



# Authentic Marketing Strategies

**How to Build Genuine Audience Connections and  
Lasting Customer Loyalty**

## Course Guide



**Compass Rose Consulting**  
Donna Lynn Price

## Welcome. Welcome!!

You being you, in your marketing, is authentic marketing and much more attractive to your prospects and customers. Use this guide to put together your Authentic Marketing strategy together.

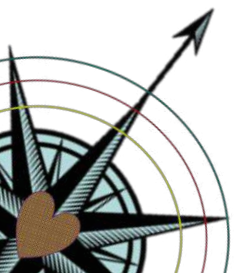
Let's get started!

*Donna*

Donna Price  
Founder and CEO

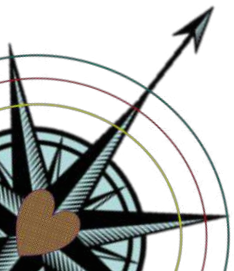
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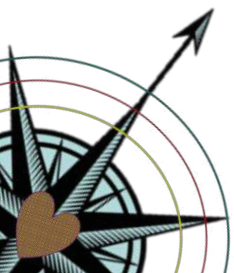
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### Introduction

Authenticity in marketing isn't just a catchphrase that's thrown around when talking about business strategy. It's a commitment to your values, audience relationships, and brand identity.

When you show up in your business as yourself, a real person with your own unique story and convictions, you'll find more satisfaction in running your business. At the same time, this approach will deeply resonate with the people you want to connect with.

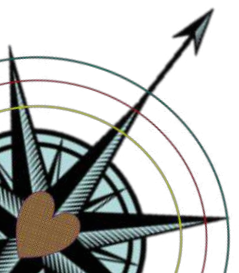
Through integrity and honesty, you build trust and engage your audience. And when people trust your brand, they're more likely to buy from you and stay loyal to your business.

Authentic marketing benefits everyone. Consumers are tired of promotional tactics. They've been disappointed, and now they crave something different. They're bombarded with AI-generated content, and they want what's real. They're looking for a genuine connection with the person behind the brand. They want to interact with a human being and not a faceless marketing team.

But how much of yourself should share? How do you balance the professional with the personal? Luckily, there are many ways to share your vision with people who align with your values without uncovering everything.

The challenge many small business owners face isn't in identifying their values. You likely recognize the importance of authenticity but struggle with how to convey it, especially as your business grows.

In this course, you'll reconnect with your values and business vision. You'll explore ways to communicate those authentically to your audience through a compelling brand story. You'll then learn how to promote yourself and your brand through authentic content marketing strategies across various channels.



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By the end of the course, you'll have created a blueprint for implementing authentic marketing strategies in your business that will help you grow through a genuine connection with your audience.

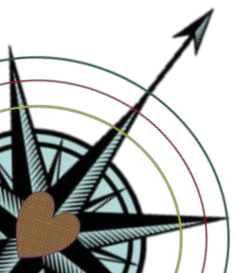
### Here is your roadmap through the course:



### Learning Objectives:

By the time you complete this course, you'll be able to:

- Apply the essential principles of authentic marketing.
- Discover and align your personal values with your business vision.
- Craft and share an authentic brand story that resonates deeply with your target audience.



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- Identify what your audience really wants from you.
- Explore different ways to use content authentically in your marketing.
- Choose the best channels for distributing your authentic content.
- Handle feedback with honesty and transparency.
- Develop a practical blueprint to keep your marketing efforts genuine and effective.

This course is broken down into 8 major modules and individual lessons that follow a logical order. So, while you can skip around if you want, it's best to work through them one at a time.

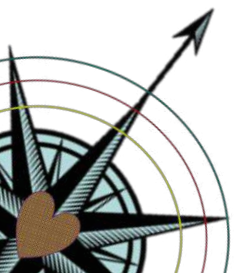
As you go through each module, use your Action Guide to help you complete the Action Steps at the end of each.

### *Action Steps:*

Before we start the course, take a minute to think about what you want to get out of it.

In the Action Guide, write down three skills you expect to gain.

Now that you're clear about what you want this course to deliver, we can get started.



## Module 1 - The Pillars of Authentic Marketing

In this first module, you'll explore the essential principles of authentic marketing and how to use them in your business to build long-lasting customer relationships.

### Authenticity vs. Traditional Marketing

Authentic marketing is not just another sales strategy. It's a commitment to show up as the real 'you' in your business and demonstrate ethical, transparent, and genuine business practices.

Let's look at the key differences between authentic marketing and marketing you may have used in the past:

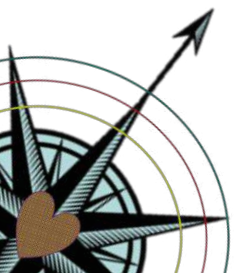
**Authentic marketing** focuses on building genuine connections with consumers, transparent communication, honesty, and integrity in all marketing, even when challenging.

#### Example

**Authentic - An online sustainable clothing boutique shares details about:**

- Sourcing materials
- Ethical conditions of production
- Honest discussions on maintaining sustainability in fashion

A small online fashion boutique specializing in sustainable clothing might share detailed blog posts about sourcing their materials, the ethical conditions under which their garments are produced, and honest discussions on the challenges of maintaining sustainability in the fashion industry.



## ATHENTIC MARKETING GUIDE

**Traditional marketing** is often geared toward sales, where sales practices may oversimplify or exaggerate the benefits of a product or service affecting a consumer's decision-making process.

### **Example**

**Traditional - An Online sustainable clothing boutique shares details about:**

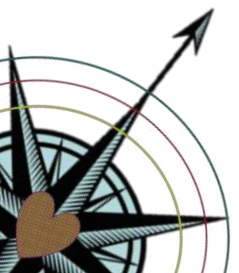
- “The most sustainable option available”
- Focus on the eco-friendly aspects of their products, not the challenges

The same online business using traditional marketing might advertise their clothing line as “the most sustainable option available,” focusing on the eco-friendly aspects of their products without delving into the challenges involved in the sustainability of the entire lifecycle of their garments.

## **Ethical Considerations in Authentic Marketing**

For many small business owners, choosing authentic marketing is an ethical decision. When you choose it, you acknowledge the importance of being truthful in advertising, respecting customer privacy, and being socially responsible.

By focusing on the core principles, you can build stronger, more meaningful relationships with your customers. It can also set you apart from your competitors,



## The 4 Pillars of Authentic Marketing

Here are some ways you can include these principles in your marketing:



### 1. Transparency and Honesty

- Be truthful
- Acknowledge AI, affiliate links, sourcing



### 2. Integrity

- Avoid dubious claims
- Acknowledge mistakes
- Stand by your products/services



### 3. Customer Needs and Feedback

- Prioritize customer needs
- Respect and protect customer data
- Ensure accessibility to all customers
- Act on customer feedback to improve



### 4. Responsibility

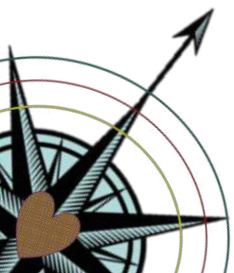
- Contribute to local community
- Consider environmental impact
- Be fair to all

### 1. Transparency and Honesty

- Be truthful in marketing messages.
- Acknowledge the use of AI, affiliate links, and product sourcing.

### 2. Integrity

- Avoid dubious claims.
- Acknowledge mistakes when they occur.
- Stand by your products, services, and promotional methods.



## 3. Customer Needs and Feedback

- Prioritize customer needs.
- Respect and protect customer data.
- Ensure accessibility to all potential customers.
- Actively listen to and act on customer feedback to improve products and services.

## 4. Responsibility

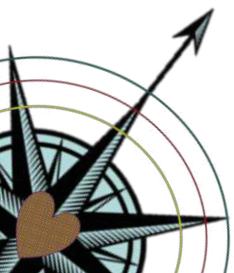
- Contribute to your local community.
- Consider the environmental impacts of marketing decisions.
- Be fair to all the people you deal with.

## Benefits of Authentic Marketing

Consumers prefer to do business with brands they feel are honest and reliable, so your emphasis on marketing authentically will attract more interest in you down the line.

As you invest in the process, there will be both business and personal benefits.

At a personal level, living in alignment with your personal and business values:



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### Personal benefits:

- Reduced stress, genuine commitment to customers
- Leads to rewarding, sustainable business

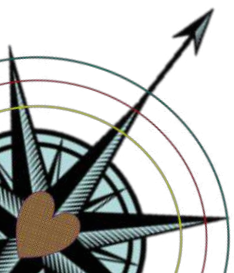
### Business benefits:

- Memorable, relatable brand identity
- Customer loyalty
- Sets you apart from competitors
- Leads to higher engagement rates, conversions, revenue

- Reduces stress and fosters a more genuine commitment to your customers.
- Leads to a more rewarding and lasting business model.

