



JAMES SCHRAMKO

The Power of Lead Magnets and Intent in Paid Ads: What's Working Now with Paid Ads and Media

Elevate your paid ad campaign. James and Valher Media's Charley Valher discuss ad campaign types, lead magnets and advertising intent.



Charley Valher

James: James Schramko here. Welcome back to my podcast. This is episode 1020. Got my good old friend [Charley Valher](#) back. Welcome back, Charley, again.

Charley: Again, thank you for having me on the show again, James. I actually love coming on here. And the reason for it is every time an episode comes out, inevitably, some people in your community will just reach out and some really powerful conversations will come. That's awesome. So if you're listening to this, like, come chat to me after.

James: Nice. So you're a man of many talents, of course. I'm always reminded when we do a podcast that I'm recording on a better camera, and a better sound deck, and video, because of Charley. You've had a big influence on this podcast. And I'm watching what you do out there.

A skillset that came in very handy

I see your social media posts. I know you like steak. I know you're doing food contests. I know you have been purchasing properties and things. It's all very exciting. But I also see that you're getting great success with media, running ad campaigns, which is one of your first love languages of online marketing, isn't it?

Charley: James, you were actually the influence of that. I came to you originally, and you gave me the advice. I was doing every agency service under the sun at this point.

And you said to me literally these words, you said, You seem to be pretty good at running ads. Why don't you just do that? So I did.

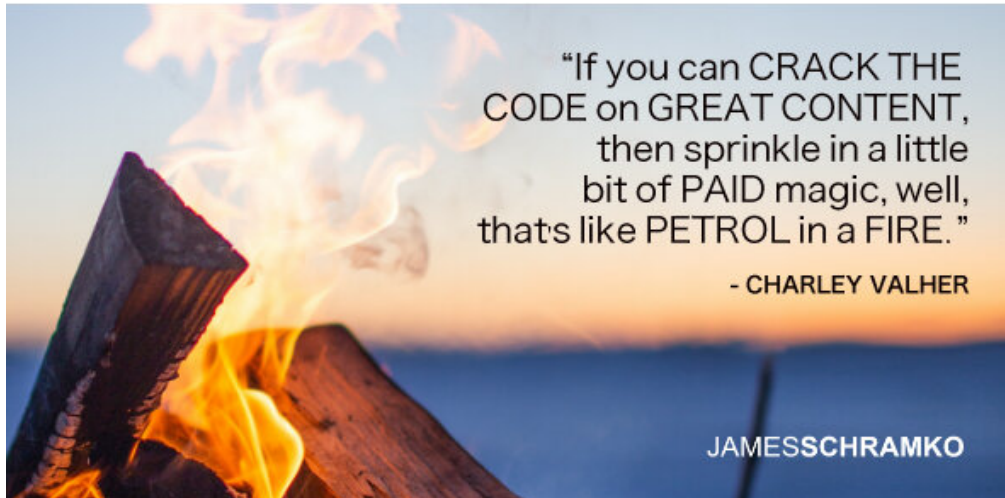
James: Was that the time you joined the membership briefly, and then disappeared for a while? And then you came back years later. And now you've become a partner of my business.

Charley: It was literally the journey, the come around journey. I went and did the paid ads thing, ended up building quite a successful paid ads agency, which I went on to sell, which was awesome. And then, oddly enough, it's a skill that doesn't leave you. Like when you're being deep in those trenches, it's something that just keeps coming up for me.

And to shed some light on that, I think many of your audience will know, since then, I've actually built quite a substantial media agency where we focus, or I wouldn't say purely focused, but certainly predominantly focused on video podcast. Because that was a massive trend I could see coming and thought that this was inevitably going to be something we would want to get on board.

And to your point is, your video looks better because of it. The video rig I'm on is what it is because of it. And I think you could make a good case for in the last, let's say three years, video podcasts have just exploded, exploded. Inevitably, one of the things I found really fascinating in that is while they've exploded, in our clients, and in myself, the next thing becomes while I'm doing this video podcast, how do I grow this thing? How do I get people to it?

And my bias of - when I say my bias, really the skills I have in paid marketing led me to say, well, ads is clearly the way to do this, like this is something I know. So this is a skill set we've bought back in and expanded upon.



And it's ended up becoming what I would say even more powerful, because I didn't realize at the time, but I'm now appreciating that it's like, it's one thing to make great content, if you can crack the code on great content, then sprinkle in a little bit of paid magic, well, that's like petrol and a fire. Like, you're able to really take it off. And for myself and many others, it's actually been how they've been able to succeed in that world.

James: Yeah. It's a couple of themes I've seen, I remember [Tom Breeze](#) talking about a good YouTube ad is going to be good content. And then you accelerate it with the paid traffic. And that's why they started making them public, instead of just running the ads private and then boosting them with paid traffic.

And I saw on another podcast, a young guy is actually going quite well with his own podcast. And he said it's still early days for podcasts. That was really interesting, for someone who's been around for a while like me, to hear someone say that after, gosh, I don't know, it's been 13 years or so, 14 years, since I started podcasting. To hear that it's still early days, interesting. What do you think about that?

Charley: I actually agree.

James: Yeah. Okay. Well, it'd be good to be so far on the right side of this.

Charley: You were really early on this one, James.

James: Some of the old carts, they had RSS feed capability so that people could buy media. They were early. I think a few times in my career, I've been too early with stuff. And then later I've seen it come. And I can give you some examples. The thing that [I quit my job](#) with in 2008 was setting up a small media agency and having a couple of clients. But that's really popular now.

I tried to sell video media agency stuff 12 years ago, there wasn't much demand for it. I had to do a lot of educating. But now I think people really know that they need it. And I'm watching you with that video agency, combining it with the paid traffic, thinking, you've also combined it with something else, you also were a stakeholder in a recruitment business. And you're clearly great at building teams, and leading a team.

So you've got things that people can't easily replicate, you've got a good understanding of the audio, video, you've got the traffic brain, but you've got the team to implement. And most people get stuck because they don't have a team, or they can't figure out the traffic before it kills them with budget.

Charley: I often look back on the journey you've just referenced there and said that I feel I've been very fortunate in - one thing seems to stack into the next. And I wish I could say I'd put more huge intent into that. But realizing that paid ads going into being able to recruit and build a reasonable team, like we have about 50 people who work for us now, at least. So I'd say it's a very reasonable team. And then to be able to stack on podcasting as a skill and bring them all together and at times has been hugely powerful, and very fortunate.

If you could pick Charley's brain...

James: So being exposed to such a large client base with such a big machine there, you're seeing what's working. And that's really what I wanted to get to today. Because let's say we're coming to this fairly cold, we don't have a lot in play. We might have a membership, we might have an agency, we might have a service. Maybe we've got an e-commerce store, some software.

