

TEI 074: Content Marketing for Product Managers

Host: Chad McAllister, PhD

Guest: Jerod Morris

[0:00]

Chad: Hi, this is Chad, your host and founder of Product Innovation Educators, where product managers learn to become product masters. The topic for this episode is one I've really been wanting to explore for a while. It's the connection between product management and content marketing. Now if you look at a recent marketing textbook, you're going to see some sections dedicated to product management—pretty good coverage—and also likely some coverage of content marketing as well. I've found similarities between the two pretty interesting. I went to the most authoritative source I know for content marketing, and that's the folks at CopyBlogger, which is now Rainmaker Digital. I've been following CopyBlogger for several years now and their materials are really quite helpful. They have been writing and teaching about content marketing for a long time. My guest is the VP of Marketing for Rainmaker Digital. He also creates educational content and digital products that help people develop and grow rewarding, profitable online businesses. The content he creates for Rainmaker Digital includes the Showrunner podcast, with Johnny Master and the Digital Entrepreneur podcast, with Brian Clark, the founder of CopyBlogger, now Rainmaker Digital. His name is Jerod Morris and I hope you enjoy the discussion as much as I did. If you hear something you want to refer back to during our discussion, I've got you covered, because I take notes for you. You'll find the summary of the discussion, along with a full transcript at www.theeverydayinnovator.com/074. Now, to the discussion with Jerod.

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Chad: Jerod, thanks so much for joining The Everyday Innovator podcast!

Jerod: Chad, thank you! I'm excited to be here.

Chad: I've been a longtime fan of CopyBlogger and we'll tie that in in a little bit with what's going on now with Rainmaker Digital, but let's dive in into an area that I think product managers really need to know about but I don't actually think that many are comfortable with, and that is content marketing. I'm confused about some points, too, because sometime I hear it called digital marketing and I don't know if there's a clear distinction. Can you unpack that a little for us, and tell us what content marketing is all about?

Jerod: Yeah. You know, the basics of content marketing is simply using content, and that could be articles, it could be videos, it could be podcasts, but using free content to educate the people who are in your ideal audience or your perspective customers, educating them on yourself, on your product, on your industry, so that they have enough information so that they can do business with you. That's the basic idea, is use content marketing to educate people, so that they get to know you, they get to like you, they get to trust you, and then they are informed enough to then take the next step with you, whatever that next step would be.

Chad: And you emphasize this free content and the purpose is to educate our customers, and this phrase that we often hear in the world of online marketing, which is know, like, and trust. So, as a way to really expose who you are and what you're offering to potential customers so they get to know you, hopefully along the journey, like you and the content you're providing, and trust you. I think the connection is so applicable to product managers because we might be dealing with brands that we don't think of as fitting a content marketing perspective, but I just see it show up more times than it used to,

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right? People are making better use of social media and online tools, and we see some big brands that are not just doing the advertising perspective of marketing, but they're helping to educate the customer in the process, to get them to adopt their product.

Jerod: Right. And you hit on the key word there, which is helping. I think that is the big key, the big concept that people need to remember with content marketing, is content marketing isn't about putting content out there that says, hey, hey, look at me, I'm so great. It's really about helping whoever that ideal audience member is. So, it's like when we do the Digital Entrepreneur podcast, yes, we will tell stories about our own experience at Rainmaker Digital because it's very, very relevant to the audience that we're serving, but the goal of that isn't just to build awareness for our products or say look at us. It's about helping people so that they can move forward with their digital business, or move forward with whatever they're doing. And that's...it's important, I mean you're going to be able to do both. That's the nice part about content marketing, is you can kind of do all of those things with this one action, but I think it really needs to come from a place of wanting to help, a desire to help, and when you do that, that's what builds that know, like and trust, and that's what gives people the knowledge, the empowerment to take the next step, and then if you're doing it right, you're leading them down the path to where they take the next step with you.

