

160 - Manage Your Client Relationships for a Stress-Free Summer

Laura Davis: [00:00:00] On the show today, we're talking about how you can manage your client relationships, so you can take that well earned break over the summer.

Laura Moore: Welcome back to another episode of JFDI with The Two Lauras, the podcast for freelance social media managers, where we share tips, advice, and hopefully inspire you to help you in your business as a freelance social media manager.

As Laura just said on today's show, we are diving into getting organised for the summer, and if you missed the last episode, definitely make time to go and listen to that one as well after this show, uh, because we shared tons of advice to help you to get organised when it comes to creating your content so you can take time off.

But in today's episode we're talking about managing your client relationships and having those really awkward conversations with them so you can take time off without them questioning about how much they're paying you and to stop them from messaging you when you are lying on a sunbed trying to chill out and they want a last minute post.

We don't want any of that. So let's dive straight in to how we can [00:01:00] have these conversations. And I think we need to start with the decisions we need to make, don't you?

Laura Davis: Yeah, absolutely. And I think the biggest decision really is. How, how hands off do you want to be in that break with your clients? With your clients' content and accounts?

With your accounts? With life? Like how much do you want to like step back. And there is absolutely no right or wrong with this, and we talked about it in the last podcast as well, that if you are someone who still wants to take your laptop on holiday, then there is nothing wrong with that. And if you wanna work on holiday, there is nothing wrong with that.

You do you. And that's absolutely fine. Like I've often taken my laptop on holiday. Very, very rarely have I ever opened it, in fact, on an actual holiday-holiday. But I have peace of mind. It's there mainly for ads. 'cause I can generally, social-wise, you can generally deal with things on your phone. But for [00:02:00] ads, I prefer to have my laptop there 'cause it's peace of mind.

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It's just, it doesn't matter if I don't open that laptop, but it's, it's there if I need to and that makes me relax. And if that's, that's you, then that's fine. Don't, you know, I've had my husband eye roll, like why are you taking your laptop? You're meant to be on holiday.

Laura Moore: God, my husband wouldn't dare.

Laura Davis: Yeah. Well, he doesn't anymore, but, um, so yeah, whatever, whatever you want to do to make it a stress free holiday. Now, if you want to. Still be engaging on your client's counts, for example, on your phone when you're on a holiday, because that's okay with you and that's what you want to do, and then that's fine.

Now there'll be someone somewhere saying, oh no, you do need to have a proper break. But if by you not doing those things are really stressed, don't enjoy your holiday, are constantly fretting, constantly checking in on things. I don't think that's necessarily any [00:03:00] better than if you just find that balance as to what is acceptable for you, and that's all that matters.

Obviously your clients will matter as well, but yeah, so I think you just need to decide, and this will be work in progress, I'd imagine, but I think you just need to decide what you are happy to do. Um, and it's kind of trial and error, like I've not always got it right.

Laura Moore: Yeah, I agree. I think you also need to have those decisions about like, if you're working with a, a client who has like a team, who in that team is gonna be maybe checking in on things when you are not there?

What are they gonna be checking on? Are there things that you are gonna be doing that they're not gonna be doing? And like make sure that everyone's kind of on the same page as that. As you with that. So that things like behind the scenes, you're not fretting about, oh, so and so hasn't been done because you know that it's someone else's responsibility.

So if it hasn't been done, it's not your problem. It's not your fault. So it's not those decisions as well.

Laura Davis: Yeah.

Laura Moore: And that kind of leads onto the [00:04:00] conversations, doesn't it? That you need to have, because that is one of the conversations of who's gonna be doing what.

Laura Davis: Yes. Um.

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Laura Moore: Did I throw you off there?

Laura Davis: Yeah, well, I was just gonna say, I was just gonna say something else and then I was like, no.

Okay. I won't bother. We'll just move on.

Laura Moore: It was probably very important. Let's chuck it in the podcast.

Laura Davis: All I was going to say was that you, it's, but this is all about just making your decisions and it's, it's your business and you design it however you want to design it. And I was just gonna mention Sarah, uh, Sarah Richards, one of our members, she, and I actually don't know whether she still does this as of 2025, but certainly up until last year, she would only work with clients who didn't want her help over the summer.

Laura Moore: Oh, nice.

