

She Said/She Said Podcast With Laura Cox Kaplan

Episode: 227

How to stop missing opportunities by developing your digital brand!

Guest: Be the Brand Collective founder Madeline Fetterly

SHE SAID/SHE SAID PODCAST SHOW OPEN

Laura Cox Kaplan ([00:06](#)):

Building influence is something anyone can learn. It's an investment you can make in yourself and it can hold the keys to achieving your dreams and having the life and impact you want to have. I'm Laura Cox Kaplan. I've learned a lot over three decades about building and sustaining influence and how using it and using it effectively can make a big, big difference in your life and career. Here on She Said/She Said Podcast, we're digging into the different dimensions that help us build and sustain influence. If you thought being an influencer was just for social media, think again. Whether you're starting a business, raising money for a cause, negotiating a promotion, running your household or trying to connect with those who don't share your views, understanding and using the different dimensions of influence will increase your chances of success. Whatever your goals may be, listening to She Said/She Said Podcast is a smart, efficient investment you can make in you. I'm really glad you're here and I'm excited we're on this journey together.

EPISODE 227 INTRO:

Laura Cox Kaplan ([01:20](#)):

Hey friend, welcome to She Said/She Said Podcast. This is episode 227. Do you have a digital brand strategy for yourself? Do you need one? Well, this week's guest has a lot to say on the matter. She is Madeline Federer and she's the founder and ceo of a digital brand strategy firm based in Washington DC called Be the Brand Collective. Madeline's business was inspired by a gap that she found and lots of missed opportunities that she saw, specifically how so many incredibly accomplished women, largely in the DC area, were not leveraging the power of social media to promote their personal brands. Now, Fran, let's face it, it can all be a bit daunting and certainly overwhelming when you think about all the various platforms that currently exist and then the different tools that are embedded in each. And of course, they change all the time, whether it's Instagram, LinkedIn, Facebook or Twitter, figuring out which one is right for which purpose, and then knowing how to use them and even more importantly, how to create a consistent approach that doesn't completely overwhelm you.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([02:43](#)):

She Said/She Said Podcast With Laura Cox Kaplan

Episode: 227

How to stop missing opportunities by developing your digital brand!

Guest: Be the Brand Collective founder Madeline Fetterly

Now, if it sounds like I speak from experience here, I do <laugh>, which is why I was really excited to welcome the fabulous Madeline Federally to She Said/She Said Podcast. Now Madeline and her team help clients to identify goals, create compelling and authentic stories and content, and then to identify the right digital platforms to use to build credibility as well as influence through the power of their story. Story. As you know, if you're a regular listener to this podcast is a particularly important component for building your influence and for creating a compelling, thoughtful digital presence that can be an important extension of that. Now, Madeline and her team work to take the guesswork out of building a personal digital brand, and that is what we dive into in this conversation which is packed, literally packed with great advice and perspective on how to build your digital brand or how to tweak your current efforts by using social media to promote your business or to position yourself for future opportunities.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([04:00](#)):

Maybe it's a new job that you're seeking, a promotion, a new client, a board role. The possibilities are literally endless. One of the most important themes that I think will jump out at you is what you might be missing by not creating a strong digital profile for yourself. Madeline and I talk about identifying your zone of influence, which is similar to your zone of genius. We talk about how to make your strategy sustainable so it doesn't overwhelm you. We talk about why you can't really have an impact if all you do is share everyone else's content all the time. We talk about how and why it's so important to create a profile that is uniquely you and how important it is to find your voice and so much more. Okay, friend, because there is so much great information that's packed into today's episode. Again, it's episode 227.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([05:01](#)):

You'll want to check out the show notes for this episode as well as the transcript, and you will find both of those things as well as a link to Madeline's website where you can reach her. You'll find those things on my website at SheSaidSheSaidPodcast.Com. Just click the episode, episode 227. So if you happen to be driving or you're out for a walk, you do not need to pull the car over or stop what you're doing in order to take notes. I have done all of that for you and those things are ready and waiting for you on my website at SheSaidSheSaidPodcast.com. For now though, here is my conversation with Be the brand collective founder and c e o Madeline Fetterly. Enjoy.

