

# MARKETING IN THE KNOW

## Marketing In the Know Podcast Nicole Kroese

Nicole: The strategy that we've seen really work for local businesses is actually asking them to engage actively in their Facebook content. Like if you agree, share with a friend, tag a friend in this, and actually getting that word of mouth to go right on the Facebook wall, of course, with the help of a boost.

Announcer: Welcome to Marketing in the Know, the premiere podcast to help you leap ahead of the marketing curve so you can grow your business. Now, get ready, set, and grow with your host and tour guide through the marketing jungle, Buckley Barlow.

Buckley: Hello, insiders. And welcome to Marketing in the Know. Today, I just want to say thank you to all of the listeners who have helped make this show a recent No. 1 in education, technology, and marketing. And if you haven't done this already, I hope you take the time to leave a rating and review. And when you have a chance, any chance at all, drop me a line and ask a question that you want answered on the next Q&A. And so you can contact me over at my website, [beintheknow.co](http://beintheknow.co), find the contact form at the bottom of the website, and you know the rest is history. And ask the question. I want to hear from you.

So today, we are going to venture into social media best practices to grow your business. And in many instances, the best way to grow is to ensure your costs to acquire a customer are as low as possible. That allows you to deploy that extra money you were saving into growth opportunities. And so the focus of today's podcast is to help you understand these actionable methods and techniques you can use to reduce those costs as well as we may talk about some other things like custom audiences and lead gen, and who knows where it's going to go. But we will talk about Facebook.

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So my guest today is a young and rising star in the world of digital marketing. She knows Saas and Social, which makes her a really valuable asset to any organization today. Likeable Local is lucky to have her over there. She's the VP of marketing and partnerships, Nicole Kroese. It's great to have you on with me today.

Nicole: Thank you so much. Yeah, I'm very excited to be here and to talk about all the things you mentioned, inbound marketing, digital, growth hacking, social, and all that good stuff. So ready to dive in.

Buckley: Well, I wish we had 10 hours. We'd talk about all of that stuff. Now, you've got a funky spelling on your last name.

Nicole: Yes, I do. It's K-R-O-E-S-E. But it's pronounced Kroese. And we were just chatting before we started recording today. And I was telling you why, in fact, it's actually pronounced like that. And I'm Dutch. So I actually asked my Dutch grandmother a couple of years ago why this is because I've been very tired of people mispronouncing it my whole life. And she said that, if I thought about the spelling of shoes with the O-E-S that it would make a lot of sense. And she uses an originally Dutch word, which we think about the clogs and sort of the origin there. So apparently, O plus E in a row in the Dutch language just makes an ew sound.

Buckley: Well, I like it. And I know what you mean. Look at my name, Buckley. And that's not even my first name. All right, Nicole. There is a mountain of info that we could cover today. But let's get a little focus, shall we, on Facebook. Have you ever heard of that platform?

Nicole: Never, ever. I'm just kidding. I only am on it 24/7.

Buckley: I'm excited to see what's happening out there and get an inside look into the success you and your team are having over there at Likeable Local. And yeah, Facebook is that 800 pound gorilla. But what's cool about Facebook for businesses today isn't necessarily the way it works because we all get that now. It's about the data. I mean, wow, right?

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Nicole: Yeah, absolutely. I think that something that small businesses and all businesses can really start to utilize more and more is the mountain of data and the mountain of insights that they're getting from Facebook. And not only the ones they're getting natively from Facebook and the advertising platform that it has, but maybe some of the data they have already in their email database or in their customer database and how they can start using that information combined with all the insights Facebook has to do some really smart stuff.

Buckley: Yeah. I mean, social is such a tough world to navigate for so many businesses. And it seems what works for one company doesn't really work for another. And so I love talking with people who work in this space every single day like you and are willing to share what's working and what's not working. So I'm ready. Are you ready to get us in the know?

Nicole: Yeah. I'm ready to get you in the know.

Buckley: Awesome. So before we launch into this social medial goodness, tell us a little bit about you, your role over there at Likeable and what the company does.

Nicole: Yeah. So we already dived into my last name. But just a little bit of background on me. I'm actually a Seattle, Washington native. So I grew up on the west coast. I moved to New York. I went to NYU. And fun fact, I actually started my New York life and partly in Seattle, too, as a professional dancer. So yeah, I went to school partly for dance. And I was dancing in a couple of ballet companies, doing some contemporary stuff, and I also actually did some work in fitness and taught at some boutique fitness studios in New York. But on the more sort of professional side, I started actually in PR.

