

181 - Social Media Marketing is Not an Admin Job

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Laura Davis: [00:00:00] There seems to be some confusion around what a social media manager actually does. So in this episode, we are diving into what this role actually includes and what it doesn't.

Laura Moore: Hello, you are listening to JFDI with The Two Lauras, and one of our biggest pet peeves is the misconception around what social media management actually involves. So I can't wait to dive into this episode. If you've been in our world for a while, you probably have heard us say that social media is not an admin job, and every time we say that, someone comes at us raging.

So in this episode, we're gonna dive into what we mean and why that is a hill that we will die on.

Okay, let's start with that then. We have said this [00:01:00] for years. Social media marketing is not an admin job. We've put it on our socials, like it's something that we will literally say until we're blue in the face, but every single time we say it, we get so much grief, don't we? We get so many negative comments.

We get DMs. It's, it's one of those days where we're like, oh God, why did we say that? Even though we don't really believe in it.

Laura Davis: We've definitely gotta be in a, in a strong mindset day when we post it. But I think it's fair to say though, that 90% of the comments are always in support of what we're trying to say, but there is always one and sometimes just one.

Laura Moore: Always, yeah.

Laura Davis: But there's always one person who takes what we've said, twists it around, and then comes back at us full pout. So we always have, yeah. Comments that make certainly give me the heart palpitations because it's so frustrating.

Laura Moore: And it's always that one negative comment that we focus on, isn't it?

Laura Davis: Yeah. A lot of people who agree with us, we're talking about it now, but [00:02:00] I think that the overarching issue that we have, I guess, is social media marketing is social media marketing. It's not anything else. Um, and yes, there are administrative roles that can play a part in social media management and bring it on.

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Like the more help we can get doing, you know, the job, the better. And we actively would encourage people to help get help from an administrative perspective. But if someone who does admin is strategically managing social media, then that's a different conversation. But by and large, what we see is like people putting content in a scheduler, they're calling that social media management.

And that isn't social media management.

Laura Moore: No.

Laura Davis: That's an administrative job.

Laura Moore: Yeah, an administrative job in my mind is a job where you [00:03:00] follow a process to get something done, and quite often it's you do this that thing the same way every time and like that's a massive sweeping statement. Obviously there are other admin jobs that are not like that, but when it comes to scheduling, it is the same process, isn't it?

You are basically copying the copy, pasting it in your scheduler, adding the image, setting, the time pressing schedule. It's the same process. Whereas marketing is very much different. It isn't the same process every time. It's much more strategic. It's very much data driven, and you're not doing the same thing every single time you do it.

So the scheduling is an admin job. The social media marketing is not an admin job. It's a marketing job. They're totally different.

Laura Davis: Yeah, and I think it comes down to a general misunderstanding. Of social media marketing and that across the board, there's probably a misunderstanding of people within social media marketing who don't understand the job.

There's people within [00:04:00] marketing who don't fully understand the job, but there's also the. Business side of it who doesn't fully understand the job. Yeah. So if all they think social media is, is putting some pictures in a scheduler and making sure a post goes out once a day, then I can understand why they would look for administrative help as opposed to a social media marketer.

'cause they don't actually realise that social media marketing is so much more than just putting a photo on Instagram, for example, once a day. So there is a hundred percent some

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education that needs to be carried out and continue to be carried out. And obviously we try and do that and –

Laura Moore: By telling people that social media marketing is not an admin job.

Laura Davis: Yeah. And we totally kind of deal with the backlash when we do that. But there are ways in which you, as a social media manager or any kind of marketer. Can create content that helps [00:05:00] to educate businesses to understand that it's such a bigger role than that. And actually, if they want results, they have to have a strategy.

They have to be strategic in their decisions. They have to think through how that strategy aligns with the wider business goals, how it fits in with other marketing efforts, if there are any. And yes, an administrator could do that if they knew how to do it. Of course they could do it. But then you would argue they're not an administrator, they're a marketer.

Laura Moore: No, and they're probably being underpaid because they're probably being paid to be an administrator, but doing a, a marketing role. But the problem is, even if a business sees this as an administrative job and they hire someone who is an administrator to do it, and at the beginning of that relationship, they think that the whole thing they need to do is to just schedule content to go on Instagram or wherever.