[4:57]

Chad: Yeah, and an example that just came to mind was some time ago, I was looking at solar panels as a way of generating power off-grid, and looked at lots of different sites, and the site I actually ended up working with was the one that gave me the best information to help me understand just how to put the system together. I kind of wanted to do the DIY approach but I really needed some help knowing where to start, and over time, came and trusted their information and they were my source for purchasing.

Jerod: It's funny you mention that, because we just bought a house about a year and half ago and so it's my first time ever trying to care for my own lawn, which I've so far been horrible at. I'm trying to get better, but I signed up for a newsletter from this guy, Ken, here in Dallas, and just to get some tips on when you should water and what kind of fertilizer to use. It was just about tips and I noticed earlier this week, you know, I got an email that said something about, hey, if you want to try out our service to do all of this stuff, we'll give you the first visit free and then you get a discount on the next seven, and I was like, I didn't even know that they had a business. I thought this was just offering tips, but then, I'm thinking, you know what, I should use these guys, because I like them, they know what they're talking about, and it built that rapport, built that trust with them. They had educated me, I realized how much work it was going to be and what kind of value it would be, and it was perfect, and this is the kind of stuff I teach and there it was happening right under my nose and I didn't really realize it, but it was a really, really good job of using content to educate someone who wasn't educated before, would not have been able to make that decision if I'd gotten that pitch right off the bat, and now here I am, an educated consumer who knows, likes, and trusts him, and that's how you want to build the relationship and that's the power of content marketing.

Chad: Yeah, and that's a great example. It sounds like content marketing certainly works well in the real physical world with physical products like lawn services that use physical products like my solar panels.

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As well as really, what your focus is at Rainmaker Digital, on digital products. Can you just describe what kind of fits in the digital product realm?

Jerod: Sure. So when we talk about digital products, when we talk about digital commerce, it's really anything that is marketed and distributed and supported online. So you can think about eBooks, you can think about online courses, think about plugins or themes, especially if you're a WordPress person, you know, you don't just want to use a free theme, maybe you want to buy a premium theme and that's a digital product. Even SaS applications, you know, you think of an application like ConvertKit or our own Rainmaker Platform, where it's all digital and there isn't a physical product, it's something that we market online, you download and use it all online, and when you need support, it's all online. It's fully digital, and that's really the niche that with some of our new endeavors that we're serving, are digital entrepreneurs who are out there creating products, creating businesses, servicing audiences and customers, but they're doing it all online, which obviously, as we know, is becoming increasingly more popular and increasingly more possible as technology continues to grow and expand.

[8:06]

Chad: Yeah, absolutely. Regardless of the product, I think the last number I saw was about 80% of us, before we make a purchasing decision, something that's out of our normal realm of what we buy, we're going online to find recommendations from others before we actually make that. So getting these insights is certainly important. My journey to this content marketing actually involved CopyBlogger, which was the name of your group before a rebranding, I think about a year ago, to Rainmaker Digital. And that included a course that you guys put together called Teaching Sells. When I took that, and I took it because, on one hand, I wear this hat of university professor, and then I also teach product managers, and I do that through workshops and I was wanting to get involved in doing more eCourses, and saw Teaching Sells as a way to help me think about this a bit more. When I took that course, I saw so many connections between the way I think as a product manager and what innovators are doing, and the way someone doing content marketing thinks, and saw a lot of those overlaps. And now the thing that you're responsible for, Digital Commerce Institute, looks like it's integrated some of those Teaching Sells principles. Talk about what's going on with Digital Commerce Institute for us and how those things are kind of related.

