The Soar Podcast E44 - Chelsea Greenway

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SPEAKERS

Rai Cornell, Chelsea Greenway



Rai Cornell 00:02

Welcome to Season Two of the SOAR podcast, the place for creative entrepreneurs who want to build healthier, happier, more profitable, self employed businesses. I'm your host Rai Hyde Cornell, business mentor at Chiron consulting and CEO and senior copywriter at Cornell content marketing, get ready to soar.



Rai Cornell 00:31

Welcome to the SOAR podcast, I am super excited to introduce our guest for today. She is the wonderful talented designer behind everything that we put out at Cornell and Chiron. She is Chelsea Greenway. Chelsea, explain to our listeners what it is that you do and about your business.



Chelsea Greenway 00:50

Hi, I am the owner of Modern Mood Design. And I do design for businesses, anywhere from branding to social media, and everything in between.



Rai Cornell 01:02

How did you get into design? Because for me looking at your work and just working with you over the past few years, has it been years? It feels like it's been years, but now I kind of think it's been like a year?



Rai Cornell 01:12

Yeah, it's like you've been in my life forever and ever. But how did you get into it? Because you seem like such a natural. This seems like such a natural role path talent for you? Was this

Chelsea Greenway 01:32

I actually got introduced to it in high school. And I didn't even know how to define what graphic design was. And I don't think a lot of people did. And so I was, my counselor actually was like, You should take this as an elective class. And I was like, Okay, I'll try it. And as soon as I started, I fell in love with it. And then I went on to get my degree, my associates degree in it. And then after that, I kind of went just into like customer service roles and didn't really do much with it. But I was able to start taking on side jobs for a lot of the companies I was working for, because they were just family owned businesses. And they needed help with, like social media graphics, or promotional posters and stuff like that. And through those side jobs, I was offered a position as a graphic designer for a newspaper. And it was like my first full time position. And it was super awesome, because I kind of was found based on my designs, and I was able to actually get a job in graphic design. And I still felt like I had no idea what I was doing. But I remember when I first started working with them, I was like, I can't believe I'm getting paid for this, like this is just fun to me. And it kind of reminded me how much I loved it.

Chelsea Greenway 02:56

And I think I was there for a year, year and a half before I decided I was going to start my own business because I felt like I got enough knowledge in graphic design to be able to start kind of working with the clients that I wanted to work with. Because with graphic design and a lot of jobs, I feel like there are some aspects that you really love and some that you don't. And so with the newspaper route, I was very limited with my creativity just because the paper that it's printed on, you don't get to have a lot of freedom with the designs. And so I knew that that wasn't what I wanted to do forever. And we had some like magazines that we worked on at that newspaper company. And that was, I was like, Okay, I like this a lot better. And I kind of started to get a feel for what projects I really loved and what projects I really didn't. And starting my own business and being a freelancer, I would get to choose what projects I spent my time doing and who I spent my time working with. And I just really loved that idea. So I decided to just take the leap one day, and I think stayed with the newspaper for about six months after and I decided it was time to just do it full time. And it was a little hard at first but I made it through

】 Rai

Rai Cornell 04:29

I feel like your trajectory of getting to this point of running your own business, having multiple clients, being on retainers and you know all of that, that when we started out as freelancers, it's kind of what we aspire to that stability, that you know reliability and the choosing of the projects like you described, but it sounds like you kind of went through a patch of imposter syndrome. When you were saying things like, I can't believe I'm getting paid to do this and you got found by your work. And I know, just because I've gotten to work with you as my designer, there have been times when you've heard from your clients like, oh my god, this is amazing. Like you nailed it. And you're still sitting there like, really, did I? Like, you kind of questioning yourself even though you had that teacher saying, Hey, I think you would be good at this. And

then you had that newspaper reach out to you to hire you. And you've had clients giving you that positive feedback. Do you feel like, I don't want to put words in your mouth but do you feel like you had impostor syndrome? And if so, how did you get through that?