At a business level, authentic marketing:

- Strengthens your brand's identity, making it more memorable and relatable to your audience.
- Fosters customer loyalty as consumers remain loyal to brands they trust and see as genuine.
- Sets you apart from your competitors, attracting customers who share similar values.
- Leads to higher engagement rates, more conversions, and, ultimately, increased revenue.



### Transition Gently

If you're a start-up without a well-known track record, you're creating a marketing strategy more or less from scratch.

But if you have an established following, transitioning too abruptly to authentic marketing could be challenging as it could confuse your audience. You can make thoughtful and nuanced adjustments to build trust at a reasonable pace in many places.

Only you can judge what is right for you and your business.

Let's look at an example where the transition was too abrupt:

#### **Fast-food chain known for convenience and competitive pricing**

Little emphasis on health or sustainability

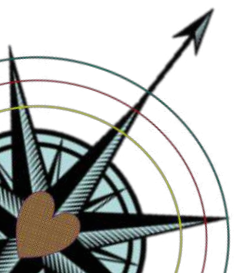
Decides to promote new organic "farm-to-table" menu

Regular customers aren't interested in health or environment

Brand criticized for "greenwashing"

Leads to loss of trust from new and existing customers

Consider a fast-food chain that has built its reputation on convenience and competitive pricing, with little emphasis on health or sustainability.



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The brand moves to authentic marketing to satisfy the growing consumer demand for ethical practices. It promotes its new "farm-to-table" menu options, emphasizing organic ingredients and eco-friendly packaging.

However, this sudden shift confuses and alienates some of its long-standing customers who aren't interested in health or environmental concerns but visit the chain for its budget prices and fast service. As a result, the brand is criticized for "greenwashing," using marketing to appear more environmentally friendly than it is. This results in less trust in the chain among new and existing customers.

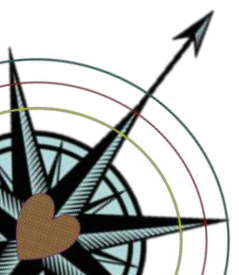
This example shows that sometimes, you can do the opposite when you seek to be more authentic and build trust. Take it gently and make sure your actions back up your values.

### *Remember:*

- Authentic marketing is a commitment to demonstrate ethical, transparent, and genuine business practices.
- Make the transition gently and ensure your actions back up your values.

### *Action Steps:*

1. Identify examples of marketing campaigns you've encountered that felt particularly authentic or inauthentic to you.
2. Conduct a thorough audit of your current marketing strategies to identify areas where more transparency and honesty could be implemented.



## Module 2 - Discover your Authentic Self

Authentic marketing begins with who you are and the experience you want through your business.

In this module, you'll develop an awareness of your authentic self by identifying your core values and how they translate into a vision statement for your business.

### Know Who You Are

Marketing authentically means being true to yourself. But do you know who you are?

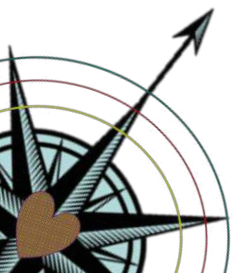
There's no lack of marketing advice out there. If you've been in business for a while, you might've followed marketing gurus in the past, trying to enact/learn a formula for attracting customers. You might've put on a mask of who you think you should be to attract prospects. Or if you're a new entrepreneur, you might be unsure which way to turn to create the success you want.

No matter what stage you're at, if you feel uncomfortable or uncertain about a piece of marketing advice, maybe there's a better way for you.

When you're authentic, you feel like you go with the flow, commit to your passion, and stay excited and motivated about your business. It doesn't mean you don't face challenges, but you have sure ways to handle them, move through them, and advance.

### Your Core Values

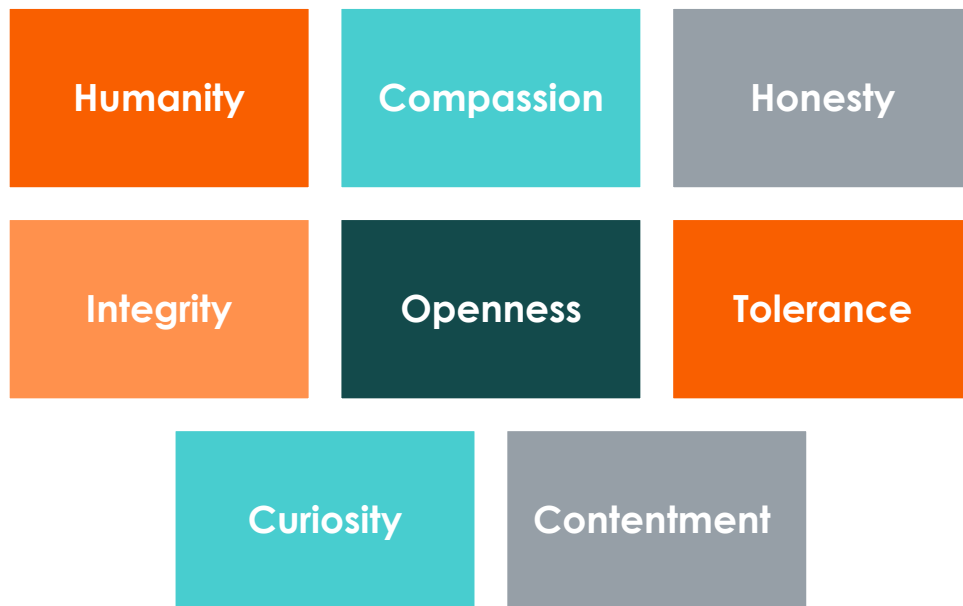
When you're authentic, you live by your values in business or any other aspect of your life. *You* may be clear what these values are, but many people aren't.



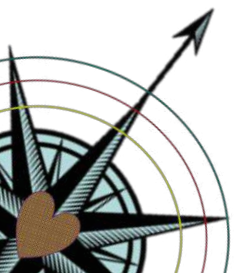
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We all have values. They're the principles and ideals that guide our decisions and actions. When you've worked out the values that are most important to you, you can incorporate them into your personal life and your work.

In the action steps for this module, you'll find exercises to help you define your core values. They can be things like:



- Humanity
- Compassion
- Honesty
- Integrity
- Openness
- Tolerance
- Curiosity
- Contentment



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There's no right or wrong with values. What's true for you might not be true for someone with different values.

An authentic marketer will transmit their values through their business. This helps your customers to be clear about what you stand for. And you'll reduce the stress of trying to be someone you aren't.

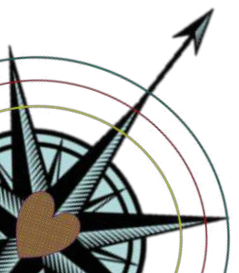
However, new and existing customers may doubt your authenticity if your values don't match up. For example, a business owner who emphasizes their green credentials but continues using plastic in their packaging will send a mixed message. Do they really care about the environment or not? Similarly, a committed vegetarian chef who espouses the rights of animals but who serves cheap meat products will raise questions about their integrity.

These two situations are obvious examples of contradiction. In your field, the differences may be more subtle.

### Live Your Values

Authenticity is about transparency and honesty, so you need to demonstrate your core values within your business.

You can do this by taking a stand on specific issues that are important to you. However, to stay authentic, your brand should only do so when the issue directly aligns with your company values, and you're prepared to take action.



## Example

**Patagonia:**  
Outdoor clothing and gear company

**Brand Values:**  
Environmental activism and sustainability

**Expression of Values:**  
From 2022, its profits would be used to combat climate change and support conservation activities

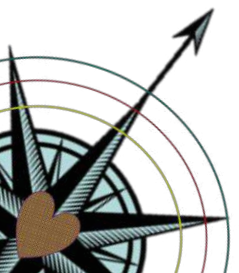
Patagonia, the outdoor clothing and gear company, has made environmental activism and sustainability a core part of its brand values. In September 2022, the company announced that it would change its corporate structure to ensure that all its profits (estimated at around \$100M per year) would be used to combat climate change and support conservation activities.

Added to its earlier changes, this is a prime example of a company expressing its values and living them out through significant, impactful actions.

## Values to Vision

To clarify what your business future will look like when you fully incorporate your values, you need to articulate your business vision.

A business vision describes the impact and change you want your company to create in the world while operating according to your core values. It's focused on long-term goals and is typically ambitious and aspirational. It will show how living authentically by your values would shape your business.



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By creating a short statement of one or two sentences for your brand, you can share this vision with others and use it to guide you as you transition to authentic marketing.

### **Examples**

#### **Online Fashion Company**

Our vision is to pioneer ethical fashion that minimizes environmental impact through innovative eco-fabrics and zero-waste manufacturing while uplifting global artisans' skills and livelihoods.

#### **Real Estate Agency**

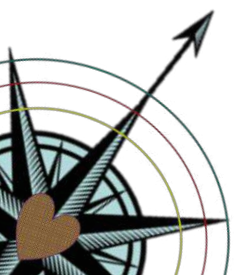
My vision is to transform real estate by facilitating transparent property transactions that prioritize community well-being, sustainable development, and the creation of long-term value for homeowners and neighborhoods alike.