At [00:06:00] some point in that working relationship, that business is gonna get the hump because they are not gonna get the results that they expect to get because they have an administrator doing the role, and so whilst at the beginning they think it's just about putting content on Instagram or Facebook or whatever, they'll soon start to see that actually the.

You know, why are we not getting results when we're, you are putting a post out every single day? Why is nothing happening? And then they start to then think that it's because the administrator maybe isn't scheduling at the right time or you know, all of these silly things that they've got the wrong type of Instagram accounts and what have you.

And it's not anything about that. It's that there's no strategy, there's no marketing kind of involved in it. And it's a real shame that businesses still do not see social media marketing as marketing. It just baffles me.

Laura Davis: It's frightening. It's like that when people come to me and say, well, you are a social media marketer. You could help me build my website. And it's like, no, no, no.

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Laura Moore: I would love to see someone let you loose on their website.

Laura Davis: Hey, hey. [00:07:00] I used to do HTML coding when I was at university.

Laura Moore: Yeah, I haven't seen you do any of that recently.

Laura Davis: No. It was a long time ago. But anyway, yeah, so I. And like I have like one of my clients now will quite often say, oh, well could you just change this on the website?

So, we don't have to get the web development team. And it's like, no, I'm a social media marketer. I'm not a web developer. They are completely different.

Laura Moore: But also that kind of makes it sound like they think that the web stuff is an admin job.

Laura Davis: Yeah, it's, but it's dangerous, isn't it? It's just like, why would you let anyone fiddle with your website who wasn't qualified. It's like, you know, you need surgery. You wouldn't go to a GP, would you? You'd go to a surgeon. Yeah. You'd go to the person who's qualified to do the job. What example did you give the other day? 'cause it was brilliant.

Laura Moore: I said I can drive a car, but I can't build one.

Laura Davis: Yeah, yeah. It's true. It's true of so many jobs, isn't it? [00:08:00] Yeah. And it's like, you know, a plumber wouldn't go, wouldn't be expected to build a, a wooden construction around the pipes, but a carpenter would, that's probably not a great example.

Laura Moore: That's a pretty good example having a husband who's a carpenter. I'll go with that.

Laura Davis: There's so many examples across the all industries where –

Laura Moore: But the problem comes from social media being so open to everyone, and anyone can open a social media account and anyone can post on TikTok or you know, tweet or whatever. So from that perspective, as a business owner, you can, you can see why they have that misguided sort of, um, understanding of how social media works.

Because theoretically yes, anyone can post on social media, it's not difficult. Whereas not everyone can build a log cabin around whatever it was you just said with their hot tub. So you can understand why they think that anyone could do [00:09:00] that job, but it's

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because they miss the actual point of why they want their content and their business to be on that platform.

They're forgetting that the purpose and the objective of it, that it's for marketing and they want their business to grow. Yeah. It's not just 'cause they want to be seen. They want some to be seen by the people who are actually gonna spend money with their business.

Laura Davis: Yeah. And so. Like we, we're a hundred percent not undermining the role of a administrator.

Like we couldn't run our business without the highly talented, very clever, very organised admin support that we have. Like it's integral to what we do. And, and interestingly, we outsource more of our admin than we do our social media because the admin roles are so important to us.

So we totally know how important administrators are and in, in our world, they're more important to us. They're integral to our business. Our business could not cope. So we are a hundred percent not knocking [00:10:00] admin in any way. It's just about the right person doing the right job. And if an administrator doesn't know how, for example, to create a social media strategy, then they're not doing social media marketing. That's it.

Laura Moore: Yeah. That's literally all we're saying, isn't it? When we're saying social media marketing is not an admin job. Admin is not a social media job. You know, the, the two go hand in hand. And it's like on the other end of this, the spectrum we see when there's, particularly for like employed roles, when there's job descriptions come out for a social media manager and it says on it must be able to do web design, must know SEO and email marketing.

Uh, why? Why would a social media manager do any of that?

Laura Davis: I see this a lot on Pinterest. It's like every other pin I seem to see is, um, the day in the life of a social media manager, or the role of a day, uh, of a social media manager [00:11:00] here. And I'll go and click on it. 'cause obviously I'm interested in what other people are doing and it's, honestly, it is ridiculous.

