

# SUBSCRIPTION ENTREPRENEUR



HOSTED BY ERIC TURNNESEN, FOUNDER OF **membermouse™**

# EP109: Landing Page Secrets & Strategies with Dan Caron

*"Every business has a customer acquisition secret. There's generally going to be one thing that really works in acquiring customers. You have to figure out what that is. In practice, what I've found is that there will be one or two channels that really work well. That means that you can do everything, you can do content marketing, paid advertising, go to events, do press, on and on and on, but only one of them is really going to move the dial."*

If you had a magic wand and could transform one thing about your business, what would it be?

Would you perfect your product or transform your team? Maybe you'd uncover the ideal, acquisition channel.

The thing is... we don't have magic wands to help solve our problems – *or at least I don't* – but the good news is that there is a proven way to generate more leads, acquire new customers, and grow your business by leaps and bounds.

Our guest today is Dan Caron. And he's an expert in identifying customer acquisition channels, crafting engaging copy, and designing landing pages that convert visitors into customers.

In this episode, we dive deep into all of these topics and tie everything back to the critical importance a landing page plays in your business.

While I can't give you a magic wand, the insights Dan shares come close. And as a special bonus for our listeners, we also have a video of Dan analyzing a landing page that embodies excellence in all areas from their copy, color design, opt-in forms, and more. You can find this bonus video in the show notes at [SubscriptionEntrepreneur.com/109](http://SubscriptionEntrepreneur.com/109).

So, let's get to it! I'm your host, Eric Turnnissen and this is the Subscription Entrepreneur podcast.

**Eric:** Hey Dan, welcome to the show.

**Dan:** Hey Eric, glad to be here.

**Eric:** Awesome, it's really exciting to have you on. Leading up to this call with you I was reflecting on the first time that we met, which was back in New York City. I think it was around 2010 and I have this very specific memory of being on the phone with you, crossing a busy intersection while you're talking to me about technical issues you're having with the MemberMouse platform at that point. It made me reflect on how generous and patient you were in those early days with MemberMouse. You were one of the first five customers of MemberMouse and you are on version 0.5 or something like that.

**Dan:** For some reason I trusted you. I thought - this guy seems really sharp ad he seems open to building a really great product. You could be trusted, relied upon, and you are a great

architect. I've been thrilled with MemberMouse. Even today I was just thinking about another site that I want to put onto MemberMouse Mouse. Kudos to you.

**Eric:** Thank you. And I also want to get into your contribution because I think it's related to our conversation and I have that on a set of questions that I want to get into. You are an expert in landing pages among other things. This is the thing I really want to pick your brain on today. Before we get into that, would you mind helping people understand a little bit about your background.

**Dan:** Yeah. I am 36 now. I just building websites when I was 15 or so, roughly that's been 20 years. I was given a course by my health teacher in high school. She ordered a course by Corey Rudl. It was called Internet Marketing Secrets. I was maybe 15 or 16 and she said, "I bought this on an infomercial and I'm not really into this stuff, but you build websites. Maybe it can help you in the future." That course, which some of the old guard of internet marketers refer to as a landmark course. That course really changed my life. It was an adaptation of old-school direct response principles for the Internet. It taught me what copywriting was, how to craft a sales message and how to craft a compelling headline. As a young kid I thought this is interesting. This seems to makes sense to me that the Internet is expanding and growing and there's all this hype about the Internet. Back in those days, everyone was coming to me, asking me to build a website for them. It was the early days of the web. Those skills, that first course set me on the path for becoming a copywriter and a marketer. I ended up going to school for computer science, entrepreneurship and marketing. I built a few businesses into seven figures on the web. My latest start up is in healthcare and has roughly about a \$35 million evaluation. We just closed a Series A on \$7 million. I have been building Internet companies since I was young. Part of being successful really is knowing how to articulate yourself and your value proposition and to do so in a really compelling way. I really enjoy it. I find that articulation and communication is so critical in business when you are trying to sell a product or service. It's really hard, it's a very difficult thing to do.

**Eric:** Right, because articulation isn't even step number one. Articulation is the tip of the iceberg and it the expression of these massive things underwater that you perceive and no and articulating is about how you tie everything together and present it above the surface.