#### **Financial Coach**

My vision is to empower individuals to achieve financial freedom and security through ethical investment strategies and information-based services that demystify personal finance and promote economic well-being.

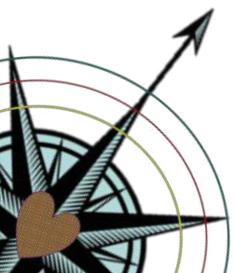
### *Remember:*

- Marketing authentically means being true to yourself.
- Be prepared to take a stand on issues that are important to you.
- Use your business vision to guide you as you transition to authentic marketing.



### *Action Steps:*

1. Personal history exercise. Note the key moments and experiences that led you to start your business.
2. Role model analysis. Pick someone you admire and identify the values you share with them.
3. Compile a definitive list of your core values based on your insights from these two exercises.
4. Create a vision statement for your business that embodies these values.



## Module 3 - Write your Authentic Brand Story

You need to next develop a compelling brand story to show what your brand is all about.

In this module, you'll articulate an authentic brand story that aligns with your core values that you can then share with your audience.

### Purpose of a Brand Story

Consumers have more choices than ever. They can easily find an alternative if a brand doesn't appeal to them or they don't trust it.

Your brand story tells people about your values and the “why” of your business so they have an idea of what to expect from you.

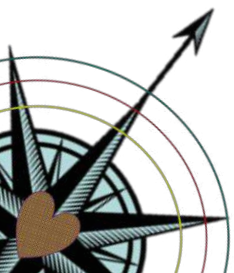
It should be authentic, engaging, and relevant to your audience. You can use it as a tool for communicating not only with customers and leads but with competitors, partners, and suppliers.

### Personal Story vs. Brand Story

For solopreneurs like coaches or consultants, your personal identity is often deeply connected to your professional brand. Often, you *are* the brand, and your personality and expertise are what you're offering potential clients.

In this case, you need to decide how much of your personal story you feel comfortable sharing.

That's also the case with brands where you're the founder and want to step out from behind the company. Sharing more of your life experiences demonstrates authenticity and helps develop a closer relationship with your audience.



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Whatever type of business you have, you can decide how much of your personal story to share. It should resonate with your audience and demonstrate your values yet remain within your comfort zone.

For a larger business, the brand story extends beyond any single individual, showcasing shared values and collective goals to the market. Selectively weaving in real founder or employee stories can help humanize the brand.

### Guide to Creating Your Brand Story

When writing your core brand story, aim for a length between 300 to 600 words. You can then adapt it to suit where you're featuring it. For example, placing it on your website, where you've got more space, will be more extensive than on a social media profile.

There are some key elements to include:

---

**Your values and the why of your business**

---

**Brand personality**

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**Align tone and language to reflect brand personality**

---

**Ensure visuals are consistent**

---

**Pivotal moments, challenges overcome, realizations**

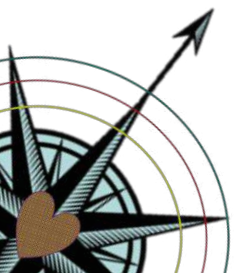
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**Examples, case studies to show core values in action**

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**End story by sharing your vision**

- Your values and the “why” of your business.
- Your brand personality. This could be professional, friendly, fun, innovative, or compassionate.
- Tone and language that is aligned so your brand story accurately



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reflects your brand's personality.

- Visuals to accompany your story with a consistent identity (logo, color palette, typography, photography style) that reinforces your brand and values.
- Pivotal moments, challenges overcome, realizations, or critical decisions that show your values. Don't shy away from humble beginnings.
- Anecdotes, examples, or case studies that demonstrate your core values in action.
- End your story by sharing a vision of where you see your authenticity leading, inspiring others to follow you.

### **Examples**

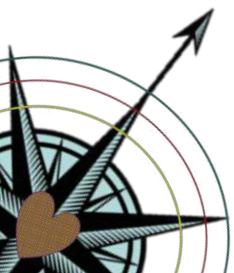
#### **Earthly Delights Organic Bakery**

*I'm Sarah, the owner and baker at Earthly Delights, an organic bakery about creating delectable treats that are as good for the planet as they are for your taste buds.*

*Growing up in a family that cherished the earth and its offerings, I've always believed in respecting our environment. Earthly Delights was born out of my passion for baking and a strong desire to align this passion with my values of sustainability, wellness, and community.*

*At Earthly Delights, we aim to be more than just a bakery. We want to be a safe and peaceful place for our customers, our community, and the planet. The team values each customer, treating them as an extended part of our family, and we're always exploring new ways to bring you healthier and tastier options.*

*The journey to establishing Earthly Delights was not without its challenges. From sourcing locally grown, organic ingredients to ensuring minimal waste in production, each decision was driven by my*



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*commitment to sustainability. The choice to use compostable packaging, despite the cost, is one such decision that reflects my dedication to environmental responsibility.*

*One of my most memorable moments was when I donated our first batch of surplus bread to a local shelter. It was a small step but a powerful reminder of our vision to contribute positively to our community.*

*Looking ahead, we see Earthly Delights playing a pivotal role in promoting sustainable food practices in our community and beyond.*

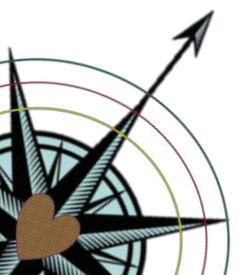
*If you value delicious, wholesome food and care about the impact of your choices on the environment, I invite you to join us. Try our organic treats, join the conversation on my blog, or drop by the bakery to say hello. I can't wait to welcome you to the Earthly Delights family!*

### **Career Catalyst Coaching Services**

*I'm Alex, the heart and soul behind Career Catalyst, a coaching service dedicated to helping individuals find jobs and forge careers that resonate deeply with their passions and goals.*

*My own tumultuous path sparked my journey into career coaching through the professional world. After years of climbing the corporate ladder, I found myself disillusioned, feeling like just another cog in the machine. It was a period of profound self-reflection, leading me to realize that my true passion was to succeed in my career and help others find their fulfillment.*

*At Career Catalyst, we believe in more than just resume tweaks and interview tips. We're here to delve deep into what makes you tick, uncover your innate strengths, and align them with a career that brings you joy and purpose. Our ethos is rooted in the belief that a fulfilling career is a cornerstone of a happy life, and every individual*



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*deserves to embark on a professional journey that is enriching and aligned with their personal values.*

*Navigating the professional landscape can be daunting. I've faced rejections, questioned my direction, and battled the imposter syndrome. But these experiences have been invaluable, igniting a vision to guide others through the complexities of the job market confidently.*

*One of the most rewarding experiences at Career Catalyst was helping a client transition from a secure, high-paying job in finance to pursue her dream of working in non-profit environmental conservation, where she's making a real impact in the world.*

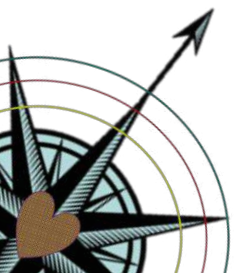
*Looking to the future, Career Catalyst aims to be at the forefront of career coaching, adapting to the ever-evolving job market and empowering individuals to adapt and thrive in their careers. I'm passionate about building a community of fulfilled professionals who feel empowered to make bold career moves.*

*If you're at a crossroads, feeling stuck, or simply yearning for a career that brings you a more profound sense of purpose, join me at Career Catalyst. Together, we can unlock your potential and embark on a fulfilling and successful career journey. Let's make your professional dreams a reality.*

You'll use the **Brand Story Worksheet** to help you write your story.

### Post Your Brand Story

Now you have a compelling brand story, you can add it to your website's "About" page, your social media profiles, and marketing materials such as lead pages and sales pages. You may need to tweak it for different content and only use some of it as appropriate.



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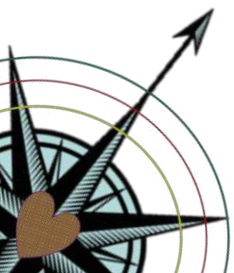
Ensure your team members and brand ambassadors share your story with their networks.

### *Remember:*

- Your brand story should be authentic, engaging, and relevant to your audience.
- You get to decide how much of your personal story to share.

### *Action Steps:*

1. Use the **Brand Story Worksheet** to help you plan and write your brand story.
2. Pick three places to use this brand story in your marketing materials to promote authenticity.



## Module 4 - Find Where your Audience Craves Authenticity

You've decided you want to market authentically. Many consumers are looking for just this approach.

In this module, you'll identify what your audience is looking for from you and why authenticity matters to them. This way, you can ensure your brand story aligns with customers' needs.

### Why Authenticity Matters to Consumers

Consumers know when they're interacting with an authentic brand. They will quickly see through you if you're not genuine.

