

JAMES SCHRAMKO



## **What are the Elements of a Great Video Ad?**

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Set your video ads apart. James & Valher Media's Charley Valher break down how to create video ads that captivate & convert.



**Charley Valher**

**James:** James Schramko here. Welcome back to my podcast. This is episode 1026. Today, we're talking about the power of video ads. I've brought along my video guy, [Charley](#), good to see you.

**Charley:** Thanks for having me again, James. I enjoyed [our last conversation about setters and closers](#) and what's going on in that world. I feel like this one's probably going to add a lot of value to people who are either thinking about ads or considering getting into the world of like, amplifying their business up with ads.

**James:** Love it. We're getting lots of good feedback from the podcasts. I actually got a flood of emails from a few episodes back when we were talking about lead magnets, and plenty of people emailing me for their special free bonus that I offered in that particular episode. So I can tell that there's plenty of action happening.

Video is such a huge topic. For me right now, it's like the center of the universe. I'm having a video rebirth, so to speak. I've had a relationship with video along the way, in my online career, maybe some of those stories will come up.

## Why is video such a big thing?

But I'm just wondering, why do you think video is having such a resurgence?

**Charley:** I love that as a question in general, it's a really strong question. I feel that what we're looking for, ultimately, is trust. I really do. And I think that when you compare, as for an example here, like a blog post, which has no image around it, or no video around it, and it's just a text-based thing, there's only so much trust we develop from text, there really is.



And then if you were to level that up a little bit, you might include some photos. And then if you were to level that up a little bit, it might be a podcast episode that's just audio. But really, the mecca of trust is video. Because when you can see someone, when you can hear someone, when they can use pronunciation or body language, it moves information at a pace that is just so much more enhanced than other mediums.

And when people start to do video, when they experience some of the results that come from it, they start to, well, I suppose it reinforces itself. So for yourself, James, I think you would look at that, you know, you do a lot of email, you do a lot of things in podcasting land. Ultimately, it's those levels of trust that people and relationship that's been built with you that's turned into it, and why I suspect video continues to do well for you today and why it's so dominant in your business, and many others.

**James:** Well you know, like going deeper on that, clearly, we're talking a little bit about the difference between video over image or text. If I can cast my mind back when I was starting out with video, it was incredibly difficult to put video on a website. I was quite early with it, I think, you know, in 2007 or 2008, I was doing webinars, I had replays in my membership of the video. I tried to make video landing pages. So I had video sales pages a long time ago.

Then I saw Gary Vee. I went to a conference, I saw Gary Vee's Wine Library TV, it was like, Wow! This guy is really doing it. He's really doing the video thing. And that inspired me to start making regular content. I did it for several years and then faded again. And then I started it again in about, like 10 or 11 years ago, for quite some time. And then it faded a bit.

And then this time for the last few years, I've really gone, like we're just flooding short content. We have now, I'm just at sort of ground zero of starting longer-form content, excluding the podcast, of course, and the video podcasts, I really did off the back of your suggestion. But I got a long way with just audio. And I got a long way with the blog. And then I think video became a thing.

But I didn't make it work the first few times. So I think something else must have changed. It must be either the platforms, or the way that people are deciding to consume, or the attention span or something. I'm just wondering if you can put your finger on it.

**Charley:** It's probably a mix of things. You've got it being easier, which you've highlighted now. The equipment we can get and what it costs has changed dramatically. I think you'd also have to acknowledge that things like Shorts and Reels didn't exist back then as well, which I think many people and many markets have been conditioned to enjoy now.

Like I know people that, honestly, the way they're enjoying social media is through video now. It's not through feeds in the same way. They like that more TikTok-style approach, or Reel-style approach, or Short-style approach to content. So the way people are consuming is changed in a big way as well.

Even for myself, I remember that once upon a time, I used to regularly go to certain blog sites and read, and I don't do that anymore. And I would question people to really consider how they are consuming, and notice that it's the mix of these things that's become really interesting. I'd even throw another one in that like, internet speed is improved. Like, it used to be painful to watch video on the internet.

I got this gripe with Vimeo, right? And like, I'm sure they're a great company. But if there was a video that was on Vimeo, for whatever reason, with my location and internet connection, it was just like, the buffering would be so freaking annoying that I just wouldn't do it.

**James:** There's be a whole generation who don't know what buffering is.

**Charley:** Exactly. So there's so many changed mechanics that have made video easier. And then you throw in the layers of like, what it does, and they go, well, it's not really any surprise to me that it's dominating. Because it is.

**James:** I feel like I was too far ahead of my time. I mean Gary Vee did it, and kept at it, and has continued to dominate with it. I had other considerations like making money. He's quite famous for making a lot of revenue and not making a lot of money because he wants the big payout and not a lot of profit. But I was very focused on just profit. And that was sort of a satellite thing to attract people and bring it in.

But I think you're right, I think the way people consume is different. Certainly, a lot of my videos were short. But there was no platform throttling that, or sticking it in front of people, or incentivizing it. In fact, just for a laugh, I went and had a look at my old Instagram channel, which was the SuperFastBusiness one, and my average videos were getting 50 or 60 views. And then on my new channel, my now Instagram with the Reels, they get thousands of views, or a couple of 1000 per video.



And same with YouTube Shorts, thousands of videos per short piece of content. So clearly the platforms are saying, yes, this is what we want. And I'm saying, yes, I want to make this kind of content. This is good for me, and I'm ready now to harness the power of video. But I also understand, there has to be amazing opportunity with video ads, specifically.

