

4 Smart Ways To Successfully Market Your Membership with Jason Weamer

Matt: Hey, everyone! Thanks for tuning in today. My name is Matt. I work here on the marketing team at MemberMouse and I'm joined today by Jason Weamer, who is the founder and CEO of the Visual Identity Group. They are a creative and marketing agency that builds really awesome websites for their clients. They also do a lot with marketing and advertising and helping their clients, not just build a website, but grow their business. Welcome to the show today, Jason. If you could just introduce yourself and give us a little bit about your background and who you are and what you do.

Jason: Great. Well, thanks Matt. I appreciate you having us here today. I'm excited about it. As you said, Visual Identity Group is a creative marketing agency. We've been in business for over 20 years, helping clients grow their business with tools like branding and strategy. As you said, we build websites, mobile apps. We do a lot of marketing, social media and public relations. We've got some experience in those areas. We actually started as an application development company back in 2000 and we've evolved over that time into a full-service marketing agency that we are today. We help clients of all sizes, from startups to large Fortune 500s, like Coca-Cola, Toyota. We've got a lot of experience in online membership models and platforms.

Obviously, we work with MemberMouse a lot, as you know, so we've got a lot of experience there. But in short, what I like to say is, when people ask this question, I always respond that, do you need more business? Usually the answer is, yes. And so, then I say that we can help them. That's a little bit about us.

Matt: That's great. I love that. And now just to open up the conversation today, because we're going to talk a lot about all the different marketing channels that people can use to grow their membership and subscription businesses. But just to open up the conversation, the people in our audience, people that are listening are at some stage working on a membership business or a subscription business or some community platform. Based on your experience and what you've seen, how do you define marketing for these types of businesses?

Jason: That's a great question. I think that what it really boils down to is what the value prop is. What is the business? What is it that we're selling? Right? There's a lot of available tools that we have at our disposal. A lot of which we're going to cover today here in this conversation. But some of which, like social media, public relations, other things, these are other tools that can be very effective and can actually generate a lot of conversation amongst the interwebs to bring in traffic. I think when looking back at it, it really boils down to what the business is and the goals and strategies. And then we try to figure out and tailor a program and strategy that's going to work specifically for that business and also for that budget.

Matt: Nice. I love that perspective and it just shows how much you know about this whole world. To just dive in right away. The first strategy I want to talk about is one that's very near and dear to my heart, because I've spent a lot of time learning about it and practicing it and implementing it, and that's SEO or organic search. This is something that you guys really specialize in. From your view, for the type of business that our clients and audience are working on. What is the foundation of a successful organic search, marketing campaign look like?

Jason: Yeah, that's great. I love talking about that and thanks for the kind words. SEO, I agree. I think it's an incredibly important long-term strategy. I like to think of it as a Roth IRA. IRA for your investor savvy audience out there that are listening in. A Roth IRA, we pay a little bit of tax up front and then we have our money working for us in the long run, tax free. Well, to me, it's very analogous to SEO. There's obviously time and money as an investment upfront to put together good content and get that out there for Google to pick up. And then hopefully it's working for us over the long run. Right? I like to think of it that way. I also to think of it as a four-part cocktail. A good SEO strategy is going to be one relevant to that search, right? That's first and foremost.

It's got to be very relevant to whatever that person's looking for in search. It's got to be next, responsive, meaning your website needs to be responsive across multiple devices, because Google is looking at that. It needs to be performance, so it's got to be good page speed. The site's got to load fast. And then there's got to be a good conversation about your website with inbound traffic, other people talking about your website or page and directly linking traffic to it. When you put all those things together, that's a really good, effective combination and strategy for having a good SEO. Very important.

Matt: I love that way of thinking of it, as an IRA, because it really is a thing you have to put a lot of time into upfront, but it can pay dividends later on down the line. I think that that initial work and the complexity, a lot of people I know think of SEO as a black box, it's like, I'm good at social media, I'm good at Facebook ads. I'm not that good at SEO. I'm not that interested. But it is really so important. Anything else you could share about how someone that maybe isn't 100% sold on SEO, how they should think about?

Jason: You're right. It can sometimes be a difficult conversation for some clients and companies to understand, because they just don't fully get it. Right? And while I said, when I created the analogy of a Roth IRA, with the Roth, you put your money in and it just works and you just let it do its thing and you're sitting back. SEO, you still need to continually try to add new content. There is freshness and staleness to the site that you were looking at as a ranking signal, when it looks and puts together search and organic results. You definitely want to be making sure that the site isn't sitting stale, that part of an SEO strategy is looking at creating good content, good, unique and relevant content to your strategy, right? What it is that you're trying to rank effectively on.

But continually releasing out new content, right? Giving other additional opportunities to build up that rank and make sure you're combating staleness and creating freshness on the website.

A couple of other things too, one thing I wanted to talk about today, which is going to be a big change coming up here in May is, Google announced that their page experience will start to become a ranking signal for them and your name. Basically, what that means is that they're going to prioritize pages with a great page experience as part of their rank, right? How they rank our websites. And so, that's going to include core web vitals, which is a set of metrics, which we've all seen. I don't know if some of your listeners have been paying attention to, or familiar with.

We've all seen that, they started to appear in Google search console. We also see them in page speed insights, which is another evaluation tool. But it's basically looking at things like loading performance. It's going to look at interactivity. It's going to look at the visual stability of the page and how it loads, especially cumulative layout shifts or what Google calls, cumulative layout shifts, which is CLS. They're also going to be looking at FOUT, which is, that's an acronym for flash of unstyled text. Those last two things are probably going to be the most important, relevant, and also difficult things for a lot of people and website owners to change.