But let's say we've got something and we want to say, hey Charley, what's going well, mate? What's happening in your world that we can learn from, you know, if we were doing the classic, Can we sit down and have a coffee with Charley? Love to suck your brain, or this, Pick your brain. Is that what they say? Charley, could I just pick your brain and maybe take you out for coffee? What would I be drilling you for information on? What's the goal, the 80:20, the 64:4, even?

Charley: What a great question. James, I'll tell you what, I'll let you pick my brain. I don't like the idea overall, but I'll allow it.

James: I hate it. It's the worst saying ever. It should be banned. Like in terms of metaphors, it's right up there with seven ways to skin a cat. Like, I don't know about you, Charley, but I'm deeply disturbed that anyone knows even one way to skin a cat. But seven ways, then that's someone I definitely don't want to hang around too much. Like, so some metaphors shouldn't be out there. Pick your brain is not an attractive metaphor for the expert. So we should reframe that, perhaps.

Charley, knowing what you know now, having run your agency and having a great team and lots of incredible clients, what sort of campaigns are good to start with or to get going if we had nothing? What would be your dream rollout for a campaign?

Considering that platforms change

Charley: What a great question. I'd love to frame this one up a little bit further. There's a couple of things that people just don't understand about paid traffic in general, that I think it's really important to highlight at the moment before I go any deeper, because this in itself is where a lot of people go wrong with it.

A lot of people when they get into paid, one of the things they'll rub up against that they don't truly understand is that it changes. It really changes, it changes on two fronts that I think is again, very important to understand is like, number one is the platforms change.

So I'll give you a great example is, once upon a time, it used to be a really, really, really good idea to run page like campaigns on Facebook, because if you could get people to like your page, if you posted anything organically, they would see it. Winning strategy, killed it. Like, we did very well out of it.

But as the platform changed, that strategy is a non-viable one today. And I wouldn't recommend people run a page like campaigns to like grow their business or their audience today. So that's one of them.

The other thing is like, new things come out. And I know you're not a fan of TikTok, James. And I'll leave that where it is. But there's certainly a lot of people that are, and that is an evolving platform.

James: Look, one thing I've learned is my opinion doesn't matter. Right? Because I'm in my own bubble, thinking about my preferences, and my values, and things that I know. And one thing I had to get good at when I was selling, and as a coach or a mentor, I have to get outside of my world and understand, for some people, TikTok will be the greatest thing ever. I've seen that they're sending you lots of merchandise. So I imagine right now you're getting great results on TikTok for somebody.

Charley: That we are. I'm actually gold-tier agency on TikTok now.

James: Oh, there we go. You could put that one up on the wall.

Charley: I should have got the - they've sent me all kinds of things. I've got umbrellas, cups, coffee things. It's fantastic. And honestly, they're fantastic to deal with, because they recognize they're the underdog and they want to win advertisers to spend more money on there, and we spend a lot of money. So it's something to make note of there.

So like, you just have to look, that's a whole new opportunity in itself, that for certain businesses is going to be fantastic.

The businesses that do well on TikTok

James: I have to ask you, what businesses?

Charley: Well, that's another great question. I'll tell you where I'm getting the wins on there, particularly, is going to be like, one is career change. So I'll tell you right now, if you're targeting people, millennial or younger, that are looking to make a change in career, I think it's a fantastic one. We also do quite well in the finance industry on that one as well, I think is a really interesting one.

And then hobby niches. So think food, which you can see, I might spend a time on there, is a really good one. Think cycling, think fishing, like anything that would fall into a hobby niche, fantastic platform for. I think it's really great, because that's where people are going to consume. And I just have to make this one point on TikTok before we jump off the topic of TikTok. You've got to remember, when people get under TikTok, they're there to actually watch things. Like, they're there to engage in content.

So their consumption rate is through the roof compared to something like Facebook or Twitter, which is largely like scroll-based, it's distractionary based. So for the right businesses, it's a really good move. Not all. But for some, I think it's a really, really good move. So that again, just highlighting opportunity and where I think it can be really powerful in itself.

And the last one I kind of have set out there is like, YouTube shorts has evolved, and you can actually do YouTube short ads now, which is like in combination, or I really should say is like they really just released this to fight back against TikTok. Let's be real. TikTok was cutting their lunch.

James: This is why the big platforms are always doing this. Instagram did that to Snapchat, didn't it? They put the stories and stuff.



Charley: Hugely so, hugely so. So first frame up is like, the platforms change. As they change, those who are willing to change do really well. That's where huge wins are.

James: So it's dynamic. It's not a set and forget thing. That's something we have to be aware of. And a lot of the courses and training out there, I imagine it dates pretty quickly.

Taking into account result compression

Charley: Hugely so. And that's why I really want to frame this is like someone might be listening to this episode now. But if you listen to it a year from now, it may not be as effective. And if you're also following a strategy you maybe picked up six months ago or a year ago, like, I'd be very cautious of like watching for result compression.

James: Result compression. That's a new one. Is that like the diminishing return?

Charley: Completely. And that's the way I look at it. What tends to happen is like, we were doing this, and I'll even just tell people, like a year ago, I was doing a Facebook group strategy. So we were getting people into a Facebook group, and then promoting things from that, whether it's podcasts or whether it was offers and things like that. And it was working really well. It was like, an absolute killer strategy. But it's like, it's actually become, it gradually declines, it decays.

James: Was that because internet marketers ruin everything?

Charley: Well that's part of what causes these cycles.

James: Because I was coaching a guy who was doing that successfully about three or four years ago. And then he started teaching it. Then I was involved in - there was a launch that I promoted where someone did it. I didn't get many sales from that. I thought, hmm, maybe it's not working so well. And my concern with it from a marketer's perspective is just, what a colossal waste of time and energy if it's not going to have a huge yield?

Charley: I concur. I actually, in this case here, the Facebook group thing is the algorithm has changed for how much they promote group content.

James: Is it true they're now running ads to Facebook groups or about to?

Charley: I do believe that, I mean, to be seen, right? We hear rumors of things they're going to release.

James: I hope it happens. I hope it happens.

Charley: It's an interesting strat - and for some people, it will do okay. But again, I just want to recognize that evolvment and like, you know, things change and decay. And if you're someone out there running ads right now, and you're noticing that decay, like, this might be a signal for you that it's time to kind of revamp things, and I hope I really hope people think about the ideas of where they could potentially move to.

The environment we move in changes

The second element of this, though, is like we've got platform change, which is massive. We've got environment change. I kid you not when you look at the world today, I'm not going to say we're in a downturn because I don't know if that's true, universally, like some industries are booming, and some are not. But I will say it's different. It's very, very different.

