

Hosting a Contest to Get Valuable Leads and Referrals

Transcript and 10 Point Checklist

Travis Ketchum

Want to gain as much knowledge as possible out of Marketing Speak? Read on below for a full transcript of this episode, as well as a **10 point checklist** that gives the next, real steps you can take to take your marketing to the next level.

MARKETING SPEAK 

HOSTED BY **STEPHAN SPENCER**



“Having a big list isn't the only factor. It's having a list of the right leads, so even a couple hundred leads can be a big impact—we've seen that happen time and time again for small businesses where hundreds of leads can be tens of thousands of dollars if they're the right lead.”

TRAVIS KETCHUM

10 STEPS YOU CAN TAKE TODAY

**Want to step up your marketing game?
Here are 10 steps that can move you closer to your goals – today.**

- Start with the most important part of your contest-choosing a prize that attracts your target audience. What would your ideal client want to win?
- If you have questions, join the Contest Domination Facebook group—Travis shares great tips, critiques and advice to customers.
- Try Contest Domination! You'll get a 7-day trial, and if you purchase a subscription within two weeks, you'll lock in a 25% discount for life.
- If you aren't familiar with Facebook ads, look up tutorials-there are a lot of resources available that will make sure you are running engaging and well targeted ads.
- Find a sponsor! Reach out to companies and ask for their support, either by giving away an item or a gift card for your contest.
- When creating your contest, use the links for all social channels, but don't forget to check your dashboard and focus on the channel that is converting the most.
- Decide if you want to use a landing page template or create your own-if you are more creative and want more control, design exactly what you want.
- Having an engaging image and call to action is essential for conversions, choose carefully, or test two options to see what draws people in the most.
- Discuss contest rules with your lawyer to make sure everything is legal-the set rules are a guide, but can vary depending on your prize and location.
- Don't be afraid to get controversial! The more you have people commenting and talking on your contest post, the more people are going to share.

Transcript

S: Welcome to another exciting episode of Marketing Speak! I'm your host, Stephan Spencer, and today I have with us, Travis Ketchum. Travis is the founder and CEO of Contest Domination and this is an amazing

“I created a little piece of software in the early days that did the most simplistic version of that tracking leads and actually giving referral credit to those who successfully got them into the contest and it has now grown into a big and robust software service”

tool that I've recently started using. It is a lead generator for sales using contests as the way to get people in and get them motivated to give their details and even share their friends details with you so that they get more chances to win. It's a leading class software and Travis also does creative training besides working on his software platform. I recently got introduced to him virtually—I didn't meet him in person at Traffic & Conversion Summit but that's where I first heard about him and, actually, he got a great shout-out from stage from Ryan Deiss, who is the co-founder of Digital Marketer and I'm just like, “I have to talk to this guy and I have to try this platform out!” It sounded really amazing! So, Travis and his team have helped over 20,000 business owners and marketers generate

millions of qualified leads online, including Digital Marketer and a bunch of other impressive companies we're going to learn about and get some case study examples from Travis. Welcome, Travis! It's great to have you on the show!

T: Yeah, it's great to be on! Thanks for having me. I really appreciate it!

S: So, let's start by just—why contest? Why not just give away free lead magnets and downloadable stuff and just be done with it? Why have a contest as a way to generate the leads?

T: Sure! I mean, there's definitely a ton of value in the old tried-and-true lead magnets and we deploy that on our own business as well but what really sort of spawn contests is—a number of years ago, a little about four and a half years ago now or almost five years ago, actually—I quit my desk job and went to work as a consultant for some best-selling authors and speakers. I was running their J.V. programs during media buys and that kind of stuff but I realized I was working my tail off building these digital assets for my clients but I didn't have any assets of my own and the only asset you truly own online is your e-mail list and so, I needed to build my own email list quick, fast, and in a hurry. I knew from my experience that contests do not only traditionally have a higher conversion rate than most standard opt-in pages but they also have the potential for mechanisms to incentivize each lead that enters to then refer additional friends. I look at all the platforms out there and a lot of them incentivize the act of the “share” but what I really cared about was the conversion—the actual addition of more leads on my list. They were interested in what I wanted to do, what I wanted to sell. I created a little piece of software in the early days that did the most simplistic version of that tracking leads and

actually giving referral credit to those who successfully got them into the contest and it has now grown into a big and robust software service—and that's kind of how we got started.

S: Yes, so that's an important distinction that just incentivizing people to share referrals of different friends, family members, and so forth is not the end game—it's to get those people, who are being referred to, actually take action themselves.

T: Exactly! What I noticed early on with a lot of those platforms I did not like—and now, since we've had so much traction, a lot of the other platforms are sort of following suit—is the fact that if I get 10 points for sharing on Facebook, 10 points for sharing on Twitter, and 10 points for sharing on LinkedIn, that's essentially saying two things: One, that's saying that every referral channel is equal but they're just not, right? You're going to get more leads as a business from one of those sources more than the other by far typically.

S: Yup.

T: The other thing is, when someone gets the points for the act of sharing, that doesn't incentivize them to keep that post up, which actually gives you the traction. It doesn't correctly incentivize someone that has a large following because if someone has a million followers, they get the same 10 points as someone who has one follower. The last component of that is, it doesn't incentivize them to take the five seconds when if their friend sends them a message on Facebook saying, “Hey, I saw you share this contest. What's the scoop?” If they don't get their points until people actually refer, they're incentivized to take the extra few seconds to essentially sell their friend on entering through their link. This really aligned all of the points in a way that has made so much more sense and the results really speak for themselves. In fact, our methodology typically gets up to four times the results of other computing systems so the devil's always in the details, right?

S: Absolutely! So, when I was at a, I think, it was a BlogHer conference years ago, there was a contest that I think Verizon ran and it was at their booth in the event so you had to be present to win and you had to tweet some silly thing. I was pretty much a shoo-in because at that moment, nobody else was present and they're like, “Hey, you know what? You can just win this thing!” and it was a really cool thing but I forget what it was.