I've seen you're doing incredible stuff with it. You're spending a massive amount of money on ads at the moment. I saw some screenshot the other day, you were up to a huge amount just for the month. What was that number?

**Charley:** Yeah, so this month, which I hope you don't mind if I date this episode, so we're in the month of July 2023 as we're recording this, and we will cross, I think, in total for the month, my expectations from here, we'll probably spend about one and a half million dollars on video ads specifically, this month.

**James:** Right, so huge fan of video ads.

**Charley:** Just a touch.

### **What sort of equipment does it take?**

**James:** This one's come up lately. Of course, the old question is, you know, what kind of equipment do I need? What's the right camera? I've actually, in preparation for this video, I've got a team of people helping me with video, Charley, there's like five people. I got the list here. You helped me video my podcast. And you've helped me with this camera, and the lens, and the sound to make this podcast what it is, and I don't mess with that, I leave it as is, it's perfect. And so many people are like, What camera are you using? How do you get the sound so good? Oh, well, let me share with you what Charley taught me.

I've got Mark helping me to help direct and bring the real me to camera, which is great. I had Stefanos teach me about what NASA was doing when he had that short format revolution. I have Justin, a local friend of mine, he's got a big YouTube channel, just teaching me how he's doing things like SEO intent and what things work well for YouTube videos; then Isaac, a member of my community helping me with thumbnails and ideas for what to create.

So I've got this team around me. But as part of it, of course, I've reviewed my equipment, and I've actually got great equipment. I guess I've got four types of equipment. So I'm just curious where people are going to come in at. So I've got the equipment that we use for podcasting gear, like the DSLR camera, a good lens, and a good microphone, and a good digital sound processing amplifier recorder thingy.

I've got the portable setup of course, like the iPhone, which most of us have, with an extra light and a shotgun mic. I've got the DSLR camera with a wide-angle lens that I can use around on a tripod, which I've just got a long extension cable for my Lav mic, because I just don't like the wireless one, even though I've got that. I used to use that years ago, often you record something the battery's not working or it's like, prone to error.

And I've got a small camera, I don't know what you call them, but they're bigger than the iPhone, smaller than a DSLR, the automatic cameras, the Canon G7 X, which I'm planning to use in my Maldives trip. So I've got different setups. And you could get all caught up in it. But what I've done is gone each piece of equipment and got it all set up properly with the right settings and sound on that.

Can you take us through sound and video and the difference between the range of equipment that we've talked about? And what are the considerations? Because it has to be answered. What type of quality videos do we need for this, for ads?

**Charley:** So this is something where people get really caught up. This is the thing that prevents a lot of people getting started. And I think it would be easy to assume that you've got to have professional grade stuff. And it's, you know, what the newsrooms are doing or what a Netflix documentary is using for you to be like, in the world of being able to do this.

So I really want to reshape the thinking on this, though. And I'll start with what I found to be true in some of the accounts we run and manage and then also where people can start. So we had a client who literally pays a film crew to come to his office once a month. And they've got the best of the best equipment, I'm talking RED cameras, lights, crazy stuff that, I'll be real, as a bit of a techie, like I froth over.

**James:** Like cinematography stuff.

**Charley:** Ah, those lenses, the light, it's like for me, personally, I get into it, I can't help it. What's interesting, though, is that for this person, they'll also routinely shoot ads with their iPhone, right, when they're like running around and like going for a walk as well, like with, like, earplugs in. And the fascinating thing to me is that numerous, the ones shown on the iPhone will actually outperform the ones shot with the professional recording team.





## What does your audience expect?

So you really have to reconstruct the idea of like, what's done through ego or thinking you need to look a certain way to impress people versus what works. And in a lot of cases, that investment in massive amounts of tech may not actually be the thing to serve you in getting the best results. So I like to ask people is like, Well, what does your audience expect from you, and what is it they want to see?

And I'll give you some examples. If you're in finance - like we do a lot of work in the finance space, that's one of our main niches - if someone's about to invest their life savings with you to potentially buy a home or invest in a fund or something, they probably don't want to see you looking like a hobo that doesn't have a haircut and is unshaven, like with a with a crappy recording. Like, you're not going to be representing yourself in the way your audience wants to see you.

But let's say you run a gym and you're trying to sell fitness plans. If they see you in a singlet in your gym, and there's weights banging around in the background, and it's a little bit more raw, well, they do expect that for you, and it's okay. So the idea being that you want to match the level of equipment, and also like the scene and setup through what your audience expects of you. And I think that's a really good starting point for people.

So if you're in what I would call, like, one of the more, I don't know, maybe lavish niches or things where people expect a higher quality, and finance is a really good example of this, you're probably going to want to invest in things like DSLR cameras, and also having a setup that supports that. If you're someone that is in - and I hate to say that fitness isn't in the same way - but if you're in the fitness niche, not that a good camera won't serve you, but you can absolutely get away with one of the more recent iPhones, and a good Lav mic, right? So what your niche wants from you is a huge thing. And that's a really good starting point.

The second thing I would just go into on that is to prioritize sound over visuals. Because if you look good, but you sound like this, your ads are never going to work, where you will find that, you know, a lot of cases, people will forgive, you know, it's not a 4k video, oh no, or even 1080p, as long as they can listen and hear you in a really, really good way.

So I think those are the, like, ground zero starting points of how you should think about what equipment and where.

## **Authenticity over perfection**

And then also, again, just really want to lean into this point, the more authentic stuff - and I didn't say like, you know, terrible quality or terribly done, but the more authentic a video can be - like someone engaging with you like the gym example I gave you, the more tendency we see for things to perform well.

