have these things very clear if you want your business to run smoothly.

[00:22:46.8] CS: Yeah, I couldn't agree more. You have such a systematic approach, and clearly this has taken a long time for you to refine. So I'm so glad you offer these resources,

because I think just starting out, there's a lot of noise. So it's great that you just cut through all that noise and that clutter, and offer not just the downloadable tools, but also the coaching. I'm curious, in your process is there ever a time, you were saying something about calls, but at what point do you get on the phone with people?

Is that something they can book right into your calendar, or is it after a questionnaire? Have you eliminated that step entirely? What does that look like for you?

[00:23:21.9] ME: For me personally, I have eliminated that step, because I feel I put out so much — I have, but some people, there are some coaches that do discovery calls, where it's a free 15 minute call, and I think that works really well. Especially if you know how to sell on the phone. I wouldn't say that I am a really good seller on the phone. So I'm going to hop on the phone with you for 15 minutes and I am not going to make the sale.

When people go on my website, usually they stalk me for a while. They have been on my Periscopes, they've been reading my blog for a while, and then they decide to hire me. So that's how I sell people, through my content, not through phone calls. So it really just depends. A lot of coaches that do discovery calls, they don't blog, or they don't get on Periscope or whatever. They sell through hopping on the phone with people. So really just depends on what your style is.

I don't really like talking on the phone unless you are already a paid client of mine. Just because I don't know what to say to you, I don't really have anything to offer, so it really depends where you are in your business. If you are looking to have clients and you really need to start learning how to communicate on the phone, then getting on the phone with people for free might be something that you want to start out doing. Obviously, you don't want to just take what I do in my business and immediately apply it to your business, because everybody's strategy works different based on their goals and based on what they're good at.

You might be somebody that's really good on selling on the phone, and you can hop on a quick 10 minute call, and sell a \$10,000 package to somebody. So just be very clear on what you are good at and the ways that you like to sell to people.

[00:24:55.8] RP: I love that you're no-nonsense about selling. Like even if you don't like selling on the phone, you still sell because that's what business is all about. This is off topic but I really am just curious, what has your money mindset story been in terms of selling? I know a lot our listeners struggle with that. They want to help people. They want to do good things, but they don't necessarily feel great selling stuff. So can you talk to us a little bit about what's that been like for you?

[00:25:22.5] ME: Yeah, absolutely. So right now I am doing a challenge called "My Get Paid Challenge", which is helping people with their money mindset, and pitching and promoting their services. It's just so funny addressing these issues, because money scares people, and you come off stingy when you're really serious about your business. So it's really funny when I communicate with people about how they should be with money, but I totally get it, because people correlate money with integrity.

So people feel like they're going to be less genuine, or what they're selling is not going to have as much integrity if it's more or less money, right? So with my money mindset, like when I was first starting out, I was offered money rather than having to ask for money. So immediately, I was like, "Oh, this entire time I have been playing myself by not asking for money". So my money mindset is if I'm not asking for money, I'm playing myself.

I am wasting my time here, because there's people that are willing to pay me. Now there's definitely been instances where talking about money has been awkward, especially every time that I raise my prices, but when you talk about money to potential clients, you need to be very confident when you're giving off your prices. People are already nervous making an investment, so if you're nervous about talking about how much they should pay you, and then they're nervous, then everybody is just nervous, and nobody is making any buying decisions where there's a lot of nerves.

[00:26:51.5] RP: Bad vibes, right?

[00:26:52.9] ME: Right, yeah. When it's all just bad vibes around. So the way that you need to think about asking people for money is understanding that they're not just giving you money for the sake of giving you money, but you're actually delivering and offering them value. You are

actually making some sort of difference in their life, or business, or whatever it is that they are paying you for.