“You have to tweet before I can give it you so you have to be a legit winner,” and I was like, “All right!” Of

course, I'm going to go tweet from my main account that has all my followers and stuff because I don't want to just put out some cheesy Verizon tweet for 8,000 followers on Twitter. I'm going to use an old account on Twitter that has like, two followers and that's what I did. I would say that's pretty much across the board with user behavior. If you incentivize people assuming that everything is equal—every account is equal and every platform, whether it's LinkedIn, Twitter, or Facebook, is equal—you get the same number of points or entries for doing that. You're going to get people cutting corners and doing the minimum possible, minimum reach, and minimum impact to them so that they can get all those entries and, potentially, win the prize.

T: Right, so we went back to the drawing board and tried to avoid all those types of behaviors by creating a step-by-step sort of contest funnel that was easy to follow and, logically, puts all the incentives in the right place so that it was a fair trade, so to speak.

S: So, let's talk about this idea of a contest funnel because many folks who have been listening to the podcast have been exposed to regular sales and marketing funnels, lead magnet, trip wire, core products, the upsells, proper profit maximizers, and so forth but contest formula is probably something that's a foreign concept to most.

T: Yeah, so I'll explain this if any listeners at home feel a little lost or if I'm going a little too fast—don't worry, we actually made a sexy little infographic that I'll give you a link to, which you can share called, The Contest Funnel Formula, so it would be really visually easy to follow but, essentially, it goes like this: You have your normal squeeze opt-in page that we provide or you can use a third-party tool. We have this opt-in page where people enter their details to be entered in the contest. Then, they go to the next step, which is the first highest value referral component that we can do—which is, actually, asking them to give us their email of three of their friends for our system to send out an invitation for those friends to join the contest. We do that because we know that the email referral mechanism has the highest conversion rate for clicks by far. It's double the second place referral channel so if you do that front and center and they can either complete that action or skip it. The third step is the ability to refer via your social channels and all these different channels have actually unique links so not only are they tracked independently and making sure that the original contestant gets, by default, 10 extra entries for every friend who actually refers but then, in the dashboard, you're actually able to see, “Hey, I can tell how Facebook is converting compared to Twitter, email, and etcetera.” Once you get them in this contest step where they enter, refer via email, and refer via social then what you do, as far as the greater conversion of that is, when you get down to the very end of the contest

“not only are they tracked independently, making sure that the original contestant gets 10 extra entries for every friend who actually refers but then, in the dashboard, you're actually able to see, hey, I can tell how Facebook is converting compared to Twitter or email”

and the contest finishes, you can do a winner-announcement sequence and so what that effectively is, assuming that your prize was correlated to what you do and sell, because of that's the number one factor

“what's powerful about that is, you have the curiosity and attention of all these contestants and what you're going to see is sky high open rates of usually 50-60% and then of those who open, 80-90%+ will actually click”

to the quality of your leads, right? If you just give away an iPad, that iPad is not going to do anything to pre-qualify that lead to buy a gym membership, right? In fact, it's probably the inverse. Anyone who wants an iPad probably just wants to sit on a couch and watch Netflix, right? So, doing a prize that's correlated is very important and in an example we could say, “We're giving away 90 days with a personal trainer,” so they enter their information for 90 days with a personal trainer. They refer their

friends via e-mail or via social and at the very end, you can create a landing page that announces who the winner is. You can send everyone who entered the contest an e-mail that says something to the fact of like, “And the winner is...” or you know, “We're really excited to announce the winner. Click here to see if you won,” and what's powerful about that is, you have the curiosity and attention of all these contestants and what you're going to see is sky high open rates of usually 50-60% and then of those who open, 80-90%+



will actually click because they want to find out if they won. On that announcement page, you can say, “Hey, our winner was John Doe but we want everyone to walk away with something and not walk away empty-handed so as a ‘thank you’ for the time and effort that you took to enter our contest, and as a ‘thank you’ for sharing this contest with your friends, we have a special three-day discount, or exclusive offer, or bonus for you that's only available for those who enter to contest, and it's on this page, and it expires in three days.” You can see how that takes people, who were entering the contest with a prize that's correlated to what they do and sell, peaking their interest at exactly the right moment and then giving them an irresistible offer to convert that prospect into a customer.

S: Yeah, that's genius. Normally, you'd think of contests as alright, everything kind of happens at the early stage of it. You get the lead into the hopper, award the winner at the end, and you're done. You then rinse

and repeat. But what you're saying is there's a heck of a lot of value to be obtained at the end of the contest—when you've decided the winner and you're using the big reveal, that's the carrot that drives people to go through another part of the sequence.

T: Absolutely! If you have more components to your funnel—so, typically, that offer that you make right at the end is a core offer of some kind, right? It's not necessarily a \$10-offer. It's probably more like, \$400 or, you know, multi-hundreds of dollars depending on your business, or it may be a multi-thousand dollar thing like, maybe you were picking up that they were interesting in marketing funnels and you want to sell them on a \$10,000-marketing funnel set up that's normally, \$15,000. It could be high-end like that but for the more advanced users that have more splintered offers as you were talking about with tripwires and things of that nature, things that would not cannibalize a core offer from the time that a lead enters a contest to the time that you announce the winner and try to sell them on your core offer, you can, what I sort of call, leak traffic off to these additional trainings and core offers so that as leads are coming in, they can already be self-liquidating based on your ad-spend that you're doing because you're pulling in leads at a higher conversion rate than you would get with a normal lead magnet and you're getting that bump from the referrals so if you can leak a few of those into some of these tripwire offers, it's not uncommon for people to be able to liquidate their contest—and what I mean by that is, basically generating as much revenue from their low-end \$7 or \$10-offers as they're spending on ads because their cost per lead is so inexpensive—and so, by the time you make that core offer at the time of announcing the winner, that's essentially pure profit.

S: Right. That's really cool and one of the most well-documented examples of a tripwire is what Digital Marketer talks about, that credit card knife and how that's, I think, a \$5 or \$7 item so even if it's a lost leader and you don't make any profit and actually make a little bit a loss, getting that person to give a credit card number and, basically, you're priming them to spend more money with you. You're getting over that hump of, “I don't know who these guys are and I don't trust that they'll use my credit card only for legitimate purposes” or whatever. They're over that hump now. They spend a little bit of money. They've got that credit card knife and now, it's going to be a lot easier to have them spend \$400 on some much bigger item. You're saying integrate that into the contest funnel so that you can start making money off of these people before the contest even finishes and liquidate some of these tripwire merchandises that are sitting in your warehouse and even if it's just breaking even, they're further moving them down the funnel into being a core product purchaser.

