

EP#43: Spencer Shaw on Entertaining Your Audience Like A Rock Star

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John McIntyre: It's John McIntyre here, the Autoresponder Guy. I am here with Spencer Shaw, who is actually Kevin Davis' business partner. I did a podcast, episode 29, which is at dropdeadcopy.com/29, a podcast with a guy called Kevin Davis, on how to achieve insane conversions with retargeting segmentation and some advanced email marketing stuff like that. And, after that podcast, Kevin suggested that I talk to his business partner, Spencer, to do a podcast for THEIR podcast, a business growth podcast. So we've done that, and then at the end of that, me and Spencer were talking, and I was like, "Well, how about I get you on MY podcast?" And this is what happens with podcasts, you know, you just network your way around from person to person to person, it's a fantastic way to make connections, and that's pretty much what happened here. So, today we are going to talk about how, basically, how a reformed rock star entertains people with emails, so comes up with email stuff that really gets people paying attention, and opening those emails, and, you know, ultimately buying the products that they are offering. So, we will get into all of that in just a moment. Spencer, how are you doing today?

Spencer Shaw: Doing great, man. It's nice to be on the other side of the microphone (laughing).

John McIntyre: (Laughing) Do you do this often?

Spencer Shaw: Not enough, man. And when I do it, I don't get a connect with someone that's kind of lighting me up, so this is fun .

John McIntyre: (Laughing) Good to hear it. Alright, so, I gave you a really quick intro in there, but tell people a bit more about, you know, who are you, and what do you do, and what are you all about?

Spencer Shaw: Okay, so, as you mentioned, I am Kevin Davis' business partner in the world of Internet marketing superfriends, or in the world of really, high-level geekery of marketing, like funnels, and retargeting, and analytics. Kevin is known in those circles, and so, he is the systems and the analytics and technical brains, and I am the creative brains of our business. So, I write the copy, I oversee a lot of the creativity, and different parts of our funnels in that business. And it was kind of like a happy accident, how it all pulled together. I think that most stories are

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that way, and you know, it has been pretty cool business marriage ever since.

John McIntyre: (Laughing) I like how you call it a "business marriage" there. I have heard a few people talk about business partnerships being the same thing as like a, basically a marriage contract.

Spencer Shaw: You know, it is a lot that way. I think some people take it too serious, and you have to understand that, there is give and take, and as long as both people are moving forward. And it's funny, Kevin and I, when we met, it was, I don't know, several years ago, and it was actually at a local Meetup, and he was consulting for, you know like, Wall Street Journal bestsellers, Robert Alan and Mark Victor Hansen. And, he was sharing his outsourcing system, and I thought, "Holy crap! This dude's smart!" And before that, I was actually in the mixed martial arts niche, so I had created a clothing line, and was one of the top affiliates inside of the MMA world, and I was networking with a lot of like, I would network with the most highly decorated MMA fighter; he did videos for me, I had been through his gym. And so, Kevin and I, you know, we would talk about that stuff, and then stumbled into a relationship that's been going on for a number of years now.

John McIntyre: Okay, okay. So it sounds like you, you said that you're the creative side. So that means, you're doing the emails, the sales copy, all of this, the marketing and entertaining side of the business.

Spencer Shaw: I am, yeah. With that comes, oh man, that double-edged sword of creativity. You know, like, when you have like a really good joke, you think you have in your head, or like a really cool story, and you share it with someone, and then it's just not as cool. I have had that happen many a time. I remember writing an email out to my MMA subscribers, and you gotta think, like, these guys are dudes that spend three to seven days a week in the gym. Their life is, like, pure adrenaline, and I remember like the subject line was like "The Death of Wussies" and like, dude I got like hate-mail from that. So, like I would test, I would test ideas, and you know, I still test ideas with our business, and luckily I have learned over time to test with smaller segments, but, you know, that's part of the creative idea. Like, if you don't test things, if you don't try throwing that weird creativity stuff out there, you know, you're eventually just going to silence it.

John McIntyre: Okay, so you're really an advocate of, I guess, getting kind of wild and wacky with some of your emails, and seeing how people respond to it. Because, sometimes, you're gonna get who respond to something that you're just blown away. Like, it just might not make any sense at all, but for some reason, they like one of your emails, that's just weird.

