

Ep #09: Storytelling Content with Summer Mulder



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With Your Host

Crystal Cooper

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Welcome to Net Worthwhile, Do More with Your Wealth, a podcast designed to explore financial topics from a broader perspective than just the numbers. We'll look at the emotional impact of financial decisions and how you can use your wealth to live a great life. Thank you for tuning in.

Crystal Cooper:

We're here today with Summer Mulder. She is the founder and CEO of The Draw Shop, a video marketing company. Thanks for joining us, Summer.

Summer Mulder:

Thank you so much for having me.

Crystal Cooper:

Now, tell me a little bit about that. Video marketing, I know there's a lot of video marketing companies out there, but tell us a little bit about what's different about The Draw Shop.

Summer Mulder:

Yeah, so we specialize in animation videos. We started as a whiteboard animation company almost... We're in our 11th year of business now.

Crystal Cooper:

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Wow.

Summer Mulder:

Yeah, we started with whiteboard animation and then it's evolved into all different styles of cartooning, infographic, stop motion. But really with a focus of making sure that you're putting out a message and content that is impossible to misunderstand. You see it, you get it, and you're ready to take action. That's our goal.

Crystal Cooper:

Nice. Now, you and I have kind of spoken how you got into this. I mean, this is your 11th year. That's so awesome. Congratulations.

Summer Mulder:

Thank you.

Crystal Cooper:

But you have a really interesting journey. For everybody who's listening, what we're talking about today is kind of finding your quote, unquote, "next." Finding your passion. It's interesting how you got into this. Now, tell me a little bit how you started The Draw Shop and how you got to this journey.

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Summer Mulder:

I started actually as a copywriter. With my first husband, we had a business together. I learned a lot about marketing and communicating to people in a digital way. Digital marketing, online sales, that type of thing. With copywriting, I learned the most effective way to get people to pay attention, stay engaged, and actually take action is through story and making them feel a part of that story and seeing themselves in that story.

Summer Mulder:

We sold that company and I was in this position of, "Okay, what am I going to do next?" So I did a lot of freelancing, which led to ghostwriting. I started networking with different people and I'd always loved writing and storytelling. People started to say, "Hey, do you think you could help me with a book?" And I was like, "Okay, sure. Okay."

Crystal Cooper:

Why not?

Summer Mulder:

Yeah, okay. That led into actually writing full complete manuscripts for people that I super admired, like New York Times bestselling authors that I was like, "Oh my gosh, I get to help you with your book."

Crystal Cooper:

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Wow.

Summer Mulder:

Then I was writing just full manuscripts. I really fell in love with it. But at the same time, it got to the point where I was doing pretty well and I was getting a lot of clients, but there was only me, and there's only so many books one person can write in a certain amount of time. It got overwhelming. I knew that there was something else that I could be doing.

Summer Mulder:

One client that I was working with is where I met a good friend of mine who would later become the person I would found The Draw Shop with. So-

Crystal Cooper:

Wow.

Summer Mulder:

Yeah, so we started the company together. I'm now the sole owner of The Draw Shop, but my friend and still my really good friend, we started it together because he was a marketing guy, I was a marketing girl. We were just all about storytelling and writing copy that converts, and how do you bring people through this journey and give them value and all of that.

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Summer Mulder:

We saw a video on YouTube that just was going viral. It was a whiteboard animation video. It was taking Dan Pink's TED Talk and turning it into a whiteboard video. It wasn't necessarily a business that was doing. It was just like, "Hey, this is kind of a complicated thing he's talking about. Let's make it super easy to understand." When he and I saw that, I was like, "Well, wait a minute. Everybody should be doing that for their long sales letters and getting complicated messages across."

Summer Mulder:

I had a client who was looking for video and they said, "Hey, do you know anybody?" Me and my friend, Erik, were just talking about... "Well, let's try this." He's like, "You're a copywriter. I can find some artists that... I can edit." We kind of just pulled together all of these resources and we created this really awesome video. It converted so well that we then-

Crystal Cooper:

Wow.

Summer Mulder:

... had other people saying, "Hey, can you do one for me? Can you do one for me?" Honestly, it was just a few months in that we were like, "Okay, we need to incorporate, we need to turn this into an actual business." So we just kept growing and growing and learning a lot along the way.

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Crystal Cooper:

Wow.

Summer Mulder:

This is not how we should be doing this. This is how we should be doing that. Yeah, it just became us, and we were both fulfilling this passion of ours. Mine, which was storytelling and really getting to do it for a lot more people than I had been doing that before.

Crystal Cooper:

That is so awesome. I'm actually... Obviously, I'm in marketing and I am a passionate storyteller myself. I just love to hear people's journeys and their different stories. Are you a firm believer that your passion sometimes finds you even if you're not looking for it, even if you don't know it?

