

Jillian Flodstrom ([00:00](#)):

If you love technology as much as I do, you are really gonna enjoy this week's episode. We are talking with Laura Kon and we're talking about marketing automation. Now, if you have listened to this podcast over the last three years, you know that this is something that I use and multiple businesses that I have, but also I really enjoy it. It's so powerful. There's so many things that you can do with it. It makes my businesses more efficient. But there's also a cautionary tale as well because we have to respect our clients, make sure that that marketing automation is being used in the best way possible. We dive into so many things during this conversation, and if marketing automation is something that you've been interested in for your business, but are curious about it and haven't done it yet, this episode is definitely worth a listen.

Jillian Flodstrom ([00:53](#)):

Today we are thrilled to have with us a true powerhouse in the world of entrepreneurship. Miss Laura Kon, she's an accomplished entrepreneur, a speaker, author, and a mentor who's been making waves in the business world for over three decades with a passion for real estate, hospitality, and technology. Laura has successfully launched multiple businesses and helped countless others achieve their goals. What sets Laura apart from others is her unwavering commitment to helping others achieve success. She believes that anyone can achieve their dreams regardless of their background or circumstances, and has dedicated her career to mentoring and coaching others to help them reach their full potential. So without further ado, let's welcome Ms. Laura Kon to the show and learn about her incredible journey. Hey, how are you?

Laura Kerbyson ([01:40](#)):

Thank you, Jillian. Thank you so much for having me today.

Jillian Flodstrom ([01:43](#)):

I'm excited. This is one of my favorite topics and you know, I'm a total geek so I can nerd out about marketing op op automation, I guess is probably the best way to say. I can't even talk. I'm so excited, <laugh>. But let's talk about how marketing automation has helped you improve your business efforts and contribute to your overall business success.

Laura Kerbyson ([02:04](#)):

Okay, very good. Well, first thing I do is I help businesses grow their business. I spent two, for example, I spent two years with one company who launched its business by building out the email marketing automation platforms. We did social media marketing with chatbots S m s automation call centers, dialers, and the business was running marketing automation on every channel.

Jillian Flodstrom ([02:27](#)):

That is like amazing. Like when you say all that, I'm like, if everything could run smoothly like that, I mean, think about the amount of hours that any entrepreneur that's out there listening would be like, oh my gosh, I could get that many hours back of my life back in my business to get all that stuff done. That would be amazing. Now, I know there's probably some pitfalls that you guys ran into throughout that process. So what do you think are some common mistakes that businesses might make when they're trying to implement that marketing automation in their processes? And more importantly, how do they avoid those common mistakes?

Laura Kerbyson ([03:01](#)):

Well, I think the first mistake is that businesses simply aren't using automation. They're using email, but they aren't using persuasive email drip campaigns. They aren't really building relationships. I mean they're, they're doing SMS as one-offs rather than as campaigns. And many businesses that need to get to the decision maker of the company, they aren't using LinkedIn automation marketing, which is actually done outside of the LinkedIn platform and then it connects in. So another very common mistake is when they, they send that first message, right? And then they try to sell you in the first message on LinkedIn. Oh,

Jillian Flodstrom ([03:35](#)):

Annoying.

Laura Kerbyson ([03:36](#)):

Yeah. They go straight to the pitch and then every time it is gonna fail. So you can use the automation to establish the relationship and steps. And so in email drips, you don't wanna put all your marketing points into one email, which is what a lot of businesses do. So you might take those potential customer pain points and you might break them out, say one per email. And that's how you can help with that pain point.

Jillian Flodstrom ([04:02](#)):

I think that's so great because you know what, it's kind of like how they talk about like when you're building that relationship with a potential future client that you don't ask them to marry you in the very first conversation. Correct. Like you have to date them a little bit. You gotta kind of ease into it. I mean, we've all gotten those messages on LinkedIn where it's just like they, people, I feel like I just got one the other day where it's like somebody vomited all their stuff out on me and I was just like, I'm overwhelmed by that. Even if I needed what you were selling, I'm totally overwhelmed by it.

