BRINGING BUSINESS TO RETAIL PODCAST EPISODE TRANSCRIPTION



Salena: Hey there and welcome to this week's episode of the bringing business to retail podcast, LinkedIn is it a social platform or is it a business platform. How do you actually use it when you're in retail or e-commerce, these are the questions that I have been struggling to get retailers to embrace for many years. So, I decided to bring on somebody who knows exactly how you can do all of those things please welcome to the show set Sarah Santa Croch. Do I get that right?

Sarah: Almost yes, thank you Salena, thank you so much, it's an honor to be here.

Salena: Okay, how do I pronounce the last name let's get it right.

Sarah: Santa Croch and that's just the English way to say it's Italian and it means Holy Cross and an Italians pronounce Santa Croch.

Salena: So, it's an Italian name with someone who's living in Switzerland.

Sarah: Yes, it's complicated. So, I told you my husband is Canadian but he's actually no his parents emigrated from Sicily to Canada and now he's back in Europe isn't it funny how life goes

Salena: I guess when you are a bit of a digital nomad you kind of rely on LinkedIn to get you clients to get you no one to build your personal brand would that be right.

Sarah: Yes, definitely, I think we're all somehow a bit digital nomads today because we're not no longer only working with people who live in our little town right and so, that's where these platforms come in handy whether it's LinkedIn or Facebook or Instagram or you know there's no more borders really we're just connecting with the whole world.

Salena: Now, you laughed when I had that little bit of an intro LinkedIn is it a social network or is it a better play platform jump in and give us your answer.

Sarah: Yes, so it's both actually but LinkedIn is still a bit always struggling with that social aspect right and that's where probably most people maybe in your audience, they're like a bit intimidated by LinkedIn because when I first started it used to be this platform for recruiters and people who are on job transition.

Salena: Customized.

Sarah: Yes, exactly big corporations.

Salena: Big corporations were on there and so, it got this reputation of being kind of stiff and sterile and you have to like put up your you know I'm this great Big Shot kind of attitude and so people _ so, they'll up till this day they're still kind of intimidated because they're like well that's

probably not my kind of people on there, especially if we're talking about you know small business owners and entrepreneurs it has changed a lot over the years especially, probably about two years ago when the Millennials started to embrace LinkedIn and say hey this is an interesting platform this is a great place to do business but in with our rules right wait like Millennials are just much more about being human showing up as they are and so, the dynamics have really changed a lot on LinkedIn. I would say especially in the last two years where it is really now a social platform for professionals. I've just noticed they've brought out similar to like a Facebook live thing there seems to be lots of videos hanging out like not professional videos just people talking on LinkedIn which is one or two videos or stuff like that and is that LinkedIn transitioning to be more of a social platform and trying to get you on there and off Facebook.

Sarah: Definitely, yes, they're always a step behind you know the other platforms but they're like alright we're getting there or you know they just brought LinkedIn live still only available to a select few users, but you can tell that they're trying to keep up with modern world so to speak.

Salena: Okay, so, the big question that retailers have and I swear I sometimes need to beat people over the head when they're in retail or e-commerce you have to be on LinkedIn. So, can you tell us why, if we are selling products to consumers rather than product manufacturers or product creators, we're just a store that sells stuff for an e-commerce site that sells stuff, why do we need to be on LinkedIn.

Sarah: And I'm going to be very honest with you on my webinar for example, you know I go through this slide where it's like who's a good fit and who should be on LinkedIn and the first thing I say is like well if you provide services then you're a good fit for being on LinkedIn right. I do some work with products but they're more like in the luxury sector because that's where the professional audience is interested. So, when you invited me to the podcast, I'm like okay let me think about this and so, what I realized is that it is just part of your brand it is just a place where people can go find out about your brand, it's not necessarily the place where you're going to you know feature all these product pictures and because it's not really even though they're adding video and things like that it's not the visual platform like the Facebook or Instagram is. ,It's more the let me find out about the owner of this brand right and so that's why you need a LinkedIn presence to also then develop relationships partnerships with other retailers with who else which you have to really with.

