

# Lead Generation Strategies b2b: What Everybody Ought to Know About Ad Ops, Email, & NOT Paying the Dumb Tax

**Austin Rickles Interview 2021-10-14**

**Joey Myers 00:06**

Hello and welcome to the Lead Strategy, The Lead Generation Strategy's podcast, this is the first episode and first I wanted to welcome Mr. Austin Rickles. Welcome, sir.

**Austin Rickles 00:16**

Thank you. Fun to be here.

**Joey Myers 00:21**

We've been talking for a year, over a year and a half now, I think right?

**Austin Rickles 00:26**

Yes.

**Joey Myers 00:27**

It started off where I was going through some merger acquisition training, so we had met and connected over that over LinkedIn. From there, I think we've built pretty good relationships, first started with like one conversation a month, or six weeks, and then it turned into every other week. It turned into every week and stuff; we get to catch up on life.

**Joey Myers 00:53**

We talk about business, and I just thought would it be kind of cool to be a fly on the wall in some of the conversations that we talked about. This video is going to be all about Austin and what he's been up to his digital marketing chops and things like that.

**Joey Myers 01:07**

Let me ask the first question. We've talked a lot about this in our conversations, but start from the beginning, where did you start to get those digital marketing chops? What did that look like?

**Where did you start to get those digital marketing chops? What did that look like?**

**Austin Rickles 01:21**

Ah, well, started as just an unpaid internship, I was still in school, and got thrown into the adult world. It was funny, my first interview for my internship, talk to my old boss, 30 straight minutes, got off the phone, wound up just calling my dad, I was 22 years old, excited.

**Austin Rickles** 01:45

He goes, what are you going to be doing? I said, I have no idea, but I got it.

**Joey Myers** 01:50

Talk about AD-Ops. What does that look like? For those out there that don't know what that is?

**Austin Rickles** 01:54

Yeah, so that is specifically for the publisher side. Ad-ops is the optimizations of the ad units on a website. The optimizations of the placements of each ad unit, getting ad demand and generating the most revenue possible for a website.

**Joey Myers** 02:12

Who were the best clients for ad-ops?

**Austin Rickles** 02:17

From my personal experience, this doesn't really matter but any site that has consistent fresh content that allows the publisher to be able to either send traffic from email or social or anything, any traffic source.

**Austin Rickles** 02:37

That part's irrelevant, but with the fresh content every day, it allows more opportunity for more users to come and become a repeat, just repeated audience, more pageviews every day, and keep it going.

**Joey Myers** 02:52

Now, give us an idea of what the money that people can make with the ad ops, didn't have to be a crazy amount, but traffic based on traffic, and when you monetize that traffic with ad Ops, what's a round number that these websites that have traffic could be making?

***Ad Ops: "The gold standard is to get what's called a \$10 RPM, which is revenue per milli, which really, that just means earn \$10 for every 1000 pageviews you have on your site."***

**Austin Rickles** 03:15

Typically, the industry standard, so the gold standard is to get what's called a \$10 RPM, which is revenue per milli, which really, that just means earn \$10 for every 1000 pageviews you have on your site.

**Austin Rickles** 03:29

That's kind of like the golden standard, anything above that is amazing. But really, the average and this little depending on niche, depend on demographics from the audience, but the true average is probably more like a \$60 RPM.

**Joey Myers** 03:45

A site that has maybe they're getting 100,000 visitors a month. What would that look like? Say like in that six to \$10 per range?

**Austin Rickles** 04:00

Break that down to let's say, \$6 per 1000 pageviews. 100,000, pageviews that would be well, without my calculator, what?

**Joey Myers** 04:14

600 bucks

**Austin Rickles** 04:16

Roughly

**Joey Myers** 04:18

Then the 100,00 to \$10, you're talking about \$1,000 a month?

**Austin Rickles** 04:24

Yes, so standard is about \$1,000 in ad revenue per 100,000 pages.

