

GrowYourSideHustle-AmyWachlin-Episode1- Oct11-2022

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SPEAKERS

Jennifer Roland Cadiente, Amy Wachlin

Amy Wachlin 00:00

If it's not something you're passionate about, you're going to find a lot of ways to quit. When you are passionate about it, you might quit. Because it's super hard a lot of times

Jennifer Roland Cadiente 00:19

Hello, and welcome to the first episode of the Grow Your Side Hustle podcast, the podcast for entrepreneurs who want to grow their side business into a second stream of income, or their full time gig. I'm your host, Jennifer Roland Cadiente.

Today we're joined by Amy Wachlin, who spends her days working at a car dealership but puts most of her love and passion into her side business, Amy's heirloom vegetables. She's located in Sherwood Oregon, which is a suburb of Portland. And she grows heirloom and no spray vegetables, which you can purchase in a subscription box or just as a single item. Hi, Amy. Hi. So why don't you tell us a little bit about yourself? Sure.

Amy Wachlin 01:00

Um, so like you said, I currently and for the past almost 17 years, I've worked my regular day job as a car dealer doing customer service and accounting, all of that kind of fun stuff. But since 2015, I have started my own side business of growing and selling heirloom vegetables with my business. Amy's heirloom vegetables. And that's why

Jennifer Roland Cadiente 01:30

So that's your passion. That's why you you decided to go into into vegetables.

Amy Wachlin 01:34

Yep, it's definitely what I would be doing if I had a day off anyway. And it's you know, I still do it. When I go home every day. It's still what I do.

Jennifer Roland Cadiante 01:44

So did you grow up growing vegetables on a farm?

Amy Wachlin 01:49

I didn't grow up on a farm. But I always at least had my own, like flower garden. Even when I was like at an elementary school, I always had something growing up my own.

Jennifer Roland Cadiante 01:58

It definitely sounds like growing things has been your passion from even the youngest age. So what are your goals for your heirloom vegetable business?

Amy Wachlin 02:10

Well, I really hope that one day it can be my full time job. It's it's really hard work. But it's definitely what I always go back to no matter what. My day job. It's no secret to anyone that I work with. That it is not my passion. And I totally get that. It's just a matter of time, hopefully. And it'll Yeah, we'll get there. But that's my goal.

Jennifer Roland Cadiante 02:34

Okay, and so how do people find you? How do they get your vegetables?

Amy Wachlin 02:39

Well, I'm on Instagram a lot. So that's the main place So Amy's heirloom vegetables on Instagram. Lachlan farms.com, for the whole farm in general. And that's the main two.

Jennifer Roland Cadiante 02:52

So what do you have besides vegetables? on that main farm,

Amy Wachlin 02:56

my, my part of it is the vegetables. I'm also part of our pumpkin patch, the pumpkin patch, which is a lot larger. And I'm a part of that that's something my husband actually started when he was in high school. So that's his little that's his side hustle, because we both have other jobs too. But we also do like hanging baskets and all that stuff. Everyone in the family kind of has their own little part of the farm. So Oh, I love that. Yeah.

Jennifer Roland Cadiante 03:23

So working full time. And working. You know, gardening is hard work. How do you juggle it all?

Amy Wachlin 03:32

I don't most of the time, I have the best of intentions. You know, at the beginning of the season. I'm like, okay, plan. I'm a big planner. So every single day, I have a to do list, one for the farm, and then I'm home. And that's the best way that I've been able to figure it out. But something inevitably is going for it's usually like my housekeeping. Because even when I have a little time from away from the farm,

usually I'm outside and my home gardens. You know, I try my best, but it's definitely it's a juggle every single day.

Jennifer Roland Cadiente 04:09

Yeah. And so, so what are your work hours like then?

Amy Wachlin 04:14

So this time of year, which is kind of the height of the season, but as we go into, you know, pumpkin season, all of that will get even busier. But you know, it's the week right now. So as far as the side, hustle goes, I do that right after work every day and then on the weekends.

