

EMAIL MARKETING CONVERSION BOOSTING TACTICS

Cindy: Stephen, it's so great to have you here on the show. Thank you for being here.

Stephen: Hey, thanks for having me. I appreciate it.

Cindy: For the people who are listening here today who haven't heard about Stephen, why don't you tell us just a little bit about how you got started in internet marketing, and why you're really, really excited about email marketing?

Stephen: Sure. Probably back in 2008ish, I graduated high school and was starting college, and I was working this job and I was going to school full time, and then working full time, and I was fortunate enough to have a boss that understood that and valued education, so he would let me take off for a 2 hour lunch break to go to class, and then come right back. It was great. I did that for the whole first semester, moved out, moved into an apartment with roommates, and the company was doing so well, they sold it for a bunch of money. When they sold it, a new CEO came in, and I knew at the time that when companies get sold, they do some downsizing, and I was at the bottom of the totem pole. All I did was maintenance and answer phones, because it was a small company.

I remember, I sat down with my new boss one day and I said, "Hey, I know that when CEO's, or when companies get purchased, they shred off the fat or whatever. Do I need to look for a new job because I would like to be prepared?" He was like, "No, no, no. We're not going to be doing any of that. Everything's fine." 2 weeks later, no. They laid me off on the spot.

Cindy: Wow, what a bastard.

Stephen: Yeah, on the spot. By this point, I'm freaking out, because I was making enough to live in my apartment, and pay for gas and all my bills while going to school, and I was like, "I need a way to make money." They put me on unemployment which was nowhere near enough and I was like, "I've always been good with computers since I was 10," so I was like, "Well, maybe I can find a way to make a little bit of money online, probably not get rich, just make a little bit of money," and I did some searching and I ended up finding transcription which is where people pay you to type interviews or magazines, whatever. I started off doing that and it was great, and I was making a lot of money doing it, create a little business out of it, and I remember the Warrior Forum that people buy training there and so I was like, "Well, maybe I can teach people about creating this little business."

That's what I did. Fast forward 6 years, which is where we are now, and that blew up way bigger than I thought it would. Now, I'm a blogger, I have product creation stuff that I do, I do consulting, I do coaching, and I just do so much stuff. This whole time, the core of everything that I've done has been email marketing. In particular, I'm an email marketing consultant because there's a lot of people who don't know it works, or know how to maybe use it to the best of their advantage, and for me, especially these days with your mobile phone, it's just a way into your customers psyche, right?

Because it's a very intimate thing to show up on someone's phone. It's a crazy, cool form of relationship building and advertising, and I've made decent amounts of money from a lot of things that I've done, but email marketing has been just the most consistent and that's exactly because it's so intimate, because if you treat your customers right and you treat your readers right, it pays dividends. I teach other people how to do that now. That's what I consider myself as, is like an email marketing expert, so that's what I do.

Cindy: Excellent. We all hear "The money is in the list. You need to be building your list," whatever it is that you're doing. For people that are listening in, these guys might be already building their list, or they might not even be started. What if we just start right from the very beginning. If someone needs to get started building a list, what is the best way? We'll keep this quick, because I guess some people have already started, but what if we do this quick overview, and then we can get really into the guts of it. Good strategies.

Stephen: There are 3 ways. If you already own a business of some sort, maybe it's an offline business, you're going to capture leads that way, whether it's like with a little QR code that you put next to your cash register, or an opt in form on your website. Find a way to capture those leads. If you're not running a business, and you just want to build a list, and that leaves you with 2 options. Well, there's a bunch of options, but the 2 options that I think are the best place to start. The first one is going to be paid traffic. A lot of people don't like to talk about paid traffic because it's complicated and takes quite a bit of effort, but the thing is, Facebook traffic ...

Cindy: [crosstalk 00:05:22].