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Spencer Shaw: Yeah, exactly. But, I have learned over time, like to test it within reason, you know what I mean? Like, if you have a list of 10,000 subscribers, don't send out an off the wall test to all 10,000. Maybe send it out to a segment of 1,000 people or something like that, you know? That's where over time I have matured and learned a few more things.

John McIntyre: Okay, okay.

Spencer Shaw: To be a little bit more methodical with it.

John McIntyre: Okay, methodical weirdness.

Spencer Shaw: Yeah (laughing), that works. I mean, I think the big thing is, you know kind of going back to the rock star, like, that's what put me through school, and I grew up. I mean, I cut my first album when I was 16, no actually I was 15 or 16, got a song on the radio, and then went up to Seattle when I was 17 and cut my second album. So I have been playing, I have played clubs, bars, you know, arenas, auditoriums, all kinds of stuff, and you have to test things. And you have to go out and try new things to your acts. However, like, when you're a band and you're performing, you always have a set list, and so the audience doesn't know what your set list is, but you know what it is. And so to them, it's a surprise; to us, it's like predicted, and we can throw little weird things in there. So I will throw in, like, you know, how we are gonna do a portion of a jam, or how we're gonna say a certain joke, or move from one piece of a song to the next, and our audience doesn't know that. But for the most part, we have it scripted out - we know what's happening.

John McIntyre: Okay, so tell me a but about that. So, you know, we chatted before this call about how we could best put this podcast together, but we want it to be entertaining. So, how did you do, how did you make your songs more entertaining, you know, as a band? And, how have you taken that and applied that to email marketing?

Spencer Shaw: You know, I think I realized - you know, nowadays, with the competition - you see things on Youtube, and what blows me away is, like, you'll see guys that are, you know, juggling something while they're playing a guitar, and they're balancing an instrument on their hand, and playing a kickdrum, and crazy entertainment there, with all kinds of things going on, and it really doesn't get a lot of views, so it's like this shock and awe doesn't really work as much on that side of things, it's like, in a live show, what do you want me to do? Like, stick a sparkler up my ass and do somersaults? That's only gonna last for like 30 seconds and its gone. And so, what you learn is, connection with the audience. You learn, like, when you come on stage, is to hit them hard, like with an energetic song, and to hook them.

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And I think, you know, one of the things that you and I talked about before is, you know, as a musician, and one thing I do with my copy is, if I am on a new audience, or I am testing out a new song, I'll play something that they're familiar with, so I'll play a cover song, and - in the music world, when you play a song that someone else wrote, that's called a cover song - so, I'll play a cover song, then we'll play a brand-new song, then we'll play another cover song. So, it's kind of doing this little sandwich of material. And the same happens with our copy - we'll go through, and if we're taking people down a new path, we'll take an existing idea that they know, or an existing story, you know, something that was open-looped from the past, and we'll bring in something new.

John McIntyre: Give me an example.

Spencer Shaw: Let me give you an example: So, we're running a bunch of master classes right now. And we've done master classes on analytics; we've done master classes on retargeting, email marketing, hangouts, and now we're getting ready to do a master class on podcasts. So, you look at the hangouts, that's somewhat related to podcasts, and so, what we've done is we've gone through and we've told the stories, the struggles, the pain, and we want to come from the perspective of, like, being as human as possible. I think the days of, like, "I'm the guru and know everything", I think those days are gone, you know what I mean?

John McIntyre: Absolutely.

Spencer Shaw: And one of my favorite writers, his name is James Altucher, he is not in the IM space, he is not an email marketer per se, or a direct marketer, he is an author, but the dude has absolutely disrupted the way that bloggers communicate and the way that authors communicate with their audiences. He is, by far, like the most vulnerable writer out there. James Altucher, I can't give a big enough plug, I've got all of his books. And he will just go through, and he will write about how crazy he is, how screwed up his life is, why his kids hate him, like why he got fired from all of his jobs - like, all of the stuff that no one wants to talk about? Dude, he shares it all. So, like, I'd be scared to be his friend (laughing). You know what I mean?

