

Introduction: Welcome to the Enchanting Lawyer Podcast. The show that walks you step by step to improving strategies you can use today to grow your business. We show you how being kind, useful and, of course, enchanting will bring you more clients and build a thriving community. Now here's your host from sunny San Diego, Jacob Sapochnick.

Jacob: Hello everybody, welcome to the Enchanting Lawyer podcast. This is Jacob, your host, and I'm excited to have this show again.

I'm still in San Francisco this week and I have – I'm fortunate enough to meet so many entrepreneurs from all over the world, sharing amazing stuff that they do. Today, on the show we have, also, an amazing entrepreneur, and this time all the way from the UK. Today we have Liz Azyan.

Liz is a social media rising star. She's a Taekwondo black belt holder and a Ph.D. dropout, who moved country and gave it all to dive deeper into the social media adventure, then started everything. We're going to learn more about what she does.

When Liz isn't kicking butt and taking life changing risk, she runs a social media agency called Digital Matchbox that helps to give hard working and passionate entrepreneurs and businesses a voice that cuts through the online noises. She has won the Google fellowship award through her work helping governments embrace social media and connect with citizens online. She's also the founder of some of the following products and services that social media: management platform, Facebook ads, audience targeting tool, graphic tool, [unclear 00:01:43] video graphics tool, and a social media manager's best friend.

Liz, I'm super excited to have you on the show today. How are you today?

Liz: I'm really good. Thanks, Jacob. How are you?

Jacob: I'm doing amazing. Like I said, I'm here in San Francisco and just embrace with the spirit of entrepreneurship. That's why I'm happy to have you on the show.

Liz, I gave a little background about you. Why don't you tell a little bit our audience what you do and how you got to where you are.

Liz: First of all, I just want to say thank you, Jacob, for having me on the show. I've been following you for some time now and I'm a big, big, big fan of your work, and all the stuff you do in the social media space. So, thank you for that.

Just a little background about me. I started on social media purely accidentally. Well, right now, I own social media management agency. I do consulting, I do

coaching, and I have all those products that you mentioned. But before that, I was actually just a student here in the UK. I'm originally from Malaysia. I came here to do my masters and then decided, after my masters, to continue doing my Ph.D., which was about social media and government.

While I was doing my Ph.D. I was – the original idea for my Ph.D. was actually how to engage with citizens online which, at that time, I was trying to engage with a lot of government agencies. It was really hard. This was about maybe 9 years ago. It was really hard to connect with them. They wouldn't return my calls, they wouldn't reply my emails. I was like, how am I supposed to do a new research without research participants.

Finally, I met up with somebody who wasn't in government but worked with government and he gave me a little tip. He said, "You know what, there are about 15 people that I know, that work in government, that are on Twitter," and he said, "Maybe you should try that. Maybe you can find someone to talk to." because it's an open platform. At that time, I did have a Twitter account but I never used it. He said, "Here's 15 names of people you can connect with."

So, I went on there, started to – try to have some engagement with them. It went really well. I did connect with a few people but they weren't the right people. They weren't the right people and the right departments that I needed to talk to.

That's when I saw that everybody was actually sharing blog links in their Twitter. At that time I was still trying to learn how to use this thing. So I decided, okay, you know what, I'm going to start a blog and see if that's going to attract the right audience. So I started blogging about all the stuff that I was learning with my research, all the literature review. Actually, because part of online engagement at that time was social media so I said, "Okay, I'm going to collect the data of which governments are using social media," and just share it. Share it right now and see if people are interested in that.

So I practically shared my data even before the Ph.D. was published just to see if I could attract them. And it worked. It worked really, really well. Because at that time government was like, you know, just imagine eight, nine years ago, everyone was kind of ... this is like my insider knowledge. Everyone was opening Twitter accounts but not telling their bosses. Do you know what I mean?

Jacob: Of course.

Liz: It's like underground operation, because they were scared. Because this was totally something – a new way to connect, and there were a lot of risks involved. As you know its government so you have to be careful of what you say.