Not all customers will look specifically for brand authenticity, but an increasing number are. It matters to them because:

**They want to feel they're dealing with a trusted friend, not a marketing team**

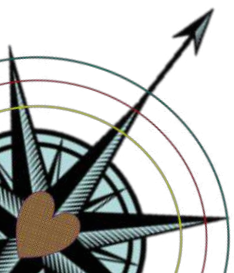
**They want to feel connected to the brands they support**

**They're looking for brands that align with their values**

**They're more particular about where they spend their money**

**They want an alternative to inauthentic marketing**

- They want to interact with the human side of a brand so they feel like



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they're dealing with a trusted friend or colleague, not a marketing team.

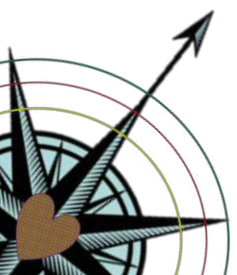
- They want to feel connected to the brands they support and part of a community of like-minded people or movement.
- They're looking for brands that align with their values and take a position on issues that are important to them.
- They're more particular about where they spend their money and want to choose carefully.
- They want an alternative to inauthentic marketing, which might have let them down in the past.

### What Your Audience Wants

Connecting with your target consumer is even more critical when practicing authentic marketing. You'll reach out to a specific audience and want to ensure you hit that target.

You know your potential audience if you're already making sales and/or have an established subscriber list. There may be some tweaks to make as you transition to authentic marketing and some additional research to do.

Prioritize a few practical strategies that provide insights to help you understand the values, interests, communication styles, online behaviors, and brand loyalties of the audience looking for authenticity.



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Here are three ideas to get you started:

**Social Media Listening**

**Audit Competitor Reviews**

**Survey Current Customer Base**

## 1. Social Media Listening

Monitor social media platforms like Facebook, X, Instagram, and relevant online forums where your potential audience is active. Pay attention to the types of content they praise as authentic and genuine and when they call out brands for feeling inauthentic.

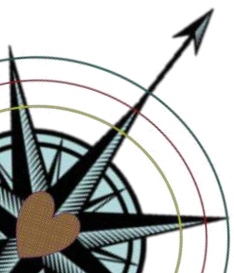
## 2. Audit Competitor Reviews

Review recent reviews your nearest competitors have received, for example, from platforms such as Google Business, Trustpilot, Yelp, and G2. Identify when customers explicitly cite authenticity (or lack of) as a factor in their experience. Make notes on what specific attributes reviewers seem to value.

## 3. Survey Current Customer Base

If you already have a customer base, send out a simple survey. Ask them key questions, for example:

- What they value about your brand
- What causes they care about
- Where they spend their time online and offline
- What defines an authentic brand experience for them

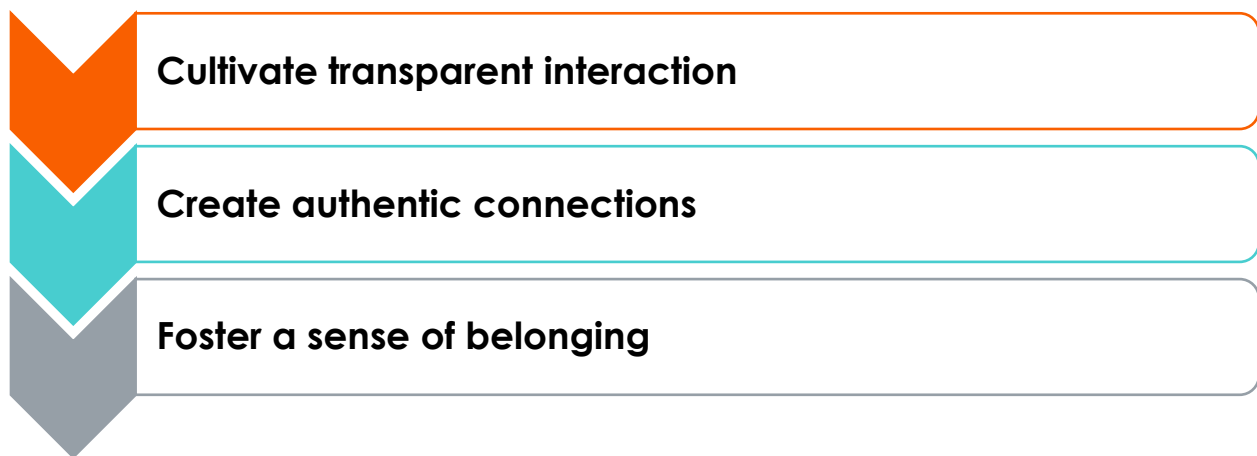


### Build Trust to Overcome Skepticism

Once you've gathered your data, you'll see how important authenticity is to your audience and what attributes they value.

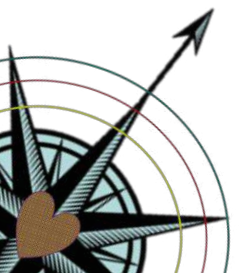
You can then take steps to ensure authenticity is at the center of your brand. This will overcome any skepticism they have about marketing based on past experiences.

Here are some ideas that cater to audience needs:



#### 1. Cultivate transparent interaction

- Tell the truth about who you are. If consumers doubt your authenticity, they can quickly validate it through online searches.
- For example, major brands might post "Happy International Women's Day" on their social profiles. Skeptical consumers can easily do some digging to find out if a company truly supports women with policies like paid family leave. If it doesn't, then the inauthenticity is exposed.
- Answer questions honestly and provide what you promise. If you don't, people may spread negative comments about you on social media, even if unjustified. This can result in a PR nightmare.



## 2. Create authentic connections

- Make people feel like they're interacting with a friend or colleague, not a marketing team.
- By talking about the issues important to you authentically, you reveal your brand's humanity. This helps form genuine connections that keep consumers coming back for more.
- Create a personalized experience for your audience whenever they interact with your brand.

## 3. Foster a sense of belonging

Developing a sense of community around your brand can significantly enhance customer loyalty and engagement.

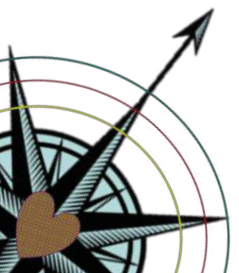
- Organize events that align with your brand's vision and values, such as workshops, webinars, or meetups, either virtual or in-person. These can be opportunities for your community to learn, share experiences, and connect with like-minded individuals.
- Create exclusive content for your most engaged customers on forums or social media. These spaces make members feel like they're part of a special club.

## Review Your Brand Story

Now that you've identified the audience who will most appreciate your authentic marketing, look back to your work from the last lesson.

Your brand story should make logical sense for this audience but check if it needs tweaking.

Make sure that your brand personality will resonate with this group. For example, imagine a luxury watch brand that traditionally promotes exclusivity and sophistication, aiming to appeal to a high-end consumer base.



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The brand shifts its personality to a light, casual, humorous tone to appear more relatable.

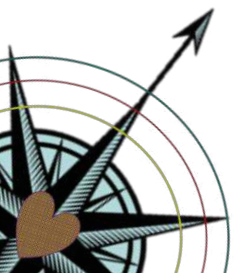
However, this shift doesn't resonate with its core audience, who values the brand for its craftsmanship, heritage, and elegance. The brand faces the choice of looking for a new audience or returning to the more serious personality it was promoting to its established customer base.

### *Remember:*

- Consumers will see through you if you're not being genuine.
- People want human connection with their brands.

### *Action Steps:*

1. Pick two ways to research what your audience is looking for in authenticity, e.g., customer survey, social listening.
2. From your research, list the significant attributes of this audience.
3. In your Action Guide, check which of the options your audience is looking for.
4. Look back at the brand story you wrote in the last lesson. Answer the questions in your Action Guide.
5. Tweak the brand story if needed.



## Module 5 - Create Authentic Content for Marketing

The most powerful way to share your authenticity with your audience will be through your content.

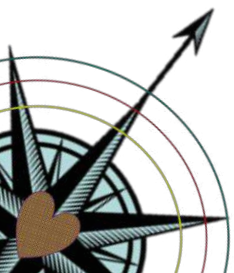
In this module, you'll learn practical ways to make your content more authentic, no matter what type of content you create.

- **Lesson 1: Infuse Authenticity in All Your Content**
- **Lesson 2: Blog Posts**
- **Lesson 3: Video**
- **Lesson 4: Podcasts/Audio**
- **Lesson 5: Infographics/Graphics**
- **Lesson 6: User-Generated Content (UGC)**
- **Lesson 7: Livestreams/Webinars**

### Lesson 1: Infuse Authenticity in All your Content

The most powerful way to share your authenticity will be through your content. Most people who've been marketing traditionally will gradually introduce more transparency into the brand so they can transition gently.

However, if you've suddenly realized something needs to change, that could be the launch pad for a new way of marketing. For example, if you decide to reduce your carbon footprint by bringing your supply chain locally, that could explain a new type of content.



## ATHENTIC MARKETING GUIDE

Regardless of the type of content you choose for your audience, there are essential elements to cover. They apply to the other lessons in the module.