Jerod: Sure. So, when we talk about this concept of content marketing, as we talked about before, content marketing is applicable both online and offline. So, you know, big brands can do content marketing. You can have a car company that does content marketing, but they're still selling a physical product. So what we really wanted to focus on with Digital Commerce Institute is how all of this applies specifically to digital commerce and to digital products, and not just the selling of them, the marketing of them, but also the creation of them. So really walking people through kind of the process that underlies both the creation and the marketing and the selling of any type of digital product. And we listed them off before, but online courses as you mentioned, themes and plugins and SaS applications. Obviously the specifics of creating each one of those types of products will be different, but there are some underlying fundamentals with each of them that we teach in there, along with, okay, once you have it, now how do you really maximize what you can do online, what you can do digitally to build an audience to sell these, whether it's through marketing funnels, whether it's through paid advertising. And so that's the big idea with Digital Commerce Institute, is give digital entrepreneurs a roadmap for

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whatever kind of digital product it is that they want to create, and then once they have it, show them exactly what they need to do to sell it and get it to the people who need it.

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Chad: So, big picture is, you're helping people that kind of might have that entrepreneur kind of perspective in their life and they have interest in a product that they would like to bring to the world, and you're helping them really formulate how to get that product put together and build an audience then to promote that product to and hopefully generate some revenue, to be able to sell this.

Jerod: Yes, exactly.

Chad: And it just includes the training, so the Digital Commerce Institute is the place to get this training and information. And what is your role, specifically, in that?

Jerod: Well, I'm the VP of Marketing at Rainmaker Digital, so I'm involved in, obviously, a lot of the different products that we have. Specific to Digital Commerce Institute, what I've really taken ownership of is our continuing education. There are a couple different ways that manifests itself. One is, you know, we have courses in there. Brian has an updated Teaching Sells course on how to build your online training business the smart way, we've got a course on marketing funnels, and we're going to have more courses coming. In fact, I'm putting one together on paid advertising. But in addition to courses, it's also really important to see what's working for other people, and how have other people actually done this. So we try and do at least one case study each month of a specific digital entrepreneur and their journey and how they got into it, number one, then how they created their product, and how they've gone about selling it. So we've done case studies on Nathan Berry at ConvertKit, Brian Gardner of StudioPress, Danny Margulies of Freelance to Win and every single one, they're really interesting, because they really show you kind of these underlying fundamentals, and you see how there really are fundamentals that from story to story are consistent, but you see the unique elements of the different stories, and how each digital entrepreneur overcame a particular challenge or took a next step when maybe it was a challenge, and how they overcame that. So they're both informative and inspiring. I've really, really enjoyed doing them. And then we also have another set of webinars that we call Cutting Edge webinars, because that's the other thing in the digital space, is while the fundamentals stay the same, the tools for getting the job done best can change and evolve, as we know. So for example, we have one coming up, from when we're recording this anyway, coming up next week. By the time this goes live, it will be out. But it's about SnapChat and you know, we're hearing from a lot of people how SnapChat is now great for brands and a great tool to market and go deeper in your relationship with your audiences, which, to me, SnapChat is the first social media tool that has made me feel old, I should just say. I've gotten on there and tried to learn it, and so we're going to bring in an expert and talk about it and kind of demystify it. The goal with those webinars is not to say, you should be doing this, it's to say, here's this thing people are talking about, let's check it out, see what may work, see what might not work for digital entrepreneurs. And kind of keep people updated on not just what's here now but what may be coming next, so that when it does come, people aren't taken aback and they have a resource to go to to at least get the basics for it. That's our idea. Plus a community—we want to be that hub, that for digital entrepreneurs offers the insight, the education, and the support that you need. A lot of people who are doing this, maybe....they're beginning their digital entrepreneur journey, maybe while they have

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another job and they're doing it on the side, or they're doing it at night, and it's kind of thing that they're doing by themselves as they get it up and started and sometimes you need that education and you need that support to get you going and that's what we want to provide at Digital Commerce Institute.