It's the overly produced, overly perfect stuff that I actually see doing worse at the moment. And I think for a lot of us, myself included, is like, you know, I have a huge amount of degree of trust in someone like Joe Rogan, for example, because he doesn't present himself as perfect. Like if you look at his studio, it's a bit of a mess. He doesn't dress perfectly, his hair's a little bit unshaven sometimes. So again, there's things in that that make him more trustworthy to that audience.

Now, not everyone has to be a Joe Rogan fan. But for a lot of people, if you come into the niches we're in, it's not the super polished professional stuff that we do trust or does perform these days.

**James:** That is such an important point. And I think it's worked against me as well, because I have had the team cleaning me up a little bit. Sometimes I think, some of the raw podcast moments that I've recorded have been cut and not presented to the public. And that's going to change. In fact, even a couple of weeks ago, if you noticed a change in my podcasting from a few episodes ago, from now on, it's because we don't have as strong of filters.

And I'll say, we probably reacted a little bit to the pandemic and some of the cancellations happening. My goal was to preserve income, and to make sure we didn't get knocked out. And so, I asked the team to make sure if I say something a little bit crazy or controversial or whatever, we should review it. But a lot of it got cut, I think.

And you know, I'm probably a little more outspoken and a little more opinionated than what has come through. But that's all changed. That's where we're going raw. I think your point about authentic is so true. You have to have flaws and weaknesses and real things, or else the trust is held back. That's what my friend Mark's been talking to me about, which I love.

**Charley:** We just have to appreciate this in such a special way. Right? So a lot of people will spend a fortune on a camera and a professional setup and a perfect newsroom, right, in the idea of like, Oh, look at me, I look like I know what I'm doing, so more people will trust me. But it actually creates the opposite effect where it's like, we don't relate to that person. It's like, oh, look at you, you're too perfect, you wouldn't understand what I'm going through.

And then in the other side of things, like James, I can completely understand why in that time, you would want to be like, Oh, I've got to be careful with my opinions right now because you know, it could do damage to my business. And for some it may.

**James:** Totally. I mean, gosh, we had nurses lost their jobs, drivers lost their jobs, there was no toilet paper on the supermarket shelf, for crying out loud.

**Charley:** Oh, that was crazy.

**James:** I don't want to use the word unprecedented. But in my entire lifetime, I'd never been placed in a situation where this crazy sh\*t was happening around me. Like, I've told this story before, and hopefully it didn't get cut out, but just to take my daughter to a day of playing in childcare, I had to put my mask on to go into the basement of my own unit. And then I had to drive there and I had to walk her in and stand in a line on an X.

And then we had to hand over the kid, and they take them away. Right? Or they hold a temperature gun to your head. You know, that's just wrong. And then we had to scan a QR code, like, track every movement, here we are now, and then we had to sanitize, it just made my blood boil, Charley, it was like outrageous, draconian, 1984, Orwell behavior, and I'm like, I have to get out of this. That's why I came to Queensland. I've got to leave this situation.

But I think a lot of my thoughts and sentiments at the time could have perhaps been taken the wrong way, because there's a lot more education now, in hindsight, and there are government reports now. I mean, this is fully documented. There are reports saying, especially where you live, Victoria, where they were surveilling mobile phones, they were overly strong-handed, a lot of the documents now don't support the behaviors that they had, they've learned from some of their mistakes, and they're still bearing a lot of the others.

And now we know obviously since Twitter got changed hands, they had whole departments censoring everything, like it's all come out. And that's why, you know, there are people like Joe Rogan or Russell Brand, who just spoke about it all the way through and weren't too worried about getting canceled. So I respect and admire them for being totally authentic.

But I think just on a more localized level, in terms of the videos we produced, this is my takeaway from what you're saying. When we're preparing video ads, go as close to you as you possibly can, and don't polish it up or bullsh\*t it or make it all too unrealistic, because then you're sort of moving into the Hollywood genre. Like Arnold says in his documentary, you know, It's all bullsh\*t, he says. [laughs] The cigars make you tougher.

Every time I see an influencer with a cigar now on socials, I think, you're just sucked into Arnold's bullsh\*t. You're doing it because you think it's tough, but he actually says it's bullsh\*t in the first place. Just stop it. It looks silly.

**Charley:** I concur on that on such a big way, right? And even to just reinforce that is like, the world literally trusts Russell Brand and Joe Rogan more than news organizations. You look how professional the news organizations are versus the two of them, and it's like, the proof is there.

**James:** And Russell's filming with a freaking curtain and reflections in the glass and his woodshed out the back, like it was pretty makeshift for a while there.

**Charley:** It makes it, it makes it.

## **Location makes a difference**

**James:** It's what makes it. And so on that, one of the biggest factors of this quality of the video is going to be location, right? One thing my friend, Mark, he says, We need to film you away from your bookshelf. Like, that's all people ever seen me on a bookshelf on podcast, but there's other me. And we did a Reel the other day of me going for a surf.

I don't even speak a single word in this Reel. It was just a B-roll. But my core audience, the people who have known me for years, like, Yes please, more of this, show us what's going on. And like, woah, okay, location makes a big difference.

**Charley:** Well, James, I think of you as a bit of a - and I hope you don't mind this term, I'll change it - but you are a lifestylist. Like, you are someone that's built a fantastic business that also has a great lifestyle, and I think that's something to be commended on. And I think a lot of people are drawn to you for that reason, where people may be drawn to, let's say, Gary Vee or Grant Cardone who doesn't necessarily have the same attributes in their life.