And like, what I'm seeing on a lot of fronts is that, if you're in certain industries, like the finance industry for us is doing really well, I look at that and go, they're going stronger than ever. Like, if you're a mortgage broker, or a buyer's agent, or a developer, or you're doing something in the property space, or finance space around the world, which involves making more money, it is boom time. I'm seeing all of them do really strongly. And that's not universally true, but in my client pool, it is.

On the reverse of that, if you're in an industry that's going through a decline right now, it's really tough. So there's a lot of change happening out there. So I would very much look into the idea that you've got to be thinking about what type of stuff you're promoting is relevant to the environment. It's not just the platform you pick or the campaign, it's like, is it the right offer to be even promoting at this time of year?

James: It'd be like, if you're a travel company trying to promote tours during pandemic lockdown.

Charley: Completely, not the right time.

James: No amount of brilliant marketing is going to help that. It's cooked for a while.

Charley: Yeah. So we worked with a client who, they're in the coaching space, and they work with what I call tradies or contractors, right? And once upon a time, the thing to do was just promote, well, how do you get more business? It's all that growth. But now what's crushing it for them is all around, well, how do you hire the right team? And then how do you survive a recession?

Because that's the concern in their marketplace, is that there's not as many people are building homes because the building costs are skyrocketing, apparently. I don't know, but let's just pretend it is. So that's what's going on for them. They're absolutely more framed in that way. So appropriate messaging and offers and lead magnet is just becoming more important than ever with what's going on.

James: Okay. So you got dynamic platforms, dynamic environment.

Charley: Yup. Makes it really difficult, ey? [laughs]

A constant need for innovation

James: [laughs] Well, that's a great time to have a paid traffic agency, if you are dynamic, and platform-savvy. And, you know, I've often said this, because I coach people with agencies, and it's not long in the timeframe until things change, and they're like, Oh, crap, this doesn't work anymore, or these clients are stopping.

And I always say, Hey, you've got a core engine there. You write ads, you've got the creative platform, you've got the ability to adjust dials and toggles in the platform itself. You've got a billing system for clients, you have a reporting system to tell them what results you're getting. You just need to hook to the right platform and understand how the platform works. And then attract the right clients who are prospering.

This is a really important point, Charley, and you've touched on this, your reality might be different to someone else's reality. Today, there'll be someone who's struggling to pay their bills. And they're going to go down to the checkout at the supermarket and not be sure if that credit card is going to clear or not. And there'll be someone else who's trying to figure out where to put all that surplus cash that they're throwing off their business. And I've seen both sides of that.

And so there's always someone doing well, there's always someone in a good pocket of the market, it's just a matter of having a look for it. And within your own business, I guess it's like a slide where there'll be parts of the business that are not going to fly so well. And there are other things that you can change. And I've constantly adapted, too.

It was actually the promise I made to myself. When I quit my job, I said, I promise that I will continue to innovate, because I have to in order to stay alive. And it's probably one of the greatest things I've helped coach people with, is to avoid painting themselves into a corner, avoid the traps of being single-source dependent, or going down a one-way path where they can't get back out.

If we head that off at the pass - and you and I had a conversation recently, Charley, where we're at the crossroads, there's this path, that path, and another path, and we combined our decision-making and experience banks to decide which path to go down. And that's missing for some people. But I can imagine how difficult it must be for someone to just start advertising on any platform from scratch. It's just loaded, isn't it? The game is loaded for the house.



Charley: Well, first off, James, I appreciate the conversation we did have the other week. I think it's really important for people to have an outside perspective to make great decisions. Otherwise, you can easily go down the wrong path or be too consumed in things. The second one I'll say is, like media-buying and ad-buying today and campaign strategy, I'm unsure if this is something you would even consider doing yourself anymore.

James: I wouldn't. I was running ads on Facebook in 2008, and AdWords, but I don't touch my ads anymore. I have help running the ads. And I still do run ads. I think it's important to run ads, as you've indicated. If you've got good content, or you've got

something out there in terms of an offer, then it does make sense to enhance it, augment it, boost it and run it across multiple platforms.

I think I'm paying Google and Facebook and Amazon for ads, at least off the top of my head. Occasionally, it's worth doing things like newsletter sponsorships, etc. But a lot of it's going to come back to having something to give away or a lead magnet.

And I really feel like we should go there at some point in terms of lead magnet, because someone might say, Okay, I accept that platforms are dynamic, I accept that environments are dynamic. I even accept that I need some help with this. And I'm prepared to take on someone. But I bet you that agency is going to say, Right, what assets have you got? What are you selling? What have we got to work with? Or what are we going to need to have in place to work with?

Charley: A great question. Should we go next? Should I just - let's go into some like, campaign strategies that we can use some examples.

James: It's okay. With you, like on the context of what's working now, with paid ads and media, you've already identified that for some people TikTok is an opportunity they should be looking at. You've identified that we need to consider if our tactics or strategies are up to date or relevant in today's environment, and on today's platform, because it changes.

The kinds of campaigns you can have

Now, I'm asking the question, well, what sort of campaigns can we have? And I think lead magnets, or, you know, whatever you want to call them, I call them on-ramps, I like that term, because I think of my main membership as a freeway. I would like to get people onto the freeway without merging, you know, you can't just jam someone onto the freeway at five kilometers an hour, because they're just going to get T-boned. Right?

I want to bring people up to speed. But there's a whole sort of cascading metaphor there about relevance and appropriateness. Because obviously, if the path's too short or doesn't line up, it's not going to work. So I'd love to know what's working well for the clients you're running paid ads for, in terms of getting people into that product, or how it works.

Charley: Awesome. Let's go there. The only caveat I'll put on this is this is probably not going to be suited towards e-commerce. We might do a whole another episode on like e-commerce, because I do have some great strategies on that. But for those that are doing education, so courses, memberships, B2B and services, right, whether you sell financial services or trade services, this is going to be a strong one. Even SaaS could do well.

James: An agency, any kind of agency.

Charley: Any kind of agency would be a really strong one here as well, I think is appropriate.

James: I reckon we've got that's, that's pretty much who we represent. So let's do this.

Charley: Also, majority of the people get the value, then, I like it.

James: Sorry, e-commerce people, we'll get back to you.

Charley: We'll get back to you. Okay. So the strategy I like at the moment is running like a dual campaign strategy. Right. And I would caveat that, not even caveat, but the way I would think about it is it's just two campaigns that are going to have very similar offerings, but they're very, very different in nature.

Unpacking the lead magnet campaign

So one is a lead magnet campaign. So to use an example here, let's say your audience is on Facebook, and that's the right place to market towards them. What I'm looking for is a downloadable. And this might be a framework, this might be a guide, this might be a book, but I want to use that as a link building strategy on Facebook.

Now, why this is so powerful right now is because of what's going on in the environment. Ads are very cheap on Facebook. So big advertisers like Nike, for example - now, I don't know the specifics of Nike, but let's just pretend - aren't spending as much money on ads at the moment. So all the ad placements are actually really cheap.