T: Right, because there is, inevitably, a delay between when they were originally into the contest and when you announce the winner and so, you're going to want to be sending them content and offers in between that anyway but you don't want to cannibalize your core offer and that's the only thing you want to make sure you don't do.

S: So, what do you mean by that? What would be an example of that happening?

T: Okay, an example of that would be like, let's say, I wanted to sell somebody on a high-end funnel. In our example where you want to sell them on some \$10,000 thing, why do the funnel for them, right? I may want to sell them a \$10 or \$97 training about marketing funnels but I wouldn't want to say, try to sell them on a \$497 big, heavy, and expansive course because what I really want them to buy is for us to do it. Does that makes sense?

“I wouldn't want to say, try to sell them on a \$497 big, heavy, and expansive course because what I really want them to buy is for us to do it”

S: Got it!

T: Because once your price point moves too far north of that lower end and if it's in the exact same vein of what you're trying to sell, some people will say, “Well, I'll spend \$497 or even \$997 to do it myself instead of paying \$10,000 to have you do it for me.”

S: Yup.

T: You know, whereas, the bolt-on might be, “Hey, you know for \$10, you can get our ultimate funnel diagram about all these successful funnels that we do and then, maybe for \$97, it can be specific to you like webinar funnels.” Or, how to create a compelling video that won't necessarily cannibalize, “Hey, let us build the funnel for you,” because that's just a bolt-on that makes them better at content if you're talking about how to make videos that sell.

S: Yeah. So, I had this very situation where, as a consumer and as a purchaser, I bought from Speaking Empire their DIY Power Day and so, now, consequently, I feel like I can do it myself. I'm not going to sign up for their full service Power Day, fly to their location in Florida, and do the full service version essentially.

T: Yeah, and some people still will but here's the thing, you know when people feel like they've already scratched that itch because when it comes to selling, what you're really doing is, you've agitated a problem and you offered a solution. If you offer the solution and it's a DIY solution, for a lot of people that's just going to solve it and those would have been potential customers for the, “Hey, come in to the doctor's office and let us do it for you!” so that's sort of how that works.

S: Exactly, right! So, when you started the company, you hadn't thought through this whole contest funnel approach yet and you just wanted to kind of scratch your own itch and have a contest system that

incentivized the right behaviors?

T: Yeah, that's correct. Obviously, we learned a lot. We're running a few of our own campaigns and I made a lot of the same mistakes that our customers make that are just sort of novices coming in and giving away Kindles and that kind of stuff. But then, I started looking at the data and saying, "Okay, you know it's a big list—fantastic—but it wasn't a big list of the right people," Let me give you an example of—if you don't mind two different case examples: one person, who's actually a well-known marketer, I won't say their name because

“When they got people in the door, what ended up happening is, from that \$400-ad spend, they actually generated \$12,000 in annual memberships within a week of running the contest.”

it's kind of embarrassing for them, but they gave away an iPad that they had won in an affiliate contest and then, they ran this contest where they got about 10,000 leads into the contest and then, they wanted to sell an internet marketing course and with 10,0000 leads, they sold exactly zero copies of their course.

S: Ouch!

T: By comparison, someone who gave away something very correlated what they did, which was a gym up in Canada, which I already sort of talked about this in my theoretical example but it was actually a real campaign, they gave away 90 days with a personal trainer as the core prize

and not only did they ask for a name and e-mail like all contests but they also asked two additional questions: they asked for the phone number of the lead—surprisingly, aspirational fields does not significantly decrease conversions—and they also had a dropdown that asked, "What's your favorite kind of workout?" and it included cardio, yoga, strength-training, and 10 different options of what you might have as your favorite workout. What they decided to do is, instead of just doing the 90-day with a personal trainer prize, they also gave away a free five-day pass to everyone who entered immediately. They only spent \$400 in Facebook ads and they had 421 people enter the contest in total. They gave away the 90 days to one person but what they did is, they called every single lead and said, "Hey, when can you come in and activate your five-day pass?" When they got people in the door, what ended up happening is, from that \$400-ad spend, they actually generated \$12,000 in annual memberships within a week of running the contest.

S: Wow.

T: So, having a big list isn't the only factor, right? It's having a larger list of the right leads so even if a couple hundred leads can be a big impact—we've seen that happen time and time again for small businesses where hundreds of leads can be tens of thousands of dollars if they're the right lead and so, sometimes it's okay to be discriminatory in the type of prize you give because you want to disqualify people just as much as you want to qualify the right people.

S: Right. Now, what would be some other examples of well-correlated prizes besides the gym membership, which was genius because that that made a lot of sense, but what else would be or maybe a handful of other great correlated prize examples?

T: Sure, so another one that seems even more niche than a local brick-and-mortar business is a lady who actually runs a ribbon-printing company and she sells physical ribbon printers. They bought a size of a large laser jet, essentially, as well as the software that goes with it and so, this is normally a thousand dollar



item that she sells and if you stop 100 people on the street and said, “Hey, do you need a ribbon printer?” Most people won’t even though you're talking about, really, without guessing. She spent some money on Facebook ads, generated about 590 or so leads, people entering to win a ribbon printer, and what she did is, when she announced the winner, she just said, “Hey, if you buy in the next seven days, you'll get a discount on your ribbon printer,” and she generated \$5,900 in immediate revenue and she generated an additional \$5,000 within 90 days of that from the same just under 600 leads. So, that's, again, north of \$10,000 from roughly high 500's in leads so a super correlated prize only the right people under a contest. If you look at her conversion rate, you might say, “Okay, it's pretty decent.” I think it was like in the 30% range, which is you know in line with most lead magnets, but the whole point is, it was the right people giving her their information.

S: Right, because if you're not careful, you could end up on one of these prize sites or contest sites where you get complete garbage traffic come in and just to win the Kindle, or the iPad, or whatever because you've been listed on one or multiple of these sites.

T: Yeah, sweepstakes directories is what you're mentioning and that usually only happens if it's like an American Express gift card or an Amazon gift card, or an iPad, or iPhone, right? Things that have universal value and they don't do anything to discourage those who aren't ideal prospects for your business.

