

Welcome to. So here's the thing, the podcast for small business owners, entrepreneurs, and creative educators who are ready to take their business to the next level through candid conversations, tactical approaches, and a few unpopular opinions. We're lifting the veil on what it takes to build both a life and a business that you love.

I'm your host, Laila Ahmadi, a coach for creatives and founder of the creative educator conference, where we're on a mission to help entrepreneurs step into the role of industry leaders and educators. I'm so glad that you're here. Today's episode is brought to you by the educators lounge, the membership for creative educators, looking to become industry leaders.

If you want to join us, get your first 10 days free at LailaAhmadi.com with the code podcast. Now let's jump into today's episode. Hey friends, happy new year and welcome to 2020. Five on. So here's the thing. So today's snack size episode, I'm going to be talking to you guys through my top three, well, maybe not top three, three of my top resources that I use in my business and that I've really like fallen in love with.

Extra hard in 2024. So as we go into 2025, if these are helpful for you, um, you'll be able to look into them as well. Now, I do want to obviously add the caveat that I am an affiliate for a lot of these, uh, things that I'm going to be sharing with you. However, I'm an affiliate because I loved the program.

And then I applied to be an affiliate like anybody can do. So I just wanted you to know that this is not sponsored by them. However, I do have affiliate links. It's listed on my website at LailaAhmadi.com/resources that have some discount codes in there as well for you to try. So I would love for you to go check those out over on the website and let's dive into those three top use tools or some of the top use tools that I used in 2024.

So first and foremost, I would say this is kind of an interesting one to share, but I had to share it. My credit card for my business. Okay. So let me backtrack for a second. I opened this credit card years ago for my business. I use chase ink. I use chase ink preferred actually for business and I have a referral code over on my website.

I'd love for you to go check it out. Um, however, regardless of the credit card that you use, the reason it is one of my top utilized and top like exciting resources for the year is because I was able to take my trip. And Tim's trip to Italy almost for free, based off of the points that I was able to accumulate over several years of business expenses.

So something that's really interesting that my amazing, amazing virtual CFO, Brittany subtle of nice and co. She has taught me and so many people, she speaks at my conference, the creative educator conference. She has always said, you know, if you accumulate points on a business card, you really want to use those points for personal use because.

You can't write it off. Whereas you can write off your business expenses. So it's a win win. Anyway, all that being said, I had been stockpiling these points for a long time and I thought, okay, well it'll help me like with a flight or it'll help me with a hotel. Guys, when I tell you getting a credit card with good points return, so, so important.

So that's the first one I wanted to share with you guys. Again, this is obviously not sponsored by Chase, but look into a credit card for your business that has good points. Again, love my Chase preferred. It's been with me for years, and I don't plan on leaving them anytime soon. Second, and this will come as no surprise to any of you who have been around for a while, is Flowdesk.

Flowdesk is the email marketing platform that I use To send out all of my email marketing and to grow my list, my email list. Now, obviously I love Instagram. I love social media, but we've heard it a million times for a reason. We do not own the audiences there. We do not have any control over what happens, but at the end of the day, Email addresses are something that you have a way to get ahold of people.

The social media platforms that we rely on could at any point in time disappear. And we would all just be left being like, okay, well, I'm really glad I spent all my time growing that audience. I mean, I don't like to work from a place of fear, but I like to be smart about it. And so, um, I love flow desk personally.

I've used MailChimp in the past. I played with convert kit. I guess now they're called kit. Um, I've, I've tried a couple others and. Really the biggest differentiator for me, aside from the fact that I do love flow desk, like I said, you guys know I'm fully transparent. Flow desk has been at my conferences.

I have partnered with them in the past. I am an affiliate with, for them, um, again, because I applied to be one and I love them, but I love them because it's such an approachable platform. It's super easy to use. They do not penalize you for growing, which to me is incredible. Like. As you start to grow in your business and you start to grow in your visibility and in your leadership, especially for my educators out there, your list will grow.