So it's something that's come up in a huge way here, is this is a very cost-effective time to list-build on platforms like Facebook right now. So I really like a very well-correlated lead magnet to what your business actually does. And I like putting that out there with the intent of, let's grow this list and nurture them into our offering. So that's part one of it.

James: On that. Can I ask many questions on that?

Charley: You can ask as many as you like, James, we're here on your show. You get to discern that.

James: I have to be a good host, though, Charley, and make sure that my guest gets to talk occasionally. I have been known to steamroll. So I'm just curious, that's all. With the lead magnet, a downloadable something, a cheat sheet, book etc. Sometimes people teach the person how to do the thing that they provide the service for, almost negating the need for the service. And I'm just wondering, how much thought do you put into what that lead magnet actually is?

Or, you know, in my case, and I talked about it in my [previous episode 1019](#), my book, [Work Less, Make More](#), is far too broad and general to get me my specific, perfect,

membership clients. It's too much of a gap to bridge. But some people give a downloadable that teaches the thing that they actually provide a service for.

Like in your case, if you were teaching someone how to set up ads, with the hope that they find it too difficult and then just buy you as a service. That's one way to do it. But what kind of lead magnet works the best, is what I'm saying. How far do you go between DIY or done with you or you know, just teaching people that they have a need?

And I saw one coach yesterday. One of his ads is, show people how clever you are, but basically don't teach them anything. That's working to the old philosophy of teach them what they need, and then sell the implementation. And I've downloaded a couple like this. And they were pretty much blank workbooks, which taught me nothing, and just made me waste time and energy and immediately unsubscribe, because it's like that's just insincere. It's definitely not helpful or valuable.

Charley: Obviously lined you up perfectly to buy their services, yeah.

James: Well, I'll start getting approached by the setter, right, the person who wants to set an appointment. And then you'll get the pretend flattery, and the casual DM chats start to happen. Hey, I really love that post you did with the podcast you did with Charley, I loved his tips on the changing face of media platforms. By the way, you know, how's business going for you at the moment? That sort of stuff comes through, like clockwork.

Charley: Yeah. So I would say that this is an area where I think not enough thought and intention gets put into it. So even in the examples you've used, if you give someone a lead magnet that is hollow, is what the word I would use.

James: Perfect example. That's a perfect example.

Charley: Right. They open it and they get no value. And then let's say you are a business that uses setters, like, what chances your setter or salesperson got if the experience they've had with you is hollow, right? And conversely, let's pretend you've delivered a really great lead magnet that helped someone solve a problem, was useful, was resourceful. And then the setter goes, you know, how did you enjoy the lead magnet? It was amazing. It really helped you. And that setter is going, Well great. We can actually do more of this. Like, what a different experience that is.

A good lead magnet for James

James: Some people are worried though, if you help people too much. Like in my case, I've given the whole book. It's like, Oh, thanks. I'll go and read that now. I don't need anything else.

Charley: Well, I might be as too bold as, I don't think that is the right lead magnet to promote your membership. Great book.

James: No, you're right, 100% validated, scientifically tested. [laughs] It's not the perfect lead magnet. But I do have other, way better lead magnets. The thing that's been working well for me is the multi-email campaign where I break down something over seven or 10 small bitesize videos, and then send a little email each day, pointing to that video, which is on a publicly accessible page, no login friction or any of that, they don't have to use usernames or passwords, they just click on the link and they can watch the exact thing that the thumbnail shows them.

And it's usually under two minutes. And I've noticed that somewhere like 68% or 70% of people actually go through all of those emails. And that for me is a good on-ramp. That is like a very long on-ramp that lets someone get up to freeway speed before I ask them to merge lanes. That's worked well for me. But I put that to the side initially, because I've seen if you volunteer a couple of good lead magnets.

Charley: Yeah. I'll tell you what, let's do one off the cuff here. I'd love to do an example of what I would do in potentially your position or someone similar. Let's say in this case here, I think a great lead magnet for you, James, would be like the 100K membership blueprint, right? So, many people come into your world because they're experts at what they do. But they want to be able to build a membership. Right?

So we've now got like a blueprint that's very, very aligned to an outcome. So if someone downloads that, right, it's very clear what they're trying to work towards versus just like, what is, I'm going blank right at the important time, Work Less, Make More. It's a very, very different intent purpose.

So let's say I would probably run that on Facebook ads, because I know that's where a lot of expert market is. I think that's a great place to run it. Now, someone downloaded that lead magnet of the 100K blueprint. And then you've got potentially these, you outline the blueprint of what it is to create 100K membership.

And then someone goes through it, they learn more about it. They see it's possible. Maybe there's a couple of great case studies in there. Then on the back of that, if they would like help with actually doing that thing, they do it through your membership, that's a really great alignment. That's something where the alignment of the lead magnet just works really strongly and I think would probably benefit you very strongly there. I think that's a really good power move.

Now, as you've kind of mentioned here, and something I'm loving here, is that if you've used that as your list builder, now with your emails, you can promote those core content pieces and keep nurturing that person to a sale. Now, if someone else has a setting team, of course, they could use a setter to do that, or a sales team to do that. But I think that's really powerful. I think that's a really good one.

James: I wrote that down. It's encouraging me to publish my membership book that I've been...

Charley: Highly encouraged.

James: There is a membership course inside my membership. And I need to bring that more to the public. In fact, if someone's listening to this episode, and they want the membership course, I do have available to the public side, I'm happy to send across to that if you reach out. Just send me an email, James@JamesSchramko.com, and I'll send you a link to that membership course. And we'll see if you end up becoming a member of my membership. We'll test out Charley's theory, as a result of this episode. Just send me an email, say, send me the membership training.

Charley: Can I throw in one more thing on this campaign just over there? Right so, with agencies, and I think this is a really important point, I see this a lot with agencies, so I'm going to call them out. In a lot of cases, agencies get confused with their lead magnets around like, showing people, like we'll just say an ad agency for this example. They'll actually like, make lead magnets that are about running ads.

James: That's what I was saying before.

Charley: Yeah, so that's the wrong lead magnet.

James: No. And I suspected that it was.

Charley: So I see this all the time. And I'm happy to be proven wrong on this, see if someone can provide it there. But if you're an ad agency trying to sell ad agency services, teaching people how to run ads is not really what they want.

James: It just doesn't make sense.

Charley: Madness. So again, the wrong lead magnet can have any campaign fail, but particularly this type of campaign.

James: What should the lead magnet be?

Charley: Yeah, so I much prefer for like, services and ad agencies, or in this case, we'll call it services is more of the thing here, it's like, don't teach your clients to do the thing. What you actually want to be more focused on is like, providing case studies and proof of how the thing can work for them, and give them a level of understanding on how they can be successful. Right?