[14:35]

Chad: Let's talk about some of those connections that I did see in my path through CopyBlogger and content marketing and what I see in product management. I guess if it was called, I don't know, instead of content marketing, maybe product marketing, something that sounded more like product oriented to me, the connections would have been more obvious to me to expect those. But as I went through the content marketing materials, I was just so surprised how this basically is content development and management. Some of the things that stood out were being able to identify a market that matters, so going after something big enough that matters maybe to make revenue, really understanding the customer, who your audience is, what the problems are, and then along the way, figuring out a product for them and validating that product concept. That's what us as product managers and innovators are involved in, too, and so I think there are so many overlaps here with content marketing to know about. Let's dive into those, and I would really like to get your perspective on it, too. Why don't we start with the identifying a market that matters piece, and what you guys teach about that.

Jerod: Sure. I mean, you know, I think what's really important, and I think where people can make a mistake with product development, is starting from the product first, and trying to create a product and then fit it into a market after that. We really teach the inverse of that, which is, as you said, to identify a market and build an audience and then allow your relationship with that audience and the insight that you're gaining and what you're learning from them to help inform the development of your product. And that doesn't mean that you may not have a notion, that you may not have a hypothesis for what the product will be or what your audience needs, but a lot of times we can do that and we end up being wrong. We can end up wasting time, wasting money, developing something that really, people don't want because either we didn't take the time to develop the relationship or listen and create something that people really did want. And so, that's what we've always tried to do. Certainly, at Rainmaker and even back when it was just CopyBlogger and Brian was just plugging along with a blog of his own, was build the audience first and then listen and observe and see. I think if you use that as an example, I think Brian had identified that this idea of using content online to build an audience and to sell, he had kind of done this on his own in some real estate businesses that he had, and realized that it might be more widely applicable and that was the whole idea of CopyBlogger, was how do you use blogging and content and kind of marry that with old-school copywriting techniques, to then build a business? We have many, many products in our product line now, but he had no notion of what those products would be when he started. The idea was build the audience and then he realized that people needed premium themes for their WordPress sites and so built a business around that and realized that people needed, just from listening and observing, that people needed help with their SEO and needed tools from within their WordPress website to be able to analyze content and optimize it and built a piece that did that. The product development cycle just went like that over and over again, until we finally put all those parts and pieces together into Rainmaker, which was not only a product that we needed for ourselves, but a product that the audience needed. I think that's...when you are a part of the market that you're

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trying to serve, it's extremely helpful in terms of really gaining insights and being able to listen with an even more keen ear, to what the audience wants, what the audience needs, and I think when you do it like that from that standpoint, you set yourself up in such a better position, to create something that people will, not just say that they want, but show that they need. I think that's obviously really important for getting them to buy it and growing a business around it.

[18:28]

Chad: This is where Apple started, which is developing products for themselves. I guess this is the 40th anniversary as we're recording—40th anniversary of Apple. They were their own customer. But we don't always have that luxury, so sometimes there's an audience that we have skills, knowledge, expertise to help address problems with, but we need to find out more about who that audience really is and just learn about our potential customer. What are some ways we can do that, leaning on content marketing practices?

Jerod: I think, like I said, whenever you start, you'll have a notion of who your market is and you'll have a hypothesis of who that is. Clearly the more dialed into it that you can get, from a demographic standpoint, from a lot of different standpoints, the better you'll be. But that's where content really helps you and that's where this idea of content marketing becomes so powerful and especially when you think of it as an iterative process. So it's not just you sitting in your dungeon churning out content and then not gauging the reaction to it, just continuing to churn it out. Every single time that you put a piece of content out there, it's an opportunity for this target market, or your hypothesis for this target market, to interact with it and give you more information. So maybe you realized that the people who are really responding to this content are skewing in one direction or another, that you didn't really know. It can inform you and maybe change what you thought, but it will give you a much better idea. That's the great part about content and that's why, on the Show Runner podcast that I host, which teaches people about podcasting, that's why we talk about how important it is to just get your first episodes out there. They don't need to be perfect, because there's no way for them to be perfect. All you have when you start is the notion of what this audience is and what they will want, but you need to put content out there as informed as it can be, but get it out there so it can actually interact with an audience and you can really see what people think about it, what they do with it, does this really hit their challenges, does this really give them the value that you think. Because then with that response, now you can adjust as you need to and you can figure out maybe what you need to do differently, what you need to double-down on, and what may be missing that may be an opportunity for you to create something to fill that need.