Chelsea Greenway 05:37

Totally, I totally had impostor syndrome for a long time, which I feel like is why I didn't do anything with my degree right after I got out of college. And I was just too nervous. It's scary. I feel like for design, because everybody's got their own style, and what they like and don't like, and so I think I was fearful that my style, majority of people might not like it. And it wasn't until I actually started working with clients and getting feedback and positive feedback that I was like, Okay, maybe I'm alright. So I think it was just, the more projects I did, and the more positive feedback I got, and even the constructive criticism that I got through projects that I didn't quite land the first time. That all helped me grow as a designer, and really feel confident. And with the projects that I don't nail right, like, at first on the first go, oftentimes, my second go at it is always better than the first anyways, and I learned through trial and error and stuff like that. And I just feel like my skills get way better with each client I work with, and each project I do, and all that helps build my confidence.

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Rai Cornell 07:06

That style piece, I feel like that's really important. I want to ask you more about that, because you actually named your company like after your style. Your company is Modern Mood Design, which speaks to your style of design. It's not like, you know, purple butterfly designs or something like that, you know what I mean? Which a lot of people do, which is fine, but how did you identify your style? And if a designer or an aspiring designer is listening to this, what advice would you give them for identifying your own personal style and having the confidence to go forward with that as that kind of trial and error experiment?

Chelsea Greenway 07:47

Oh, that's a good question. Really, I picked the name modern mood design, long before I started my freelance business, I actually started an Etsy shop and did nothing with it. But I kind of was brainstorming what kind of style fit me and one of the things that I really enjoyed, before I got into graphic design was interior design and interior decorating and stuff like that. And I kind of learned my style through that. I am definitely very modern in my design with like, my home decor and stuff like that very minimalist, very like aireal, I like to use that word and stuff. So that kind of transferred into my graphic design style, because that was just me, that's just kind of what I like. And I guess it was, I just kind of like, learn that through time that was, and with the modern mood design. Like I said, I just kind of found that name. It wasn't like anything that I spent a lot of time brainstorming on.



Rai Cornell 09:12

Is it like one of those like, Aha moments like this is it. Yeah. And it just stuck. You didn't even question it.

Chelsea Greenway 09:17 Yeah, exactly.



Rai Cornell 09:20

So I'm kind of trying to understand the style thing a little bit more, because, you know, I'm coming from the perspective of a writer. I've been writing my entire life professionally for 15 years now. And for writers, unless you're a creative writer, and you're publishing your own books, you have to be able to adapt your style of writing to whatever the client means. If they need it to be funny and witty and catchy and punchy. You have to do that. Or if it needs to be serious and stoic and educational and formal and corporate. You have to be able to do that. And so for designers, for you in particular, how do you kind of tailor your business model around your style? Do you go after particular clients who you think would enjoy that style? Or is it more of like a, let me put my work out there, and I'll attract in the people who liked my style? Like how has that worked well for you.

Chelsea Greenway 10:19

At first, I was really just open to working with anybody. I feel like with a lot of my designs, my style come through, but I'm able to adapt to what the client likes and what the client needs. And now like, I mean, I've worked with enough people, and I've done enough projects to really find my style. And because I'm not in the beginning part of my freelance business where I'm like, I'm so desperate, I'll take anybody, I can start attracting the clients that I feel like would appreciate my style and appreciate kind of the designs that I come up with without them being super, like micromanaging exactly what they want it to look like. But I feel like, it's fairly easy for me to understand what a client wants and be able to deliver that in a way that also kind of resembles my design style in my business. So I want it to be distinguishable from like other designers just so that people, if they see my style, they're like, oh, I want my business to look similar to the work that she's done for these other clients. And I really love her style, and I want something similar to that, then people will be able to find me, I don't want to just, like completely change my design for, you know, specific people. I want it to have like the same underlying look, I guess if that makes sense.

Rai Cornell 12:06

Yeah, no, that totally makes sense. Because you kind of have to keep the integrity of your work, right. Like, yeah, everybody who freelances they have to have something that is kind of like their anchor point. So like at Cornell, and we were actually talking about this earlier today, our thing is quality. That is the first and foremost thing. That's how we build our project management systems. It's how we build our checks and balances, quality, quality, quality, and that's what is our number one selling point to our clients. And then there's subsequent things like, you know, the psychology infused copywriting, and all of those things. But that quality piece is kind of the cornerstone. And so for you, it's like that modern, elegant, airy, quality is your cornerstone. And there are other things that you can do that are derivative of that. But



that's like your leading selling point. So have you ever had a situation with a client where you had to kind of deviate from the integrity of your style, just to get the project done just to make them happy?