So I look at that and go, for myself as an ad agency, what I actually want to put together is something where people can see how they can win in working with an ad agency. That's the frame you've got to be operating from.

James: For my agency partners, I've always recommended they do some kind of diagnostic or review. It works beautifully well because it's like a test drive of a car, which

is something I was familiar with. You've started the communication process, so you know if they're actually communicating well, or efficiently, or making sense.

They're having a look at what you've got, and making a judgement. So now you can gauge their experience, their expertise, their ability to see if there's something there that needs help or not. And occasionally, they might say, You know what, it's all perfect, there's nothing we can do for you here, or you're not a good fit because of this, or whatever.

When I had the SEO business, we would use this process to disqualify or exclude, you know, a terribly bad client from working with us, because we knew that it'd be hard work. So we would just basically mark it red and say, Look, not a good fit. And so you get your very best clients. And then sometimes you can offer them an incentive, like a rebate on their audit fee, towards any service, you could then with certainty tell them which is the appropriate level of service provision that might be working well for them.

So I do like a review kind of process for service agencies, if they've got the manpower. And some people are automating this with tools, you certainly see this in the fitness and weight loss area. People punch in details, and then it analyzes and gives a score and then prescribes the right package to go forward. But if you have a human-powered agency, and you want to take it to the next stage, I think that's always a good thing to do.

The diagnostic/review/audit campaign

Charley: Yeah. So let's unpack that even further, because you're kind of nudging on my second type of campaign. So the first type of campaign I've mentioned has been like a list growth campaign. I think it's a really great time to be doing list building. I really do.

James: But you couldn't build a list off a review or a diagnostic?

Charley: Completely can, but that's our conversion campaign. Right? Because that's a much stronger campaign, not so much in the area of like, audience growth. That's a great campaign to convert leads into sales. So in the combination of an agency here, I look at it and go, maybe a great lead magnet is like, how to hold your ad agency accountable. Right? What do you need to know about ads so you can work with an agency?

James: So this is a consumer buyer guide.

Charley: Yeah, fantastic one to do.

James: Like Joe Polish did with carpet cleaning.

Charley: Nailed it. So then the second campaign I would run with that is the diagnostic, is the review, is the audit. And I think that type of combination can work extremely well. And I want to use another niche as well, just to like, I suppose give people examples, because we're not all agencies here. Right.

So we work with an organization who's in the sales niche, they do sales training is their niche, right. So a lot of their like, lead magnets are very focused on like, how to overcome an objection is a really good one for them. So if someone's struggling with that, they can get a guide that could work really well. But then the conversion campaign might be, well, let me review your script, like, let me do a script review and see if we can work it out there. Or maybe their lead magnet might be they'll give away a script, and then they'll review something that comes in there.

So that type of two-campaign setup where you're doing one for growing an audience and very intently nurturing them, and then the other for how you're going to convert them. Like that's the one, two combo I'm using in every account we're in at the moment. And I think that's a really great way to be leaning into things.

James: So a lead magnet, followed by a call to action for some kind of interaction with your team. And is it paid or free, the interaction?

Charley: That's going to be niche-dependent. I would be recommending free is a really good place to get mass amounts of volume. So in the case where a business has like, setters they need to keep full and busy, you're going to go with free, but let's say you're a one-man business, and you don't have a lot of room on the calendar, you want to make sure you're getting the highest quality appointments you can get overall, like highest quality leads coming in. So maybe a paid offering is a really good way to go about it. Once upon a time, I used to do a lot of podcast reviews, a lot.

James: I remember. I think in our early days, it was something you offered.

Charley: Until it was just, 30 hours of my week. [laughs]

James: [laughs] That's too many.

Charley: I couldn't handle it. And I said, I've got to put a filter in.

James: But did I tell you about the SEO audit, when we went from free to \$20, it cut down the audits by about a fifth, to 1/5 of what we were getting. So four fifths stopped getting it, but of the 1/5, like 80% of them went on to be a customer, which ended up being exactly the same number of net customers.

Charley: Huge. Absolute winner.

James: And I think that's got a lot to do with intent.

Charley: Well, this is moving back to round to what you were asking in this question about like, how important is the lead magnet. So important, right, you can see that if you've got the wrong type of lead magnet set up or even just the wrong type of thing.

And the way I think about lead magnets is when you put a lead magnet out into any platform, what you're really doing is like, you're looking for people with a specific problem. And you want to make sure that the lead magnet you put out there has someone coming to you, putting their hand up going, I have this problem that you know you can help them with. And if your lead magnet doesn't achieve that, and isn't aligned with that, well, then it's very unlikely that you're going to have success here. Like, very unlikely.

More lead magnet examples

And we can go through some more examples, if you like. Or we can talk through some different ones here. Like we can take this conversation where you feel appropriate, James.

James: A couple more examples, I think, because I mean, this is probably one of the most valuable episodes that I've recorded for a long time. Notwithstanding the fact that I was away for three weeks. But the lead magnet and the follow-up, I mean, I could really see this working well for me as well.

And so you've given a few examples, you gave one for me. We've talked about some kind of downloadable, and then some kind of offer where you can get on a call or do some kind of diagnostic or review. What other lead magnets can we have?

Charley: So I'll do one, we work with some buyer's agent's property space. And this one's doing incredibly strongly right now where it's like, they're marketing a wealth tracker. So for people that are interested in tracking their wealth, is like the whole idea now. I love this one. It's very, how can I put it?

James: It's right up your lane, isn't it?

Charley: Oohh. It tickles me in all the right ways. Just think about the intent in that, is someone's wanting to track their wealth. They've got an intent on wanting to build wealth, wanting to measure wealth, they potentially already have some wealth they need to account for and measure. So what great intent.

And then the second part of that is they have got the ability to do a portfolio review. Right, so great review strategy there. Or the other one is they market them a case study of taking them from point A to point B, which I really like here, which is, I would think of it as like a VSL or just a long form video. So if someone's downloaded this wealth tracker, this is our list builder here.

James: So this is software.

Charley: I believe it's just a Google Sheet. I don't even think it's software in itself, but it very well could be made into a software.

James: I had a lot of software made from a spreadsheet into tools. In fact, if you look at the bottom of JamesSchramko.com, there's a little menu called [Tools](#). And you'll see there's a [membership calculator](#), an [effective hourly rate calculator](#), there's a [sales copy script generator](#). Having someone program these things into tools is epic. And I know people like Neil Patel, and a few others have got so many leads of having these tool front ends. Software tools for lead magnets, winning combo, no doubt about it.

Charley: Huge, and especially today with, there's tons of like, [no code](#) ability things as well.