You might be familiar with it. Cumulative layout shift is when, we've all seen this, right? You go to a website, the page is starting to load and as it's loading, it's bouncing all over the place. Image starts to load, and then all of a sudden it bounces over. The text is starting to load, and then it also bounces. What's FOUT is, if text starts to load in its default font, which might be, it's Times New Roman or something. And then the font loads finally, and then styles, the text, it moves around and you can see it. That's called FOUT. It's also a part of cumulative layout shifts, that the page is moving around. And so, Google's going to be monitoring this, and they're going to be factoring that in as part of their ranking signals and algorithm here in May.

That's going to be something that we're all going to be wanting to be paying attention. It's something that, it's been on everybody's radar for some time, and we've tried to combat it. For a lot of developers, that could be something that could be quite of a challenge. Some easy ways to fix that, or making sure that we're using web ready fonts, that we're creating image heights and width, so that when the page starts render, that space is already appropriately allocated. And so, that it's not waiting until the image finally loads for it to then fill up that div or that space, which helps contribute to that shift that we see, things like that. Really the first step is to use Google search console, to look at the core web vitals area. Hopefully your users have a Google search console set up for their website. It's how we communicate.

We as web owners communicate to Google, we can set in what our site maps are and get valuable information from Google. Right? Because they don't tell us anything. Right? That's the only method that we know on what's happening with the website in Google's eyes. Right? And so, first stop is to go there and check out those reports. We can run reports for mobile and desktop. Those provide us a lot of valuable information, because Google is going to say, hey, your page here in desktop, or this particular page on mobile, it's not working. You've got some issues there. Once we've identified that, then the next step would be to go into page speed insights, which is another valuable tool that really, it gives us a strong indication of score, and

what's actually happening under the hood when Google is looking at and evaluating our web pages and how they're loading, right?

It gives us a tremendous amount of information. We could probably have a whole conversation, you and I just on that alone. But it's a fantastic tool and it really starts to give you a lot of valuable information and about what's going on in your page, especially as it relates to Google. There's a lot of debate out there online, a lot of people argue that, how much stock you should really place in Google score, right? It's a score for those listeners that aren't aware, Google is looking and giving you, assigning a score for a page anywhere from zero to 100. 100 being obviously the best score for both your page on a mobile device or on your desktop. And so, you get two scores. There's a number of metrics and things that you will notice and see that compile and make up to that score.

Everybody's trying to shoot for in the 90s, right? That's where the Google threshold seems to, it shows you a green score, meaning, hey, thumbs up. It's good. Right? You've got a good score in Google's eyes and we all want that. We all want 100, but it's very difficult to get 100 score, because of a number of factors, some of which you might not be able to control, such as some of the external scripts or the CDNs that are hosting some valuable CSS or jazz files on your site. Even Google's analytic there, Google tags scripts a few years ago used to create and flag or create some reductions in scores, which is ironic. It's really funny. But there's a lot of argument out there about how much stock to place in that, because some site measuring tools like GTmetrix or Pingdom has another one.

They'll look at the score and say, it looks great. But Google will say, not so great. But at the end of the day, my arguments to the people that make that claim or have this debate is, well at the end of the day, Pingdom and GTmetrix, aren't the ones deciding how your site is going to rank in a search engine, that's Google. At the end of the day, I want to make sure that I'm pleasing Google. You know what I mean?

Matt: Not exactly. I'm so glad that we're talking about this, because I've been reading about it and we've been looking at ways to work on this and improve this at MemberMouse. And really what you're saying, is that, right now, there's, I don't know, 190, 200, specific ranking factors that Google looks at when they're considering how to rank your website, how to rank your content. And now the page experience, the experience somebody has on page is going to become, not only a ranking factor but a more important ranking factor than it has been in the past.

Jason: Correct. Yes. They're really going to be measuring that page experience and they're factoring that in. Absolutely. It's something that we want to definitely be paying attention to.

Matt: And this is really an opportunity for a lot of people, because let's say that right now, some of the other ranking factors are backlinks, domain rating, the age of the content, how long people are staying on the page when they are reading it. Your keywords, keyword density, all of that sort of thing. Let's say that somebody right now for their membership, they have a

fitness membership site and they're on page two or something for a lot of the search terms that they would ideally like to be on page one or in the top few rankings for this. This is really an opportunity for them to improve the design and layout of their site to potentially boost themselves in the ranking.

Jason: Take advantage of it. Sure.

Matt: Yeah. When their competitors maybe aren't even looking at their website or their website hasn't been updated in five years, and all of a sudden, you're delivering the best user experience on page. Google wants to send its visitors, places that are going to give people who trust Google a good experience.

Jason: Absolutely. I do look at it as an opportunity. There's definitely going to be some changes and shifts in rankings. We've seen over the years that, when Google introduces major changes like that, some sites can fall quite a bit and some can jump on that. It's definitely, I think an opportunity. Looking at another investment analogy is, buy the dip, right? All those people bought stock in April of last year after the economy tanked, probably really have a big smiles on their face now too. You certainly can look at it in that way and thinking that this is an opportunity to make sure that the site is looking good in Google's eyes.

