

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, this is Jacob Sapochnick with the Enchanting Lawyer podcast. This is a show where we interview the most inspiring entrepreneurs, business people, and just cool people who do amazing things all over the world that inspire us to do our job better.

Today, we are going to be talking all about social care, online reviews, the importance of having empathy and understanding what's happening online with your business. I'm very honored to have Kari Embree here.

Kari is a social media community manager for Green Flash brewing company right here in San Diego. I'm very excited because first of all I enjoy beer, and second of all, because we're talking about social reviews and all these things related with this.

Kari, welcome to the show. How are you today?

Kari: Thank you so much, Jacob. It's great to be here.

Jacob: I'm very happy to have you here.

Just a bit of a background. I met Kari -- we're actually sitting together on the panel in Social Media Marketing World just a few months ago and this was a panel about online reviews, social care. What other businesses are doing when they are trying to get reviews, trying to deal with bad reviews, the whole concept of online reviews. It was actually a great panel and I really enjoyed meeting you that day. Again, welcome to the show.

Kari, I gave a little bit of a background but what is exactly that you do in Green Flash, in your division, and why is it important to have somebody like you in a company like that?

Kari: Thanks for asking.

I am the Social Media Community Manager at Green Flash Brewing Company. I work in the marketing department and, basically, I'm responsible for all of the social media -- everything. I'm responsible for writing the posts, from monitoring, to responding to customers, to really being that person that people can talk to on social when it comes to our beers.

It's a really busy role. It's really exciting. It's amazing to be able to talk to people all over the world about our beers. Big part of it is definitely the customer interaction. That's what I do for Green Flash is I watch for mentions and how we can be of assistance.

Jacob: We all see right now what's happening with Yelp and Google Places and all these other major websites where people go and complain or before they go into a business, they look at the reviews and make a decision. Just for you, somebody from the back, from inside the industry, first of all, what do you think is so important to monitor and have a system to monitor, reply to reviews of any business?

Kari: It's absolutely critical because the whole purpose of people putting out reviews and taking the time to either give you positive or negative feedback, that's a huge step for a consumer or a customer to take. Most people will try your product, try your food, your beer, your service, and never say anything positive or negative about it.

For a customer to take that huge step and actually provide feedback either way, it's up to you as your business to absolutely look for those people that have taken that effort and to make sure that they're heard because they are trying to help you make your business or your product better in one way or another. It's a huge responsibility for business to be interactive with that.

Jacob: I agree with you 100%. Companies and brands are definitely paying more attention to that. But, I think, one of the things we talked about in the panel is also smaller businesses are looking at bigger brands and saying, "Well, we have to do the same because if not, customers are not going to come to our business, customers are not going to be willing to try because they have bad reviews or because they feel that our business -- we don't care."

I think one of the things you mentioned at the panel, and also I heard you say in other podcast, is the whole notion of empathy. I wanted to ask you, why do you think empathy is so important in building a strong community in any business?

Kari: The whole point of being empathetic is just a good human value to have, I think, that when we're marketers, we're so used to pushing out content and we're used to just talking at customers and at consumers. We forget sometimes that we, also, have been in the position where we have been to customer, we have been to consumer. We've had a wonderful experience at a restaurant or we've had a terrible -- something a product just broke on us a week after we bought it.

I think being able to step back some marketing role and put yourself in the role of the customer and really understand that they have something they're trying to tell you. That's why you should pay attention, and you should listen, and you

should try to understand, from the customer's point of view, what they're trying to get across to because that feedback is very, very valuable.

For a small business in particular where your resources are very limited and those kinds of reviews, positive and negative, can make or break your business. You have to put yourself in the customer's shoes and be there for them -- the way that they expect you to be for them.

Jacob: As oppose to think, "Well, maybe they're just a bad apple or somebody that is not normal," every kind of complaint, every issue that we read, we have to take it seriously and look at it from their point of view, right?