Salena: One of my clients is she does gift Campus for corporates and she has a retail store as well, but she was one of the people who I said one hundred percent you have to be on LinkedIn because a corporate person is hanging out there so we used to get when I have my stores exactly the same thing even though we didn't advertise gift hampers where we get people because we would neither near the city in Sydney, we get people just ringing up saying can you put a gift hamper together someone's expecting it maybe he's our budget we'll just leave it up to you someone will be call us when it's ready to be picked up. I would find you on LinkedIn because it's not even with the connection sometimes they just search we had a baby shot Sydney because those people it's the platform they hang out on the most, so to search there.

Sarah: Exactly, so, if you have a corporate audience, so if you're if you're actually delivering your products to corporations well then yes of course you need to be on LinkedIn. So, that's where the bb comes in right, you're actually creating and selling your products to other businesses, well then this is a no-brainer I was trying to also think about what if you're an e-commerce and you're actually your clients are you know the individual customer. So, even then I think it's good to have a presence because you're going to have that brand representation not necessarily to sell products like you would if you're selling to the corporates, but at least to have this brand presentation.

Salena: I have a client who sells wedding-day core and let's be honest we want people who have good jobs, if you're selling a luxury product because they're not cheap, you there's a good chance that the woman who's out there looking for your product is in some sort of corporate role and I'm the same I kind of feel like if I'm going to buy something and I can see that you're a connection or if I type in wedding and I can your wedding in Sydney and you come up then I'm probably going to go to you first. So, I see it as like a bit of a conquering the landscape that your competitors aren't doing because most retailers aren't only LinkedIn. So, if you have a LinkedIn profile that actually has something about you and your business, you're going to be found way before anybody else.

Sarah: Yes and any gifts you do really does this credibility that if you only you know have a Facebook page maybe it doesn't because LinkedIn has this kind of this status symbol to it right it's like I'm a serious business owner and you know I have a LinkedIn profile that show that.

Salena: I am one hundred agree. I think it'd give you that complete next level of professionalism. So, speaking about that you mentioned before personal branding. So, how do you kind of differentiate between your retail or e-commerce store and who you are or whether you should even be a personal brand on LinkedIn.

Sarah: Well, I think we definitely nowadays all should have our personal brand even if you know on the ecommerce store for example, doesn't necessarily have an about page but somehow I'm always interested to know who's behind the business that I'm working with today. I think that is just you know people do business with people and that is so true even more nowadays like people just want to know who's the owner behind this business and that's where the personal branding comes in. so, the branding is really about the person who owns the business and then the ecommerce store well that's just your platform where you sell your products.

Salena: A couple of episodes ago actually in New York we're talking about the New York trip. I interviewed two Australians Jen Gil from mountain bikes direct and Jane Liu from zopo both eight-figure retail businesses, they're pretty much their sole job in the business now is to be the face of the business and promote the business further. So, for them they've developed a personal brand even though in Jen's case she's a co-owner but she was the one who felt comfortable being out there and she was saying she gets a lot of people especially reporters just reaching out to her violent in because she's posting these articles where she's been featured or awards that they've won speaking events all these kinds of things and as a result journalists are reaching out to her other businesses are reaching out to her speaking companies are reaching out to her because by default

she's become the face of the business and they basically she talks about how they grew the business. She doesn't get on there to talk about bikes she gets something to talk about business.

Sarah: Exactly, because nowadays people want to know you know what this company stands for, they want to know the values and the company doesn't have values unless there's persons involved to have values and so, I totally agree with that the person needs to be somewhere up front and represent the company.

Salena: So, tell me a little bit about how say, we've convinced people to finally get out on LinkedIn, how would they use it to move towards that personal brand or to move their retail brand or e-commerce brand further ahead, when they post.