Summer Mulder:

Totally. I think there's so much pressure for people to have that passion. But like you said, oftentimes what happens is you get interested in something that kind of comes to you and you realize, "Wow, I'm actually... Something I'm pretty okay at. I'm pretty good at." It intrigues you so much that it becomes a passion.

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Summer Mulder:

I think there's this pressure of, "Well, it's got to be something that you loved since you were three years old." Passions change. I mean, sometimes it's something that finds you midway through your life. I've had that, as we've talked about before, with being part of a blended family. Being a stepmom and having stepchildren and having something that came into my life that I was like, "Wow, this is really hard," but then became a passion. It wasn't something that I ever, ever thought would be a part of my life. So yes, I am a firm believer of that.

Crystal Cooper:

Yeah, and I actually... I really love some of the stuff that you put out as a podcaster and a blogger around being a blended family. When you were talking about that piece that you cut out how to love a narcissist or something like that. I thought it was hilarious because it's the topics that people kind of shy away from. It's true, and I love that you're so open and honest about that. I think that's what happens when your passion is driving you.

Summer Mulder:

Thank you. Yeah, I think there's definitely risk when you're going to be super transparent about things, but I've learned the people that have influenced my life the most is because of their honesty and their transparency. Anytime that I have been able to help or inspire somebody else is because I'm completely honest and transparent. Which yeah, it's kind of uncomfortable because you're revealing vulnerabilities. But that's where we learn and help each other.

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Crystal Cooper:

Do you think when you're living in your true passion, success sort of just naturally follows, or is it sort of a chicken and an egg thing, or are you always going to... If you're following your passions, does it sometimes just not work out in success and you can't follow your passions and you have to do the traditional 9:00 to 5:00? Or what do you think in that realm?

Summer Mulder:

That's such a great question because I kind of have two ways I look at that. I think the reality is that there's somebody who could be... I'm really passionate about singing, but you might not be the best at it. You might not even be that good at it. I really love singing and it could be a passion, but it might not be the career that you take. It might just turn into something that is a great hobby of yours.

Summer Mulder:

I think that living in passion doesn't necessarily mean that it has to be the career that you have. Because I think you can love the work that you do, but still have a passion that's a hobby. That's just something that fulfills you. I think no matter what you're doing in life, if you're doing something that fulfills you and lights you up, whether it's related to your work, your family, a side hobby, whatever that is, it all kind of helps. It supports each other because at the end of the day, it's bringing you good feelings. And when you're feeling good, you just naturally do better things.

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Crystal Cooper:

You hit on something so key right there. It's that fulfillment piece, that lights you up piece. It's so funny because I actually, as a kid, I wanted to be a singer. How I got into marketing and PR and all of that is being a singer is a crapshoot, obviously, right? Not everybody's going to be this amazing famous person, regardless of how good you are. By the way, I'm not a Patti LaBelle by any stretch of the imagination. But I do enjoy it. I love it.

Crystal Cooper:

What I realized, one of the things that I loved most about it is the lyric and the story that it tells. I sort of one day just sat down and literally how I got into marketing and started my college degree was I like to write and I like singing. I started, that is how I decided my college degree, as crazy as it is. Then I ended up kind of pursuing this field that way. But thank God I did not go into singing, because I would not be very successful at it.

Summer Mulder:

The thing is is it does lead to something else. I mean, it's all a journey and doing something that... Yeah, like you said, it's that fulfillment piece. It's really feeling good. Some people really are in a career that they're just like, "I love every bit of it. It fulfills my passion," and all of that.

Summer Mulder:

But I think that doesn't mean if you're not doing that, if you're doing something that you have a super fun time doing and it's making you money and it's allowing you to do these other things in your life, that's great too. I

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think there's so much pressure about it having to be just one way like it has to be that one thing that you're doing in your career. I'm like, "But so many people start where they're hustling, they're working hard, they're making money, and it leads to something else." Or they just keep doing that and then they've got this other thing that they love to do. I think that's good. I mean, at the end of the day, it really just matters like how do you feel? How do you feel?

Crystal Cooper:

Yeah, I think... Well, one of the things I got in talking to you before is that your passion is always evolving. I think that sometimes where we get stuck is this idea that you've had, to your point, something that you wanted to be since you were three. Maybe what you wanted to be when you were three isn't what you want to be when you were 15, and 20, and so on and so on and so on. Talk to me a little bit about how that evolution has happened from maybe... I mean, seriously from when you were a child and to now, and the points and evolutions.