Chelsea Greenway 13:08

Yes, definitely. There are a couple of times where I wish they would go one way and they decide to go a completely different way. But that's where I have to just oftentimes, when I feel like there is a clash in style with my client and I, I will do exactly what they want me to do for one of their mocks, and then I'll do what I feel like they should do for one other mocks. And if they still choose the one that they basically helped me come up with, then that's their choice, but I was still able to show them kind of like what I'm able to do and what my thoughts are. But if I am just there to make my clients happy, you know, most of the time, I'm working on stuff for their business. And so that's like, their baby, you know, and I don't want to disrespect that in any way. And if they want it to be a certain way, and they have this idea in their head, then, of course, that's what I'm going to give them because my job is just to make them happy.



Rai Cornell 14:12

The funny thing is, and I think, I know this has happened with a couple of your clients, because we've talked about it, but I know for sure it's happened with me too where when I've asked you to design something for me, I'm like, okay, you know, we see the first iteration, I'm like, well, maybe we should do this. And maybe we should tweak this, maybe we should make this this way and that or that. And then you do that, you give me that one version of what I'm asking for, and then you give a version of what you think it should be. And I look at the version that I asked for. And I'm like, Oh yeah, that doesn't work. Because I'm not a designer. I don't have that design brain. And so I love that strategy that you use. And I think a lot of designers can leverage that when they are working with clients who are difficult because it's like, you hit that frustration point where you're like No, this is wrong. I run into this same issue when I have clients who are like, we want to use this keyword. And I'm like, No, that's going to make the article read like shit. And I forced the keyword to go in there. And then I'm like, This is terrible. And like, Yeah, I told you. So it's basically that way of saying, I told you. So this is why you need to follow my expertise. And I'm wondering if once you do that, does that make that client interaction easier and easier for every project they're after or their every iteration thereafter? Because they realized, my ideas are not always great in xecution

Chelsea Greenway 15:36

Yeah, sometimes there are clients that are just very, like, stuck in their ways and want things done a certain way. And that's fine. I feel like I can work well with a lot of different styles of like personality and stuff. And it might not be my favorite client to work with. But usually it's totally fine. And I'm always happy when I'm able to make the client happy with the products.



Rai Cornell 16:04

That's kind of the intrinsic reward for you is when your clients are happy with the work that's kind of like the extra fuel in addition to the paid invoice. Yeah. There's one other thing that I

want to ask you about with regard to the way that you've gotten clients before. But before we get into that, we're going to take a super short break, and we'll be right back.



Rai Cornell 16:27

Hey, Ray Hyde Cornell here. If you're tired of doing it all yourself, all on your own, and you want a supportive, high vibe place to call your home, then the archer mastermind is where you belong. This small group program includes monthly business building trainings designed specifically for you and where you are in your business, Chiron counsel group coaching sessions, motivating co working sessions, special ticket prices for retreats in Colorado Springs, Las Vegas, Sedona, plus free access to business building week and everything inside the Chiron Academy, which includes all of my workshops and courses to help you make massive leaps forward quickly. The Archer mastermind is the ideal place for creative entrepreneurs who are ready to take their businesses seriously and remove roadblocks to success every single day. Early bird pricing is open now through November 30. And if you're listening to this after November 30, you can still get in, we open the doors for the Q1 Q2 mastermind cohort on January 1. So check it out, learn more and apply at Chironconsulting.us/mastermind.



Rai Cornell 17:46

And we are back with Chelsea Greenway of Modern mood design. So Chelsea, as I've said before earlier in this episode, you are my designer, you are my go to gal anytime I'm like, oh, I want an infographic oh, I want a PDF. Oh, I want this. You are my go to gal and you always make it happen in ways that I'm just like, How the fuck did she come up with that? And I want to talk about how we started working together because I don't think you give yourself enough credit for this. And I think a lot of people can learn from what you did. So do you want to tell the story of how you landed me as a client?



Chelsea Greenway 18:27

Is it the social media story?



Rai Cornell 18:30

Yeah, so Okay, what did we first start doing? You did one of my workshops on the Chyron side, right? Yeah. Yeah. And then I got an email from you.