James: Well, one of our members inside the membership used AI to code his tool. He's got an email copywriting tool. His name is Tim. He was on a [previous episode](#). And he got AI to write the tool, and then installed it and it's working great. I had the AI write me a time scheduler for my site. I'm not a coder. I asked it just to use only HTML and JavaScript. And then I gave it to a webmaster to put on the site and it works. And now I can see the time zones in my different markets. I think we're at the point where this wouldn't be an objection to having this lead magnet.

Charley: I concur. I feel like this is easily overcomable, very easily.

James: You know, in terms of intent, someone who's got property portfolio or wants to track their wealth, but also has a Google account, that's at least one filter for getting a real email address.

Charley: Completely. Love that you picked that one up as well, James. It's a nice little insight right there for people playing along at home.

James: Well, I know a lot of people have their throwaway email for opting into stuff. And a lot of the tools like the iPhone now, I think it's got sort of a random email generator. Email deliverability is an interesting thing. That's again, like you want terms of platform change. Emails are just as powerful as ever. But they have become harder to deliver in some cases, and especially, the more your intent fades away, more likely it is people aren't going to open your emails or engage with them, which affects your sending reputation.

Charley: You can see how easily it is to veer off course here.

James: Yeah. That's why when people join a membership, their onboarding emails opened like 80-something, 90%. But if you send the seventh follow up on a launch day, because it's the last of the deadline, or the post deadline server got back up, and it's your very, very last chance, I promise, email, those ones start to fade away a bit.

Charley: Definitely.

James: Tongue and cheek there, I never send those emails.

So one more lead magnet example, if you've got one.

Charley: So I'll use the trade and contractor example here. I think this is a really good one. So to break it down into two parts. So the list builder, right, is like, I'll go back to that example I used earlier, but the two ones that are working right now is the recessionary guide and the hiring, are the two topics that are very relevant in this industry.

So one of the lead magnets we use is actually like, would you call it like a job interview question list? So if you're going through hiring right now, and you're wanting to hire people, it's very intentful that you have good questions to ask people on the job interview.

We've also done like, a job ad template. So if you're putting a job ad up at the moment, like, this is the template you can use to help with your hiring. So it's a really critical piece where for someone to want that, you know they've got a hiring problem or are thinking about hiring right now. So a really strong solution. So that's your list builder campaign.

The conversion one of that is that when someone comes on board is they've got a whole hiring, training and thing that they sell in that ability there, which is really strong. So great connection between the campaigns. And you can see that in that example there is the two lead magnets I've said, the nurturing feeds into the conversion campaign, like it very strategically feeds one into the other.

So if you are building that list on that list builder side, all your nurturing is just pushing people into the other campaign as well. So you're not only getting traffic from promoting your conversion campaign through ads, you're also getting it from your email list as well, which I think is incredibly powerful.

James: That's brilliant. And it's a lesson I learned in the beginning and then forgot for a while but when I started online, my first sales were as an affiliate for website software building tool. And I got commissioned for that. And those people when they claimed their bonus went onto my database.

So my first email database of a few thousand people, every single one of those had purchased software for \$200. Imagine how much intent and clarity I had on the type of people on that list. From there, I was able to start helping them with other solutions, like ranking the site better, improving the sales copy, helping them make more sales. But every single person on that list was a buyer of this exact software.

So the intent level was through the roof. And we forget that over time, people focus on the vanity metric of having a big email list or a lot of followers. But if it's not with the intent, it's useless. I mean, the only person they're impressing is themselves.

Charley: That's probably one of the big things to note in here when we're looking at what's working now and like, what's changed. I very much once upon a time was one of those people that said, like, you know, big email list, let them fall off the list, you know, it'll naturally filter itself. So again, you might go really broad, promote something hugely, get 10,000 people and then let attrition happen, where you're just taking people off your email list.

My views have really changed to quality these days, where you can see that you might get, you know, less people onto your list by promoting one of these more intentful lead magnets. But the people that are on there have a much higher degree of chance of actually purchasing from you, or becoming a client, or buying your products. And I think that is well worth putting effort into today. A smaller, hyper responsive list that is actually inclined to do business with you is far more valuable than going broad.

James: Unless you sell advertising to that list.

Charley: Oh, there's probably unique circumstances to that. Yes.

James: I was thinking about my [surf site](#), I built up quite an email database with the competition or quiz, it was a quiz funnel. It's like, how good is your surf knowledge, and it asked questions, you know like, what's a kook, for example, and they got a score and it printed them the result. And then they could share it. So it kind of went viral, it was pretty amazing. I've built up quite a list.

One way to monetize that would be to sell someone the option to send an ad to that database. But in the surf market, it's pretty hard to make sales directly to that list. There's not much they could buy except for surf training, I think's one of the few things. But ideally, I'll just sell that entire site to a big surf brand one day. And that will be the exit. But in the meantime, we'll just sell ads, right, ads is the way to go. So that was the only use case I was thinking of where having a big email list might be impressive.

Something in the context of surfing

Charley: Could we go a little bit more deeply into that one, though?

James: Please.

Charley: So like, you've got a very clear intent around that. So that strategy would potentially work. But if I was going to go into the surf industry right now, and I looked at it, and I go, Well, for me, one of the things I'd look at is going well, I think a neglected, like, sub niche of surfing is bigger guys.

So if you made like, the tall guy's guide to surfing, right, and what you need to do differently, that's going to speak very intently to a market, which would be perfectly in line to selling them products that are specific to their needs, that they're not going to get

from these generalized things. And you might even have like, big guy surf training. And this was me, by the way, I'm six foot three. And at the time, when I used to surf many, many moons ago, I was like 85, 90 kilos. So I was a big guy getting around, I couldn't, you know, rip one of those five foot two shortboards.

James: Well, I'm a big guy, then I sell my boards to other big guys, right? Like we have our own community.

Charley: That is, as I said, we look at that. And then of course, you've got the beginner market.