We've actually had, it's been a lot of interest in it with clients we're working with, several that are looking at other content management systems, because primarily, especially with MemberMouse, we're working in a WordPress environment of course. There are fortunately some good tools that give us the capability to control these things, especially if we're not hosting it in the traditional vanilla standard, just doing the default install of WordPress. We're using tools in stacks like roots.io, which gives us more development centric tools that we are accustomed to, in a world outside of WordPress, because WordPress does things and it's very in an unusual, sometimes a normalized way. We can then affect things like CSS and JS, to make sure that they're not render blocking, or we can do tree shaking of CSS that gets rid of extra styles that we don't need necessarily for that particular build.

We can change things within the template and effect, image, heights and width, stuff like that. And so, there are good opportunities and we're getting clients that are seeing that more and more, they're into, in fact, we're working on two projects right now where one client, it's a very pretty large client, SAS type client that has hosted their site in Webflow. Webflow is a tool is a cross between Wix and Squarespace and a WordPress in one. It's very intuitive and it gives us some things that, it offers some ability to make some certain adjustments to affect how these pages are actually rendered to control page performance. And so, that's good. Another project we're looking at is the clients in a CRM like HubSpot, where it doesn't give us a lot of that same kind of tools.

And so, they're effectively jumping ship and they're actually getting into WordPress, and this is another very large established, it's a CPG, consumer package brand client that is looking to get out of HubSpot CMS into WordPress actually, because of some of those things that I just

mentioned. I definitely think there's some opportunities and there are some good things there that our clients can and are looking at.

Matt: I think you and I could probably talk about organic search all day long. But for our listeners, the people who they want to grow their businesses, they want to increase their exposure. In terms of SEO, a final look at this, what are some of the just the other things that you would recommend they do to increase their rankings, look good in the eyes of Google? What's the most important thing for you? Is it doing really good keyword research for your content that they're trying to rig? Is it link building, building the authority of the site? How do you look at this to help your clients grow their businesses?

Jason: That's a great question. The first thing is, in order to answer to that question, you got to be able to have a foundation of good data, right? We can all make assessments and judgments based on what we think people are doing when they're searching to find us, right? But at the end of the day, unless we've actually really done a good study in our collection of data via an audit, it's difficult to know that. We're just guessing based on our experience and best guesses and hunches. And so, one of the things that we do, is we first start with an audit, and the result of that can be a service evidence itself. And in fact, we've had lots of clients come to us and say, we just want you to provide us with this audit, because it's a very full, it's very encompassing, very in-depth and provides a tremendous amount of data.

It's basically an instructional how to guide it, so to speak. Because it identifies the keywords, not only the keywords that we think we're bringing to the table, but it covers a lot of opportunities out there that we may not have thought, that are as difficult to rank on are not as competitive or maybe have more search volume than we may have initially thought. And so, the part of the audit would be to look, to try to find those keyword opportunities and really rank them and assess them based on what we want as part of our strategy. And then we're also looking at that compared to our competitors, right? Because let's face it, we're going up, it's David versus Goliath, right? We're going up against thousands, if not millions of other competing websites, depending on what it is that we do of course. There's lots of competition out there.

And so, trying to see as part of that study, what is working for your competitors versus us and where they rank versus where we do, is all part of that equation. We like to start with that audit. And sometimes it's something that we'll provide to clients as an executable document that they can take and go off and do themselves and put together great content based on that strategy. Or that will be the start to an engagement with us, where we work with them to create an effective SEO campaign that works to write the content and based on that audit and strategy. I really think that that's the most important thing, is being able to come to it with a good informed background and good data, really good data.

Matt: I love that. I agree with you completely there. Now, the next stop on our tour of marketing strategies for membership site owners and online entrepreneurs is directly related to

organic search, but it's paid search. What is up with paid search for types of businesses that our audience is trying to build, and what has your experience been like in this world?

Jason: Paid search is another incredibly valuable tool, but unlike SEO, right? We got to put a bunch of money at it. Right? When combined with SEO though, it's actually a very effective strategy, because if we're thinking about SEO as a long-term strategy, right? We've got our money and we've got our keywords and our content is going to be working for us. It takes a little while for Google to index and gain some traction on that new content that we put out. Right? It just takes a little while. And so, whereas paid search can come in and start buying, we can start buying ads on keywords that might be very difficult to rank on, or rank on right away. And so, paid search is an incredibly effective strategy in the short term. So, we can target and buy those keywords that are very difficult to rank on.

Some clients also will look at it as part of their long-term strategy. It really just comes down to at the beginning when we're sitting down and we're meeting with the client, saying, hey, look, what is it that we're trying to accomplish here? What is the budget and how do we divvy up that piece of pie? Right?

Matt: Definitely. I'm actually looking right now at a chart you have on your website. It's on the page we have set up for your MemberMouse marketing services. It's comparing a Google Ads campaign that another agency ran in March, 2019 and a Google Ads campaign that you and the Visual Identity Group ran in March, 2020. The budget for 2019 was \$10,500. The budget for March, 2020 was \$11,200. So, only \$700 difference between those two budgets. And yet when you ran the campaign, you had an over 8000% increase in impressions, 3000% increase in clicks and a 315% increase in conversions, from basically the same budget. What's going on here? What's the story behind that?

