



JAMES **SCHRAMKO**

PAID AD INSIGHTS FROM A MULTI- MILLION DOLLAR PER MONTH AGENCY

Dive into the world of high-stakes digital advertising. Charley Valher shares insights from running millions of dollars a month in clients' paid ads.



Charley Valher

James: James Schramko here. Welcome back to my podcast. This is episode 1058; they're racking up. I've brought along my longtime friend, guest, partner, [Charley Valher](#), [ValherMedia.com](#). Welcome back.

Charley: Thanks for having me on, again, James. I'm excited for this conversation.

James: I know we do a slightly different thing with this podcast. Like, there's lots of podcasts out there who get all the famous people, book authors, everything else, right? It's a buffet of differentiation. And I will bring in other guests occasionally, I promise. And I'll do some solo episodes.

The background and theme of this episode

But the backstory as to why you're on this show so many times, there's two main reasons. One is, if you wound the clock back maybe a decade, I had about four podcasts. So I had one with Joel Ozborn called KickingBack, I had one with Ezra Firestone called ThinkActGet, I had one with Tim Reid called FreedomOcean, which was the first one, and I had my own one at the time, it was called InternetMarketingSpeed, and I had one with Taki called SalesMarketingProfit. Okay, that's five.

So I had five podcasts. And obviously, that's five websites, it's five different ways of editing. And then I was having a little bit of trouble sometimes organizing times with various hosts, I was trying to do one episode a week with each partner, but it just didn't pan out. I mean, Taki went on a lot of travel, Ezra had things happening in the e-commerce space. Tim was busy too, with his Small Business, Big Marketing, which is a great show.

So I got to this point where I thought, it's probably just easier if I have my guests on my show, and just have them back over and over again. And I reckon I'm one of the earlier shows who has got repeat guests, kind of like a radio station where they have regular guests of the show. And the second reason is, you know, I partnered with your business to help you grow it and bring you to my audience, because I really, really dig what you do. I believe in what you do.

I love the quality of it. I like the innovation of it, the growth. I've seen you do amazing things. And not just because I get an insider view. Of course, that's a privileged view. But even as an outsider, I'm actually subscribed to some of your clients' newsletters, Charley, and I receive those. Some of your clients and users are my clients. So I get to see this from so many dimensions.

It's brilliant. I love it. I believe in it. And what I love the most is you just have no signs of slowing. And what I wanted to do today is say, Charley, it's the start of a new year at the time of recording this episode. It's the beginning of 2024. Last year, I'm actually exhausted thinking about last year, on behalf of the people I've worked with. Not so much me, I actually worked the least I've ever worked in a year last year, which was great from a personal achievement.

I'm still making the [Work Less, Make More](#) formula work. But for a lot of people, it was a demanding year. There was the rise of AI, there was the chokehold of interest rates, taking all that family grocery money and making you pay the bank instead. There was carnage with, we're still in the midst of a political campaign in some markets. There's threats of war. Like, it can be exhausting.

And then I think there was a big shift in business models. Hormozi came in and just basically, everyone started giving everything away for free. Now we're in a community frenzy, everyone's doing communities and so forth, which is the model I've been doing since about 2008 or nine. So there's been a lot going on.

But you know what I'm most interested in? What is working now. The theme of this episode is, what is working now. And for context, can you describe the part of the market you're in, Charley, so that we know exactly what we're talking about what's working now?

Working: massive ad investment

Charley: I'd say the short answer to that is ads. Like, I'm on the forefront of running paid campaigns on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, AdWords and Tik Tok. And the clients we work with tend to have a pretty big objective of growth. So I'm going to use the word investing, right? Where they're investing in a marketing agency, they're investing in ad spend, they're wanting to get a return on that capital in their business in the way of growth. That's what I'm on the forefront of.

James: So Charley is the ad growth expert. Are you doing this on like, tiny little stuff, or really big stuff, or somewhere in the middle stuff?

Charley: You know, I literally had this conversation with my team the other day, because I've always gotten to the point where it's like I'm desensitized to the numbers we do now. When I first started in this to be, you know, pushing through multiple seven figures a month in ads, right? That's just our spend was like the dream, was like the idea of like, wow, you know, like if you're spending that much, it's like, crazy the amount of conversions and things you'll be able to do or the testing you could do.

