

Episode 75: How to Build Trust with Potential Clients using the Art of Storytelling with Megan Hargroder

[00:00:00] **Joey:** Everyone welcome back to another episode of the business growth advantage. I could not be more excited for today's guest because let's face it. If you're a business owner, you probably know of someone who can help you with website design or with the copy on your website. I've gotten a few in my day and not to knock anyone else, but I have fallen in love.

[00:01:10] **Joey:** With Megan, Harvard and Hargrove her. I told her that I would get the name right. And. Megan has such a next level strategy and expertise about the way that she thinks about websites that I really wanted to have her on, whether you're a lawyer and by the way, Megan has a niche practice of, how she does what she does for law firm owners.

[00:01:33] **Joey:** If you're not a lawyer, keep leaning in because you're just going to have these secret weapon strategies that others in this space just won't be able to give you. So, Megan, You're super smart. And when we were introduced, it was very clear very quickly that you and I would become really good friends and hit it off someone like you, once you start getting into the business world has a choice of what kind of a business to build.

[00:02:01] **Joey:** what made you decide to go in the direction of website building it? And what made you decide to stay in that space?

[00:02:08] **Megan:** I actually started doing social media first. Um, I kind of accidentally built a social media business. I was working at a nonprofit. I really want it to take yoga classes and I couldn't afford them.

[00:02:19] **Megan:** So I bartered, we own her. I was like, Hey, do you know about Twitter? Um, I can clearly this is early two thousands. So do you know about Twitter and Facebook? Like I can make you pages and get more people to come to classes and she's like, Yeah, sure. I don't care. I have to pay the teachers to show up for class anyways.

[00:02:37] **Megan:** I don't care what extra persons in class. You want to do some free work for me. Go ahead, have fun. And it really spun out and was successful. And she was also a graphic designer who referred me to some of her clients. So I did a lot of retail. I did a lot of restaurant stuff. I did, at one point I was doing social media for pretty much everyone on the 500 block of magazine street in new Orleans.

[00:02:58] **Megan:** And then it got to the point where some of those people started meeting with. And I kept trying to find these website development partners to work with. And I was very frustrated. I was frustrated because website developers tend to be very creative people and artistic people, which means they're not into deadlines.

[00:03:19] **Megan:** They're not into customer service and they weren't treating my clients the way that I did and like the bar that I had set. I was like, I gotta figure out how to do this.

[00:03:30] **Joey:** And I just stop you right there and say that like, I can relate, sell hard to creative entrepreneurs. There's a struggle there as, being a business owner in the creative space of mastering, that overlap between being really skilled at your craft and mastering the business side.

[00:03:47] **Joey:** just prompts for pointing that out because that can be such a hard thing to figure out for any creative, because you're so strong in the creative space.

[00:03:56] **Megan:** And a lot of people find that it's not right for them. I know a lot of people who went and they started their own creative agencies and then decided they just wanted to be creatives.

[00:04:05] **Megan:** and so my designer who I work with now is, um, prefers to not do the front facing client interactive so that she can just focus on the creative and that's great. So we kind of built that system where our creatives just to get, get, to be creative. we create fake deadlines so that they meet the deadlines.

[00:04:25] **Megan:** You know, you have to play the game. It became more evident to me that social media was just one part of the puzzle and it was a branch that was coming off of the website. So it all goes back to the website. If your website isn't good and successful, like, what are you sending traffic to and why?

[00:04:43] **Megan:** and you know, why are people mad or like your website is actually your business. Online and everything about it reflects who you are as a company and as an individual. that kind of became my new focus and I became very, very obsessed with, making really great [00:05:00] websites and telling really great stories, which is what my background is.

[00:05:04] **Joey:** And when you say that you make great websites because she's not playing around, put her link in the chat, so you can all go see her own website and what she's built out for her clients, conversations, digital.com. The websites that you create are like gorgeous to look at. I know from talking with you that they're also like SEO powerhouses, and it's hard to do both of that.

