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## CTRL+CLICK CAST #080

### Marketing for Web Freelancers and Agencies with Ilise Benun

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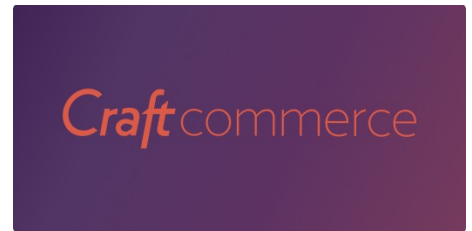
[Music]

**Lea Alcantara:** From [Bright Umbrella](#), this is CTRL+CLICK CAST! We inspect the web for you! Today Ilise Benun joins the show to talk about a topic near and dear to our hearts at Bright Umbrella, marketing for web freelancers and agencies. I'm your host, Lea Alcantara, and I'm joined by my fab co-host:

**Emily Lewis:** Emily Lewis!

**Lea Alcantara:** This episode is brought to you by [Craft Commerce](#), a brand new e-commerce platform for Craft CMS. If you're a web shop that likes to create custom-tailored websites for your clients, you're going to love Craft Commerce. It's extremely flexible, leaving all the product modeling and front-end development up to you, and it's got a simple and intuitive back end for content managers. To learn more and download a free trial, head over to [craftcommerce.com](#).

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**Emily Lewis:** Today we are really excited to have Ilise Benun on the show. Ilise is the founder of [marketing-mentor.com](http://marketing-mentor.com), the go-to online resource for creative professionals who want better projects with bigger budgets. She is a national speaker, the author of seven business books, a business coach, a program partner for [HOW Design Live](http://HOW Design Live) and adjunct faculty at Pratt Institute and Maryland Institute College of Art. She has also been a valuable resource to Bright Umbrella this year. Welcome to the show, Ilise.

**Ilise Benun:** Thank you so much. It's great to be here.

**Lea Alcantara:** So Ilise, can you tell our listeners a bit more about yourself?

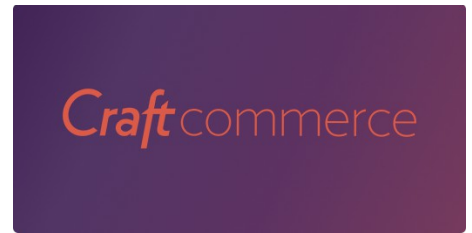
**Ilise Benun:** Well, I was raised in Southern California and I live in Hoboken, New Jersey now, and I spend a lot of time reading and trying to fill in the gaps in my education when I wasn't really paying attention in school.

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

**Emily Lewis:** So how did you end up making the transition from the West Coast to the East Coast?

**Ilise Benun:** Well, I just thought 18 years was long enough in Los Angeles.

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]



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**Ilise Benun:** And I wanted to see something else, so I went all the way to the other side of the country and I ended up staying here.

**Emily Lewis:** And is marketing what you have always done or is that something that has become your area of focus later in your career?

**Ilise Benun:** Well, I studied Spanish and French in college, and I wasn't really sure what I was going to do with it, but I really love speaking other languages and kind of translating, and then I was fired from the second job I had out of college and decided I was never working for anyone again.

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

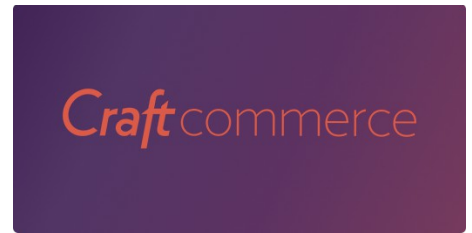
**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Ilise Benun:** And so I had to come up with something and all of my friends in New York were creative but a little disorganized and I was a little bit more organized, so when I was fired I had this idea to become a professional organizer.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** Oh.

**Ilise Benun:** And so this was before computers, when we all had just lots of piles of paper when we all had just lots of piles of paper, not that there are fewer piles now, but there were lots of piles of



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papers, and I would just sit at these desks with creative professionals, artists, actors, musicians, et cetera, and go through the piles of papers, and it was kind of amazing because at the bottom of really everybody's pile, there was always something that had to do with marketing and self-promotion that wasn't getting done.

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Ilise Benun:** And it was so consistent that I thought, "This is the real problem, the clutter is an obstacle to the marketing," and once we would get to the bottom of the pile and we would find literally a pink message from someone who was asking for information about their work that had never been responded to.

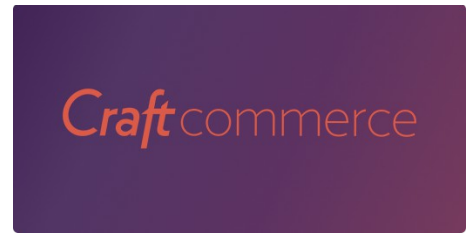
**Emily Lewis:** [Agree]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agree]

**Ilise Benun:** And so I just tried to help people respond or come up with ways to respond to people who are interested in their work, and that evolved into Marketing Mentor.

**Emily Lewis:** Well, I love how you described the pile and the most important things on the bottom of it because I think that's the perfect analogy, at least, for us at Bright Umbrella because we didn't have marketing per se on our radar as something for us to put a lot of energy in.

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]



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**Emily Lewis:** And once we started talking to you, it became clear how really important that was going to be for the long-term success of the company.

**Ilise Benun:** And that's very common actually. I mean, at the beginning, I thought people just starting out would be good prospects for me, but I very quickly found that people just starting out in their business, I mean, literally the first several years, you're just figuring out how to run your business and you're taking whatever comes along.

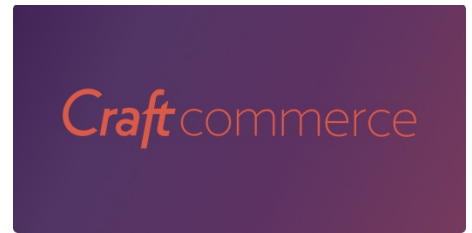
**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** Right.

**Ilise Benun:** And that's just fine because those are your practice clients basically, and there is a point where most people get to where they think, "Wait a minute, I could probably have better clients and probably even bigger budgets, but I don't know who's going to give it to me and I'm not getting it from the people who find me, so what do I have to do?" And that's where marketing is the answer.

**Emily Lewis:** Well, that's a perfect segue to our very first question, which I think is important to start with the basics, and I even think this was one of the questions we asked you when we started consulting or you started consulting with us, what is marketing?

**Ilise Benun:** Right. Actually, this morning I had a call with a woman who has an MBA, but needs help with her marketing.



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**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Ilise Benun:** And she said, “Everything I learned in school, I just can’t figure out how to apply to myself.”

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** Right.

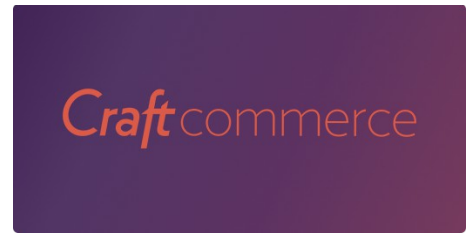
**Ilise Benun:** So marketing is not what you learned in school. It’s not what a VP of Marketing would say it is. For creative professionals, in my definition, is it’s everything you do to get the word out about your business so that the people you want to work with can find you.

**Emily Lewis:** My follow-up question was why is it important, but you really just answered it in that explanation, so the people you want to work with, with the budgets you want, can find you.

**Ilise Benun:** Exactly, and the reason is important, and this is the mind shift that most people need to make before they can actually do any marketing, is you have to understand that in order to get the best project, you have to go find them.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Ilise Benun:** It’s very rare that they’re going to find you, and even if one happens to fall into your lap, there’s not going to be a rain of them falling into your lap, and so there is this proactive mentality and



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series of actions that you have to take instead of essentially waiting for whatever happens to come along, and most people are fine with what comes along, and there might be a sense of complacency, but to me the biggest problem with it is that there's a lack of control, and the beautiful thing about being self-employed, whether you run an agency or it's just you is that you are in control. But most people don't take the control that is theirs for the taking.

**Lea Alcantara:** Right. I know it's nothing yet that you pointed out because I think also what holds a lot of people back in the creative industry is they think they've heard these messages before because it sounds like it make sense, yes, bring the people that you want to work with and the projects you want to work on toward you, but the actual actions to get that to happen, no one has a clue.

**Ilise Benun:** Well, it's possible that no one has a clue, or they have a clue and it's actually a lot of work and a lot of thinking and a lot of effort and it takes time.

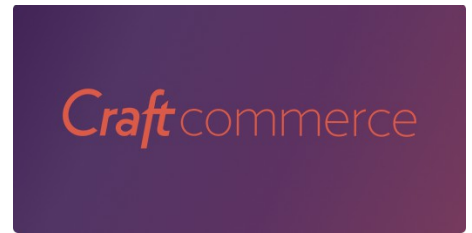
**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Ilise Benun:** And we live in a culture of instant gratification.