Jason: Thanks for bringing that up. It was an incredibly effective campaign. We took over that account from another agency that had been working with this client for many years. When we took it over, we found that there was a lot of issues within that campaign. It basically looks like, and we see this a lot unfortunately, where a lot of agencies will utilize software to manage their client's online campaigns. And so, that means the software, the AI is making all the judgments on what keywords to buy, what negative keywords to include or add, how to make bidding adjustments and strategy. It's doing these things at levels that we as humans can't really comprehend. We took over the account and it had four or 5,000 keywords, I can't remember how many negative keywords, but it wasn't really doing it that well.

You just looked at the change history and it was thousands of changes within a month. And it's very difficult to comprehend all those things that are going on. And so, you really are putting a lot of trust and faith and stock that that software is doing your clients the best job that it can do. It's difficult to track it as a human. What we found though is, is that it wasn't. That the software was actually competing with each other across multiple campaigns and ad groups. They were competing with each other for buying the same keywords across two different

campaigns. We even saw one where, because context is very important. In this example, the client is a cabinet manufacturer and they sell entertainment centers.

We live here in Southern California, basically they were buying ads on, if you were searching for an entertainment center, you were getting ads for a show at the forum. If Guns N' Roses or Beyoncé were playing at the forum, you were getting ads for that. And they were effectively spending money on that mistakenly, by people placing clicks. Our assessment initially, the account really was not set up correctly. There was a lot of wasteful spend, a tremendous amount of wasteful spend. And so, one of the first things that we did when we took over the account, was to basically wipe all that out, start from scratch, which is how we usually do it. We as humans have strategy, we think about that analyzing the business, the business goals and how we can effectively apply that strategy to a paid campaign.

We divided it amongst the different campaigns and ad groups and selected all our keywords we got based from an audit and our own other PPC auditing tools that looks at keyword volume and costs. We came up with a campaign. We also added on where they were just doing previously, Google, we have options on how we want to advertise. We can do just straight search advertising. We can do display network, we can do smart display. We could do remarketing. And so, we looked at it and we added in a smart display and remarketing campaign, which really took off. Like you said, I don't have the numbers in front of me right now, but we had over 8,000 impressions that shot up. Over 3,500 impression clicks, but really at the end of the day the most important thing is how many conversions are we getting, right?

And what is that cost per acquisition? That tremendously dropped down there. They were paying the previous CPA, cost per acquisition, was in about neighborhood, I think of about 180, and that dropped by more than half during that process. Conversions also went up by over 300% in that period, because we were effectively spending roughly the same. We were spending \$700 more, but effectively the same amount of money going from 10,000 in change to 11,000 in change. We were effectively spending the same amount of money, but doing a lot more with it and getting out to a much wider, bigger, concentrated audience without wasteful spend, that was using concentrated keywords, showing buyers intent, right? Not just, I'm buying an ad on entertainment centers and getting an ad for Beyoncé. That campaign, that was one of the major shifts. And hopefully some of our creative messaging and calls to action has helped contribute to that as well.

Matt: For someone listening, what process do you recommend to them to find the right keywords to bid on? Because there's all sorts of keywords and they can be at all different stages of the funnel, from awareness, to learning about you, to purchase intent, versus keywords or alternative keywords. What do you look for when trying to align a paid search campaign, trying to optimize a page search campaign for conversions?

Jason: Yes. Great question. There's a lot, we could probably spend-

Matt: For sure. We can spend a whole other hour.

Jason: But one of the obvious things, and you mentioned it, is intent. Trying to weed out single keywords. For instance, looking for more long tail multiple keyword search phrases is going to definitely be something that we're going to want to look at initially, right? Because it's going to show that intent. If someone's just typing in, again, going back to the closet client, cabinet manufacturing client. If someone's just typing in the word closets, it's very ambiguous and open and vague. Closets could mean any number of things. They could be trying to paint their closets. They could be trying to just get some information. They could be trying to buy some organizational boxes, a box for something that they want to store their shoes in.

In this context, for this client, we want to be finding keywords that are showing the intent of that search user looking to build a custom cabinet or closet. Right? And so, we might want to use that three-word, four-word, five-word keyword search as part of the process to show that intent. Right? That's definitely something that we want to make sure that we're looking at. Another thing that you want to make sure that is really good, is that Google looks at each one of these keywords for the quality score. Looks like we were talking about previously with the websites and page performance, they rank a score via their page speed insights tool for a webpage. They also give you a quality score for an individual keyword.

It's very important that the keyword that the user clicked on when they saw your ad, when it goes to a landing page, that that page is very relevant contextually to what that person was looking for, and that they spent some time there, that they're looking at the content, they may have dove in deeper into the website. And so, Google's looking at all of that, right? They're determining that as part of their quality score for that particular keyword. And then they're looking at all of these keywords and then aggregating all of their scores amongst the ads and who you're targeting, that audience. They're using that to effectively say, hey, look, this ad should rank higher than this other one with a lower quality score.

It's very important. Content that we have on landing pages, the messaging, making sure that we're using similar messaging and keywords, that we're buying ads on. That's all very important part of the process too. Absolutely.

Matt: I love this because I'm a student of copywriting, and one of the rules that we work with for paid ads specifically, is the 90, 10 rule. The ad, whatever it is for a paid search query, you want the first 10% of the page to reflect the messaging in the ad, just to show that it's relevant. And so, often when I click on ads, for paid search or display ads, they just go to the homepage. They don't go to a landing page that reflects the messaging of the ad. And so, you get confused and lost. It's like, you need to have that seamless transfer of experience to make sense of what's going on almost, otherwise you just bounce.