Laura Kerbyson ([04:30](#)):

Yeah, exactly. I think that's

Jillian Flodstrom ([04:31](#)):

One thing too that like probably prohibits a lot of people from using marketing automation one because I think as a whole it can be super overwhelming. But what do you think are some ways that technology as well as automation can be used to enhance that customer service interaction? You know, sales Legion, I mean that's like three huge things that we could probably spend hours talking about. Just those three things. But what, you know, how can those businesses balance the benefits and those tools with the need for people's personalized customer attention? Because that is so often what people are looking for nowadays.

Laura Kerbyson ([05:10](#)):

Yes. I mean, whether it's email or LinkedIn messaging drips building out the workflows to create those drips and those actual messages are really truly crucial. The drips need to be good building the relationship and the trust, and they also need to be good at focusing on those pain points. And so we all know the chat bots that say, are there any questions I can answer for you? Can I help you? Mm-Hmm. <Affirmative>. But I think a more progressive, innovative way of using a bot is when you attach the code

to a Facebook advertising button. So you've got the ad, you've got the button, the user's already clicked the opt-in, which is, you know, crucial. You can't run Facebook ads without the opt-in, which means that they opt into your email, they opt into sms, they opt into the phone call when you put that in your terms and agreements.

Laura Kerbyson ([05:56](#)):

So the user clicks the button, the bot launches, and then it's gonna pre-qualify that customer because certain industries need to ask pre-qualifying questions for their product. So let's say, and let's just come up with a hypothetical here. Okay. If you're an accident attorney, like a basic question might be if you have been in an accident. Because if they say no, they're in the wrong place, <laugh>. So that button would then capture the email address and the phone number because the opt-in was checked by that potential customer. So then that phone number is gonna be dumped into a dialer for call to happen, and then the email is going to be dumped into the email flow that is gonna send one email a week for 10 weeks. And so those are the kinds of things that drive sales. So using technologies to establish relationships basically.

Laura Kerbyson ([06:44](#)):

And how we balance the benefits is that when the bot has exhausted the capability to help the person that's when it's connected with the human and the human takes over. So you put the employees really on the monitoring side. So y you know, you might have 2000 conversations that occur with the bot in 24 hours, but let's say 25% are not qualified, 25% of those customers we're not in an accident. So they're not your customer, right? So the bot allows you to have your people focus on 75% that are qualified so you can drive thousands of leads in short periods of time. It does require investment, but that investment pays for itself and this allows you to scale the business and it's wise to run this kind of automation on both the customer service side and the sales side.

Jillian Flodstrom ([07:32](#)):

Well, and I think it's important too to remember because it is an investment, but that's exactly what it is. Just like you're investing in an employee that would make those phone calls, you're investing in that automation to do it for you. And it probably creates even more opportunities because then you're kind of flushing out those, like you said, the person that doesn't, has never been in a car accident, they're not gonna be your client. So let's just move those folks out of the way so that way we can focus on the 75% of people that we do wanna focus on. So what strategies have you found to be most effective when you're creating those opportunities?

Laura Kerbyson ([08:10](#)):

Well let's see, right now, let me give you an example here. I'm currently using a platform that was written to drive LinkedIn marketing because I'm trying to get to decision makers. And that's really the strength of this is that LinkedIn is all about the business makers, the decision makers and basically how this front is, it connects to the LinkedIn platform from outside of LinkedIn. So I build out the flow of what the messaging's gonna be and when to send the message based upon what happens. I start targeting a list of prospects for the product and then I start the campaign. And then when I see that people are interested by the messages, then I step in and the automation stop. So we've used similar technologies to build out entire companies but in some cases those are gonna be sms, they're gonna be email, they're gonna be bot automation. You'd like the flow run until you need the human to step in.

Jillian Flodstrom ([09:01](#)):

Well, and I love that at any point in that process, like you said, that a person can step in and say, Hey, I'm here. What do you need? Because you're right, automation, it's amazing. And it can do, I mean the stuff that our team has come up with, I'm like, say what? Like, never even thought about it. I think that's why it's so important. If you're not doing anything with marketing automation yet, you definitely need to look into it because you could go super complicated, like, I like to call that ninja. Or you could go super easy, whatever works for your business wherever you're at in the process. But I really like the part that you said that like throughout that flow there's metrics that you can track. You know, you're using that marketing automation to measure customer satisfaction. You know, where are people at in the process? You know, where do you need to step in? What feedback? Or maybe a better question is how do you use that feedback to improve your business when you're able to see all that information?