**Dan:** Yes, exactly. Take MemberMouse, it's a fantastic product/service. There are tons of features. It's an enterprise class. There's so many amazing things about MemberMouse and you have to choose, right? What do we want to communicate? What do we want to lead off? You only have one page, one screen load and when someone visits membermouse.com to capture their interests and communicate the right things, even when you only even when you have a very complex and robust product or service. I think that this topic is extraordinarily valuable. I would encourage everyone to listen because we're going to be going through some things that can really truly multiply your business. We are going to be talking about growing a business from nothing into hundreds of thousands or millions of dollars. These are the things that will move the dial.

**Eric:** I love how so naturally you can do that articulation. What you just said was, "okay great we don't have to worry about writing any of the copy for this episode and promote it because you just naturally encapsulate it in such a compelling way. One thing I've known about you, in knowing you for ten years probably has some hand in your journey and what you've come at is I would describe you as a tinkerer. You mention you do business, but every time I meet up with you, you're doing something. One time you're working on the Arduino board, that portable motherboard processor, and you're also a talented musician. You were getting into Khan academy and studying physics and all sorts of stuff. You just seem to have a naturally curious mind about the world and breaking things down. I wonder, how that feeds into what you do.

**Dan:** That's a great question I'm actually am Myers-Briggs INTP. They are sort of introverted, intuitive, thinkers that perceive the world. INTP's are known as very logical. We are tinkerers, programmers, engineers and things like that. I'm not naturally extroverted, I don't sustain my life through extroversion. I sustain it through internal worlds of playing with code and playing with the intricacies of music. My desire to build businesses, to generate an income for myself and my family and to bring cool products into the world, led me to tinkering with copy and messaging. Just my natural inclination to toy with things, I thought you know there's a lot of things that can be tested quickly on the Internet. You can test ads, you can test headlines, different value props. You can test different value pricing. It's a fertile ground for someone who likes to tinker. The Internet is great for that because you can fail so cheaply. Yes certainly, tinkering is really important. I find having a scientific mindset and bringing a marketing message onto the Internet can be done quickly. You shouldn't spend a heck of a lot of time trying to build the business before you validate it at some point - with some quick rapid prototypes.

**Eric:** Right, and tinkering also takes discipline and persistence. The level at which you dive deeply into it I think directly influences the amount that you get out of it.

**Dan:** I learned that from Eugene Schwartz. He's an old-school direct response copywriter. His message was you're a sales person and you're a copywriter. Your number one job is to get under the hood and inspect the entire car front to back and do you need to be the world's leading expert on the product or service that you are selling. That is your job as a marketer, that is your job as a salesperson is to know the intricacies and bring all of that to force when you're crafting a value proposition. Imagine if you just took a cursory overview of a product and then try to sell it. You could be missing enormous parts of the picture. We can get into short copy versus long copy, but I will say upfront that I'm a big fan of long copy. I sort of started to tone down a bit and turn towards medium copy with more strategic use of imagery and video. For the most part, if you have something that you're trying to sell, long copy will generally outperform. That is because if you're selling something of value and you have the right person in front of you, reading your website, they will pay attention, they will read all the words. If they don't read all the words, at least they will think this is very complete, it's very robust, this looks solid and they will take the dive.

**Eric:** You were saying how if people just had a cursory understanding of something then you can't properly market it. Tying this to back when I asked you to start working on MemberMouse

and help me out, my issue wasn't that I had a cursory understanding of MemberMouse, I knew MemberMouse in depth to the deepest depths, but the thing is the perspective of what I knew about MemberMouse, the technology - the features, I was missing something that wasn't allowing it to sell. Now, you ultimately worked with us for three years. You helped the company grow sales 10x. I know you use the landing pages as your primary strategy for doing that. I want to ask this question to help put in context - put in perspective the role that the landing page plays in growth. If you can talk about when you came on, how are you approached it.