Chad: I'm quite certain that my first podcast and now I'm up to about 77 or so recorded, that none of those were perfect, but at least they get better a little bit all the time and it is, as you point out, feedback. This is such a great point for product managers, too. I've shared this before on the podcast, that occasionally I get that phone call from someone wanting some help with product management, and they already have a prototype if not an actual product done. So I back up a little bit and say, okay, where did the idea come from, how did you validate that with customers, and typically, none of that work has been done yet. There was some fashion of ideas, some problem that they had themselves that they wanted to solve, but there wasn't any engaging with a potential group of customers and getting actual feedback from them to help evolve the product concept.

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Jerod: Right. And that's so important. And that's why, once you have that minimum viable product, you've got to get it out there. And you've got to let people use it and let people see it. That's, when we talk about a podcast, obviously, let's say that your very first podcast you didn't have a mic and people could only hear every third word, okay, that's not a minimum viable product. It's got to, number 1, it needs to be informed by some interaction with an audience, and then it needs to be in some minimum viable format that it's not just going to be embarrassing to put it out there, but then you've got to put it out there and let it actually interact with the ideal customer, or who you think the ideal customer is, and get that feedback and then iterate it and make it better. We've always done our products like that, and maybe you give the lowest price in the beginning to those charter members, and you're up-front, you let people know, hey, this is a charter offer, this is a new product in exchange for the best price we're ever going to give you, we hope you'll use it and tell us about bugs and let us know, but you'll be grandfathered in at this price forever. There are ways you can do that and really make it almost a selling point that it's not at the place where it will be ultimately and again, that's how you'll get that hugely valuable feedback that you need to then iterate it and take it to the next step so that it's ready for more mass consumption.

Chad: Absolutely. Just to give you an example of that, I'm kind of in that experience right now. The Everyday Innovators, a lot of you have already heard about this. A few weeks ago I did a prelaunch on an eCourse for product managers. This was a completely new approach to me, that I had not tried before, and it was a prelaunch. I basically said here's the topics we're going to talk about in the eCourse, and if there's enough interest, if enough people buy, then I will go ahead and build it and anyone that does buy will have the benefit of helping to steer the direction and get a lot more access to me, a lot more involvement in the actual course than maybe later down the road. It was really scary for me to do. There was something about offering this thing that wasn't yet done and I had some hesitations about the whole thing. But it's been a really good experience, because now I have a group of people that I can ask questions of and they can give me direct feedback and I know that I'm building something that hopefully is hitting more needs than completely missing it.

[24:00]

Jerod: And that's the best way to do it. It's so much better than if you had developed the whole thing and then come out with it. That's not to say that if you had done that, people wouldn't have bought it, but imagine how much better it will be now that you're doing it this way and you're getting feedback and you're able to improve it before it goes out there wide. It's just such a smart way to do it.

Chad: The other piece of that is, imagine if I spent all the time building it and no one bought it. That happens a lot of the time. That's the whole message behind Eric Ries' Lean Startup, that his company spent so much time building this product and they sold like three. And you know, what did we do wrong here?

Jerod: And that cycles back to content marketing, because you can do that once you've used content, built that know, like, and trust, now you have this audience. We call it your unfair business advantage, because once you have this audience of people that is educated and knows you, likes you, and trusts you, now you can do something like that, where you can go out to 100 or 1000 or 10,000 people

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however many people you've built relationships with, and say, hey, I'm thinking about doing this, and get that charter group of folks. If you haven't used the content to do that, now you don't have that audience to go to and you don't really have a great place to start from, outside of your own hypotheses, and that's not a winning strategy for building a product or building a business.