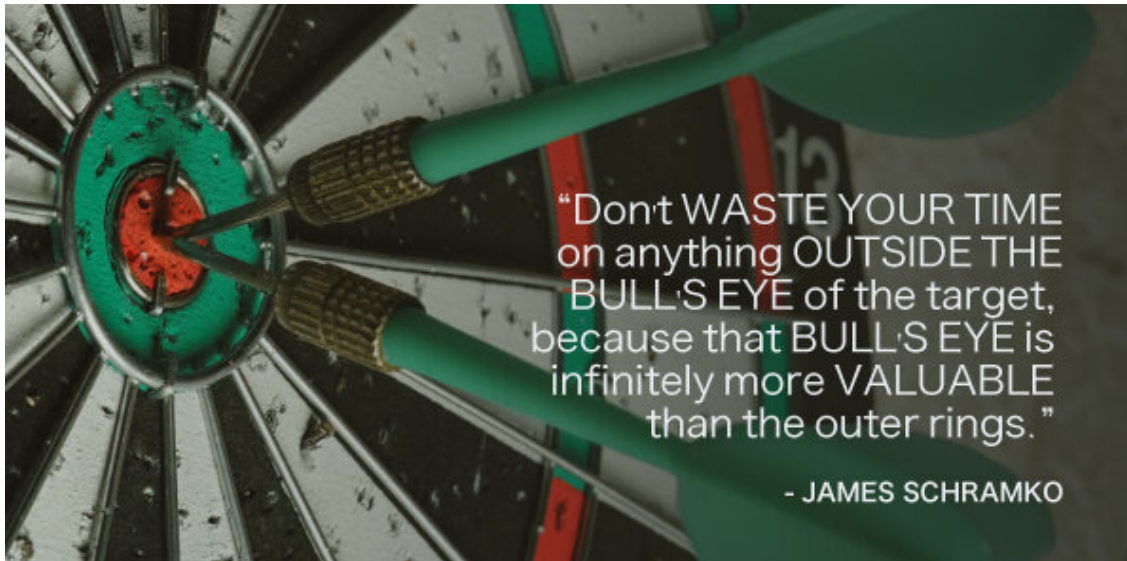
James: Every time someone buys one of my surfboards, I get a very strong handshake because they're going to be six-foot-tall, and they're going to weigh 90 or 100 kilos. Right? [laughs]

What is the intent of your strategy?

Charley: I found an interesting one in the golf niche the other week, which golf is something I'm endlessly fascinated with. But there's a whole market of golf related to basically the older people. Because their flexibilities and what it used to be, their strength is and what it used to be, and like, they've got to make the most out of the power they have.

So again, there's these subsets that would be really powerful, intent-driven lists you could build in any market that may actually be more valuable than a broad market. But bringing this back to paid and what we're talking about here, this is coming around to how you can be a little bit strategic in what you're putting out.

I'm sure you could build a generic list of contractors or tradies. I'm sure you could build a generic list of investors as well, or agencies. But when you get into some of the specifics here, that intent level can align much more strongly with the business.



James: I think this is the single biggest takeaway from this episode is intent. Just don't waste your time on anything outside the bull's eye of the target, because that bull's eye is infinitely more valuable than the outer rings. And if you're not even on the target, stop it. I've seen a couple of social accounts - so there's a few people on Instagram, and I look, and they have a lot of followers, but when they post, they get very few comments or no comments and just a couple of views.

And I'm like, okay, so they've purchased likes. That's the message that I'm getting, the intent is not there. Because the initial intent of getting a lot of followers was flawed in the first place. It actually works against them. You think, okay. Not an actual authority, just someone who decided to pretend that they are. And it backfires terribly.

Charley: Can I tell one little funny story here about lead magnet goes wrong?

James: Yes, please.

Charley: I think just to go even further than that. One of our clients, I won't name them or the niche, but I will say that the offer they put out there was actually around cashflow. Right. So they said like, and I'll mention a few of them, it's like you know, how to buy real estate with no money down would be like, they don't have cash offer, or like, what to do if you're in a business where you don't have cash.

Now, you can see that you're very intentionally putting out to a marketplace and advertising towards people that don't have money. So what would happen if you were to advertise towards those people and try and bring them into your business if your intent is to make a sale to people that don't have money? You're probably going to be running up against a very hard intent there.

James: Classic. It's right up there with the win an iPad competition.

Charley: Completely, horrible intent.

James: You'll build a list of people who want a free iPad. [laughs] That's pretty broad.

Charley: I concur on that one, James.

James: So do you still email people after this? Is there a step three?

Charley: You're going to be entwining these things. So if your list-building strategy you're doing is getting people on your list, you should absolutely be emailing people to give them the thing you perhaps have promised them in the ad or downloadable, but then also nurturing them into your second campaign here. I think it's really powerful.

But at the same time, I look at it and go, and we were literally talking about this before the podcast, we hit record, just how long it can take before someone actually buys something these days. Like, in your words, and I hope you don't mind me quoting this is like, sometimes it can take 12 months before someone buys from you.

James: I think my buyers do take 12 months, because I'm not an aggressive salesperson and I don't hype, maybe. Other people market way better than I do. But also, people's environment changes, their situation changes where over time, they sort of fall into that bullseye of where I help people.

I just had someone join yesterday. And she's right in the middle of a significant revenue share deal opportunity. And so she's just said, Right, I need your help. How do I join? I mean, it's like, on. It's kind of like fishing when everything lines up, and then it's like, it's time, let's go. And so, it's seasonal. I think that's a really good way to approach it, especially if you're a coach or helping people, even an agency, people will come and they might go, but don't beat yourself up about it. It might not be the right season for them.

It's like, at the moment, I love mangoes, I just had three weeks of mangoes, but there's none in the shop here. Because I just came back to Australia and it's not the season for mangoes, evidently. So it's bad luck. [laughs] Right? There's nothing I can really do about it. I'll just wait until the right season. And when they come back, I'll enjoy them, because it's just a seasonal thing.

Charley: Yeah, I just know, in type of business as well. I used to do quite a bit of work in the pregnancy market, right, that's like people who are only pregnant for nine months, potentially, if they just have one kid, obviously, if people have two. There's times in certain markets where it's like, you kind of have a window to work with them. And your nurturing cycle should be very based on the window of that market.

And then in other things like hobby markets where people do these things for decades, then it's very much worth approaching your nurturing from like, an ongoing basis and a longer-term relationship basis.

James: Wedding market was a classic.

Charley: Short span.

James: I like [Dean Jackson](#)'s idea of wedding planner, that's a good lead magnet. Because you get in early, and then you can line up beautifully for where your bid, you know, if you do the cake or the outfit or the venue, at least you're getting at the top of the cycle so that you can then distribute the leads wherever you want.

So you mentioned before a video sales letter, are people still doing video sales letters, or long videos or webinars? Are they still a tactic?

Charley: Hugely so. And I would actually say there's a resurgence in popularity if you're doing them right. And I would say there's also some great results coming from what I'm seeing on my side of things. And I would think about it in this way. Just imagine you've got someone who's watched a 10 minute short VSL, I would say, compared to some that are out there. If someone's consumed that amount of content on a topic with this level of intent we've been discussing from here.

So maybe it's a whole case study on how to build your 100K membership blueprint, James. Like, the quality of a lead that comes after that depth of consumption is massive. And I think is, if you're wanting to generate quality leads, or quality business, really powerful strategy. I would go out there to say that you would have to think about podcasts and YouTube videos as kind of VSLs these days as well. Like, people are spending a long time engaged in content, and it is working to a degree.

So I just think of it as, if you can have a lead consuming a depth of your content, whether that's from podcasts, whether that's from emails, whether that's from VSLs, or webinars, that can work really well. What I find interesting is there's actually very little difference between a VSL or a webinar. It's just what people tend to label them as, to not have them appear as marketing things. I've seen people stop calling things webinars, and they call them master classes, or info nights, or things like that.