Sarah: Okay, so the way I teach my clients to use LinkedIn is in three steps, the first step is to optimize your profiles. So, that is where the branding comes in right so rather than just for example let's look at the title in the title linked it doesn't really make it bad obvious because it tells you, you know this is the headline. Okay, people go what's my headline well probably my title owner act in the name of my store. Well, that's a big mistake because everybody is an owner of their companies though that doesn't tell me anything about who you are and what you stand for and what your product is etc. so, use that headline in a smart way by actually adding something that that people understand what it is you do, who you help and what you're good at what kind of results you use or the products that you sell get four people can you give it. so, you have retail strategists right okay I understand you have a brand that helps people with strategies around retail right, so.

Salena: I think I have retail strategist's speaker and something else.

Sarah: Bring it up again

Salena: With little stars that was a tip that I got actually was to use a little star graphics in there because it makes it stand out. yes, I like that, what I would say is keynote speaker. So, yes, you have retail strategies retail consultant and keynote speaker. Keynote speaker is kind of a buzzword and a lot of people use it, so, tell me what you're speaking about that's what I'm really interested in right.

Sarah: Cool, I like it.

Salena: Because it is that positions you as the expert in this field. I can guess that you're talking about retail, but I want to know exactly you know what I would hire you for if I was looking for a keynote speaker.

Sarah: Top strip.

Salena: So, can you give us an example bit of like some of the things that you've like maybe before and after thank you for mine like a before and after of what you've done with some of your clients.

Sarah: In terms of the profile you're saying?

Salena: Yes, in terms of like that headline or the title.

Sarah: So, the headline is just amazing because it's just a simple thing right you're like it's high rank in twenty characters, but it really makes all the difference like people send me messages after they watched my webinar by the way. So, anybody wants to watch that they can look at it at https://sarahs.lpages.co/webinar/. So, in that webinar, I share exactly the those tips about the headline and if they improve it what the first thing they'll see is the views, the profile views go up and so, some people you send me screenshots of like the disguise at me screenshot of the profile view is going up by seven hundred percent, I'm of my it just makes a big difference basically they go from like no profile views, if they used something like founder or owner really boring right who wants to look at that but the minute you actually improve it hey your connections obviously will look at it because they're like this is interesting but weed these are keywords and that helps you show up in search results. So, when someone looks for a keynote speaker in retail well there's a very good chance that your profile will show up, So. it that's the first result is getting more profile views and then getting more connection requests and then from there you know going into conversations with people and you know in the end they will lead to new business.

Salena: I want to come back to connection requests but you said there are three things that you normally optimize. So, the first was the headline what is the second.

Sarah: So, I was saying the three steps is the profiles, so the headline is just one tiny bit of the profile the other thing is the summary, so that's where you have about three paragraphs you four paragraphs on yours. So, you could add more content there as well because we have two thousand characters. So, we can really use it like a sales page. So, when people come to your profile they're like okay, I get it what she does I know who she works with I know what kind of keynote speeches she gets and it's all there right. So, that's the that's the summary section that I work with people on and then the other parts of the profile are for example the experience section either previous like a whole bunch of previous experience sections or at last two or three that really can be improved as well. So, on yours for example you have retail strategist consultant and then it just has your website. Well, there as well again we have, characters that we could use to give people more information about you know your different coaching programs about your keynote speeches. So, it's really also a place to further educate people about who you are and what you do.

Salena: That's a top tip right there thank you.

Sarah: That's the profile optimization and there's other things like you know place keywords where they should go etc. so, that just the profile itself what its job is to represent your professionalism and really position you as the expert that you are, that the job and what I often say is like you no longer have to sell yourself you don't have to send messages then and say hi I'm Salena I'm a retail strategist here's what I do. No, they already see that on your profile it's all there right.