So obviously it will start with, you know. Social media, content creation, engagement, customer service, all the things. I'd be like, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. And then I realised

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there's like a page too, and I'm thinking God, more stuff. And it's like SEO web design, blog writing. Blog writing's a big one actually.

I, we see that a lot. Um, yeah, email marketing, uh, video, long form video editing, like I guess short form video editing is probably part of the role to a degree. But it just blows my mind. It's like, no, this isn't a social media manager that's like a digital marketer, someone who can do all of that is a digital marketer, and that's fine if you are a social media manager going, well, hang on a minute.

I do email marketing as well then. That's absolutely brilliant. But that's, you are more than a social media manager. It's like, it's the other [00:12:00] end of the spectrum, isn't it? So you need to make sure that you differentiate yourself because you are not just a social media marketer, you are a social media marketer who's also an amazing email marketer.

So you have to. Position yourself differently to a social media marketer, but you are not a social media marketer. If you can do web design, SEO, email marketing, all those other things that we just listed, you are a digital marketer. So if you can do all those things. Amazing. But you need to position yourself as a digital marketer because you are not a social media marketer.

There's so much confusion in this industry. I can understand why businesses don't understand what they need help with.

Laura Moore: Oh, totally. And that's not to say that if you're a social media manager, you can't like level up and learn how to do SEO and all of that stuff and add it as an additional service. But if you do that.

I think it's really important, like you just said about like positioning yourself differently, but I think you also need to make sure that you're charging differently. Mm. And [00:13:00] you don't bundle it in with like your social media, um, services because it's a separate thing. So you wanna kind of manage those expectations with that client.

But also you need to make sure you've got those skills, like SEO or doing somebody's website. It's not saying you just wouldn't just go in and hope for the best, just wing it because you can make a bit more, a bit more money, press a few buttons and see what happens. Yeah. Can you imagine It's a, it is just a nightmare, or you do what we've done and you, if a client says, right, I want you to manage my socials, but I also need help with SEO, or I also need email marketing, and it's not a skill you do.

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Outsource it, grow your team, charge well enough that you get paid for managing that team and you can, you know, help businesses with that without actually having to do that yourself.

But yeah, I think the problem is that businesses still [00:14:00] just don't see social media marketing as marketing. They see it as people just posting willy-nilly on social media. And yes, anyone can do that. And yes, anyone can get results, like influencers, for example, have built amazing, huge followers on TikTok or Instagram, wherever, and they've been able to monetise their platforms either with like affiliate marketing or bringing out their own products or teaching people what they've done.

But doing it for yourself is very different to doing it for somebody else's business. So like if you were a business owner and you think, oh, that person's got a hundred thousand followers on TikTok, they must know what they're doing. That's not necessarily the case. They know what they're doing for them.

They need to understand the strategy and unpick it all, don't they?

Laura Davis: I think the scale of the job is also dependent on the, the goal of the business. You know, so if someone says, oh, well I just wanna get started on TikTok and get some content out there, then yeah, I guess that could be done by anybody. But when you start [00:15:00] thinking, I wanna put content out there that, um, grows my brand.

You start to think, okay, well we need to just have a little bit more of a strategy behind that. If we wanna, um, grow my TikTok and get more traffic, then there's a different strategy involved. If you wanna get more sales, then there's another strategy. And so the more the goals change and the more the goals vary, the the, the difference in how you operate a social media platform.

Because you're trying to get your, the audience to do something different. Because at the end of the day, all that a social media marketer is doing is trying to get the other person on the other end of their phone or their desktop to do the thing you want them to do, and. The receptionist's son from up the road who Yes, is goes viral on TikTok for doing silly dances in his back garden.

Yes, he might be able to do a [00:16:00] few things, but actually is, does he have the strategic knowledge to be able to actually make that bigger impact?

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Laura Moore: So what you're saying is that it's not an admin job, right. Just to be clear on this, to be really clear, it's not an admin job, but also it's not an SEO job.

It's not an email marketing job. It's not a video editing job. It's not. I, there was, there was a post in our membership, the inner hub recently, where there was a job advert for um, a social media manager, and it also said that they needed to do the cleaning, so. Just a reminder, social media marketer isn't, you're not a cleaner.