That's the goal, right? You never want to join a platform, in my opinion, that charges you more for the more people who want to be in the loop of what you're doing. And I love that Flowdesk is a flat rate and they don't have any kind of like tiered based off of the number of people you have signed up on your list.

Like their pricing is their pricing. So love flow desk also on, I think an important note, but maybe not important to everybody, but it is to me, the emails are beautiful. It's drag and drop. It's so easy. And now with their newest, one of their newest things that they released, uh, this past year, I believe you're able to utilize templates and download templates and buy templates from amazing designers.

In fact, one of my designers, um, that I work with regularly created some incredible custom templates for me. And so now it's like. Even less work, which I love because let's be real. We all are lacking in time. So flow desk is the second one out of the three I'll be sharing today. And the third top utilized resource that I'll share with you guys today is Kajabi.

So if you've been around for the past five years, you've heard me try out many course platforms, um, and, and different ways of sharing and selling my education. I have used and continue to use actually thrive cart, which I do love. Um, it's listed on my resource page for a reason. It's. It's still up there.

I am still an active user of Thrivecart and I do like it. However, when I launched the educators lounge, which is my membership, I really dug into what is an all in one place that can house a community based membership that also has resources and needs all of these things to be very meticulously and easily laid out for my members to be able to access everything in one spot.

And for me, Kajabi was Well, pricey, of course, was a really easy yes for me. Um, I was a little hesitant. I'm not gonna lie because I have used Kajabi before in the past, and then I left them for Thrivecart. Before Kajabi, I've also tried Teachery. I tried Teachable. Again, like I said, I try out a lot of different platforms.

Um, my friend Don at Tech Savvy Creative always says, you know, you got to see what Like what platform works for you and for what you need and for what your people need. And so I don't disagree that it's important to try out a bunch of things. But for me, when I sat down and looked at the different membership options I had, I made a little, honestly, I'm a little nerdy.

I made a little spreadsheet with price comparisons, with benefits, with like pros and cons. And at the end of the day, I landed on Kajabi. And so. So far, I am loving it. The educators lounge has been now open since August. So now being January so far, I have a very few complaints. There's been maybe like one glitch that I've noticed and their customer service was actually really, really great to work with.

So thus far, I've really enjoyed Kajabi setting it all up over the summer was. It's not difficult at all. And again, they were really helpful when I did have questions as well as something that I think is really important and that's that their tutorials and their help center are so thorough that I really didn't have to reach out to anybody.

Very often we were able to troubleshoot and fix everything for the most part within our team ourselves. So that was pretty cool. So those are three of my favorite things for 2024, um, in my business and three of the favorite resources that I used. Of course, I will, again, I'm going to encourage you guys, like, even if you don't click on my affiliate links and you just want to go snoop on what I'm using, Like go over to Lelymati.

com slash resources and you'll see there's companies on there like show it who's my website platform I'm obsessed with as well as a couple of template shops that I Partner with and or have used or purchased from in the past If you're a photographer cloud spot is my favorite way to deliver images But even as a non photographer I use cloud spot to send over full galleries For events, which is really, really great having a branded place as an event host to send out the gallery so that all of my attendees can see them.

Kind of obvious things like Canva, QuickBooks, things like that. Everything I use is on there. And I actually have to add a couple more things. Hopefully I'll get around to that. Sooner rather than later, but I would love for you guys to go snoop around. Let me know what your favorite things are. If you have any that are the same as me, I'd love to hear.

And if you have some that you're like, actually, this seems like it would fit your needs really well. I am a very easily influenced friend. So I always say I'm not an influencer, but I am easily influenced. So please hit me up and I will see you guys on the next one. Full size episode next week here on. So here's the thing for show notes and resources mentioned on today's episode, head to.

So here's the thing podcast. com. This episode is brought to you by the educators lounge where rising educators become industry leaders. Come join us.

If you're looking for community resources and opportunities that will take your educational offerings to the next level. Thanks so much for listening and I'll catch you on the next episode.