Kari: Absolutely. You have to assume that it's a valid complaint until proven otherwise. There are people that complain to try to get free things. I've worked in e-commerce where we had products that we sold and people do. You have to accept that as part of a liability that you're willing to right off in some cases. But, for the most part, the people that are trying to take advantage of the system are really -- I think the people are much more good at their heart than that. Those kinds of situations are relatively few and far between. But every comment and customer complaint and positive reviews is an opportunity to genuinely connect with your customer one-on-one.

Jacob: Exactly. And then you can learn more and improve your service and whatever you do at your business.

Kari: Of course.

Jacob: That's a great source.

Kari: If people feel they're connected to your business as an individual, they're much more likely to support you or at least be nice about trying to get their issues resolved too. So it's a win-win all around.

Jacob: Perfect.

What do you spend most of your time on these networks? Is it mostly on Yelp or Google? I know that you have a niche social network that's specific to your industry. Why don't you kind of walk us through like what are the things that you do as a community manager trying to handle? You mentioned at the conference, and I want you to say it again right here in the podcast, how many reviews do you process or monitor on a daily basis between Yelp and all these other niche social networks?

Kari: So we have a niche platform for beer reviews, it's called Untappd. We get approximately 35,000, 36,000 reviews, check-ins on there per month. So it's over

1200 a day. It's physically impossible for me to see every one of those but it's a really amazing place for us to be able to see what people are saying about our beer and what kinds of feedback and people can share photos and stuff. It's a really active review platform for us.

It's a little different with beer because beer can be consumed. People can buy it at a liquor store; they could be having a pint Untappd. For us, Untappd sort of covers the whole beer product spectrum. Yelp would be more specifically for people's experiences in our actual tasting room.

Jacob: When you monitor Untappd, is there some kind of a filter there that allows you to see if somebody complaints, "You know what, that beer was bad." How is it different than Yelp, for example?

Kari: With Untappd, there's no way specifically to filter right now. It's just a big feed of people that are checking in to their beer and giving it a rating from one to five in half increments. It's just a big giant feed and I just kind of keep it scrolling all day and watch for people's comments on those check-ins and respond to the ones that are extremely good and ones that are maybe there was a problem with.

Jacob: Sometimes when you respond -- I think you mentioned once that you have different creative ways to surprise customers that you ... What are some of the things that you do that you can share with us that people found interesting? Maybe you saw somebody check in somewhere and you want to reach out to them before. Are those things you can possibly do on Untappd?

Kari: Yeah. With Untappd, you can earn different badges for checking in to your beer. So you might earn a birthday badge for drinking a beer on your birthday or you'll earn a badge for checking in at a golf course. There's different things. There's a gamification aspect to it.

It's kind of fun to see because it will show you which person has earned which badge when they checked in to your beer. If I see they earned a birthday badge, I can give them a shout out. I'd be like, "Hey Jacob, happy birthday. Thanks for having a beer with us today." Or somebody's checking in in an airport, we can say, "Safe travels."

It's kind of fun to see where people are that you're actually experiencing and enjoying your product at a particular place. You really have a sense of what's happening in their life when they're actually enjoying your product.

Jacob: How do you feel those real life, real-time interactions are affecting these people's loyalty towards your brand as oppose to other brands?

Kari: Oh, it's amazing. We've had people respond where they were like, "Oh my God, I've never had a brewery notice me before," you know? People are very appreciative for the most part. They're like, "Wow! Thanks for the birthday greetings." It gives people an opportunity like, "Oh my God! I love your beer. I've drank this one today for the first time but I usually drink this other beer of yours." People share some great photos, it gives me an opportunity to ask if we could use that and share their photo on our Instagram feed so it gives us an opportunity to kind of connect on a different platform. I think, for the most part, people are genuinely really pleased and surprised to have a brand respond to them because it's relatively rare these days.

Jacob: Absolutely. Absolutely. Because they don't know who's standing behind all these big names.

Kari: Right. Exactly.

Jacob: Now as far as comments, you know all these comments whether it's on Untappd or in Yelp. I'm just curious to see what you think. How are they different between the different channels? What people are saying on Yelp or what they are saying on Untappd or any other place that your company is visible if you want to share with us.