Where I'm almost like at this point now where it's, to answer that question, we're doing like, multiple seven figures of ad spend per month. Like, I'm just in there and loving it, it's a really, really fun thing to do. So that's the sizing of what we get up to.

The typical bare minimum ad spend

James: That's fairly significant. What would be on the lower end of the type of person who might be getting your services?



Charley: Yeah, great question. So I would say some of the smaller accounts. So I have to put a preface around these, because I've got an interesting one. And it might even be a great lead into this episode itself. Because sometimes it's not about spending more. It's about spending really selectively.

And I actually had a heap of fun doing the prep for this episode, James, because I went through every one of our client accounts, and picked out the winning campaigns and went through them. And then made a comparison to what's working really well, which we could bring to this episode today.

But to answer this one, specifically, one of the points I really want to cover that's working extremely well right now, and I hope people can appreciate my pronunciation of that, that's a hint, a big hint, is the idea of actually sub-niching campaigns. Now, we work with, in the United States, they're an accountant/bookkeepers/ I'm going to say, like wealth advisor, they kind of do like a whole in-house service.

And one of the things we noticed when we were working with them is, you know, in 2023, to your point, like, there was a time when we were running like, broad campaigns, but maybe they were focused on like, a really specific symptom. So we would go after, like, all business owners, but then just go after like, tax services, for example.

And I shouldn't say all business owners, but like, you know, a fairly broad amount of business owners, where something that's just like, taken off, and we've rolled out everywhere, is we've actually doing like sub-niched campaigns. So the idea of them is going after, well, we're just going to go after, let's say, contractors, or tradies, depending on where you're from, you'll appreciate that little language difference there.

And then we'll do targeted campaigns towards them in the same idea. So in this example, we're actually spending less on ad spend but going hyper targeted in who we go for, for lead quality. And that's been a huge payoff. And I mean, like a huge payoff where these, this company was previously spending, like, let's say, about \$30,000 a month on ads to acquire clients, we're actually doing more campaigns, but spending less for a significantly improved result.

So to answer that question more specifically, most of the clients who work with are spending, let's say, more than \$10,000 a month on ads, that will be like the bare minimum in ways. But then some are spending astronomical amounts as well, like we do some pretty big ones, where it's like hundreds of thousands of dollars a month.

Max returns, minimal spend - agency ethics

James: I want to put on my skeptics hat and talk about something that's probably an issue in the industry. Some of the big agencies, they have an issue where they're incentivizing their campaign managers on ad spend, or they might charge a client a percentage of ad spend. And unless they put some other mechanism in place, the campaign manager likes to try and spend as much as possible because that increases the revenue for the business, which they get a slice of. Is that something you've seen? And how do you deal with that?

Charley: Yeah, so we don't do it. Because I actually think it's a conflict of interest. Like, I could tell you more stories on this one, but like, that story I just told you there with the accountant, who then sub-niched, well they're spending less on ad spend, but actually like, getting a far better return.

And I kind of see that as my job, right? We should spend the minimum to get the best result, where it turns into a bit of a conflict of interest. And I've seen this on the other side, where it's like, ad agencies are reluctant to make a recommendation that would serve the client because it impacts their business.

The other one that comes up is we see agencies like, and people love the idea of this in theory, where they'll say, Let's do a profit split on an item. And, you know, that's all good, as long as you can sell unlimited amounts of the item. Right? What happens if it's a service business that has capacity issues, or an e-commerce business that can't stock or do things?

So it's like a lot of these things, why, I get the well-intending meeting. And it's like, well, if you're able to spend more, we're probably doing more, or if we're able to profit speak, you know, we've got to get you the sale, but it's the well-meaning things we get into that have unintended consequences, which can often cause, like rifts, and just like, I think, bad setup for my agency relationships.



Where I feel very strongly about this is you've got to be able to be or act within your client's best interest at all times. Otherwise, it's like, it's a recipe for disaster on all fronts, like no one wins that battle.

James: You know, I've seen where the agency owner might be well-intentioned, but the account manager gets greedy and blows up the customer's account. They keep spending more and more to get past the point of diminishing return. And then the client leaves upset. Basically, they blow the whole account.