So my thing is stop thinking that you are really selling packages, or selling products, and selling services. Think about what is the end result of what they're really buying from me, and is it worth the investment to them. That is something that they have to be able to answer, but that is also something that you'd have to be comfortable with saying yes or no to, whether they want to make that investment. They are either going to pay you what you ask for, or they're not going to pay you what you ask for, or there needs to be some type of negotiating where both of you are comfortable with the end result of that.

So like, when you are selling a wedding package, you're selling to somebody one of the most important days of their life. You're not selling them a photography package and some beautiful invitations. You are selling them the most important day of their life, and you need to think what would that cost to somebody who takes this seriously.

[00:28:06.1] RP: So good.

[00:28:07.0] CS: Yeah, if somebody is just starting out, and they're trying to put together all these different packages, they're maybe hesitant to sell, like we're talking about. I love that you are not doing the phone thing and instead, it sounds like you're — what am I trying to say here? Where's the idiom? Killing two birds with one stone, right? Where increasing your exposure by being out on social channels, but also building that trust and that value by creating all that content on your own platform. On Periscope, on Facebook, wherever it is that you're marketing.

But yeah, let's use this wedding planner example. If she's getting out there, she's trying to make those packages, make those sales, what are some ways that she can stand out in a noisy market? What are some ways that she could possibly set herself apart, so that she is offering some kind — or I guess, the real question I want to ask is how does she find her unique selling proposition, or her minimum viable product? Where is her value that she can really hone in on right from the beginning?

[00:29:11.7] ME: That's a really good question. I always like to go back to storytelling, and I feel like sometimes that's such a cop out answer, like, "Go back to your story and back to your purpose", but I really believe that. That's where the value lies in everything that is meaningful. First of all, why is it that you're so into wedding planning? What is it that you're really good at? How does this really connect with who you are? Because all of these industries, we can name any industry right now, and pretty much all of them are saturated.

The only difference is how they connect to our own life experiences in our life story, right? So honestly, I just like to connect it to how am I different the way that I started a business versus somebody else started a business, and that's how you make a connection with people. Then also in order to stand out, it's really important to have some type of portfolio. Again, it comes back to what comes first? Like how do I build a portfolio if I don't have customers? How do I get customers if I don't have a portfolio?

I would say that it's really important to have a very clear idea in your mind of the type of people you want to attract, and what you want your consistent portfolio to look like. If you're just doing this for money, you're probably not going to have a consistent portfolio, because all of your projects are going to be different and all over the place. But if you're doing this because it's something that's meaningful to you, and there's a very specific type of weddings that you want to do, or a very specific type of products that you want to do, your portfolio is going to look the same for the most part.

So I would suggest targeting these specific type of products that you want to do. I'm leery about saying offering things for free, because I don't like people to devalue themselves, but maybe possibly giving a higher value package, but then charging it for a lower rate just starting out, just so you can build your portfolio. Obviously, this is not something that you should do long term, but you definitely want to build a portfolio that's going to attract the right type of projects and people you want to work with.

[00:31:11.5] CS: What are some things that you can do to go out and find those people if you're just having problems? The biggest concern that we see, aside from not knowing where to start, and really struggling to just get those first few things on your website, or get your feet on the ground in front of a client, one of the biggest things that we see people struggling with is obviously knowing where to get started, but also consistently booking clients.

So they might accidentally have a couple of people interested all at once, and they have this great day or this great month, but then it's crickets for a while. Or they are just starting out and it's been crickets for a while, and they are starting to doubt whether this is a thing. It sounds like you had some accidental success with building websites, and working with Myspace templates, and things like that, and then getting involved in what you do now obviously over the years.

What are some things that you talk about with your clients, or that you would tell a new creative who is just like, how do people get clients? They're in that space where they are totally clueless as to how people even get a client, or consistently book those clients over and over?

[00:32:18.4] ME: Right. That is a really good question. Back when I started, it feels weird because 2008 doesn't seem that long ago, but when you think about all of the things that's happened in eight, nine years, we have so much more access to people now. So I am on almost every single social media platform. I have a reach to way more people than I did back in 2008. When I first started, I would literally just hop on Craigslist, and go to gigs, and see who needed services, and I could make money easily that way.