EPISODE CONVERSATION:

Madeline, welcome to She Said/She Said!

Madeline Fetterly ([05:54](#)):

Hi, Laura. So great to be with you. Thank you for having me.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([05:57](#)):

I'm so happy to have you and I am so happy to kick off this season with a focus on how we can do a better job of developing our digital brands. So to jump into the conversation, let's level set for our listener. What do we mean when we talk about developing a digital brand and is this something that everybody needs?

Madeline Fetterly ([06:22](#)):

It's a great question. I love just bringing intention right to the beginning of the conversation. So the first thing that we want to think about when we think about a digital brand is what is your intention behind it? So when you're asking yourself the question, does everybody need a digital brand, the question for me would be, how would you want to take advantage and how would you want to leverage an enhanced digital presence? So one of the ways I like to think about it is we all have invested many years, many hours, many late nights in building a robust in-person reputation. We have an in-person brand that we bring to the table when we walk into the room that has helped us get to the next step that has helped us level up. And so in the same vein, when we're thinking about all that effort that we have spent investing in that in-person reputation, that impression, that brand, it's important and critical for us to continue to level up to translate that in-person reputation into that digital online format. So I think when we're thinking about do you need a digital brand, the question is are you still leveling up? Are there still things you want to do? Are there more audiences you want to reach? Is there more influence you want to garner? The answer to all those things is yes, then absolutely it's very important and critical to really invest in that digital footprint.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([07:52](#)):

And it also, I mean I am a big proponent as folks who follow me on social media or who follow this podcast already know, but it can be really important whether you are selling widgets, whether you are positioning yourself as a thought leader, whether you're building a business, whether you're trying to attract clients as a consultant, it really can have applicability across the board. So when you sit down to help a client, where do you

start with beginning to think about how you develop a strategy around developing a digital brand?

Madeline Fetterly ([08:36](#)):

The first question, which I think applies to so many parts of our lives in so many parts of really being a high achieving, high performing woman, the listeners to this podcast is what are your goals? So this is always the first question. So if we're wanting to build lifestyle credibility or influence, then that directs us down a certain path. If we're wanting to really build professional credibility, then that directs us down a different path. So the way that we always start is what are we hoping to get out of an enhanced digital brand? Are we looking, like you said, for business development? Are we just hoping to garner more influence? Are we building a thought leadership platform or perhaps a lot of our folks we have causes things that we care about that we want to amplify and digital is a great space to be doing that.

Madeline Fetterly ([09:34](#)):

And of course all of these things can coexist. It's never just one thing, but I think anchoring the starting point from where what we're hoping the end goal can be is the best place to start. For example, if we're really wanting to use digital and LinkedIn, et cetera to make a big pivot to change a job or have a mid-career shift, then that really is a whole bank of strategy that compliments but is unique to just wanting to build lifestyle influence. So it's really depends on taking the time to do the exercise to ask yourself where, what do we want the end goal to be? And then we will back the strategy up from there. Yeah,

Laura Cox Kaplan ([10:18](#)):

Let's talk a little bit about the different platforms because I know for folks who are just beginning to think about it or maybe they've been engaging to some degree in a digital strategy, maybe she's using LinkedIn or she has a LinkedIn profile that she set up when she was trying to get a job. So she still has sort of that platform, but then she's thinking, okay, what about Twitter? What about Instagram? What about Facebook? Maybe talk a little bit about the best ways to think about the different platforms and then maybe a little bit about the different tools within those platforms. Because you've got static photo posts, you can share content, you can create weight reels and stories, and it can seem both really overwhelming and just very confusing when you're trying to figure out

which one makes the most sense for me. So maybe give us some advice on how to think about the different platforms and the different tools that are out there.

Madeline Fetterly ([11:21](#)):

So I would say that for the majority of folks that we work with, and you will know through all the readers or all the listeners on the podcast is folks are really trying to garner influence. And so we're not necessarily focused on being an influencer, but we do know that everything we do, everything we put out there can be a plus or a minus in terms of the influence that we have. And so that really is kind of the first question that we'll be asking ourselves, who are we trying to influence and what is the right platform to promote and to broaden our realm of influence? So if we're really focusing on the professional and what I mean by that is amplifying your business, amplifying your team, amplifying your industry or your subject matter expertise. We really like to focus on LinkedIn. That has really become the professional thought leadership sandbox.