Jason: Absolutely. Absolutely. I guess just to sum it up, one final thing I would leave for your audiences, is that, the beginning is and our philosophy is, is that we want to identify, because there's multiple channels. There's multiple options. You can spend money on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Yelp Inc, there's tons of options. And then within that, we can do things

search and display or smart display and remarketing. There's lots of options. And so, it's important that we're looking at, what are the available channels? Look at what the value prop is. What is it we're selling? Determine what those call to actions are, right? We've got to have a good plan going into it.

Before we even look at these channels, we've got to understand what it is that we're selling, who we're selling to, what is the messaging and the calls to actions that we're going to create, and then create a scorecard that's going to define certain KPIs, key performance indicators, right? How we keep ourselves honest. How are we measuring success? And so, that we can then try to determine how to budget and allocate money. Do we have a little money? In that case, we want to put all our eggs in one basket, or do we have a bigger budget now, in which case we want to put our eggs in many baskets, spread it out and target effectively where we think our users are going to be more engaging and clicking on us.

That's the first thing. And then the other thing that I would really recommend, is that when starting a campaign, that we look, we like to build what we call an iterative, scalable, lead gen machine. What I mean by iterative first, is that, we start as a pilot program, right? Because one of the cool things about Google and a lot of these, is that they give us the ability to target geographically where we want to spend. We might target a smaller area up front, knowing that the long game is to grow it. That's where the scalable part comes into. But we iterate that initial pilot campaign, maybe at a lesser budget amount, depending on what the campaign requires or what our strategy is. But we want to iterate that over the course of several weeks or a couple months to really optimize it.

We're going to learn a lot. Google is going to learn a lot about what we want. We're going to learn a lot about what Google's traffic and other search channels, our paid channels are sending our way, and we're going to make a lot of changes. But we want to see some stability and see that it's actually working, before we then start to throw more money at this lead gen machine. Right? Because getting back to it's an iterative, scalable, lead gen machine, if we start with this pilot campaign, if we throw a thousand dollars at this program, and we get some return on that investment, well then, we should reasonably be able to assume that if then we grow and scale that into other areas, that we should be able to reasonably be able to forecast what that return would be in those other areas.

That's how we approach it. It's something that we feel is really important, and I would recommend to your audience as well, that they look at it in a way to not just throw it in, throw all your budget, everybody in the United States, right? Concentrated and focused and specific, and then grow and scale.

Matt: I love that. And so, this next strategy that I wanted to talk with you about, this is one that I know almost nothing about, and it's out of the box, but I love it. I do have a friend who's had some success with this and that is, postcard retargeting. Tell me everything I need to know about marketing and retargeting with postcards.

Jason: First, just real quick with retargeting, if you don't mind, if we just talk a little about paid retargeting, because I think they're closely related. Some people, remarketing or retargeting. It allows us to reach the visitors that have come to our website or to our mobile app. Right? Google's keeping track, we know who they are and if they didn't buy, well, we have a method via retargeting to go off and get in front of these people again, maybe hours or days later after the initially visited our website. It's great. We've all seen them. I know you've seen them, you're shopping for a bike, and then two days later, a day later, whatever it is, we see that same ad following us around. We're on a totally different website, we're shopping for something else, we're searching for something else...

There's that ad for that bike. Right? It's just right there following us around. It seems a little creepy, but it's also really cool and effective. Right? But it's important because a lot of studies have shown that it takes several ads or engagements before a prospect actually converts. In fact, I've even heard that, and this is a really, a real knife in the stomach, in the gut of companies that says that 90% of all web traffic doesn't convert at all. 90%. That's crazy. When you think of a tool like retargeting and being able to go back and chase that person out the door, they walked out of your store, you'd be able to go grab their hands and say, no, no, come back in. That's what retargeting really is.

It can be an extremely powerful tool that it can increase click through rates by tenfold. It's really interesting. That's online, but segueing into your topic with targeting with postcards. It's a very similar thing. Privacy laws won't allow us to find out who that person is by name. But we can get address information. Retargeting of postcards, started I should say, by placing a pixel, a tracking pixel on your website. All these data companies out there, like Factual and Experian. There's lots of people that are out there collecting data on us, right? It's happening. I'll touch on that here in a minute too, about something else. It's something that we also as marketers need to be aware of.

There's lots of data that's being tracked about who we are, what our buying habits and interests are. And even down to our address. Now, privacy laws say that you can't say, it's Matt and Jason, their names specifically, or our emails and phone numbers, but we can actually get our addresses. That's where retargeting with postcards comes in. What's really cool is that, anybody that comes through our website and leaves, we can actually if we wanted to, shoot them off a postcard to that address, within about a 60% reliability of, accuracy is a more accurate word that we're going to get that person's address, right? There are some cons to it, in that, if say for instance, it's a commercial business and you're at work and you're in an office building with a hundred other people, you're searching for a bike, let's go back to that bike example.

You're searching for a bike. You leave the website, you don't buy that bike, but the company then decides to send a postcard to that address of that place of business. And so, there's a hundred people. The person in the mail room doesn't know that this is actually meant for Matt or Jason. It just was somebody in the building, it just maybe looked like spam mail. In that instance and depending, that's why I say, certain tools work for different businesses and

different types of campaigns. I think that's a tool where, because your degree of success really goes up when you look at it at residential. If you're looking B2C, that's really more of an effective tool if you're trying to target individuals. I think that that can be really cool.