**Dan:** Sure, there's a lot of variables that play. When you're building a business, you have a product, you have tons of different channels you can try to get attention from. You have a price point. You have your communication, your marketing your sales language, your imagery. You have all these different variables. When I first partnered up with you Eric, the MemberMouse site sort of had features in different area areas and you could click around and see different things. There were many different pages and the issue was that if you look at click-through rates and look at any given click-through to a different page it's pretty low. We're talking 1-5% maybe. If you have a multi-page site and you're trying to craft a sales message and you don't have all that sales information in a linear pitch, you run the risk of losing somebody - that is very, very dangerous. So, the first thing that I did was said, "ok we are going to build a long-form, single page sales presentation of all the value of MemberMouse because I know if I get somebody on that page who is remotely interested in a membership plugin, they are going to at least be able to find all the information that they want and they are going to be able to experience the sales message that I want." It's in my control. If it's broken out over multiple pages, it significantly increases the risk that you will lose them, or they want see something that's compelling. The first thing that did, was consolidate everything into one page. Then, I said, "what are the channels that are going to drive growth in this company?" The predominant channel in my mind that I knew we could control was Google AdWords. I said, "I need to build an experience that will work with traffic from Google AdWords." What is really really critical is the channel. When I thought, how are we going to grow MemberMouse? I thought content marketing can be great and I think it's valuable, and I think it's worthwhile, and I would encourage everyone to have a great content marketing strategy, but you're still sort of at the whim of Google and it takes a long time to see results. I wanted to grow MemberMouse quickly, so I thought the absolute right channel was Google AdWords. So, the landing page, as a central focus, was built around the channel of Google AdWords. It was built around if someone types in "membership plugin" or "WordPress membership plugin" or something related to that, when they landed on membermouse.com, I wanted that traffic to convert. I wanted that person to say, "you know what this is the most compelling membership plug-in on the market," and I wanted them to sign-up. The interplay between your channel and your marketing is critical. You cannot think of a landing page in isolation. If you think about a landing page in isolation, you are doing yourself a tremendous disservice.

**Eric:** Given the importance that you place on it, and it makes complete sense to me, while you're talking about it - to ground it for me, every time I hear you say channels I think about an individual. When I did sales calls with people, I would talk to the individual, I would understand who they are before I started speaking to them. The pitch is different to based on my

understanding of who the person is, where they're coming from, what their journey is. That's how I help myself really resonate with everything you're saying and not just lose it because I haven't necessarily used the word "channel" before. Given the importance of channels, what are some of the guidance that you would offer to help.

**Dan:** I think it's really important to look at analogs, products, services and companies that you admire and that are doing really well. One of the best pieces of advice I got was from Mark Ford. He is a major partner in Agora and very successful as a direct response marketer. He said to me, "every business has a customer acquisition secret." I always thought that was intriguing. There's a little bit of a mystery to it, there's a little something that gets your attention. Every business has a customer acquisition secret. What he's saying is that there's generally going to be one thing that just really works in acquiring customers. You have to figure out what that is. You want to know what your competitors are doing and what businesses you admire are doing. You need to figure that out. A lot of that is channel research. It's channel research and then it's the hooks. What are the hooks that are working in those channels? Thinking about those two things and doing that kind of research can pay off enormously. If you think about what's happening on Instagram. That channel, the channel of Instagram is built around photos, and photography and short snippets of video. When I look at the apps that have a lot of downloads and I look at these clothing manufacturers that are doing well. They're building their entire sales process around Instagram. When you click 'learn more' from Instagram and you ultimately end up on the seller's website - that landing page almost mimics Instagram often times. There's sort of a developing standard, if you will, for products being sold from Instagram. It's important to understand those trends because if you build a landing page and you're not considering the entire customer journey from a channel to the landing page, there's going to be a lot of drop-off. That drop off is where you lose people. There's a great book called Traction. It's sort of a beginners guide to thinking about channels. One of the things I sort of disagree with in the book is that they say, "treat all your channels equally and go out there and test them all to see what works." That's a very sort of an agnostic opinion. It makes a lot of sense, I can see why they say that, but in practice, what I found is that there are one or two channels that work really well. In fact, most successful businesses are only built on one channel. Most successful businesses, we're talking seven, or eight figures are in general built using one channel. That means that you can do everything. You can do content marketing, you can do paid advertising, you can go to events, you can do press, you can do on and on and on. However, only one of them is going to move the dial. It's important to think long and hard about your product, about analog products, analog businesses, your competitors. Really look at the channels that they're using to grow. Then, you have to build your landing page around that channel. The synergies that happen can be incredibly powerful. I know that when I was scaling up my dating business, we were using ads on Pandora and we were spending upwards of 100,000 a month on Pandora. That channel was just crushing it for us. It was working so, so well. There were tons of impressions that we could get. It was driving tons of traffic. That was one channel that was working well. Another channel that was working well for us was the 'logout pages' on dating sites when somebody is done using a dating site and they click 'logout' that was real estate that the dating sites weren't monetizing. You'd say, "yeah can you just let us put a video here and throw up some banners." That was a channel that was really working very well

for us. We had those two channels going at the same time and it was driving millions and millions of dollars of sales.

**Eric:** Are there some tools that you use for doing channel research?

**Dan:** You know that's a great question. I don't have any specific tools other than Google and sending emails, talking to people and paying close attention. It's just a lot of research. Just dogged it research really. Going out there and sleuthing.