S: Right. Okay, so I recently signed up with you, guys—with Contest Domination—and my fiancée is doing a podcast launch and the prizes that she came up with—I'm thinking, "Okay, one of them is well-correlated but two of them are probably not, actually." So, the prize, the one that's well-correlated, is a ticket to her three-day seminar called, Butterfly Effect, and that seminar is for women only. It's self-empowerment, femininity, unleashing your inner superhero, and all that sort of great stuff. Perfect. Well-correlated. But then, she also has a sponsor prize—it's a necklace from Energy Muse. Energy Muse makes these kind of energetic jewelry items. That's like a \$180 value. The third thing was a gift card or a gift certificate for a healthy and organic cosmetic company so that could be problematic. We end up on those sweepstakes directories because of that prize and it's not really well-correlated with her target audience. I mean, it's better than just a Sephora gift card but it's maybe not that much—

T: So, let me throw this out there for you and it just takes a little bit of creativity to sort of invert the way that you think. Some people say, "Well, I just want to buy them but I don't want to actually ship them as physical thing," What you can do, so you can say, "Okay, let's say, we want to do some nice products from this."— what is it? Like, creams and lotions and stuff?



S: Yup, and cosmetics—

T: And cosmetics! So, what I would do is, I would handpick, basically, some specific cosmetics that are in line with the message that she wants. So, whether it's feeling rejuvenated, or feeling empowered, or however you can correlate benefits of those, and I would say, "Hey, you're going to win these specific products," and then when the winner actually does win, say, "Hey, these are the products I had in mind but

I'm actually going to fulfill it by giving you a gift card so you're free to choose whichever products from the site you'd like,"

S: Ah!

T: See the difference? So, you're selling the benefits and the outcomes correlated to your message. You're still fulfilling with a gift card but that way, when people see it, what they're thinking about is the benefits and the outcomes related to your message and not just thinking, "Oh, sweet! It's a gift card, I'll take that!"

S: Ah, I love that distinction. That is really good!

T: So, it's the same thing but it's presented in a very different way to get your prospects thinking in the same vein that you need them to be correlated to your message.

S: Yup, got it. Got it! You also have another have another case study example where the company was wanting to source of bunch of professional photographers—

T: Yeah! So, there was a marketplace called, Snap Knot, and what they do is they match—they have a supply and demand side to their marketplace so the supply side is they need to find professional wedding photographers specifically and then, the demand side is they need to find engaged couples—which on that, there's an arc to the need of those who reckons because once you get married, the demand is gone. On the supply side, there's always geographical issues too so they need a whole lot of these photographers because if you're an engaged couple and you come like, I live in Washington and if you've only been focusing on California, I'm like, "Okay, well, there's no one in my area. This service is useless," so for them, they need to get a whole lot of professional wedding photographers to set up on their sites so there are service providers all over the place where they're creating demand. They had to hit a pretty big sort of tipping point before, basically, anyone on their site could refer their friends regardless to geographical boundaries within their country, right? And so, they wanted to attract a lot of high-end photographers and they did two things that were interesting: one is, they gave away a high-end DSLR camera. You know, pretty high-end, and the winner gets to choose whether it's a Canon, a Nikon, or a Sony so that alone creates an interesting controversy on their ads because if you talk to any professional photographer, they're all in on one of those cams and they usually think that their cam is the best, which is why they chose them. You can create an interesting discussion about, "Hey, which one would you choose if you won? Would it be Canon, Nikon, or Sony?" and so, they will enter and they asked them a couple of questions.

They asked them, “Hey, what level of photographer are you? Are you an amateur? Intermediate? Professional? Or, professional wedding? That let them segment their data so that they can give a specific call-to-action to those who tell us their professional wedding and drive them down the track of hopefully, signing up for our snapped-on service but there’s still value in knowing who all those other people are because if you’re just a professional photographer who doesn’t do wedding specifically, you’re probably still a candidate to get offers about new camera hardware they can earn a commission on, right? If you’re intermediate, they can give you information on paid courses. They can help you go from intermediate to professional and turning it into a full time job. If you’re an amateur, you’re probably looking at 101 courses on

“That let them segment their data so that they can give a specific call-to-action and drive them down the track of hopefully, signing up for our snapped-on service, but there’s still value in knowing who all those other people are because if you’re just a professional photographer who doesn’t do wedding specifically, you’re probably still a candidate to get offers about new camera hardware they can earn a commission on”

dollars on the prize and they spend a few thousand dollars on ads and what they do, typically, is they partner with people who already have a community of professional photographers and they say, “Hey, look, we’re giving away this really nice camera. We want to do something for the professional photography community. You know, you have a service that lets photographers back up their photos; this other person has a service that lets photographers rent expensive lenses. Always there’ll be people who have photographers for different reasons and so what we’d like to do is, we’d like to promote one of your offers on the back-end of our contest in exchange for you just letting your audience know about our contest. We call this the Contest Sponsor Method and what’s really cool about it is, not only do they get a ton of free traffic of super, prequalified leads that are already in the community that they want to tap but each one of those sponsors

how to get better at Photoshop, or the whole Adobe suite, or how to get your first client. Each message can be tailored to each lead and while they’re still filling their marketplace and Snap Knot is the number one goal, there’s value to be extracted from each tier of photographers for them because that’s just as good community for them to be a part of.

S: Yeah.

T: So, that was one component. The other component that they did that was really interesting to fill that contest was, they said, “Okay, you know we’re going to pay for this nice prize” because these cameras are roughly \$3,000 and so, some people at home might think, “Oh God, \$3,000 prize! I don’t want to do that!” but the deal is, they get anywhere from 100 to 200,000 leads every time they run this contest. They only spend a couple of thousand

walks away with thousands of new prospects of their own for, essentially, no cost—

“A lot of these sponsors walked away with tens of thousands of new Facebook likes and many thousands of new prospects. A lot of them walked away with quite a few new customers as well right off the bat”

S: Wow.