So, I was actually just telling people, “Oh, by the way, this ...” say local government “is using Twitter. This is doing Facebook,” and this grew the confidence of those people, and even connect with each other, to swap best practices and to just like say, “Hey, they did it. We should do it too.”

Jacob: Right.

Liz: So, it was really exciting.

So, at that point, I started to kind of realize, oh my God, this social media thing is going to be the way forward. You could feel the ripples happening even then. And that’s when, like, the whole topic of my Ph.D. changed from online engagement to like purely social media and government.

So, that was kind of how I started and how it really worked for me in terms of just putting myself out there and getting those kind of participants that I wanted to interview to come to me. Because what happened was when I had the audience, everybody started following me. Mind you, at this time, my Twitter account was on private. So everybody that wanted to follow me actually had to request to follow me before I would let them in.

I think that’s the power of content. If you’re sharing a very powerful content, a very useful content, people are willing to go through those hoops to just get access to you. What happened was I, one day, once I have the audience – I think it was about a thousand by then. From 15 went to 1000. Those days that was considered quite a lot.

One day I just tweeted, I said, “Okay, you know guys, as you know I’m a Ph.D. researcher. I’d love to connect with all [unclear 00:07:28] who are web masters.” At that time, web masters were the ones who held the key to the social media doors, whereas now it’s probably marketing team or something, but those days.

So, I told them who I wanted to talk to and I just literally tweeted out a Doodle calendar. I don’t know if you know what a Doodle calendar.

Jacob: Yeah, of course. Of course. We use it sometimes.

Liz: Yeah. It’s perfect. If you want people to just put an appointment with you, you just tweet. And I got, like, 20 people immediately responding and booking those appointments. Within two weeks I finished all the interviews that I wanted for my research. I was, like, blown away. I can’t believe that it was that easy.

Jacob: You know, Liz, I’m listening to what you’re telling me right now. It’s interesting because a lot of our listeners are professionals, attorneys and people that provide service. You, essentially, described in a nutshell the content whether it’s today or before, sharing, giving away value, is still the way to build your

community, your audience. People are always asking, well, how do we use this social media? How do we use that to create leads? You're thinking the opposite because it's not about the leads, it's about providing value, it's being the source, and then things will happen. You're just a remarkable example of what happened.

Liz: Yeah. You know what? I was still in shock at that time myself. I couldn't believe this was ... I was experiencing the power of social media. It's just a remarkable place to be in. What was really exciting about all this is that me talking too is ... There was a point in my Ph.D. where I had ran out of funding. As you know, Jacob, I was on a student visa.

Jacob: Right.

Liz: Everything was kind of in jeopardy. If I didn't have enough funding, I couldn't stay, and all that stuff. I was in a pickle and I had, at that time, I had built a connection with all these people, and I just tweeted out and said to everyone, "I'm in a really tough spot. I might have to go back to my home country if I don't get a job that could support me and replace the funding that was kind of stopped." Because funding only goes how many years and then after that it stops. It was amazing.

After I tweeted that, people were ... there are hundreds of re-tweets, people were actually creating their own hashtag. The hashtag was keeplizlocal. It was kind of like a campaign to keep me in the country. It was just amazing. I was crying because I was so overwhelmed with the support. Everybody wanted to help me. Everybody was like, "Oh my gosh! What can we do to help? We really want you to stay?" And people were like saying things like, "Liz is an amazing researcher. Anyone who hires her is going to be really happy that they did that."

But the thing is, even with all that support, there needs to be somebody who is willing to take me on and also give me the work permit, right? It's not just about getting the funding, it's also about changing from visa for student visa to work permit. It was really a hard situation that not just anybody could offer me a job practically.

What happened was, somebody said to me, "Liz, why don't you open a LinkedIn account, update it, and put your blog as a company so we could write you testimonials." I was like ... You know what? I never would have thought of that. And that's the other thing about social media. You put out a problem to a network that trusts you; the network will help you find a solution that you wouldn't have even thought of. That was one person that had ask me to do that.