**Eric:** Right. You also have to be able to identify what channels are being used in a situation. How do you know?

**Dan:** There are some tools that track media impressions and media impressions whether they be banner ads or television commercials or radio ads, you can subscribe to some of those services. Some of those are very helpful in analyzing the media mix of a particular company. I've never discovered something amazing that was a game changer. It really requires intuition and logic and careful consideration of where those customers might be and how easy it is to reach them. And if your product or service, or a similar product has been sold through those channels in the past. There's also an interesting the interplay between price and channel. So, if you're selling a \$20,000 coaching program, a Mastermind or something like that, it might be a little more difficult to sell that using a channel such as, Google AdWords.

**Eric:** Yeah, you need a much warmer lead.

**Dan:** Right, exactly that doesn't feel right. You can feel that there's some sort of friction between that idea of somebody going to Google, typing something in, clicking on an ad, and purchasing a \$20,000 coaching program. However, those high end Mastermind programs are sold all the time at events. Events, right? All day long. Maybe, \$20,000 is a sort of a high price for an example - call it \$5,000 or \$10,000 - that happens all the time, all day, right now those are being pitched through events. That is something to consider because if you're selling a \$20,000 coaching program and your channel that you've decided on is SEO, there's a bit of an impedance mismatch there. You're going to need to think about how your business model and your channel relate. Also, think about Walmart. You don't go to Walmart to buy expensive goods and services. Walmart is clearly a discount retailer. If you are a premium product and you spend all your time trying to get into Walmart, it's not going to work, right? You have to consider your product and channel. Once you found the sweet spot between price point - what is commonly sold through a channel and the nature of the product itself. That has taken me 20 years to learn that that is really where businesses are made or they fail. It's understanding those variables and those dynamics.

**Eric:** Right, like the quote you said, "there is a secret and secrets aren't things that are protected unless they're valuable." Obviously, what channels people are using a lot of effort went into that. Would you say a good rule of thumb is taking a logical exercise, in terms of identifying a channel, and visualize a person, an avatar - a customer avatar, going through the

cycle of buying your product? Google, although an ethereal thing, is much like Walmart. You walk in the door and what are people walking through that door to purchase? And a SaaS product certainly falls in to that, a lot of things fall into that category. People use Google to buy all sorts of things. Would that be a good rule of thumb to litmus test your choice of channel?

**Dan:** Absolutely. I would go so far as to say, if you're building a business, you should pick your channel first. Rather than your product or service. That's a little facetious maybe, but what I'm trying to clarify is that you need to be an excellent operator in a channel. If you're going to build a business, be great at AdWords, or be great at Facebook advertising, or LinkedIn, or be great at working with the Walmart or Pandora or Spotify or figuring out the App Store or be great at radio, or television. There are many channels out there. They are changing all the time. Landscapes change. New channels come along all the time. Be great at banner ads. Banner ads come and go in terms of popularity. There are many channels out there, but you have to have a grounding in at least one or two of them that are scalable. If you don't, if you're just building a product and you don't know the intricacies of the channel, you're never going to grow your business. If you think about SEO and the early days of the web, there were many millionaires made who could understand SEO because it was very simple back then. How many links you had, inbound links, make sure your anchor text is on point - that was sort of the game. Get some high ranking sites to link to you. To an extent, those things still exist today, but there are many more factors and Google is a bit harder to game. It's more difficult, but the operators who are really good at that, the programmers. I remember Webmaster World. I used to read Webmaster World when I was in college and high school. I'm reading these forums and all the technical details. How do you optimize you're H1's and H3's and your keyword density and all that? It was those people that understood as SEO as a channel and then went and said, "what can I sell to this channel?" They were the ones that made a ton of money. That approach to being successful still exists today and will always exist. But it's a very channel centric strategy. I know this call is about landing pages, but in order for your landing page to be successful it is determinate upon the channel that you're working with.

**Eric:** It's like if you're going to build a brick-and-mortar business. If you build it in the desert there's no channels to your door so you could have the most luxurious facility and best of, but ...

**Dan:** Exactly! That's a perfect example.

**Eric:** There also seems like there's endless depth to what you can do in terms of figuring out your channels, but it also sounds like if you just start somewhere relatively good you'll get the juice that you need to propel you. Then, of course you can endlessly attempt to optimize that and get to the seven or eight figures. But, if I'm a beginner and I don't have everything that I need, maybe just keeping in mind - I need to make sure that I'm thinking about this, make sure that I don't just silo myself off and think about my product. Make sure that I know from day one who I am selling this to because if you're building a SaaS product that can also inform your design - of who you are building it for.