### 10 Essentials of Authentic Marketing:

#### 10 Essentials of Authentic Marketing:

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Be true to your brand's voice, values, and vision

---

Share real stories, challenges, and successes

---

Offer genuine advice, including the pros and cons

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Respond genuinely to comments on your posts

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Share authentic customer stories and testimonials

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Create content that aligns with your values

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Acknowledge when you use AI as a starting point for ideas

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Maintain consistent visual branding across all channels

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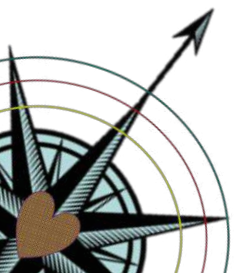
Ask consumers for feedback

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Ensure content provides valuable information

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1. Be true to your brand's voice, values, and vision while being transparent, engaging, and respectful toward your audience. This will build trust and foster a robust and loyal community around your brand.
2. Share real stories, challenges, and successes related to your business or industry. This humanizes your brand, builds a deeper connection with consumers, and helps engagement.
3. Offer genuine advice, including the pros and cons of certain strategies or products, even if it's not entirely in favor of your brand.
4. Respond genuinely to comments on your posts to show that you value your audience's thoughts. Create a person-to-person dialogue



## ATHENTIC MARKETING GUIDE

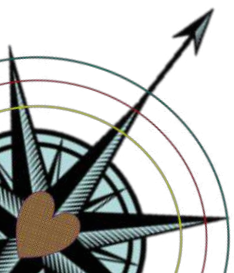
- where possible, such as following up by direct message if necessary. Use chatbots carefully; people can tell if they're talking to a robot.
5. Share authentic customer stories and testimonials. Consumers trust what other customers say.
  6. Create content that means something to you and aligns with your values. Don't get sidetracked into following trends that aren't you.
  7. Acknowledge when you use AI as a starting point for ideas. Edit any AI-generated materials to keep your content true to your authentic brand voice.
  8. Maintain consistent visual branding across all your marketing channels to reinforce brand identity and reliability.
  9. Ask consumers for feedback and be open to points they raise. This will help you better understand your audience and deepen your relationship.
  10. Ensure your content provides valuable information, education, or entertainment. Avoid making it purely sales-driven, as this won't be seen as authentic.

### Remember:

- The most powerful way to share your authenticity is through your content.

### Action Steps:

1. List the types of content you create now for your audience, e.g., blog posts, podcasts, infographics.
2. Choose one piece of content you've created that generated much interest and one that didn't. Analyze both pieces and rate them in



your Action Guide.

## Lesson 2: Blog Posts

Let's look at different types of content and how you might make them more authentic.

Here are the specifics to bear in mind when writing authentic blog posts:

**Add images and photos to make the post more real**

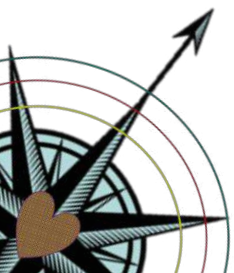
**Take pictures and include them to show real situations relating to the topic**

**Incorporate storytelling to connect with the audience**

- Add images and pictures. This will make your content come alive and be more engaging.
- Take photos relating to the topic. This will show readers real situations relating to the topic.
- Incorporate storytelling in your posts. This will connect with the audience and draw them in.

### Action Step:

1. Rewrite an old blog post to sound more authentic.



## Lesson 3: Video

Here are the specifics to bear in mind when creating an authentic video:

### Show behind-the-scenes content



### Upload customers' "unboxing" videos



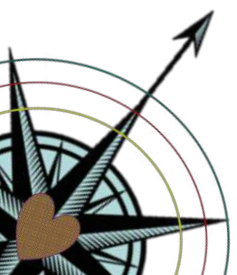
### Make videos in the correct format for social media platforms



- Show behind-the-scenes content such as how products are made, day-to-day operations, or introductions to team members. This will reinforce the human side of your business.
- Ask customers to make "unboxing" videos and upload them. This will show their genuine first impressions of a product and are great social proof.
- Make sure your videos are in the proper format for your chosen social media platforms. In this way they can be easily accessed and shared.

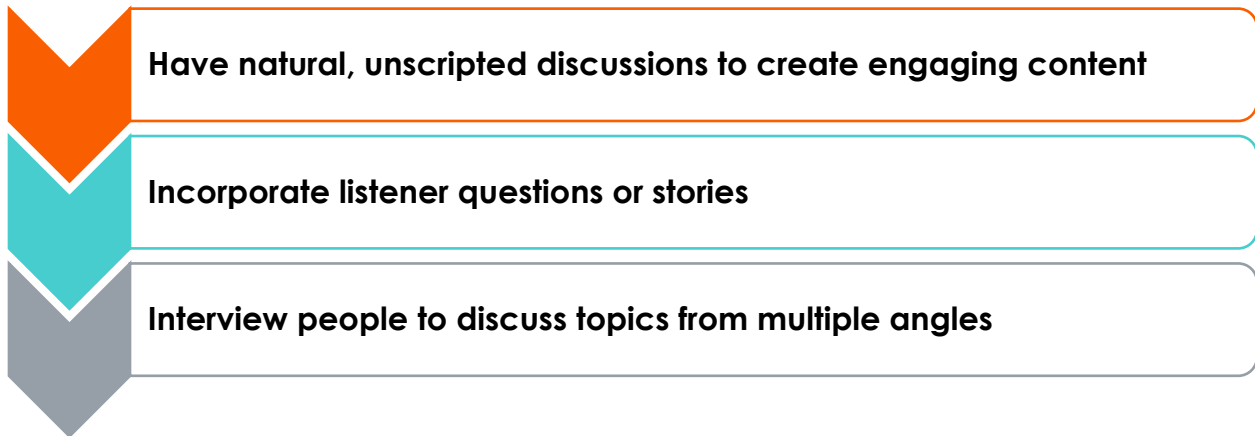
## Action Steps:

1. Review a past video you've published and rate it for authenticity.
2. Identify what changes you'd make if you re-recorded the same topic and wanted to convey authenticity.



### Lesson 4: Podcasts/Audio

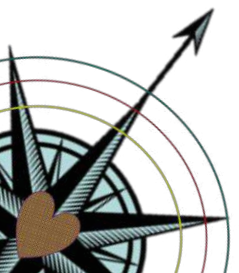
Here are the specifics to bear in mind when creating content for podcasts (your own show or as a guest interviewee) or for recorded audio sessions:



- Have natural, unscripted discussions. This will create genuine and engaging content that will interest your listeners.
- Incorporate listener questions or stories into podcast episodes. In that way, you'll create a more interactive and community-focused experience.
- Interview people from various backgrounds to discuss topics from multiple angles, not just people who agree with you. This demonstrates your openness to others which is an important part of authenticity.

### Action Steps:

1. Pick a podcast episode that relates to your business and your industry. It could be from your podcast or someone else's.
2. Note how you might authentically deliver equivalent content.



## Lesson 5: Infographics & Graphics

Here are the specifics to bear in mind when creating infographics:

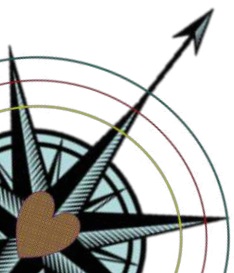
**Use actual data and statistics**

**Always provide clear attribution**

- Use actual data and statistics to back up your graphics. This adds credibility to the information you're presenting.
- Always provide clear attribution when using external data or quotes. This demonstrates honesty about your sources and also respect for the intellectual property of others.

### Action Step:

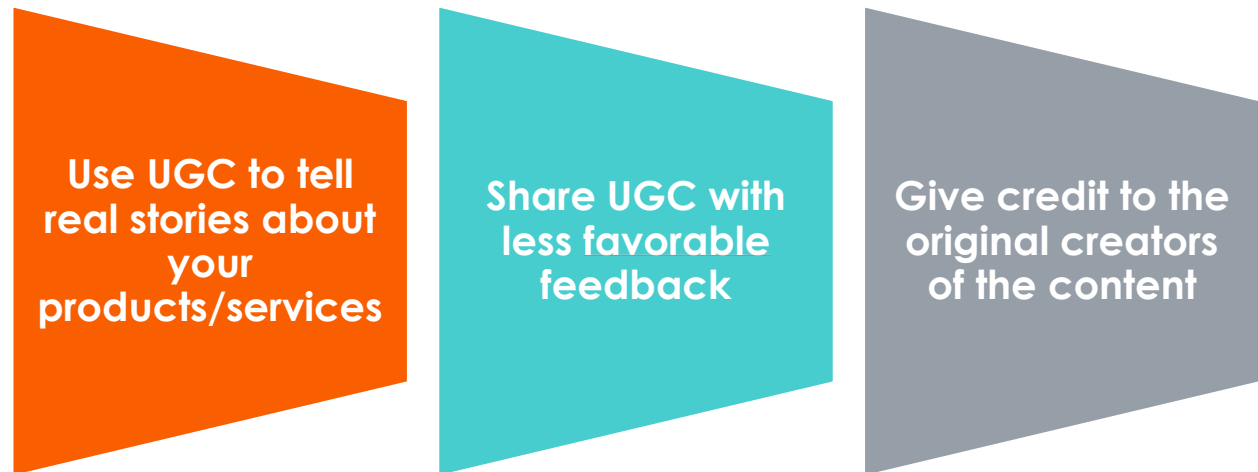
1. Outline an infographic to illustrate your brand story, e.g., a timeline.