**Joey Myers** 04:29

So those are the probably the ideal websites that it would make sense to jump into that. They're getting about 100,000 pageviews per month or so.

**Austin Rickles** 04:39

Yes, that's a good starting point.

**Joey Myers** 04:42

Most of the websites that you've worked in, and again, we don't have to go into the domains or anything like that. But if you're comfortable with going into the niche because I'd like to ask a couple questions on that.

**Joey Myers** 04:57

Maybe give some examples of some of the new sites again, you don't have to mention the names, but just new site A, new site B.

**Austin Rickles** 05:06

I got my start in the specifically Conservative News niche. With new sites, most publishers can bust out anywhere between three to 15, maybe 20 articles per day.

**Austin Rickles** 05:21

A lot of them leverage either social or email to drive traffic to the site. The cool thing about that niche specifically, is that due to the demographics and how polarizing that niche can be, the audience base interacts with ads very well.

**Austin Rickles** 05:41

From my experience, you basically can get a much higher RPM on a site from that niche specifically. This works on both sides of the aisle. For anyone out there, news in general, conservative, liberal, it doesn't matter, you can generate a lot of pageviews and generate good ad revenue from there.

**Austin Rickles** 06:05

I've worked on some sites and some of our sites right now, have a record RPM of 30 to \$35.

**Joey Myers** 06:14

Wow,

***“Social traffic does tend to perform the worst out of all traffic from an ads perspective, not from a page view perspective but specifically from ad revenue, email traffic is where it's at.”***

**Austin Rickles** 06:15

Way above the norm. To follow that up, social traffic does tend to perform the worst out of all traffic from an ad perspective, not from a page view perspective but specifically from ad revenue, email traffic is where it's at.

**Joey Myers** 06:32

In other words, you have a company who is driving traffic from social media to the website, and now you're looking at that specific traffic coming from social media, and how well those people are doing on the ads on the site.

**Joey Myers** 06:47

Whether it's Google AdSense or whatever, there's other ones I guess, out there, where you can set that up. From that standpoint, the traffic coming from social media does worse. In relation to you talking about the 30 to 40 record RPM right?

**Austin Rickles** 07:03

My personal record, I'm sure there are people doing better. Either way, you're way above here.

**Joey Myers** 07:09

That's email, right?

**Austin Rickles** 07:12

Yeah.

**Joey Myers** 07:14

What does social media look like? What's social media compared RPM?

**Austin Rickles** 07:21

Unfortunately, social media, with that traffic, you don't have the benefit of awesome monetizing email newsletter with more ads, and that does hurt the overall RPM significantly.

**Austin Rickles** 07:34

The biggest issues with social traffic, you can get amazing pageviews and get a very quickly massive spurts of traffic. The issue with those users specifically, as I call them, the ADD audience, and that's just it is what it is, you tend to get a lot less time on site from those users, less pages per session, and the bounce rate tends to be much higher.

**Joey Myers** 08:01

You think that's because of the internet marketing style on social media, they're scaling their feed.

**Austin Rickles** 08:07

directly rolling and everything they want to see all over the place

**Joey Myers** 08:11

They want to see videos on kitty cats and dogs, and then they see your ad pop up for conservative new site and they're, oh, it's kind of cool. Then they get there and like I lost interest, I'm going to go back and watch some cat videos.

**Austin Rickles** 08:23

Yes, a lot of the time, they'll read, sometimes not even the entire articles and go right back to Facebook, or Instagram or wherever.

**Austin Rickles** 08:32

On the email newsletter side, those are people who have already opted in, the interest is there. Otherwise, they wouldn't be part of your email list and they're looking forward to receiving your emails every day.

**Austin Rickles** 08:44

From there, they'll pick their favorite story, and click in there, and within the email template itself, there's already couple ads in there. Once you can get them focused on that, clicking within your email, or going from your email to your site, you're essentially double monetizing your users.

**Austin Rickles** 09:04

Since those users you know, are very invested in the site, they're going to go through, read an entire article, the time on page, it's from what I've seen, it can triple.