**Dan:** Absolutely. You just mention something that's extraordinarily important. Your product should be designed to suit the channel and the needs of the channel. This is sort of a radical idea. Amazon's a great idea. Amazon is a massive channel if not one of the greatest. There are more retail goods sold on Amazon and anywhere else, period. When you are a manufacturer or a vendor you're selling product on Amazon, you are thinking of things like how can I make the packaging as small and as condensed as possible? Because it keeps the shipping costs down and it keeps the warehousing costs down, which allows you to compete in the channel known as Amazon. The best Amazon sellers are designing their product and their packaging to be lightweight and small and as cost effective as possible because it allows them to compete in that channel. You can go out there on Amazon and read the guides on how to design your product and how to make it most effective for Amazon. That is a direct lesson from one of the biggest sales channels in the world. Design your product to suit a channel. It's critical.

**Eric:** So, let's assume that we get the channel portion correct. We choose an appropriate channel, we're driving traffic from the channel, now people land on the landing page. How do you approach that?

**Dan:** It is an art and a science. I think we can go back to breakthrough advertising and Eugene Schwartz. What he says in that book, he says there are desires in the world that humans have that have always been around. We have basic desires: we want to be loved, we want to be adored, we want to be secure, we want to provide income for ourselves, we want to be safe and we want stylish things. There are base human desires that don't go away. We want things to be easy, and ideally they are fun. You work from a level of desire and say we have this product, what are the main desires that somebody is going to have who is searching for a product like this? Then you gotta start there and say, "what are the features of my product that most connect with existing desire?" That is critical. You are the zeitgeist - is what you are selling to. You're not trying to push your product on somebody. That's a mistake. What you are doing is connecting your product to their existing desire.

**Eric:** Right. It's like that Monty Python sketch with the cheese shop. Where he walks in and he goes through 20 cheeses and he doesn't have any cheese.

**Dan:** Right, exactly. It's important to do a ton of customer research. I'm a huge fan of interviewing people in the market. Like, what is a market? A market, we use the word all the time, marketing. What does marketing mean? What does it actually mean? A market is defined by people that all have the same set of needs. People that are in the market for a car, they need transportation. That's how a market is defined, it's defined by a need. You have to think well what's the biggest need? You have your product and you can talk all day about it. I could say, "Eric I have this guitar it's beautiful and it has this beautiful finish and it has these amazing pick ups and these tuners are so shiny and smooth," but you play piano. So, I can talk all day about it but you're going to say, "Dan I don't care, it sounds great but go away you're annoying," because I'm not connecting to your needs. Other than channel, that is the next biggest thing. It's making sure that you're connecting with a real need.

**Eric:** I remember when you were working with me you talked a lot about problem-solution marketing. Is this the same thing? Or is this a variation?

**Dan:** It is. I use problem and desire almost interchangeably. They are not quite the same thing. I think desire is a little more emotional. A problem, you might have a flat tire, you need a new tire. It's just a problem. You might be a little frustrated about it. I mean sure, you can take frustration and say, "when selling tires you want to make a fun," right? I think fun and easy are appealing when shopping for tires because it's a mundane task.

**Eric:** Problems may lead to desires.

**Dan:** Exactly. You have a problem. There will be some natural desires around to it. Problem solution-marketing - It's sort of basic marketing 101. The issue is a lot of people sort of understand that, but where they fail is they don't articulate their solution in a way that connects to the problem in a visceral and immediate way. It's easy to say everyone wants, whose building a membership site, they wanted to be easy. You can say yeah well of course nobody wants to sit around and have a hard time putting together a website. That can be endlessly frustrating, but just because you know that doesn't mean you're articulating it well on your landing page. There's also a huge mistake people make where when you're a subject matter expert, you keep everything in your own head and you know certain things about the subject that you as an expert, they are obvious to you. Of course it's a WordPress plug-in and this is how you install it. You think well everyone knows that, but not everyone actually does. You have to really assume it zero knowledge or next to zero knowledge in a lot of cases. You have to make sure that when you are articulating things on your landing page that you don't come from the perspective of an expert because you leave things out. I see landing pages all the time where somebody who is really good at something like a lawyer, and They say, "we are the best patent attorneys around, call us!" What did they leave out? Well, what are the steps? Do I have to have a drawing before I talk to you? Do I need paperwork before we talk? What do we do here, how does this work? Because you're a lawyer you've done this at thousand times, you know what the process is, but on your website you just say 'we're the best around' - you're just falling so short in communicating to a beginner. You really have to take the perspective of being in a vacuum and say, "If I didn't know anything about this, am I communicating all of the information necessary."