But it was wrong, because the mechanism for that account manager to get paid was directly tied to ad spend percentage, and some. So I'm so happy to hear that you have considered that. And it's pretty clear where your values sit. And it's exactly the same for me.

I remember, I would always tell a client if the decision they're about to make might not be in their best interests, because I know it's going to come back someday. Like, how are they going to be in a position to do business with me in a couple of years from now, if they're unhappy about the decision they make now? So I'd be the custodian. I think that's a [Jay Abraham](#) term, we have a duty of care of the client. And it sounds like your mechanism is set up in a way that actually takes that into account.

From podcasts to paid traffic: a strategic shift

So let's just recap. You're dealing with clients who are spending anywhere from maybe \$10,000 a month upwards, your agency itself is handling multiple millions of dollars of ad spend across different platforms. You used to have a video podcast focus, is that still there? And did that lend itself to the platforms that you're running ads on? Most of the ads, you're running video format, or you're doing text-based or display ads as well?

Charley: What a great question, James. In summary, it's like, every client we were doing podcasting for, ultimately, they're doing a marketing service, and they want an outcome. And in general, that was to get clients. One of the challenges with doing a podcast or even some of the organic stuff is it can take a long time to get traction.

And I would make the case, if someone was going to do a podcast today, and they were just going to do the organic stuff, like it's likely going to take more than 12 months to build a reasonable following. So we saw a real need and itch, kind of speed that up, which opened the door to paid traffic, which I was already very skilled in from a previous business that I had and I sold.

So the decision was made to go into ads and like, the opportunity of ads just got bigger and bigger. And we started to notice that we could be more effective with the ads than the podcasting. So we went through a series of like, what I'll call, retooling. Now, a very handy advantage for me in this is I had a lot of video editors.

When strengths and skills find their niche

James: We had a virtual assistant partnership at some point too. Like, is there any skill you don't have?

Charley: I'm terrible at a lot of things. But in my world of things I've done, I think I've gone alright.

James: Well, you've got a good advantage, right? This is your rare combination, you're good with people and systems, and you're good with paid traffic, and you have an affinity for media, like the video and the audio. So those things are really valuable in the online space, as it turns out soon. You're in a great situation.

Charley: I do feel very lucky. I'm not going to lie, it feels like my natural tendencies ended up being a good conglomeration of skills, right? It wouldn't be such an advantage if I was like, you know, let's say, world strongman, and good at systems. It's like maybe I went a little bit in that world, but it's not as conducive.

James: It's like me, I figured out how to get paid to listen to people and then solve their problems, which seem easy for me to solve, and hard for them to solve. And I'll take that every day of the week. And even the fact that we can sit here in our own home and record a conversation that can go out there and be helpful to others, and some of those people who listen will end up becoming clients.

It's a model I can work with for a long time. As you know, when we're talking about episode 1058, it's clearly, it's been proven for me. And I think it also works for you, too, Charley.

How sub-niching elevates ad spend ROI

So big point number one, what's working now? Sub-niching, basically, putting a ring fence around a certain part of your audience and speaking specifically to them. One of the big concerns that comes up when you say that, is that, well, what about all the people I'm missing out on?



Charley: Well, great question. Let's go deeper on this one. I love it. Right? What I would say is like, you could make the case you're missing out on people, but I would actually make the case, in my world, you're actually wasting a lot of your ad spend and getting a lower quality. So if you go too broad, the real challenge comes that you get a lower quality of lead, and they might be cheap, but it tends to just drag down the organization.

Now, the other side of that is in what you can do with ads is like, you don't have to do one campaign. So I mentioned the idea of like, you know, we'd sub-niched this accountant into doing contractors and tradies. That's one of the campaigns. The other one's actually medical. Right? So that's their one-two combo.

Now in the world of ads, that's fine to do. In the world of like, branding and your business, in other worlds, that's not fine to do. So as long as your umbrella serves, what we're really talking about is the perspective of like, using this in a paid media sense. It will be much more difficult to execute that in other avenues.

But this is where the opportunity is, and I've got some more of them here which I think could be really, really good. I also do work with mortgage brokers in Australia, I think that's a really strong one as well, where this applies. And rather than just going after, you know, hey, let's get a, let's say, a mortgage review done, or let me check your loans or anything like that, going after, again, like specific segments, like nurses and teachers, or going after business owners that have a unique need.