That's a totally separate role. Yeah. Just, just remember that.

Laura Davis: Okay. Well, whilst we're on the subject, it's, uh, a very timely post was put into The Inner Hub, our membership this week. And it said a social media manager isn't dot, dot, dot. And it's been followed by some very, some very funny, some [00:17:00] very interesting comments that are very aligned with what we've been talking about today.

So we thought we'd read a few of them out. Okay, so first up the answer was so they're not a business consultant that can or will help you with other aspects of your business. And how bloody true is that?

Laura Moore: Do you know what? I think this needs to be on a t-shirt. 'cause so many times, for some reason these business owners think that a social media manager knows everything. Yeah. Like why, why do you think that we are the saviour of your business?

Laura Davis: And I do think because social media does filter into lots of different aspects of a business, doesn't it? Like your customer service, your complaints, your obviously your sales. So there are those kind of areas that I guess, fit to have a bit of a conversation.

Like, I often chat to my clients about things which are, you know, not social media manager because it, there's a, a [00:18:00] link, but when it starts getting into. Their whole business strategy or their business, uh, planning. It's like that is, that's above our pay grade, quite frankly.

Laura Moore: Totally. You want that level of expertise, you can pay for it.

Laura Davis: Totally. Okay.

Laura Moore: Someone else said on that thread, not on call 24/7.

Laura Davis: Yeah.

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Laura Moore: Oh, I felt that one.

Laura Davis: How true again, is that. Because although the job of social media is pretty much 24/7, isn't it, it doesn't mean you've gotta be the beck and call of a client twenty four seven. Like there is that thing called boundaries that are important.

Uh, so this one made me laugh. It said a miracle worker that can magic images out of thin air. Sorry, bad day. But it's so true, isn't it? Like businesses expect us to, there was another post actually. I think that was in the hub, the main Facebook group where someone had said they weren't getting any content from their [00:19:00] clients and they had, they were selling, I think it was just fashion, but they weren't get, there was no photos, but then they were complaining that the same photos were being put out again and again and again.

It's like, well, if you don't give me any photos of your clothes. What am I what? What would you expect? Like I just don't understand what businesses think.

Laura Moore: I had a client like this when I very first started. I think I stayed with them for about two weeks and then told them to do one because they didn't have any photos of their products and they wouldn't give me their products to take any photos. Like, okay, what do you want me to just draw one? Oh God, my drawing isn't very good, so no, probably not.

Laura Davis: Oh God. It's so painful, isn't it?

Laura Moore: It really is. This comment really made me laugh. I was going down the thread a bit, but this one really made me laugh. A social media manager is not your bitch, because some clients definitely think that.

Laura Davis: Yeah, it's in the same vein, isn't it? They don't know the boundaries really do they, some of these clients.

Laura Moore: No, it's very odd, isn't it? It makes you [00:20:00] wonder whether they would be the same with like their bookkeeper or, you know, their mechanic,

Laura Davis: I'm sure not but this sometimes is a case where you give them an inch and they'll take a mile.

Laura Moore: Oh, a hundred percent.

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Laura Davis: So we have to be strict in like not giving that inch. Um, another one said, um, and this is in similar veins to what we've talked about on this podcast, but a videographer, a graphic designer, illustrator, photographer, copywriter, SEO expert website genius, all rolled into one, and then she ends it with, and especially not for the cost of an intern.

Laura Moore: Oh. Those posts that you see on Twitter where there's been a brilliant post by a brand, and then everyone's going, oh, give the intern a raise. Yeah. Why do you think it was the intern that came up with that? How patronising is that? Yeah, no.

Laura Davis: So lots of people saying your admin assistant, your VA, um, your entire marketing department, someone's put or your marketing manager.

Um, very true for reasons obviously we've already [00:21:00] discussed, um, an expert in your industry and will therefore need some input. So. Like that. Again, a social media manager, yes, some of them may niche into a particular industry, but we, we can't be expected to start day one, especially it's a, if it's a very specialised subject to know everything.

Yes, there is a uh, a responsibility of a social media manager to try and find out everything, but the client should be happy to answer questions, shouldn't they? And to help them to become an expert because it's not gonna happen overnight.