Laura Davis: So she would pause all, all her summer content with her clients and they just had to deal with it, I think, I think is how she did it. But as in, she's just designed this business, how, what works for her. And it, it, you know, it works around her family and her, her life. And I just think [00:05:00] it's brilliant.

Like just, it's your business. They do what you want. And if you can find clients who also wanna take their foot off the gas and there's other people in the team who can maybe pick up the slack over the summer. Then that's fine. Maybe they're quiet too, so they're happy to not have the outgoings, but it's whatever, whatever works for you.

Laura Moore: I think that's an interesting point, what you just said about that, because like we've been in memberships and masterminds where they're like, we are not here in August. There's no content, there's no calls, there's nothing in August, and we've never questioned it. We've just gone, oh, okay.

Because that's how it's been presented to us. So if you are presenting that to a client right from day one. Like that's, it's just normal to them. You know? If that's part of your onboarding, part of your welcome pack, part of all of that kind of stuff, why would they question that? So I think that's a, that's a brilliant point.

Laura Davis: Yeah.

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Laura Moore: Love it. Build that into your business from here on in. Brilliant.

Laura Davis: Yeah. I thought it was worth sneaking in.

Laura Moore: Definitely.

Laura Davis: Um. Okay, so [00:06:00] back to those awkward conversations with clients, but they don't have to be awkward.

Laura Moore: No.

Laura Davis: I think people feel like their clients are paying them to be their freelance marketer, social media ads, whatever. So therefore they're expecting this 365 day, 24 hour survey.

Laura Moore: Yeah. Which is weird, isn't it? Because like we talk so much about how when you're pricing and when you're speaking to clients, you're talking about their objectives and their end goals and blah, blah, blah. And their end goal isn't to have a full-time employee.

'cause otherwise they would have one, their end goal is to get whatever the result is, like sales, leads, people on their website, whatever. So as long as they're still getting that. Nothing's changed.

Laura Davis: It shouldn't matter. It shouldn't matter what country you are in or whether you're sat at a desk or on a sun lounger.

Laura Moore: No, or whether you are working at 10:00 PM at night or 10:00 PM in the morning. 10:00 PM in the morning? That doesn't make sense. 10:00 AM in the morning. Um, you can tell it's early. Give me some [00:07:00] coke.

Laura Davis: I do, I can relate, like I've had clients who are very, I think they struggle with that freelance business relationship.

Like they automatically go into like an, an, I'm an employer role and I am, they're my member of staff and I like, I can relate that some clients are more challenging than others because they forget that we are not employees, we are not working set hours and maybe. And maybe over time that you've worked with the clients, it's about these boundaries, isn't it?

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That they've crept a bit and they think maybe you do tend to work certain days. So over time they've gone, oh, well I always know that she works on a Monday and Tuesday for my stuff.

Laura Moore: Yeah.

Laura Davis: Um, and then they, so they develop this idea that you're there at their beck and call on those times and days, but, um.

So obviously [00:08:00] if that's the case, you're gonna have to work on that a little bit more. But at the end of the day, the conversation about you having a holiday should not be awkward. And you should just be able to say, I'm taking a break, X, Y, Z. Like what? And then whatever will probably go on to now. But it shouldn't be difficult.

Laura Moore: And to be honest, you don't even need to tell. You don't even need to tell 'em that you're taking a break. You can just be like I'm out of the office for these days. They don't need to know that it's because you're on holiday or if you're in a really important conference about their business. The fact of the matter is just that you are out of the office. Doesn't matter where you are.

Laura Davis: Yeah, that's really true. And that's like I would only if I am away at conferences or if I go for a weekend away, maybe like Friday to a Monday, I'd never tell my clients that. Ever, ever. It's got nothing to do with them at all. If they ring me and I don't answer –

Laura Moore: Like you're not going to phone them if you're, if you're off sick one day, you're not going to tell them, are you?

Laura Davis: No. And I just, we, we as freelancers need to also not have that [00:09:00] employee mentality. Like I would never tell my clients wherever I am, the only reason I would ever tell them is when I'm going abroad. Maybe I won't have. And I, so I don't want to speak to them. Basically, I don't want them to be ringing me.

I don't want them to be messaging me, and I just want them, that clear boundary. But if I'm at a conference or a weekend away and they happen to ring me, I just don't answer the phone.