Stephen: Facebook traffic right now is huge. You can take Facebook traffic from any niche and build a free report or offer some sort of thing and get them onto your list, and then focus on relationship building and building an audience out of that. That's probably, even though it seems harder, that's probably a lot easier than the third way that I would recommend, which obviously is if you have something valuable to present to people, product launching. My list, as it is right now, is 80% product launching, 20% blog. Working on moving away from product launching, but the very first list that I built was from paid traffic. I was running a list, trying to get transcription clients, and pretty early on, what I realized was that I could say, "Hey, I'm running a deal," because the way transcription works is it's like $60 an hour when you're good, sometimes a lot more.

I was like, "Hey, I'm running a deal. I'll do an hour for $45." Then, people were like, "Oh, I need this done. I need that done," so it was really cool. Then, once I got into the product launch space, I realized there was this whole other area of it where you could actually try to sell other people’s stuff, so it's been interesting.

Cindy: That's fantastic. I was interviewing someone the other day. We were discussing Facebook and media buys and stuff like this. Something that they said, since you brought up buying Facebook traffic, something they said is that you don't have to go, when you're buying clicks, and I just thought I'd throw this in, is that you don't have to go by what Facebook actually tells you to, and you can go to their absolute minimum and you can still get clicks. I thought I'd try it out, because just thought I'd try list building, sending them to a lead generation page, just giving away something, and there's tonnes of stuff out there that you can just grab and put your name on it and start sending traffic to, and I'm getting clicks here, I just logged in to check, for 3 cents, so these are actual clicks to my thing and I'm getting signups and stuff. It's cost me so far $8.24, and I have 311 clicks and 52 signups.

Stephen: That's really good.

Cindy: Yeah, I know. I'm really pumped. It does take a little bit of work, but golly. This is really good.

Stephen: Yep. I know a few people right now that are using Facebook. I'm not one of them, because I have a new kid, so I've been trying to get into a routine, but I know people right now that are taking people from Facebook, getting them into their funnel, and then doing a few things, relationship building, and then teaching them with auto webinars, so they end up making like 4.99, 9.99 sales. It's really interesting. I want to pursue that soon, but I've got to find the time.

Cindy: Yep. Once you get people onto a list, have you got some tips that you can share about ...

Stephen: Absolutely.

Cindy: ... Connecting with them, perhaps?

Stephen: Yeah. The thing about email marketing now is a majority of the people who are going to be on your list, they're going to get your email to their phone most of the time. The thing about a phone is it's very, like I already mentioned, it's very personal and intimate, and so when people get onto my list and into my funnel, my first 5 emails are relationship building emails, and I take it up a notch. Some people just give away free PDFs, or membership sites, whatever. I purposely create videos, like just 1 video per email, where it's me trying to not only get them comfortable with me, but also build a relationship and let them know what I'm all about. They get my first email when they get on my list, I introduce myself, and then I give them some free training.

The reason I'm giving free training, is because some people say it's for reciprocity, which I guess sometimes it does work, but that's not why I do it. I do it because I want them to hear my voice and see me on camera, see what I'm about, because it's a lot easier for people to trust you and judge you if they can see your mannerisms and hear you talk. My first email goes out, talk about myself, give them training with me on camera. It's a very one on one experience, and then I have another email that goes out. The first email, it's strictly training. The second email is training and a little bit of preaching, where I give them training, and then I'm talking about how I feel about certain things in internet marketing and how it's not right and how it's not cool, and then I tell them to look out for my next email in which I start to preach a little bit more. Eventually, you get to the final email and it's me just basically talking about ...

It's preaching. It's essentially preaching, where I talk about how it's wrong to ... The way a lot of things in internet marketing are pretty immoral, and not all of them, but you know, there's a good bit of it, and so I talk about there's people who will take your email and put you on their list and then send you emails that are designed to make you want something and then you go to a sales page which is designed to make you buy, and so the reason I have it all setup like this is because I want them to feel like I'm on their side, and I am, but this is for me, the way I have it setup is I have it setup so that I get fans, people that want to follow me for years and want to see what I'm up to, and want to know that I took my daughter to the park today. If you have a list, the very best thing you can do is start with relationship building and come up with an image of who you are.