Madeline Fetterly ([12:22](#)):

That's where everybody's playing, everybody's building their presence and their influence on LinkedIn. Twitter, of course, is also a great place to marry a LinkedIn strategy. So anything you put on LinkedIn, you can also repurpose for Twitter when it comes to the more social and visual elements of social media like Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, Snapchat, et cetera. We find that those are really beneficial when you're wanting to build lifestyle influence. So say you want to be more of an aspirational person around town, or you are wanting to promote more soft skills like a love for art and fashion or a love for cooking or travel or something like that. Those are really welcome in Instagram is a very supportive environment for that kind of content. Whereas on LinkedIn and Twitter, we really like to stay more in the professional realm. So I would say again, asking yourself what is the type of influence?

Madeline Fetterly ([13:29](#)):

What is your zone of genius almost? What is your zone of influence? And then identifying which platform matches that zone. That would be the first step. The second thing that we always want to focus in on is making our strategy and our approach sustainable. So to your point, social media is extremely overwhelming. Every single person we work with also is running a hundred miles an hour working on their professional life. So running their businesses, overseeing their teams running their households, being a community member, it's just, it's a lot. And so social media and

building that digital brand is really something that falls off the to-do list or we're trying to do it late at night when we're exhausted and we can't bring that creative energy that it deserves. And so when we think about maintaining a strategy, the most important thing in my mind is to make sure that whatever we put in place is actionable, is implementable and is maintainable so we can maintain it moving forward. So if it's too much of a heavy lift to be on multiple platforms, then we don't recommend being on multiple platforms, focus on one and build a robust presence there.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([14:51](#)):

Madeline, do you have advice to your point about maintaining your consistency and sustainability as it relates to when you decide which platform or platforms make the most sense for you? Maybe some advice on how you can create content in advance or how you can work to manage that schedule. And I know this is a big part of what you do in your business at Be The Brand Collective. I talked a little bit about who you are and who your clientele is in the intro for this episode, but maybe talk a little bit about advice that you have for planning your content, helping your clients plan their content so that it checks all these boxes that you're meeting the right audience, that it's consistent, that it's authentic to use that way. Overused, but still really important word. Maybe talk a little bit about that.

Madeline Fetterly ([15:47](#)):

So I would say weave your social media strategy into whatever other quarterly or biannual or annual planning that you do. So I would say so much of the listeners, so much of high performing, high achieving women, we are planners. We know that the magic does not just happen. We have to make it happen. And so we plan for it. So I would say for anybody who works with us, we sit down together every other week and we discuss upcoming activity, content engagements, things that would make sense to amplify. We also go through really robust exercise that we call message house building or I call it branding bootcamp, where we essentially build a personal message house that identifies through the exercise. Here are the six buckets of content that we are going to build posts around. And these six buckets or seven buckets or five buckets really kind of are your areas of expertise, your areas of credibility, and it can include to your point about being authentic.

Madeline Fetterly ([16:54](#)):

It can include all the wonderful multi-dimensional things about who you are. So it doesn't just have to be I'm a tax expert, I'm a policy veteran and I'm a ceo. It doesn't have to just include those things. It could also include the fact that I'm a working mother, I care about women's empowerment. And so it's really thinking about all of those multi-dimensional things that make you who are and that you can speak credibly into those conversations, building content around those. We do that on a biweekly basis I would say for somebody doing this exercise on their own, again, think about how can you incorporate into into your regular planning. So look at your calendar, say from now until the end of Q1 to the end of March, what are the things that I'm going to be doing? What are the panels that I'm speaking on? What are the conferences that I'm attending? What are the global activation days happening? So international women's month, black history month, and how do those things ladder up into the digital brand, the digital presence you're trying to create and write those things out and then revisit it on that week over week basis. Whenever you do your weekly kind of maintenance or your inbox clean out or your calendar setting, make sure that you have five, 10 minutes carved out to identify and make sure you're staying on track with that social media roadmap you've mapped out.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([18:29](#)):

How do you keep from just getting overwhelmed? Because to your point, you're working with some really high profile thought leaders largely in the Washington DC area. These are women of tremendous influence. Several have been on this podcast I think most of them are friends of mine in one capacity or another. You have an amazing client portfolio but to your point, most of them are working moms. They're contributing their communities, they've got big jobs, they're doing a lot of stuff. And so how do you manage the workload of adding what can be an incredibly time consuming exercise of managing your digital presence? I mean, even if you have a firm that's helping you talk about maybe the role that you personally need to play versus maybe the role that a third party or a firm like yours would play. Does that make sense?

