

Kathryn: Welcome to episode 24 of compass, I'm your host Kathryn Hunter. Do you need to move away from project based sites and build up a recurring client base? Today Melody Spencer and I talk about that and more when we get into the details of becoming a marketing mentor. You're listening to Compass, where we talk with location independent womxn about their work and the paths that got them there. We get into their stories of struggle and success, finding clients, figuring out what to charge, and of course, we talk money. Join us and take the next step in finding your direction. Melody. Welcome to the show.

Melody: Yeah. Thank you so much for having me. So excited to be here.

Kathryn: I like to start with your early life and see where that influences you later on. What did you want to be when you were five?

Melody: Oh, man, I think I wanted to be a writer and that's kind of followed me everywhere I go. I love writing, I love creating. I've always been super, super imaginative and creative. So I think that's always been within me.

Kathryn: Had that changed any by the time you left high school?

Melody: When I left high school, I wanted to be a theatrical costume designer. I actually went to Governor's School, which in Tennessee for that, I did that all through high school. I learned how to sew, I learned how to draw, like all that stuff. And then when I got to college I realized, Eh, there's not really any jobs in this. It's kind of hard. So I switched my focus to communications and marketing because I thought that would be a more job stable career choice, which is kind of boring for a 19 year old to make. But you know, it's worked out.

Kathryn: Your marketing studies, I'm sure you use, on a pretty regular basis. Is there anything from your design studies,?

Melody: I think I learned a lot about, you know, color and how to mix creative elements, end of things. I still use some of that a little bit I think because I love creating graphics and yeah, I think creativity never really goes away and design never really goes away. You can use it in all things.

Kathryn: How did you get into being location independent?

Melody: So in 2013 I had had enough of my administrative assistant job, I was working for an insurance company and I was just fed up. I was, so I had gotten really obsessed with the reading about digital nomads and all these people were working online. Cause that was, you know, six years ago and that feels like a lifetime ago. And it really is in this state, in the world of digital marketing, in the world of online businesses. And I told my husband, at the time, that I just really wanted to try freelancing and see what happened. And surprisingly he was cool with it. So, I kind of just went for it. I had no business plan. I had no, I mean I knew what I was doing in terms of marketing, but I didn't know anything about running an online business. So I just went for it. And so it happens. And then I

realized that once I kind of had that formula going for my business, I was able to work while I traveled, work from any coffee shop, not have to be at home. It was amazing. So I've just been doing that for six years of just traveling when I want to and working while I do it and pretty much everybody I know that works a normal job is pretty jealous.

Kathryn: I think that's pretty common.

Melody: Mmhmm.

Kathryn: How do you describe your job to people who are just being polite when they ask?

Melody: Okay. Yeah. Well it depends on their age group. People in my age group or younger, totally understand what social media is and what digital marketing usually is. People in my parent's age group don't always understand. So basically I say, well, you know those ads you see on Facebook or Instagram, I help people create those. And I say, you know, those posts you see on Facebook from businesses, I help people create those. So basically I whittle it down to the fact that I help business owners understand and create marketing that's effective to grow their businesses. Because that's really what it's all about. I just do it in digital unique ways.

Kathryn: When you're talking to people who really want to know the details...

Melody: When I'm talking to people that know more details, I can get pretty nerdy, especially if there are other marketers. I can go into the kinds of ads that I create and kind of designs I do. The kind of writing I do. I actually love talking to those people because I can just nerd out about what I love doing, which is creating marketing strategy and content and ads and all that.

Kathryn: How did you get into marketing from being an assistant?

Melody: Well, in let's see, 2007 one of my best friends from college created her own online business. She had handcrafted organic mineral makeup. And she knew nothing about marketing. She barely knew how to run an online business. So she asked me to help her with her marketing. And even though I had a degree in communications and marketing when I graduated college, that was definitely the dark ages of social media. Facebook was still in its infancy. Youtube, had just started. Instagram didn't exist. Twitter, I think had just started. So it was really the wild, wild west. So I kind of took what I knew, learned what I didn't know, and just took over all of her marketing and I was able to help her grow her business tremendously over many, many years due to the fact that I just kind of pulled my bootstraps up and just got into the trenches and learned all about digital marketing. And I think that's really unique because there's so many people now who are doing what I do. They just take a course and they say "I'm an expert." And I think really honing in and getting their true experience over years and years and years is what makes you an expert, not just getting a course.

Kathryn: So you've mentioned social media a couple of times. How would you explain the difference between social media marketing and digital marketing?

Melody: So digital marketing really is all about using paid advertising and marketing funnels to get your leads, to get your sales. And social media is just about being social. So showing up on Instagram, showing up on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest. But in the way that marketing has changed in the past few years, you really can't separate the two. You need to have digital strategy with your social media strategy. You need to have a budget for ads and have a budget for creating landing pages and creating funnels. Because if not, you may not get much traction because organic marketing is pretty much dead thanks to Facebook and Instagram constantly changing their algorithms.

Kathryn: So, your first client was someone you knew, how did you find clients after that?