Chad: Right. So, I'm using that as a tool to really help me validate if I'm meeting the needs or not, and I want to dive into that aspect a little bit more with you. What are the mechanics, what are the ways that we can go about, from a content marketing perspective, getting that feedback from our audience and validating the ideas we have for products for them. A lot of time, I know this takes shape in a blog, and there might be blog comments, but there's so many options out there.

Jerod: I think this is such a great question. I think it begins with mentality. I think you have to, number one, be committed to getting that feedback, because some people are, and some people say that they are, but they're not really. So you really have to want that feedback. When you get feedback, engage with it. So it's not just about putting a blog post out there, getting comments, and you just pop in and read the comments every now and then, it's finding opportunities to go a little bit deeper. This is not always something that is scalable, which makes us want to shy away from doing it, but it is so valuable and so important, especially in the early stages. So I think, to me, comments on a blog are a good start, but I think it's only a place to start. To me, the best feedback that I've ever gotten is, you know, you've got a blogpost, you've got a podcast, whatever it is, and then you get people onto an email list and then you encourage, either through directly asking or just through the content you're putting out in email, get people to interact with you there. You know, kind of in that private setting, in the more intimate email setting, it's like the podcast Showrunner. With the podcast and the course. We've gotten so much great feedback by just interacting with people in our inboxes. No, it's not scalable and there are some times that I'll start doing it and responding to emails and you know, your brow starts sweating and you think about how much stuff you have to do and it's like, why am I sitting here on email, and then I remember, oh yeah, remember all of these great ideas and great feedback I've gotten. Not only do you get the ideas, you really lock those people in as strong members of your audience, and most of them end up becoming advocates, assuming that you don't talk with them and just ignore them, or don't try to act on whatever they say or act on whatever you do. So I think getting people into a setting like that, having some kind of forum is also really helpful, that I think you can do. Then, two more. One is social media, and I think you have to be careful with social media, because it can really be a time-suck, but think, and this is where it comes back to mentality, not just thinking about social media as a place to broadcast, but thinking about social media as a place to listen and a place to converse. Once we've done that, then maybe we get the privilege of broadcasting our links and doing some of that 3-4% of the time, but spending our time on social media wisely, identifying conversations that we should be and getting into those conversations and learning and listening. Then the other one, and this is one of the things we like to teach people at Digital Commerce Institute, we talk about getting people on an email list, but really leveraging the power of, say, a free course, or some kind of free opt-in that goes beyond an email list, that then allows you to use some kind of adaptive marketing strategy and technology to not just ask people and have them tell you what they like, but to really show you, and that's really the power of adaptive content and adaptive experiences, based on the actions the people take, you can adapt their experience. They click on this link, they go to this page, and if they don't click on this link, they get this email. You know, you can set up some of these kind of "choose your own adventure" things, and it kind

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of shows you, okay, people are going to tell me one thing, but when they're out there on their own and they have the option of clicking on this content or ignoring it, what do they do. And when they get to this content, do they use it or do they stop. That can really give you powerful feedback as well. So again, I think it goes back to the mentality of really, genuinely wanting the feedback and then setting up opportunities to get it in a way where people really are going to respond to you both honestly and candidly through their words and their actions.

[29:43]

Chad: And it's really building a community, or that tribe word gets used a lot, I'm not sure where that originated, maybe Seth Godin's book *Tribe*, but building that community of interaction to just sincerely understand the wants and needs of your audience, of your potential customers.

Jerod. Yeah. And I think the community is good, and I think people can get into conversations. I do think sometimes you run into risk if you build a community of almost feeling like you're off-loading some of the burden for paying attention to the feedback onto the community. It's interesting, because I think you can get a lot more feedback, but you have to make sure that you don't kind of absolve yourself of the responsibility to go listen still. To me that's why a lot of email, just because I know if there's an email, I will go in and read it and respond to it, so it becomes a to-do list item for me and I can't ignore it. So I like that, because it makes me do what I know that I want to do, and maybe this is just a me thing, but sometimes with a forum, it can kind of be over-there, out-there, and if there's already 3-4 other forum members responding, then it's like, okay, they've got that. Well no, I need to be in there making sure that I'm listening. So I agree with you. I think it's a great way, you just want to make sure that you're using it to the fullest extent of its potential for you.