Madeline Fetterly ([19:31](#)):

Totally. So one of my big philosophies and how we start out with every partnership that we take with a executive woman is the client or the executive, they also have to be ready to do the work. So it doesn't just happen like you are your brand, you are. And so whatever comes to life online, it has to come from you and any third party company firm can a hundred percent come alongside you, help you execute for you hold that space,

brainstorm. I mean, there's so many much value add to that third party, but at the end of the day, you, and so you have to be ready to do that work. And so I would say if you're not bought into the benefit of building an enhanced digital presence, it's probably not going to work out for you because you need to invest the time, invest the energy, invest the resources in order to do it the right way.

Madeline Fetterly ([20:29](#)):

I mean, from my perspective, and we've seen it time and again, the benefits are tenfold. People getting on boards, nonprofit, corporate boards, job pivots, big promotions, tv, all this kind of stuff that can come from an enhanced digital presence. But again, we know the magic doesn't just happen. We have to work to make it happen. And so there are things like showing up for the I guess I'm trying to think really making sure that you're working in good partnership with that third party I would say is really important step and also expanding your perspective in terms of what digital can bring to you. So one of the things we work through a lot, obviously our client bases here in Washington DC and a lot of our clients have a political background, so they were in some sort of political administration. They were on the hill, they've been in corporate lobbyists.

Madeline Fetterly ([21:36](#)):

And so we know that when that's the case, a lot of these women have grown up behind really big bosses, and it's really hard to step out. Totally. It is so hard, and I think finding that right partner who's going to understand your world, who will come alongside you, who will say, we are going to start promoting you and talking about you, but we're going to do it in the right way. We're going to do it in a way that is sustainable, that is authentic to who you are and then showing up and doing the work. I think that is how it happens.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([22:10](#)):

Yeah, I love that you just said that and it resonates so deeply with me, and I think you and I have talked about this in the past that the point that you made about being an advocate for others and if you've spent your entire career as a spokesman or spokesperson rather for someone else, for in a large corporate environment that was the background that I came out of. So when I launched this podcast and did this big career pivot on my own and found myself needing to have a point of view, I mean, I sat down and started doing interviews with people, but I didn't want to step on the message of a guest by offering my perspective. And what I found was I had to do that in order to build

credibility with the audience and that I needed to be much braver. And it was really scary to do that because I didn't have any experience in thinking about, well, this is actually what I think about this issue. Maybe talk a little bit about how you work with clients to get over that sort of what the problem that I had, which was kind of the psychological piece of, oh my God, can I really do that? Can I really jump out there and say this on my own? Talk about how you coach them through that.

Madeline Fetterly ([23:32](#)):

Imposter syndrome is something that we all have, it's just part of life. I think people will say it's part of being a woman. I think it's just part of life. I think everybody has it. I think particularly for people who are just high performing, high achieving women, we know you put your head down and you do the work. And I think that stepping out, having that point of view is really, really, really hard. The way that we think through it is, one, we hold the space for that to exist and to work through it with a client. So what I find is that pretty much everybody that we're working with has a point of view. They have it inside of them, and maybe they just need the space and the time and the capacity and that thought partnership to have it come out. Or maybe it's something where they start talking and it's like, oh, that doesn't sound great, and that's not perfect.