**Lea Alcantara:** Yeah.

**Ilise Benun:** And those two things don't jibe.



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**Emily Lewis:** I mean, that's exactly how I feel about the marketing we've been doing this year.

[Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

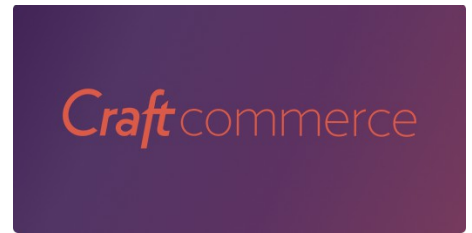
**Emily Lewis:** Because it is a tremendous amount of work, but I think the shift for us is what you were just describing, we've had a few clients that have come to us that have been just the perfect exactly what we want, but it's been happenstance and we haven't been able to maintain it, and so to guarantee that we're always getting that kind of work and this shift that we've made really shows me that there is a path to it.

It's not an easy path and it does require a lot of hard work, and I can see why people don't do it, but I also think that, if any of our listeners tuned into the podcast we did with Christopher Schmitt on the Non Breaking Space Show, we sort of talked about this. Lea and I are committed to this business where we don't want to work for other people, we want to work on the kind of projects that we love and make us happy and make us money, but it's not just about doing the design and the front-end, the CMS, it's also about finding a way to not just promote our business because, Lea, I think you and I were promoting the heck out of our business, but we were doing it to our peers.

**Lea Alcantara:** Right.

**Emily Lewis:** And it's learning to promote our business to the people we want to work with, and that was the big thing that I think is the overall umbrella that I've learned from you, Ilise, is that whatever





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we are doing, whatever type of marketing we're doing, and we're going to talk about these specifics in a second, whether it's emails or blog posts or social media, we're talking to our audience in terms they understand talking about their problems and how we can help them. It's just a constant focus on that audience.

**Ilise Benun:** And the biggest obstacle people have to getting there is deciding who they want to focus on.

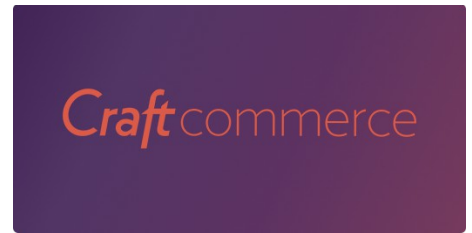
**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** Absolutely.

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**Ilise Benun:** And it's interesting because I was talking to another client this morning and he just can't decide, he doesn't want to eliminate anything because he's afraid that if he limits himself to this one or two or even three markets, because you don't have to just choose one, you can choose three, but if you don't limit yourself, then you're trying to be everything to everyone, and you'll become a blur in the minds of your prospects.

**Emily Lewis:** And I think this was something that we worked on together early because we actually came to you with a preconceived notion of what audience we wanted to work with, and you pushed back to us and said, "You really need to validate that that audience is viable for you," and that that in itself required effort for us, and it's an effort we're still doing with the research we're doing, the



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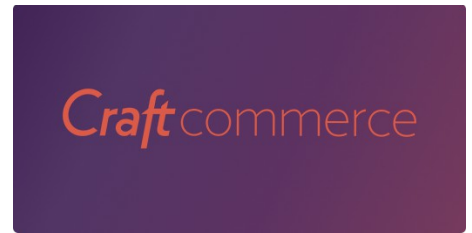
outreach we're doing. We have identified one clear market that we're pursuing that wasn't even on our radar, but it's how we're trying to specialized ourselves within that market to stand out. Because we have been trying to be everything to everyone and it's working, but we're not growing the way we want to. So let's talk about some of the things, because I want to make sure this is a really practical episode for people, what are some of the things, the core aspects, of marketing that freelancers and agencies should cover? Once they've identified the audience they want to pursue, how do they pursue that audience? [Laughs]

**Ilise Benun:** So there are three main marketing tools, and part of the problem is that there are thousands of marketing tools.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Ilise Benun:** And so most people have trouble deciding which ones are the most effective, and the ones they choose often tend to be the easiest ones and the cheapest ones, and those are obviously not the most effective ones. So a lot of people are out there doing marketing, but getting no results because they're not using the right marketing tools, and then I would say it has to be the right marketing tool for your target market, for the people you're trying to reach, so it always starts with who's the target market, and then what tools will best reach them, and then what message do I have to convey in order to get their attention in the first place, and that's part of it too.

What takes time is actually getting someone's attention, and if you can shorten that time, because you reached out to people who you have some familiarity with or they have some with you or maybe



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you have a connection that you can build on or someone who's referred, that shortens the initial time that then you can build on with your marketing tools.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Ilise Benun:** So the three main marketing tools that I recommend as a starting place and then you can add from there though are networking, content marketing and outreach.

**Emily Lewis:** And when you were explaining to us about these three, one of the things that was key to all of it is that they all work hand in hand.

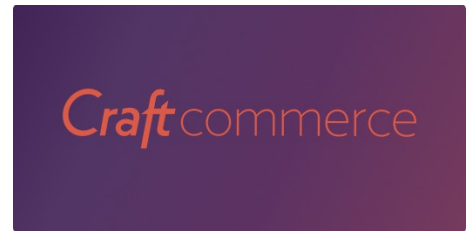
**Lea Alcantara:** Yes.

**Emily Lewis:** They're kind of all part of the system. It's really not you could go all in in one and that's it. You do have to look at all of them as a whole system together.

**Ilise Benun:** Yes.

**Lea Alcantara:** And I think that's an important thing to emphasize because, again, these are not like, say, new concepts to Emily or I, like we've always done networking, we've done our own content marketing and outreach, but none of them really were kind of cohesive.

**Emily Lewis:** Right.



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**Lea Alcantara:** Like we just were like, “Okay, here’s an event, I guess let’s go.”

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** And then... [Laughs]

**Emily Lewis:** Like that was literally our thinking. [Laughs]

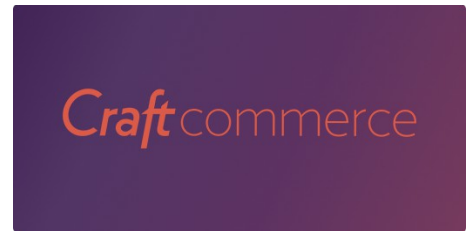
**Lea Alcantara:** “Here’s an event, let’s go,” and there’s no follow-up plan afterwards. There’s no blog post or content or newsletter to point somebody we met at that networking event to, and then if there’s some sort of outreach, which Emily and I have done, they were out of the blue, no context, and confusing.

**Emily Lewis:** Confusing.

**Lea Alcantara:** Yeah, it’s confusing and inconsistent. So basically when you have all these three and you’re thinking you’re marketing because you’re doing these things, they don’t have a plan. It actually...

**Emily Lewis:** They don’t interrelate.

**Lea Alcantara:** Yeah, they don’t interrelate. They don’t have a plan. They don’t have a direction. It can all quickly fall apart or even harm you I think because, for example...



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**Emily Lewis:** It can turn you off.

**Lea Alcantara:** Yeah, because, for example, like when Emily and I did kind of the random outreach without context, without a plan, without a reason besides us just outreaching, it came off desperate to be frank.

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Ilise Benun:** [Agrees]

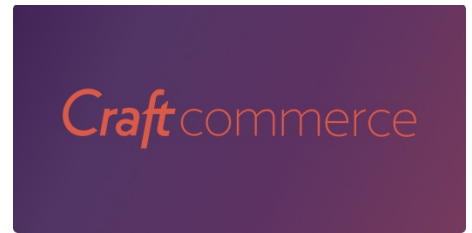
**Lea Alcantara:** You know it did. It did come off desperate as opposed to I am a partner for your needs, your very specific needs/I'm trying to strengthen our relationship so you gain more trust with me, but instead it would come off as in like I'd email somebody we haven't spoken to in a long time that hasn't been subscribed to our newsletter who we haven't seen in a while and then emailing them out of the blue, of course, of course, they'd be turned off.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** Because I would too.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Ilise Benun:** And I would actually suspect that they may not be turned off, they just may not have even registered it.



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**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** Right, right.

**Emily Lewis:** There was no connection.

**Ilise Benun:** Right.

**Emily Lewis:** So let's talk about some of these three – I always call them the three buckets for us. Our internal verbiage is, "They're the three buckets of our networking." Ilise, can you explain what networking is? I think people hear that term and I know my thoughts go to, "I'm going to network, I'm going to an event and I have to sell." That was my previous perception of what networking was.