For me, I try to just be myself and everyone on my list knows I'm a recovering drug addict because I didn't want to hide that, and I wanted them to know, and everyone knows that I have 3 dogs, 2 cats, and a bird. The very best thing you can do when you first get a list is build a relationship with them. Put out content, 1 video per email, do 3 to 4 emails, and then after you have that relationship built, what I've found the best way to keep them engaged is to always be available, so this whole time, during the emails, I'm like, "Reply back, and I'll message you back." I've made a couple friends, not any that I've met in real life, but one of them, we actually play video games together ...

Cindy: That's awesome.

Stephen: ... Which is interesting, yeah.

Cindy: Yeah. I think what some people, especially in the internet marketing space, what some people forget is that when people get on an internet marketing email list, they're basically on 20, 30, 50 other peoples list, as well, so what you're saying is really important. You need to be able to let them connect with you. If you're just sending out email swipes that are from the latest launch, there's actually no personality in there, and there's nothing separating you from the other 50. The thing is, you're very open and you share everything, and some people might be shy about that. The thing is, your story and your personality isn't going to actually connect with absolutely everyone. Some people are going to go, "Yeah, nah. I'm not interested in that. I don't care that he has a kid."

I mean, that's kind of harsh, but some people don't want to hear about that sort of stuff, but the people that do, those are the one that you want on your list, and there's going to be enough of those people to identify with you and really connect with you. That's what I'm trying to do right now. It's a really fun phase, because once you start expressing yourself and who you are, you do see a little bit of a drop away, but the people that are listening and actually opening your emails, they're the people that you want to connect with anyway, because they really care about you. I think it's great, and you get to be yourself.

Stephen: Exactly. The logic for me behind it is right now, the space, especially the internet marketing space, it's really crowded with vendors, probably more crowded than it's been in the last 2 to 3 years.

Cindy: More than ever that I remember, and I've been doing this for over 10 years.

Stephen: I've definitely noticed that it's been packed, just crazy. When you get to, in any market, not even just internet marketing, with any market, when there's a flood of vendors and not enough customers, the ones that stand out are the ones that focus on quality and engagement and customer service. Me introducing myself to them and building that relationship is essentially customer service because they're like, "Well, hey, I know Steve. He's got 3 kids, or 1 kid, 3 dogs, 2 cats, and a bird, and he's never screwed me over and he's nice." What I've actually found is by doing this, a lot of people will buy from you just because they like you and because they trust you, and so all the time, I get emails from people, like even on a product I didn't recommend, they're like, "What do you think about this?," or, "What do you think about that?" I'm like, "Well, I don't know," or, "It's not worth it," you know? I've ended up in a spot where people just ask me, they want to know what I think about stuff and I think that's because I've been so open and straightforward with them.

Cindy: Right, and we're in a good position here where we actually get to spend our days looking at products and using things and stuff. A lot of the time, people don't have all that time. I mean, we're busy still, but we actually get to go and it's our job, I guess. We don't have to go to a day job, as well. We're a bit lucky. When you send out your emails, can we talk about sequencing?

Stephen: Yeah. Especially right now, with so many vendors, and you kind of hit on it that there's just so many people right now in the space to get on so many different lists. What I teach my students is, I teach them to focus on time zones, and then always being the last one to mail. It used to be, you'd want to be the first because then you're going to get a flood of sales. I'm not like that because I realized that not everyone is sitting there at 9am ready to buy something. I always want to be the last. I'll give you 2 examples. On a launch, if I'm promoting a launch, I mail 10 to 15 minutes after everyone else does, and the reason for that is because on these little iPhone's and droid phones, the most recent email sits at the top. It's at the top, so if you're the last one to mail, you're not going to get lost.

You're going to be the first one they say when they open up the mail app. On launches, I mail last. Now, if I'm just doing relationship building or anything else, I mail when no one else is mailing. I'll try to avoid the 11am rush, because obviously I want people to see it, so I'll either mail at 6 or 7am Eastern, or I'll wait until after and mail at 1 or 2. Now, what I actually do is I use Google Analytics on my site, so I'm able to see where most of my readers are, and I'll mail with time zones. I'll avoid the rush and I'll mail for the American's, but then I've also got a lot of customers in the UK and a lot of customers in Australia, so I'll mail later, like perhaps to unopens, if you will, people if you haven't opened it, I'll mail later when it's morning time there for them. When it's 6am in Australia, 8am in London, I'll do that.