Laura Moore: The thing is the, does the client want an expert in social media, an expert in marketing, or do they want an expert in whatever their product is?

Because really you can't have both. And as a client, you either need to be able to give the answers or have somewhere where that social media manager can go and get the answers. You can't expect them to learn every single thing about your business that you've been running for 20 odd years or whatever.

Laura Davis: Yeah.

Laura Moore: So that they can do your marketing. 'cause they're a marketing expert, they're not a, [00:22:00] whatever your product is expert.

Laura Davis: Yeah. This, uh, the next person commented four comments in a row, which, um, all of them made me chuckle and they go, number one, a performing monkey for your reels. Number two, your customer service department.

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Number three, a three boobed dancing, robot, and number four, oh oh, hang on. Technical support for literally any computer or web related query.

Laura Moore: I would say though, the customer services one. For some businesses, social media is their customer services platform, isn't it? It is where people go to ask, ask questions and stuff.

So in some respects, for some businesses, a social media manager does do customer services, but if that is the case, that's a chargeable job.

Laura Davis: Yeah. And it shouldn't be the entire responsibility of a social media, freelance, social media manager to understand the kind of strategy behind their customer service that needs to come from above.

Laura Moore: No. Yeah, definitely.

Laura Davis: And they [00:23:00] need to have a conversation about how that's actually managed on a day-to-day basis.

Laura Moore: Yeah. Agree. Agree. Um, another one said a social media manager is not just for Christmas.

Laura Davis: I love that. Sometimes feels like it. Especially e-commerce.

Laura Moore: Yeah, definitely. They want you to just come in, be with them for like a couple of weeks just at that little nice bit. And then once they've had enough, they wanna just ship you off down to the rescue place.

Laura Davis: Yeah. And the final couple were a magician and a counsellor. Awful.

Laura Moore: Uh, I had a client once who used to treat me like a counsellor.

Laura Davis: What, as in they used to like talk to you about –

Laura Moore: Yeah, talk their problems with me and you know, I'm not great with people's problems. Like, don't come to me expecting me to like, you know, be a shoulder to cry on. I'll give you the JFDI advice.

Laura Davis: There'd be no sympathy there.

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Laura Moore: No, none at all. But they definitely got some honest, useful advice to go and put into their business. [00:24:00] Sadly, they didn't. So we shortly parted ways. But there we go.

Laura Davis: And the final one is straight out of school, which got a few likes. And I dunno how I feel about this because I think nowadays you can be probably a social media manager straight out of school. They do teach it.

Laura Moore: Yeah. I think you can be, it doesn't matter what age you are or what you've done before, as long as you've got the marketing knowledge, you understand how the platforms work.

Exactly. You understand how to reach your customers. Then I think you know anyone really can be a social media marketer. They just need to have that knowledge and that experience.

Laura Davis: Yeah, exactly. If you've got marketing experience and you're straight outta school, yes, you might not have life experience and client experience, but that doesn't mean you can't be a good social media manager.

But yeah, you can't just be a social media manager because you know how to use TikTok, for example.

Laura Moore: But on the opposite scale. You can still be a social media manager even if you're 50, 60, 70 years old, as long as you know how to do social media marketing. [00:25:00]

So before we finish this episode, do you think we should talk about what a social media manager actually is responsible for?

Laura Davis: Yeah. Well maybe that would be clearer and then we can all go create some content and help educate the world.

Laura Moore: Yeah. 'cause I think that's a social media a really good point actually. Social media managers should be doing that. This shouldn't just be us, saying that social media is not an admin role. Come on, get on our bandwagon.

Laura Davis: Yeah, come. Come join it. Honestly, there'll be no nasty comments, I promise. No. It's only us that get those. Yeah. So what does a social media manager actually do?

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Well, I think we've repeated the word a hundred million times in this podcast, so that at the top is social media strategy, isn't it? That's the overarching skill. You can't do anything [00:26:00] without that, can you? Yeah. If you've got no strategy, then all you're doing is, I wanna say pissing in the wind. Am I allowed to say that?

Laura Moore: It's our podcast. You can say whatever you want.

Laura Davis: Yeah. You're just hoping something sticks, don't you? And that that's not gonna get the results that you, you or, or your client are, are looking for. Well, if you do, you're bloody lucky.