[00:05:25] **Joey:** I have a lot of friends who pay a lot of money for good SEO sites and they're like, I know it, works and it's great for SEO, but like it is ugly to look at you really have captured the way to do this. Like the best of both worlds. In terms of building the website. One of the reasons why I just found you so refreshing to talk about this is that you take some, I don't want to say contradictory.

[00:05:48] **Joey:** Positions on, on website building, but you think about things differently and you elevate and prioritize certain parts of this, all that maybe other people just don't think to. And I think part of this to your point goes back to your background in storytelling and thinking really pragmatically about how the website works.

[00:06:08] **Joey:** I was floored when you told me that you don't really start with the homepage anymore, or at least that's not really your jam.

[00:06:17] **Megan:** I don't serve at the homepage anymore. And it's, uh, it used to be my main thing it's like, and it's so important. I'm not saying the homepage isn't important. It is the most important page on your site.

[00:06:28] **Megan:** It has to keep people there and we'll go back to that. But. Now we begin with the attorney biography. So we primarily work with solo and small firm lawyers. And when someone's hiring a lawyer, they're hiring a person and they want to know about that human. We started really deep diving into the person's story, why they do what they do, what connection points they have with their own clients, what are their stories?

[00:06:55] **Megan:** You know, what are their successes? What are their failures? and looking at that, and that really helps us to build out the story on the homepage versus saying like, let's start with a tagline. Okay. You do divorce. you know, there's, we could think of a million taglines for a divorce lawyer. But what's the right one for this specific divorce lawyers.

[00:07:17] **Megan:** So by starting with the biography and the story page, we're starting with learning first about the clients, so that we're building their website. Now we're not just building a great website, we're building something that's completely reflective of them. And that's probably the thing I'm the most proud of is like, yes, our websites are good.

[00:07:35] **Megan:** They're SEO friendly. They're beautiful, but they are also. Our clients, it is them in the mirror manifested as a piece of online

[00:07:45] **Joey:** collateral. I can just kind of say some words and then you can make them sound better. one of the things that I'm learning as a business owner, who has to learn the, marketing and messaging and sales side of all of this is, when your ideal client.

[00:08:01] **Joey:** Is looking more for an affordable service or they're very money conscious. then you have to build a brand that is more geared towards that commodity. And one of the things that I really like and respect about what you do and the types of websites that you build again to your credit, even if you're working with solo law firm owners, you elevate their brand, you make them seem more high-end.

[00:08:25] **Joey:** And one thing that I've recently. Learned or discovered is if you are going after that more money conscious more money sensitive. Consumer or business owner who's, wanting a more affordable option. That's when it's more effective to lean into those, kind of click baity type languages. The, do you want to avoid pain here?

[00:08:49] **Joey:** If so, keep reading, click below. Whereas if you want to position yourself as a more affluent service provider who. for example, I'm a trademark lawyer. If I want to go from a trademark lawyer who is attracting people by not just talking about why trademarks, but why Joey and white indie law, I need to be more aspirational in the language that I use.

[00:09:13] **Joey:** And so instead of my headlines and everything being like, do you want to avoid a lot of this pain? There can be a lot of aspiration. I want this for you and I've say all of this because not only do I, I love Megan's work. We've actually worked together and you helped me revamp our about page. If you've been there or you want to check it out, read it.

[00:09:38] **Joey:** If you like it, then all the prompts to Megan. If you don't, then I just need more work to get it up to speed. But you helped me so much in kind of elevating the language. Of aspirational, why us, and then still sprinkling in the, you know, we help you avoid certain nightmare situations. we make it so that you can, go to bed at night without worrying about getting a cease and [00:10:00] desist letter.

[00:10:00] **Joey:** can you speak to that, part of the language? Because I know a lot of business owners, when they get started, they hear about this. what subject line or whatever can I use to really maximize people reading or clicking, which might have unintended consequences.

[00:10:16] **Megan:** Yeah. So that's kind of like, I call it like your value proposition, right?