Now, if you are not representing your brand, and like people don't get to see that, then there's lesser trust, where it's like, you know, if I imagine what you do on a daily basis, like I see James walking around, like heading down the beach with his board, right, or I see him doing business from a laptop in some nice cafe in the morning, like I see the lifestylist...

**James:** You'll never see that. [laughs]

**Charley:** But, again, this is imaginary, but it's like, this is where it comes down to like, what your audience would expect from you.

**James:** Well, that's what I need to - I need to show them, I need to share why I think having a laptop in a cafe is a failure, why I think if you take your laptop to the pool at a hotel, or to the beach, that's a failure in my books. It means you've f\*cked it up, because the work could be done in a compressed time and in a place so that you can put it away and forget about it for the rest of the week.

**Charley:** I was just going to say, can you not see a great ad that we could make here to actually promote your book, like if you made that ad from the cafe, it's got the laptop, and we'll throw it, although probably not throw it, you get the idea. [laughs]

**James:** We'll have to get one of those laptops they have in the furniture shop that, you know, like the kids always go, oh thank God, they're plastic. They're very realistic, actually. They're hyper realistic laptops, but they're not very functional. But I think this is the point, this is the magic we're making here, Charley, because I'm having this discovery. Like, I've tried video before, and then I tried it again, and then I tried it again. This is maybe my fourth generation of video.

I'm getting it right, because now it's just going to be me. And I'm going to go and choose the right equipment for the right piece of content. If it's a podcast, it's going to be this. If I'm out and about, it's probably going to be my phone. But it's okay. But the most important thing is I need to have the authentic story.

## Good native YT video versus a good ad

And I want you to just tell me, what do you think the difference is between a good native YouTube content and a good ad that you're going to play on these platforms? And by the way, are you talking Facebook or YouTube or both? Or somewhere else, TikTok?

**Charley:** So currently, I am spending quite a bit, as we've already said, on ads across YouTube ads, Facebook, I'll call it Meta. So it's Facebook and Instagram ads, which is the Reels placements and also videos in feeds, and then also TikTok.

**James:** So they're the big ones?

**Charley:** They are the big ones, and they are all different. To your point is that an ad I would run on YouTube is going to be very different than maybe a video that's featured on a channel, right? Which is, again, a real big difference. Or an ad I use on Meta. Even the difference between Instagram and Facebook placements can be quite interesting. So the type of video or the way it's packaged, I think about it very, very different. And then TikTok is a beast of its own as well.

So one of the things I've been really fascinated about, and I've been very lucky to be able to actually experiment with this, because some of the clients we work with have the budgets to do tests on multiple platforms, the way you would advertise and do video as a format. So we're not changing your offer, we're not changing what you sell, right? But we're just simply repackaging the type of video you would put on one platform versus the other, will perform wildly different, like absolutely will perform wildly different.

I also think you get access to different demographics, depending on what one you go on to. So TikTok, for example, skews very young. So if you're going after a younger, let's say fitness market, it can be a really good option, where if you're someone that's going after, let's say, gamers, like YouTube is a fantastic place, or musicians like, again, just looking at this, like a lot of people that say, who play guitar, go on to YouTube to like, get tabs, do lessons.

**James:** All my musicians are on YouTube.





**Charley:** Yeah. So if you were going to run video ads, where would you want to go is probably, you know, what demographics are offered and where is the audience spending time, I think, is a really big consideration. And then to that, when we start to think about the differences, is you want to represent yourself right for the platform.

So again, TikTok and Meta have their own styles, and so does YouTube. And they're very, very different. But I just want to go into this point a little bit further. In the YouTube land, which, again, I'll look at it, you really have to break this down even further, where it's like, some people make great like, seven- to 10-minute more, I'll call it medium-form videos, and other people make like, hour podcasts, like that's its own thing. It really is.

In the ad world that I'm talking about more specifically, it's the pre-roll ads, it's the things that could be done, or even ads we've run as Shorts. Now those again, you just want a trailer. You wouldn't just get a podcast that goes for an hour and start running it as an ad. Or you wouldn't get one of the videos that is seven to 10 minutes in more like, you know, search content or standard medium form, and try and run that as an ad.

I think in the way I'm looking at it and suggesting from here, yes, there are some what I'll call native elements. But really, we're talking about purchasing traffic and getting it to take a certain type of action.

**James:** Is there much difference between a YouTube short ad and a Meta, Instagram ad?

**Charley:** They're very similar. And I will say that that is probably one of the ones that crosses the platforms the best. But I think how you would approach it is really, really different. So I'll give you one of the strategies I'm playing with at the moment. One of my favorite things to do at the moment on YouTube is actually to run Shorts as ads to build remarketing lists. And then based on the engagement of those Shorts, we'll actually run ads in different places or run YouTube ads more specifically there to like, convert that into a bigger thing.

I think audience building on YouTube is really powerful, combining like, Shorts and pre-roll ads at the moment. And I think that's a fantastic way to particularly play it. As a starting point for someone, I'm not anti, like, trying the same, let's say Short or Reel video, and putting it in a few placements. But the likelihood is you'll find a platform where it outperforms. You really, really will. And you want to double down on that and then potentially alter to suit in the other places.