But like, so what we'll do, is we'll come with that, like, real-life approach, and we will do that, and talking about our hangout master class, and how we totally screwed up, and how we had 800 people on one of our hangouts, and we clicked the wrong button and ended it, like, right at the time of the pitch. So like, when you're going to be making the most of the revenue, like, we totally screwed the pooch, we messed it up. So, we share those stories, and we mention, we start weaving in, back then, started weaving in podcasting, or becoming a radio celebrity, and then we

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come back into the hangouts, and now we're getting ready to start fully diving in with, like, how the importance of the podcast master class, of being the importance of that radio celebrity, that Internet celebrity, and so it's just weaving ideas. I think Andre from Autoresponse, he talks about the open loop thing? You know, he uses "Lost" as an example, and it's very similar in a way, but we're more conceptual, we're on a bigger basis.

Because, you know, it depends on your audience. You know, if you've got an audience, at times, they're stoked to read an email that has that drama, has those open loops, but it can also become really transparent, like, "OK, yeah, I get what's gonna happen here," you know what I mean?

John McIntyre:

Right, right. To me, this seems like it's a question of context. So let's say I'm into email marketing needs right now, with the podcast and with the McIntyre method, and so it's natural for me to send out an email to my list about email marketing, whether it's my product, or a Webinar that I'm doing, or someone else is doing, or some email marketing service like Aweber or Infusionsoft. But if I want to go to them and talk about a sales letter, a piece of software that helps you write sales letters, that's only gonna . . . Like, if I just come out and say "This is a great product, all about sales letters, and you should buy it, and here's why", that wouldn't do as well, as another email that set the stage first by talking about email marketing. So, starting with where they're at right now, and starting with that context, and then putting the sales letter in the context of email marketing, which is that, if you don't have a good sales letter, you know, you can do all the email marketing in the world, but when they hit that sales page, it's going to be so bad, that they are not going to know what to do, and they are not going to click that "Buy Now" link. And so that's why, if you're doing email marketing, you also need a sales letter. So, what's happening there is I'm starting with the idea that they already know, to create that familiarity, and then weaving, you know, going over almost, it's a bit an open loop kind of thing, and then going over into the sales letter. So that, when I introduce that new idea to them in the sales letter, it feels familiar to them. That's what you mean, right?

Spencer Shaw:

Yeah, absolutely. You know, a really simplified way of saying it is something that I learned from Eben Pagan - this was years ago. He said, "If you want to create an 'aha moment' for someone, what you do is you take two things that people know about, and they're very familiar with, but are completely unrelated, and then you find a way to connect those two things together, and that creates an 'aha moment.'" Because creating, or say this, uncovering gold for people, and sharing a completely new concept, psychologically, that's really tough for people, because they have to accept the change, they have to accept a new paradigm shift, and

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they have to accept all these other things. That, psychologically, it actually puts some weight on their brain. But if you take something that they already know, and you just connect it with something that they already know, but maybe they hadn't thought of it from that perspective, then they sell themselves, because they have that "aha."

John McIntyre: This is like metaphors. You know, you create the metaphor, and you relate it to something else, and you're, "Oh, that's why! I know what you mean now."

Spencer Shaw: Yeah, it just, I don't know. I mean, again, James Altucher, I think he stole from Eben, or maybe Eben stole from James, but he said, "Just take two separate ideas, that aren't connected, and let them have sex with each other." (Laughing) That's a good way of putting it!

John McIntyre: Absolutely! And another thing we talked about, before we got on the call now, is that, you mentioned something about, where you would send out, say, an email about some sort of news item, maybe it's a local business. You find, you enter the conversation - this is that old Robert Collier rule from his book - about enter the conversation that's already going on in their heads. So, they're thinking about a current news event, and start your email by talking about the news event, and then weave your way into your pitch. Or, have the first email talk about the news event, and then the next email talk about your product. Because, when they open the email that you send them, this is actually a really good point to keep in mind, because I haven't framed it up this way, but, when someone opens your email, no matter what the subject line is, they are almost definitely not thinking about your product, and their credit card isn't in their hand when they are reading their email in-box, so you shouldn't start off by saying off, "Oh, I've got this great product." You gotta think, "well, what are they thinking about right now? How can I enter that conversation going on in their head? Are they thinking about their whining baby upstairs? Are they thinking about some tsunami that's happened on the news, or some political situation that's going on, or some sort of politics that's going on right now? Or maybe they woke up this morning, and looked in the mirror and they're fat? So, it's like, how can you start there, and then weave your way to a point where it's a natural place for you to insert your pitch?