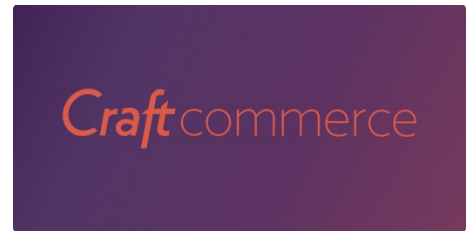
**Ilise Benun:** Okay, so that's totally wrong. [Laughs]

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

**Ilise Benun:** And actually, I have two ideas that I want to put on the table here first, and it's related to networking, and I'm thinking of two brand new marketing tools. One is generosity and the other is curiosity.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]



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**Ilise Benun:** And what if we actually thought about them as marketing tools and use them as marketing tools? So for example, when you go do networking, you're not going to sell, you're going to offer what you have to give and to ask the questions you want answers to so you can better understand your market.

**Emily Lewis:** So for example, one of the things I've been practicing, I'm part of a local New Mexico National Association of Women Business Owners, and we have a group that meets twice a month, and I've been practicing this very thing and so I explain what we do and then I immediately go to a question to the person saying something as simple as, "Do you have a website? Do you struggle to update it?" So that's my attempt to try and mention what I do, but then be curious about what they're doing to immediately try and put it on them to talk to me.

**Ilise Benun:** Absolutely, and you could even invert it by asking the questions first and then using the information you gather in their response to tailor how you talk about what you do.

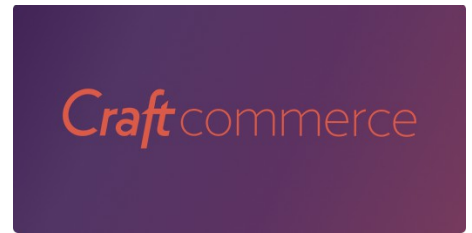
**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Ilise Benun:** Because that would speak more directly to their needs.

**Emily Lewis:** Because you're asking their needs first, you're putting them first.

**Ilise Benun:** Right. But a lot of people don't do that because they don't know what to say.



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**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Ilise Benun:** Or they're afraid of introducing themselves to a stranger.

**Emily Lewis:** And that's a very real... [Laughs] I mean, I can really relate to that feeling. I feel awkward is I think the best way to put it in these situations, and all I can say with regard to that, the emotional component, is that's why I got involved in this group. We're meeting regularly. It's typically the same people, and I'm getting to practice this stuff in a safe environment so that when it does come time to sort of expanding beyond "I am prepared," and so it's been worth it to me to find this professional group here in town for meet up, and essentially, you know...

**Ilise Benun:** Practice.

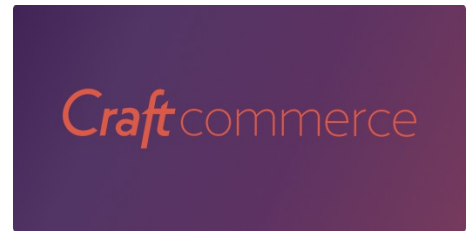
**Emily Lewis:** Exactly, because it doesn't come naturally to everybody.

**Ilise Benun:** And I think that makes a lot of sense. The problem that happens is when someone is practicing in a group like that where they're probably not going to find their best prospects. They don't make that distinction between "This is just my practice networking. I don't expect to get work out of this."

**Emily Lewis:** Right.

**Ilise Benun:** And that's when they throw up their hands and say, "Oh, this networking thing doesn't work." But if you know exactly why you're going to what event and who is going to be there and you





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go with your curiosity to determine “is this actually a viable market for me,” then when you come back with work or when you don’t come back with work, at least it’s based in reality.

**Emily Lewis:** And so building off of this explanation of networking, what’s the tail end of networking? So the front of it is attending an event, speaking to people with curiosity and being generous with what you can offer, then you come back, you have a sense of whether the event or the market itself is viable for your business, what’s next? Let’s say you made a few contacts.

**Ilise Benun:** Follow up. This is the thing so many people don’t do. I mean, I do a ton of networking and I am always surprised that very few people follow up with me.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

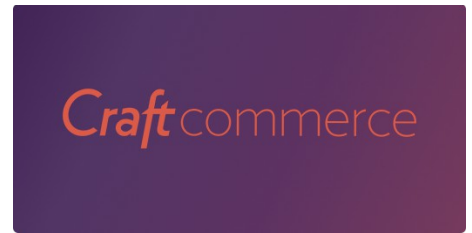
**Ilise Benun:** And I just came back from an event in Florida last week and I have a little stack of business cards here, and I could easily bury them under a pile of papers or I could lose them in the pocket of a coat that I probably won’t wear until next year.

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**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Ilise Benun:** And I will have wasted all of that effort of going to the event.

**Emily Lewis:** Right.



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**Ilise Benun:** Or I could go through that pile of cards and I could invite everyone to connect with me on LinkedIn and then I could follow up with an email a couple of days later saying, “It’s great to meet you. I would love to chat more to find out more about what you do and what you need and how I may be of help to you.” And if you don’t get any response, that’s fine because then you’ve got content marketing, an email newsletter.

For example, I publish quick tips from Marketing Mentor every two weeks and everyone I meet goes onto that list and here’s from me, every two weeks, until they don’t anymore, until they ask to be removed or until they call me and say, “Okay, I’ve been hearing from you for years now, I think I’m ready.”

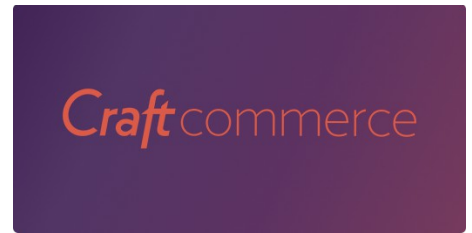
**Lea Alcantara:** Yeah, I think that’s the follow up. It just seems so common sense, but it’s so uncommon in actual action, and we were definitely guilty of that ourselves. It’s only recently that Emily and I started using a CRM or a customer relationship management tool and putting all our contacts in there before we had spreadsheets. [Laughs]

**Emily Lewis:** Take 20.

**Lea Alcantara:** We had a ton of spreadsheets, and so we meant well.

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** So again, it was like one of those...



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**Ilise Benun:** [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** So again, it was one of those things where it's like we know we should be doing something.

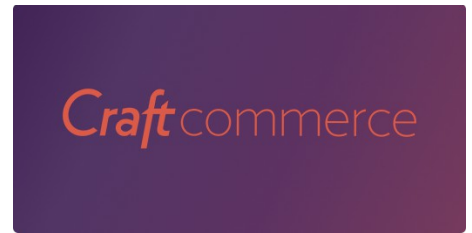
**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** Okay, we went to this event or we met this person and we're making this list, and because there was no real process to it all, it got put at the bottom of the pile, like that pile you mentioned where there's the sticky note saying, "Follow up with this person." It just never happen.

**Ilise Benun:** [Agrees]

**Emily Lewis:** I think the beauty of what we've learned from Ilise with regard to this aspect of networking is that it sounds like a lot of work, and I'm not going to minimize it, but with the networking stuff, it is straight up a to-do list, and then every time we go to event, there's a to-do list. If we make a contact, we just have a list of things we do. The first thing is we connect. Well, first thing is we put them in our CRM system, then we reach out on LinkedIn, then we send an email, then we put them on the newsletter, exactly what Ilise described, which prior to learning this, the value of this, from Ilise, seemed too much to me.

**Lea Alcantara:** Right.



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**Emily Lewis:** But I'm not convinced there's no way it's even enough, that there's still more we could be doing, that that's just the beginning of establishing this relationship with this person, that who knows when we will get the work, but if we are a valuable resource to them and they see that we are genuine real people who wanted to connect with them, that's the core of this marketing thing is to build these relationships and now we have a process in place, and it's a really a no brainer process now, I mean, with Lea and I. Am I being accurate with that? Do you feel like what we've put in place is now just sort of it happens?

**Lea Alcantara:** Yeah. Yeah, like once we had the tools, we would just trigger the to-do list template that we had and just added dates.

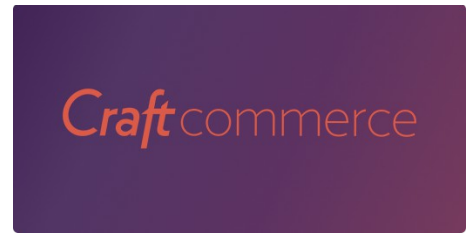
**Emily Lewis:** Yes.

**Lea Alcantara:** And then so it would almost be brainless for us when we get a notification that today you do this.

**Emily Lewis:** Yes.

**Lea Alcantara:** And then a couple of days, you do this other thing, et cetera and so forth. So it takes a lot to like set everything up, I think.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]



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**Lea Alcantara:** But the biggest is the mind shift that I feel like maybe it's also with women entrepreneurs, there's this pressure to not say too much and be too pushy.