### **Is it worth amplifying the winners?**

**James:** Pretty sure we put our same short on YouTube and Instagram. And it's interesting to see which ones take off or not, there are some variances. There are some common ones where they're just by far more popular. But we just did something this week, which was really interesting. We took some Shorts from my old channel and put them on my new channel. And then we deleted them, because you don't want it twice, right? And they took off on the new channel.

So same piece of content, but with a more sticky, active subscriber base. Even though it's a smaller subscription base, they're far more interested in what I have to share, because it's a newer audience. So I felt like that was quite telling. And I'd be wondering, is it worth amplifying ones that took off organically?

**Charley:** That's a great question. I actually get this question commonly. In some cases, not all, and I'll just go through a couple here. For regular content makers like yourself, you may be able to go into your back catalog and say, these are the Shorts that have done well. And you can grab them and reamplify them and use them to drive revenue and sales in a business through funnels and whatnot, that can be a really great strategy.

But for someone who's newer and doesn't have that back catalog, running ads first, and seeing which ones perform better might actually be the precursor to deciding what organic stuff you want to make. So I would make the case that it depends on what stage of the journey you are. And if you are a regular content maker or not, that would discern that. They both have merit. They really do. But I think the underlying in that is to be measuring. Right? It's like if you've got certain topics hidden, you want to lean in and do more of them regardless if it happened on ads or organic.

**James:** It's like the old run paid ads to figure out which things to make your content on and then put your content out and see which content goes well to turn into paid amplification. It's like they can feed each other, just start with something and then pay attention to the data.

## **Do you need to be in your videos?**

So just a quick question about the video itself, because this has just come up for me. Stock video. A lot of the Shorts we're doing, the short content, it's got the pshew, pshew, pshew stuff, you know? Like the captions, the B-rolls, the GIFs, whatever you want to call them. That's what people want. Gotta like, hold attention quickly.

Some of the medium-form content, your words, like this eight-to-12-minute stuff I've been starting to create, some of them, we're just doing clean edits. It's just me and different sort of, you know, bit of cut, zoom in, zoom out, different angles, no stock video. How do you know whether you should be putting stock video or not?

**Charley:** Again, I love this as a topic. We just have some clients that just hate being on camera as well. They really dislike it.

**James:** Right. I get that a lot. I don't want to be on camera. So YouTube's not an option. I'm like, Wait a minute, there are like, crime-solving channels with tens of millions of people watching where you never see the person on the camera once.

**Charley:** So I'll go into this in a few ways. I actually have a client who's a mortgage broker, right? And I think video ads in the finance industry are just a really great way of standing out. But he hates camera, I mean, hates it. There's no chance I'm going to get him on camera. So we've had to be a little bit creative in like, how we've put things together. And it does work.

So I don't even think someone needs to be in their video to be successful with video ads. But they do want to be working with a creative agency of some kind that can kind of help put something together that still works. Because, again, just going back to the earlier part of this discussion, like trust inherently is built by seeing someone's face. I think if someone's in a video, there is the ability to build trust. But that doesn't mean it's the only way.

And so I'll go on to this. One, in the shorter-form, one-minute stuff, so this is Reels, Shorts, TikToks, whatever you want to call them, the use of stock image is very, very common. So to do that, I think, is completely acceptable. I would always so go as far to say that you could use in some niches like my mortgage broker one, it's possible to make videos where you don't have to be in it at all, it can be more stock image and other things that can work well. Not in all niches, but some.

In other things where you're in a niche where it needs trust, I think it can be really powerful to use influencers, also. So for example, like, I'll even put this into clients as well. So if you have clients that have recorded video testimonials, using that could be a really powerful format with that. And that wouldn't have you in the video, but have other people in the video, which I think is great for proof.

And then the influencer angle, I also think, is really strong. And you see this quite commonly. There's a whole industry built around it where like even Apple these days have many YouTubers doing reviews of their stuff because they are the influencers. They know how powerful this is.

**James:** Well they called them mavens, didn't they, in the beginning? Guy Kawasaki one.

**Charley:** Yeah, Marques Brownlee does the tech ones. In many cases, it'd be more powerful to have the video review from someone who's got the trust of an audience already, can be really, really powerful. I've also seen some that are really clever, where people will make like, screenshare Loom videos, because they don't want to necessarily have their face in it, but they want their voice in it. And they might review something or go over it on a screen. And it can come across in a really, really powerful way, if done correctly.

**James:** I think I saw a checklist for an e-commerce store like that. It was just a Loom video of someone going through a spreadsheet, saying, Hey, you go through all these checklists. If you have an e-commerce store, you go through these checklists, you're going to find lots of profit, etc., something along those lines.

And I think for someone who has an e-commerce store, that's quite in line with the way they probably have built that store, they probably research and study a lot of information and then apply processes, because it's that kind of business.

**Charley:** I'll give you another example now, my mortgage broker client. Again, he's fine with recording things, just doesn't like the camera. I've seen him actually do a screenshare of like, he's got some sort of software that compares like different banks and their lending policies. I don't know what the software's called, don't quote me on that. But he's done a Loom screenshare video and like, literally going over the different options and saying why one might be right for this person, and this one might be that for that person.

And when you think about it, like him sharing that information is kind of like proving why he knows what he's doing. And it's also like, highlighting what might be right for someone who's watching this ad. So again, he's not even in it, but has done a really powerful way of using video in that light to actually enhance trust and create a conversion, ideally there, not to give away all my mortgage broking secrets. It's a strong niche.

## **Learning through continual testing**

**James:** When you see this stuff, when your clients are doing something, and sometimes they're probably experimenting or whatever, is that when you say, okay, this is a little tool to put in my toolkit, and you can then roll it out? Is that how you're learning this stuff?