The quality of the lead that's been able to come through on top of that has just been incredible. Like, absolutely incredible. And I'll give one more example here, because I was a fan of this one as well, we have someone who does health, I'll call it health coaching, right? Essentially, they were providing, like, a six-week body transformation. Now originally, they were just going after, let's call it like, weight loss, as an example here.

James: That's fairly broad.

Charley: Yeah right, really broad. But what's become really interesting is as they've gone after, like employment segments, well, now they're very different, and it's cutting through. So they're going after, like, teachers, or going after nurses, or shift workers. Again, people with a little bit of a unique need has been really cool here. And that's enabled them to cut through in what I'd say is an incredibly crowded space.

So if I was in any of the spaces today, I don't think there's really an argument for pushing back on sub-niching when it comes to ads. Because you can always do more campaigns, right? You can always change the niche where it comes to it. And then the other side of it is, I think, the quality lift I've seen would just justify the effort of doing that extra work. It really does. So I'm a big fan of the sub-niching approach now. And I think if anyone's running ads or considering it, that should be strategically where some thoughts go in at the moment.

When broad targeting meets smart algorithms

James: There was some discussion around with ads, that you should let the platform do the work for you and not try and keep it as specific as possible, that it's okay to go a little broader now and let the platform work for you. Where do you sit on that?

Charley: Well, that's a great question. I love this one. It's a really good one. I'll put it this way. It's kind of true. And it's like, it's dangerous that it's kind of true, because I think people can like, put opinion and manipulate around the edges. What's occurred in both YouTube and, I'll say, Meta, and TikTok to a degree, is their algorithm is actually exceptional. And if you give the platform good creative, it can actually find the right targeting.

So I'll give you an example here to make this one clear. And we'll use weight loss as the example here again. I've got a really good video ad, and I call someone out specifically, and it goes, Hey, you know, if you're a young dad, and you're 30, and you've put on five kilos since having a kid, and you want to lose that weight, then I've got the program for you. I've got a six-week program, if you put your name and email below, I'll send you the details, right? Very direct ad.

Right now, if you put that out to everyone, I'm talking like male, female, old, young, well, really, it's only a very specific segment that that ad's actually going to appeal to. Now, as long as a group that fits that description convert on that ad, the algorithm will actually do the work of finding those people for you. It actually will.

So you can theoretically not target anyone, provided the creative is good, and get the algorithm to do the work far better than you may be able to target yourself. However, there's only certain circumstances you would really use that. And there's actually a balance to play. Well, in that example, again, well, if you know you're in this example, it's only for dads who are 25 to 35, you know, maybe putting in male, 25 to 35, would give the algorithm a head start, would save some of the testing that goes into it.

So that's a really important part there. And then, just to preface the downside of this strategy is, and I've had this happen, right? And I'll give you an example here is that we were doing a campaign, a mortgage campaign in Australia. And for whatever reason, the people that converted on the board targeting in the beginning were all in Western Australia.

So the algorithm actually self-optimized for Perth, which wasn't a big enough market to carry the campaign. So it actually chokes and throttles. So what will end up happening is your ad campaigns won't spend the money because, Facebook, in this example, won't have the ability to go and find these people. It's like, well, I know who you want, because I found some of them. But I can't find any more in context here, because we've gone too small. So you have to reset campaigns and do things differently to overcome that if you are going to deal with it.

But it's an interesting thing to think that these platforms are so good at finding the right people now that targeting is something that I would say is, you used to have to be quite good at targeting to be successful with ads, where the shift is more now to being you want to be exceptional and creative. Still some targeting skills. But that's the formula to win.

Adapting to change: reviving segmentation techniques

James: It does lend itself to my current thinking about how content marketing works, where if you have a channel, and you have 10 videos, and one of them's gone particularly well, which is, let's say that's happened to me in my [surf channel](#), one of them has just knocked it out of the park. The platform is saying to me, please make another video just like this, because we know these people like it, and we're going to promote it for you. Not only to those people, but we'll give it a better run, right?