Laura Moore: Yeah.

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Laura Davis: I may drop them an email later, say, I'm not available at the moment. I've seen your missed call, I'll call you back whenever.

But I I, and that's fine. I wouldn't care doing that whenever. Yeah, it's, it's interesting, you, you do not have to explain yourself to your clients. So you can just say, I'm not available for the next two weeks.

Laura Moore: Yeah. And I think you need to remember as well, like if, if they, if you do have that kind of relationship where they do kind of treat you like an employee.

If they have employees, those employees will have 20, 25 days holiday every year. So, uh, yeah, [00:10:00] therefore, it kind of stands to reason that you will too. So, you know, just remember that as well. People are entitled to have a break. People are entitled to have holidays and it's re, it's actually quite unlikely that they're gonna be shocked that you're having a holiday.

It's just how you kind of approach it. You wanna make sure that you're doing it in, in like a, a boundary setting way.

Laura Davis: Yeah, absolutely. And then it always, we always get these questions like, what do I do if my client doesn't wanna pay me for the month? I'm away for part of it, some of it. And I find this really interesting.

Like, I don't, I do not think I have ever reduced my invoice if I've been on holiday. I, I can't recall ever doing it.

Laura Moore: No, I can't get my head around why you would.

Laura Davis: Well, I think people think they are, if they're, they're, I think. I don't know, is like, I, I'm trying to understand –

Laura Moore: So [00:11:00] basically what you're saying is that you can't get your head around it either.

Laura Davis: I think what people fear is, and they forget that they'll have done all the work beforehand. They think, oh, hang on, I'm not here for that two weeks, week, whatever. I can't charge them. I, I don't, I don't, I don't know because you still do all the bloody work.

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Laura Moore: If, if I had some sort of alarm sound now, I would definitely ring it because like, def-, this, like, alarm bells are ringing.

If that's what's in your mind because, and if you've listened to last week's podcast, you'll know there's a lot of planning that goes into taking time off when you're a freelancer. Whether you are an ads manager, a social media manager, whatever it is you're doing, you're gonna be planning that content.

Or, you know, setting up those campaigns in advance, going to be having the conversations with your clients so you know what's gonna happen. You're going to be making sure that everything that's going out, whether it's ads or organic content, is leading towards their end goals whilst you're out, is been strategically thought about so that it's the right [00:12:00] content when you are out of the office and it's the right content so that it's building up to whatever's happening when you are back like that is a lot of work.

So, and, and whilst you're away, there may be someone else in your team who's kind of managing what's happening when you're not there. You may have done a handover to somebody else in the team who's gonna be managing it. That's more work. There's so many things that you would've been done, been doing, possibly even more than you would do in a normal month.

So why would your fee lower? It absolutely should not.

Laura Davis: It should not. But I also want to add in the similar vibe to the last week's podcast where we were talking about the content in that if you will not be able to have a break and be able to switch off because you feel guilty. Maybe your client doesn't understand and is been a bit difficult with you or, and, and you choose to reduce your invoice.

It's not what we would advise. But if you [00:13:00] choose to do that, because that is what gives you the mental break, you need to have a holiday. Then that's fine. You do? Yeah. What you need to do to enable you to have a break because it is important that you have a break and it is important that you have downtime.

We - to, to stress would try to encourage everybody to not reduce their fees, um, or their bills over a holiday period. But if you choose to do so, then obviously it's your business. And you know it is a business by design, isn't it? You design how you want it to work and, and that's fine. If you know that you're going to be doing that and you know that every

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August you are going to reduce your fees, then for the other 11 months of the year, consider charging higher to enable you to take that August off so it doesn't have a huge impact on your income.

Laura Moore: Yeah, but also just think about if you reduce your fees. What happens [00:14:00] next month when your fee goes up? Because then that looks expensive to a client. And so if, especially if you've only worked, maybe you've only worked with them for two or three months, and then you drop your fee back down. If you've still done all the work and they're still getting the same results, well, hang on, how come I'm paying more this month?

It was cheaper last month, and I know you're out, but I still got the great results. I still had all this content, so I don't really understand why I'm paying more again, but just make sure that you're thinking about what's going on in your, your client's mind. The psychology of seeing those different numbers on a, on a, an invoice.