## Lesson 6: User-Generated Content (UGC)

Not all your content has to be created by you. Featuring real customers or suppliers is one of the best ways to achieve more authentic content.

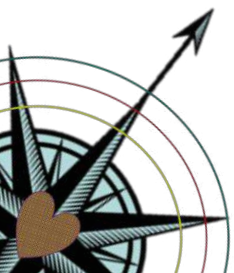
Here are the specifics to bear in mind when leveraging UGC:



- Use UGC to tell real stories about how your products or services have changed your customers' lives. This is valuable social proof which will impact your prospects.
- Share UGC from various customers, not just the ones who have had positive experiences. Acknowledging and addressing less favorable feedback demonstrates honesty and a commitment to improvement.
- Give credit to the original creators of the content you share. This not only shows respect but also fosters a sense of community among your followers.

### Action Step:

1. Share appropriate UGC that has appeared on your audience's social media platforms.

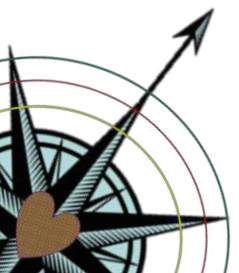


### Lesson 7: Livestreams/Webinars

Here are the specifics to bear in mind when hosting live events that allow real-time engagement with your audience, which increases authenticity:



- Interact with your audience in real time, answering questions and acknowledging comments. This demonstrates transparency and a willingness to be put on the spot.
- Be authentic. If you don't know the answer, admit it. Promise to research and follow up later. This demonstrates your honesty.
- Engage and ask questions using the chat box. Acknowledge viewers by name to create an all-important personal connection.
- Be yourself at these events and let your brand personality shine through. In this way, you let your customers see the person behind the business and that's what they're looking for from authentic brands.

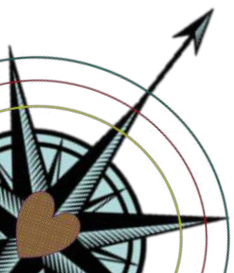


## ATHENTIC MARKETING GUIDE

- Handle mistakes or technical issues calmly. Being honest, and sometimes even having a laugh about it, can endear you to your audience and shows you aren't perfect.

### *Action Step:*

1. Pick three ways to project your brand personality at virtual events.



## Module 6 - Engage Authentically Across All Marketing Channels

Now you've looked at ways to increase authenticity in your content, you need to consider where you will place that content.

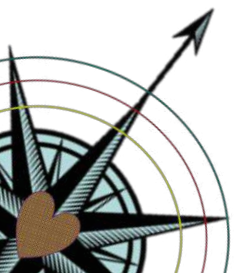
In this module, you'll select the most appropriate channels for distributing authentic content to your target audience.

- **Lesson 1: Social Media**
- **Lesson 2: Website Pages**
- **Lesson 3: Email Marketing**
- **Lesson 4: Digital Text Communication**
- **Lesson 5: In-Person Engagement**
- **Lesson 6: Traditional Marketing**

### Lesson 1: Social Media

You can use many different marketing channels to send out your authentic message depending on the touch points with your audience.

Let's begin with best practice tips for social media.



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**Choose platforms where your audience is**

**Tailor content to fit the social media channels**

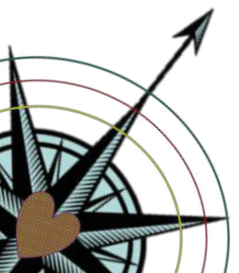
**Increase engagement by answering comments, asking questions**

**Use platform-specific ways to engage**

**Develop authentic partnerships with social media influencers**

**Showcase behind-the-scenes of your business**

- Choose the platforms where your audience is present. That way, you'll be more efficient and only spend time on creating social media content that will make a difference.
- Tailor your content to fit the social media channels you use. This will ensure your content is compatible and can be easily accessed by consumers.
- Increase engagement by answering comments, asking questions, and sharing UGC. This is important for building your community as well as educating and providing information.
- Make use of the platform-specific possibilities for engagement, such as running quizzes and polls and organizing livestreams. This will ensure your output on social media is lively and dynamic. It might also set you apart from other providers who aren't using these tools.

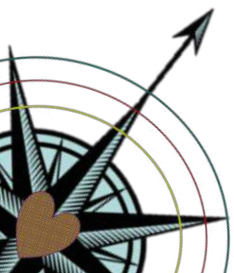


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- Develop authentic partnerships with social media influencers who reflect your brand and are on the same wavelength as you. But beware of following those who over-hype their products and services as many consumers will find this inauthentic.
- Showcase behind-the-scenes glimpses of your business in photo or video. This again portrays your human side which consumers like.

### *Action Steps:*

1. Pick three ways you will build an authentic presence on social media, e.g., showcase behind-the-scenes stories, share UGC.
2. Identify authentic partners who share your values for potential collaboration.



## Lesson 2: Website Pages

You'll probably have a website and other web pages, such as sales and landing pages.

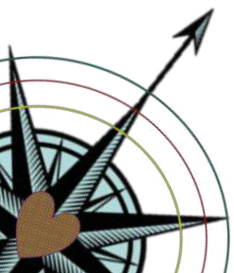
**Integrate blog posts, videos, and infographics**

**Add chatbots or video bubbles**

**Use landing pages to share solutions**

**Be honest about the benefits of your products/services**

- Integrate blog posts, videos, and infographics as appropriate. This will make your web content more attractive and dynamic.
- Add chatbots or video bubbles to your website. This will provide helpful information for web visitors 24/7 which might help them make up their mind to buy.
- Use landing pages that show your solution rather than focus on the eventual sale. By pointing out exactly how your product or service will benefit them, it will be obvious for them to buy from you.



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- Be honest about the benefits of your products or services on sales pages. Avoid hype and over-selling. Honesty is the key to authenticity and your customers will come to expect that from you.

### Action Steps:

1. Choose three changes you can make to your web pages to convey authenticity.
2. Write authentic content for a sales page for an existing or future product/service.

### Lesson 3: Email Marketing

If you use email marketing as a channel to communicate with your subscribers, then the content must be authentic.

Here are some tips to improve customer engagement:

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**Personalize your email content**

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**Create email campaigns to encourage interaction**

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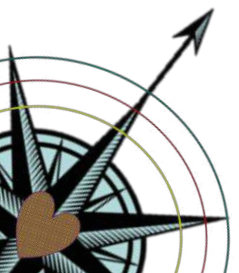
**Make sure your language is clear and jargon-free**

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**Investigate tools that use video**

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**Segment your list**

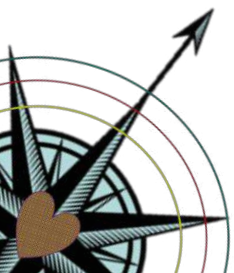


## ATHENTIC MARKETING GUIDE

- Personalize your email content as much as possible. Using the person's name creates connection and builds community.
- Create email newsletters and campaigns when appropriate. This will keep people up-to-date with what you're up to and encourage interaction.
- Make sure your language is clear and jargon-free. You want your prospects and customers to understand immediately what you're saying and for the communication to flow easily.
- Investigate tools to include video and make the email experience more engaging, such as [Warm Welcome](#), [Invideo](#), or [Sendspark](#). When you add ways to interact with you, you show your personal brand and build the connection.
- If you have many subscribers, segment your lists so you have more direct contact with your audience. That way you'll be able to target your communication and increase the impact of your message to those who are waiting to hear it.

### *Action Steps:*

1. Set up personalization in your email provider.
2. Research video email tools that promote more engagement.
3. Segment your subscriber's list (optional).



## Lesson 4: Digital Text Communication

Digital communication through SMS and direct messaging is a great way to have a through line to your prospects and customers.

**Send pre-scheduled SMS texts,**



**Use third-party messaging apps**



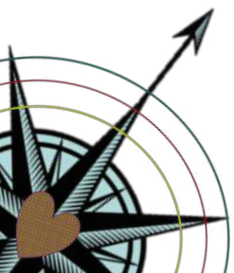
**Choose in-app messaging**



**Personalize all messages**



- Send pre-scheduled SMS texts and one-off messages through the cellular network to reach someone on their smartphone. Be concise, as you're limited to 160 characters. Check out tools such as [SimpleTexting](#), [TextMagic](#), or [Slicktext](#). Pre-scheduling messages helps your planning and saves you time.
- Use third-party messaging apps such as [WhatsApp](#) and [Facebook Messenger](#) for more extended “conversations” and replying to customer questions. They require an internet connection, so they won't work everywhere. These apps give you the chance to take the conversation off a public social media platform into a private space where you can resolve issues more comfortably.