**Emily Lewis:** Be pushy.

**Lea Alcantara:** And then getting out of that mindset and realizing, "Actually, this is just the baseline."  
[Laughs]

**Emily Lewis:** Right. [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** It's not even pushy at all. It's just regular follow up to be like, "Hey, I'm alive and remember that we had this type of conversation."

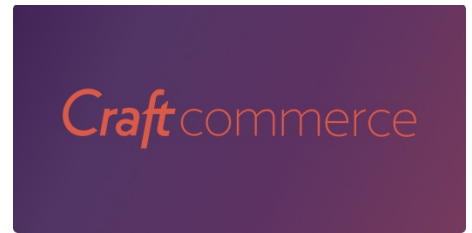
**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Ilise Benun:** It's not even just "I'm alive," it's expressing your interest and enthusiasm in helping them.

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Ilise Benun:** Because I think people need to hear that.

**Lea Alcantara:** Right.



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**Emily Lewis:** Yeah, I agree. Well, I think that's a good shift to talk about the content marketing aspect. Ilise, you mentioned you have your quick tips that come out every two weeks. Can you talk a little bit broader about what content marketing is? It's not just a newsletter, right?

**Ilise Benun:** Right. Although I do think it starts with a newsletter. If you do nothing else, you should do a newsletter, and email, no matter how much we all still get and get too much of it, email is the best way to actually reach people and to get a response or at least be available for a response. But before I go too much into content marketing, I just wanted to do one other little digression because it's related to what you were saying about women not wanting to be too pushy.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

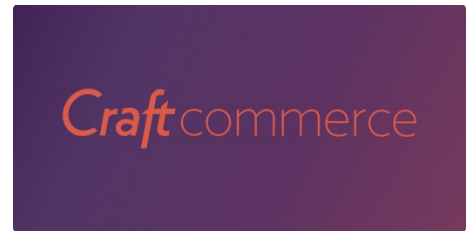
**Ilise Benun:** And I think there's a corollary there about the choice to do the client work versus the work on your business.

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Emily Lewis:** That's very true.

**Ilise Benun:** Right. And I don't know if it is gender related. I see it in both men and women.

**Lea Alcantara:** Sure.



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**Ilise Benun:** But I see the prioritizing as wrong, frankly, because the client work, yes, you're being paid to do it and you need to be paid to do it, but that's your present. Your future is your marketing and if you don't do that, if you don't carve out time and make it a priority, and frankly, do it first, the future is going to be being at the mercy of whoever happens to find you and when there are these slow periods when no one is finding you, then you panic because you don't have a system in place.

**Emily Lewis:** Absolutely. I feel that that's so true. It's one of the things that Lea and I keep reminding ourselves when we're going through the slog of our content marketing. [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

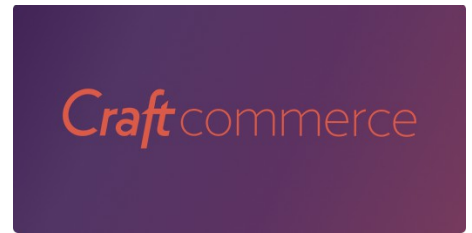
**Emily Lewis:** Because it is, there's a lot of writing and a lot of content that we have not yet produced that we know see is critical for our business, and so we're now seven years since I started the business and three years since we became Bright Umbrella, we're just now figuring this stuff out. [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

**Emily Lewis:** But I really do believe that it is our future investment that we're making in this.

**Ilise Benun:** And really at seven years, you're about on track. That seems normal to me.

**Emily Lewis:** Oh, I'm actually going.... [Laughs]



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**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

**Ilise Benun:** It's not a compliment. I mean, that's what I see is that it takes that long. It takes at least five years for people to realize, "Wait a minute, I could be doing so much better if I just did a little bit more."

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** Or a little bit more focused.

**Ilise Benun:** [Agrees]

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

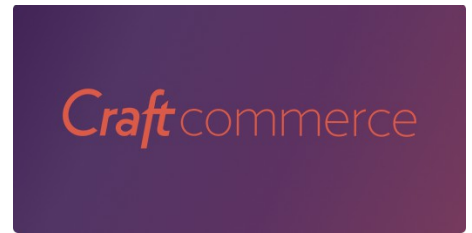
**Lea Alcantara:** Because again, like Emily and I used to blog a lot, but with no focus, no direction. We were just like, "Hmm, we haven't blogged in a while, let's have an article."

**Emily Lewis:** Let's blog. [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** Yeah, let's have an article. Hmm, that's it. [Laughs]

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]





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**Ilise Benun:** Well, actually, that's a good segue back to the content marketing because I think the biggest challenge there for most people is what do I have to say or what do I have to say that no one else is saying or why would they want to hear from me, and this is what stops people from actually creating content in the first place.

**Emily Lewis:** Yeah, I feel like for us that was less of an issue because we have been comfortable blogging, but it was what to blog about and what else to do with the blog, because as you mentioned, you said, "If nothing else, do a newsletter," and we had a newsletter, but I don't think it would really fall under content marketing. It would probably fall under an advertisement. It was really just a newsletter about us.

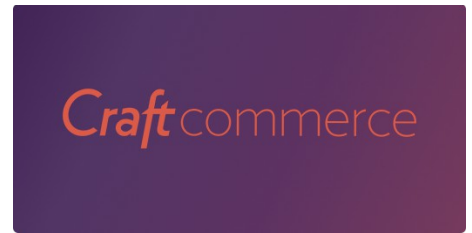
**Lea Alcantara:** Before, yeah.

**Emily Lewis:** Being like, "Hey, we did some stuff, aren't we great?" [Laughs]

**Ilise Benun:** [Laughs]

**Emily Lewis:** And that part of the shift with our newsletter and then also our blog post was to speak to that audience, and so we made a major shift in our newsletter to talk less about us and talk more about what our clients' needs and how we can help them with that. I like our newsletters more. It's a little I think too soon to say whether we can strongly say that our clients love it or something like that.

**Ilise Benun:** If it's working.



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**Emily Lewis:** But I feel like it's doing a much better job of telling the story of, "We understand you. We know the problems you're facing and this is how we help you solve them." And then our newsletter, and this was the other beautiful thing you taught us, I think what I thought before is we had a blog post and then that was it. It was just a blog post and then you forget about it. But you said, "Mention your blog post in your newsletter and then mention your blog post in your email outreach, like recycle everything you're doing," and so our blog becomes the fodder for our newsletter. We make sure we have deeper resources in our blog or on our site that we can mention in the newsletter to sort of up the value of what we're sharing, which never occurred to us before.

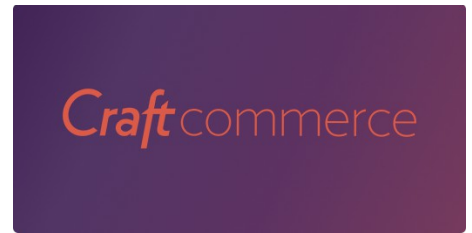
**Ilise Benun:** Yeah, I mean, I'm all about repurposing content and finding other ways to get it in front of the people who need to see it or read it or hear it, but the crucial point is at their moment of need because when it comes to marketing, timing is absolutely everything.

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Ilise Benun:** And if you don't understand that you can reach out to someone a hundred times, but if they have no need for what you're offering at that moment, it's going to do no good until they come to their moment of need, and that's exactly when you want them to remember you and know how to find you in their inbox very quickly.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

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**Lea Alcantara:** And it's funny that you mention that because, again, it's one of those things that we start, we tried to do, but we had no focus before. We were trying to figure out our client cycles, our client budget cycles, and before, we kind of like, A, before I really am thinking we had no idea. We had no idea when they even thought about budgets.

**Emily Lewis:** I think you said client cycles, and I was like, "What's that?" [Laughs]

**Ilise Benun:** [Laughs]

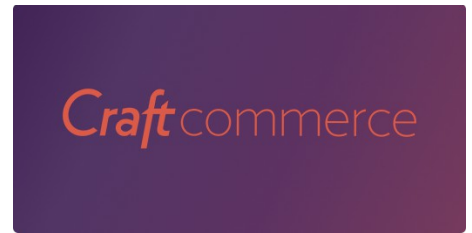
**Lea Alcantara:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, exactly, and then I remember going through a few hours actually of several different prospect emails from like the moment they just ask us to jump on a call to talk about a website all the way from when they paid the first deposit invoice to the end of the project. I started seeing patterns, and I was like, "Okay, it seems like there's a lot of increase at this time of the year, blah, blah, blah." And then now that we have a more focused market, we see there's a reason why because clients have budget cycles.

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** And you need to ask them for work when they're thinking about their budgets.

**Ilise Benun:** Right.

**Lea Alcantara:** And it just seems like, okay, so literally we just started adjusting the timing of when we do these outreaches based on the research we did over our client cycles, and it has worked.