So there is another way though, right, to really train the ad platform to give you the absolute best people who are likely to buy that maybe, almost counterintuitive. But before I ask you to reveal what that is, I just want to say it's absolutely adorable that you've got a little sticker on your hand. Tell me you have a kid without telling me you have a kid. I'm running a unicorn power sticker here that I only just noticed was on my T-shirt just before the show. So how do we get the most out of the platform if we're running ads?

Charley: How do we get the most out of the platform? Well, this is where it becomes quite circumstantial, this is like trying to give health advice for everyone. If you're 75, the health advice should be very different than if you're 20. Right? If you're a coaching business, in an earlier stage, the advice is going to be very different than versus if you're an ecom business who's, you know, doing eight figures a year.

So it's very difficult to say that, like universally, and this is where like, the approach I very much take is you've got to put the business circumstance first, and then pick the right spots, you've got to be able to do that. So that's, I think, a huge part of where a lot of people go wrong today. Like if someone took the idea from this conversation and goes, well, I'll just do broad targeting and very specific call out ads, and that's going to work for me.

Like, in some cases, yes. But not in all cases, like, that's a very applicable thing. I would actually suggest the best place for people to start is by knowing where your competition is, because that's very likely, people only spend ads in general in places where they're getting a good return, and kind of start from there. Or speak to a professional like myself, it's very easy on our experience to go, well, if you're this type of business, these are the things we'd recommend.

And I'm constantly innovating and playing with these things to your point, like even what I suggested right now, by this sub-niching strategy I was talking about, like that's new, like we weren't doing that 12 months ago, because the broader style campaigns were working more to a degree.

But as more players come in and copy our stuff, which is inevitably something that happens if you're in this game, is people will copy your things, right? Once too many people have copied this stuff, you've got to be ready to innovate to the next thing, and you've got to be on the forefront. So like my sub-niching idea, I'm hoping I get a year out of, but over time we'll find out. Might be more, might be less.

James: Yeah, the really good bonus about that is you can sub-niche but still have multiple sub-niches to add up to being broad, but you're just putting them in its own lane. You know, it actually reminds me of the original Definitive Guide to AdWords by [Perry Marshall](#). You know, he was talking about peel and stick and segmenting, like it's an old idea.

Charley: Broad match campaigns, and you'd pull them out into exact match.

James: Exactly. And then there was this theme where you don't need to do that anymore. And now we're back.

How conversion pixels transform ad strategies

But I'll tell you what might make it different. And I can tell you, when I was first following guys like [Andre Chaperon](#) in like 2006, he was one of the only people that I remember who were using conversion pixels to inform ad campaigns.

Can you just talk for a moment about pixels and where to put them? Because I feel like this is what, if you're not using pixels or conversion tracking, you're wasting your time running ads, I imagine?

Charley: Yeah, you just wouldn't do it.

James: Yeah.

Charley: You really wouldn't do it. And I'll tell a quick story on this one. I wanted to do a test on something for running video campaigns, right? I was like, you know, what if we ran a campaign that was like a video views campaign, which is an objective you can run, so there's no pixels, we're just giving the platform, like, get as many views on my video as possible.

James: Which is what most enterprise internal ad people do. They go to their boss, say, Hey, we got 10 million views on our such-and-such video, and they're like, Awesome. [laughs]

Charley: And don't you look good in that meeting, right, as a hero? We'll come back to that. And then I wanted to run the same - so it's the same video, but what I'm going to change here is I'm going to make it a conversion campaign. So there's a button to click. And I want to make it very specific that I want people to convert.

I've got a call to action in both videos, the video is the same. And what I wanted to know is, do you actually get less video views for running a conversion campaign versus a video view campaign? And like, what I found is absolutely, like, mind-bending to me is that if you do a video view campaign or a traffic campaign, like, Facebook knows the people that are likely to watch your videos, or click a button, but they also know who are the ones that are likely to convert.

So even if you're running a video view campaign in this sense here, you want to be going for the one that's a conversion, because it is the people that are most likely to buy your stuff down the road. Facebook knows, well, you are the people that click on pages and buy stuff versus the people that don't. And they've got credit card data, they've got stripe integrations, landing page data, like, they know who spends money and who doesn't on their platform via ads. It's incredible.