T: Because Snap Knot was not only saying, “Hey, go sign up for our Snap Knot service,” they’re also saying, “Hey, make sure you thank our sponsors and here’s a special offer from four of our really good sponsors,” and they did that in the follow-up e-mails, on the announcement page, and etcetera. A lot of these sponsors walked away with tens of thousands of new Facebook likes and many thousands of new prospects. A lot of them walked away with quite a few new customers as well right off the bat just by simply saying, “Hey, here’s this cool contest that cost as no

money and we’re spending no money on ads but we, basically, endorse what they’re doing so you should go enter if you want to win a new DSLR!”

S: That’s very cool! I’m kind of floored about how many nuances there are to running contests online. Many years ago, I did a contest that was really successful for a client. The client was OvernightPrints.com. This



was back when I had my agency in three different countries—Net Concepts. OvernightPrints.com, the client, they had a lot of printing services, business cards, letterheads, stationery, and so forth printed overnight and shipped the next day by air. They were sucking wind on Google. They were not anywhere for the term business cards in Google, for example, and that was the end result we were after—to ranking high for business cards. The idea I came up with was, a contest, “Win free business cards for life,” by designing Jeremy “ShoeMoney” Schoemaker’s new business card. You’d have to win the contest in order to get the prize and the prize is actually really inexpensive when you think about it—up to a thousand business cards

per year. I was in the small print for up to twenty years so very inexpensive. My agency handled all the logistics for it and the client just kind of sat back. In fact, we were able to leverage my relationship with ShoeMoney and not get any charges—he normally charges folks for running contests on his blog—so he did this for free. He promoted it not only on his blog but also on his YouTube channel. We got design sites picking it up and writing about the contest and so forth. The goal was to get links much more so than getting leads so there's all distinction there and we got some great links from it and the end-result for the client was they ended up ranking number two in Google for business cards.

T: Nice!

S: Great outcome for the client! Now, how would you take an example like that—this was from 2009 so it's ancient history—with all the different permutations, additions, and kind of cross-promotional opportunities that exist these days with your technology and with other services out there? How would you blow that contest out to make it ten times more successful in various ways?

T: Yes. There's so many different types of contest you can run. Our software is really focused on capturing the lead in incentivizing your audience to bring you more leads. It's very different in goal than say, an SEO contests. It's a very different goal than saying a user-submitted content in terms of like voting—we don't really focus on that. Using the technology that we have and couple it with sponsor methods, where you can have sponsors either donate prizes; or you can have them pay you to be promoted on the back-end of your contest, which gives you money to go buy ads; or you can have them send you pre-qualified traffic so those are really fantastic ways to sort of throw jet fuel on your existing campaign. Facebook ads are, obviously, a go-to for people these days because you can target so specifically the persona and buying interest that you want to be involved in your contest. You can use tools like LeadPages, ClickFunnels, and OptimizePress in conjunction with our software if you like to really fine-tune that landing page to sort of set up and do whatever you want to do. Working with contest sponsors, running Facebook ads, and doing some extensive split-testing on the landing pages are all, I think, it really takes these days to generate a high-impact contest that gives you a lot of leads that are actually interested in what you do and sell.

S: Right, so let's dive into each of these in more detail—so, the Facebook advertising side, how would you recommend doing more sophisticated targeting, ad copy, ad imagery, and just correlating the right ad with the right landing page so that you get maximum value out of your contest?

T: Well, I mean, we could spend 14 hours talking about Facebook ads so it's important to note that if you really want to delve into the really fine details of Facebook ads, I suggest you go find one of the multiple high quality courses out there and really get into it. That being said, as far as Facebook ads, the low-hanging fruit is usually setting up a retarding segment of those who are already visiting your website and

then promoting your to those visitors. The next—because, hopefully, your content is attracting the right kind of people to start with and the people that are hitting your main domain are people that have already heard about you or are interested in you in some way shape or form—a good way to sort of kick that off and pre-season your contests as well is just e-mailing your own list. People, sometimes, say, “Why would I want to give voice on my own list if they are already on my list?” Well, the point is, those are actually some of your best of evangelists and can bring you the most number of leads and so, that helps get the ball rolling as well. If you're on our business plan, you have the conversion tracking pixel running on your contest and makes hard to create lookalike audiences as well from that right people who have already shown interest, cringing your contest, and go from there. The other component is, the actual targeting of Facebook itself. You want to take a look at, “Okay, what is the average age of my best customer?” and I'm always the one who appealed to look at their customer profile data and not just their larger list so people who have actually bought the things that you want to sell, what does that demographic look like? Are they females that are 55+ who have an income of at least, \$80,000 a year, who own a home, and who have purchased pet products before? What are the details of people who are your best customers because that's who you want to target? It's important to know, in my opinion, that if there's an overwhelming majority of your customers that fit a certain mold, and if you're running ads for them, and even if the front-end conversion rates seems a lot lower than if you just do a broader-based campaign, that might be actually more than okay because that might be money better spent on the lower converting traffic because they're probably exactly the right people when it comes to pulling out their wallet, opening it up, taking the credit card out, and typing in on your site. I always focus on who is your best customer and model that for your Facebook targeting.

S: Right, and do you have any examples like a gallery of great Facebook ads that have done well for your clients?

T: We currently don't mainly because we just haven't focused on asking customers to do that. I mean, there's been some pretty clever creative ads but what I can say is, the characteristics of ads that tend to do better in terms of customer acquisition are ones that have some sort of either controversy—so, what I mean by that is, like in the camera example, right? Saying, “Well, which camera is better and which one do you pick: Canon, Nikon, or Sony?” and so what their ads inevitably had is, a lot of photographers and they're, essentially, duking it out over which brand they thought was the best and what that ends up doing is getting skyrocketing your engagement and getting you way more reach with people who care about that discussion. Another one is, we had a client who was in the dog niche and doing stuff about, you know, “I support euthanizing dog abusers,” and so, that obviously gets a very passionate response. Those kinds of things can, again, skyrocket engagement and really fan out your reach on the ad, which, inevitably, will significantly decrease your cost of acquisition.

S: How are you creating that controversy other than just asking the question? Are you sharing the results on the same page like, 80% percent say euthanize dog abusers? Or—

T: What you'll find is that people will just get into it in the comments and you don't have to give a specific stat. You can just say, "Do you support this?" and people will clamor on board. It's basically just a piece of controversial content and people find a way to engage. They're compelled to comment, to engage, and share with their friends and say, "Yes, I support this," even though it's just an ad because it's just good content.