**Eric:** Which is the fundamentals of teaching. You need to be a teacher in that sense - don't assume knowledge. If you're teaching algebra, don't assume that people know what a variable is. Start from day one talking about variables.

**Dan:** Exactly. That's one of the questions I always ask myself after writing copy. I say, "did I leave anything out, am I leaving something out?" I'm always terrified of leaving something out. That little piece of knowledge might be critical for somebody to understand something about how to proceed, how to sign-up, how the product is going to work. Also, design plays a really critical component too because the words you use are extraordinarily important. You have to make sure that you are talking about the correct topic, but you also have to back it up with really great design too. Your imagery has to really support what it is you're saying. Sometimes I see

this on blogs that are a little bit lazy or on news sites that are little lazy - they will have an article and then a stock photo that's sort of irrelevant. How does that make you feel when you're reading an article and you can tell that the photography is thrown in there as a placeholder - they're just trying to get by. Immediately, the credibility drops. And I think, "Agh this is just ..."

**Eric:** And perceived value.

**Dan:** Yeah. The perceived value just drops. So, investing in custom photography, getting a really good camera, getting a really good photographer, or putting together videos at a minimum - and videos are hard - but at a minimum get really great photography. People can do this. Really make sure that you are supporting your messaging with the right images. The right image, especially if you're talking something like Amazon. Product shots - they are critical. People make their entire purchase decision almost just from the product shots.

**Eric:** Again, which is understanding your channel and what they value. Amazon obviously is primary among them is product shots.

**Dan:** Yeah.

**Eric:** To me, what you're talking about, it's sounds like you are huge proponent of preparations. Figure out and make sure something is going to be successful before you act etc.. Now, I don't do that. I don't resonate with preparation. My personality is to, in some ways, sink or swim, leap and trust which, has pros and cons.

**Dan:** Yeah I think getting out there and trying - there's nothing more valuable than that. You have to dive in. Everyone is afraid to fail. We don't set up the Google AdWords account because we've think, "I'll do it tomorrow or I'll do it next week or I'll do it when I get funding or..." No - do it. There's a lot to be said about that, but you know what, if you fail, you know what that means? It means you're learning. I don't want to get too much into - I think most people are familiar with psychology, but there is a great book I just read called *The Obstacle Is the Way* of the way by Ryan Holiday. I think he's a really great writer. I think his stuff is very practical. *The Obstacle Is the Way* is a really a stoic philosophy about taking what is an obstacle or a failure or setback and not looking at it as a failure or a setback, but looking at it as a launchpad for something greater. If you go out there and new try your Google Ads and you're running them to a landing page and it fails, than you have to look at it as - how can I turn this failure into an advantage? Well, really it's learning. You can say, this channel isn't right or this price point isn't right, but it's just a step along the way.

**Eric:** I think where we've come to at this point is basically we've unpacked a simple sentence that you mentioned in the beginning which is, it's all about articulation. What is articulation? Articulation is the landing page you are articulating something, but what are you articulating? You are articulating your understanding of who is on the page, what channel they came from, what market they are part of. Your understanding what problems and desires they have. An understanding of how your product addresses those desires and problems. And your

understanding of how to communicate that in the most effective way possible through words and design so that it is efficiently absorbed by the person.

**Dan:** Yes, absolutely. You know Brian Tracy said that you can make your own personal fortune simply by helping other people get what they need. I think that that is a good frame when you're thinking about your copy. There is a great book called the Brain Audit that I also recommend. The Brain Audit gets you in the perspective of the customer who has the problem. Dan Kennedy has a great book and I think it's called Problem Solution Selling or something along those lines, but again it gets you in that space. You have to do it with style. You have to do it with some panache. You have to do it with some energy and confidence. The more experienced you are as a marketer, you know what to hold back on. A common mistake people make with copywriting is they tried to sell too hard. They're so desperate to make this sale and when you read really desperate sales copy it's just going to turn people off.

**Eric:** Right, imagine you are reading a dating profile. Would you date this person?

**Dan:** I am desperate I will take anybody that'll going to date with me just please. Well, it's not going to work. Gary Bencivenga gives us an example in one of his courses where he says, "get rich quick or get rich slowly." I'm paraphrasing, but it's really close to that. Get rich slowly outperformed. It outperformed because there's more credibility, there's more believability.