That way, as they're getting up, maybe reading their emails over coffee or something, they see mine and it's not buried by 1000 other people. Now, as a general rule of thumb, times that I've found for me, that are best to mail, 1am Eastern has always been really good for me, and some time around 8:30am Eastern. I think part of that is because a lot of people don't mail at that time and so you're in front of more eyeballs for longer, and I think the other reason is just where my customers are spread out. When I mail at 1 Eastern, it's 6 or 7 in London. I get a lot of ...

Cindy: Okay. I know that a couple of the autoresponder platforms now, they're starting to let you do it based on the time zone, and also, based on frequency of when the person actually opens the emails which is great. I mean, if you're mailing for a launch it's a little bit tricky because you just want to get it to them. Like, when it goes live, you want to be able to get that product, that email out to them. Sometimes, it takes a little while to drip all of those emails out. What have you found there? I find ...

Stephen: I will say ...

Cindy: I try and use that, but ...

Stephen: I haven't tested it. Some people have, and they've had mixed results. My issue is I know for a fact that I use AWeber, which I honestly need to switch because they're all right, but they're not as good as they used to be. I've found that their cookie doesn't always fire, so the tracking cookie, so even though I'm hitting, sometimes I'll mail unopens, some of those people have already seen it, it's just the cookie, whatever platform they're using to read the email doesn't load the cookie so you don't track. I'm always worried that if I use that, how do they send to people who they don't know how they check, you know? I haven't tested it yet, but I think it has promise, because if you can mail at the exact right moment that most people always check their email, that's going to be pretty powerful. I just don't have enough data yet to give you a clear answer.

Cindy: Yep. All right. What other advice have you got related to email marketing?

Stephen: Okay, sure. My students, I always get a few comment questions and one is, "What's the best way to promote a product and review it and recommend it? What's the best email structure?" Then, I always say, the way I look at email marketing is I like at it from risk aversion, because we work for ourselves, and if we don't do well, we don't get paid. If you put together a whole page and all this stuff and spend all this time on something, and only convert at 2%, you're going to be pretty ticked off, and so I reframe the whole way I look at email marketing. I look at is as risk aversion, because I want to know that the time I'm spending on something is going to be at least somewhat consistent and trackable, and so the way I've managed to do this is I came up with a formula that usually always makes sure I'm converting at 20-30%. It has some downsides, but I'll get to those in a second. What I've found is, if you were to just right now, send out an email with an affiliate link, just on any old product or whatever, you're going to be seeing anywhere from 5 to 25% conversions.

More likely, way closer to 5. If you were to just create a video and send an email out, no pre-promotion, no anything, that number that's close to 5 is going to go up a few points, percentage points, conversion wise. If you were to create a video and add a bonus, it's going to go up. If you were to create a review page, add a bonus, and pre-promote, you're going to be even higher, if you were to pre-promote longer. Basically, what I've come up with is a strategy that makes sure that it hits on all the things that are proven to have increased conversions. What I'll do on a promotion I really want to get the word out about, I'll mail 2 days before the product goes live to a review video page which is on my blog. On that page, I have my review video and a whole bunch of information about the product, more information about the one time offers, and then just my opinion about all of it, whether I think it's worth their time, and then I give it a score.

I'll mail that out 2 days before with 1 angle. Pick any angle. Then, the next day, this is now 1 day before, I'll mail out a different angle of a different email to the same page. The goal is to get them to the page and to watch the video. Then, when the product goes live, I'll mail. Depending on how much traction this offer is getting and how many affiliates are promoting it, sometimes, like, if more affiliates are promoting it, I'll mail 2 hours before it goes live, just to remind them, and if not, then I won't, but either way, I'll mail 2 hours before if it's packed, and if it's not packed, I'll just mail 15 minutes after it goes live, 10 to 15, because again, I want to be the last person they see and then ...