James: Oh, they know so much. Like after watching the Social Dilemma, it's pretty mind-bending. Imagine them, back before privacy got a little bit scrutinized. Remember, they were running ads to soon to be pregnant, young teenagers before they even knew they were pregnant? Like, that is a lot of data.

Charley: You could actually still do that on Google. It's outrageous.

James: I mean, it's just incredible. They just know more information than we could even comprehend. I mean, gosh, many, many years ago, I was talking with Mike Rhodes about AI on these platforms, we're talking seven or eight years ago. You'd have to think they're doing some pretty crazy stuff now in terms of predictive marketing. And that's why the conversion pixel, training that platform on who is the buyer, is critical. Right?

Tailoring pixel tracking for enhanced ROI

What about training them on who converts to opt in versus who actually buys the product? Is there a major difference?

Charley: Yeah, so let's go through this, I'll use some examples here to be a bit more helpful. Let's say you have a coaching business, and you're someone who does a VSL. And then at the end of the VSL, you've got an offer you want people to go and buy a product after it. Okay, so in a lot of cases, what an ad agency will do is they'll set up their pixel to track a conversion based on people who put their name, email, potentially phone number in to watch the video.

Right. So that's a lead conversion. They haven't bought anything yet, but you've collected their details to watch the VSL. And to be frank, this is something we used to do quite a lot of, I still do a little bit of it today. Now, what we tested pretty heavily, though, is actually moving the conversion pixel not to where someone's a lead, but saying we only want to track the buyers, right?

So someone would have to put in their name and email, watch the VSL, click the button at the bottom of the VSL and then buy, before we would count it as a conversion, rather than counting a lead as a conversion. Now, this is a significant change on going from like, the lead side of things to now the sales side of things.

But when we gave Facebook in this example here, actually, I'll say Meta because it was in Instagram as well, when the pixel started collecting only sales data, right? The lead cost went up, which is a little bit like, ugh. But so did the number of conversions substantially on sales side. So again, it just proves to this point of like, how powerful these platforms are.

If you're able to feed the data into it at the like, most direct source, like so in this case here, it would be where the point of sale is made, it's able to do an excellent job of actually converting people at a higher rate. I would suggest that for people that are running, let's say VSLs, or like, live event ads, or things like that, as well, or maybe the webinar will be more effective here because it's evergreen.

James: Book giveaway, I'm thinking...

Charley: Book giveaway, great example.

Why sales matter more than leads

James: This specifically happened to me. It's easy for the guy running your ads to the book to say, Look how many people have got your book. And I'm like, I don't care. I wonder how many of those people who got the book buy my coaching program, or buy from my partners. That's the thing I would like to check, because I'm going to take the amount I spend and then compare it to the actual revenue that it generates.

It's not meaningful to me, if I have people getting the book that aren't going to buy at some point. It's not as useful for me. I'd rather spend more for less leads. And I remember seeing a case study from MindValley, where they were saying that they changed their opt-in page to get less opt-ins, but it ended up in more orders so they clearly have to have been tracking the sales.