So I opened my LinkedIn account, I did an updated thing, and put my blog that's been followed by all these people, as my company. That one person wrote a

really raving review. What's interesting was he tweeted it, I tweeted it, and I said, "Thank you very much. This is really going to help me." Twenty-eight other people followed within like a week to write amazing testimonials.

That led to about six offers for job. Three of them were really serious to the point that wanted to offer me the work permit. And then, finally, it came down to one, and then that one was actually the one ... one of those first 15 people that actually I followed on Twitter. The first 15 people, the government. I literally could not believe what was happening.

That was the point where ... That's why I always like to tell people about my Ph.D. drop out story because social media really changed how I saw the world and how I saw my future was going to develop. It gave me, like, the strength and the confidence to just say to myself, "I could do anything. I could do anything that I wanted to because I had this connection to people that would allow me to just ... literally do whatever I want my heart's desire. So, that's when I've really let to myself and I said, "Do I really want to be an academic?" Because, basically, if you do a Ph.D., that's kind of like where you're going.

Jacob: Absolutely.

Liz: And I was sponsored by my government to do the Ph.D. If I had continued I would have needed to go back to my country and then become a lecturer, basically, at university. That was the kind of whole sponsorship deal. I did a lot of reflection and thought, you know what, there's so much opportunity in social media, and I could literally just taste my future, if that makes sense. I could just see that where I was going with the power of social media that I have discovered, that wasn't going to be the path for me.

So I decided, oh my gosh, I've already made the impact that I wanted to do with my research. All those testimonials that they've wrote to me, everybody that was in government had told me that I had made a difference in how they've carried out their social media tasks, or how they've had the courage to jump into social media because of the work that I shared.

To me, that in itself was why I was doing the kind of research that I was doing. It wasn't because of the three letters that I would get at the end of my name. So I thought to myself, you know what, if that was the goal, and that's why I want, I had already achieved it, so it's time to kind of move on. That's when I said, "You know what? I'm not going to finish it. All I needed to do was write up."

I wasn't writing at this stage for my Ph.D. so I was like, "I could spend another year putting my head down writing Ph.D. or I could literally pick up all the opportunities," because at this point, a lot of opportunities were coming way, and basically giving me a new life here in the UK and also – which is one of my

dreams. It was one of my dreams to always be adventurous and go to a different country, and build some sort of new life, and find my identity. Without social media, that would have never been possible.

Just making that big decision to quit my Ph.D. which also meant that I had to pay back every single cent of that sponsorship that I took, which is huge, by the way. I could buy a house here in the UK.

You know what? Sometimes when you have profound impact on your life, and it changes the way you think, and it changes the path that you know that you're going to take, all of that – it's just money. It's worth every penny. I don't regret it. Not a second. Because of how all the experiences I've had.

I've traveled the world just because of social media. I've been paid to go to events and speak at them and tweet events. This is like seven years ago when people were still tweeting at events was such a new thing. Everybody wanted me to go and share all the knowledge that I could get from events and blog about it. That was a career for me for like a couple of years, just traveling to events and sharing what I was learning.

Jacob: It's such a remarkable story because, again, I'm listening to it and I'm looking at people who use social media. Even in my own story where we use that power of connection. Social media is about connecting with people, being out there in the community, and sharing knowledge, and people building businesses. I build my law firm using social media. You change your life, your career, because of social media which, in a sense, is building connections.

So I think this is, to me, hopefully our listeners who are listening right now, can get empowered. Even if they want to start doing something where they want to become better at what they do. It's all about being open and sharing as oppose to trying to get what can I get from this. You're not thinking like that. You were basically sharing. You were just doing what you ... You are genuine. You're genuine sharing that. You don't want to leave. You need help. And people like that. I think this is just remarkable. That's what I get from this story. Inspiring.