S: Got that! Yeah. For our listeners, who are interested in learning a lot more about Facebook advertising, I interviewed Nicholas Kusmich in a previous episode. Fantastic content! We talked a lot more about conversion pixels, retargeting pixels, and doing retargeting, creating, custom audiences, look-alike audiences, and all that so definitely check that episode out. So, Travis, what about landing page optimization? We talked a bit about the Facebook ad but now, they click on the ad and they end up on a contest entry page. What is best practice for this kind of landing page? What would you recommend people test and optimize once they have the right template in place?

T: Sure! I mean, it's important to note that if you're just getting started out, we have a couple of templates built into our system that sort of force you to use good components right so headlined by description, we ask you to upload what we call, Featured Image, which is sort of a graphical representation of the prize. You can also include a video if you think about how people learn and consume content and understand what you're asking to do so people will benefit more from a video. Some people benefit more just by reading. Some people are very visual and need a graphic just like in a classroom. We try to include all three of those elements on a lot of our pages just because we know that it hits all three different learning styles that people have in the way they consume content. None of that is necessarily required—a lot of contests don't include a video but we think that's a compelling way to bolster your message. Our stuff is sort of set up like a wizard—like, do this then do this then do this and as long as you sort of fill in the blanks, you'll end up with the page that probably does pretty well out of the gate. If you have been doing your own landing pages for many, many years, you may elect to use your own custom many pages but then let us handle the referral pages and so forth. For those custom landing pages, you have to do what you know works in your marketplace. Some people do well with long sales letters while some people do well getting right to the point. You also have to understand what percentage of your audience is on mobile devices, which not just from a "Is the page responsive?" standpoint but also, "Where is my call to action to ask them to actually sign up?" that can also have an impact depending on what kind of devices that you're targeting and your users are doing. Just know that a lot of your users are mobile no matter what your industry is so that's obviously key.

S: Right, and you mentioned a few different potential platforms: LeadPages, which I use, ClickFunnels, and OptimizePress so you could start with your kind of built-in, templated, interface but then for going to the next level, one of these other platforms probably makes sense. You're probably already using one of them.

T: Yeah, exactly! So, the way that we integrate with those providers right now is, we generate some HTML form code that you can then just integrate with any of those partners so those are three that we've tested with: OptimizePress, ClickFunnels, and LeadPages. Even if you want to do your own page completely from scratch or you're using your own HTML and CSS if you are super pro, you could do that but most of the customers that end up doing third-party pages end up using one of those three tools just because they use it, they're comfortable with it, they like how it works, and it's pretty simple to make them work together. We're working with all three of those providers to make it and even an A.P.I. integration, which essentially means, you don't have to touch code at all. You just basically connect the two apps and it will be a lot more seamless, hopefully, by the end of the year so that's how that moves forward. Now, as far as optimization stuff on pages, one thing that we noticed that can make a big impact at least on the "referrals" side of things when people share is, making sure that you have a really compelling default share image when people share on Facebook. Having the right image and the right call-to-action text when people share for the preview snippet can be a difference between doubling your conversion rate or being half of our network average so, having a good image for that is a lot more important than people usually given credit for.

S: Do you have any examples that you can point out or is there a training with examples, best practices, and tips and tricks, for getting all these steps right?

T: So, as people go through editor on, basically, each step of the contest, we have a little link they can click that pops a video that talks specifically about how to get the most out of each aspect of your contest as you go through and they're broken down in little 3 to 5 minute chunks of consumable content so people don't get overwhelmed and have to skip around so that's obviously included. The Contest Funnel Formula is really a great way. By showing examples from our other case that is showing pictures of their actual landing pages and screenshots of their dashboard, you can get a better understanding of their analytics. Showing the actual offer is one of the best ways that we can train people on how to also create successful offers.

S: Yeah, and that Contest Funnel Formula is a full free training? It's not just an infographic explaining the funnel but it is a training set of videos and so forth?

T: It's just a PDF but it has a written analysis on two different case studies, included with the infographic.

S: Got it, very cool! Okay, and then split-testing—AB testing or multivariate testing, any great used cases or case study examples there where some of these, maybe, integrated Optimizely or Visual Website Optimizer or some other testing platform to really ramp up the performance of their landing pages?

T: Our business accounts do support Optimizely and the only one that I can think of, off the top of my head,

is you'd be surprised how big of an impact sometimes removing your logo at the top of the page can have for conversions—as weird as that sounds. We've noticed several different examples where people just simply removing their logo on top of the page can give them a nice bump on the actual contest. I know it sounds bizarre but it's what we've seen.

S: Wow, that's a good tip. Very good! And so, let's talk a little bit about used cases. As I mentioned, my fiancée, Orion, just launched her podcast, Stellar Life, and she's about to launch her contest through your platform. She's just going to type some kind of legal bits and pieces here to make sure she's not running an illegal lottery—will come back to that question or that topic in a minute but what would be some other used cases besides a podcast launch? Let's say, you want to fill a webinar, or you have a book and you're going to do a book launch, what will be some example used cases?

T: Sure, so webinar definitely works, where you can even make it so that you announce the winner live on the webinar. Our business account, actually, integrates webinars so at the same time that they enter your contest, they would be subscribed to your email list but they can also be registered for a future webinar so, again, making sure that prize is relevant to what you're really talking about in the webinar, you just sort of usually condenses that timeline from entry to announcing the winner and you, basically, leverage that peak interest for a timely webinar as opposed to a landing page—that's the only real difference there. Launching a book definitely works where people can enter and then, usually, for that where you're basically brokering a celebrity and so, the prize there can be a one-on-one with the author or whatever but then you can, in your follow-up sequence, you could say, “Hey, if you buy the book now, because you entered my contest, you actually get this bonus training for me because you entered the contest and you purchased a book,” so it's as a way for you to stimulate book sales and getting people who are interested in whatever the book is about by giving them some higher level prize related to the author typically.

S: So, let's differentiate for our listeners here: a book launch, a contest associated with a book launch that you wrote the book, or a book launch in, let's say, it's an affiliate situation—the author is not you but somebody that you're promoting and you're going to throw in some bonuses to get people to sign up because you're going to get 50% of the take on anybody you send to that author for their core product.