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Especially if you've got a long-term relationship with the client, they're pretty open to you when their budget is.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** Like considering their budget, they're like, "Okay, we're thinking about our budget at this time of the month or this time of the year." So we just send them an email around that time saying like, "Hey, have you considered blah?" And they were like, "No, but we're talking about our budget now, so we'll get back to you literally in a week," as opposed to months and weeks and who knows when because we just didn't contact them at the right time.

**Ilise Benun:** [Agrees]

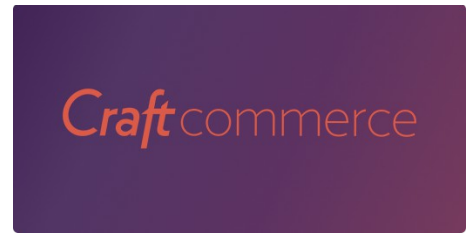
**Emily Lewis:** And we sent them an email, but we also have a blog post, so there was even more information that they could get into.

**Lea Alcantara:** Context.

**Emily Lewis:** Yeah, we had developed content to use to tell the story to connect with these people, and literally blog post being like, "Hey, are you budget planning? Then think about your website."

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

**Emily Lewis:** I think it sounds literally cheesy by making fun of myself, but that's what they're doing.



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**Lea Alcantara:** Yeah.

**Emily Lewis:** And they're like, "Oh wait, yeah, I am budget planning. Well, thank you for that extra information." And three weeks later, "We'd like you to do this for us." So there is a clear correlation if you are aware of who you're market is and where they are in their cycles that you can content market and outreach to them speaking to that, and like Ilise says, making sure that when they have that need, you're in front of them.

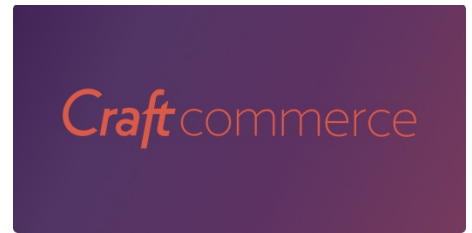
**Ilise Benun:** And even if you can't detect their budget cycle from the information that you have, you can very directly ask them when it is.

**Lea Alcantara:** Yeah.

**Emily Lewis:** Good point. In fact, that was one of the things we've added to our sales process is we're just starting to ask people, not just what their budgets are, but what their cycles are, when do they begin planning, when do they make the decisions, that kind of thing, because not everyone, but different nonprofits have their own calendar year cycles or fiscal cycles. Education has their own cycles. So knowing what those are is great because then you're speaking relevantly to them.

**Ilise Benun:** And the overarching point I would make about all of this related to content marketing is that the goal of the content is for your best prospects to say to themselves, "These guys or these girls really get us. They understand what we need."

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]



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**Lea Alcantara:** Yes.

**Emily Lewis:** And before we make a shift and talk about outreach because I definitely want to make sure we touch that third area, if I can just share with our listeners what we're doing to help us sort of manage our content marketing is we've created an internal spreadsheet. It's an editorial plan. We do a combination of research where we are looking at our target audience. We're looking at events that they go to, articles that they read, I'm drawing a blank, but the various things that they are connecting to for information, and from that, getting ideas of how we can relate our services to those topics, and then we start planning.

We take those ideas and we see when they fit into different cycles in the spreadsheet and we identify a blog post topic. We identify whether it's going to have an associated podcast episode that talks about it. We identify if it's going to go on a newsletter, and so it sort of planned out at least a couple or maybe five weeks' worth with some flexibility to shift if something comes up, and so we're trying to keep that cycle complete where a blog post and a newsletter and an outreach email, and the resources we're sharing on social media and even the topics we're talking about on this podcast, all are sort of relating to this overarching theme that we picked, let's say, for the month.

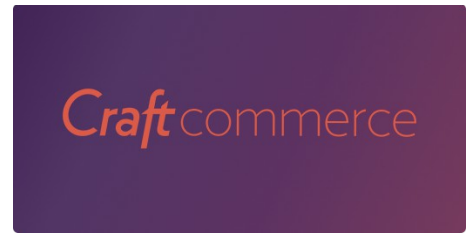
And even better, because we don't just focus on one audience, we can take the work that we're doing for one audience and recycle it with a different angle and perspective for another audience, but the planning has already been decided, the resources we share are already decided, we just have to retweak it, change it to suit that audience more. So it's really worth planning this out and seeing the big picture.

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**Ilise Benun:** And you guys are really good at this, and it's very unusual, I have to say.

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

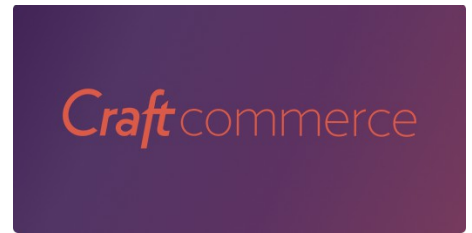
**Ilise Benun:** Not too many of my clients go that far, and I love it, but I do want to offer an alternative or the other end of the spectrum for people who aren't there yet.

**Emily Lewis:** Absolutely.

**Ilise Benun:** The place to start in terms of what is my content and how do I figure out what I need to say to my market, you have to know who your market is and who you're speaking to, but it's about listening to the questions that people ask you over and over and just answering them in your content marketing, in your newsletter.

So for example, my recent quick tip was all about essentially retracting some advice about asking for people's budget that I've been saying for years and years, and then suddenly realizing through many conversations with the clients recently that that is the wrong question. It's not working anymore. I have a better question, ask this, and I put it out in my tip, and I got so much response, it was amazing. I had no idea it was going to be so positively received, but it was, and so that tells me, "Okay, so I'm on the right track."

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]



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**Ilise Benun:** But it could happen like in the moment that way. You don't have to set aside time to plan it even sometimes. You just have to have it in the back of your mind, "I'm listening for the questions that everyone might want to hear the answers to."

**Emily Lewis:** Absolutely. I think that's a very good point because it's also present, you know?

**Lea Alcantara:** Yeah.

**Emily Lewis:** It's tuned in to what's happening now, and that's important as well.

**Ilise Benun:** Right.

**Lea Alcantara:** Yeah. And I also want to point out that even though, as Emily mentioned, we've got this spreadsheet and we have like all these plans and stuff, we have adjusted based on what we have heard seems to be more urgent.

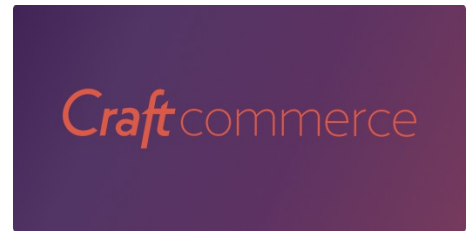
**Ilise Benun:** [Agrees]

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** So even if we have like this general plan, we're like, "No, we're going to bump this other topic much sooner because this one is what people are talking about now."

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]





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**Ilise Benun:** Right.

**Emily Lewis:** And then for us, the spreadsheet is helpful, but it's really part of what Lea and I talk about every time we check in on the business. Marketing is now a huge part of the discussion. Whereas before, it's just simply wasn't, and so we're always...

**Lea Alcantara:** Yeah, it was just about the work as opposed to like our business.

**Emily Lewis:** Yeah. So it's now integral to what we are thinking about all the time. All right, let's talk about outreach. Ilise, do you want to explain what outreach entails?

**Ilise Benun:** Yes, but I'll frame it by the two buckets we've already put on the table.

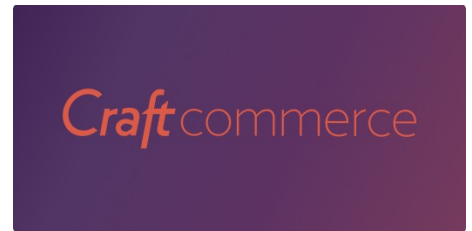
**Emily Lewis:** Okay.

**Ilise Benun:** So you're doing some networking and I recommend in-person in real time networking whenever possible, even if you have to travel to do it because that's how you make the strongest impression on people and shorten that time it takes to get their attention.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Ilise Benun:** But it can be done online, it just takes longer.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]



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**Ilise Benun:** So there's networking, and then you build on that by following up with people using your content marketing, using here's a blog post in a follow up email or you put them on your newsletter or whatever your tool is, and you said earlier, "What we're doing suddenly seems like it's not nearly enough."

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

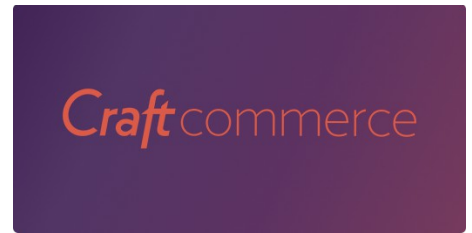
**Ilise Benun:** And the next step in this process is the outreach, which is essentially where you know who you're talking to, you know who you're looking for, and you need work. You need to generate something quickly, so you need to do outreach. You need to literally reach out to people, either who may have some familiarity with you or who have no idea who you are, and those are two slightly different approaches, but not all that different, but this is the thing people avoid the most.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Ilise Benun:** I'm not exactly sure why. I think it's an interpersonal thing. There seem to be a lot of fantasies about rejection.