Liz, I wanted to get into some – we can spend hours talking and I know you have a lot of actual tips. One of the things that I want to talk about that I like what you shared online is turning employees into social media or any advocates. And I think it's important because whether you have one person working with you, or 20, it's important to engage them and help you in being advocates. I love some of the stuff that you [unclear 00:17:58]. Why don't we go and dive into that.

So what are some of the things that they can do to enhance company's branding or any of the other things? Let's talk about some of that, and some examples.

Liz: Yes. I come from that place where – I always say it's better for someone else to say that you're good than you say it yourself. It's almost the core of social media is always trying to get somebody else to say that the culture of your company is good or you are passionate in what you do and that's why you deliver results. Who are the best people to actually demonstrate that this is happening if it's not your employees, right?

Jacob: Right.

Liz: I mean, they're the ones working with customers and they're the ones dealing with customer's frustrations and trying to solve them.

By getting employees to kind of also be your brand ambassadors on social media, you're virtually extending your persona and what your company stands for, or what your company believes in, or what your company delivers. Because people always think that social media, you have to create all these kind of market-y, sales-y type of messages to get the sale and all that, but it's not true – although sometimes that can happen.

Most of the time, it's all about building trust. Trust comes with the details of what you're doing. Not the big splash or the big advert, putting out there, of what you want people to believe you to be. Employees, they're doing their work day in and day out.

Just by them saying, "We're having a meeting; really trying to solve this problem of working on a product." Talking about the process of what that's involved in doing the work. That is what's going to attract people with problems to find the solution because you have to understand. People, when they're googling for a solution, they're not googling your company name. Unless you're Virgin Atlantic or something like that, right? But for small businesses they're searching for solutions.

Just a quick example. Google recently partnered up with Twitter, right? So tweets are coming up in search engines, in Google search engines. Just by, say, an employee tweeting about ... say there's a hair dresser – very simple example. A hair dresser just tweeting a before and after picture of the customer that she just did a lovely haircut for, and she explains, "Oh, this is the hair bob type of haircut."

Me, as a lady, what I usually do before I go to the hairdressers, I would like to Google haircuts and I would say, "I want the bob." I want pictures. I want to be able to show my hairdresser this is what I want. But while I'm searching, I might actually come across ... you know because how Google work. I might come across the local hairdresser's tweets saying this is the before and after.

People always like something that they're familiar with and say if the customer they were dealing with had the similar haircut before that was similar to mine, and then the results was exactly what I was looking for. That'll be like, "Oh my God! I've got to go to that hairdresser." I have to have that same thing because I can see the results, before and after, and that's exactly what I want. That's when you get customers that are willing to wait to get your services.

Say, even if they had to wait a week before that hairdresser is available, they would wait. But if you put out like there's a 30% discount here, they might say, "Oh, I'm going to look for somewhere else that has 50% discount." Do you know what I mean? It's not that sort of personal connection or like really attractive type of marketing. It's just kind of cost base, it's not passion base, or it's not results base. That's just like ... sorry?

Jacob: But when the employees do it then it looks more genuine because they are actually on the trenches.

Liz: Exactly!

Jacob: One of the companies that I love – and I use them all the time but I also love the story – is Zappos.

Liz: Oh, yes.

Jacob: Zappos are great in using social media and all these other tools to kind of reinforce the message that businesses are really powered by people and not by numbers or money or profits.

Liz: Absolutely.

Jacob: And it's amazing. There's so many examples of what they do, and I know you've written about this. Their book, I think it's Spreading Happiness with ... The whole culture of everything is about the employees – what they do. I tried in my own law firm to encourage people. We don't tell people, "Don't use Facebook." They can be on Instagram all day if they want to. And I want them just to share stuff. Like, "Today, we had a cake at the office," or "We won this case." They use their own platforms and I encourage it even during workdays or work hours, to do this. They can take a photo of something that happen at the office or just share story on their network. It is probably the best way to do it because they are in the firm. It's not a marketing scheme.

Liz: Yes. That builds trust with people as well because they know you're not trying to trick them.

Jacob: Exactly.