[00:10:19] **Megan:** Like what are you bringing to the table? That's helping people because you're going to have two potential clients. One is the one that's just looking for the cheapest solution and you don't really ever want to play that game because someone will always underbid you. And the other one is someone looking for the right solution for them.

[00:10:38] **Megan:** That's going to get it right. They can trust it. and a lot of times, if it's a service-based offering, people want to know what the process is going to look like. They want to know how much time it's going to take for them. They want to know if it's going to be an enjoyable process and that kind of boils down to, they want to like the people they're working with.

[00:10:59] **Megan:** So those things are really important. And that's another reason it's really, really important to start with what is your story? You have to be likable. And I always say not everyone's going to like you, the more real you are, some people are going to be very on board. And some people are going to be very turned off by whatever you're saying.

[00:11:17] **Megan:** But that's not the wrong way to go about it because not everyone is your client. So if you're getting a ton of phone calls from people who are not hiring you, because they think you're too expensive, it may be worth putting some language on your website that says we're not the cheapest game in town. We are the best.

[00:11:36] **Megan:** Well, if you're a little, you can't actually say you're the best, but you can show evidence of why you're really great. You can show points of authority. You can show case studies and that value proposition of this is actually what you're going to get. This is what I'm going to do for you when we're working together.

[00:11:53] **Joey:** Oh, well said. And another, just again, if you guys are tuning in live, feel free to ask questions. it's a real opportunity to have someone like Megan, that we can get, just get real time responses and feedback from. but as I can just be in this place of asking the best questions

that I can, one of the things that I love about you, that again, I've never seen before is you're a proponent of really creating two different about pages.

[00:12:19] **Joey:** Yes, because of that more.

[00:12:21] **Megan:** Are you talking about for like firms with multiple? Yeah. Okay. people don't want to read 20 different biography pages. a mistake that some people make when they have larger firms or growing firms, as they create a page for every attorney in their.

[00:12:37] **Megan:** Do you have a ton of attorneys? This is a bad move for a lot of reasons. One is that no one wants to read about all of those people. They want to know. Who's the main person they want to read about that person. Philosophy and mission and vision is driving this business that they're about to hire that's who they want to know about.

[00:12:57] **Megan:** the main like CEO or owner or whatever that is primary biography pages one, and then the other one is the about page. And that's where you talk about your company, your vision, your mission, your, how you do business, how you work with your clients, why your ex. And then you put the rest of your team on that page, maybe with a mini bio, maybe with a title and a little snippet about what they do.

[00:13:22] **Megan:** because the other thing is the larger your firm is typically the more turnover you're going to have with the team. So from an SEO perspective, If you got a page for each individual person, you have a verbal link for that person. That page exists online. When they leave you, you have to take that page off your website, which means you have a 4 0 4 error, which means you have to redirect that link, which will always exist when another page on your website.

[00:13:50] **Megan:** it's just easier.

[00:13:53] **Joey:** Yeah, really, really good point. If you guys go on their website, you look at these examples, you can start to spot this is like a Megan approved about page versus not. on the topic of websites before we went live, we were talking about, what some business experts will say to.

[00:14:14] **Joey:** Business owners who might be just starting or in a beginner stage saying you don't need a website right now. What are your thoughts on that?

[00:14:22] **Megan:** Well, if you have a business, you need a website because. The first thing people are going to do is Google you. If they're thinking of hiring you, no, one's going to say, oh, my friend passed on this, email address and phone number, and I'm just gonna, trust that this person's legit.

[00:14:40] **Megan:** They want to Google you. They want to see if you have reviews. So if you're a brand new lawyer, you don't have Google reviews yet. You need to have something else. You need to have a LinkedIn page and an AVO page. You need to have endorsements for those.

You need to hustle for those endorsements and you need a website where you are in [00:15:00] control of your message.

[00:15:01] **Megan:** So ideally when someone searches your name, the first thing they find is your own website. And when you're just starting out, it doesn't have to be this big Cadillac with all the branding and the bells and the whistles and the SEO. If you're starting with a referral based business, But it does need to have the basics.