I had a bit of an injury, but life is full of surprises. It was really exciting for me to sort of venture into more things. I worked in PR for a bit. And then I just had a huge passion for digital and for social media. And I ended up at Likeable Local through networking with our CEO, Dave Kerpen, who some of you might

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know and might have heard of. He's the most read Linked In influencer of all time. And he's actually written a couple of bestselling books on social media and on business. So I networked with him. And what kind of started as a mentoring relationship turned into a job.

So it was really exciting for me to come to Likeable Local, which is a SAS company. And we have a social automation tool geared towards small businesses that's really unique and combines a lot of features that are really integral to helping small businesses succeed on social. And small businesses are really an area that can be so successful, but they often just have a lot of challenges around time and resources and expertise. So our tool solves a lot of that for them. And my team here, we work on, basically, all of our lead generation. We've really adopted the inbound methodology, so inbound marketing, always be helping, a lot of blogging, E-books, webinars.

And of course, we really practice what we preach. So a lot of our lead gen efforts are social driven. I'd say almost 50 percent of our leads are directly from social media. And recently, we actually launched a freemium app for our product, and so we've become also a user acquisition team. So we've been using a lot of paid social to acquire users for our ads and do a lot of nurturing and conversion in that way. So it's been a really, really exciting time.

Buckley:

And you've got a lot of moving parts over there internally. And of course, you're also helping a lot of businesses navigate these waters. Now, as I mentioned before, what works for one company may not work for another. And I want to give a little background to the kinds of businesses that are on your platform. Give us a little insight into the demographic of the user base, if you would.

Nicole:

Yeah, absolutely. So we work primarily with small business owners. Think anyone from your dentist and doctor to a jeweler, a retail store to a real estate agent to an auto shop to a marketing and consulting agency. So we kind of run the gamut. But there are a couple of things, although the breadth of industries is really wide. There are a couple of things that are kind of consistent across our

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customer base. And one of them is that our customers have all really seen word of mouth as a great grow of their business. And we really believe that social media is like word of mouth on steroids.

So we want to help them take this word of mouth concept that's worked maybe even for generations and make it a little bit more scalable for them using our tool. And the other thing we've seen kind of in common with our customer base is, often, they're sort of in it for the long run. They're not kind of going for the flash sale maybe like the goal of kind of like Groupon type deal or something like that. But they're looking for long term, loyal customers who might be worth \$5,000.00 or \$10,000.00 over the course of their lifetime. And so investing in them with value and education and improving loyalty with a social strategy proves to be really fruitful in the long run.

**Buckley:** Well, what are the biggest pain points for smaller companies then right now? Is it a staffing issue, a knowledge issue, a time issue, or all of the above? Why do they come to you? And what's their biggest pain point?

**Nicole:** Gosh, yeah. It's all of the above. And I also think maybe one not mentioned is kind of the fact that we're seeing a lot of small business owners at times think of social media as almost a necessary evil. If they're not digital natives, they know it's important. They're reading about it's important. They're seeing their competitors doing it. But they don't really want to have to do it themselves. And they're kind of keen to outsource. So that's definitely a subset of it. But there's also the fact that time is always of the essence for any business owner, as well as expertise. And that loops into time.

Sometimes, the time it would take to become enough of an expert to do a good job is just not worth it. And it's better off to hire someone who really knows what they're doing.

**Buckley:** Now, speaking of hiring, I would love to get some insight and value here for the listeners. What are the right questions

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businesses should be asking of their providers before they hire a social media company or invest in a platform? What are those questions?

Nicole: Yeah. I mean, I think that one of the really important things to look into is success stories. So you want to see that there are other businesses like yours or who have a business model like yours that are successful. And I know that case studies are – my team produces a lot of case studies, and they're really an important part of our sales enablement materials, making sure that our prospective customers feel like they can see these success stories, and they can think of it as being them.

Another, of course, is just making sure that the company you're hiring truly is an expert, right? So do they seem to know what they're talking about? Who is their CEO? Where did he or she come from? Do they provide a lot of content that makes them look like an expert? Maybe they have some great infographics or blogging. And I think just kind of vetting someone for their expertise and their establishment in this space can also be a good indicator of how good a tool they will be for you.

Buckley: Awesome. A little research goes a long way nowadays.

Nicole: Yeah, definitely.

Buckley: All right, Nicole. Let's dive into Facebook ads. They've been on fire. But recently, I've heard that they're not converting like they used to. And before we get into what's working out there and how you're achieving the kind of results that you are, what's not working on Facebook anymore?