Liz: They know you're not trying to manipulate them.

This is just what's happening and that's what culture is. Culture is what's just happening in the certain group, or certain community, or certain company. It's just something that we do. When you just do something ... that comes from passion. You do something good, you do something right. People can feel that. You have to be genuine. There's no kind of business sales there. We just want you to know. It's not even that actually.

Employee just generally like to share their successes in their career because that gives them satisfaction as an employee as well. To be able to share that with their network – it's good for them as well because it's showing that they're progressing in their career. The impact on confidence and being happy at the workplace, all that comes into play.

Jacob: Right. If somebody is listening right now and they're saying, "Well, that's all great but I have employees. I have ..." let's say, "five, six people working for me. How do we start? How do we get started with involving employees in social media efforts in this kind of outreach?" What would you tell if somebody was asking you that?

Liz: I think sometimes because I've actually had ... I've actually had the job of being that instigator for company.

Just start yourself. Even if you go and have, like you said, you had a cake in the office, right?

Jacob: Yes.

Liz: Even if you had a birthday party and then you guys just went out to the pub, you had a little cake. You just take a picture and say, "Oh, we're having a birthday party in the office." Start small steps and see ... Because sometimes some employees don't like to be involved in their company's kind of social presence. I think we need to respect that as well.

The whole process of starting, instigating it yourself, is so you can know who are going to be the champions of those people that are going to be happy to share their experiences working in the company and sharing all the stuff that they're doing. We have to understand that social media is not like ... You can't force it, right? You can't force your employees.

That's why whenever I go into any company I always say ... they would say, "Oh, I want everybody to use social media." I'm like, "Well, no, you can't do that as well because not everybody is a social media user just not naturally." What you

might find is if you do that they might not know how to use it properly. It just might seem to sales-y for some reason or all these things might happen.

You need to identify who your champions are and then encourage them to encourage other people because it needs to be natural I would say. It is a process and it's also something that will ... it's not going to happen overnight, it is something that you need to allow to grow and flow within your company.

Jacob: And the leadership of the company, people who run the company, they have to be onboard because ...

Liz: Yes.

Jacob: I get emails and sometimes Facebook connection, people are working for law firms or other companies and they say, "Well, we want to do it but I don't think that our owners understand the power of this. So, how do we convince them?" Everybody has to be onboard otherwise it's not going to work.

Liz: Yeah, absolutely. You hit the nail on the head there. It needs to start from the top. If you're not doing it ... It's almost like the same as blogging as well. It's like the leader doesn't blog and doesn't show his thought leadership, what he's thinking the company is, or should be, or is working towards, or he's not sharing his vision, it's very hard for the rest of the company to share that vision. To also let you know, sometimes they ask the employees to blog and they're like, "Well, I don't know what tone you want. I don't really know what your vision is." There's no example of what we're trying to tell them.

People work great when they know ... like they have an idea of what the persona they're trying to show the customers. That's the thing, right? You just need to be ... like Tony Hsieh ... I don't know how they say his surname but the Zappos CEO.

Jacob: Hsieh.

Liz: Hsieh, right. He's amazing. If anyone wants to know how to do it right, just go and follow Tony Hsieh, the CEO of Zappos, he is amazing. He is the true example ... he's the leader that other people follow in Zappos. He exemplifies what Zappos' culture is and it just trickles down.

Jacob: Yeah. He's very charismatic. Zappos' definitely a good example and I constantly go and check what they do. The stones of information ... They used to have a three-day boot camp in Zappos where any business could go and actually experience it. I don't know if they still have it but I would have loved to go through that.

Liz: Oh, I did not know that. I know they do like open weekends where you can ... as you can visit their offices.

Jacob: Yeah. They have a training ... it's a whole thing. They become an amazing company that people can actually use it as an example. One of the few that actually are doing it right which is [amazing 00:29:20].

Liz: Yeah.