Chelsea Greenway 18:40

Oh, yeah. So Well, I had kind of already started, I think I did one project for you. So I was on your Slack group and stuff. And I was overseeing a couple messages where I noticed that you weren't super happy with the way your social was going. And I saw that and I was like, Oh, I could do that. And I went and I made a couple mock social graphics based on the ones that you had already had scheduled to go out or were already up or something, like I kind of redesigned them. And then I sent you an email and said, I noticed that you were struggling with your social media graphics. And I would love to help you with that. I created some mocks, if you wanted to take a look. And if you'd like them we can talk about future, like projects together. And then from there, I think it just kind of took off.



Rai Cornell 19:37

Yeah, and from a client person, you're still not doing yourself justice, by the way. But from a client perspective, I was so impressed with how proactive you were. And I think we talked about this a few months into working together. You had said something like, after taking one of my workshops, you decided in your head that you wanted to work with me. And you actually sent me an email, suggesting that I turn my big dreams daily action worksheets into a planner. And I was like, Oh, dang, yeah, that's a really good idea. I had planned on kind of doing something. But I was just really impressed with your proactivity. And then when you actually showed me what you could do in my brand colors, and my brand styling with my logo and everything, I was like, Holy shit, this chick is amazing. And I don't think enough people take those chances. I think a lot of people go, Oh, I don't want to bother her, or Oh, she already has a designer or, Oh, I don't want to, you know, push that designer out and take her spot. I don't want to, you know, screw her over or something like that, which you didn't by the way that person was already, you know, on her way out with maternity leave, and things like that. But you saw an opportunity. And you took it. What made you do that, especially coming from a place of dealing with impostor syndrome? How did you get to that place where you were confident enough to go, Okay, this is what I'm going to do. I'm going to take the time to create these graphics, I'm going to send them and I'm gonna see what happens.

Chelsea Greenway 21:10

Oh, my gosh, I was nervous. I gotta be honest. I think I reread that email, like 14 times before I actually sent it. But I'm so glad that I did. And that was kind of like, that just opened up a whole new world to me of like, oh, my gosh, if I reach out, there is a very good chance that people are going to say yes. But initially, it was really nerve wracking because of everything that you just said, but also, like, I didn't want to be rejected, you know? Because if I show my design, and someone's like, oh no, it would really hit my ego pretty hard. And like, you know, what I used to sell myself is my designs and my previous work and stuff like that. So it was definitely nerve wracking. But I am so grateful that I did it. And I definitely feel a lot more confident from that interaction, being able to go out and do similar things with potential new clients.



Rai Cornell 22:15

Yeah. And I think there's a delicate balance, right? Because what you did was you saw a problem, you saw a problem that you knew I recognized as a problem. What a lot of people do is, first of all, I've had this happen where someone goes to my website, and they find a typo. And they email me and they go, I see you have this typo on this page. That must mean that you need an editor, you must need an editor because that one typo that is going to lose your business. And nobody's going to trust you. And your content needs a major upgrade. Will you hire me as your editor? And I'm like, Fuck, no, you just like spent 55 words insulting me? Like,

no, of course not. I'm not gonna, but you didn't do that, you saw a problem. And it wasn't like, Hey, your current designer's work is shit, I see that she's not doing this. And this could be so much better. And she's really bad at balance and color scheme.

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Rai Cornell 23:18

And you didn't do that at all, you didn't attack anyone or anything. You just said, Hey, I noticed that you're not quite happy with this. And so the question then becomes, how do people take that lesson from what you did and how you landed a client and apply that? And it's looking at things like, okay, in social media, for example, you want things to be consistent, right? Like you need to be posting consistently. So if you look at a client's profile, and you see, okay, they posted three times that week, and then nothing for two weeks, and then four things, and then nothing for a month. That's a consistency problem. And that's where you can go, Hey, I'm noticing that your posting is a little sporadic. Do you happen to need help with more consistent design work and you know, if so I can help you with that. You're noticing problems and you're providing that solution. So I don't want to over generalize, but has that technique that you worked, that you used to land me as the client, has that worked with others?



Chelsea Greenway 24:27

In a way Yeah. I actually haven't really needed to go out and look for new clients recently. So I haven't been using that tactic.



Rai Cornell 24:37

No problems right.



Chelsea Greenway 24:41

Yeah. But I do notice that even just like having helped other people in areas of their business that they needed help in, clients or potential clients are seeing that and they're reaching out to me through like word of mouth and stuff. So, like recently, I have done menu designs for coffee shops. And I had somebody that saw one of the coffee shop menus that I had done and talked to the owner and got my information. And she was having the same issue as this owner because they have to increase their prices just because everything is so expensive right now. And so she kind of came to me with her problem. And she was like, I really like your style. And I want to see if we can work together. And so I've been able to get a lot through word of mouth, which is probably my best marketing tactic. And so yeah, it's been, I've been really, really lucky so far. And I'm so grateful for it.