Kari: Yeah. Well, I think, Yelp, like I said, specifically would address our tasting room. When people leave comments on Yelp about us, it's very directly related to our tasting room and the experience that they had there. They would say, "I had great service," or we had somebody leave a negative review they said, "Oh, the bouncer at the door wouldn't let me in," because we're very strict on ID's. So if you don't have your ID, we cannot let you in. Somebody might say, "I didn't like it because they wouldn't let me in without my ID."

Those are all genuine things to see if there's something we can improve in our tasting room or if we can get those customer compliments back to the beertenders. I love to be able to say, "Hey, so and so has a great tour guide." I shared that feedback with our staff because everybody likes to get the kudos.

But on Untappd where people are checking in to the beer, they're really using it as almost like a beer diary. It's a way to say, "Oh yeah, I was drinking this here." The comments are a lot more unscripted. With Yelp, people are leading specific comments because they expect the brand to hear.

Jacob: Of course.

Kari: On Untappd, I think, it's a little bit more spontaneous, you know? So somebody might say, "Love the espresso in this. This is great. This is my first time having to style a beer," or "This was quite tangerine-y." These are all things I'm actually

just looking at right now, what people have written. I think getting my Zwickle on because there's a Zwickle logger.

I really enjoy Untappd comments because people don't expect them to be seen and so it's sort of this very honest and refreshing place for people to be just very honest about what they're having. It could be positive and negative and we watch for it. It's fun to see how to connect with people on it.

Jacob: It's kind of like almost an instant reaction. "Oh, I just tried this coffee-flavored beer. Oh, it's amazing."

Kari: Yeah, exactly. We can. We can see it real-time. I can see that somebody's drinking this particular beer at this particular location.

Jacob: What do you think is the incentive of people on Untappd to do this? To comment like that, to react like that as opposed to, for example, somebody on Yelp who wants to post a positive or a negative review. It's something that they want to share because they're very, very happy or because they're very, very upset.

Kari: Yeah. I think, like I said, Untappd is -- because it's such a huge tool in the beer community, it's actually the biggest online beer review app.

Jacob: Okay.

Kari: It's crazy big. It's been around for several years and it has a huge community. I think that people really do use it, like I said, like a beer diary because you could put a wish list in there for beers that you'd like to find. Having a way to document the beers that you've tried and that you've enjoyed and it's a way for people to leave comments for their --

It's like a beer journal. "This one was light and refreshing," or "This one was a little too coffee for my taste." I use Untappd myself and I use it that way quite a bit as a way to document and keep track of beers that I've enjoyed in the past, beers I'd like to try, and beers I'd like to drink again.

The common approach is much different. It's like I said, it's less about specific complaints or specific complements aimed at the brewery. It's more people expressing themselves individually.

Jacob: So it's more kind of the experience of them trying the beers and seeing what they're like. For you guys as the brand, you can learn a bit more about what people are feeling and the experience with the different products to help you maybe improve it or do it a bit differently.

Kari: Exactly. Yeah. It really does kind of gives us a refreshing way to see what people are saying without the expectation that they're being watched. Do you know what I mean?

Jacob: Yeah. So it's an impulse.

Kari: Like with Yelp. The comments that people leave on Yelp are very specifically intended to get the attention of the brand, I think, that people very intentionally are writing their comments and they're really planning out what they're saying and they're expecting a response.

As oppose to Untappd where the comments that people are leaving on their beer check-ins are less intentional to be aimed at the brand. They're really using it as a way to document their beer experience and to leave notes for themselves in kind of a journaling experiential way.

The comments on Untapped are written not with the intention of being seen; that they're a lot more genuine and a lot more honest. Quite honestly, it could be a lot more fun to read because you kind of get a little glimpse into what people are experiencing when they're enjoying your beers that time.

Jacob: Exactly. For you looking at it as the brand, you have all the different feedback that you need to continue giving good customer service.

Kari: Absolutely. Even in Untappd, if somebody says "The draft line tastes dirty. Something doesn't taste right with this beer." That gives us an opportunity to have our sales person connect with the restaurant and say, "Hey, maybe we need to address the beer's old or flat or maybe it needs to be cleaned, the draft lines." It's all an opportunity to improve.