**Emily Lewis:** Yeah.

**Ilise Benun:** But the reality is, it's mostly silence that you get back, and there's nothing wrong with silence. Silence doesn't mean they're not interested. It just means they perhaps didn't see it or now is not the right time, and this is where people stop, but essentially we're talking about emailing, inviting on LinkedIn, maybe some phone calling, maybe some snail mail. You have to decide based on who



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your market is and how they will respond best, what your conglomeration of best tools is, but it takes several touches to actually get someone to respond, and the expectation most people have about how many people will respond is way too unrealistic, way too high.

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**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

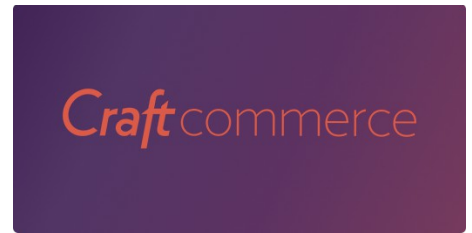
**Ilise Benun:** I would say out of ten people you reach out to, maybe one or two will respond and that's 10 to 20%, that's awesome.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Emily Lewis:** So we've been doing, I believe, the two types of outreach, the cold outreach, where we don't actually know the people that we're talking to. We haven't met them or we don't think they know us, and then two, to people we do have a connection with, and we've created essentially ongoing cycles in the past, and Lea alluded to this, we decide, "Oh, there's no work, let's email a bunch of people."

**Lea Alcantara:** Yeah.



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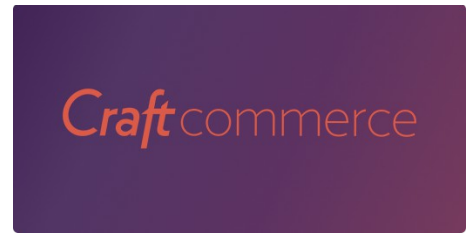
**Emily Lewis:** And that would be it, and then maybe we got a bunch of work, we never email them again. [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** Yeah.

**Emily Lewis:** So now, we're always emailing people. For the cold outreach, because we are members of an association, we're using their directory to identify clients we think might fit in our audience, and we do exactly what Ilise said, we reach out first on LinkedIn, then we send a touch base email suggesting and conveying that we find their business really interesting, that it's the kind of work that we love to do, and this is the kind of thing we could help them with. Would they be willing to talk to us?

And if we hear from them, we set up a call. If we don't, we then call them and essentially say the same thing, "We'd love to set up a call with you. Would that be possible?" And then if a call comes from that, we do the call. If it doesn't, there's a follow-up email and it's our last email that we send that's traditional email, but in this email, we reinforce everything we've said, but then we also say, "We have this great newsletter we think is going to be really helpful for your business because X, Y, Z. Unless I hear otherwise from you, we're going to add you to that list."

And so a cold contact is now in our regular cycle list, and of course, they can unsubscribe, or they could respond that they're not interested, but either way, we've established now that. In all that initial outreach, we'll still have them in our queue for the newsletter or we'll find them in our contact CRM system for some other type of outreach that might be relevant to their industry.



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**Ilise Benun:** And what's important here, and that's all very beautiful and you followed my instructions to the letter, and that's great. [Laughs]

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

**Ilise Benun:** And what's really important here is to remember the marketing tool of generosity.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

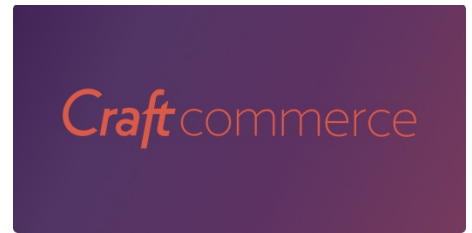
**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Ilise Benun:** That you are offering them what you do your services, which have value, and you've chosen them specifically and carefully because you think it might be a good fit, and that's why you're reaching out.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Ilise Benun:** You're not trying to take anything from them. You're not trying to stalk them.

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]



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**Ilise Benun:** You're not going to worry that they don't want to hear from you. You're just saying, "We're interested in you. Here's what we have to offer. We'd love to talk with you about it."

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** What's interesting about the way you're phrasing all that is that a lot of people, I think part of their hesitation is they're actually not confident about their services.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

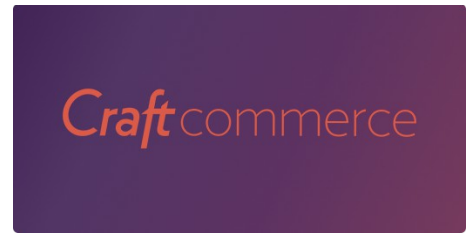
**Lea Alcantara:** So even if they feel like a service will be a benefit to a potential client, deep down they feel like, "Oh, I'm kind of scamming someone," which obviously is not the truth, but there is this weird kind of perception that marketing equals scamming.

**Ilise Benun:** Right. And I think you're right about this idea of a lack of confidence or maybe just low self-esteem. I don't know, but I do see it a lot, and all I can say is that we each have something to offer and we have to find the people it's right for.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** Yeah.

**Ilise Benun:** And we should not be comparing ourselves to other people, and there's also this issue of web designers or web developers or many creative professionals, really the services that you offer



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are all the same. There's not that big a difference between them. So the only way to set yourself apart is, number one, to focus and have them say, "Oh, they really understand our industry or our business." Or to communicate and/or to communicate in your outreach, in your content, what it is about you that makes you different or maybe it's something personal or maybe it's the way you do your business. I know you guys are just really structured and excellent at project management.

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

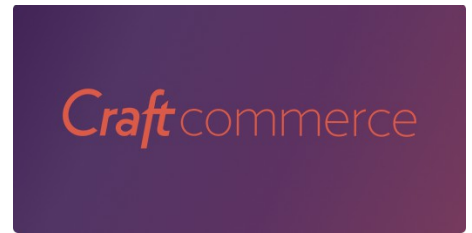
**Ilise Benun:** And if nothing else, that would be the reason for people to hire you.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Ilise Benun:** And that has to come through in all of your marketing because you're looking for the people who appreciate that.

**Emily Lewis:** So we've mentioned a number of times, this is a lot of work and Lea and I can attest to it, and you've told us personally, Ilise, this is a long-term investment, but what should someone be expecting in terms of a return on this investment? What are the most realistic expectations to go into it with, and how long should it take really realistically to sort of establish this foundation of these three tenets that you can then build from later?

**Ilise Benun:** I can only tell you, I'm thinking of one client, in particular, who is kind of my star student who I've been working with for about five years. She's a web designer and developer, and she has basically set a very strong foundation over that time to the point where now her prices are much



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higher than they used to be. She is very picky about which client she can take and is interested in taking, and she's got a waiting list.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Ilise Benun:** And at first, she asked me, "Do you really think people are going to wait? They say they want their website now."

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

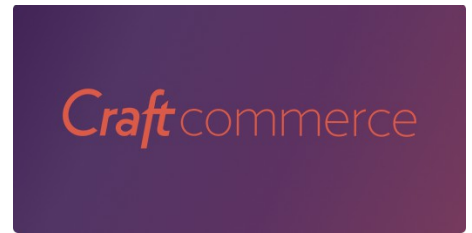
**Ilise Benun:** Like, "No, you tell them you can't do it until January, and you'll be available then, if they're interested," and they put the deposit down because they want her because she has set this really strong foundation. So I can't answer how long it will take, but I can point to, and I have a case study on her if people are interested, and to see exactly what process she went through, and I think it was about two years in that she was getting the clients that she wanted and now, four to five years later, she is declining a lot of work actually.

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]





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**Ilise Benun:** I mean, that's when you know you're in a good position is when you are the one who chooses, "I want this one, but that one, you know what, that feels a little fishy to me and they're asking for too much or they're trying to haggle me. No, I don't need that."

**Emily Lewis:** Well, that makes me wonder then with the person that you're referring to, she's now in this great place with her business, does that mean she's done with marketing?

**Ilise Benun:** No.

**Emily Lewis:** So she's still doing all of the same things she did to establish that foundation.

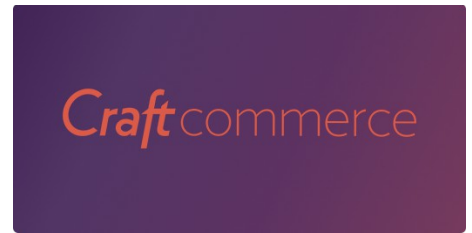
**Ilise Benun:** Oh, yes.