Laura Kerbyson ([10:01](#)):

Well the analytics are everything. They drive, how you optimize the campaigns, how you make them better, how you make them more effective. So for example, I'll give you an idea of like what we track and then where we're at right now, like on a particular campaign. So let me look at this real quick over in the corner. But right now I'm running a campaign where I'm tracking the leads, I'm tracking the total messages sent back to me. I'm tracking the views, I'm tracking the total leads, followed the sent emails, the emails verified, the connection request, the sent emails cause this happens to be a LinkedIn marketing campaign. I'm checking the acceptance rate which on the current campaign is running about 28% on the acceptance rate, which is very good. The response rate is a total of 11% and our open rate is a whopping 48%, which is fantastic.

Laura Kerbyson ([10:51](#)):

So I can look at the flow chart of the workflow, I can see that step two is gonna be to follow those LinkedIn accounts and that 488 accounts were followed in the past week. And then I can go to further email steps that are deployed and I can see 75 emails were sent 36 were open, giving me a response rate of 48% on that part of the flow. So I invited 115 people to connect in Fast week 32 accepted giving me a response rate of 28%. So each step of the flow would continue to go on. So the software is gonna be much faster and more powerful at achieving the goal than I could possibly do by myself. And that's really the power of automation.

Jillian Flodstrom ([11:31](#)):

Well, and really even that tracking, like you're not requiring an employee to track all that stuff on a spreadsheet. Like you can literally pull it up and look at it anywhere in the process. And it probably allows you an opportunity to, when you see like maybe there's a part where you're like, oh, people are getting stuck right here in mm-hmm. <Affirmative>, whichever section it is to be like, okay, we need to tweak that, we need to test that or maybe adjust it. I think that's the crazy cool thing about marketing automation is there's so much freedom in what you have to do and you can really customize it for whatever business you have, whatever type of business that you have. One thing too that I'm curious about is with all this marketing in a automation that we do use, how can it enhance our sale, our sales or the customer experience that would potentially build customer relationships? Because I feel like there's so much of that missing nowadays, or especially if you're in an industry that, you know, revolves around finance or something, that those customer relationships are so important and you have to build those typically before you can sell a customer. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, what are your thoughts on that?

Laura Kerbyson ([12:35](#)):

Well, yeah, I mean, you just brought up some really good points. I mean, for example let's say someone's at work, but they're interested in a mutual fund or something like that. If you are interacting with that chat bot, you know, they can do it with maybe on their lunch hour without people knowing what they're doing. Cuz they want their privacy. And there are really actually entire markets and age groups that prefer to text. So by using the chatbot, they can text and ask the questions, they can maintain their privacy and they can get instant help where it's not possible to employ enough humans to answer those questions. Cause I know that the one I started where I had 2000 conversations in the first 24 hours, there's no way I would've had enough people to answer that.

Jillian Flodstrom ([13:15](#)):

Yeah, that is so amazing. So I know we've talked even about, so we're using marketing automation, which people think is a lot of like ai, we're creating those flows ahead of time. And I think a lot of people might not think that that's personalized service when in fact it really is. Yes. But because it is an investment in our business, in our employees, how do you manage those bus budget constraints and frankly, everything else that we have going on as business owners, there's so much pressure out there. What are ways that marketing automation can help us achieve that balance?

Laura Kerbyson ([13:51](#)):

Well, I think automation is very, very cost effective. Humans are really nice, but in order to handle volume, it's really an inefficient business plan to rely solely on humans. So I think that we've reached the realm in marketing and automation AI where humans just need to be the oversight and the ultimate judgment and know when to step in so that their, their leads are more high intention at the point at which that they're engaging with the customer. But it, it still requires a tremendous creativity because all the messaging had to be created in the case of emails, the messaging and the visuals. So you can't do it without the humans. It just makes the human job more interesting and more productive and engaging even for that person.

Jillian Flodstrom ([14:31](#)):

Absolutely. And too with marketing automation, it's probably evolving like social media or any other technology that's out there, it's probably changing all the time. So tell me what you're most excited about with the emerging trends and how do you see them impacting the future of customer service for our businesses?