James: Oh, I never called them webinars. When I started doing them in 2007, I called them online training.

Charley: Perfect.

James: Because no one knew what a webinar was, only people in enterprise who had, you know, Citrix accounts, or whatever they were called, Go To Webinar was very rare. And now it's easy to do video. And I like what you said about podcasts, it is the ultimate sort of native platform to distribute good content and education.

How Charley captures leads for his agency

You ran me through a potential lead magnet for my business. What lead magnet do you have for your agency, Charley?

Charley: Yeah, so the one we're running at the moment is our review, funnily enough, which we've spoken about here, already. So what I like to do is I like to spend time with people and go through what they're currently doing, and give them that diagnostic. That is a very powerful way for us to generate business. And I also think it's really helpful for people because it gives them insights they wouldn't be able to get on their own.

James: And is that specifically to the ads they're running?

Charley: Yeah, so I like to combine it. I think that's a great question. Inevitably, I think the world of media and ads is merging, as we see more and more people using media as ads, which I would highly encourage. So when I look in an ad account, I also want to look at the media or if they're doing that, because I feel if they're not potentially taking advantage of that, it could be a missing element, it might be the lead magnet or intent we want here.

James: Well, so many people say, I've run ads, but I didn't get a result. I mean, it could be 1000 reasons why they're not. But you would have your checklist of things that you'd be looking for, wouldn't you?

Charley: I feel like Facebook and Google would have gone out of business by now if ads didn't work, right? It really would have been one of those things. To universally say that ads didn't work is just such a misnomer. And if you come back to it, it may have been that you had the wrong strategy, used an outdated one, or the environment wasn't right.

And I would look at that. And I've often quoted or thought of it like food, it's like there's inevitably meals you've had that might have made you sick. Didn't stop you from eating again, because you realize that the nourishment that comes from food is kind of worth it. Now, I'm not saying ads can't be a difficult game to work out for many businesses, and sometimes they could have, they work with the wrong provider, the environment changed, a whole bunch of things can be very difficult.

But the rewards of getting it right can change your business. Because the scale that is available on these platforms like Google or Facebook is immense. So I really want people to not be discouraged by ads. I think that it is still a very winnable game. And I actually think it's probably more exciting than ever. So I would just encourage people not to give up on it.

James: So your review is for people who are running ads.

Charley: Yeah, absolutely. So I'll offer the review now. If anyone would like to come and do a review with Valher Media, its [ValherMedia/review](https://valhermedia.com/review) , which of course, James, I'll give you a link to that you can share with anyone that's interested. Now, if you're someone that's running ads right now, and you're not thrilled with the results you're getting, or just want a second set of eyes on something to ensure you're doing the right things, come and do a review with me.

I will likely point out things that you, or potentially your agency is not aware of, that might be very worth capitalizing on in this environment, like some campaign strategies we've looked at today. Now, if you're not currently running ads, but you have run them in the past, this also might be really helpful for you, because you might be just like working out your lead magnet that we've got here.

So maybe the big benefit is to have someone to come and have a look with the perspective of I have of what is working right now. That hey, this is the type of thing that might work for you with ads right now. So kind of the combination of two there.

James: So that's valhermedia.com/review.

Charley: That's the one.

James: Legend. Charley, I think you've delivered on what's working now with paid ads and media. I wrote down notes for myself. This is why I like having podcasts. But list builder number one, and then the conversion number two, and make sure they're super relevant, there's intent there, that you're getting the right traffic through on the right offer that allows you to have a really straightforward backend process, whether that's a VSL, a webinar, a setter, a closer, a sales conversation, email campaign, following up, etc., that's going to set you up nicely to take advantage of paid traffic on top of what you're already doing well with organic stuff.

If you do happen to have assets ready to go, like I do actually have a membership course, and I do have a membership book written, I've just got to clean it up and get it going. I think it could do well for me too.

Charley: I suspect you'll do very well, James. And maybe in future, we might cover - there's some other things that are really exciting in this space, like how to get your paid ads working with like, a setting team, is something that's coming up a lot for me at the moment, is there's people that have setters and closers and they're unsure how to kind of loop in and make sure their agencies can actually provide the volumes of leads they need.

James: I think it would be a good topic. I'm getting people, I mean, I get approached by all the top setting and closing agencies via email and Instagram messages on a daily basis. There's hundreds of them. I wouldn't know who's a good one or not. I also know there's pros and cons.

For me, it's always a bit weird when someone I know, like a friend of mine, starts DMing me setter-type conversations, it's like an alien took over their body. And I don't know how I feel about that, it doesn't feel right to me.

Charley: Can I leave a little bit of a cliffhanger here?

James: Sure.

Charley: All right. Let's do it. Because I know we won't have time to go into the depths of this. But even in this conversation, if you were feeding a setting team leads based on what we've discussed so far, leads that are coming in having downloaded these types of lead magnets and been through these types of videos and this level of intent, I suspect they would have a substantially higher success rate than if they're cold DMing people weird things from profiles when we think they're your friends, but they're not your friends.

James: Well, that's like, it's not like I even typed the word, you know, typed such and such, which I know is the flag for the setter to go into the account and start engaging. Obviously people should know that. If you're on a Facebook post or an Instagram and they say, you know, Hey, I just put together this thing, you want it, type such and such below. That such and such is saying, Hey, my pretend me, my setter is going to come in and start selling you on something. That's what that thing is. But it's not like I'm doing that. I'm just getting cold approached by - just from a - if I put a like on their page or follow someone. So it starts pretty early.

Charley: Just like all things, right? I'm not going to put this under setters.

James: I'd say that's the outer ring of the target. If you know, maybe I'm on the target because I liked their post. But it's nowhere near the bull's eye.

Charley: It's not the most effective way to do it. And just like there's plenty of crappy restaurants out there, or there's untalented coaches, or there's a variety of things, there's good and bad and all of it. But unfortunately, setting is one of those arenas which, borderline, it's just, there's a lot of spam out there. There's definitely better ways to do it.

James: I think one of the greatest insights you've shared today, Charley, is the fact that if paid ads didn't work, these platforms wouldn't be around. So clearly it's working for some people. Clearly, you've got an idea what's working well as an agency, valhermedia.com/review. Good luck. Thank you for sharing, and let's talk about setters and closers and stuff in a future episode.

Charley: We'll do, James.

James: There you go. We'll put this up at episode 1020. We'll put links to Charley's website and yeah, catch you next time.

A close-up, high-angle shot of a person's hands typing on a silver laptop keyboard. The person is wearing a light-colored, long-sleeved shirt and a dark watch on their left wrist. The laptop is on a dark surface, and another laptop is visible in the background. The overall scene suggests a professional or business environment.

JAMES SCHRAMKO

**Keep your business
strategies up-to-date
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