Spencer Shaw: Yeah, absolutely, man. That is super key, and I mean, you know, you have to be relevant to something that they would be, that everyone would be interested in. I mean, it's kind of like the psychic stuff? You know, they're called false-positives, you know, like, "I sense that you have a lost loved one in your life, is that right?" And they're like, "Oh yeah", and then, "And you think about this loved one all the time, is that right?" It's like crap like that, and if you look at how psychics work, they are asking

these leading questions, and you can do the same thing with news, and obviously, I am not saying be unethical, but what I am saying is, you can look at the news, and there's ways to lead it, so they are like, "Oh yeah, totally!", like, "oh, that person's bad" or "that person's good" or "oh, I never thought of it this way," and then you lead them down the path, and your product is the solution, or clicking on the link is the solution, and then, it starts to sell them on the next step, or whatever it is, and I kind of want to back into the stepping of it.

You know, I see many times, marketers, inexperienced marketers, where they are trying to "sell", and they are trying to blanket the message to everyone, and they don't take the time to really segment down their lists, and understand what people are interested in. So, you know, one of the things that we do, and I am really grateful for Kevin for his genius system approach to it - when we are creating a new campaign to sell someone on like a broadcast or a new product, I will write a sequence ahead of time. And the first email will go out, and once the people open that email, so there's actually, people get segmented into two different lists from there, so when a person clicks on the email, they get put into a bucket, and then the people that click on the link, they get put into a different bucket, and the people that click on the link, they are a better candidate. So, they are going to receive the next email in that sequence, because we're not selling them on the first one, we're just warming them up, we're just taking them on the date, so they receive the next one, and it's taking our subscribers through that process.

Whereas, many times, I see people, like, they will send an email, and then, the next sequence, they send out the email to everyone, and then they send out the email to everyone, and you start to burn out your list, because maybe that first email, they totally weren't into it. And it's coming from that perspective of, okay, we're going to test this segment, we're going to test the most hyperactive people, and once we have those results, okay, now we can go back and, why did this group of people NOT open the email? Was it the subject line? Okay, let's just keep the same body, but we'll change the subject line. OK, cool. So, it's a lot of testing, and like a methodical process of going through and realizing, like, I don't need to sell everyone. And if you do it that way, your subscribers absolutely love you, because you're not selling them stuff that they don't want. You're only selling them the stuff, it's like almost mind-reading - again, it's like back to the psychic stuff. It's like, you know, because, they're like "Holy crap! I am stoked that he's sending me stuff about podcasts!" You know what I mean? And they don't realize that, the people that didn't click on that email, they are not getting that sequence.

John McIntyre: Right, okay. So what you're talking about here is, if you have more of a general list, I suppose, you would send out that first email on, say, podcasting, and if no one reads that, or if no one clicks on that, they don't get the next email. But then, in a week's time, or a month's time, or three months' time, you might send another email, and this time, it's on pay-per-click advertising, and they read this one and they click it, because they're interested in that, so you're doing, Andre calls this in "Autoresponder Madness", he has his main SOS, Soap Opera Sequence, which you might think like, you've got your main sequence, which is just on, say, Internet marketing, and there's all these people on that list, who just want to make more money with marketing on the Internet. And then, within that market, you've got people who want to know about podcasting, who want pay-per-click, who want to know about SEO, and so you send out these single emails, which are basically like bait, and when you catch a fish, it's basically when they click the link in that email. You send an email on podcasting, and they click that link, and if they click it, they get automatically added to an autoresponder only for people who are interested in podcasting.

Spencer Shaw: Absolutely, yeah. And that's always worked the best, that gives us the highest EPCs. It makes our audience stoked the most to hear us. Your unsubscribes go down. And, you know, there's a lot of different things that we'll do in that, you know, for example, we weight the links, and so, you know, in the past, we used to use things like Survey Monkey, so it would be like, you know, hey, you know, go to the Survey Monkey and fill out this stuff. Well know, it's just like, "Hey, tells us, what of these three things are you totally into?" And if they click the link inside the email, it weights it from there, like, they don't even have to go to the surveys. So, it's like little mini-surveys, our links within the email act like mini-surveys.

John McIntyre: Absolutely, because you can know what they want, and what they are thinking about, based on what they click on.