[00:15:19] **Megan:** It needs to have a homepage that says what you do and how to contact you. some kind of points of authority. It needs to have a biography. It needs to tell them something about you. And initially you may just want to work that into the homepage. It might be a small version of it. but at the very least you need a one-page website that lets people contact you and lets them know exactly what you do.

[00:15:42] **Joey:** Love that. And on a related note is one fad or trend that we're starting to see that if I remember correctly, you very kindly kind of called me out on was, this idea that like longer is better for homepages or having certain pages on your website that are just stacked. Like what you might see in like a sales page.

[00:16:06] **Joey:** can you speak to that a little bit? Because I think some people are like, oh no, this allows me to kind of put a lot of language. It can be very SEO, friendly, whatever. but, but what do you see as just things to be thinking about? If you start having a really long homepage or some other patron.

[00:16:21] **Megan:** Well, so there's two schools of thought on that and you no longer these better in some instances for SEO.

[00:16:28] **Megan:** So you're a lawyer and you have a practice page, for example, all about your target practice area. That should probably be longer. It should have. You know, different types of information keywords, it should be broken up in a way that's readable though. And it should be broken up with calls to action throughout so that someone doesn't have to scroll all the way down to get in touch with you.

[00:16:50] **Megan:** there should be at, at any given point, you want someone to either contact you. Opt-ins schedule a call. Bye. You want them to do the things? So the thing that you want them to do needs to be stacked throughout. They shouldn't have to scroll the problem with a lot of these sales pages and even like homepages.

[00:17:09] **Megan:** You just have to keep going. It's exhausting. And then you're like, there's so many different concepts going on that you're not sure, you know, am I doing this? And my opting into this e-book or this one-page download, or do I want to schedule a consult first? And the person's brains already confused and like, ah, I'm going to deal with this later.

[00:17:32] **Megan:** If they're not immediately, like, this is the next step. They're going to move on and go do something else because that feels hard to them. And then the other problem that not

a problem, this is just kind of a structural thing is just stacking too many pieces of information together. the way that people's brains read, like they really like clean space.

[00:17:57] **Megan:** In between things. So like a chunk of information here, I want to be able to digest it quickly. I want to be able to scan it. So if you've got four boxes in a row, I think you might've had something similar to this. And each box has like 200 words. Right. And they're just side by side.

[00:18:13] **Megan:** That's extreme. Yours was not that bad, but nobody's going to read that right. That's, it's very difficult on the eye and on the brain to figure out like, what is this sequence of things? That I'm reading. So maybe you do have a lot of information. Maybe you do want to share a lot of that information and people want to find more, but the better way to do that is to keep it simple.

[00:18:38] **Megan:** What is the most important thing and what is the journey that I can take you on, on this one page and then link out to other pages that have additional information. So maybe, uh, going back to the divorce lawyer at some point, you know, there's a divorce costs or calculator. Stuff that doesn't even need to be on this page.

[00:18:57] **Megan:** If people want to know about that, they can click over to that or you know, within that page, some people may want to know about, co-parenting stuff, custody, all of that, that might not apply to everyone. So don't put that on a general divorce page. When some people may not have children, it might not apply to them.

[00:19:17] **Megan:** That's another thing that would be. Linked to that. And people who need that information can get some more.

[00:19:23] **Joey:** Love all this advice. And I will say that you're dropping so many, like really valuable golden nuggets that I'm leaning towards keeping this conversation on the shorter side, just so that people have, uh, not too many action steps to walk away with.

[00:19:39] **Joey:** And I really want to emphasize the, for anybody who's listening into this conversation is like, oh my gosh. No that I need help with my website, especially if you're a law firm owner, go to the website, that's linked in the chat conversations, digital.com, check out Megan stuff. There is a, I think it's a freeway to book a call.

[00:19:57] **Megan:** Yes, I do all of my calls. So [00:20:00] you actually do get me and I take it very seriously. It is like, it's a free call. You can ask me anything. and I like everyone, whether they hire us or not to walk away with something actionable. so yesterday I talked to someone who was like, yeah, I'm doing all these things, but my SEO just isn't there.