Jennifer Roland Cadiente 04:35

So do you have any any big struggles with just making all of that work together? Um,

Amy Wachlin 04:41

yeah, definitely. I mean, along with just, you know, there's only so much time in a day, but I have found that if I plan a little bit better all the time or as much as I can, that helps a lot. We've all of the family is involved in the businesses. So you know, we're kind of all trying to Got a little bit of everything. But I guess for me the struggle is sometimes keeping motivated. Because, you know, I started it in 2015. And I feel like some days, I'm like, why am I not? You know, why is this not my full time job yet. And then my husband goes, and I remember when I started, the pumpkin patch was in high school, and that was, like, 20 years ago, and only the past few years, it's really taken off. So luckily, he's the, you know, half glass half full person to balance, because I need that sometimes. So I get discouraged, you know, sometimes,

Jennifer Roland Cadiente 05:36

yeah. Yeah, it is in I mean, you know, since we don't have as long of a growing season, as other parts of the country might, you know, that can make it a real grind for you to

Amy Wachlin 05:47

well, and every season is different to in the past couple years have been just like, absolutely crazy. And so, you know, you can only guess so much and, and customers don't always understand that either. They're like, well, it's June, why don't you have strawberries? Well, it's July, why don't you have corn? You know, it's not like that.

Jennifer Roland Cadiente 06:06

No, it's not. And I mean, you even see that in grocery stores, you know, in with conventional farming,

Amy Wachlin 06:13

while in grocery stores haven't helped too much, because they always have everything year round. And so people don't always understand, right, that's another part, I guess, of, besides just having the farm beat time, my full time job, part of that is I really want to do teaching, and like maybe go to school classes, and even just teach the adults because a lot of people don't have any idea what it takes to

grow something that onto your plate. And I think that's so important, whether it's teaching them how to grow their own food, which I think is amazing.

Jennifer Roland Cadiente 06:43

And, you know, we are so separated from our food, and it is so cheap and accessible, whereas growing your own food can often cost more. Absolutely, yeah. So you know, how do you communicate the benefits of using heirloom vegetables instead of just whatever tomatoes are on sale that week.

Amy Wachlin 07:05

Like I said, being open to the customers and like, I'm completely no spray, which and just over the weekend I had someone asked about, you know, organic, and I said, Well, I'm not organic, but I'm no spray, and I kind of told them what that meant, and how actually organic is like super overused and doesn't actually mean a whole lot because it's not regulated. So they're like, oh, so I really love being able to talk to the customers like that. And I think when they can actually talk to the person that's growing the food, that means a lot to them. Because I know that means a lot to me, because I like to go support other farms and vice step two, and I like to know what goes into the food and meet the actual farmer. I think that's fun.

Jennifer Roland Cadiente 07:45

Yeah. So where do you meet your customers?

Amy Wachlin 07:49

Well, I do a few markets. But mostly, it's just right at the farm when I'm there. Mostly, of course, that's weekends, because that's when I'm mostly there myself. So I really liked that opportunity when I can actually be there. I do subscription boxes. So lately, I make sure I'm there when the customers come to pick up their box. So if they have any questions, I show him what's in the box that I just picked for him. And I always give him recipes and everything. So I think that's worth a lot.

Jennifer Roland Cadiente 08:17

Yeah, that's always so fun. Because, you know, sometimes if you get something that you're not used to using, yep. You know, then having those recipes and saying, okay, really what do I do with this thing? That is so helpful.

Amy Wachlin 08:31

I tend to grow a lot of kind of weird things, or things that most people haven't seen yet. I love to you know, have them here. Try it, you'll like it. Or, you know, they've never seen me before. So.

Jennifer Roland Cadiente 08:42

So are people able to come pick up when you're not there when in your family helps out? Or do they?

Amy Wachlin 08:50

Yep, so during the week, usually my mother in law or someone else is at the store because during now we're kind of in transition from their, their flowers and stuff to the vegetables to fall. There still there is always someone there to pick up if needed. Yeah.

Jennifer Roland Cadiante 09:08

Okay, so do people just schedule or do they just show up when they show up?

Amy Wachlin 09:14

Either. I was not 100% sure I wanted to keep going at the beginning of this year, I was pretty defeated, actually. And so I started using a really cool company that's helping us so we actually have online sales now. They like redid our website and now they people can order online for pick up at the farm. So they can either come right in the store, or they can order online and pick up the next day too.