Madeline Fetterly ([24:29](#)):

Well, that's fine. We can edit it. That's the great thing about the work that we do is that it's better to just get something out there and to get the wheels turning, and then through the process we can refine the messages, we can edit it, we can curate it in the way that we want it to be. We think a lot about this idea of being authentic, and you've brought this up earlier, but being authentic is almost like a false message we've been sold, particularly as it relates professionally. In my mind, if I was to be my most authentic self online, I would be on the couch with Cheeto stains and my two-year-old and my baby. That's just not the message or the image I want to get out there. Right? Well,

Laura Cox Kaplan ([25:13](#)):

A little of that probably goes a long

Madeline Fetterly ([25:15](#)):

Way. I mean, everybody loves the babies, but that's not the professional image I want to have. However, I'm a mother, I'm a working mother. That's very important to me. And so there are parts of that that I will put online, but it's curated. So it's about really curating

and holding that space to work through the imposter syndrome to think about you do have a unique point of view. How do we bring that out? And just knowing that it's a safe environment. We don't have to just talk and then post it online. We can refine the messages. The last thing I'll say is we really believe in the philosophy that nobody will start talking about you unless you start talking about you. And so we really have that be an anchor to the way that we position our work. And then we caveat that with saying, we are not building bragging empires. We're not getting online to brag about ourselves. We are getting online to talk about the work that we do, the things that we care about, the teams that we support. And through talking about those things, we also talk about ourselves. And so I think it's really important when we go into the work to know that we need to create that echo chamber of influence and that echo chamber of credibility. And to do so, you have to talk about you. So that's just kind of part of what we do when we start working together.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([26:47](#)):

I love that. I absolutely love that. Maybe let's talk about sort of mistakes that you see clients make. Maybe the number one mistake that you see with some consistency or the kind of thing that you have to help maybe unwind where people have made some mistakes in terms of developing their digital strategy.

Madeline Fetterly ([27:08](#)):

I would say over posting is the number one. I think that people will come in with a lot of energy, which is great and be a little overzealous in terms of the frequency of content that they're putting up. I think it, and it makes a lot of sense if you think about it, especially for the non-millennial generation. So the generation, your cohort, Laura,

Madeline Fetterly ([27:38](#)):

Probably one of the most comfortable platforms is Twitter. And so if you grow up first using Twitter, and Twitter kind of came before LinkedIn. LinkedIn was something that we all got to ignore <laugh> for 10 years basically. It's really only been in the last three to four years that it's like, oh no, we have to be on LinkedIn now. And what is a LinkedIn presence? What is a LinkedIn strategy? But Twitter has been around forever. So if you think about Twitter, it's kind of like a free for all on Twitter. You can post a hundred times a day and it's fine. It might be a little annoying, but it's okay. Twitter is very much that newsworthy. It's buzzy, it's it's Twitter. And so people who are comfortable on Twitter

will then try to translate that strategy to LinkedIn. Interesting. And that's not correct. That is not the right strategy on LinkedIn.

Madeline Fetterly ([28:26](#)):

One or two a week is plenty. We do not need to be doing more than that. And what I see happening a lot is people using that Twitter, flexing those Twitter muscles over on LinkedIn, and it's just really not the place. And it can come across as being very spammy. It can come across as being overzealous over Sherry. And so LinkedIn is really the place for more curated, more thoughtful, more slower type of content. And so I would say that's the number one mistake I see is overposting. And then the other thing I would see a lot in the same vein is sharing without adding your own unique point of view. So say you work for a company or something exciting is happening, and you will just take bum, well, let's use Bumble as an example. Say you work for Bumble shares a exciting annual report or something like that, and say, I work for Bumble and I'm excited about it, so I just re-share it on LinkedIn.

Madeline Fetterly ([29:29](#)):

That's fine. But people already know I work for Bumble. It's on my LinkedIn profile. People can go to Bumble's LinkedIn to check out that annual report. It's probably also in the news. So it's not really adding any value to my audience, and it's not garnering any influence because I'm not saying anything about it. I'm just re-sharing it. And so instead, a better strategy would be to take that same post, add two or three sentences about why I think it's important, how I contributed to the annual report, what my value add was there, maybe tag in my colleague, my boss, something like that, and then share that. And that is going to be so much of a more impactful post than just re-sharing content that somebody else has created.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([30:19](#)):

Yeah, it's interesting that you say that oversharing is the number one thing that you see. I thought you were going to say oversharing or maybe overthinking posts because I find that I will sometimes <laugh> oftentimes maybe think too much about a post that's going up and over because I was trained that way. I was trained to be a spokesperson for others and other causes. And so I was always extremely careful about anything that I would put out in the public domain, which by the way, I think is a good practice that everyone should at least consider. But getting the balance right between overthinking and being careful is obviously kind of a big delta. So I'm surprised that you don't have

more clients who are more reluctant to share versus those who are aggressively sharing everything that crosses their desk.