**Emily Lewis:** Okay.

**Ilise Benun:** Absolutely. And even better and stronger, so regular blogging, regular newsletter, she's starting to do some speaking. She never really did outreach, but she's very focused and clear on who her market is, and it's other creative professionals basically.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Ilise Benun:** And so she just does all her networking in that market and she's only one person, so she doesn't need all that much work.



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**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

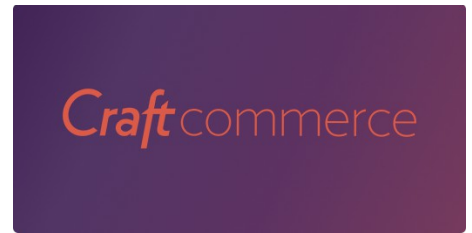
**Ilise Benun:** I think people also imagined they need tons of work, but if you really think about it, do you need more than three new projects a month?

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** So you're really kind of emphasizing that this is a long-term process. You shouldn't expect immediate results, and even when Emily and I looked back at our own client cycles like realistically when we step back to see how long the actual sales process was, we realize that it really isn't a quick thing. In those first couple of years for that particular client that you're mentioning, were there cues for her to understand that the marketing is working so she knew to continue with it? Because as you mentioned, a lot of people give up too soon. How do you keep yourself motivated knowing that it's going to take a while?

**Ilise Benun:** Here's how I answer that question. You will know soon if it's not working. People will not respond positively. You will not find the information that you're looking for. It will be clear if you're on the wrong track. It's much less obvious if you're on the right track. So it's kind of by omission or by absence that you figure out if you're on the right track. Does that make sense?

**Emily Lewis:** It does, so there's no outright I guess failure at the beginning where someone wrote in and was like, "This is completely inappropriate." Or they said, "Why are you even at this event? This isn't even for this type of stuff," or something like that.



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**Lea Alcantara:** Right, right.

**Ilise Benun:** Right. Or that the people that you come across or do the outreach too or talk to have no budget that even works with what you need.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

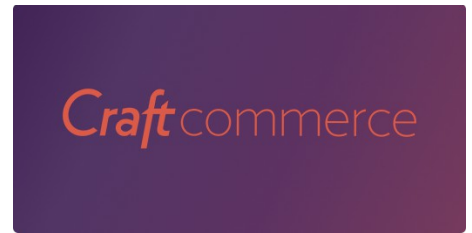
**Ilise Benun:** I mean, that's usually where you figure it out is you find people, but they don't want to pay anything.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** Then you know it's the wrong market.

**Ilise Benun:** Exactly. I was just going to say really you just have to have a lot of faith, and I think that's where my role comes in because it's very hard to do alone and to remain committed and keep the momentum going if you don't have someone to be accountable to for it. So you two are lucky because you have each other and you can support each other.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]



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**Ilise Benun:** But most people are working by themselves and it's a vacuum. You don't have a sounding board to say, and it's not even a cheerleader. It's like, "No, keep going because you need to do more."

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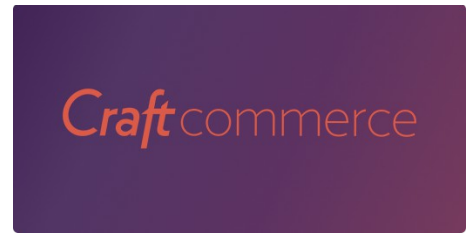
**Emily Lewis:** Something Lea and I are doing to sort of help us to stay motivated is [laughs] once again we created a spreadsheet. [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

**Ilise Benun:** [Laughs]

**Emily Lewis:** And that we called it "marketing wins," and basically anytime, even the smallest little thing happens, like even just a nice reply on social media, to a resource we share that was a specific intentioned content marketing resource or a blog post, we'll make a note of it, just to remind ourselves that there are little cues that we are moving in the right direction and I just opened it right now and the very first effort we did starting in May this year, which was content marketing focused on our women-owned business certification.

So we put that out in May and there have been throughout since then a bunch of little notes and long story short, we have a client that I think we can directly tie to the fact that we promoted that we embrace diversity and that we are a women-owned business and is now a client of ours.



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**Lea Alcantara:** That one.

**Ilise Benun:** [Agrees]

**Emily Lewis:** But you probably wouldn't see that if we weren't keeping track of these. "Oh, we've got a little note on social media." And then they wanted to talk to us about this one thing that wasn't even related to work, but something totally different, and then six months later, we're doing work for them.

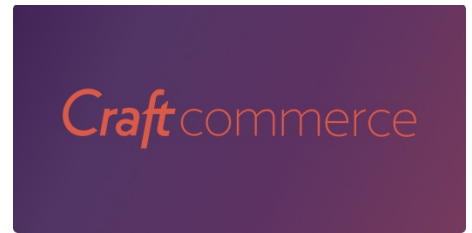
**Ilise Benun:** Yeah, you really have to be in it for the long haul and you have to be open and flexible, and I think the main message I want to convey is that you have to be listening to your market. You have to be responsive to your market, and too many people go in thinking, "I want to do this and I want to be this," and if the market isn't there for it, then it doesn't matter how much you want it, it's not going to happen.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Ilise Benun:** And I did this without knowing I was doing it very early on in my story where I just saw that people were disorganized. I was like, "Okay, let's get organized," and then I saw, "Oh, they're not responding to the people who want to know more about them. Okay, let's give them the information." So I was totally responsive to my market and it worked out well.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Ilise Benun:** And that's the attitude that I find people, it doesn't come naturally.



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**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Emily Lewis:** They're cultivated.

**Ilise Benun:** Yeah.

**Lea Alcantara:** Yeah, absolutely. And I just want to add another thing about trying to figure out like if something working is not, et cetera, earlier, Ilise, you mentioned that there's nothing wrong with silence, that it doesn't necessarily mean rejection.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

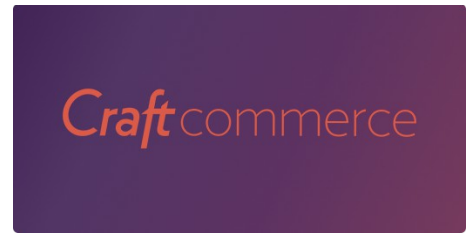
**Lea Alcantara:** And so let's put it back in the context of this particular podcast, so this podcast gets about 11,000 downloads in the past 90 days, so over 11,000, we get maybe three tweets. [Laughs]

**Emily Lewis:** Yeah. We never hear from anybody. [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** Yeah, yeah. Okay, we do, but not 11,000 responses.

**Emily Lewis:** Right. [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** We don't get 11,000 responses per download. That's how many downloads we get, but we get maybe three to five responses per episode, period, through social media or just like a nice



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email or like a retweet or something, but then when you actually see how many people listened to the show, it's massive, right, in comparison to that response.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** So when you think about that in the context of our own marketing where maybe we get one tweet here or we get one email there and it seems like nothing is happening, but how many people are actually reading on a regular basis that's having some sort of impact? And again, it takes time.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

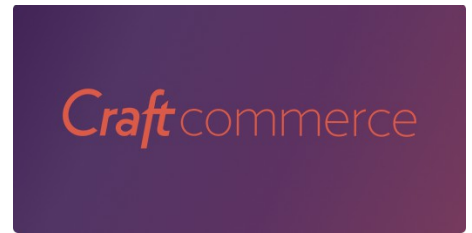
**Ilise Benun:** And you won't know it.

**Lea Alcantara:** Yeah.

**Ilise Benun:** Most of the time you won't know it, and that's okay, but you can't assume it's not happening.

**Emily Lewis:** Right.

**Ilise Benun:** When I was at this event in Florida, I happen to sit down next to a woman and she said, "I love your podcast." Like if I hadn't sat down next to her, I wouldn't have known that.



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**Emily Lewis:** Right. [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** It's funny that you mentioned that because I remember you're going to a conference and I introduced myself, et cetera, and they're like, "Oh, I know you. I recognize your voice." [Laughs]

**Ilise Benun:** [Laughs]

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** I'm like, "What?"

**Ilise Benun:** [Agrees]

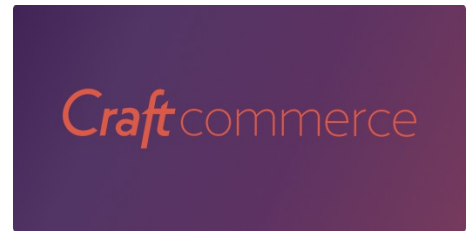
**Lea Alcantara:** And this was an individual that's never engaged with us on social media whatsoever, so I would never have known at all.

**Ilise Benun:** [Agrees]

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** So that's very interesting.





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**Emily Lewis:** So before we wrap up, one question I had for you, Ilise, was any recommendations for someone who wants to start getting this into their workflow, especially if they feel like they already have a really busy schedule.