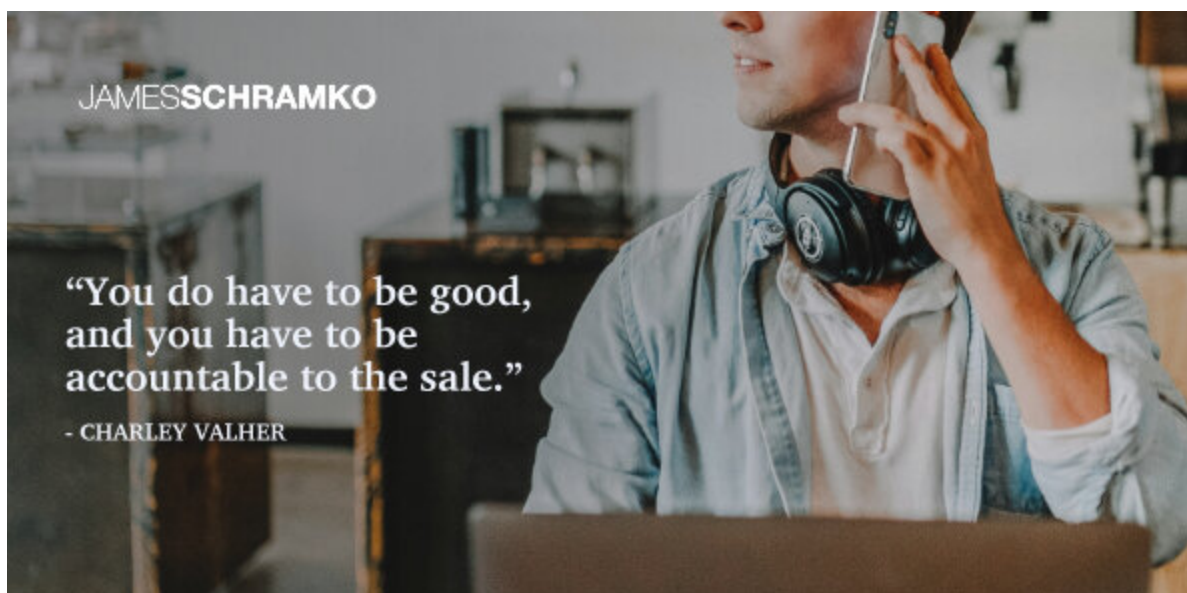
But this really speaks to me, because much to the horror of many people, I think in the early days of my affiliate marketing, the only person I was interested in was the buyer. I would give people who bought the program through my affiliate link a membership, and a cheat sheet. That my only list of email people were buyers. So I had, you know, from my first 100 or so buyers, I'd made good commission. My first 1000 buyers, I had a pretty decent sample set of people who had spent \$200.

They'd spent \$200 on - and I know exactly what they spent it on. And I knew all about them. And that made it easier for me to go out there with the next offer. That was super, super sub-niche, which is also very interesting. So the beginning success that I ever had was being super sub-niche, and only dealing with buyers.

It's very important now because we have people who get super carried away with having huge followings, and big email lists, and lots of subscribers. I saw on one of those sort of scammy sites, there was a guy exposing this podcast who has millions of followers, and he posts posts with tens of thousands of views. And there's not a single comment on these. And he's charging people \$6,000 to do a podcast. And clearly, it's just fabrication.

So it's completely, it's bot traffic, all the reviews are bots, all of the views are bots. The only person who is going to believe that is super shallow. Like, they're just basically, they're lifting themselves up on a fake cloud that eventually has to crash. So focusing on the buyer only with the pixel, I imagine that's harder for the agency to say, This is what we're going to base it on, because you're going to have less exciting reporting.

It's not going to thrill someone who's interested in vanity metrics, as much as it would if you could just track leads or that initial action. It can be very exciting to report on that. Bit harder, I mean, you actually have to be good to report on sales, because you're going to say, Here's what you spent, here's what you sold. And that number that you sold better be more than what they spend, or they're not going to stick around forever.



Integrating skills for superior results

Charley: Don't you feel that's, as much as I can appreciate that and say, yeah, you do have to be good, and you have to be accountable to the sale. But if you're not, it just leads to churn.

James: There are actually a lot of people who are not good.

Charley: That is a real issue.

James: Like, I had an SEO business for seven years. And most of our competitors were pissing wind. Like, they were just buying random forum links on the bottom of a forum, or just doing shady stuff, like getting Fiverr gigs for spam bot links, and then they'd go back to the client, say, Oh, look, you're ranking for this. Totally obscure longtail words like, on page one.

But in our world, it's like, hey, which of your phrases turns into buyers? What converts for you? We want to know that, that's where you should focus. We'd actually say to clients, You've got the wrong target. You don't want to rank for this phrase, here's a phrase that you would probably want to rank for.

And you know what the best thing, the best asset that someone could come to us when they were trying to grow organically, it was a paid traffic campaign, because we already knew what converts, right? If you're doing organic campaigns, and you haven't done paid traffic, you have to wait a long time to find out what's going on.

But if you use these together, they are the most powerful possible combo because they inform each other. I imagine if someone has a good organic presence, you can log into their analytics and say, Well, this is organically where you're getting a lot of traction, we think this would be a good thing to make more of, or to boost, or to run a campaign around, or to piggyback.

Charley: Completely, and we do that often. It's a really powerful idea.

But I'll just go a little bit deeper on that one. We employ four full-time developers. Like, I have four developers on staff. And originally the idea of hiring a developer was like, what, we're an ad agency. We don't need it. What are you talking about?