Madeline Fetterly ([31:19](#)):

Yeah, I would say that by the point that somebody's working with us, they're usually bought in to the idea that we're going to be doing this work. And that's so great and I love it. And sometimes people are too bought in and we just have to reign it back a little bit or not even reign it back. Just think more strategically about it and think how can I make sure that everything we're doing here is laddering up to those goals that we set out to achieve?

Laura Cox Kaplan ([31:53](#)):

Yeah, I love what you said about, it's great to share other folks' content, but making sure that you have a point of view or some reason and rationale that you explain to people when you're sharing that content. Maybe talk a little bit about the balance between sharing others' content, including sharing it with your point of view versus producing and creating unique and original content. Maybe talk about the balance there.

Madeline Fetterly ([32:22](#)):

There's a great report that just came out that talked that talks just about this almost from a corporate lens, and it says that content that is shared by employees or by workers is 84% more successful than content that is shared by the actual company itself. And so we know that anything that comes from an individual is going to be more successful in terms of engagement, in terms of influence, in terms of reach. And so when we're thinking about that mix of sharing other people's content, adding your unique point of view, and then curating or creating your own content, we generally follow a 75/25 split. That's kind of our rule of thumb. We really want to focus the majority of the time on curating or creating your own content. And what I mean by curating is just thinking about what are you doing? What are your activities? What panels are you attending, what conferences are you participating in? And taking that and writing a point of view about that post. So we're really just thinking about you're out there, you're doing the work, how can we curate this content and posted online? Creating content is something very different. That is creating original content, thought pieces, series, podcasts, like what you're doing here. We're creating content here.

Madeline Fetterly ([33:52](#)):

But then I also do think that there, especially if you work for a big business or a corporation, there will naturally be a lot of great content that they are creating or messages that they want you to amplify. So investing in employees and team members as spokespeople for the business is a very smart digital strategy that more and more corporations should be doing and should be investing in. But what's important when we think about that and sharing other content is again, say I work for Bumble. If I work for Bumble, Bumble should really be investing in me as an individual to take their content and to put it out there on the platform, not to just copy paste or just to share, but to train me and to teach me and to coach me on how to take Bumble content, add my own unique point of view, and then amplify it for my audiences.

Madeline Fetterly ([34:48](#)):

And so I would say if you work in a big corporation or perhaps someplace that has an internal social media message board that you can pull from, which a lot of places do, that's awesome. I would take that, but then I would still add a little bit of your unique perspective or tagging in colleagues or something like that in addition to what your company is providing. It's just always going to be much more successful that way. And I would also encourage businesses and corporations to invest in their people as their spokespeople, but to do it in that authentic way, not just to create internal message houses that they can copy paste from.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([35:28](#)):

I love that. That's such great advice. Let's talk a little bit about one of my favorite topics, which is the power of story and story is such an important component as it relates to building influence. It's important that we have a clear understanding of the story that we're telling ourselves and also the story that we're sharing with the world. And of course that extends when you create a digital strategy for yourself. It extends there as well. But maybe talk about some advice that you have for mastering something that frankly does not always come easily to everyone. How do you tell a good story and how do you incorporate those stories into building your digital strategy?

Madeline Fetterly ([36:15](#)):

So I would say that as we think about how this work comes to life in real life in person, we're in a room, we're networking and we make a connection with somebody, and we probably have a personal elevator pitch or a personal introduction or three or four sentences about us that we kind of have on repeat. It's the same idea for digital

storytelling. So you want to really start with the work that you have already done to get you where you are, all of those years of investing in yourself of hard work, of trying to build credibility, influence, et cetera. And then you want to curate it to fit your online narrative. So when we think about storytelling, I think again, such a critical, important piece of it is to remember you are a person. There are so many wonderful things about you that have gotten you to where you are.