Matt: I'm just thinking about someone that, let's say that they run a vegan eating membership site and they get a ton of traffic. They have a lot of popular articles, but like you said, 2% of their web traffic converts into paid members. It could be something interesting to try, sending a postcard, that's like, 50% off your membership or something like that, just to see, hey, what would another touch point, a physical mail touch point look like and what could that do for our business. I definitely see that there could be a great use for that, for the right type of business.

Jason: 100%. You beat me to it. I was going to mention that. If I was a website, if I run a membership-based website or any kind of website, and I knew that somebody came and left a product in a shopping cart, or they just visited and browsed. I want try to go after them. Right? They were interested. They're a prospect, even though we don't know who they are by name, they are a prospect. One of the cool things about this, is that, it doesn't have to be just anybody that comes to the homepage. You could target people that go a few clicks in, or to certain particular pages, that may have viewed or placed a product in a shopping cart or have gotten to a certain stage in the checkout process.

You can look at a geographic location. So, you could say, if people come within an X mile radius of this territory or in California or in New York or wherever it may be, you can still target people geographically and other behaviors that they conduct online, to just little down, because if you've got a lot of traffic to your site, you don't want to just fire everybody a postcard. Because that could be probably quite expensive, but you might want to shoot off a postcard to somebody that comes and puts something in a shopping cart, or goes and navigates to a couple areas that you think would much more likely convert to a sale. And then where I think that this could be very cool for memberships is, because one of the cool tools that I love about MemberMouse, is the coupon codes and discount codes.

Say they came, you have some parameters that identify this particular user for a postcard, you could shoot them off a postcard that said, hey, we noticed you left or you could put some specific messaging to it and say, here's a coupon code, please come back, you get 10% off or free for the first two weeks or one month, whatever it is, because obviously you MemberMouse gives you the capability to adjust, create whatever promotional coupon code that you want. And so, I think that that's really awesome. Again, it's another form, a method of being able to grab that customer's hand and pull them back in the door.

Matt: I love that. Is there a particular tool out there that you recommend people use to do this or is it a service? If someone wanted to learn more about that, what should they do?

Jason: It's a service. We work with a few mail houses and printers. We put together the software, we work with you to put that directly on your website, the pixel tracking code, and then define the parameters on how we want to actually kick off a campaign. We let the data

collect for about a week or so, to get an understanding of what your site is actually generating in terms of traffic. And then we work with you to define what that actual campaign is, what the offering is, meaning what's the postcard going to look like? What's your call to action? Are we going to put a coupon code on there? And then the printer then works to get that in there. Basically, once you hit that threshold, you can curb it, say, I only want to send off a hundred of the top people that come per day, or I want to do all of them.

You've got a lot of flexibility on how you want to configure the campaign per your budget. Obviously with more volumes as it is with print, the cheaper your cost per card will be. It really comes down to budget, who the audience is, the amount of traffic that you have, creating the offer, the creative and tailor that, so that we get it all set up and then it just becomes an automated machine. Once that's all done, it just goes and just fires off, they fire off and drop those postcards off in the mail. It's pretty good. And then we also sprinkle in some seeds that we call, that have postcards that come to specific addresses, so we can make sure that things are happening as they should be. Right? We don't want to just always take the word for everybody. I'm sure your audience wants to know to make sure that we're doing the right job. As the printer and the fulfillment centers are doing their part.

And so, we'll sprinkler in these seeds to make sure that as these postcards go out there, once in a while, we're getting the ones that we expect, we could see that it's actually, and they're anonymous, right? But we know that that's actually the accounts, they're doing their job and we're getting them delivered as we would expect.

Matt: Nice. That is fantastic. Now, this last area that I wanted to touch on with you today. This is something we hear about, semi-frequently from some of our customers and its own arena is app creation. What I mean by that is, building a companion app for your membership site. I know we have some MemberMouse customers that do this. I know that you built one for John at Gluten Free Daily. We have a guy who he runs a yoga style membership site, and he actually has a handstand app that his members get, that help them with their handstands. For someone who's listening that is potentially interested in building an iOS or Android app, as a companion piece to their online membership site, what does this process look like? Because this is kind of its own can of worms so to speak.

Jason: Yeah, no, absolutely. It's a great question. I think first way I would start with it, is looking at the financial side of it. By that, what I mean is, do you want to collect money via an app or not? Because, if for those listening aren't aware and most people probably are, Apple and Google are very, very wealthy and they're wealthy because they reach deep into our pockets. They take all our money. With the apps they take, Apple is taking 30% for transactions. For every membership that you might sell through an app, you're having to give 30% back over to Apple, that could be quite painful. And so, the first question that I started with people, is bringing that to attention if they weren't already aware, is that something you want to do?

The good news is, is late last year, Google created a small business, SBA type program, where businesses that make under or collect under a million dollars in fees, they reduce, they cut that

percentage commission in half, from 30% to 15%. That could be a really good thing to get it back in the fold. But it'll be interesting to see how that really changes things. Because even still 15%, for small businesses that could be a lot to be paying for, but we'll see. There's a big lawsuit where everybody in this marketing and development community is paying attention to. It's that battle between Epic, the makers of Fortnite, for your gamers out there and Apple. Fortnite was just making, most popular game, right?