**Austin Rickles** 09:16

Say you're averaging a minute on page and social, you can get three minutes or more from a user. They're also going to another article, it's just they're much more in tune with your brand than someone just popping over from social media quick.

**Joey Myers** 09:32

What I really liked about you from the beginning, is you're not into politics, like you do not follow politics.

**Austin Rickles** 09:38

I have not read a single article on any of my sites or client sites or anything. I just understand that very well

**Joey Myers** 09:48

At that and you're looking at the numbers in the data from an objective point of view, right? It's not that you're being subjective and you're skewing numbers bias.

**Joey Myers** 10:01

You don't even have a pulse on that market at all. You're just getting something come in. You're looking at it from a data standpoint and optimization standpoint. I think that's a huge thing that you do, I've always admired about you in the work that you're doing.

**Austin Rickles** 10:17

Very much just focus on the ad revenue statistics, how each unit on page is performing. Versus different placements, depending on where that is. Funny thing is sometimes an ad unit, very bottom of page will perform one at the top of the page.

**Austin Rickles** 10:33

You'll have to go in and see why is that happening? You go in and someone loads your site, you have a nice big ad right above the title, a lot of people are scrolling immediately to get right into your article. Then, they're slowing down at the bottom of the page.

**Austin Rickles** 10:52

Right after the content is staying in on the user screen longer than anything up top, which is kind of counterintuitive, because everyone wants what's called above the fold.

***“You must really pay attention to user behavior, how they interact with your site. That's where Google Analytics comes from, and I do spend a lot of time in there.”***

**Austin Rickles** 11:04

They want their ad right there, right when the site loads. You must really pay attention to user behavior, how they interact with your site. That's where Google Analytics comes from, and I do spend a lot of time in there.

**Joey Myers** 11:18

Tell a real quick story when you were in school, and you had a Google Analytics core class, and how the teacher reacted to you.

**Austin Rickles** 11:26

Well, it's funny. I was already working full time; my internship went well. They hired me to come on full time before I was even done with school. I'd already been working with Google Analytics for about a year at this point.

**Austin Rickles** 11:45

At the end of my marketing degree, Google Analytics was a hot topic, and the teacher was teaching stuff. They're like, has anyone ever used Google Analytics before? I look around and I'm the only one to raise my hand.

**Austin Rickles** 12:03

Teacher was like, tell me more about what you do? I just went through this whole spiel of diving in, finding URL, going in to see where your traffic is coming from, whether it's source medium time on page from those users, everything.

**Austin Rickles** 12:21

My teacher had me go up and demonstrate everything about Google Analytics. It didn't really register until after that, that is something people do have to learn in school and everything to work on, within marketing in really any field within marketing.

**Austin Rickles** 12:40

To me it was just second nature that it caught me off guard that other people weren't already doing it.

**Joey Myers** 12:46

We've had talks about that, and how much easier, stickier it is to learn Google Analytics, if you're working on your own sites, right? Most of those other fellow classmates in there didn't have an internship on ad Ops, like you did, where you had the application, you were learning it, but you're also applying it to websites and looking at data and seeing where things are supposed to fit with that.

**Joey Myers** 13:09

I would have thought it was hard, I would have been one of those people sit right next to you and watching you raise your hand, and I never would have had any experience with it.

**Austin Rickles** 13:17

The hands on experience plays a huge role and the ability to learn that faster, because not only because you're forced to interact with it for your job. But when you have a site to where you can see on the other side, what the analytics means and what they're tied to and it's just so much easier to understand, versus someone who is just diving straight into analytics without any site to reference from.

## **You mentioned UTM parameters. Talk a little about that, if you can bring it down to some of those out there, they're like UTM parameters? What the hell is that?**

**Joey Myers** 13:42

You mentioned UTM parameters. Talk a little about that, if you can bring it down to some of those out there, they're like UTM parameters? What the hell is that?