Madeline Fetterly ([37:15](#)):

Hard work experiences, your background, pivots, failures, successes. These are all really important things about your brand narrative that you want to spend some time thinking about thinking, what are the key messages here that I can leverage and utilize to really build a cohesive online story? So I think that's includes not being shy about who you are. It includes thinking thoughtfully about it. I always think going through actual brand building exercises, building that personal message, house, writing it out, taking 30 minutes to say, what is that five second impression, ten second impression, I want to leave with somebody. What are the six areas of expertise or six experiences I want to be talking about? What is the tone or the kind of flavor, the zest that I want to add into the language that I'm using and write it out and think about leveraging all of those critical pieces when you're building that online brand narrative.

Madeline Fetterly ([38:30](#)):

One kind of best practice or trick that I have when you're thinking about that brand story is when somebody visits your page, whether it's LinkedIn, whether it's Twitter, whether it's Instagram, you want people with three or four scrolls of their finger to really actually get a very good sense of who you are. It should be consistent. If you're just posting about random stuff all the time, that has no consistency, there's no story there, there's no narrative. There has to be a through line. And so focus in on those, again, those areas of expertise or those areas of things that you care about, and build a steady drumbeat of story of narrative around those things so that when somebody does go to visit you, they will really get a sense of who you are. It's not about the last five jobs you had, it's about who you are. That is the most important thing when we are building a brand narrative and an online presence.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([39:33](#)):

I love that. That's such great advice. Madeline, I'd love for you to talk a little bit about your own origin story and how you got into this work. You've got an amazing

background. Maybe talk a little bit about how be the brand collective came about and how your own personal story and experiences have informed this work

Madeline Fetterly ([39:54](#)):

Be the brand has been such an unexpected surprise. So I have always had a heart and a passion for back in the day, I would call it women's empowerment. Now, I would call it women's leadership. I grew up in an extremely matriarchal family in West Texas. We all had things about us that were unique that we brought to the table, that added to the family dynamic. So I always really kind of believed in the power of women leaders. And when I grew up and got older and really realized some of the gaps that are lacking in terms of women in the public space, women of course in leadership roles, et cetera, it really fueled and ignited a fire within me to really understand that, to work in that space more and to really promote and amplify women and women's voices. So I had the wonderful opportunity for many years to work at a nonprofit called Vital Voices that works in women's leadership.

Madeline Fetterly ([40:56](#)):

I know you know it well, Laura, I do. And it's such an important and critical nonprofit that works exactly on this investing in women leaders. So while I was there, I had the wonderful opportunity of getting to know so many incredible women here in the United States and around the world and being really inspired by them and wanting to learn from them and understand them better and going to look them up online afterwards to share their stories with my mom, my sister, my friend, and just realizing they had almost no digital presence and just understanding that this was such a shame, this was such a missed opportunity. And so that really ignited the idea behind be the brand. So I just kind of started out with this idea that there are so many incredible women out there doing the work who have put in decades of hard work, who have a lot of credibility and have incredible in-person reputations, but have no digital presence and thinking that this was such a shame and that this was a problem that really needed to be solved because we know that investing in that digital presence, having that digital brand, that digital footprint really is critical now to leveling up to getting the next opportunity, the next step.

Madeline Fetterly ([42:18](#)):

We know that employers want, executives want C-suite executives to have a digital presence. You have to have a thought leadership platform now and be recruitable for

television, for panels, for keynotes. But if you don't have any kind of digital footprint, then it's going to be very challenging and almost impossible to get there. I actually I was talking to a friend who works at a PR firm recently, and she was telling me that when somebody comes to her and says, I want to do tv, the first thing that they do is they look them up online and they say, do they have some sort of digital presence? Is there something there to amplify? And it's the same idea before you head into a meeting with somebody before you go into a job interview, they are going to be looking you up online. And so it's really critical to not only take the work that you've done and translate it into that digital format, but also continue to feed and water it so it continues to grow as your career continues to grow and evolve.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([43:21](#)):

Yeah, I love that. So how can folks find you if they're looking for some help developing their digital strategy, if that's part of their series of goals for the year 2023, how can they find you and how might they go about working with you?