Chad: You mentioned listening, which made me think of a different mode, which is phone calls, and having actual conversations about some of these points, and that's another thing that we could throw in here, right? If you have established that email relationship, it's pretty easy then to email someone and say, hey, can we spend 15 minutes, I want to get your perspective on this.

Jerod: Yes, absolutely. And I am reminded of that every time I go to events. We'll go to events sometimes...we sponsored one of the parties at Traffic and Conversion summit out in San Diego a few months ago. We had a table for the Rainmaker Platform, people had to come up to us to get drink cards. That was kind of the hook to get them over to our table, and so we just spent 3 hours at this party as people came up, talking to them, not just about what Rainmaker can do, although we would answer their questions, but just talking with them about how they use the web, what do they need a website to do. That interaction with people was huge. Not only does it build the relationship to where they say, hey, the people behind this really care, yeah, I'm going to go try this out. But I personally just learned so much that I can then take back to our team. Then it's like, okay, we thought people wanted this but talking to people, these are really the issues they're having, and this thing that we have in development right now, people were really talking about this, we can bump this up now and let's get it out even faster. Yeah, those kind of conversations, again, it's not scalable, it's not like you can have 1000 conversations, but once you really identify people who are really interested, there's no substitute for it. It's extremely valuable.

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Chad: All these concepts really just are marketing concepts, but I tend to think of content marketing kind of as the, maybe it's the new millennial way of thinking of marketing now, with so much of an online presence, and I just find so much synergies in understanding these concepts and then being able to apply them to the work that a product manager does. The big picture, just to make sure we're not leaving out some things here, when it comes to what is going on inside the Digital Commerce Academy, what are some of the other areas that you're hitting upon? Like marketing funnels, which is something I'm starting to learn about, and different techniques.

Jerod: Yes. So we have a course in there right now about marketing funnels, and like I said, I'm getting ready to actually work on a course about paid advertising, because what's really interesting about paid advertising, and again, it kind of comes back to what order do you do things in, sometimes people get a product and they just want to throw paid traffic at it, but what you really need to do is you've got to set up your funnels well and you've got to set up your conversion pages and your landing pages, you know, really test them, make sure they work, and then once you have a funnel that you know educates people enough, leads them, kind of walks them through to whatever the conversion is, now you're just left with, okay, we just need more traffic at this. And that is where paid advertising can be so powerful. Because you know you have something that converts, so now it's...and I have a good idea of my market...how do I actually go and identify and find the people who are in this market to buy some advertising, buy some attention and get them here, because I know once they get here, they'll convert. Obviously, places like Facebook are great for that. We're going to have a course inside of Digital Commerce Academy that really teaches people that process, but it's not a...again, paid advertising on Facebook too many people look at it like a get rich quick thing, and hey, if we just get this, people will come and they'll convert. Well, no, not really. And if you don't have good...if your content marketing isn't on point, if your content isn't good and your landing pages aren't good, then you're just going to waste money. That's so important, that's why, again, it goes back to what we talked about at the beginning, of the power of content marketing, that needs to come first, but we're going to teach people that and then really dive into...I talked about we have that course on online courses, but then to dive into some of the other products: eBook development, how to create plugins and themes, how to get into SaaS development, all of that, which can seem complicated, but we want to demystify that process, show people the steps that you take to do it, because again, there are underlying fundamentals and once you know them, and you can do them, then you can succeed in this.