So that they understand what's happening. So don't, for example, on the invoice, just put, you know, 250 instead of 500, 500 instead of 1000, 1000 instead of 2000, put the number and then put discount and show the discounted amounts. They can still see the full number, so that then next year, next month, they realise, oh yeah, I had a discount last, last time.

'cause seeing a discount psychologically looks very different to seeing just a lower number. So [00:15:00] make sure that you think about the psychology of that as well.

Laura Davis: Yeah, and I think the point you, you mentioned then about it depends how long you've known your client, I think is true of everything we're saying here.

You know, clients I've worked with for like six years, I would speak to and tell them very differently because of the relationship and the trust we've built up over a long period of time. If you've literally just started working with a client in June, and then you're saying to them, oh, in July I'm taking two weeks off, that's not a problem.

You just need to be aware of that in terms of how you are, um, you know, obviously you've not built up that trust, you've not built up that relationship. So, um, it's one of the reasons why I used to try and avoid taking on clients anywhere near the summer holidays, to be honest. Like I used to stop trying to take on new clients around Easter.

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Um, 'cause I think it does depend. Now, it may well be [00:16:00] you've taken on a client. End of June, you're going on holiday, end of July. Your client is cool as a cucumber. Does not care. Absolutely happy. You know, wishes you, well ask for a postcard, um, and that's fine, but just, it's just to be aware of that. It's, and you know your clients better than obviously we do, but it's about having open and honest conversations and, and not being afraid to tell people that you're having a break.

It's very normal.

Laura Moore: And I think if you are taking on new clients, you can set that expectation from the outset. And you can be like, at the beginning, by the way, I take four weeks of holiday a year, you'll get x amount of notice. Um, yeah. Just, just FYI. My next holiday is actually in July. I know you're only just onboarding you now in June, but my next holidays in July, here's the dates, you know what's happening.

Uh, put it in your welcome pack, you know, all of that stuff so that those expectations are set.

Laura Davis: And on that note, I would absolutely make sure that you have a crisis [00:17:00] management document that you have given and had these conversations with a client about prior to you going away. Because, and I, I've experienced this, if you have shit hitting the fan when you are on holiday, you.

You don't wanna know about it really, but if you've written up and created your crisis management document that they know what to do in an, in a crisis, whether that be complaints, PR disasters, natural disaster, worldwide, you know, like the when the queen died. All of those kind of things. They need to be covered in this document.

So. Anyone within that business knows what to do. How do they pause the scheduled content? What should, how should they respond if they've had a complaint on their, their Facebook for example, like that needs to be covered off. And if you've, if you've done that with your client and your clients have got that document, and maybe you've reminded them of that [00:18:00] document before you've gone, you should in theory, be able to just relax that little bit more when you are having a break.

Laura Moore: Yeah. And I think that's, that's a really important part of your onboarding with a new client, and that's why we've included it in the, the toolkit. Um, as part of like

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that, on those onboarding steps, we've got a whole crisis management document that you can complete. Uh, but it's, it's not enough to just have done it on onboarding.

You want to remind people, don't you, when you are taking time off. By the way, here's the dates that I'm taking time off. Here's a link to remind you where the crisis management document is. Have a look through it. If anything needs changing before I go, let me know. You know, maybe if you have moved schedulers since it was written, rerecorded a new video, showing them how to turn off, you know, content, all of that sort of thing so that you are all on the same page and everyone does know what's happening.

It might have been that you wrote that crisis management document six months ago, and the person who's in there name just dealing with complaints has left. So just check that it's all up to date. So yeah, make sure that you kind of of organise from that, that kind of point as well. [00:19:00] And in terms, I think there's things that you could be doing in terms of like.

Uh, personally, like not necessarily related to your business, and I know that you are pretty good at this, like planning what's gonna happen in the summer holidays in terms of where are your kids gonna go so you can do some work. Are there holiday clubs you can go get into? Like I have put William's name down for a holiday club ages ago.

I'm not even going to go into the extortionate amounts of money I have to pay for it. Um, which is ridiculous. I'm hoping he's getting a place, but at least that means I've then got some free time to do the work that I wanna do or just lie in the sun if I want to. Because if you are taking all of this effort to go and, you know, put all these plans in place so you can have a break over the summer and you're not going away.

