

# Plain Talk-The Evolution of IPSM

Tue, Sep 27, 2022 12:30PM • 22:05

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

business, marketing, client, public relations, finding, employees, learn, agency, local, work, started, ad, needed, diming, mentors, team, consulting agency, intern, running, year

## SPEAKERS

Olivia Mooring, RP, Renee Plain

### RP 00:02

Welcome to Plain Talk, a podcast dedicated to bringing useful marketing advertising and public relations tips and information to small and micro businesses, nonprofits and beyond, hosted by the team at In Plain Sight Marketing. We're excited you're here.

### Olivia Mooring 00:20

Hi, I'm Olivia, and welcome to Plain Talk. Today we have Renee and we're gonna be talking about the evolution of In Plain Sight Marketing, and how it all got started. So, Renee, can you tell me how you went about starting your business?

### Renee Plain 00:37

Yeah, so it took me actually a couple of years to get it going and to get the courage to start my own business. It was, you know, I started thinking about it right before my husband and I started having kids and then it didn't actually happen until after we had our first child. So, it's a little terrifying to go out on your own when you've got a family to, you know, help provide for. But I worked in advertising for about five years and I just, I have seen so many agencies in that face. This was, you know, back in 2008, I had seen how there were several agencies who were taking advantage of their client's, kind of nickel and diming them. There was, you know, I was working for a national trade publication and motorcycle and ATV industry. Yeah, like, an example of kind of nickel and diming, one of the ad agencies was overnighing us an ad, this was before you could send really big files electronically. And they were overnighing an ad that wasn't due for several weeks and it was an ad we already had on file that they looked, and we did. But just like was we'll just bill the client, not a big deal. You know, we'll get it sent to you. And it was an ad that wasn't due, it didn't need to be overnighed. It was one we had on file. And it just made me so sad for the company and that was kind of the start. I guess that was kind of the start wanting to start an agency that was for the client, that was an advocate for them, that was quite, you know, part of their team in their corner. After that position, I went to selling local advertising for a couple of our local papers and I just saw our mom and pops, having all of these different sales reps come in and try and sell them ads and no one was really offering them solutions. And so, it just kept coming back to that. I want an agency that's for the client, that's part of their team, that's helping them navigate all these different opportunities in their marketing. And so, in 2011, November 2011, I went for it. I

registered IPSM as a business in the state of Nevada and then it took me about three more months before I took it full time and launched it full time in January of 2012. So, it literally started at my kitchen table. I always talked about how ironic it is to be back at my kitchen table with it behind me. We've gone remote, but it's been a crazy year, a crazy 11 years.

**Olivia Mooring** 03:36

Yeah. From the beginning. That's awesome.

**Renee Plain** 03:41

So, I mean, we started really just doing overall strategy, media buying, social media management and that's morphed into campaign management for some of our local political candidates, and then it morphed into websites and graphics, and that it morphed into public relation. And then it just keeps changing and getting bigger and better. You know, anytime we have a client who says hey, I need something like this, we are always willing to partner with them and figure out how to make it work. So as a client's needs grow the agency capabilities grow.

**Olivia Mooring** 04:27

Can you tell me like a little bit about your experience with learning about business and running it?

**Renee Plain** 04:39

Yeah so coming from a newspaper background, right, where advertising background where you have a whole team on the back end, like my job was to sell the ads to sell this, you know, sell the products, work with the companies on their creative, but I had a team behind me doing all the things, doing the billing, doing the contracts, doing the art work, doing everything that goes into it. And so, when you then go off and start a business, nobody, like I didn't go to school to run a business, I have an English degree and a minor in communication. So, there's a very steep learning curve when you get started, right? Because you have to learn about contracts and proposals and negotiation and then you have to go back and do the work, especially when you're, you know, when I first started out, it was a team of one. So, everything that had to do with running the business, billing, the collection of payments, taxes, reporting it keeping up to date on all your things. I mean, it's incredibly overwhelming, which is why I love mentoring at the Adams Hub, because I will help like, if you're a startup business, I'll help you walk through how to start your business. I wish I had thought out resources for that because it's been an ongoing learning opportunity.

**Olivia Mooring** 06:19

It's something you have to do confidently, especially you have to do math.

**Renee Plain** 06:22

It is, it really is especially going from your fellow entrepreneur to then bringing on you know, Kathy as my business partner, to then bringing on our first employee who was an intern, to bringing on a full-time employee to bring on more people full time employees. Every step in the agency and every step in the business growth requires more understanding of how to run a business, like, HR never thought that would happen. And, you know, payroll, and all the things so, still learning.