Salena: Right

Sarah: That's the first part, the second part is to really develop this network and have the right kind of connections in your network because most people when they start out well maybe they have connections from their previous corporate job, they're like well these are not really the people that you know need to see my content, I don't have contact with them anymore. So, that's where it

gets to like really being proactive about reaching out to the right kind of connections. The other thing is publishing content in that step. So, really being actually visible and so before you asked well what kind of content would retailers share. So, I would I would say what you mentioned for example you know if they've been interviewed if they've been on a podcast if they write a blog on the side. So, anything that's either educating or informing or funny or you know kind of like show me more about you and the life of an owner of a retail business show me more about yes your products as well, but don't just show me an ad tell me stories about this product and what it has done for people. So, that's the kind of information that people are interested on LinkedIn.

Salena: I'm going to come back to that, but I want to go to connections first tell me more about connections because I get a lot of connection requests and most of the time they don't come with any kind of message and I will get onto that shortly and I look at them I'm like I don't know who you are and I don't know why you want to connect with me. So, I don't actually press accept now my husband who does work for a corporation was like no you just accept everybody because if so reason the more people you have the more content gets seen. I guess I don't understand it if I want to connect with somebody, I connect with them because I've met them or maybe I think we could do business together or I've got something that I would love to share with them, how does the connection thing work.

Sarah: Okay, so, what you just said that unfortunately nowadays still after me repeating this for ten years or more people still don't understand out on LinkedIn it's a good practice to personalize this invitation. It's only they don't understand they just don't know that it's even possible or that they should be doing. So, I'm never blaming the person who doesn't personalize the invitation but it's true it puts all the work on the receiver and you're like who are you do I know you have you listened to my podcast should I be honored by your connection request I don't know right and so, it makes it really difficult making this decision do I accept or not where, if you know for example listeners of this podcast right now, if they would reach out to me and send me a LinkedIn invitation and say hey I saw you and Salena on her YouTube channel great conversation, I'd love to connect of course I'm going to accept that

Salena: Yes, that make sense, I feel the random connections are like a bit of a you know Instagram follow unfollow it's like you're just kind of hanging out with me because you want to be associated with me.

Sarah: Also here's things you don't know.

Salena: You don't know. So, I just don't know it.

Sarah: You don't know what they're thinking and so is where your husband is like well you know maybe they are actually podcasting those listeners or maybe they are on your list and so why not take that small tiny risk and say yes, I'm going to connect and then what I do is I send them a follow-up message. So, I say I send a thank you message saying hey thanks so much for connecting if there's ever anything I can do for example introduce you to one of my contacts let me know and just got to be connected right that's then oh okay this LinkedIn thing that's how it works I can send back a message and then often they're like by the way I'm on your list or by the way I listened to your podcast and that's where the conversation then starts.

Salena: Alright, so, I do get a lot of people who are retail stores or work within some sort of retail department and I usually just write back and say you know hey Pete thanks so much for connecting let me know if I can ever help you out growing your retail business I don't know I don't know who you are.

Sarah: Usually I don't know maybe it works for you, how do people respond to that.

Salena: They, don't but I don't know...

Sarah: It because you freezes them, it's too scary you know it's like she wants to sell me something. We're on the other hand if you just opened the conversation that's when the magic might happen maybe not but you just opened the conversation. So, rather than say hey, let me know if I can help you with your retail business just say thanks so much for connecting have you ever listened to my podcast or here's the latest podcast I don't know just like something rather than trying to sell immediately.

Salena: It was only because I don't know who you are, this is a random thing. So, let's go into that a little bit more because I know that you have an awesome giveaway. I haven't subscribed to it is sitting on my other screen but I had to jump into this interview first, when I want to reach out to someone and connect with them what do I say.

Sarah: Right, so that's where my templates come in because that's what a lot of people struggle with. So, I decided to put out this template with six invitation emails or messages that people can grab and they can get that as Sarah Santa Crochet not actually https://sarahsantacroce.com/linkedin-templates-download/ that's the easiest link.