**Charley:** Yeah, so I like to be my own experiment. Like, I run a lot of ads myself and like, I think many people are aware of my podcasts and things like that, I've done over it. Like, we test stuff on ourselves continually. I'm also very lucky that in the client base I have, they're open to testing things as well.

So what occurs quite commonly is, we'll get a winner in an account through trying things with either seen and one a model, or things we want to try for ourselves. And then once we find a winner, we create a template and a framework, and we share it with all the clients and go, This is what we want you to make. And then we'll roll it out.

And you will be surprised how many commonalities will work, let's say, across like finance and fitness, which is one that just blows my mind, right? Or something that works for a mortgage broker can actually be a really good thing for someone who sells courses or a coaching offer. So a lot of the, I suppose we'll call philosophy or things that exist back there, can be really powerful, really, really powerful.

**James:** I love cross pollinating things between industries or categories, because sometimes, something you bring is so fresh to the market, no one's ever seen it, and it just stands out straightaway. I do see a lot of fit pros crossing over to business. They're all doing it. It's the natural pathway. And it's quite interesting to observe these patterns.

## **A checklist to go by**

But if I were to be cheeky, I'd say, Charley, would you open up the toolkit for us and show us a framework? You know, what do you think a good ad looks like? Can you break it down for us and give us an example?

**Charley:** Yeah, I actually did some prep on this. And I think, more than anything, I want to share this because it can be the difference in someone being successful with ads or not, it is. So I actually call what I'm about to share, like the elements of a good video ad. And I think when an ad does well, inherently, it has all these elements in it. When I find an ad that bombs or doesn't perform as I expected, it's normally because I've gotten one of these wrong.

Now, I'll also preface this and say that they don't need to be in order. It's just that they've got to be in contained in some way within it to be successful. So that's my kind of findings here rather than like it's a script for word to word to kind of go through from there. So I'll go through some of these, I might even use some examples along the way just to make it a bit easier.





So I think the starting point - and this is just a successful ad, right, this doesn't even have to be video, is like something people want. It doesn't matter how good you get the rest of the elements I'm going to discuss, at the end of the day, if no one wants what you have on offer, the best cameras, the right tech, the editing, it just doesn't work. So I think more time needs to be spent, and we covered this, I think a bit more in depth in another episode, about like, the right lead magnets, like the right intent to bring someone in on is a really, really good part.

So if you don't have that in the way, and you know, the dangerous is where people kind of want it, it's like, kind of attractive, because they'll run it long enough where they think it's what people want, but it's not really what people want. So I think spending time there is just hugely, hugely important.

The second thing I'll go into here is like, the hook and getting people's attention. Inherently, the start of a video is very important. What happens in the first 10 seconds will decide if someone's going to watch the entirety of that. So doing something from a video point of view, and this might be the editing style, this might be something you say where that has controversy, or curiosity, or identity in it, where it's like, oh, that's something I want to consume more of. Very, very important as well. And I've given away a few ideas of how you might represent that in a video ad as well.

The next element, a good video has in my opinion, is it gets someone to go, This is me. Like when someone actually identifies with an ad and goes, Oh, this is for me, like that's the exact effect you're wanting to have, which primes someone to want to consume and buy the rest of the things that's in there. Like if you've got a really great solution, but no one can work out if it's for them, it kind of doesn't work. So I think this is a really important part of it.

The next thing, and this is, I've done a lot of testing on this in more recent times, is the importance of aggravating the problem. So if you sell a solution to a problem, I think it's really important that you aggravate that problem. Or you might have heard of this, like twist the knife, I think is a really good way to position it.

**James:** It also reminds me of SPIN. What you're saying, current situation. This is me. Problem. implications.

**Charley:** Huge. And I will say I've probably borrowed a lot of these things from resources like that. I've read many of them across the years as well as like, breakthrough advertising and many other elements of itself. I might even just bring in, like, the mortgage worker example, because I think it's an obvious one to kind of lean in as we go through these elements. Right. So selling what people want. Do they want to save money on their mortgage? Absolutely. I can inherently say that overall, people do want to save money on their mortgage. They want a better deal.

**James:** I don't think I've ever gotten more mail in the post than from my bank in the last, what is it, in the last year, they keep sending me love letters about interest rates rising across all the different properties. I think I can create a phone book size document out of these. They love sending interest rate rise updates. Just a friendly reminder, your next payment will be more.

**Charley:** So if you're that person getting those letters and you see my ad coming up saying, I can get you a better deal. That bank that keeps sending you those love letters, no more. Right? Powerful.

**James:** Well even there, I'm just thinking, cut to scene, another letter, another letter, right? That's like, Oh god, that's me. This is me getting these letters from the bank at a constant rate. Luckily, I do have a proactive broker. And he keeps contacting the bank saying, You need to relook at this. And then they send me a letter saying, We've reduced it. And then they send me one saying, We're putting it up, and then we get one - like, this is ridiculous. It actually is comical.

**Charley:** Right, so for the hook. Imagine I'm standing in front of a camera and I'm holding up one of these letters. Like, you've just been getting them and it's like, are you getting these? Like, I have been getting these.

**James:** That's bang on, I get it. This is very good. Very good.

**Charley:** So now it's, this is me. That is me. I'm getting those letters. By the way, I am getting those letters.

**James:** Do you get those letters?

**Charley:** Absolutely. [laughs]

**James:** Little bank love - the offset is I do get letters from the bank when they have a dividend. I got a few dividends, right? Because I'm holding the top bank thing, because I'm thinking, one way I can make money out of this whole thing is at least own part of the bank. So I do get dividend notices. It's like yeah, okay, we're back to like, step forward, step back, step forward, step back.