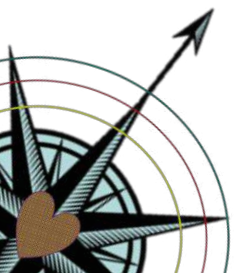


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- Choose in-app messaging for targeted marketing to your audience. You need a tool like [PushWoosh](#), [Notificare](#), or [OneSignal](#). If you use one of these tools, you'll be able to send messages that will hit the spot with the right customers and that can help their buying decisions.
- Personalize all types of messages to encourage engagement. When you receive a message addressed to you personally, you automatically feel important to the sender. You want this for your customers.

### *Action Steps:*

1. Create an authentic SMS message of up to 160 characters to practice concise messaging.
2. Look at the three alternatives: SMS, direct messaging, and in-app messaging. Note the pros and cons for your business.
3. Draft a direct message to send to selected audience members to engage your subscribers.



## Lesson 5: In-Person Engagement

This is “old school” authenticity and the original marketing channel where you're in front of a prospect or customer.

**Convey your values face-to-face**

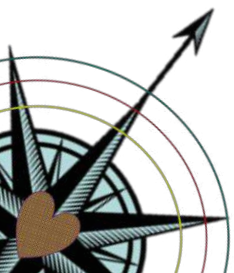
**Attend trade shows/industry events for contacts**

**Present your authentic self when networking**

- Use the advantage of communicating face-to-face to convey your values and what your business is about. Being in front of someone is a unequaled opportunity to show who you are.
- Attend trade shows and industry events to make contact with prospective customers or potential partners. You can follow up with them later having established the connection at the event.
- When networking, present your authentic self to those you meet, not just a business “front”. That way people will connect authentically with the person behind the brand and that will be the start of a fruitful relationship.

### Action Step:

1. Decide how to introduce yourself authentically at a networking event, conveying who you are and your brand.



### Lesson 6: Traditional Marketing Channels

Unlike face-to-face marketing, businesses traditionally used advertising to communicate their brand message. Some still invest in paid ads.

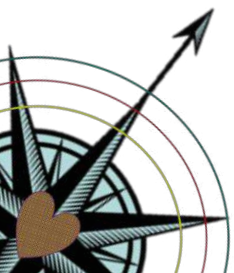
Consider how and when you might use traditional ads authentically, for example, in newspapers, billboards, or TV advertising. If you have the budget, you might prefer to combine traditional and digital marketing strategies by purchasing ads on [Facebook](#), [TikTok](#), [LinkedIn](#), or other social media platforms. Always make sure you get a good return from your ad spend.

If you prefer to avoid paid advertising of this type, consider direct mail. Go for "lumpy mail," which sparks curiosity when it arrives and sets you apart from others. You can send anything 3D through the mail, such as jumbo paper clips, pens, key chains, or other promotional items. You could also send free samples or advanced promotional articles for the upcoming launch of one of your products.

"Lumpy mail" campaigns are successful because they grab attention and are relatively inexpensive.

#### Action Steps:

1. If you are spending money on traditional advertising, write down the return you are getting on your investment.
  - a. Review how satisfied you are with this spend (optional).
2. Decide how and when you could send "lumpy mail" to your audience.
  - a. Investigate appropriate products and prices.
  - b. Set goals for a "lumpy mail" campaign.



## Module 1 - Respond Authentically to Criticism

All businesses receive criticism, which isn't always easy to handle without being defensive.

In this module, you'll choose ways of using transparency and integrity to respond authentically to negative feedback and criticism. You'll also learn how to confidently and politely refuse opportunities that don't align with your values.

### Embrace Negative Feedback with Authenticity

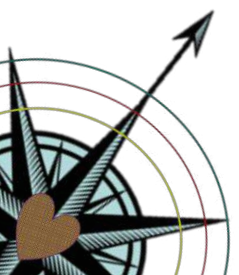
Negative feedback is inevitable, but how you respond can reinforce or undermine your authenticity. Even major brands have been severely damaged by bad publicity after behaving dishonestly and destroying customer confidence.

When you have ways to handle criticism with transparency and integrity, you'll increase customer loyalty and the strength of your community.

### Spot the Value in Negative Comments

However hard you try in all your business tasks, things will go wrong. And that can attract negative feedback.

See these comments as constructive and an opportunity to showcase your authentic brand. Criticism often stems from customers being disappointed they didn't get what they expected. But commenting, even if unpleasant for you, shows they're still interested in you.



## Best Practices for Consistent Authenticity

Your way forward is to show your commitment to the Pillars of Authenticity we looked at earlier.



### 1. Transparency and Honesty

- Be truthful
- Acknowledge AI, affiliate links, sourcing



### 2. Integrity

- Avoid dubious claims
- Acknowledge mistakes
- Stand by your products/services



### 3. Customer Needs and Feedback

- Prioritize customer needs
- Respect and protect customer data
- Ensure accessibility to all customers
- Act on customer feedback to improve

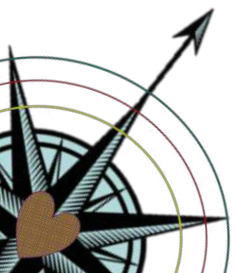


### 4. Responsibility

- Contribute to local community
- Consider environmental impact
- Be fair to all

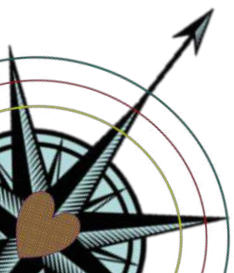
1. Transparency and honesty in marketing messages.
2. Integrity by acknowledging mistakes when they occur.
3. Customer focus by prioritizing customer needs.
4. Responsibility to your community and the planet.

Here are some best practice tips to help you:





- Respond with empathy. Put yourselves in the critic's shoes to understand their frustrations.
- Avoid being defensive, but say “sorry” and take responsibility for the situation.
- Enter into a deeper dialogue to discuss the circumstances.
- Be upfront in admitting the truth and areas needing improvement.
- Clearly communicate the steps you'll take to address the criticism.
- Empower team members to take approved steps to make things right if issues arise.



### Example

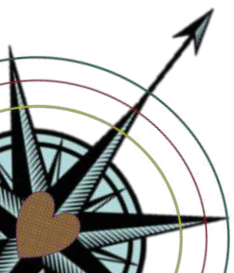


You're a clothing manufacturer whose customer posted about a defective product arriving with missing buttons. Your response: "Thank you for bringing this to our attention, (firstname). Your experience is unacceptable, and we're grateful you took the time to share this issue with us directly. We're already investigating this batch with our production team to address these problems and improve our processes."

### When to Disengage

Sometimes, you'll be asked to make changes you don't agree with or partner with someone who doesn't share your values.

In these situations, the authentic way is to say "no" and politely explain why their perspective doesn't align with your brand's authentic vision. For example, a consulting firm turning down an oil company engagement due to



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its climate values or a personal care brand clarifying why it won't use a controversial ingredient.

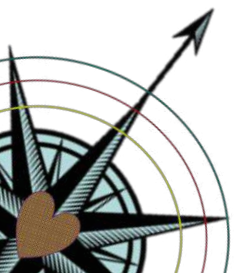
Sticking to your values in all situations, even if you lose some short-term growth or publicity, demonstrates your authenticity as a brand.

### *Remember:*

- Handle criticism with transparency and integrity to increase customer loyalty.
- Stick to your values in all situations, even if you lose short-term gains.

### *Action Steps:*

1. Draft an authentic response that you can adapt when answering comments or criticisms about your products or services. Ensure you're honest and transparent.
2. Make a list of the ethical lines you won't cross. Refer back to your core values to guide you.



## Module 8 - Create your Authentic Marketing Blueprint

It's time to combine your plans for authentic marketing into a strategy you can implement for your business.

In this module, you pick your success metrics and develop an authentic marketing blueprint to guide you in the future.

- **Lesson 1: Set Your Goals and Metrics**
- **Lesson 2: Develop Your Blueprint**

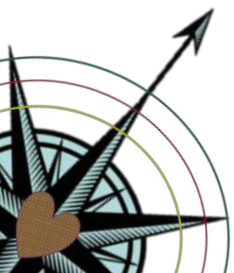
### Lesson 1: Set your Goals and Metrics for Authentic Marketing

#### Set Realistic Goals

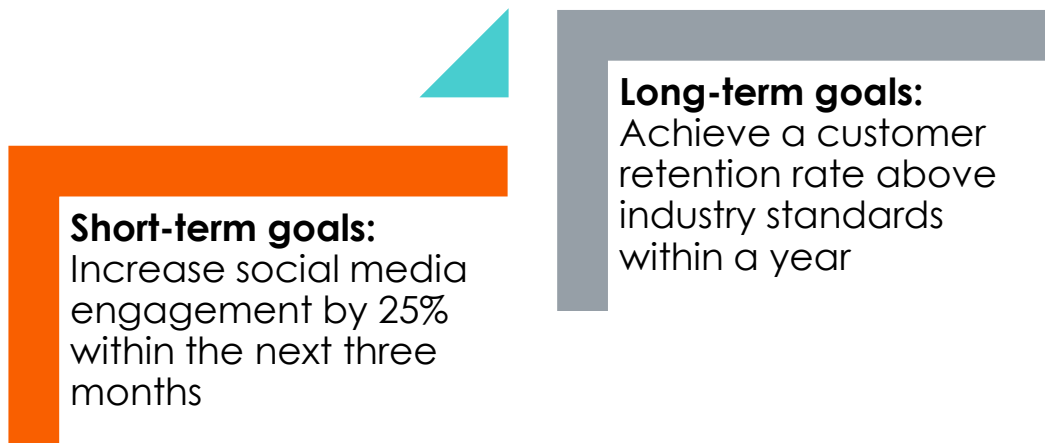
Your goals should reflect what you aim to achieve through authenticity, such as building trust, enhancing customer loyalty, or improving brand perception.