Rai Cornell 25:51

Well, you can say that you're lucky now. But you got that ball rolling, you built the momentum that got you to the point where now you have solved so many problems for other clients, that they are now recommending you because you are that excellent problem solution person. I

mean, I do it all the time where one of our clients, who runs a fertility agency and some online courses and things she was looking for a designer, of course, I'm going to mention you because you've always been solid and creative in just the most brilliant, unexpected ways for us. And so that word of mouth is very natural. You don't even have to prompt your clients to ask for that. It just happens because you put in that early work. And I think that's one of the big things that I want listeners to take away from this is in the beginning, you have to be gutsy, and you have to put yourself out there and you have to be proactive. And it's going to pay off so so much in just a short amount of time. Because how long ago was that? That you and I started working together? Less than a year?

Chelsea Greenway 26:59

Yeah, yeah, yeah. And I think my business is going on two years now. So I mean, it was rough at the beginning, but don't give up. It gets better. And it's just yeah, just getting your work out there. And that's probably the best thing I could have done was just taking chances and getting my work out there. Because now people can see what I can do. And they want to work with me. So I'm no longer seeking them. A lot of times they seek me, and I'm so grateful for that.



Rai Cornell 27:33

That's such an amazing place to be in after just two years, most people work 5, 6, 7, 10 years to get to that point. Someone who's listening to this and who's like, mehn I want to get to the place where I'm not even looking for new clients. And when I do get new clients, I get to pick and choose them. And they're all based on word of mouth. I don't even have to hunt for clients anymore. In just two years. What advice would you give them?

Chelsea Greenway 27:59

Put yourself out there. Sometimes it's really, it's crazy to see how you can get clients. One of my clients I was doing, I picked up a shift for a friend at her drive up coffee stand. And somebody came through the drive thru and I hadn't worked at a coffee shop for years. And it was just really weird how it all happened. And he drove through. And I was like, Yeah, I'm just helping out a friend today. And I had to tell pretty much everybody that was coming through because I was taking so long to deliver their drinks. But he asked what I actually do. And I'm like, I have a graphic design business. And he's like, oh, I need a graphic designer. And it was just so crazy how that happened. Because everything had to line up perfectly. I had to have said yes to my friend to help her out. It had to be on that day. It had to be at that time. And I had to have that conversation open up in order for him to know that I was a graphic designer and

Chelsea Greenway 28:59 You think as fucked as a barista. Yeah.



Chelsea Greenway 29:03

Yeah. It was just crazy how it happened. And there have been so many times that that's happened. And I've found clients in the weirdest ways. And so go out and just talk to people and let the conversation come up. And oftentimes you'll find somebody that's like, oh, my gosh, I need exactly what it is you're doing. Yeah.



Rai Cornell 29:25

Yeah. Well, and on that note, the one last thing that I want to ask you, which this ties into our conclusion of where people can check you out. I know you are not all over the place. You are not on Twitter and Pinterest and YouTube and, is Tumblr a thing anymore, Facebook and all the things I don't even know. You're not on all of those places, which just speaks volumes to this power of networking, of being that problem solution to your clients and relying on that word of mouth when you do good work, and you put yourself out there, so where can people check you out in the few places that they can find you



Chelsea Greenway 30:08

On my website would probably be the best. It's www.modernmooddesign.com. And I have my email on there and my phone number and some pieces of work that you can look through and stuff like that. So that's probably the best place to find me.



Rai Cornell 30:30

And that's it. That's all you need. That's all you need to get started, two years in, you are already rock solid, super stable, have a steady stream of clients coming in. And all you have is a website that you designed yourself and wrote yourself too by the way. Yeah. Amazing. Thank you so much for being here, Chelsea.



Chelsea Greenway 30:51

Thank you. This was great.



Rai Cornell 31:05

Hey, Rai here again. Thanks for listening. If you liked this episode, please subscribe and rate us in your favorite podcasting platform. Want to be a guest on the show or know someone who has an amazing story of entrepreneurship, apply on our website at chironconsulting.us/podcast