But it has become so much more important to be on top of how to track things properly, do the integrations properly, and have the automations work well to make this setup work. And if you're an ad agency today that doesn't have that, I'll probably beat you just on having a better setup in that world.

So for me, it's critical for performance, but to your point, it comes with a certain - you've got to have a certain size to be able to pull that off. I don't think most agencies have that resource in-house, and that is a disadvantage to them.

The resurgence of live events

James: Huge. So we've talked about sub-niching. We've talked about tracking the conversion pixel at the sale, which is pretty ballsy. We've had some side conversations about reward mechanisms, client size, client type, etc. There are still more things that I'm curious to find out about what's working. But I feel like I'll invite you back to talk more about those if I can.

I want to know, and maybe it gives you some time to get some information on this, but I want to know if live events versus online events, I want to know some of those metrics. I want to know if low ticket or high ticket is in vogue at the moment, and I'm curious about what kind of funnels are working well, because, you know, there's always different advice. It's either get people to book an appointment, or is there a video sales letter? Or is there a webinar? Or do we invite them to? I'm wondering if we can talk about those on our next episode.

Charley: Let's do it. Can I keep away a little hint before we wrap up, though?

James: Go on.

Charley: Live events are so freaking hot right now. I am like, beyond excited. And they are definitely in this bucket of what's working.

James: When you say live, do you mean in person or virtual?

Charley: So both, but particularly the like, in-person, you-could-touch-someone-else events, are hitting the ground, like absolutely crushing right now. So that's in our list of like, if I would say is what's working now. If you'd like, though, James, and I mean, I'm putting this in the episode, so we kind of have to do it. But I can do a whole unpack of the strategy we're running for live events at the moment. And it's like, I think it is probably going to be one of the most powerful things in 2024.

James: Yeah, I'll definitely want to put you down for that.

It makes sense. Like, I imagine there's been a slingshot build up of people being isolated, people being cut off, told they can't leave the house. Two weeks' quarantine in that Brisbane hotel was one of the most difficult two weeks of my entire life. And so I get it, people want to get out and about.

Charley: And less people are doing them. There's less events, more demand, like I don't know about you, but that sounds like an equation.

James: Well also, it was a bit harder to travel, you know, it was a bit harder to travel up until now. I've just done another round of overseas travel in the last month. And this is the first time I did it without them moving a flight or canceling a flight or losing something, which was pleasant. Also, the costs are coming down a little bit. So I feel like whatever you're seeing now is just the start of it. And if we ever get to a point where they actually stop putting up the interest rates, or even pull them back slightly, people are going to spend on going to these things.

Charley: I'm going to put that in as well. Right? What's working now? Interest rates, it's coming down. right? It's on the list for 2024. [laugh]

James: Please, book it in, Charley.

Charley: I have no idea to be clear, but it's just, I feel like it.

James: I think they're pretending that it's going to happen to make us feel more relieved about the fact that almost all the income is going back into mortgages for most people. But whether they actually do it, only time will tell.

If you'd like to work with Charley....

Charley, it's such a delightful chat. Could you please share with us, what is the easiest way for us to chat with you or your team about if your agency might be good for helping with that, with the traffic, like, you clearly know your stuff. If we want to work with you, what do we do?

Charley: Head over to [ValherMedia.com/review](https://valhermedia.com/review). So I really encourage people to take that up as well, because there's in five minutes, I'll be able to tell you which way our, I think it should be done. Like we've got a really good perspective on it. And I think it can be incredibly helpful. Now if you're someone that's actually running ads at the moment, if you come in and do that review, I'm happy to go through your accounts with you in live time and show you where opportunities are.

I'm happy to - even if it might be just a reassuring thing to say, Hey, look, your current agency is doing a really good job. People who do that, the feedback I get tends to be pretty good. So, more than welcome. Come and have a chat. If it's a great fit, maybe we'll get to work some magic together.

James: There you go, [ValherMedia.com/review](https://valhermedia.com/review). Charley, thanks so much. I'm looking forward to the next episode. We're going to book it straight away.

Charley: I'll pull the stats. We'll do a good one on this. From the point of view of like we'll unveil it.

James: Thank you so much. See yah!



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