Nicole: I think what's really not working on Facebook anymore, first of all, before we even jump into ads, what's not working on Facebook is not boosting or paying for your post at all. We've actually affectionately coined this new era of Facebook as Facebook-reachageddon, a play on Armageddon. Just the fact that it's very hard to get reach, almost impossible, if you don't pay. So first of all, this is a trap we actually see a lot of business owners running into is

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they're not paying to boost their posts at all. And they're not seeing any results. So that's really the first thing that's not working is to not pay.

The second thing that's not working is to be really pushy and sort of overly salesy. You definitely want to be direct and simple and clear but continuously pushing your message without a balance of content. That's also educational, that's also just fun and giving insight into your company. If you're only pushing the sales messages, you're not going to be as effective as when you have a nice balance. And even with your paid ads, you want to make sure your paid ads are always delivering value. So you can look at it, and there's value beyond the hard sell.

And I think, in this era of the customer is always king, the prospect is always king, you know so much data, you just have to be a lot smarter because you can be. You can target the right people with the right message versus sort of this mass blanket targeting where seven-eighths of your demographic won't actually be interested in the product.

Buckley: Great advice. Now, let's switch gears. In your iterative testing that you've been doing, what are you seeing that's working out there really well?

Nicole: Yeah. A lot of things that are working out well have to do with some of the new features with Facebook. I know we've seen a lot of great success with things like lookalike audiences and the ability to get really specific there. I also think some of the features of Facebook ads that maybe some people who aren't advanced aren't taking advantage of can be really successful, including calls to action on conversion ads. Facebook has some great features where you can add ad calls to action, buy now, learn more, download and whatnot and drive people to a specific page, which is really cool. And, of course, quality over quantity.

We've tested with sort of quickly putting together images for our ads versus sending them to our design team and having them really professionally crafted and whatnot. And, of course, the nicer

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images, the ones that are beautiful and attractive and have great contrast are the ones that are performing the best. So such a simple trick. But I really think taking care in the esthetic of your image, especially when it's competing with pictures of your friends going out to dinner and their babies and whatnot in the news feed. And it definitely has to blend.

**Buckley:** Yeah. That's actually an important point, especially for boosting because I think a lot of businesses out there don't realize that Facebook has like a 20 percent text rule on their images. And so you've got to do a lot with a little. And so those images are absolutely key so that you don't get a lot of text. And so you've got to choose the right imagery.

**Nicole:** Absolutely, yeah. And text overlay is really effective. But make sure you are measuring it. Our team that makes images has a template, and they know the exact amount of space and the exact font size that's going to maximize the 20 percent but not go over. And it's kind of a pain in the butt if you do make the mistake of going over because, sometimes, it takes a little bit for Facebook to reject your ad, and you have to start from scratch. And it's like a whole day lost.

**Buckley:** What do you do in situations like that where you share something, and then you're boosting it, it gets rejected? Do you go back in and change it completely or wait? Or do you put it right back in the queue and share it all over again?

**Nicole:** Most of the time when this happens to us, it's something that's happened maybe in Ads Manager. And we'll re-upload a new image.

**Buckley:** Perfect.

**Nicole:** Yeah. With boosted posts, it often gets rejected a little bit quicker because there's less complexity. So it depends on the campaign. But usually, something we're boosting on our timeline is something we want to get out rather quickly. So we try to do it right away again.

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**Buckley:** That's great. Now, I wanted to give you a hypothetical, if we can. My niece, Madison, has a growing home based business around designing and baking custom cakes for various occasions, weddings, you name it. And she's growing through word of mouth. And she's starting to get some traction, which is great. And I thought, obviously, Pinterest, Instagram would be great for her. But I think Facebook could really help her drill down on a custom audience locally, right? What is the secret to using Facebook for local businesses like this? You had mentioned lookalike audiences and custom audiences.

Can you give a good idea here of what she could do?

**Nicole:** Yeah, definitely. I think in terms of her content strategy, of course, you want her to be boosting her posts. But, for local business, they have such an amazing opportunity to really connect with the members of their community who are both their current customers and their prospective customers. So the strategy we've seen really work for local businesses is actually asking them to engage actively in their Facebook content. Like if you agree, share with a friend, tag a friend in this, and actually kind of getting that word of mouth to go right on the Facebook wall, of course, with the help of a boost.

I also think what can be really unique is doing some the lookalike targeting is really effective. But also, doing a little bit simpler targeting in a local space can really work. We've actually seen the friends of fans targeting with sort of a zip code parameter be really effective for local businesses just because it is a little bit more of a niche community. And they're able to capitalize on the ads actually coming with that word of mouth endorsement of your friend, Amanda, also likes this cake shop and sort of getting that credibility right in the sales pitch, if you will.