[00:20:17] **Megan:** And I was like, well, one easy thing you could do is just remove the popup from your homepage. Google hates popups. If you have a, pop-up remove it today and your SEO will improve just from removing

[00:20:28] **Joey:** all man, another great, awesome away. I'll let my team know that. Cause I don't think I've heard that before.

[00:20:33] **Joey:** and you're so generous with your time with your brand. one thing that you helped me clarify was that. work with anybody who needs your service. You're not necessarily looking for them to be at a certain milestone before you can start working with them. That said, if you could find out right now that you just got a new client without any details and wave a magic wand so that they've already got certain things in place, what are steps that people can take before they start working with.

[00:21:03] **Joey:** That can make a world of a difference just in terms of like setting things up for success with you and your team.

[00:21:10] **Megan:** Wow. That's, I've not actually thought of that before. Um, I don't know that there is, doesn't tend to list anything. Cause sometimes people will come to me and say, I bought all these domains or I tried to set this thing and then I kind of had to just jump in and undo it for them.

[00:21:28] **Megan:** So I think the prereq for working with me is too. Be someone with a niche. So that actually would be the thing you have to have. I won't help you find your niche though. I ha I say I don't. I do a lot. Um, we'll have to at least want to know what the niche could be. There are ways if you have a few ideas, there are ways to do keyword research to see where the opportunities are for, you know, the untapped markets for Nisha's.

[00:21:54] **Megan:** Um, but you have to be willing to niche. You have to be with. To be open and honest and vulnerable. Um, and you have to be a good person who likes to help people. Cause like what I do is not magic. It truly is reflective of the people that I'm working with. So if you don't have a good set of paints and a nice high quality canvas to work with, then the art will not be that good.

[00:22:19] **Joey:** That's really, really well said. And in terms of a niche, maybe we can end here, is. And apologies to all of my service provider audience, we're going to zoom into, to the law firm owner context. although I do think that this relates to a lot of services, in terms of niching down, is that the same thing as picking one practicing?

[00:22:39] **Megan:** Yes. However one practice area could be family law, right? That's a practice area, but it's not really a niche. It's still very big. So an example of a niche would be custody, For dads, AAO. That's very specific. Another niche could be adoptions. You could just focus on adoptions. Like one of the happiest lawyers I've ever met.

[00:23:04] **Megan:** All he does is adoption. you always win for the most part, you typically win. Right. And it's good. Everyone's happy you brought families together. What if I was a lawyer I would do adoptions. mediation is another example of, a specific niche within family loss. So. The more specific you can be, the more successful you will be.

[00:23:25] **Megan:** We have a client who's cornered the market on traffic tickets in new Orleans, which is something that's very specific. I built a website for an all female law firm that does transactions for the buying and selling of private jets. That's a whole practice. Apparently that happens a lot.

[00:23:44] **Joey:** That's awesome.

[00:23:46] **Joey:** I love these niche ideas, and I just want to say that if you feel like you might not have a really strong niche, the work that you can do with Megan and her team in terms of figuring out and telling yourself. Can also add an element on that niche. That's helpful. So indie law, our practice area niches trademarks.

[00:24:04] **Joey:** but Megan has really helped, does clarify through our stories on our website and specifically our about pages that like the psychographics of who we work with and why we do what we do that attracts our ideal type of client. Cause

[00:24:19] **Megan:** that's the other thing. It's the, what do you do? And for who? And when you have the, who, then you can speak directly to your client.

[00:24:26] **Megan:** And then when they read your website, they're going to say, that's me. this is the person who helped me with this specific

[00:24:32] **Joey:** thing. Megan, I could talk to you forever. know this isn't the last time I'll have you on the show. Thank you so, so much for your time. Thanks for having me on of course. And again, everybody check out conversations, digital.com.

[00:24:46] **Joey:** If nothing else than to just kind of take note and steal some strategies that you can see on our website and get some ideas. All right. That'll do it for this week. Everybody talk to you next week.