

Ypulse Interview: Jennifer Kushell of YSN.com



Before I launched Ypulse, the blog, I had a bigger vision for a company that would somehow syndicate or license the best youth media content (and pay these organizations create custom content) for marketers creating micro-sites for teens. I figured why pay copywriters my age to sound like teens when there are so many teens producing content

already and we all know teens love content produced by their peers. I was looking for a business partner and posted something on a little site I found called Young & Successful. Jennifer Kushell, the founder of that site, reached out to me separately on Linked In asking me more about my background. Time rolled on, instead of creating that company, I launched Ypulse instead and have grown it to what it is now, and Jennifer transformed her idea of helping connect "young and successful" people into a new social network called YSN.com. I recently interviewed Jennifer about the new site...

Ypulse: What do you think are the most interesting features in your redesigned site?

Jennifer Kushell: We've definitely been online for a long time now, but this is no redesign. YSN.com is actually a brand new site and concept that really ties everything we've been doing, experiencing and creating for all these years into one place that's accessible to anyone, anywhere in the world, anytime, for free. There are so many features on the site, but one that's really unique is the self-assessment, which the top experts in the field are saying is the most innovative tool they've ever seen. We've taken something that typically looks like an SAT test and evolved it into an interactive game that's interesting, relevant and helps you figure out what to do with your life, as well as offer a custom action plan all in about 30 min, for FREE. The Industry Q&A, Mentoring and Groups features are all also user favorites!

I'm particularly proud of our newsletter, YS Weekly, a fabulous publication that consistently delivers really insightful, interesting and useful information with a fun and entertaining spin, that's 100% relevant to young people building their careers, looking to achieve success in all areas of their lives, and really just becoming better people all around.

YP: Describe the demographic and psychographic you're going after -- who is the typical YSN.com user?

JK: When we say "Ambition is the price of admission" that really encapsulates the audience that we're looking to reach. We exist to help people pursuing success in the real world, regardless of what stage they're at and how they personally define success. Everything we do on the site is meant to support them in those efforts. So, for the most part, we focus much more on psychographics, than demographics. We're looking for that person with fire, passion, a mission, or just a genuine desire to do something more, something different, something special with their life.

Demographically, we focus primarily on the 18-34 audience, though we do offer wonderful opportunities for people of all ages to engage as mentors, advisors and experts who have an interest in helping young people.

Newsletter readers: Visit Ypulse for [the rest of the interview](#).

YP: Tell me a real life success story that happened as a result of your site.

JK: Well, let me instead share a posting we found online from one of our members recently.

I am twenty-one and I graduate in May. I am a young entrepreneur who is dedicated to success. I have been using YSN for the past two and a half months. Through interaction with other people on the site I have found it to be a positive place to find direction. I have met many other people who are actively pursuing their dreams and I have mentors that I can turn to whenever I am in need of guidance. For me it has been more than just networking, YSN has been a great place for further education in more specialized areas. Graduating in three months is scary; leaving most seniors asking themselves, what the hell am I going to do in three months? Because of YSN I have a good grasp of my future and I like the direction I'm heading. I'm fairly confident most highly successful people understand the importance of writing down their goals and planning their future. YSN makes it easy for me to do so in my downtime, the only time in my day where I'm not "just doing it."

Here's another one I just got this week too:

I just wanted to say a quick thanks for realizing the need for a website like this and putting the effort into connecting those who are young and driven to make something of themselves! I live in the oil driven city of Fort McMurray AB Can, the cool thing here is to go get a job for an oil company and make \$40/hr, I prefer to set my own destiny and make a difference in other peoples lives, it is so great to be able to view a complete data base of people like myself who are driven, and want to make a difference in the world and you deserve huge credit for connecting those of us who share

these feelings!! you can bet I will be promoting this site to everyone I know who is out there everyday trying to raise the standards and make this world a better place!

YP: What are your future plans for the site?

JK: Right now we're just really focused on creating the best possible experience for our users. But we will always be thinking and working on new initiatives to make this transition for young people smoother and more fulfilling.

In the meantime though, I can say that we're actively exploring new ways to distribute the enormous base of original content that we have created over the years and continue to create for our network and our partners. At this point, we have books, articles, profiles, audio programs, our YS Weekly newsletter, podcasts (Secrets & YSN Live), blogs, RSS feeds and even video -- all spreading new insights, tips, strategies, and resources specifically targeting young people actively pursuing their success. That's definitely one of the things that I think makes us special in this market, but with the technologies and distribution platforms changing so rapidly, constantly adapting content to make it most accessible to our loyal fans definitely keeps us on our toes!

YP: Anything else you think Ypulse readers should know about the site?

JK: We take this business of helping to sculpt the lives and futures of young people very very seriously. It's not just a business to us, we're trying to tackle some major social challenges and make a profound impact on the lives of millions globally. Along the way, we hope to get the chance to work with people and organizations who have the same vested interest and passion for serving this audience, while using YSN.com as a catalyst to helping provide new opportunities for everyone to connect more intimately online by leveraging the best that technology has to offer.

Posted by anastasia