Summer Mulder:

It's funny. I have always loved to write and tell stories. Just loved movies, loved the whole... Oh my gosh, what's the actual framework of telling a story and what has to happen in order for people to stay engaged?

Summer Mulder:

I mean, I can definitely trace back that I've always loved that, but I probably once thought, "Well, I'm going to be writing fiction novels." I have done that, but I thought that was going to be my thing. I never really thought I was

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going to love business as much as I do. I was like, "I don't really... Okay, I do all right in math, but I had to have a tutor. I don't really love numbers." Now I love numbers. I love measuring and tracking things. I'm so fascinated by it.

Summer Mulder:

So many things have evolved in terms of what I love and what fulfills me. They're so different than the things that were when I was younger. What really happened for me is learning and getting excited that I could understand something that I thought once upon a time I couldn't understand, that was way over my head. Maybe I'm not smart enough for this or maybe I can't do that. But when I started to learn it, I started to get really excited about it. I think for a lot of people, that's what can really inspire a new passion, is that they think they don't love something because it seems hard and it seems like they don't get it or understand it, but once you understand something, you see it in a different light and it can actually excite you and light you up.

Summer Mulder:

I mean, here's a funny thing too. My husband does a lot of home remodels. He likes to flip homes. A couple of homes that we've had, he's seen the potential like, "Yes, it looks like crap. You don't want to buy it, but I can turn this into something beautiful." I'd always been like, "That completely scares me. Don't make me do that." But once I learned through him, "Wow, we can do this, we can do that," now it's this exciting thing that has become something that we're both passionate about. Like, "Oh my gosh, this is so much fun."

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Summer Mulder:

That's just kind of an example of... It's scary. The unknown is scary. I don't know how to do that. But if you just open yourself up to learning, you might find something that you really are excited about.

Crystal Cooper:

What kind of keeps pinging me in what you're saying is your passion is right past that point of fear. It's almost like if you could just step right past that line, you will find what excites you the most. That is so pointed. That's just so amazing.

Crystal Cooper:

Because I imagine there's a lot of people out there, and you're sort of this jack of all trades and this amazing entrepreneur, who are out there right now who are like, "Man, I so wish I could follow this dream, but the idea of starting a business is frightening and scary and all these things." Here you are 11 years later and you're doing this amazing work with The Draw Shop. I imagine when you set out on that journey you were like, "There is absolutely no way."

Summer Mulder:

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Yeah. You can't even... You start, you kind of have a vision of where you want to go, but it's like, "Am I even capable?" You're not capable until you actually do it.

Crystal Cooper:

It feels big. It feels really big.

Summer Mulder:

Yes, it feels so big and you're like, "I'm not capable. I'm not capable." Well, you haven't even tried. It's so true. It is that whole one step in front of the other. What happens is you quickly start to realize how capable you are and then you look back and you go, "Oh my gosh." Even in just a year, we can look back and say, "Wow, look at all that I've done and that I've learned that I actually never even thought I could ever do."

Crystal Cooper:

Yeah. It's just on that other side of fear. Yeah. What is something that you did, I'm curious, to kind of get out of your headspace just a little bit when you got started? I imagine maybe there was a list or a pros and cons. Or what's something, if somebody were listening to this today and they were deciding on whether to just take that one step of whatever it is, what's something you would say just to do just today to try it?

Summer Mulder:

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I'm sure some people have heard this before, but it's really powerful for me and it's always been something that has pushed me forward and I still do it every day. It's when you have that feeling of that's too uncomfortable or too scary for me to do, you should be doing it. Do it. That's-

Crystal Cooper:

That's the thing.

Summer Mulder:

As soon as you... It's like you will grow so much in that short, very short, short moment that could be a matter of seconds. You will grow so much by just picking up the phone. No, I couldn't call that person. Do it. Just do something that feels so scary and frightening. I mean, sometimes it's just even raising your hand in a room to say something. Those little moments open up so much opportunity.

Summer Mulder:

I remember having that, "I can't..." Can you speak on stage? No. My brain is saying, "No, I can't do it. Can't do it." But just do it anyways.

Crystal Cooper:

Wow. Yeah.

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Summer Mulder:

It's those moments where you grow so much because you've now retrained and said, "Wait, but I can." Then you can just keep doing more and more. It's really about that thing you don't want to do, do it.

Crystal Cooper:

I love that. Almost ask yourself if the worst scenario could not happen, what would you do today?

Summer Mulder:

Yeah, yeah.

Crystal Cooper:

I love that. Well, thank you so much, Summer. I really appreciate the time. If you are interested in The Draw Shop, it is TheDrawShop.com. Again, thank you so much, Summer. Really appreciate your time today.

Summer Mulder:

Thank you so much.

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