Cindy: [inaudible 00:23:07] works, yep.

Stephen: Exactly, and then depending on how it's performing and how the conversions are, that'll determine whether I move forward with a closing campaign, because I'm sure you know, you can make a lot of money when a product goes live, but if you promote it for 5 days, you can sometimes just double the amount, triple the amount you made on day 1. 2 days before, 1 angle. 1 day before, another angle. 2 hours before, if it's busy, and then when it goes live, about 10-15 minutes after. For me, that's the strategy I've found that guarantees that I'm not wasting my time, maximizes conversion, maximizes effort. I just used that exact campaign on a product that didn't have any traction and made 450 sales from 1200 clicks.

Cindy: That works then.

Stephen: I've been using it now for 5 years. People ask, "How have you been able to do this? Stay in this particular niche so long?" It's because I have a system. My video is systemized to answer frequently asked questions, and encourage them to check it out. My page is optimized. It's all set up so that when I make a campaign, I didn't just waste 12 hours going through a product and making the video and making a page. That's how I look at it.

Cindy: Yep. That totally makes sense, and then you can actually put in the effort to do a really good job of it, instead of jumping from thing to thing. Yeah, makes it a lot better. It's a better experience for everyone else who's on your list, but it's also a bit more rewarding for yourself, too, because it's hard to put all this work in and then not have a lot of anything back from it. I mean, whether it's money or appreciation from people that need that information.

Stephen: Exactly, and the way I make my videos, I structure my personality and relationship is that I'm always not pressuring them. I'm like, "Look, I'm not pressuring you. Other people are going to, but here's the information you need to make a decision for yourself. I don't want you to feel like I'm making it for you." The reason I do like that is because, again, I see my readers and my customers are people. If you screw them over, they're going to remember, which is why some people are having to constantly put out a product every 2 weeks because they can't keep anyone happy, to like them. If you're thinking about doing an email marketing campaign, the 3 things you can do to make sure that conversions are high are pre-promote it, do some sort of review video where you actually have gone through the product and talk about what you think, and add a bonus.

If you do even just 1 of those things, your conversions will be higher than as if you were to do just send it out, but it has a synergistic effect, so if you do all 3, you get a lot more conversions. You see a lot of people do 1 or the other. Sometimes they'll do all 3, but for me, all 3 is just always done so well. It's crazy. I can promote 3 or 4 things a month, and be way ahead of a lot of people.

Cindy: Right, okay. We're probably going to wrap it up soon. Do you have any last words of advice for people that are wanting to really smash it with email marketing?

Stephen: Yeah. Just remember that sometimes it's hard to picture that these people that you're emailing are actually people because you don't know them, you don't know what they look, you don't know how they maybe even smell or anything. It's hard to imagine them as people, rather than just an ATM machine, but if you treat them right, treat them with respect, then they'll treat you with respect in return, and you'll not only get more engagement and more fans, but you'll end up ultimately make a lot more commissions and money. Treat people right and just put a little bit more effort in than everyone else, and you'll be surprised at how far it can take you.

Cindy: That's funny that you mentioned that. It actually just triggered a memory. I created, it's a workbook, I guess, a worksheet, to be able to create an avatar, so you can create your own personal avatar of who is your email list, and I've found that as soon as I started creating an avatar for whoever it is, either a product, or an email list, or whatever, it really helps you identify who it is that you're talking to, and turns them into a person, instead of just some random wallet, because that's not what they are. They're actually real people. For you guys that are listening, what I could do is include this for free, and I'll throw it on the blog, so if you came via this recording, via iTunes, or via the Android Store, or whatever, go over to 7FigureFurnace.com and look up "Stephen's Podcast," and underneath, I'll make sure that I can throw that in there, and help you just really connect and identify who it is that your people are, so that you can just turn them into people because that's who we all are, right?

Stephen: Right.

Cindy: Cool. Thank you so much, Stephen, for being here on the show. I appreciate your time.

Stephen: No problem. Thanks for having me. Have a good day.

Cindy: No worries. Talk to you soon, bye.

Stephen: Bye.

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