Jacob: Absolutely. That's why it's allowed. Customer service, customer care is really where marketing should be and where marketing is heading right now.

Kari: I absolutely agree.

Jacob: But I wanted to ask you, Kari, something about negative reviews -- when things go bad, how do you guys deal with it? What is the policy? I don't know if you go through a process where ... Let's start with Yelp, for example. Somebody say they have the worst experience at the brewery and the tasting room; either the person who serve them was rude or the actual product was bad. How do you handle that? Is there a policy? Who's involved and how do you resolve it?

Kari: Yeah. We want to pay attention and respond to those people on Yelp. We try to acknowledge them publicly and then take the conversation private so that we

can really get all of the details without necessarily exposing somebody else's personal information. We try to be respectful of our customers.

We need to find out what the details are so that we can escalate to the right department because sometimes it could go to the tasting room manager if it's a staffing issue, or it could go to operations and warehouse team if, maybe, somebody had a bad -- like a six-pack carrier. Was it glued properly or bottle caps were loose. We need to find out what happened specifically so that we can get it to the right team.

Jacob: But typically you would necessarily always respond to every review that is negative.

Kari: That's the goal, absolutely.

Jacob: With the amount of reviews that you get, thousands of comments, do you feel sometimes that things kind of get lost a little bit in the noise? If so, what do you think is someday you would see in the space change? Because I know that people complain and say that it just overwhelm me right now. People can say anything about you anywhere and you might not even know.

Kari: Yeah. It's a huge thing to be aware of and obviously it takes resources. I think that right now -- I'm a team of one on the social team so it's physically impossible for me to see every comment, positive or negative. I watch for as much as I can. But I've also worked in companies in the past where we had entire teams devoted to social care where we would have five or six, seven people that were on in 24-hour shifts but it was for a much larger company. That would be the absolute goal is to have 24-hour coverage and have somebody available to respond.

Because if a customer is having an issue now and you can't see it until tomorrow, or if somebody has a great compliment that happened on a Saturday and you don't get to thank them until Monday, you really do miss an opportunity. The reality is because there's a lot more people online than there are working in the business. The goal is always to try to be there as much as you can for your customers. I hope that companies and businesses have the opportunity to really realize the value of customer care and to make that a priority in the future as they grow their teams.

Jacob: Again, this is your personal opinion. What do you think this industry, the social care, state of mind and approaches is heading in the future? Look at it as a marketer in a large corporation but also you worked in the bigger companies before in the space.

Kari: Yea. I really do think that it should become a piece of every companies hiring process. That should have, eventually as you have a marketing team, as you have a PR team, as you have human resources. I would hope that eventually you would actually have a customer service and a customer social care.

With social media, it does cover different departments. It really affects marketing, it affects PR, it affects customer service. I think that the ideal goal is that companies really do understand the value of customer care and they hopefully will start actually hiring teams for that as well because it's not going away.

People have always commented and always complimented and always complained. I think now, with social media, really getting that broadcast even more so that it's even more critical for brands to be paying attention and to start devoting some resources to addressing those into helping their customers.

Jacob: Yeah. I couldn't agree more with that. Even in our service business associate, the law firm which is much more than your company, but we dedicated at least one person to be aware of that. What customers are saying and what we can do to respond to them on a very, very prompt basis because otherwise things can escalate. I do agree that this is going to be the future. Customer care is going to become part of marketing -- if it's not already part of it now.

Kari: Yes. And it is for some companies. Some companies already have the resources and are putting that in place. It's hard for a smaller company to dedicate the resources but I think that, eventually, they'll realize that the value they get out of that one extra person more than makes up for it.

Jacob: Absolutely.

As we come to the end of our show, Kari, why don't we talk a little bit about beer? Because I know that it's something that I personally enjoy and I know you do.

Kari: Well, I love beer.

Jacob: What are some of the new flavors and trends that are coming up in this industry? You can tell us about what your company is doing that you're working on. Maybe make some suggestions for listeners when they are looking for beer.