**Olivia Mooring** 07:01

So, can you tell me a little bit about how you started doing political work?

**Renee Plain** 07:14

Yeah, political work kind of happened. So, having worked at the local paper prior, I had been involved in the local Chambers of Commerce and I had met several of our, you know, leaders in the area. And so, it just kind of happened that one of our Assemblymen who is running for reelection needed updates to his website. I worked with him on those and then we started working on a few different grants. And then I had another local candidate reach out to me, and she needed help with fundraising and graphics and mailers and social. And so, I was like, hey, let's do this and so jumped into that. And then it just started picking up every year, I get a couple more clients in the political. And then that also brought me into event planning, because then I was planning fundraising events, and meet and greets, things like that. And then it turned into, you know, I got a client working for one of our local malls, doing all of their events and event and promotional planning and marketing. And then it turned into having a client who wanted to do an event for their clients and so managing all of those things. So, it really just came out of like, the client needed a service. So, I jumped in, and I learned how to do it, and then I've just been perfecting it.

**Olivia Mooring** 08:49

Yeah, that's crazy. Did you just like, Google everything, or how do you go about it?

**Renee Plain** 08:56

Yeah, Google's a great place to start. For sure. I, you and I talked about that, like yesterday, like, Google is a great place. Reaching out to your network too and asking your friends. I think that's for anyone who's looking to get better in marketing or public relations or anything, like creating a network of professionals that are in the industry that you can call on to ask for help, or if you can't do it, having that network of providers and vendors that can help you.

**Olivia Mooring** 09:34

Yeah, so how did you start doing publicity?

**Renee Plain** 09:43

So, we brought out a client, this was 2015, who really needed more press releases and media relations and things like that that I wasn't 100% sure how to do. I haven't quite broken that faith, even working for the newspaper, right? Like, I know how to write a press release. That's really where Kathie came, was in 2015. We got this client, they needed PR help, more than that I knew how to do. And so Kathie and I had always talked about starting an agency together and when I was ready in 2011, she was still in the corporate world and not quite ready to make that jump. So, I called her, and I was like, I need help. And you're the best writer I know. Can you help me? And so, she started doing some project work with me. And then we got more project work and then we got more project work. And I was like, hey, do you want to just like finally jump in and be a partner and do this with me? And so that, that's really how it started. Then in 2015 she was at a point where she was really ready to get out of corporate America. And so, she had started her own consulting agency, PR consulting agency, so we partnered on a lot of things and I was like, why don't you just come in and like, be together and do this together. And so

that's really how it started. And then she continued her education in public relations, she got her APR so she's accredited in public relations and that has really shaped in how we do things as an agency, from our research planning, implementing and evaluation like that. We really strongly subscribe to PRSA as a way of public relations and now she's the VP of Professional Development for our local PRSA chapter. So

**Olivia Mooring** 11:57

That's awesome. She is the PR queen.

**Renee Plain** 11:59

She is the PR queen, yeah.

**Olivia Mooring** 12:02

Yeah. And then how did you get into doing like employee services?

**Renee Plain**

Employee services? Talk to me more about employee services.

**Olivia Mooring** 12:16

Like what we do like public relations. So, like adding employees in?

**Renee Plain** 12:20

Oh, got it. Got it. Sorry. Sorry, still drinking all the coffee.

**Olivia Mooring** 12:25

I know I need one. So yeah, so like adding employees and stuff like that?

**Renee Plain** 12:33

Got it. So I'm trying to remember back when we hired our first intern, and that was really that first step into, our intern was our first employee, right? So, I had been working with the local school district, in their CTE program, which is the career technical education program, and doing some work in their marketing classes, and business classes. And this student, I had been watching her for a couple of years and watched her growth and progression. They did a shark tank competition where they had to put together a business plan and pitch it to a panel of sharks. And I was really fortunate to have been a shark. And I did that program with their teacher for about five years. This particular intern really stood out in her wanting to learn and her creativity, and just kind of that she had an intuitive knowledge about marketing, and strategy. And so, we brought her on, she was a paid intern, she worked on the CTE account, because we were doing marketing for them. Figured it was right up her alley, cause she was in programming, did a great work for creating social posts and whatnot. And then we brought on an employee who started as part time and bumped up to full time where we really needed kind of like an administrative person to keep us on track. She happened to have a marketing background. So then she ended up doing like project management work. And then also started doing client work as well. And as we kept getting more clients, we just kept adding more employees. And then what we started doing is we started really getting into like, understanding what talents we needed on the team. And so how we