Laura Moore: Yeah. And, and if you do, it probably won't last.

Laura Davis: Yeah.

Laura Moore: It's not something that's going to kind of stick for long.

Laura Davis: No. So there's strategy. There's also having the ability to be able to audit accounts, to understand what is working, what's not working, and more importantly, where improvements could be made. Um, so being able to look again strategically at accounts, either your, your client's accounts or potential client accounts and being able to, to figure out what your potential strategy going forward would be, um, based on [00:27:00] that audit is a really, really useful skill.

Laura Moore: Yeah, and we've also talked about data a little bit, but I think it's really important that social media managers. They are responsible for like creating that content, testing messages, making sure that that what they're putting out is attracting the right people and getting them to take action. But the only way that they're actually gonna know that is by analysing the data.

And like, don't get me wrong, I hate data, but it is a big part of what we do, isn't it?

Laura Davis: Yeah, and I think when we talk about data, we are not talking about, oh, that reel had 5,000 views. That means I've nailed it. Or, oh, that post has had loads of likes, or that post isn't getting loads of likes, that means it's crap.

Like if you are looking at those kind of basic vanity metrics and, and leading your strategy off of those alone and not the wider data, then there's probably a. A skill that needs to be

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dug a bit deeper [00:28:00] into to learn a bit more about data, because it is so much more than the vanity metrics that people kind of obsess over.

Laura Moore: And even with the vanity metrics, it's no good to just look at them and go, oh, this post bombed. Well, so what are you gonna do about it? Why did that happen? Yeah. What are you gonna do about it? What, how is that gonna impact what you're putting out next?

Laura Davis: Yeah. And being able to kind of spot patterns and trends and being able to just be analytical from afar as well as like individual posts, as you say.

Laura Moore: Yeah, totally. And it's like the social media manager. There's things that you're responsible for, and then there's things you're not responsible for. We've already talked about like SEO and all of that stuff. That isn't what you are responsible for. And, but depending on what your client's goals are, you might be responsible for driving traffic to the website for starting conversations with the audience, uh, responding to messages or complaints, even answering questions, in which case you need to either have the answers or know where to get them.

Then there's things like social listening, you know, building [00:29:00] relationships with influencers, all of that stuff, right? We could go on and on and on and on, but they are all marketing things, aren't they? Yeah. Yes. There might be some scheduling, which is a bit of an admin role, but all of those things are all marketing.

And one thing that all of those things have got in common is that they all take place. Pretty much all of them on the social media platform. Maybe the social listening might not. Maybe the, the data might not all be on there, but everything that you are doing and that you're responsible for is on the platform, isn't it?

Once somebody leaves that platform, once one of your audience leaves that platform, that is no longer part of your job, like the website, if you're drive driving website traffic, you are responsible for getting to them to the website. What happens on the website is not your role as a social media manager.

Laura Davis: Yeah, if you were a digital marketer though, and you were involved in that website development, then your role does take that customer straight through to that purchase point, or not as the case may be. But as a social media manager, the point that that [00:30:00] person is off of social media, then they aren't your problem anymore.

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Laura Moore: Yeah, totally.

Laura Davis: Which is a quite ni, quite a nice place to be.

Laura Moore: Quite a nice position to be in. Totally. So I would love to know about like what you think a social media manager does. So if you're listening and you've got different opinion to what we've said, we wanna hear your opinions, don't we?

Laura Davis: Yeah, we do. All of them. Good, bad, the ugly.

Laura Moore: Come at us. Tell us what you think about whether or not it's an admin role. We're here, we're open. We might disagree, but we're open to your opinions.

Laura Davis: And if you're struggling for a content idea today, then why not go and post something about social media marketing not being an admin job? Or if you're not feeling brave enough to do that, why don't you just go and tell people what a social media marketer actually does?

Laura Moore: Yeah, what services you offer. It's a good promotion opportunity. But yeah, drop into our DMs. We're on Instagram, we're on all of the channels as thetwolauras drop into our DMs.

And let us know what [00:31:00] you think Social Media Manager does, and if you've ever had a client who's expecting you to do something differently, we'd really love to hear from you and um, we'll see you in the next episode.

Laura Davis: Bye.

Laura Moore: Ta-ra.

THE TWO
LAURAS