Jacob: Liz, I wanted to ask you, as we come to the end of the show, why don't you ... I know you've done an amazing unconference recently called Social Hack, where you bring people together, to share ideas about social and business. Why don't you tell us, as we end the show, some of the takeaways that you've taken from that conference, for small businesses, to be successful this year, and in the future, using social.

Liz: The Social Hack is all about not just social media experts to tell small businesses on how to do social media but it was also about small businesses teaching each other. Because, you know, they're at the same level. They're the best people to share experiences with each other. And the social media experts that were there were just really to kind of [bide 00:30:10] them along and give them even more tips.

The great thing that came away from that conference was the confidence level of all the businesses that were there. They actually came up to me at the end of the event and personally thanked me. It was a Sunday. This is not like a normal day where people would come out and spend eight hours with us. It was a free event.

We had no agenda. We didn't give them like, "This is happening at 10 o'clock. This is at 11 o'clock." We had no speakers. It's just literally just roundtable sessions and people were just like ...

As people came in we ask some questions like what is your biggest challenge using social media in your business? What happened was we just said, "Okay, is there anyone an expert or anyone wants to talk about it?" And then we assigned tables to those kind of questions and challenges. From there people really started to see patterns in like ...

Just knowing that someone else has the same challenge in their business, that gave them the confidence to think, "You know what, this isn't just me having a problem," and that's probably the biggest takeaway that I heard that people said, "I'm not alone in this. Now I have other people," within the local area because we did it in London, "that I could also connect with and have coffee maybe and create even partnerships," because some of them were in the same industry.

But they weren't necessarily competing with each other. That was a huge thing to come out of that. That they're now able to work together as startups in small businesses to kind of share their audience and become a better and bigger brand that could reach a bigger audience. As you know, with social media, it is about how many people can you reach. Small businesses tend to not want to partner up with each other which I find really weird because that is the power of being small, that you can move easily in between spaces. So, why not?

Jacob: I love that. This is a great tip because, you know, we're all small businesses in the service business attorneys, [accountants 00:32:23], professionals. Collaboration is really a key because you can't do everything yourself.

Liz: Absolutely.

Jacob: Maybe somebody has a way to mark it one way and you can tap that resource. I encourage collaboration among professionals and I do that in my own community. It's one thing that I advocate others to do because we are all in the same boat. We are trying to provide service. As long as we have the same state of mind business will come our way and we'll be very successful. So I think it's amazing.

Liz, why don't you share verbally with the audience, where they can find you. Your website, your Twitter handle, whatever you want to share. And I'll put this, of course, in our show notes as well.

Liz: Okay. Everybody can find me on Twitter, that's mostly where I am. And that's liz\_azyan. My website is digital-matchbox.com. You could find all my information there. I'm going to do a revamp soon though because I'm releasing a bunch of new products that will help, hopefully, social media marketers and also small businesses to kind of really, really leverage social media in a really, really authentic and effective way.

Jacob: Excellent. And, again, we talked before the show. We both are Taekwondo practitioners. That's huge. I encourage everybody to try that. It's an amazing sport. It does change the way you think. So, ten points for you there.

Liz: Thank you.

Jacob: And, even though you dropped out, I'm still going to call you Dr. Liz.

Liz: Oh, thank you.

Jacob: Yeah, absolutely. So everybody can hear it. All these [unclear 00:34:06], people who listen to the show.

Liz: Oh, wow!

Jacob: It's Dr. Liz. See? Perfect.

Liz: Thank you.

Jacob: It was a pleasure, Liz. We truly enjoyed it. Hopefully, if you come to the US, we're more than happy to have you in San Diego.

To our listeners, thanks for tuning in every week; your questions, your emails. We love to hear from you. Email me at [jacob@enchantedlawyer.com](mailto:jacob@enchantedlawyer.com), and we'll see you at our next episode coming very soon.

Closing: Thanks for listening. You can find even more resources, including the show notes for this episode, at [enchantedlawyer.com](http://enchantedlawyer.com). That's [www.enchantedlawyer.com](http://www.enchantedlawyer.com).