Salena: We'll put a link into the show notes because they can fix whole templates to use. So, it just has these kind of you know yet their templates, so they 're messages that are meant to be kind of an idea starter you're not supposed to be just using them exactly like they are but they give you an idea of what you could say in different situations. So, for example if you're connecting with someone that you're part of the same group you're in the same group on LinkedIn and that's always a good excuse, so to speak to say hey we're in the same group. So, did the main thing to remember when you send these invitations is obviously you're not going to say hey, I came across your profile looks like you're a perfect client for me can, I work with you something like that, so you don't want to sell and it's decent rotation connections what you want to do is really find something that you have in common use something that you can say hey we're have a common interest in retail are you open to connect. Hey, you know I have listened to your podcast are you open to connect. So, it's always an open question are you open to connect here.

Salena: Okay, so when you want to do this I have noticed that sometimes there's a connect button and sometimes there's a message button and even then connect button is hidden in the little hamburger menu and the message button is more prominent you hit that and it says you need to be a LinkedIn Premium Member to do this. So, it's my first tip is if you can't find the connect button it's over on the right-hand side in the other stuff, but would you suggest that people just continue to reach out it's like I'm just thinking from a retail point of view how would we choose whether to message or connect because the difference between for those who aren't who aren't familiar with

LinkedIn the connect button just sends a request these are these random requests that we keep getting we don't know who somebody is and then there's a message button which is for you to send them a message but you need to be a premium mentor member but you are saying that the invitation we can customize. So, when we press connect, we do have the option to add a note in there. So, we're going to go and grab your templates but how then do we decide who to go and reach out to.

Sarah: Okay, so, the difference between message and connect is that when you connect you can still customize the message and that's what my templates are for you want to actually connect not just message because you want to connect you then have them in your network and then you will share content be visible in this person's newsfeed so that you get to establish your expertise because most likely and we know that is that the person you're connecting with they're not immediately ready to buy from you though that never happens one percent chance right. So, you need to first establish that you're an expert in this field or that your product is the perfect fit for this person and so, that's why you want to have them in your network so that you actually get to that they get to see your content and so that's why also when we go back to the topic of you know having little connections or having a lot of connections. Well, if you look at it from a retail point of view, I would say a lot of connections is what you want because you're really using LinkedIn for brand awareness that's what are you using it for.

Salena: So, we'll just that one of the easiest ways to start would be to just go and lightly team with your customers is that weird? No.

Sarah: I don't know the kind of connect customer relationships you have do you know them like with e-commerce, I assume that would be a bit complicated but if you know these are people who you see they come into your store then then definitely, I would definitely connect with them first.

Salena: And then how else would _ tell me I don't know how the search function work. So, say you have an eco-conscious brand and you want to reach out to potentially journalists potentially corporates that might do the gift hamper thing. I'm just thinking women who are ecofriendly kind of people how do we find them do you just type in ecofriendly into the search term into the search bar.

Sarah: Right, so that's the third step of my three-step process is now that we've published content now that we grow in our network now we're going to get specific right and so that's where we use the LinkedIn database to search for these ideal client and what you need to do is first do that kind of brainstorming about what kind of keywords do you want to search for. So, is it ecofriendly. Okay, think about the term eco-friendly but people use that on their LinkedIn profile well, a journalist probably wouldn't use eco-friendly on their profile right, but someone who has an ecofriendly brand yes, they would so that would be a good keyword to find probably other business owners with eco-friendly brands if you want to you can find journalists well then you're going to look for journalists in the search bar. So, this is the search bar and that's accessible to the free account as well top left corner where you're going to use these keywords and then once you enter a keyword, it will give you some additional filters because maybe you want to kind of only search in Australia or narrow it down to certain companies, so that's the filters you have available to

access the database and then you still need to do the legwork and look at this person's profile and say is this you know the person that I want to connect with.