**Charley:** I actually like that for the mental game you're playing there, James. So I got screwed on interest, but good dividend. [laughs]

**James:** It's it, it's like, okay, well, if they keep jacking the rate up, that's got to come back somewhere. [laughs]

**Charley:** We'll go to the next one. Aggravate the problem is like, I look at this and just go, well, if you don't refinance your mortgage or get a new mortgage from here, it's like, well, every month this is costing you money. Like, that's money you could be spending on your kids. This is money you could be spending on new surfboards, James.

**James:** The example of that that I think of is the local community Facebook page. You'll see the general public talking about financial distress. They're like, How does anyone afford to buy food? You know, what are recipes I can cook for \$5 per person and stuff like, that's where you see the actual manifestation of the end result of these problems, people struggling.

And that's very hard-core emotion. Because you've got like, it's often moms, they seem to be more socially expressive on these groups. Especially they're actually moms' groups on Facebook for each community. And you see the posts, and it's like, heartbreaking. That's like, that would be, it's real, like there is heartache out there.

**Charley:** And I want to completely acknowledge that that's true. And I know we are dancing around the fun of making an ad here...

**James:** Well the ad is to help someone solve their problem, right? I mean, presumably, you could help them put some cash from the bank back towards their kid's school lunch, right? So that's a good thing in my book.

**Charley:** Absolutely. So we're getting there. So let's go to the next one here, which is like a clear outcome. And I feel like a lot of people struggle with this. They're just like, Oh, I can't refinance your loan, where it's like, you want to make it more powerful than this. It's like, in the next 30 days, I'll have you refinanced and saving this much money. Right? It's like, it's much clearer on the outcome and timeframe of expected.

So I really like the idea of like, achieve x by y. That is, when you can put that in there, it makes it so much more solid to get around what is possible from here. So clear outcomes, I feel like, is a really important one.

**James:** I remember there was a radio ad. And it was from a mortgage broker. And if they said, if we can't lower your mortgage repayment, we'll give you \$100 cash, just for making the appointment with us.

**Charley:** I love that for so many reasons. It's actually got some of the other elements we'll discuss later in here. But it's like, talk about like, a reason. Crystal clear. I won't give away some of the feature elements yet, but I'll dive in, like that is a solid button, I will say.

The next one in this is the idea of like, well, why does someone need you and your solution? Now, again, it's like often people will promote things, but it's like, in the case of the mortgage broker, why do I need this specific mortgage broker? Why not another mortgage broker, like if they're all a commodity, which they are not, but let's just pretend or someone may believe that their mortgage brokers are there, well, they're never going to move towards you.

So you want to have something that's specific in what you do and in the mortgage working land, it might be that you have access to lenders that other people don't have access to. It might be that you've got certain relationships with people that can do better deals or get something done more quickly.

So again, you might have a complicated refinance. And the value premise here is that I can get this fixed for you really quick. And again, I hope people can extract this into their own markets. But I do think that the uniqueness towards you and your solution specifically is really important here, you don't just want the problem solved, we want it solved by you.

**James:** Well, I think that's where, sort of, you're stacking on this need to be authentic. When you're authentic, your true human personality and characteristics are going to come through, and you can also extrapolate this across to a brand, right? A brand can be authentic, I think, like Nike is for runners.

That's something that's on my mind, anyway, like that one's like, that's for the people who are out there, when it's dark, running in the rain, Nike is their brand, it's authentic to them. And it speaks to them. So whether it's a brand or a person, the more you can nail it with the content, the easier it is to get it over the line at this point, I suppose.

**Charley:** You could take this in numerous other words. If you're a SaaS, right, and you've got a software that has a unique premise here, is that well, this is the only place you can get that solved.

**James:** Like Klaviyo is the one for Shopify, right? That's the one that people who have Shopify are going to get.

**Charley:** Exactly. So that's it, like the specifics here. Alright, so I'll jump into the next one, because otherwise, we might be here all day. But the idea being is like, well, then we want to make sure that we give people the reward of what it's going to be like, once they've got it solved. So you know, like, if you do this refinance, it's, like, you'll have that money, right? You're not going to be in a financially stressed situation is another way to frame that. So you can frame reward in different ways. But you ultimately want to help someone understand the payoffs, I think, is a really important one to include here.

And then the next element is proof. I think proof is a really important one. So again, using the mortgage broker as the example here, well, you'd imagine in this ad, at this point, it cuts to a testimonial. It's like, oh, I spoke to this mortgage broker, and 30 days later, you wouldn't believe it, I actually had like, the extra money in my bank account. How powerful that would be to see people like them that have just gotten the result by following what we're indicating here. Super powerful, super powerful. Or if they're, in the case of someone who maybe is a...

**James:** Fitness trainer, skinny person and a fat person, but it's the same person over a time period.

**Charley:** If you're a coach, before and afters of people that have completed the transformation your program offers. If you're selling the Nike runners, we want to see PBs on the marathons.

**James:** Olympic gold, or whatever.

**Charley:** Whatever is relevant to you. But the proof in the idea that it works, I think, is really compelling for people, because this is, you know, trust in itself. And then I'll go into the next element here, which is like a compelling reason to take action now. And you might go to all the effort of hitting all these other elements, but if people feel like they can just deal with it any point, like, I'll come back to this, and then maybe life gets a little bit busy, and they don't act in that way.