**Ilise Benun:** Yes. The key is momentum, first of all, to be doing it consistently, so my recommendation is 30 minutes a day, the first thing, if possible in the morning, work on your business. Do a little bit, break it down, whether it's research or writing or looking for events to attend, but you have to make it a practice basically, because feast or famine happens on both sides. If you do your marketing in a feast or famine way, then you get feast or famine type of work.

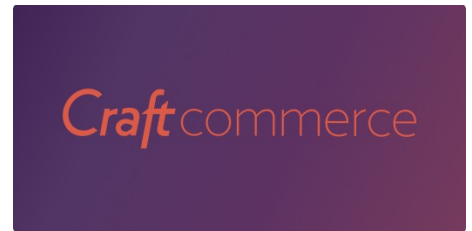
**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Ilise Benun:** And if you are consistent about it, we can shrink that, we can smooth out the waves just a little bit. I don't think we can ever actually eliminate that aspect of being self-employed, but you can definitely shrink the waves if you make it a practice to do every single day.

**Emily Lewis:** Yeah, agree with this, and Ilise, before we go to the outro here, we've met you. We got a referral to you and you offered a free 30-minute consultation, and that's something that you would offer to anyone, right?

**Ilise Benun:** Absolutely.

**Emily Lewis:** And what can people expect in this like mentoring session?



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**Ilise Benun:** So I like to use the 30-minute mentoring session as a working session basically so that anyone can get a sense of how I think and how I work, and so people come with their questions and I answer them to the best of my ability, and then if it seems like it's a good fit and there's more we can do together, then I propose something, and if it doesn't, I will say so.

**Emily Lewis:** And that's exactly what happened with us. [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** Yeah, exactly. Here we are. [Laughs]

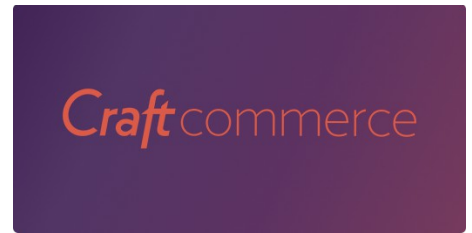
**Ilise Benun:** [Laughs] Exactly.

**Emily Lewis:** And we'll have a link in our show notes for learning more about it and scheduling one of these sessions along with a bunch of other links that Ilise has shared with us for some of the really great marketing assets and tools that she's put together. In fact, we recently bought a package and we're using some of the information you put together about proposals to help us kind of shore up our proposals.

**Ilise Benun:** Right, excellent.

**Lea Alcantara:** Very cool. So before we finish up, we've got our Rapid Fire Ten Questions, so our listeners can get to know you a bit better.

**Ilise Benun:** All right.



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**Lea Alcantara:** Are you ready, Ilise?

**Ilise Benun:** I think so.

**Lea Alcantara:** First question, morning person or night owl?

**Ilise Benun:** Morning.

**Emily Lewis:** What's one of your guilty pleasures?

**Ilise Benun:** Ice cream.

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

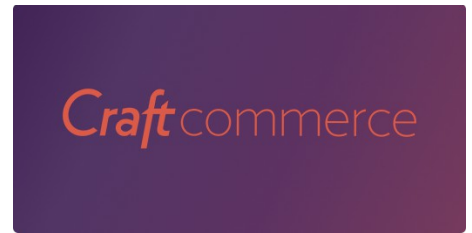
**Lea Alcantara:** What software could you not live without?

**Ilise Benun:** I think Skype.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Emily Lewis:** That's so funny because I hate Skype. [Laughs]



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**Ilise Benun:** [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** And yet here we are. [Laughs]

**Ilise Benun:** [Laughs]

**Emily Lewis:** I know we use it all the time. [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Emily Lewis:** What profession other your own would you like to try?

**Ilise Benun:** Oh, I just wish I could be a historian.

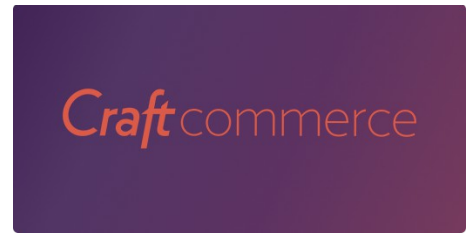
**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** What profession would you not like to try?

**Ilise Benun:** Hmm, exterminator.

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]



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**Emily Lewis:** If you could take us to one restaurant in your town, where would we go?

**Ilise Benun:** Hmm, Anthony Davids.

**Emily Lewis:** What kind of food is that?

**Ilise Benun:** It's just a local place on a corner in a residential area with kind of gourmet-ish food, but it's just very neighborhoody.

**Emily Lewis:** Nice.

**Lea Alcantara:** Very cool. If you could meet someone famous, living or dead, who would it be?

**Ilise Benun:** I think Marcus Aurelius, the emperor.

**Emily Lewis:** Hmm.

**Lea Alcantara:** Interesting.

**Ilise Benun:** Yeah, because he was a smart guy.

**Emily Lewis:** If you could have a super power, what would it be?

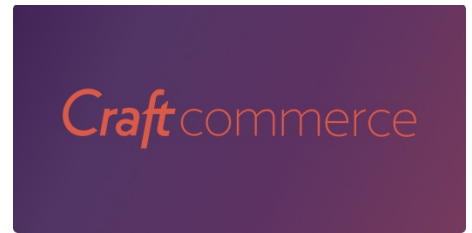
**Ilise Benun:** I would like to be able to see as clearly as possible.

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**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** What is your favorite band or musician?

**Ilise Benun:** I have to say Barbara Streisand.

**Lea Alcantara:** I love it.

**Ilise Benun:** But that's kind of an old answer. [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** No, I love it. [Laughs]

**Emily Lewis:** I love Barbara. [Laughs]

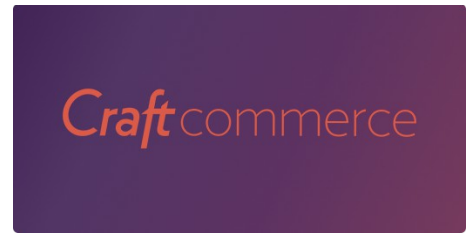
**Ilise Benun:** [Laughs]

**Emily Lewis:** All right, last question, pancakes or waffles?

**Ilise Benun:** Oh, pancakes, definitely.

**Lea Alcantara:** Awesome, awesome. That's all the time we have for today. Thanks for joining the show, Ilise.

**Ilise Benun:** Thank you so much, ladies. It's been great.



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**Emily Lewis:** In case our listeners want to follow up with you, where can they find you online?

**Ilise Benun:** So go to [marketing-mentor.com](http://marketing-mentor.com) and everything is there, links to the podcast, my quick tips, the free session, everything.

**Emily Lewis:** Thanks again, Ilise. You've really helped us a lot, and we really hope that this episode helps our peers with their own marketing, and it's just been a really major and important shift for our business this year. So thanks for joining us and thanks for helping us.

[Music starts]

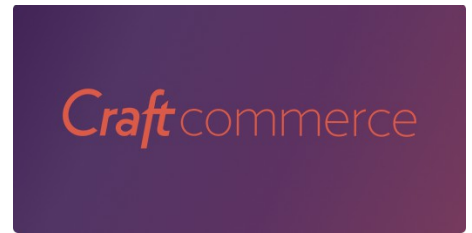
**Ilise Benun:** I want to say I appreciate how seriously you've taken it because that's what's required.

**Emily Lewis:** Absolutely. Well, it's our business, so we're committed to it.

**Lea Alcantara:** CTRL+CLICK is produced by [Bright Umbrella](#), a web services agency obsessed with happy clients. Today's podcast would not be possible without the support of this episode's sponsor! Thank you, [Craft Commerce](#)!

**Emily Lewis:** We'd also like to thank our partners: [Arcustech](#) and [Devot:ee](#).

**Lea Alcantara:** And thanks to our listeners for tuning in! If you want to know more about CTRL+CLICK, make sure you follow us on Twitter [@ctrlclickcast](#) or visit [ctrlclickcast.com](http://ctrlclickcast.com). And if you



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liked this episode, please give us a review on [iTunes](#), [Stitcher](#) or both! And if you really liked this episode, consider donating to the show. Links are in our show notes and on our site.

**Emily Lewis:** Don't forget to tune in to our next episode when we'll talk to Noah Bernsohn and Peter Compennolle about e-commerce shipping and fulfillment. Be sure to check out [ctrlclickcast.com/schedule](http://ctrlclickcast.com/schedule) for more upcoming topics.

**Lea Alcantara:** This is Lea Alcantara ...

**Emily Lewis:** And Emily Lewis ...

**Lea Alcantara:** Signing off for CTRL+CLICK CAST. See you next time!

**Emily Lewis:** Cheers!

[Music stops]

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