T: Okay. I mean, in the case I just outlined would be if it's your own book. If you're an affiliate, what you want to do is make sure that you have a product training or service that you know is correlated to that book and say, “Hey, enter this contest to win this thing from me,” but if you buy the book and for me, for the entry, say, “Hey, if you go buy this book through my link and forward me your receipt, I'll give you this extra training instantaneously because you bought through my link.”

S: Got it!

T: It's a subtle nuance but it's more or less the same formula.

S: Okay. What would be the most popular used case for a contest? Is it for a podcast launch, a webinar, a book launch, or something else?

T: It's actually most commonly used for sort of business-to-consumer type services. We have a lot of people in the fitness industry—a lot of gyms trying to generate subscriptions for boot camps or normal gym memberships. We also have a lot of people just in the the general consumer space, like you talked about Digital Marketer where you heard about us at Traffic & Conversion. They use contests in every single one of their native commerce brands so for their survival life niche, they're giving away a crossbow or some of their DIY make up stuff, they're giving away sets of make up or other beauty-related products and has an incentive to take their existing traffic and audience and convert them into e-mail subscribers.

S: Right, and they shared a stat with me at Traffic & Conversion Summit about like 100,000 hours and sales, I forgot—

T: Yeah, they said within the first 30 days of them implementing contests within their native commerce brands, they added an additional \$100,000 in sales, specifically for the leads that were generated using contests.

S: Very cool! And so, the crossbow example—what would that look like again? Because we talked a little bit about that prior to the recording, so the prize was a crossbow, they got a bunch of leads and they did something that Digital Marketer Native Commerce calls, Sideways ListBuilding.

T: Yes, so what they did is, they have this intense audience for survival life and so they said, “Hey, you know we're going to give away these multiple different products.” They've looked at generators. They'd looked at all the kind of things that, again, would be of interest, specifically, to the survival life crowd. After they collected those leads, they actually ran it through a service called, Tower Data, which gives them all these different attributes about their list and about the leads that they collected. You know, how much of their list is high net worth individuals? How much of their list owns their home? Or, has a mortgage? How much of their list have kids in the household? Or, how many have kids out of the household? What this did is, this allowed them to, on one hand, segments some of their audience who are their high net worth individuals, which to them is someone with a net worth of a million dollars plus to, you know, while they are acquiring these leads

for \$0.18 a lead or whatever, they know they can get \$6-7 a click to a financial offer and so, they can segment out the people that are high net worth and give them e-mails that are, specifically, to financial offers because that's a high value activity for them to do with that segment. Another thing that was interesting for them is, by running through Tower Data, they had run on this assumption that much of their list had kids in the household. Well, when they ran through Tower Data, they actually found that, "Hey, you know what? A lot of our list actually doesn't have kids in the household. They have kids but they've grown



up and moved out of the house," and so, that really changed the approach in the way that they wrote their copy for their offers and allowed them to really boost their results by just knowing a whole lot more of their audience, which they could only do once they got the e-mail list and so, running that contest really helped them extract that audience into an e-mail list but not only gives them that ability to communicate with that lead but also run it through a service like Tower Data that gives them way more in-depth information about what that lead is, does, purchase behavior, and all that kind of stuff.

S: Yeah, really cool! I love those guys at Digital Marketer. They are so switched on. It's a great conference to attend, by the way, for any of you, listeners, who've never attended Traffic & Conversion Summit. It's a must! So, let's now circle back to something I had mentioned very briefly earlier on and that was avoiding legal problems like inadvertently doing an illegal lottery and I'm going to preface this with a disclaimer that I'm not a lawyer and this is not legal advice. Travis is not a lawyer and this is not legal advice that he's giving either so consult your lawyer about how to get the language right and cover your butt. With that all said, what are some of the legal best practices that you're see clients using with their terminology in their official rules, their terms of use and conditions, and all that?

T: Yeah, so thanks for that preface. I think, we actually say that in our app where we force people to click a checkbox when they write the rules saying that we're not lawyers and we try to give them the best possible resources to be in a good position but again, our advice is not legal advice so always check with your lawyer. With that being said, we actually do provide some default rules in a sort a rule builder in our

tool that was originally written by a lawyer but that doesn't mean that, it always translates over to what exactly you're doing, right? The biggest thing is, avoiding a paid lottery is requiring someone to pay money to be entered in your contest. Some people say, "Well, you know, we do raffles and stuff all the time at fundraisers." Well, most people aren't really worried about that but when you start talking about a bigger stage and a digital environment, the rules change a little bit.

S: Yup.

T: Some countries like Australia require it to be a game of skill instead of a game of chance. That particular wording is important to pay attention to and a way that a lot of you will get around that is, in one of their custom fields, what they say is, "Hey, solve this math problem," and they give some math problem and then in the drop-down option, you might get four wrong answers and one correct answer and so, when they randomly choose a winner, they make sure that the winner actually gave the right answer and if they didn't, they can disqualify and pick a new person.

S: Right!

T: Because it's a game of skill, you have to know the answer to be eligible to win.

S: Right, because you want to avoid a game a chance. You want to avoid charging consideration that could be money or some other payment to participate in the contest. You also have to realize that each state and country has its own rules about contests and lotteries.

T: Very, very, very true! I mean, our default rules, for instance, say, it's geared towards the U.S and it says, anyone in the United States excluding Rhode Island. I forget exactly what it was because it's been years now since we've written that but it was, essentially, something like, anything over a value—I think, it was like \$50—you have to like, bill all this paperwork in Rhode Island and declare it with the state government and prove that you actually have the prize and, basically, it was all these different hoops and so it was just easier to just say, "You know what? Rhode Island's not that big so we're just going to go ahead and exclude them from the rules and we'll remove lot of headache and a lot of liability for our customers in the process."

S: Right. So, eligibility criteria—which states or which countries are eligible to participate in the contest? Whether they have to be residents or citizens? Their age—do they have to be over 18? Because you don't want to include minors, probably.

T: Right. Yes, and the other thing too is that the rules change depending on the value of your prize. If you're claiming to give away a million dollar prize, obviously, that's a whole different ball of wax than giving away 90 days of personal trainer, right? So, being aware that there are thresholds and they're usually pretty high—but being aware that there are thresholds where you have to declare your prize with your local government.