[00:32:47.9] CS: Oh man, not today.

[00:32:49.0] ME: I know, right?

[00:32:49.7] CS: Please don't go on Craigslist, listeners.

[00:32:54.1] ME: Listen, there might be some money out on Craigslist, but I don't know. I wouldn't know. So that is something that I used to do when I first started. Another thing is just connecting with people in complimentary industries. So you might know somebody who's a caterer, like a wedding caterer, or you might know somebody who's a wedding photographer and you design wedding invitations.

So you also want to connect with people, and collaborate with people who are in complimentary industries who are successful. Same thing with content creators. You see people doing collaborative webinars when they have complementary products or services, and you want to do

the same thing if you're providing a service for people. So that's definitely one way that I would suggest, and then you even talked about when you have one really good month where you have all of the clients, and everybody is so interested in you, and then another month or another season in your business, stuff is really dry.

This is why diversifying your income comes in. So you might not want to rely on only designing invitations, but you might want to, I don't know, maybe you want to sell an ebook on how to design invitations, or sell an e-book on how to do something. I don't know, because the wedding industry isn't my expertise, but the way to diversify your income is allow people to make investments with you at different levels, but based on the same expertise, pretty much.

So the example that I gave on my challenge for web designers was come out with an ebook that's like a step-by-step guide on how to build your website from scratch, and then have a workshop. A step-by-step workshop on how to build your website from scratch. So maybe the ebook is \$12, maybe the workshop is \$67, maybe one on one training on how to build your website is \$600, maybe you actually building a website for them is \$1,500, right?

If there's a month where you don't have people that are paying you to design their website. you might have a month where people are paying for training, or paying for the ebook, so you want to have different levels where people can make an investment with you.

[00:34:59.6] CS: Yes, I love this so much, and I think it's so important, because you're a service provider, originally, and now you have all these products. One myth that I hear over and over is that, "I'm a coach, I'm a wedding planner, how can I ever create a product?", and the default these days in our industry is to create some kind of educational product, but I think you are a great example of someone who has diversified it incredibly.

You have not only your educational workshops and your services, but you also have gone a step further, and you've created not something that's educational, but something that is really helpful. So your product planner and your toolbox, those are all things that someone could download, and they could literally use it and just go through and check off the things that they need in their business.

So there's also something like that, and I think we forget as a wedding planner, or as a coach, or whatever your industry is, there are people out there that could really benefit. Not necessarily from learning how to be a coach, or a wedding planner, or some aspect of what you do, but what does your process look like? What does it look like for you to wake up and talk to clients in the morning? What kind of emails you send? How did you turn your services into these commodities?

[00:36:15.0] ME: That's a really good question. Again, when I was doing web and rocket design, and when I realized that these people are struggling with their strategies, I just wrote down what the strategy would need to be, and then put a price point on it. Or even some of it was free. Some of it was blog posts, to give me — because I am trying to build my brand as an expert now. I'm trying to build my brand as somebody that you can hire as a coach.

So some information I gave for free, some information I just decided to put a price point on it. Like when I first started consulting, I didn't know what I was doing. I just knew that I have information in my head that I could charge people for. So I just put up a consulting page, and people that wanted to start their business, but didn't necessarily want a website, or they had a website but it wasn't getting traffic could pay me for that information.

So I just took a look at what was missing, where do I have experience, where do I have a little bit of expertise, and can I put a price point on it?

[00:37:09.7] RP: Yeah, I keep seeing people, and Christina you probably see this too, so it might be a little bit of a jump, but I see people who are doing things for free. People who are doing things that they think are good marketing things, but it's not quite connecting to their ideal client. So I don't know if you're familiar with the term "styled shoots", but they are basically productions of people who get together, vendors who work together, to create this beautiful thing.