**Eric:** There's also more of the foundation. It makes me think of that jungle episode in the BBC nature series where a tree dies in the jungle and then all of the small plants start competing for the sunlight and growing. Ultimately, it's the hardwood - the tree that takes the longest to grow and builds up its foundation to grow, and takes a long time that ultimately recaptures that space.

**Dan:** Exactly. I think that was something with MemberMouse you dedicated a lot of time to building an enterprise class business and those roots are so strong that the business is very stable. It's a great foundation. I think the same thing applies to your marketing. You have to think sustainably. You have to think long term. You have to think, "is my marketing going to burn people out or am I being sustainable in my messaging."

**Eric:** But also, don't forget about the art. I think we've talked a lot about the science, but for somebody at your level of experience, art and science become more closely blended to each other. I think it is why in my mind I have to keep bringing it up for myself. You can dive deep. When you say things - when you say one thing that's supported by many experiences that tell you so much about how you are articulating that, but for me, I don't have that experience. So, I have to try to help myself understand another way. Correct me if I'm wrong, I'm going to make this statement - I think that in the beginning when you don't have experience to fall back on, leaning on the art is a good approach to do. For me, art is personal expression. If you stick to what you know and your authenticity and what you have to say. Imagine you are talking to a person than that can cover a lot of bases.

**Dan:** Yes, I rely a lot more on that now. I rely a lot on my intuition a lot more when I'm writing copy and dreaming up marketing, than crazy split testing. I've realized that as long as you are treating people with respect, you're showing them a good time - you can't bore people. If you bore people, no one is going to buy your stuff. Not at least in consumer markets, maybe B2B is fine, but in consumer markets you don't want to bore, you don't want to put people to sleep. A lot of times it comes down to identity. People buy products and services in many cases because they are buying into an identity. Cars are a great example. People who buy Volvos may identify as more practical or safety-minded people. They are very different than people who buy Ferraris. There are different mindsets out there. I've been having a lot of fun with Myers-Briggs lately. You know people can criticize it and say it's just another modern version of astrology, but there are some really fascinating things about different personality types that Myers-Briggs reflects on. Different personalities are attracted to different products. It's important to realize that. People are very different, our minds are very different, they're constructed over time from vastly different experiences. Sure we share some cultural experiences geographic experiences and things like that, but the nuances are extraordinary. It's worth thinking about personality types in your marketing and how to appeal to them. If you're selling a product that is, let's say you're selling a machine learning platform. Well, naturally you're going to be talking to data nerds. You need to look at other products that are marketed towards data nerds and think, "how do I appeal to data nerds?" Am I going to use a lot of charts and graphs and facts and figures? That stuff is going to help tremendously. If you're selling something that is more towards, it's just important to think about the overall personality, it's important to generalize a little bit when you're thinking about your product and your services and try to find one person, talk to them and say, "does this appeal to you?" I love to test one person sitting in front of me and say, "do you like this, do not like that?" I will literally go and make changes based upon what they say. I find that feedback is just so important

**Eric:** Where do you stand on customer avatars? To me, this is a further drilling down of the channel. You have a broad pipe channel that is coming to your site and then within that channel there may be x number of different customer avatars. Do you advocate having landing pages separate for different avatars, or is that too much?

**Dan:** I think that you certainly want to consider them. I go through the exercise every time, building customer avatars is extraordinarily useful. It's difficult to say well we built these avatars and it resulted in millions of dollars in sales. It's tough to draw that line of causation; however, the exercise will put you in the right headspace from which, you can develop more effective marketing. That is helpful. Again, the Brain Audit is a great resource for this. There's a lot out there. I think you can look at personality types as a way to do it. For me, I really like to talk to people and I like to call five or ten people and get their feedback. Then, I make changes based upon that. From there I build a profile - well I talked to five or ten people about this product or service - the ones that are interested are all of this nature, they all seem to work in these jobs.

**Eric:** You base the questions that you will ask them?

**Dan:** Certainly. I always ask them, "how appealing is this to you on a scale of 1-10?" If it's a landing page and they say, "well it's a 7." Most people are going to say somewhere between 5 and 9, or 7 and 9. They will be polite and they'll say, "it's a 6 or 7," which is fine - who cares. Then, I ask a follow-up question. I say, "what would it take to get this from a 7 to 10?" Now, they're going to give you the gold. They're going to say, "I don't really like this, I like this, I don't like that, I like this, I wish it had that." Now, you have the gold which, you can go and rework your landing page. The other thing you can do is Net Promoter Score. On a scale of 1-10 how likely are you going to refer us to a friend? Net Promoter Score is great and you can benchmark against other products and services in your industry. Those are my two go-to's.