Melody: After that, it really was utilizing big based project sites like Freelancer and Upwork, which I'm not a huge fan of those any more. But to get started in the online space, it, it was a really good launching point. And from there, so now I get most of my clients through former clients who tell people about me or LinkedIn or Facebook groups in it or networking groups I'm in, but back in the day it was definitely through big based project sites.

Kathryn: Tell us about your first major struggle.

Melody: My first major struggle was, I think, dealing with people that had expectations about my work that didn't match my expectations, not communicating, not paying me what I was worth or what I felt I was worth. And yeah, it's just a learning curve of learning how to communicate better and really stand up for yourself. I think even though we have all this experience going into freelancing, I still didn't really believe that people would pay me for it or respect me for what I knew. So I just kind of had to learn the lessons of dealing with crappy clients who treated me just like a disposable thing, in order to realize that, no, I'm worth more money, I'm worth more respect.

Kathryn: What got you to the point of saying that? of saying I'm not going to deal with these issues.

Melody: I think just having a series of those cruddy clients and realizing that they wanted me to compete with people in say like Pakistan or India who were charging a dollar an hour and that just wasn't feasible for somebody in North America. And also working with and befriending lots of coaches and people who are doing very well and who just said, you know, "you are so smart and you are not charging your worth and you're not standing up for your worth, so you need to own it." And that kind of gave me the power and the confidence to take a step away from what I knew, which was just taking whatever project, taking whatever pay and just going full force into what I'm actually good at.

Kathryn: You mentioned charging your worth. When you raised your rates, did that bring in a different type of clientele?

Melody: It does. It is funny. Sometimes I still get people who want to get on the phone with me, who they've read my website, they've filled out my application and they still think I'm going to give them a deal. And sometimes I will, but I think that you shouldn't go into a

consultation with somebody trying to wheel and deal them. You should see, like this person knows what they're talking about and they're good at what they do. Otherwise you wouldn't have gotten on the phone with them. So you should be willing to, you know, pay what they're asking you to pay. But it does bring about people who are a little bit more seasoned in business, understand the worth of what you're bringing to them and how you're going to help them. So it brings a little bit less of those tire kickers, I think.

Kathryn: How about your first major success?

Melody: My first major success was when I was able to work with a company who was a little bit skeptical about digital marketing and I was able to get them so many leads, to get them so much traffic, so many sales in just a few short months that they were like, wow, this is the missing ingredient to our business. They just needed to be shown what to do and how to do it and the right way to proceed. Because so many businesses are scared of spending a fortune. They were scared of giving the reins over to somebody else. But once I was able to give them, there were successes and those positives, they believed in the power of what I was doing.

Kathryn: If you could start today knowing everything you already know, is there anything you would do differently?

Melody: I think I would plan my business a little bit better and organize it a bit better, though I am a details person and I could probably do that for a year. So maybe it's better that I just plan plan, plan. Cause planning is great but then you've got a little bit more organization rather than just flying by the seat of my pants.

Kathryn: Odds are, there's no such thing as a typical day for you. Do you want to give us what a random day looks like?

Melody: A random day. So yesterday, I met up with a friend for coffee. We chatted for a couple of hours and then I worked from the coffee shop we were at, walked around, hung out in the community, talked to people, went to a yoga studio. I mean it was just definitely random and then came home and had a client call and made dinner. It was not typical, but it was fun and I loved it.

Kathryn: Do you keep up with any kind of continuing education, formal or informal?

Melody: I do. I actually went to the biggest marketing and social media conference in the world back in March. It's called Social Media Marketing world in San Diego and that was a game changer. It had been something I'd wanted to do for years and years and years, but I was scared of the cost. I was scared of kind of launching myself into that element, but it was incredible. I got to meet 6,000 other people who were just like me, a lot of them location independent, all doing marketing, all passionate. I got to meet a ton of my marketing heroes, so that was amazing. And I'm always working with coaches, doing courses, just learning. I keep up with tons of mindset and marketing thought leaders every single day. I listen to lots of podcasts. I just, I love learning and I think that's the

key to success is always learning and not being stuck in the same thing, same ideas, the same methods.

Kathryn: What are you excited about right now in marketing?

Melody: Right now I'm excited about the fact that things are shifting dramatically. One of the big points that was brought up at social media marketing world was that the way we have been doing marketing for the past five years is completely changing. For the past five years we've been doing something that was spearheaded by Russell Brunson with Clickfunnels where you created a lead magnet that got people on our email list and then you retarget them on Facebook and send them and upsell them and down sell them and just go through this whole funnel and people are really burnt out on that. They're tired of that. They're tired of the same kind of email marketing, the same kind of boastful selling. People are just burned out on that and what is working right now and what people are craving is human to human, heart to heart, real genuine connection.

Melody: So that is what I am so excited about because that's what I've already been doing in my marketing on my podcast, in my Facebook lives is just talking to people like people. Because somehow on social media and in digital marketing, we forgotten that the people on the other side of the computer screen are actual human beings with emotions and feelings and I think if we can really connect with people on an emotional level, they will know, like, and trust us and they will buy from us because they have that connection built in. It's not about just trying to sell somebody and being sleazy.