have hired employees over the years has changed. Where we're looking for someone who's a really great fit for our organization, and also has that desire to learn more and get really creative and you know, that's where you and Jordan came in, right, because you guys are really, really wonderful creative lines. And we needed that for our clients. Because sometimes you can get into that loop of man, I've been creative all day, and I just don't have anymore. And so having people who are excited about learning more in marketing and public relations, is like ever changing, who wants to stay on top of their education and finding new creative ways to do things has been really great. So yeah, and, you know, if we can't do it internally, we have a great group of vendors and a network where we can, you know, find those answers and help.

**Olivia Mooring** 15:44

I know, Jordan and I were doing the podcast on marketing certifications. How great it is that guys like push us to continue on and keep growing because it is ever changing. Or you have, you know, new software.

**Renee Plain** 16:03

Yeah. And then, you know, evaluating how it's all working and making sure that it's hitting the right movement points for our clients and new platforms, I mean, there's just so much so yeah, finding great teams that are excited to keep learning because we have to say, active and current.

**Olivia Mooring** 16:37

Definitely. So, for you what has been the best part about In Plain Sight Marketing?

**Renee Plain** 16:47

Oh, it sounds like it should be an easy question. But it's not because In Plain Sight Marketing is like another kid. It's my baby. It's something that I've, you know, grown and nurtured and there's lots of really great things, really great moments, really great things and there's really hard moments and really hard things, there's tears, there's, you know, there's been days where it just feels harder than ever before. And, you know, you can't walk away because it's your baby. So, it's like finding that, you know, moment in your child's life at that moment. But I think the best part about it, we have always been for the client, right? We have always had that heart mission of working with businesses, professionals and organizations who are trying to make the world a better place to live, work and play. That has never changed. Yeah, and I, you know, I still get goosebumps talking about that and so that's the best part, I think is having that mission and seeing it actualized and a reality and working with really amazing clients and having a really amazing team who shares that value of making things better for people.

**Olivia Mooring** 18:11

Yeah. That's great. No that's perfect. and then I have one more question. So, for anyone like looking at starting a business, can you give them any advice?

**Renee Plain** 18:23

Yes, I sure can. Yes. The advice is I thought that I can learn everything on my own. It took me several years to realize I can't possibly learn everything on my own. Because there's things that I don't know that I even, there are things that I don't know that I don't. And looking for your resources, like gore is a

really great national resource, getting connected with the Small Business Association, finding some of those like innovation hubs, like here locally in Carson City if you're in the Northern Nevada region, you can come to the Adams Hub and they will help you like business plan, write your business plan. They've got mentors, like I'm there every Monday, mentoring people on how to get their marketing up and running, how to look at, you know, their ideal client avatar and really honing in on who they're trying to serve, and what platforms are the best ones for them to deal with giving advice and whatnot. So, I think finding a mentor, finding those resources that are free, they're free and utilizing them, right? Financial, still an area that I struggle with in the business. So, finding those mentors, finding those programs that can help you get started and then when you hit like the three year mark, can help you take it to the next level, at the five year mark can help you take it to the next level, at the 10, 11 year mark, can help you continue like, find the free resources and utilize them for sure.

**Olivia Mooring** 20:08

Awesome. Well, thanks so much for sharing all this.

**Renee Plain** 20:13

Thanks for having me on the podcast today.

**Olivia Mooring** 20:17

Yeah, no, I think that's great. Definitely a journey for any business. So, I think sharing like your whole, like, great people here was like there.

**Renee Plain** 20:31

Yeah, I mean, it's hard and it's scary, but it's really, really rewarding when you get to do the work that makes you happy. Right.

**Olivia Mooring** 20:40

Yeah, and if you love what you do you're not working right?

**Renee Plain** 20:46

I find that to be great days. Yeah. I mean, the great days help power using the heartbeats, right and remembering why you got into the business. Please help carry through. I don't want to sugarcoat it and say it's super easy all the time because there's definitely times, I'm like, I hate that. But those are few and far between, right growth and growth is hard, painful. They call it growing pains for a reason, right? Because you're stretching and you're learning new things. Don't ever give up on your dream. Don't ever give up on yourself. Come back to your why. And, and just keep pushing, pushing.

**Olivia Mooring** 21:33

Thanks again. Great talking with you.

**Renee Plain** 21:36

Appreciate it.

**RP** 21:40

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