They're making tons of money and they had an argument with Google. They didn't want to be paying the 30%. They said, we're coming off. We're not going to pay that anymore. Apple basically kicked them off the platform. And so, there's a lawsuit about, there's an antitrust lawsuit. They recently put out all their arguments and documentation. We'll see, because that'll be a very big precedent, if Epic wins and the judge finds that there is some antitrust there. It could create an opportunity for us businesses to have a much more cost-effective way of being able to put our businesses online through their mobile apps, to sell our memberships online.

I mention all that, and it's not to discourage the people that want to create mobile apps, but it's just to educate them, because that's obviously a very important part of the discussion. You mentioned Gluten Free Daily, one of the things that we wanted to do initially when we built that app was, because that wasn't an issue for them. They didn't want to pay the 30%, but they wanted it to be a companion app as a value add for their members, which I'd imagine is probably going to be attractive to most of the people, especially that are listening to this episode here. The way that we built it is, is that you're giving your access to that membership, that valuable content, whatever it is that you're selling, you're giving them an ability to get that content mobile, on their phones.

And so, you're allowed to do that, because you're not actually paying for the renewal or the subscription through the mobile app. You basically look at it as a gateway to that valuable content that you're paying for online, through a mobile app. And so, that allows you to really get around it. Another thing too, I would add, is that another cool feature of MemberMouse, is that, when you do that, you set that up, you open yourself up to using MemberMouse, it makes it a lot easier, because the same controls and features that you can have in MemberMouse in terms of creating the different levels of permissions and access between the products or member levels that you might have, if you've got a gold, silver, platinum member or something like that. You could still inherit and have that same level of permissions in the app, that's also controls within MemberMouse. Right?

If this page, you're creating a new page, and it's only going to be accessible to a silver member or everybody, or I should say a platinum member, and then everybody, you can do the same thing and it controls in two different areas. We really liked that aspect. I know that that client and several others have really enjoyed that as well too. So, still it helps minimize the amount of work and maintenance that is needed. You can affect basically two platforms with one control center, so to speak. One dashboard. Right? That's pretty sweet.

Matt: I'm biased because I work here, but I also think that that is amazing, without that sort of control, without that sort of two way compatibility, it could be a nightmare to try to manage all of that manually for your members.

Jason: Absolutely.

Matt: Sorry. I was just going to say, I had a friend not too long ago. He was like, hey, I got this idea for an app, what do you think? How do I get this thing built? I really don't know much about apps or app creation, but I have a friend who he does some work on that and said, why don't you go talk to this guy and see what he has to say, see if this is something that's realistic. He did. He came back to me. He's like, the scope of that is beyond what I thought was required to build an app. I thought it's something I could do on a weekend. What is the actual of designing and building an app for membership, for subscription look like?

Jason: It can be a little daunting. I think first it's important to recognize there are several different ways that you can build an app. The first one is a native and I'll explain them. I'll go into a little bit of detail on them. First is native, then you can build a web app, or you could build a hybrid. And so, a native app is a lot more along the lines of what... It's more common that we see those, because they are a little full, they're more immersive. They play nicely with the phone, the device that you're on, right? They're integrated directly with calendaring and in-app notifications and things like that. It's very integrated within the mobile device that you're using. But because of that, to build it on that particular platform is, you have to create a code base, a mobile app specifically for iOS.

And then if you want to be on Android, you got to create a native app specifically for Android. It's basically creating two different mobile apps in one, even if they're going to work and function the same way. You're still having two different projects. And so, that can really be not cost effective for a lot of us out there. Whereas a hybrid helps to solve that problem. A hybrid app is, basically it's a JavaScript app, which is a very fast language, it's incredibly fast, and because it is a JS app, it allows us to, using certain frameworks, we can have a single code base and we can push that app out to both iOS and Android using one code base. Now, the downside is, is that we don't get all of that native functionality in the app that we would want, but it's also a lot more cost effective. Right?

And so, we could build it a lot easier and quicker. There's pros and cons to everything. We still have things like in-app, we can still do some things to get around it. But depending on the scope or the level of functionality required for that particular app, that's where we sit the client down and we try to educate them and go over the pros and cons and understand what it is based upon what their budget is. And so, that's a really important thing. The last one that I mentioned was web apps. And that is basically a glorified website in a mobile app wrapper, so to speak. You can basically tailor it to look more like a mobile app, excuse me, but it's actually hosted on a website and it's just put into a mobile app wrapper.

The downside of it, while incredibly cost effective, very cost effective, it relies on the internet. It relies on just as if we would open up Safari or Chrome-

Matt: Internet browser.

Jason: ... internet or browser to pull in and open up that page. It's going to require that internet connectivity, it's going to have to go out and make that request for that content, bring it back into the mobile app and render it. So, there's a time delay. It just doesn't have that same user experience that we see most on hybrid and native based type apps. But for those people that are out there, if you want to get something up and want to do it cost effectively, to just jump into that arena, to get something out there, because you know you need it, you know that your membership could really use it. While you don't have the budget for it right yet, that could be a perfect way to get entry into that area and get your users into it and using it, and that value add. That's certainly an opportunity there.

Matt: That's great. What I love about the idea of apps, is that, to me it really is a tool that you can use to really help with retention, keeping your members around, because everyone pretty much has their phones with them at all times. Not everyone's always online, logged into your member dashboard. So, for certain types of memberships, fitness style, diet style, lifestyle, if you have an app that you can go to the grocery store and pull up a piece of food and scan it, is this safe, or is this on my list or whatnot? That's going to keep you engaged, when you have all of these more touch points with the membership and keep you a member for longer.