Kathryn: Now it's time to get into the numbers. What would you say your income range is and how long have you been doing the work?

Melody: Well, you know, I'm sure you understand this about this with freelancing and marketing it really fluctuates. So a couple of years ago I was making as much as it'd be \$50,000 a year. Last year I had a bad year and I think I made like \$20,000 so it really depends year to year and the types of clients you get, but this year is going to be much better. I really think I'm going to have the best year yet. So yeah, it's very fluctuating and that can be very frustrating for a lot of people coming out of corporate jobs cause we love that consistent paycheck. But with freelancing and location independence, unless you have a tried and true method of consistently making money, that's going to fluctuate a lot.

Kathryn: What would you say the beginning range would be? Somebody just coming in?

Melody: I mean I think you could probably hope to make \$20,000 to \$25,000 depending on what you're selling or what you're doing and the types of clients are going after. It really depends on a lot of factors, but I think that you could probably make a decent, you know, right out of college kind of salary with the right motivation.

Kathryn: What would you say the top income range is?

Melody: Well, I know people in this industry who make you know \$100,000, \$200,000 I mean I think depending on how well oiled your business is and the kind of team you have and

the systems you have in place, you can make six figures or more, usually. I know people that do that. It just kind of depends on the type of business you have and what you're selling or doing for people.

Kathryn: How do you, what to charge?

Melody: What other people are charging, what the industry standards are, and then what I feel comfortable with and what I feel my ideal client would be willing to pay. So I just kind of look at all those factors and then decide. It's interesting, because I get people that look at my pricing and they either say, wow, that's expensive. Or they say, wow, that's really cheap. And it depends on who I'm talking to entirely.

Kathryn: So we were talking a little bit about the instability. Is there anything you do to keep your income stable?

Melody: Well, I constantly look for new clients. I'm constantly trying to show up and be at the forefront instead of, you know, I think a lot of business owners in this industry think they can just set up some ads and that'll bring them all the clients they need. That's not necessarily true. You definitely need to keep top of mind with your potential clients on social media and your email list in, you know, Facebook groups, in videos and that will bring about the right clients for you. But for me the best way to get clients is to collaborate with other business owners and really show up for them on like their podcasts or their live videos or their groups. And that's what been one of the best ways I get clients.

Kathryn: Are there any tools that you recommend beginners start with?

Melody: Oh, there's so many tools. It depends on what you're trying to do, but I would definitely say if you don't know Facebook ads do the Facebook blueprint certificates that will help you give a good overview of what Facebook ads are all about and how to do them. And then I would recommend working with Rick Mulready or Amanda Bond to get a deeper dive on how ads can really convert and you can get amazing clients from those ads. And then as far as tools for social media, I highly recommend Buffer for scheduling out posts. That has been a tremendous tool to save you time and energy rather than natively posting all of your social media content for yourself or your clients. Those are my top few tools.

Kathryn: And what's your number one tip for women looking to get into marketing?

Melody: Be Yourself. Don't try to be like you know the experts you follow or the coach you've worked with. Just be yourself and show your knowledge, share your knowledge freely and people will come to you. It's not going to happen overnight. It's definitely going to take some work, but you are your own unique person and you don't need to be the next Amy Porterfield or Rachel Hollis, you are you. So just show up as you and people will gravitate towards that.

Kathryn: What are your next steps?

Melody: Right now, I'm kind of rebuilding my business in a way that makes more sense for me and for my current goals. So I have been doing done for you services, meaning clients would pay me to create the content, set up the ads, manage the ads, create social media, do marketing strategy. Pretty much I had my hands in whatever aspect of their marketing they didn't want to deal with. And that was great for awhile. But when you have 20, 30 of those clients, and I'm the only one doing all those things, it gets very exhausting and you feel like you're juggling a thousand balls and dropping all of them. So I am refocusing my business in a way where I can teach people and I'm calling it done with you. So I'm going to teach business owners, especially female business owners, how to create a marketing strategy, how to do digital marketing and social media marketing in a way that works for them and their industry. So I'm refocusing my whole business into that because that is more where my heart is. I love teaching rather than just doing everything.

Kathryn: And where can listeners find you?

Melody: You so you can visit my websites swiftlysocial.com I'm also on Facebook under Swiftly Social Digital Marketing, and I'm on Instagram under Biz Babe with Soul. That's where I promote my business and promote my podcast Biz Babes with Soul, which is all about female entrepreneurs talking openly and honestly about their journey in business and their lives.

Kathryn: Melody, thank you so much for joining us. This has been great.

Melody: Yeah. Thank you so much. I have loved it. Thank you so much for having me.

Kathryn: If you want your own location independent life and are eager to take that next step, join us in compass insiders where every week I send you actionable tips, inspiration, and motivation so you can take that next step towards going remote. Join us now at compasspod.com/insiders Did you enjoy this episode of Compass? If so, please take a moment to write a review. Leaving a review helps other women find us so they can find their direction too. Thank you for listening to Compass. You can find today's show notes at compasspod.com/024 that's compasspod.com/024. Next week we'll be talking with Linnea Molander, dating coach.