And then their hope I think, the strategy behind it is to get it published so that they become known, and famous, and all of that stuff. But what I see more commonly is that they will go off and create this thing. They spend a lot of money, a lot of time, a lot of resources, and then it doesn't really pan out. What I've loved about listening to you is that everything has been

strategic. Everything has been tied to your bottom line in terms of making you money somehow, whether it's directly or indirectly.

Do you have any encouragement for somebody who's maybe spending a lot of those marketing dollars and not getting people in the door?

[00:38:14.8] ME: Yeah, again it really just all comes down to strategy, like you said. Everything that I do is strategic. That is probably why my title is strategist, because I love strategy. Not just because it is smart, but because it is intentional, and I'm a very intentional person. So usually if you're not seeing success in something, it's probably because there's not a lot of purpose behind it. You need to be very clear on that. If you don't really know what the purpose behind what you're doing is, a lot of people aren't going to be able to see what the purpose behind it is either, right?

People want to make investments that are meaningful to them. So at the end of the day, when people are buying from you, they are buying based on their emotions, right? They might justify it with rationale, but they are making a purchase based off of emotions. If I do not feel good about giving you my money, I'm not going to give you my money, but if I feel good about giving you my money, I'm going to justify it with, "Oh I needed this because..." I am not going to say, "Oh I bought it because it felt good", but I really bought it because I felt good, right?

So there needs to be some type of purpose and intention in the things that you are doing in order for other people to be able to see the purpose and intention as well.

[00:39:29.1] RP: Yeah, that's spot on.

[00:39:30.6] CS: Maya, if you are looking out into the future, and you're looking at what your creative empire looks like, can you tell us a little bit about what you see?

[00:39:39.0] ME: Yeah, absolutely. I look out into the future, I can see myself working with bigger brands and bigger companies, and it's weird, because I feel like there's a cycle with our businesses. So I started out with the digital age, and seeing and helping people with their web and graphic design, and then I was like, "Whoa, I don't want to do this anymore, because you

guys are so clueless. You have no idea what strategy is. You don't know what you want in your websites, and it's literally burning me out."

And I don't want to start hating my clients, so I was like, "Let me stop doing this before I start getting resentful", so then I started the coaching, and the strategy, and that's been great. I love teaching people so much, it makes me so happy, but then I was like, "Ugh now I just feel like I'm just this thing that just sells products", and again, obviously I enjoy making money, but I want it to feel good at the same time, and so being behind a computer screen and not working with people one-on-one as much.

I'm like, "Well, I feel like I am not really connecting with as many people as I once was", so now I see myself going back into the direction of working some type of agency. But now I can at least combine design and content. So we're combining both of the careers that I've been able to be successful in, and then making it more successful, and reaching more people, and doing things that are most meaningful. So I can definitely see myself running a bigger agency where I am helping people and helping bigger businesses to get results.

[00:41:01.4] RP: Awesome. Where can people find you online?

[00:41:04.6] ME: People can find me online at mayaelious.com.

[00:41:12.5] RP: Fantastic. Any other social platforms that you like using?

[00:41:15.3] ME: I am always on Twitter, always on Instagram. So I am everywhere pretty much @MayaElious, and if you want to join my free Facebook group, it is full of content creators that is just sharing ideas and supporting each other. You can sign up for that for free at fit.ly/contentclub.

[00:41:32.1] RP: Fantastic, thank you so much for coming on. I feel like we talked about so many different things. I know that people are probably scrambling to take all of these notes, but we're so excited to share you with the world, our audience, and go build your Creative Empire.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[00:41:47.0] ANNOUNCER: Are you ready to build your own empire? For more information, show notes, downloads, and tips on how to do it, head to www.creativeempire.co, where you can find out more about this week's episode and the two lovely ladies behind it all, encouraging you to build your own creative empire.

If you enjoyed this week's show, it would mean so much to Reina and Christina if you could take two minutes to go to iTunes and leave a review. It's a little thing that makes a big difference for the show.

[END]