**Eric:** Cool. I really appreciate your time coming on and sharing your experience, your insights, your perspective - super helpful. Last thing, where would be a good place for people to learn more about you to get in contact with you?

**Dan:** I have a consulting company called Dark Pilot. At Dark Pilot what we do is landing page optimization. Typically for startups and growing SaaS companies. At Dark Pilot we take all our years of experience - my business partner is a designer she's has worked on brands such as bloomberg.com, Justin Timberlake, Yippets and some very big brands. I've built a lot of companies into seven figures and we combine design with direct response principles. We do all the things that we've been talking about in this episode. We do what's called strategic landing page design. That is to say that everything is very very very carefully considered. The price point is a bit high for some people, it's \$35,000, but for a start-up that's funded or they have a Series A or its a SaaS business that's doing several million dollars a year, 35K is just peanuts for a really strategic homepage. So, it depends where your business is on the spectrum. But you get ahold of me at [darkpilot.com](http://darkpilot.com). My email address is [dan@darkpilot.com](mailto:dan@darkpilot.com). I would be happy to talk about landing pages. If you're interested sometimes I will do a quick critique and tear apart a landing page and see what can be improved. I'm happy to do that for listeners of the podcast. I just encourage everyone to really think carefully about what it is that you're trying to say because words matter. I'm going to just leave you with one final tidbit, which some people may have heard. It comes from the copywriter Gary Halbert. He says, "you can get two pieces of paper and two envelopes. One of them you can say - 'dear mom, I just want to thank you for being a great Mother. You've been so instrumental in helping me develop as a person. You have always been there for me. I owe everything to you and I just wanted to write you and let you know how important you are to me and I hope to see you soon.' You can put the address on there, put the stamp on there and then you can take another letter, another piece of paper and say - 'dear mom, I just wanted to write and tell you that I never want to see you again. I think that you are a terrible person and this is my final send off and please don't ever contact me.' Now, the medium is the same - the letters, the papers the pen is the same, the paper, envelopes and the stamp are the same. They are both going through the mail which, is the channel. They will both have a vastly different response rates. The takeaway is that really spend time thinking about the words you use and ask yourself, "am I saying the most optimal thing throughout every single word and sentence of your homepage." If you do that, I can promise you, you will be on your way to a better landing page.

**Eric:** Yeah that makes a lot of sense. I'm looking at your darkpilot.com site right now and really amazing site, of course. I do have a question about a choice that you've made on this. We have a nav at the top, but you choose to scroll to a section as opposed to going to a separate page and I'm guessing you did that deliberately - and I'm wondering what the reason is?

**Dan:** Yeah, I find that I like to keep people on one page. I don't like them to get lost. I like to manage - it's like the inflatable bumpers at a bowling alley. I like to keep people going down the lane. I find it's risky when people click away. I want people to consume my sales message in a very linear way. I've always found that to be the most effective for me. Keeping people in the lane, that's the goal.

**Eric:** And, I don't think 35K is a lot to ask. I know for MemberMouse alone we've spent close to \$80,000 over the time we've been in business on webpage/website design. Now, a lot of that is because we didn't get it right the first time and not to mention opportunity costs for having it wrong for a certain period of time. It's just the same with when we have a sales conversation with potential customers of MemberMouse. Making the right decision with your platform now, investing in the right tools. It's not really about the upfront costs because the savings that you get and the additional profit that you get from making the right choices.

**Dan:** Yeah, absolutely. I really appreciate the kind words. Some of the businesses we work with, they go onto raise Series A. They go onto really double or triple their revenue. So absolutely, it depends where you're at 35K could be a lot of money for somebody that's just starting out or it could be a drop in the bucket to a more established business. In the context you can go to 99 designs and get a landing page done for \$1,500, but it will be vastly different than a well-crafted, where every single word has been thought through and the value prop has been thought through. It's really strategic. It's for a certain business and we love working with companies that have cool stuff to sell and start-ups. It's fun. It's a lot of fun - just like this this podcast. It's great to talking to you Eric. I'm so proud of MemberMouse. You guys are doing a great job and I'm really happy to see the continued success of the business.

**Eric:** I appreciate it Dan and thanks again for coming on.

**Dan:** Alright. Talk to you soon.