Madeline Fetterly ([43:38](#)):

Well, first of all, thank you for asking that question, and I

Laura Cox Kaplan ([43:42](#)):

Will obviously put links in the show notes to where you can find Madeline as well, but it's good for her to tell you here on the podcast as well. Yeah,

Madeline Fetterly ([43:51](#)):

So there are so many ways to work with us, and I have a great team around me. So we are open for business as they say. We have a website, you can find us at [be the brand collective.com](http://be.the.brand.collective.com). You can always email us directly through that, where of course on social as well be the brand collective on Instagram and LinkedIn. In terms of working with us, there are several different paths that we do. We do short-term engagement with folks that are really looking to invest in building that personal message, house, understanding, identifying what is the brand story, what is the brand narrative, and then what are the actions we need to take in order to get that narrative online. So that's engagements. We do longer term kind of engagements with executives and really kind of senior leading ladies or leading women in terms of doing all of that branding work.

Madeline Fetterly ([44:46](#)):

And then we stay on with them and we execute on their platforms. We find, again, like I said, consistency is so important. If you're going to really build something, you need to be doing it consistently. And so we offer very high touch services where we meet with folks on a biweekly basis. Like I said, we create content on that weekly basis. We post on their channels. It's very fun, it's very successful. The work that we do is just, it's energizing and it's a great investment in you and who you are and in yourself. And then of course, we do workshops where we meet with teams or with companies to really think about how does the individual bring that digital presence to life online. We also do things like SWAT analysis like this, looking at the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of your online presence. So if you're perhaps wanting to build a LinkedIn but you don't know where to start, or maybe you have a LinkedIn and it's been neglected for three years, we'll go in and kind of look at it, clean it up, get it ready to be relaunched, so to speak.

Madeline Fetterly ([45:59](#)):

And then the thing that we're most excited about is we are we're branching out and we're building partnerships with corporations. So like I said, investing in your employees to be the spokespeople for your business, for the work that you're doing for your impact is such a smart strategy. Moving forward into 20 23, 20 24, we know that people want to see authentic professionals, but then your folks, your employees, your teams, they also want to be invested in. So it's a wonderful professional development opportunity to invest in your teams to build their brand, but then also it pays back dividends to you because you're getting their messages out there and it's really helping to amplify the work that you're doing as a business. And so we have recently launched a program that we call the Thought Leadership Accelerator, which essentially organizes teams into different cohorts and moves them through a thought leadership accelerator over a six month time period. And so we're very excited about that. That's something that I would encourage anybody that has a business or works for a large business to be thinking about how are you investing in your people and their digital presence.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([47:15](#)):

Yeah, I love that. I absolutely love that. Madeline, what a pleasure to talk to you. This has

Madeline Fetterly ([47:20](#)):

Been, thank you, Laura.

She Said/She Said Podcast With Laura Cox Kaplan

Episode: 227

How to stop missing opportunities by developing your digital brand!

Guest: Be the Brand Collective founder Madeline Fetterly

Laura Cox Kaplan ([47:21](#)):

Great. I know that folks listening have gotten a lot out of this, and hopefully this will help anybody who's listening, who has developing a digital strategy on her goal list for 2023. Hopefully this will really help to supercharge that. I'm really grateful that you spent some time with me today.

Madeline Fetterly ([47:39](#)):

Yes, thank you, Laura. So great to be with you.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([47:42](#)):

I appreciate it. Take care!

EPISODE CLOSE:

Laura Cox Kaplan :

Friend. I hope you enjoyed this week's episode as much as I did. There was so much great actionable advice, and I hope that you're able to take advantage of it or maybe reach out to Madeline and her team and see if they can help. One of the things that I especially loved about this episode is how it highlights another powerful dimension of story and its importance for building credibility and influence. I also loved what Madeline said about her philosophy that no one will start talking about you unless you start talking about you. That you really have to be the anchor and set the stage for your own story. Isn't that great?

If you enjoyed today's episode, consider sharing a little love with me in the form of a nice review on iTunes or wherever you're listening. I'd be so grateful.

Until next week, you take care, and I'll talk to you again real soon.

She Said/ Said Podcast is a weekly production of She said, she said Media.

#