Get your kids out the house so you can have a break. You know, the mo more, you can do the better. Um, so think about things like that. Think about how you can kind of remove the distractions that you don't want around you so you can have a break. You know, do you need to figure out how to turn on the Do not [00:20:00] disturb settings on your laptop?

Do you need to lock your laptop away in a different room so you can just chill out? What are those other things that you can do to kind of stop yourself? How can you stop yourself from scrolling? When you've decided that you're gonna have a break, and if you are scrolling, how can you make sure that things you're looking at are not related to your client work? So it's not taking up your brain space? Right? There's probably loads other things we could list to that as well.

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Laura Davis: Yeah, your, your time, you know, in, in these, especially over like summer holidays, if you are a parent, your time is compromised, isn't it? So it's about how, how can I work efficiently and effectively within potentially a very condensed period of time?

And hopefully you'll have done all the things that we talked about in the last week's podcast about planning ahead and creating content and building your ad campaigns, et cetera in advance. So therefore you, that gives you a bit more breathing space on the [00:21:00] times that you do have to work. But it's about being organised, um, and not setting too high expectations, I think, or over promising things for clients.

You know, be realistic with your time so you can not be stressed. Like I know someone who puts, say their freelance and they put their kids in childcare I think four days a week.

Laura Moore: Oh, that is the dream.

Laura Davis: For the whole holiday. I don't actually think that I would want that.

Laura Moore: Honestly if someone could set up some childcare. I would really want that. But then obviously, yeah, I, it's more of a caring role than childcare for me. So that's not gonna happen. Anyway.

Laura Davis: I wouldn't want that now. 'cause now the kids are older, it's it,

Laura Moore: They just go out on their own so it's free.

Laura Davis: It is a bit easier. But when I, they were younger, I think there was this kind of like, well hang on. I've set up a freelance business to be flexible to work around my kids.

Why would I be putting them in holiday club? And if you don't [00:22:00] want to put them in holiday club, that's absolutely fine. Um, but. If you do, then that's fine. It's still a job. It's still the same as all your employed friends. So if you want to put them in holiday club, then you do that. Like I used to every holiday, I'd sit down with my husband, he would go, right, I'll take one day a week.

I'd be like, right, well, I would definitely won't work one day a week. So that's another one. And then we'd put the kids in one day a week, and then I would always have normally a couple of days a week, which would 'cause my family no one's near and they've all got their own kids, so no one wants to help.

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Um, so I would always have a couple of days a week where we might sit and watch a movie and then I'd let the kids go and sit on their iPads or whatever and I would do some work or they would just entertain themselves doing whatever they did and I'd, it would be one of these kind of just go with the flow type of days.

Um, [00:23:00] and it always worked really well and the kids always got to do the things because they had their dedicated days, whether it be in clubs or with one of us. So that we still went out, went to the park, did the things, did do the summery stuff, but we, they just knew that there would be times that they wouldn't be able to do that, and they'd just have to sit in front of the device and I would work and it, and we've, we've all fared, okay so far, no long term damage.

Laura Moore: Not yet.

Laura Davis: Um, not yet.

Laura Moore: Not for them anyway. Can't speak for us.

Laura Davis: Yeah. So I definitely think there's some kind of boundaries you need to put in place for yourself and to kind of think, uh, realistically and logically about how you can make the best of that time. And I mean best for your business, but also best for yourself and for your family, and for whatever else you're trying to do with your life.

Laura Moore: Yeah, definitely. [00:24:00]

Laura Davis: So if you did miss last week's episode, dive into that next. Um, where we're gonna be helping you all with your content and getting organised so you can cover that summer holidays for both you and for your clients. We'd love to hear if you enjoyed the podcast, so if you can take two minutes to rate and review the show wherever you are listening, we'd be very grateful.

Those reviews really help us. They signal to the podcast platforms that people are listening to the show, which means we can reach more people. So we're always grateful when you can take just a minute to leave us a review and we'll be back next week with more tips and advice and to help you with your social media businesses.

So we will see you then.

Laura Moore: Auf Wiedersehen. Oh, I did that last week.

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Laura Davis: Ciao.

Laura Moore: Ciao bella.

Laura Davis: Ciao.

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