Jason: I like that. I think you might be referencing the Gluten Free Daily project. For those out there that have a health wellness or food membership business, and if you're trying to keep track or allow your members to keep track of what they're eating, being able to use a mobile app to scan in that food, or type in what you ate, how you exercised or slept that particular day, that input, that user information, that's incredibly valuable and important. There's a lot of really cool things that we can do. Utilizing the MemberMouse API for that particular app, we were able to do a lot of what we just talked right there, but then also combine it with a lot of food-based databases.

So, that we could actually pull in and retrieve that data in real time, to get the nutritional value and data out of it, so that we could record that. At the end, what we were actually able to determine is, is that, what was the total caloric value of all the things that we ate today. There's a lot of apps out there that do just that, but do they do it specific to a particular membership? That's just one example, right? There's a lot of valuable data sources out there today in all the different industries. Basically, if there's an API to connect to, if there's some technical programming interface that allows us to tap into something, we can join data from one another and pull it together into a single application and make that user experience really rich and give them a lot of really good stuff, really good features.

Matt: I remember I had a conversation with somebody a while back, they were looking for a way to build, I don't know if it was an app, but it was a custom member dashboard that pulled

in the data from Fitbit. They were a physical trainer and they're assigning workouts to their clients and they wanted to have this dashboard, be able to track results and forecast progress. If I remember correctly, I think they did have an API. I forget exactly how that was, but they were trying to come up with a way to do that. That's just another idea of how something like that could work.

Jason: Yeah, no, absolutely. In fact, your Apple watch too, same thing. There's a lot of data that you can get and extract off of it in terms of steps that you're taking, exercise, even I think heartbeat and some other types of vitals that you can pull off of these wearable devices, these IoT devices, and consume that data in the application. If the user consents to that and you have the means to go off and grab that data, it's certainly is an opportunity. It just shows that there's a lot of opportunity out there to collect data and bring it in and to create a really engaging data driven experience for users, especially with the memberships and such. I think it's very, very cool, very powerful.

Matt: Man, well, I feel we have covered a lot today Jason. Is there anything that we haven't touched on that you feel a burning desire to share?

Jason: Well, I don't know if I answered the question about the process of building a mobile app. Sorry, say that again.

Matt: You tricked me. I didn't even realize. You gave me so much good info that I didn't even realize you forgot to tell me how to actually build an app.

Jason: It's pretty straight forward. I think it's not a lot to it. But one thing that I wanted just to mention was that, the process is quite similar to a website. But the important thing is to identify that model and strategy like we talked about earlier, right? Looking at the pros and cons of whether you're selling it through the app versus through the main website, right? Do we want to give Apple their commission or Android their commissions? Once we get past that, it's then really looking at, well, what's the user experience? Making sure that we're identifying the type of platform, whether it be native or a hybrid type of model, that's going to work for the budget. And then really trying to create a really good user experience that's going to get people to find and utilize the application as easy as possible.

For some clients they can do that in a number of ways. We build wireframes that will allow us to start to explore the beginning stages of what that thing's going to look like, how it's going to be utilized before we actually put some designs to it and comp it out. And then we can kick it out to, there's a lot of online services that offer usability tests, where we can actually put these in front of random people to see, ask them to do certain things, to say, hey, do this please and tell me what you think. Was it easy to do that? Was it a problem? What are your comments and feedback? Because one of the things that you want to make sure initially out of the get go, is that you're getting thumbs up ratings.

You don't want people to start commenting negatively about the app, because bad user feedback is just going to build bad rating scores. It's not going to get you up higher in searches. We want to make sure that that's good. Usability is something I definitely want to make sure that I'm highlighting as part of the process. And then once we've attacked that, then it gets into just building it, testing it, launching it, and marketing this great new, this mobile app, right? Something that's hopefully going to work really well for the membership, for the clients.

Matt: Nice. Man, well, thank you so much for coming on the show. I say that it's just not a full-on podcast episode, we'll publish on this on our blog, but thank you for sharing so much of your experience and wisdom with us today, Jason. For people that are listening, where can they go to learn more about you and learn more about all the things you offer?

Jason: Thanks Matt for having me. I really, really appreciate it. I'm very grateful. Well, first, in MemberMouse, if you search in marketing, there's a couple areas that will lead you there. Also, on your member dashboard, it will take you to that MemberMouse page that talks a little bit about us and Visual Identity Group. Or you can go directly to visualidentitygroup.com and reach out to us there. Happy to help, even if you have a question and just need some advice or some guidance, very happy. You can always reach out to me, Jason. Happy to point people in the right direction, even if it doesn't mean that we're working together. I feel like helping people can always only help to serve the greater good and the community. Who knows later on down the road, you might think of us when you actually want to take that next step.

Matt: When you need an app.

Jason: That's right. That's right.

Matt: We'll include links to all the different things we talked about in the article, including the MemberMouse page we have for you on your site. Any parting words of wisdom for everyone before we wrap up, or have we covered everything?

Jason: I don't know. We covered some stuff. We covered some good thing here. I feel like we did.

Matt: This is as good as some of the information I've got in paid courses. Hopefully people find a lot of value in this episode.

Jason: That's good. That's great. Well, I hope so. I really hope that your audience finds some value from this. That would make me happy.

Matt: Great. Well, thanks for coming on today, Jason, and we'll talk soon.

Jason: Thank you, Matt. I appreciate it. Thanks again.