Salena: Okay, so, back to content thank you for that because I've always wondered that exact thing, back to the content what is the optimum amount of content we should be publishing every single day week and can we just repurpose stuff from otheryou social media platforms.

Sarah: Right, so, I would say it's a good idea to commit to something regular rather than tell you, you know at least once per day, if you can do once per day then commit to that but if you know that after a week you're going to just stop again it's probably better to say I commit to twice per week so that's usually my answer to that question. The other question is can you repurpose yes, but it depends what, if you write a blog post definitely repurpose that or you know link to your blog or what I usually do because right now, and the LinkedIn algorithm what works well is text only posts. So, rather than sending people to your blog which LinkedIn doesn't like because it's an external link take them off LinkedIn. Well, I just take a few key insights from the block and just write a text update and then say if you want to read the full blog link is in the comments so that's a way to stew because what you're really using LinkedIn is not necessarily only to get traffic to your site that used to be the case ten years ago but now what you're really doing is positioning yourself as this expert. So, people don't necessarily need to read the full blog to get this fact that you're the expert in this field a few key insights and they're like okay yes, she is the one and if they want more info the link is going to be in the comments.

Salena: Okay, do we have to go and comment on other people's stuff.

Sarah: It a good practice for sure because again it's actually faster than writing your own content all the time and it still positions you as the as the expert because you're obviously going to be very smart about commenting not just saying yay, and you know Congrats and stuff like that but actually making you know meaningful contributions to the to the content that that's already there so I definitely recommend commenting of them for people's content yes.

Salena: I think that I'm going to stop there, I think because my head is reeling with how much information you've given us and I feel like if I start the next question, we could be talking for like the next half an hour or an hour so.

Sarah: Next time.

Salena: Next time yes, let's definitely do it next time but I think the biggest takeaway from this is if you aren't using a LinkedIn profile even if you're not doing the posting and you're not doing all the commenting you're not doing all the things simply having the profile there is going to put you further ahead than your competitors and then if you head over to Sarah website and you grab her templates you can start doing the connection thing and we'll put a link to the webinar in as well because in there you're talking about how to optimize the profile. So, guys take an hour out of your day go and listen to the webinar watch the webinar spend a bit of time on your profile because really one sale is all you need to get and you've got a return on investment and every sale after that is just building your profile and this stuff is free right, you're not doing it you're not paying for any ads if we're not we didn't even talk about ads or anything like that we're just talking about going

out there and connecting with people who generally a pretty good clientele because they are business owners, they are professional people I'll make the assumption and say generally they have disposable income because the people who are hanging out there are in those levels of business where I don't know what would be the word here more professional/

Sarah: And there's definitely stats on that that LinkedIn has the most you know affable user so yes because usually they're either you know in a corporate job or they are business owners who are doing quite well, so that's why this is definitely true the money is on LinkedIn.

Salena: Okay, if there's no other reason to go and hang out on LinkedIn it's because the money is on LinkedIn. So, thank you Sarah so much for sharing all of that, I'm going to head off not right now because it's quite late at night but tomorrow and have a look at my profile of definitely grabbing those invitation templates I'm literally halfway through putting my name in before I had to jump on because it's one of those things that I feel I just don't do very well. So, thank you for that advice you know on how I can connect when people random people connected me. I still think it certainly but we're going to take them on board and see what we can if we can turn them in to convert them into a customer.

Sarah: Exactly, I can I add one last thing because you know the header of the profile, so we have there's very small lights, I said it's not the visual most visual of the platforms but we have a little header banner on the top of our profile picture and so that's another way where we can use our branding and so, I would highly recommend use some kind of visual from your site it just gives you this Authority profile that stands out from the rest.

Salena: Okay, can you do video on me.

Sarah: No, not yet well you can have the video in the other media section.

Salena: Yes, you are just a powerhouse of information thank you.

Sarah: Thank you for having me that was fun.