Kari: Absolutely. I'd love to talk about beer.

We do have a couple of really, really exciting new beers out that have just come out this year. We have a Tangerine Soul Style IPA that's really lovely and

refreshing. Then we have Passionate Fruit Kicker which is a passion fruit wheat beer. We just started canning the Passion Fruit Kicker.

Really excited about the canning because there's a lot of times when I want to go to beach, I want to go out, I want to go hiking and I don't want to be carrying bottles with me but cans sure make it really nice to go out. Even at the pool. You don't have to have glass by the pool side. The Passion Fruit, I've been drinking a lot of that lately. It's really, really nice.

And then we have Cellar 3 which is our barrel-aged program and we have some new beers coming out of there too which are absolutely fantastic; very, very nice bottles. We just released the Natura Morta Boysenberry. I have a bottle of that in my fridge right now. It's a shareable bottle. That's not a drink by yourself but ...

Jacob: It's a big one, right?

Kari: It's a big one, yeah. It's 750 ml. It's got the cork and cage. It's a beautiful etched ceramic bottle and it's absolutely fantastic. I'm excited to have a little share party soon and share that with my friends.

Jacob: I know you have also something with coffee in it, right? I've tried it myself. How does it work?

Kari: Yes, the Cosmic Ristretto.

Jacob: Uh-huh.

Kari: It's a Baltic Porter with espresso and it's absolutely fantastic. It's very caffeinated so I would recommend it to be your Friday or Saturday night beer or maybe your Sunday brunch beer.

Jacob: Yeah, I've tried it before. It's pretty strong.

Kari: Yeah, it's really caffeinated but it's got this beautiful chocolate-y coffee, smooth, scrumptious, yummy. It's really good.

Yeah, the Cosmic Ristretto is also one of our new beers this year.

Jacob: We're becoming close to 4th of July, what would be a good food pair with beer typically?

Kari: Oh my gosh! Well, I mean, I'm a fan of pairing just about anything with a good beer. 4th of July tends to be a pretty neat holiday, you know, hamburgers and hotdogs and maybe some steaks on the grill. We have a Soul Style IPA that's a

really nice beer that pairs really well. It's really crisp and really pairs well with a lot of different food. So the Soul Style IPA is fantastic.

We have a new Sea to Sea Lager that's a session beer which means it's under 5% and that's just a great -- It's got a lot of flavor for a session beer. That also is in my fridge right now, and that in cans, and that also goes with hotdogs, it goes with burgers. You can drink a few of them because they're very low alcohol.

Jacob: Nice. I'm taking notes here. I'm taking notes. Of course, we have all these notes in our show notes. If anybody was not able to write it down, it's going to be right there in the show notes.

Kari: Yup. We've got a beer finder on our website too so you can always use our -- I'll get you the link.

Jacob: Perfect.

Kari: We distribute to all 50 states so there's Green Flash wherever you may be.

Jacob: Excellent. What is the website?

Kari: It's greenflashbrew.com.

Jacob: Greenflashbrew.com. Perfect. Again, we have links to everything over there and now I'm already excited about -- It is Saturday here today when we're recording it so I'm going to probably be getting some beer in the next hour.

Kari: It's almost 12 o'clock somewhere.

Jacob: I know, exactly. Inspired by this conversation, I'll have some beer.

Kari, it was a pleasure to have you on the show. You shared a lot of good tips and inspired us to continue provide good customer service and monitor the reviews online.

Kari: Yup. It's been great to talk to you too. Like I said, it's always a pleasure to talk to somebody who shares my same values about taking care of our customers. I think it's absolutely the most important thing you can do.

Jacob: Perfect. Have a beautiful weekend to yourself. To our listeners, thanks for tuning in every week; send in your comments, your emails to us. We continue to improve our show based on your recommendations. We wish you a beautiful weekend and we'll see you at our next episode.

Closing: Thanks for listening. You can find even more resources, including the show notes for this episode, at enchantinglawyer.com. That's www.enchantinglawyer.com.