**Buckley:** That's great. That's a great segue into what I wanted to ask you about key words and the case studies that we wanted to talk about today. So we're going to talk about key words in terms of case studies, and then we'll talk retargeting. But take us on that journey

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of how to use those key words to really make sure that you're drilling down on the things that are working and get rid of the things that aren't.

Nicole: Yeah, definitely. So Buckley, when you asked me to think about a case study, of course, I jumped into our Ad Manager and started looking at things. But I also want to give a plug to our marketing associate here at Likeable. His name is Evan, and he actually gave me some great insights because he's the one who is sort of managing this day to day. So we were chatting about a great case study of our ads, and we decided on this one to talk about key words just because it's really an interesting thing that sometimes people don't talk about as much since there are these other different types of targeting like lookalike audiences. And this particular case study is around a piece of content we're promoting that's a great lead generator for us. It's an E-book on Twitter best practices. And it's a little bit ironic that we're actually advertising it on Facebook.

Buckley: I like that. I like it.

Nicole: Yeah. But we find that people who are on Facebook and are interested in marketing are also interested in Twitter marketing or curious about it. So we have a set of key words that is part of our audience. And when we start any audience and any Facebook campaign for a new initiative, we sort of like to do a little bit of a wider spectrum to start. And then we really, really, carefully manage it throughout the next couple of days, next couple of weeks. And we try to figure out what components are maybe bringing the cost up or down and continue to optimize it.

So this particular audience, we had a range of key words, things really specific as people who are interested in Twitter marketing or Twitter analytics, for example, or a little bit more broad, people who are interested in digital marketing or something a little bit less related like social media marketing. And as we looked at the key words, we actually started to notice that some of the thing that were really specific key words like Twitter marketing or Twitter analytics were actually the key words that were bringing the cost

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per conversion up. And they were sort of the ones that were not working.

And by eliminating some of the key words that were lagging our campaign down, we actually were able to shave our cost per conversion by about 60 percent. And so sort of the lesson here is, often times, we get focused on what are the best, best ones? What are the best performing key words here? And how can we just keep hitting those home? But sometimes, if you actually look at the opposite, you look at what are the worst performing key words in my audience, and you eliminate those. Sometimes, you can actually just – there's a lot of value in raising the floor versus always shooting for a much higher ceiling.

And that was able to save us a lot of money, increase our conversion. And what we've learned is, sometimes, if you really just too narrowly focus on what you think might be the best converting, there is something interesting about Facebook's algorithm where, at times, you need just the right combination of different words or different specifications within the audience. And if you strip too many things away, it's no longer optimizing itself well.

So it's sometimes better, actually, to remove the things you can tell are really bad. And then the whole campaign kind of lifts itself up accordingly.

Buckley: That's interesting. That's a great point. All right, Nicole. Let's turn our focus to retargeting. You've done some really cool retargeting. What are you doing within your own organization for other companies?

Nicole: Yeah. I think that retargeting is a great strategy to help bring buyers a little bit closer to where you want them to be. So if you think about your marketing funnel really traditionally, there are people who are sort of right in the discovery phase. And then there are also people who are considering your product, and there are people who are ready to buy. And as soon as you get someone in your funnel as a marketing need, but you haven't quite gotten them

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to that point where you think they're maybe ready to talk to a sales person, that's an opportunity to continue to retarget them to get them closer.

A way that we actually do this is, for example, if someone comes in as a lead who has downloaded an E-book or something like that of ours, but what we'd really like them to do is request a demo of our product, what we'll actually do is we'll try to drive them maybe via email marketing, for example, do that demo page. But if they don't bite on that, we actually have a tracking pixel in the demo page. And we're able to retarget them on Facebook, the people who have viewed the page but haven't submitted the form, and continue retargeting them to see if seeing it in the Facebook environment will be a little bit better for conversion.

So that's something that we do in terms of retargeting. We also do some fun stuff with our app. Getting people who have installed our app, retargeting them again to get them back in and start using and start making posts with the content that we create. So those are two really effective examples of things we've been doing internally.

Buckley: I know I'm putting you on the spot here, but what kinds of results have you seen from this?

Nicole: Yeah. I'm trying to think of the actual number of conversions. Of course, our cost per conversion on the retargeting is always less than getting a new lead right away because they're a little bit warmer and more privy to us. Gosh, I wish I knew the numbers off the top of my head. I know for our app install retargeting ads, those are a little bit fresher in my mind. And I know we're actually seeing less than like \$2.00 per re-engagement, which is less than an install. And it's a really specified audience. So we've been happy with that.