Goals need to be realistic and align with your broader business objectives. In this way, you can ensure your authentic marketing activities contribute directly to the success of your business.

Seeing the results of a transition to authentic marketing can take time, so setting short- and long-term goals makes sense.



**For example:**

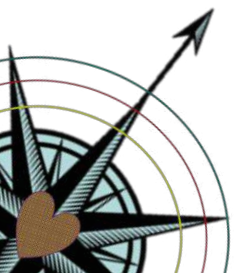


**Short-term goals:** Increase social media engagement by 25% within the next three months.

**Long-term goals:** Achieve a customer retention rate above industry standards within a year.

## Define Metrics for Authentic Marketing

Choosing relevant metrics allows you to track progress toward your goals effectively. In authentic marketing, it's essential to focus on metrics that reflect genuine engagement and trust building.

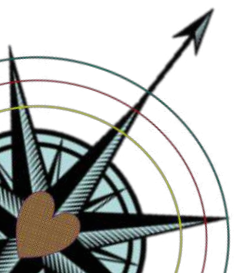


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Here are key metrics that will demonstrate the achievement of short-term goals:



- **Engagement rates.** Look at likes, comments, shares, and time people spend consuming your content. High engagement rates indicate that your message resonates with your audience.
- **Customer reviews and feedback.** You've looked at negative criticism, but tracking positive reviews and constructive feedback is equally important. This can be a strong indicator of trust and satisfaction. These comments can also give you an insight into how your audience perceives authenticity.
- **Brand sentiment.** Use social listening tools to gauge the overall feeling toward your brand online. It's not a hard and fast measure, but when people start to feel more positive about your brand, it's a clear sign that your authentic marketing is impactful.
- **Conversion rates.** This is a standard metric you'll be familiar with. In the context of authentic marketing, focus on conversions that result from content that highlights authenticity. This can help you understand if your approach is driving business results.



## Tools for Tracking

Leveraging appropriate tools is essential for effectively measuring your authentic marketing activities.

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### Social media analytics

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#### Google Analytics

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#### Customer relationship management (CRM) software

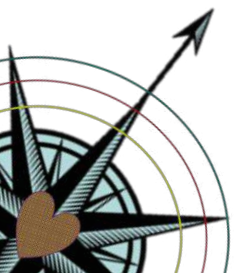
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#### Social listening tools

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#### Customer satisfaction sites

- **Social media analytics** are available on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [X](#), [TikTok](#), [YouTube](#), and all other platforms. Go to the platforms where your audience is present. Look particularly at the analytics that track engagement and sentiment on your posts.
- **Google Analytics.** This will track website traffic, conversion rates, and the effectiveness of content marketing strategies.
- **Customer relationship management (CRM) software.** If you use a CRM system, you'll find data to help track customer interactions, feedback, and overall satisfaction.
- **Social listening tools.** Sign up for [Google Alerts](#) and other tools like [Mention](#) or [Hootsuite](#) to monitor people's conversations about your brand.
- **Customer satisfaction.** Check out [Google Business](#), [Trustpilot](#), and



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other feedback sites appropriate to your industry to see what customers are posting about you.

### Remember:

- Set realistic goals.
- Choose relevant metrics to track progress toward your goals.
- Leverage appropriate tools.

### Action Steps:

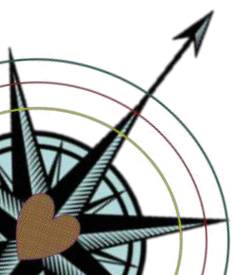
1. Set realistic, measurable short-term goals (up to three months).
2. Set long-term goals for the following year.
3. Decide on the metrics you'll use to measure your short-term goal achievement, e.g., engagement rates, conversion rates.
4. Pick which tools you'll use to access data, e.g., Google Business, Facebook analytics.

## Lesson 2: Develop your Blueprint

It's time to integrate the insights and strategies you've developed throughout the course into a structured, actionable plan.

The **Authenticity Checklist** will be your check that you've completed all the tasks in the course. If you haven't, then do so before you move on.

Then you're ready to create your **Authentic Marketing Blueprint**. It will help you plan how to achieve your authentic vision through the provision of authentic content, delivered via the most appropriate marketing channels.

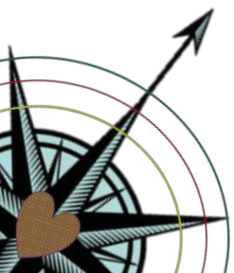


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In the Blueprint you'll lay out the specific tasks you need to complete and when. This will guide you when implementing your new strategy, keep you on track, and help you meet the goals you set.

### *Action Step:*

1. Complete the Authentic Marketing Checklist in your Action Guide
2. Complete the separate **Authentic Marketing Blueprint**.



### Module 9 - Next Steps

You've made it to the end of the course, so now it's time to plan what's next as your business goes forward.

#### **Learn From Your Analytics**

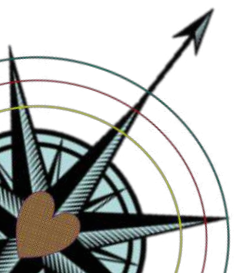
Examine all the data at your disposal to stay authentically connected with your audience.

Regularly review metrics from your website, social media, and other marketing channels to gauge the effectiveness of your content and authenticity strategies. Look for patterns in what drives engagement and conversions.

Use insights from your analytics to refine your marketing strategies. This might mean tweaking your messaging, adjusting your content calendar, or revisiting your target audience based on actual performance and feedback.

#### **Maintain Authenticity as Your Business Grows**

Staying authentic as your business scales is crucial for maintaining trust and loyalty from your customer base.



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Here are some ways to do that:

**Maintain a presence in customer communications**

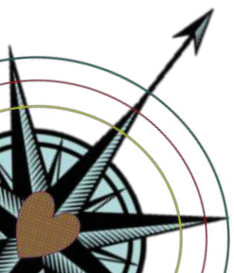
**Stay true while innovating**

**Be open about difficulties**

**Give back to your community**

**Regularly revisit your brand story**

- As your business grows, you'll probably move further from the front line. Try to maintain a presence in customer communications where possible. This could be through social media, a founder's letter in newsletters, or appearances in company videos.
- Stay true while innovating. As you explore new markets or launch new products, ensure they align with your brand's core vision. Innovation should not mean deviating from your values.
- Be open about difficulties. Be transparent about the challenges your business faces as it grows. Share your continuing journey, including the setbacks, to strengthen customer trust and loyalty.
- Give back to your community. Look for ways to help your community or causes aligned with your values as you grow. This could be through donations, volunteering, sponsorships, or advocacy.
- Regularly revisit your brand story as your business evolves. Ensure it reflects your current values, offerings, and community involvement without losing sight of your roots.



### Remember:

- Stay authentic as your business scales.

### Action Step:

1. Set up dates for regular authenticity audits, e.g., every three months.

### Now it is time...to make it happen!!

You have done it!!

You should, at this point, have a great Authentic Marketing Plan!! That is exciting!! I hope you feel it. The momentum you can build with real world marketing is incredible.

BUT, if you don't or you need some help to refine it, schedule a brainstorming session with me. During the 45 minutes, we will look at what you have and sort through your questions. Let me help you to get into forward action.

Schedule YOUR brainstorming session today!! I would love to talk with you!!

All the best,

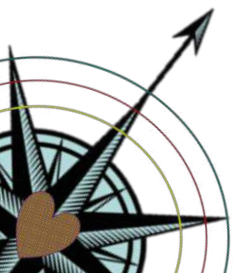
*Donna*

Donna Price  
Founder and CEO

Compass Rose Consulting, LLC  
<https://compassroseconsulting.com>

Check out the full [Content Marketing Course](#) and create your full content marketing calendar and system for growth.

Members of the [Business Growth Hub](#) gain access to almost every course at CRC as part of their membership.



*Schedule your call today!!*



- \* During this call we will:
  - \* Look at your business right now!
  - \* Review your content repurposing plan!
  - \* Create a plan to accelerate your results.
  - \* Leave with an action plan for business.

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