Spencer Shaw: Yeah, so it helps out. And again, I think it's, you know, it's kind of like, I'll go back to the music metaphor. You know, when I play in a coffee shop, you're gonna play a lot different songs, and you're gonna have a different line of jokes, and way that you're gonna treat the audience, than when you're playing at a bar, and you're gonna have a different type of lineup and jokes and everything when I'm playing that big auditorium or places like that. So it's just, it's really noticing the audience, and playing to that audience, and I guess in a way, it can be bad, because you become somewhat chameleon-like, but at the same time, you know, you got it. Like, for me, whenever I play bars, I realized one thing - my job wasn't to play the most awesome music and have them love me; my job was to

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sell liquor.

John McIntyre: (Laughing)

Spencer Shaw: You know what I mean? And , that's where most musicians screw up, because they get there, and they're like, "Oh dud, I'm gonna be a rock star," and it's like, "Dude, no, your job is to sell liquor." You know what I mean? And, actually, I don't even drink, you know what I mean, like that was my job, I realized, that's my job. But I can have fun with it. And if I bring them along the path to other things in that process, cool!

John McIntyre: Okay. That's a really, I think that's a great note to end on, actually. So, we're trying here, to basically be the musician who goes into bars and clubs and arenas and all these different places, and knows when to do an acoustic set, and knows when to play a cover. He knows when to sell liquor, and knows when to go crazy and wild and do things like at a festival. So it's all about understanding, the way to be entertaining, or the way to write really, really good emails, is to just, either use surveys and use automatic segmenting software, which you do with InfusionSoft and Office Autopilot, or just take time to really understand what your market's into, and then write them emails based on that. That's really the message.

Spencer Shaw: And it's super-effortless. Like, if you do it that way, your emails can be really crappy. I mean, obviously, don't write crappy emails, but like, if you're selling people, who want what you are offering, it is a lot easier to sell to them, you don't have to, you know what I mean?

John McIntyre: Yeah, man, this is the core of selling. It's not going and selling ice to an eskimo, it's all about finding people who already want what you have. That's really the key of marketing. So then all you do, you don't have to sell them, you just have to matter-of-factly state that, "Here's what I have, and if you want it, here's where you can get it."

Spencer Shaw: Yeah, and then you're the coolest dude! Exactly, you're their resource, and the cool thing is, you get to charge a better price, because you're like, they're hotter, you're solving their problem, they are willing to pay a premium for it, and you know what, they're gonna be like, "Dude, if you have anything else like this, I'll buy it." And, one thing I learned years ago, is that buyers that buy, buy, and what that means is, like, when people have a problem, dude, they want to solve it. They will throw money at it right then, and if you go through, and you write an email sequence, and you go, "Okay, well, the free report reveals . . ." or whatever crap you're saying, and oh, I'm gonna lead them through this process, and then, on day three, or day seven, I am gonna finally sell them, dude, they might be out of heat by then. People that have an itch, may, they want it

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scratched, and so, offer it to them right away.

John McIntyre: Absolutely. Cool, man. Well, we're right on time, but before we go, give people a heads-up about where they can learn about you or Kevin or all this segmentation stuff. I know you have a podcast - tell people about that.

Spencer Shaw: Yeah, I think you know, the podcast is probably the best. It's called Business Growth Podcast. You can get it on iTunes. You can find us on Youtube, or on our website, BusinessGrowthPodcast.com, and that's probably the best place, and then just give us a shout out.

John McIntyre: What sort of podcasts do you have on the podcasts, who are you talking to, what's it about?

Spencer Shaw: It's really geared towards the business growth side of things, and we've found, you know, we've really connected with a lot of startups, so people in the Ycombinator, a lot of people in Boston, a lot of accelerators, so these are outside of Internet marketing, these are businesses, like big businesses. I've got one right now where they are going to accent for about a half-billion dollars, and I interviewed them, and it's high-growth business type of stuff, not little pay-per-click campaign companies.

John McIntyre: (Laughing) I am hesitating to say "real businesses" . . .

Spencer Shaw: Well, you know, I don't want to say that, but like, there's also, like you and I talked about email marketing, which is like a core component, and I have talked to people about angel investing, and I have talked with analytics and follow up, but it's really like, very high-level, high-growth type of stuff.

John McIntyre: Absolutely. Alright, Spencer. All of the links to the podcast on dropdeadcopy.com with the show notes. Thanks for coming on, man. I really appreciate it.

Spencer Shaw: Definitely. Thank you for having me.