Laura Kerbyson ([14:52](#)):

Well, there are reasons to be excited about the advancements in artificial intelligence, but at the same time, to be honest, there are reasons to be concerned as well. The field is at a really interesting place right now. It can be such a revenue maker for companies, but you can also see new technologies can be dangerous. This is a debate that's going on in the industry right now. And recently there was a letter that was signed by Elon Musk as well as other members of the tech community, including myself. And let me just pull up here for a second. I'll read you basically what it says. It says, advanced AI could represent a profound change in the history of life on earth and should be planned for and managed with commensurate care and resources. The letter says, okay, so unfortunately this level of planning and management is not happening, even though recent months have seen AI labs locked in and out of control race to develop and deploy even more powerful digital minds than no one, not even the creators can understand, predict, or reliably control.

Laura Kerbyson ([15:54](#)):

So I signed the letter, Steve Wazniak, who was one of the co-founders of Apple, signed the letter as did thousands of people in computer science. I think we have 25,000 signatures at the moment. And we're at the point with artificial intelligence where, you know, we say to ourselves, yes, we know we can do that, but should we do that? So there's been no greater time to discuss ethics, I think, than now. And I think most of us in the field agree that it, it needs to be technology people to make these recommendations and limitations. And technology companies cannot be run by people without tech backgrounds. I mean, it just, it never works when that happens. So the things that I execute on a marketing automation side, they are meant to provide benefit to both sides. I mean, I would never do it if both sides weren't benefiting, but the technologies in the wrong hands can be used to exploit people and to harm them.

Laura Kerbyson ([16:49](#)):

So that's the concern of the industry. But when you hear that one of the bots found a cure for a type of cancer that we didn't have, I mean, it's really hard to put the brakes on that and it seems like a, a really good use of the technologies. But on the positive side, you know, these technologies can be used to reach, to interact, to engage and to help people and customers in greater ways than human only companies. So, you know, I think I was stunned when that first bot I wrote did 2000 conversations in 24 hours. And you know, that was the point at which I realized that this is how you learn how to scale a business and scale it quickly through automation. You know, s m s is highly effective but the fccs has just imposed new regulations on sms. So, you know, this is a game that it, it changes constantly and in marketing, we need to pivot in business, we need to pivot and we need to react to the changes that we have in society. But I think, you know, ultimately my goal is to use these technologies to help businesses earn revenue, to be more efficient and to match the right customers to the right people.

Jillian Flodstrom ([17:57](#)):

Well, and I mean, I feel like that's kind of like entrepreneurship in like sums it up because we have to be flexible. We have to be willing to, you know, pivot to make changes necessary, but at the same time, we need to remain extremely ethical because our customers depend on it. The those relationships that we're creating with people. I mean, just like you said, I mean there are lots of ways that businesses can abuse things that our customers use. And that's another reason too, why we as business owners, we need to work with reputable people, people that share the same views as us of like, we want to respect our clients. You know, we wanna make sure that we are doing the right thing for the right reasons. And I think that that is one reason why you have excelled so much is that ethics that you do have. And if people wanna connect with you and they're like, Hey, I wanna geek out with you on this marketing automation, I wanna find out more about it. What's going on? What's the best place for people to connect with you?

Laura Kerbyson ([19:00](#)):

Ah, well they can find me@floridawebdevelopment.net or they can find me@lauraeson.com. The Florida web development do net laura eson.com and we can hop on a call, we can do a demo, I can show some behind the scenes you know, any number of ways. My telephone is all note all over the internet as well with those websites. And they can always email me at laura Florida web development.net.

Jillian Flodstrom ([19:26](#)):

I love that. And we'll be sure to link everything in the show notes. So if people are driving or running, you know, listening to this or watching this, they'll be able to have access to those show notes. Quick and easy. Thank you again for sharing all of this information with us. I feel like this marketing automation is such a massive thing and if people are like, oh, I know I need to do that, but I'm so overwhelmed, I think even just having this short conversation that we did, you cleared up so many things for us. So I appreciate you being here with us today.

Laura Kerbyson ([19:54](#)):

Thank you so much, Jillian, for having me as a guest. And thank you to everyone who's listening best on scaling your business.