[35:18]

Chad: Very good. And Everyday Innovators, you know I don't bring commercials to this podcast, and this isn't a commercial either, I just want you to know, in the world of product management, I've just found so many synergies with my own personal experience, learning more about content marketing, and my journey personally through that was through CopyBlogger, and now the Digital Commerce Academy. So I wanted to make sure we could bring that to you. Jerod, I really appreciate you sharing some of those ideas and helping us think through some of those intersections and what's going on with the academy there. I also asked you to bring an innovation quote. What did you bring, and tell us why you chose this one.

Jerod: So, I don't know if this would really be considered an innovation quote, but it's one of my favorite quotes and it's the first thing I thought of when you asked for an innovation quote. The quote is,

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“Humility is not thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less.” That is a quote by C.S. Lewis and the reason why it stuck out to me, and again, maybe this is just a personal bias, but I know that whenever I’m thinking about doing something new, maybe this happens to you, Chad, and maybe it happens to some of the people listening. But I have lots of ideas and I get really, really excited about these ideas. When I’m on a walk, when I’m in the shower, or in the middle of doing something else and an idea will spring up, and maybe it’s an idea for a new product, or some new thing or a brand new project, who knows. And I get really, really excited about it, but that’s all about me and my excitement for the idea. Whenever I have just kind of gone down the road and pursued it simply because I’m excited about it, it hasn’t had the success that I would have wanted. And it’s taken me away from doing what I should be doing. So that’s where, to me, having the humility to take a step back and to realize, okay, whatever this is, I’ve got something good to offer, but let me not think about this just in terms of my excitement, my enthusiasm for it, but think about it in terms of, okay, how can this idea now be applied to helping other people, and how can I get it out there in a way that I can gauge people’s reactions to it and figure out how to make it better for them. And so, it’s not saying wait, that’s a bad idea, put that out of your mind and do this. It’s about really valuing the contributions that I can make, but valuing them within the context of how they can help other people and what they can do for other people and I think when we can do that, we create better products and we create better relationships, and it just helps us all around, so that’s why I like that quote, because again it’s not about denigrating yourself or your ideas or anything you’re doing, it’s simply about not thinking so much of yourself and thinking of other people to listen, to understand, to empathize, and then to create something, whether it be content or a product that is going to help them take the next step. If you do that enough, then you’ll find a lot of people who want to take the next step with you.

Chad: And because of that, I think it is directly applicable to innovation and a great innovation quote. Because it’s a good reminder that we should not be thinking about the product from our perspective, but from indeed the perspective of our customers.

Jerod: Yes, good. I’m glad it qualifies.

Chad: It qualifies wonderfully well. Let’s wrap up with just making sure people know how to find out about Rainmaker Digital and then specifically the Digital Commerce Academy and anything else you want to leave with listeners.

[38:36]

Jerod: The best way, really, to connect with Digital Commerce Institute would just be to go to www.digitalcommerce.com and there’s a free membership. So it’s a paid academy, but there is a free membership and it’s not just like you sign up and you just get an email or two. We actually give away four free lessons in the course on courses, three free lessons on the marketing automation, three of the case studies I talked about are in there, so there’s a lot of value even if you never sign up for the paid academy, just with the free stuff you can really learn a lot. So I think for anybody who’s interested in some of the things I’ve been talking about today, that would be the best place to do it, is go to www.digitalcommerce.com and you’ll see a button there for free and that’s where to go to get signed up and to see some of what I’ve talked about today in practice.

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Chad: Excellent. And I will put all of the details in the show notes, also, to make that easy for Everyday Innovators to find, and Jerod, I appreciate your time, thanks so much.

Jerod: Perfect. Thank you, Chad. This was a lot of fun.

Chad: Thank you for listening. To help other product managers and also to raise the recognition of our discipline of the field of product management, please tell other product professionals about this podcast. I really appreciate you doing that. Check out www.theeverydayinnovator.com/074 for the summary and transcript of the discussion with Jerod Morris. Everyone, keep innovating!