Jennifer Roland Cadiante 09:38

So what helped you push through that feeling of being discouraged?

Amy Wachlin 09:45

I feel like it was actually it's kind of strange. I was I had a meeting with the family because we're all involved in it together and I kind of said this is gonna be my last Sure, because at this point, I feel like I should have, I should be a lot farther along with the business. And, you know, I can garden at home, I don't have to sell vegetables, you know. So I'm gonna, it's a lot of work if it's not gonna get to my end goal. And then after we had that meeting, like a week later, I had the company I was talking about barn to door, they actually called me I had never heard. So I don't know, if it was like some universe thing saying, you know, I'm gonna give up yet. We kind of just went for it. And it's been a heck of a lot of work since then, because they, the company's amazing, but I kind of took it all on myself, because it's a lot of technology and stuff that no one else was interested in bothering with, which is fine. So it's a lot of zoom meetings, and I a lot of lunchbreak, phone calls, and all kinds of stuff like that, since March is when we started, we signed up with them. So but we got, you know, like I said, our new website, the online ordering stuff. It's actually been really amazing. And it gives me a lot of hope. And if I ever have questions, or they give me suggestions about how to advertise, you know, they're there all the time for me. And that's been very, very helpful for me.

Jennifer Roland Cadiante 11:24

So are you feeling now like, you're really on the road to getting to where you want to be with your business?

Amy Wachlin 11:31

I would say more than ever. Yes. And the past, you know, since 2015, when I started, I don't think I felt this confident since the beginning. So because I guess the part of that is the company that we're working with, they want me to succeed, because if I succeed, they succeed. Right? I like that a lot. Yeah, and it's my goal, and they know what I do. And they work around all that, you know, they know I have a regular job too. So

Jennifer Roland Cadiante 11:58

yeah, yeah, it's, it's amazing what you can get done on a lunch break, though? Oh, yeah.

Amy Wachlin 12:04

Sure, is.

Jennifer Roland Cadiente 12:06

I used to do a ton of that myself, I would, I had a little computer and I would sit and write articles on my lunch break in my car, sometimes outside the McDonald's in the Wi Fi.

Amy Wachlin 12:17

I do a lot of that my Instagram posts on my lunch break, usually, because I figure that's when a lot of other people will see them anyway. But that's when I do a lot of that kind of stuff. I like that creative, creative time at that time, for some reason.

Jennifer Roland Cadiente 12:29

And that's a nice thing about working locally is that, you know, we're all on about the same time. You know, we don't all take our lunch at exactly the same time, but pretty close. Yep. As you look forward to growing your vegetable business to your full time gig. What do you think you're going to add next to help keep your business growing?

Amy Wachlin 12:50

Um, well. I think the next thing once, I guess maybe that is because there's like, definitely some glitches we're trying to figure out with online, which has been super fun. So I think once that's like, I'm super comfortable with all that, and we get a lot more customers flowing in there. I feel like because that's only been open for the past, like, two months or so that I like to get a lot more customers ordering that way. Hmm. And then I would say after that would be adding other opportunities for customers like classes and things like that. Let's see my hope.

Jennifer Roland Cadiente 13:28

Do you think that you would do live in person classes or online classes?

Amy Wachlin 13:34

I would definitely want to do in person because I feel like for the farm type stuff. I there's nothing like being out in the farm either. Yeah.

Jennifer Roland Cadiente 13:43

Yeah. And I did notice on your bio that it says you're an OSU Master Gardener?

Amy Wachlin 13:49

Yes. I well. I'm technically still an intern. I just turned in my volunteer hours a couple of weeks ago, but yeah, actually started that in 2020. I was my last class was supposed to be like March 17. Of 2020. Oh, yes. No, no, no, what happened? 122. And I'm just finishing it. Very excited. That's been a lot of fun.

Jennifer Roland Cadiente 14:10

Yeah. And I know that, you know, going forward once you get that certification, teaching is something that they really want you to be doing.