Buckley: That's great. Yeah. I think installing those pixels on your website, if you haven't done that, you definitely need to use the Twitter and Facebook pixels for retargeting. They're absolutely key. Now, you are the VP of marketing, so you're in charge of some hiring. And if you were going to hire one person on your growth or

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marketing team today to continue to leverage this growth that you've seen, what would you be looking for and why?

Nicole:

Yeah. I think one of the No. 1 things I'd be looking for is someone who is really intelligently able to handle and manipulate data. I think more and more, the marketing field is becoming less about who can write a great blog post and more about who is great with data and who can create data driven insights and be more of a growth marketer. So that's one of the things I would definitely look for. I'd also look for someone who – it's hard to expect, especially young hires to have all of the skills already. So I try to look for someone who I think has a great aptitude to learn and to problem solve.

And just the ability to sort of finagle their way through some of these tech platforms and someone who is curious by nature, and they want to dig deeper into hey, why is that number that way? I didn't expect it to be that way. So just sort of this savviness around data and around technology is important to me.

Buckley:

That's great. How do you keep you and your team ahead of the curve?

Nicole:

I think continually educating ourselves is so huge. We've actually recently sort of instilled every single day, we spend 30 minutes to 1 hour just learning. And I know that a lot of maybe team leaders will think of that and be like that's lost productivity. But in the marketing field, and in a field like social and digital marketing that's changing so often, if you don't continue to learn and to innovate and to stay on top of new tactics, you'll be lost. So we have a bunch of different blogs that we read. We're constantly investigating more into the tools we're using. And we also kind of have weekly projects that we dive into, and we try to figure out different technical solutions, too.

Recently, we sort of dove into better ways we could better optimize all of our sites and all of our landing pages on the SEO front. And we each looked into a couple of different resources and

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learned about different aspects of it and then came together and sort of did like an optimization hackathon.

Buckley: That's great.

Nicole: Yeah. We just try to keep learning.

Buckley: Well, that's great. Why don't you leave us with your best growth or marketing advice that you've received in your career so far?

Nicole: Yeah. It's actually something kind of recent. And we have an advisor and an investor group at Likeable Local. And one of the members of 500 Startups actually gave me the advice to continue having a cadence of experimentation. And I thought that was just so interesting because, the minute you stop experimenting, you can start plateauing and stopping seeing that growth and that success. So that's really inspired me and my team to continually be experimenting and running experiments. And the worst thing that can happen is that they'll fail, and you learned that didn't work.

And the best thing that can happen is you can discover something amazing that can help you with your company growth. So just keeping that cadence of experimentation I think is the best advice I've gotten.

Buckley: Boy, that's awesome. You just teed up a blog post that I'm working on, as well as an infographic. So I'll shoot it over your way to get some feedback from you. So insiders, it's obvious that Nicole and her team over there at Likeable Local, that can be a tongue twister, know what they're doing over there. You can find the details on this episode on Nicole's show notes page at [beintheknow.co](http://beintheknow.co). And if you want to see how Likeable Local can help you augment your Facebook strategy and other social media strategies, you can always head over to their site directly at [Likeablelocal.com](http://Likeablelocal.com).

Now, Nicole, it was great to talk with you. And I love talking with people like you because you're in the trenches every day. You're learning best practices. And it's great that you'll come on and

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The logo for 'Marketing in the Know' features the word 'MARKETING' in yellow at the top. Below it, 'IN THE KNOW' is written in a dark teal color. The word 'IN' is on the left, 'THE' is in the middle with horizontal lines above and below it, and 'KNOW' is on the right. The letter 'O' in 'KNOW' is replaced by a white lightbulb icon. A yellow curved arrow points from the top left towards the 'IN'.

share. You're an amazing talent. Keep up the great work. And thank you so much for taking the time to come on and share with us today.

Nicole: Thank you so much for having me.

Buckley: All right insiders, that's a wrap. Thank you for joining us on Marketing in the Know. Now, I'm going to ask you to take just a minute of your time to give me an honest rating and review of this podcast because it will help me deliver the kind of content that you're looking for. And also, if you love this podcast, I would ask you to subscribe. So again, thank you for listening. And until next Tuesday, get that growth on.

Announcer: We appreciate you joining us for this episode of Marketing in the Know. For show notes and a free version of Ready, Set, Grow, visit [beintheknow.co](http://beintheknow.co). Thanks again, and we'll see you next Tuesday here on Marketing in the Know.

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**Duration: 28 minutes**