**James:** Of course, it's busy, they've got the next 15 Shorts running through, right, like that's what you're competing against, isn't it? The cost of doing nothing.

**Charley:** Hugely so. So a compelling reason to move and take action is huge. And then the last step in this framework is the idea - or not really a framework, but there's elements here is that you have to tell people what happens next. Like set, if you click on this ad, you're going to go here, and this is what you're going to do. So people can feel instructed to know how to follow the steps.

Commonly, marketers forget to include this. And then when people click on an ad, they don't really know what they should be doing or how to get to the next step. And that type of confusion can just drop conversion rates.

**James:** One of the greatest examples of that I saw was on a sales offer page, people next to their order button would have a screenshot of the cart page that comes next. It's like, on the next page, you'll see the cart where you can confirm your order, and they click on it, and it's exactly what the thumbnail picture showed, so there's no break or disconnect. Often you see people have a certain style and then you click on it, it goes a completely different look and feel and it seems like, hang on, have I gone to the wrong link here?

**Charley:** It's jarring, it's confusing.

**James:** It is. And even subconsciously, it erodes our trust. There's something not quite right, Spidey senses activated, barrier goes up, end of sale. So I think this is critical. And I know the greatest copywriters they say, have the call to action, be very clear, be very specific what people are supposed to do now. Sometimes it's ambiguous or completely missing.

**Charley:** I feel like at times people think copywriting is about like, using like, buzzwords, right? It's about wordsmithing.

**James:** Tricky words, yeah.

**Charley:** Sometimes, it's just about really clear. [laughs]

**James:** I like the Joseph Sugarman thing, you know, the purpose of the headline is for them to read the next line, and the next line is to read the next line. And then people are going to look here, and then here next, and then they should do this. And this is why they should do it. It's just so straightforward. I like this. So these elements of a great video ad, fantastic, Charley.



**Charley:** Just on a few little caveats on this as well on that one there is like, if you have a SaaS, like a great way to end it might be showing people the steps of signing up for your SaaS. If you have a book you're trying to get people, like, having the book might be a really powerful one to bring people into that as well.

One final thing I'll throw into this is just going that it can be really powerful to use stories in some of these elements. So your proof might be a before-and-after story of someone, or like, you know, there's ways to encompass story in here, which we - and I know you've certainly mentioned in other podcasts just [how powerful story can be](#).

**James:** So many, and I'm still learning. How long should the video ad be?

**Charley:** Depends on your platform. Let's say you're in TikTok land, you know, you've got to be under one minute. And really, you want to be closer to that 42nd mark is what I've kind of found. So to get through all these elements, you might have to be really strategic in how you include them. Like your proof element, if you're in fitness, might be that you're really, really fit. So you're giving proof in like your visual, you're not trying to prove it in other ways.

Or, if you're trying to say this is me, maybe you should look like the person you're trying to bring into it. So again, because you're getting to communicate in ways past just text, and you're getting to use visuals and sounds and all these things, you'd be surprised that it's very possible to have all of these in a short video, right? Just represented in unique ways.

**James:** So this will be a good checklist to just go and - if you're already running video ads, you could check this checklist and say, tick, tick, tick, cross. Okay, this is something I should improve on in the next version to test it, to check Charley's elements.

**Charley:** It's literally what I use for reviewing if something has gone wrong. Am I missing something? We don't understand what it is.

## Need help with your video campaign?

**James:** If I want you to help me come up with an ad idea, like the scene shots, or the scripting, or to run these campaigns, how do I do that?

**Charley:** Yeah, so we do reviews, I'll call them. So if anyone heads to [valhermedia.com/review](http://valhermedia.com/review). Now, if you are running ads, I will take a look in your account and perhaps review things or be suggestive in how video could be powerful in this example here. If you're someone that's not running ads, though, and is considering it, that review might still be really powerful, because we might be able to get a little bit creative here in that conversation, like we have here. Although I might have just given every mortgage broker some really good hints here. [laughs] They probably don't need the review, but still.

**James:** Beyond that, clearly, if someone was a mortgage broker and they wanted an advantage, you understand that market quite well, right? Go to someone who's getting results depending on if there's capacity for you to take another client or not, I don't know what your agreement is with that mortgage broker. So these are things to consider. But it sounds like you've worked in a few different niches. You'd probably be the first person to tell someone if you don't think you could help them anyway, right?

**Charley:** I don't think it's a good idea to take on clients if you can't help them. I think that's a pretty good ethical false, but even then, it's like, well, if you take on the wrong clients, they ultimately leave unhappy and leave horrible reviews about you, so it's not in my interest either.

**James:** Yeah, and I mean, we're on the same page there. Charley, so good to chat. There's Charley there, episode 1026. We've been talking about the elements of a great video ad and why we should be doing video ads. I'm super, super, super excited about - this actually reminds me, I was walking on this local mountain we have here, a mountain in Australia is actually probably a small hill than in many other countries.

And she says I'm hungry. I said, Are you really hungry, you're super hungry? She goes, Yeah, I'm super, super, super, super, super, super - and she kept saying super like halfway down the mountain, and people walking past looking at us. And at the end she is hungry. Now, I got the picture. She's very, very hungry. Anyway. So [valhermedia.com](http://valhermedia.com). V-A-L-H-E-R-media.com. Thank you so much, Charley.



**JAMES SCHRAMKO**

**Power up your  
business and your  
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