Amy Wachlin 14:19

Yeah, I actually just finished. They were doing a optional presentation class, actually, that I did. And so I had a lot of fun with that. Actually, I didn't I get kind of I mean, I've always been very shy and nervous. Unless you're talking about gardening or farming or plants. And then I'm like, I won't shut up about it. Otherwise, I'm very much a shy person.

Jennifer Roland Cadiante 14:45

Yeah, you just get too excited to remember that you're shy.

Amy Wachlin 14:48

Absolutely. Yeah.

Jennifer Roland Cadiante 14:51

Okay, so what lessons have you used from your day job to help grow your vegetable business?

Amy Wachlin 14:59

Um, Usually a few of them. I mean, I was in customer service at the dealership for like 11 years to begin with. Before I do that, with accounting what I do now. And that is, honestly, something that's immensely helpful on a day to day basis just dealing with, you know, all of the kinds of customers that you'll have the happy ones, which are wonderful, but then you're gonna get the ones you don't ever make happy. And I've dealt with, so we're good. Yeah. But then also what I do now, the accounting, that's helpful, too, when you're a small business, you kind of have to learn how to do a little bit of everything. So that's been helpful.

Jennifer Roland Cadiante 15:36

If we, you know, we have listeners who have maybe not started their own side hustles yet. So what advice do you have for people who want to find something?

Amy Wachlin 15:46

Well, I think first of all, if it's not something you're passionate about, you're going to find a lot of ways to quit. Yeah, even when you are passionate about it, you might quit. Yeah, because it's super hard a lot of times, and I think that's the most important thing. But I guess, is is kind of the thing I have, I have a lot of little quotes that keep me motivated on my desk at work. One of them is basically do one thing each day, the short of it do one thing every single day, that's helping you get to the goal you want to be tomorrow. And so I try to do one little thing, even if it's just doing an Instagram post that advertises something that I have fresh today, sending out a newsletter, replying to a customer, you know, instantly. I just tried it every day, I think about that. I think that's incredibly helpful. It doesn't have to be a big thing. Just something little, it's getting you to move forward to what you want to be where you want to be tomorrow. I also think if you're going to be a business, you need to make sure that you're available for your customers. As much as possible. Obviously, if it's your side hustle, that's difficult with hours, but you just need to make sure that you're on top of things like emails, you can have people text you, you know, as soon as you get a break or you're on your lunch break, you're calling people back. If you don't, they're gonna go somewhere else. People are very quick to leave these days.

Jennifer Roland Cadiente 17:22

They are definitely.

Amy Wachlin 17:26

But then I also think, which is something I need to definitely work on sometimes is take a little time for yourself, because it can get incredibly overwhelming when you're nonstop all of the time. Even if it's just maybe using your lunch break every once in a while to do something for yourself. return some phone calls. I think it's very important.

Jennifer Roland Cadiente 17:49

Yes. And be open to those messages from the universe that say don't give up.

Amy Wachlin 17:56

Definitely.

Jennifer Roland Cadiente 17:59

Okay, well, I'd love for you to tell our listeners where they can find you online. What's your Instagram handle? You did say your website earlier, but if you could say it again?

Amy Wachlin 18:08

Yep, absolutely. So on Instagram, I'm Amy's heirloom vegetables. And I do I update that most of the time pretty much every day. And then just to visit the farm website, that's Lachlan farms.com, w AC H li n farms.com, which includes all of the businesses that we have at the farm, most of the year round.

Jennifer Roland Cadiente 18:31

All right. Well, thank you for talking to us today. And I'm excited about your about your business.

Amy Wachlin 18:39

Thank you. Me too.

Jennifer Roland Cadiente 18:40

And here are our top takeaways.

First off: Keep your passion alive because you're going to find all sorts of reasons to stop doing your side hustle, so you need to make sure you love it.

And be open to new ways of working in your side hustle. If selling online hasn't need working, find a new way to do that, like Amy did.

And finally, just be willing to listen to the messages you get that say, even when you're discouraged, keep going.

Thanks so much for joining us today. Don't forget to subscribe so you won't miss any of our future episodes with other side hustlers and some experts to help you deal with some of those small and large

issues that come up when you're running a side hustle. I'd also love it if you could share this episode with any of your friends that you think would be interested and leave a review and a rating in your podcast app. See you next week.