S: Yup! I read a post on Quora from a lawyer who said that, if the prize is worth more than \$5,000, you'll need to register in New York, Florida, and Rhode Island. New York and Florida will require a bond to be posted equal to the total value of the offered prizes.

T: Yeah, so there are headaches related to that but, again, seek legal counsel. Most of our customers give away things well below that price value—

S: Right.

T: And so, most of our customers, I think, will be probably pretty satisfied with what they find in the software but to really cross your T's and dot your I's, it's always good to have someone else look at it who's in a legal position to give you advice.

S: Would you suggest that they look for a lawyer who is specialized in the contest space or any good, general-purpose, kind of business lawyer would be sufficient?

T: Anytime you can find someone specialized is usually better but even just seeking general counsel of someone who you can trust and who's reasonably priced in your local area is at least, usually, enough to be sort of in good faith and making sure that you're going about it in the right way.

S: Yep, yep. Cool! All right, well, this has been just a torrent of information. If anybody who is on the fence about contests, I think we pushed him over the edge and, hopefully, they'll be signing up with your service. Now, there's a special incentive for people or a special discount that people can get if they know this little bit of information that Travis has shared with me. If you sign up for a free trial with Contest Domination and then you upgrade in the first two weeks, you'll get 25% off for life. Is that right? Did I get that right?

T: Yup! That's a 7-day trial with no credit card required for the trial but if you purchase a subscription within two weeks of initially setting up your account, you'll lock in a 25% discount for life, regardless of what we

do with pricing in the future.

S: Yup, and what does the business plan cost on an annual basis? Because the business plan has all that integration with GoToWebinar and—

T: --Using conversion tracking pixels, returning pixels, turning off the power by—

S: Optimizely and all that, yeah.

T: So, the business plan is \$720 a year, which works out to \$60 a month billed annually and that's including the discount built-in.

S: Very good! You, guys, have this really active Facebook group—my fiancée has been using it quite a lot. You've been really helpful and thank you, by the way. It's just amazing to see the founder chiming in with all these great tips, giving critiques and advice to all these different new customers. You're trying out different things with their contests so it's a great Facebook group. Do you want to give any details on that?

T: Yeah, it's just called, Contest Marketing, and you can include a link in the show notes if you like.

S: Yeah!

T: You do not have to be a customer of ours to be part the group but, obviously, we encourage you to be a customer. I really take it seriously and personally in my mission to help as many businesses run successful contests as possible and while we've helped tens of thousands of businesses do that already, this Facebook group, which is really not that old. It has about 800 people in it. You know, I take it upon myself to really try to make sure I get in there and give people feedback but the cool part is, by doing this in a more public setting, a lot of our other active customers are jumping in there with feedback, links, and critiques. I'm really a big believer in a rising tide will float all boats and so the more value I can provide for our customers and interested prospects there, the better. You've seen it. You're part of the group and so, hopefully, you can recognize that we don't try to be pushy there about anything. We just try to give open and honest feedback about what we've seen work and give you advice specific to your individual contests and how you might be able to get better results.

S: Yeah, it is awesome! It's a huge value-add for customers and non-customers alike. It is really great stuff

and Travis is a real giver. In fact, that was a big reason why I reached out to have you on the podcast because I saw you being so helpful with other people on the Facebook group and then with Orion, my fiancée. I would just say, “Oh, I got to have this guy on and share all his brilliance about doing a contest and really blow it out.” That's really appreciated so, thank you!

T: Yeah, my pleasure! I'm glad this all worked out. Thank you so much for having me on!

S: Yes, and for those who want to take the next step, go sign up for a 7-day trial with ContestDomination.com. I'll put in the show notes, the links to the various things that we talked about, including the Contest Final Formula, that PDF document, and the links to the Facebook group for the contests. If somebody wants to reach out and contact you directly, are you on Twitter? Or, how do you like people to reach out to you if they want to continue the conversation?

T: Sure, I mean, if they have a specific question about the software or something, just email support@contestdomination.com. It's a great way for us to keep track of the requests but if you want to reach out to me personally, I'm a huge fan of Twitter. I know it's sort of falling out of vogue a little bit but I'm just @TravisKetchum and you can have a link to that too if you want. Just send me a shout-out there and if you just want a quick feedback on something or whatever, I'm happy to catch you, guys, there. If you want more in-depth, obviously, there's the Facebook group but if you want talk to me personally, Twitter is a great place to grab my attention.

S: Great! Well, thank you so much, Travis—this is awesome! I learned some things and I'm sure our listeners learned a ton so, I appreciate your time and your wisdom. For listeners, I hope you got some great content out of this. Again, I encourage you to always go to the Marketing Speak website. Get the show notes and the PDF transcript with the checklist. We put a lot of time into transcribing each episode into taking the best action items out of the transcript and turning that into a checklist so you have a checklist to work from that will move your business forward if you implement it. You get the transcript, the show notes, and they are fabulous stuff. I do this as a labor of love and I just want you, guys, to get value out of it and the way you're going to get value isn't just through listening, it's by “actioning” the stuff you learn. Thanks again and catch on the next episode! This is Stephan Spencer, signing off.

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[Stephan Spencer](#) is an internationally recognized SEO expert and bestselling author. He is the co-author of [The Art of SEO](#) (3rd edition - August 2015), author of [Google Power Search](#) and co-author of [Social eCommerce](#), all published by O'Reilly. Stephan founded Netconcepts, an SEO and interactive agency in the 1990's, and sold it to Covario in 2010. He invented a pay-for-performance SEO technology called GravityStream that was also acquired and is now part of Rio SEO. Stephan's recent SEO clients have included such retail giants as Zappos, Sony Store, Quiksilver, Best Buy Canada, Bed Bath & Beyond, and Chanel. Stephan has spoken at countless hundreds of Internet marketing events, including all the major search & e-commerce conferences (SES, SMX, PubCon, Internet Retailer, Shop.org, eTail, etc.). He's been a contributor to the Huffington Post, Multichannel Merchant, Practical Ecommerce, Search Engine Land, DM News and MarketingProfs, to name a few.

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