**Austin Rickles** 13:51

UTM parameters, there's a few different options, the main two are source and medium. I typically only use source because it's just for me to keep track of who's sending traffic where, etc.

**Joey Myers** 14:04

By email, or social media, or whatever.

**Austin Rickles** 14:08

All that really means is the UTM parameter, it's hit to go our jargon here. But it's just if you ever go to a URL, and you see at the end of the URL, there's an extra slot on there. That's just a question mark. Then it'll say UTM, underscore source equals.

**Austin Rickles** 14:28

You can put in whatever you want there. Say, for example, say email. Then you're able to go into Google Analytics, go to acquisition, and right under acquisition overview, within your traffic tab, it'll say source medium, you click on that, and you can see exactly how many pages came directly from email. It just allows you to break down your statistics, just to another level.

**Joey Myers** 14:54

That's cool. I learned that probably a couple years ago, the power of UTM and what you're doing with ad ops where you can speak on the idea of what kind of a viewer is an email person coming from email versus a viewer coming from social media that's how you can speak on that because Google Analytics will parse those two out they'll separate those and you can look at those with varying graphs.

**Joey Myers** 15:20

You can put one graph in it against the other graph and compare them and you can see right there what kind of viewer they are so that's how you're talking on that.

## **You do your own emails, you set up those kinds of campaigns, talk a little bit about that, the work you do on that...**

**Joey Myers** 15:29

One of the other things you've talked a lot about email, so there's ad ops, like you said you can double on monetization of the traffic, one is ad ops so sending them to the website and then you have the ads



there and then the second one is email, so you do your own emails, you set up those kind of campaigns, talk a little bit about that, the work you do on that.

**Austin Rickles** 15:51

Absolutely. If you can't tell already, I'm a very very big fan of email and email marketing, email traffic, just anything.

**Austin Rickles** 15:59

Whether it's from content news site or e commerce it doesn't matter I still think and it's not always a popular opinion, but I still think email is king, sorry Facebook.

**Austin Rickles** 16:15

Especially with the news and like I said before, it doesn't really matter which side of the aisle you sit on. For me I couldn't even tell you what's one anyways. But for different social media standpoints, Facebook in particular, Twitter's getting involved with that now they're really hammering down on all these political news sites because of either biases or you name it.

**Austin Rickles** 16:40

I'm sure most of you have heard of the whole fake news scenarios and all of that, regardless of what you think there, it's irrelevant to this.

**Austin Rickles** 16:50

Email is a good way to get set up to where A, you can monetize better, and you're not dependent upon anyone else for your own traffic. That's interesting for me. Because I've seen Facebook pages get deleted overnight for what seemed to be no reason or for multiple different niches.

**Austin Rickles** 17:11

Suddenly, people are left trying to figure out how to keep making money with their site.

**Austin Rickles** 17:17

We put a lot of heavy focus into building email lists for ourselves and for our clients to drive traffic specifically. You have this ongoing asset that can never be taken away from you, that you're constantly getting traffic and I've noticed the best ways, so there's a lot of simple ways to build your email list whether it's a little pop-up form on your site anything.

**Austin Rickles** 17:41

However, the best ways I've noticed are through polls petitions and giveaways. People love interacting with those especially give voice but if you can get into some sort of polarizing niche, there's always going to be a strong opinion one way or the other.

**Austin Rickles** 18:00

That's great for a poll or petition because you're driving emotion to the audience, getting them to engage with you based on that emotion and then to be able to answer your poll or sign the petition they

have to give you your email and get this out of the way, there's always a disclaimer on the bottom that users are well aware they can be added to a marketing list or an email list for a newsletter or whatever.

**Austin Rickles** 18:26

It's very clear on any of these but from there it's just a really good way to secure yourself and your site or your clients from the worry of social media traffic.

## **From a capturing customer information perspective, is it smart to only be selling products on Amazon?**

**Joey Myers** 18:40

Are you saying that if I'm an author and I have my book on Amazon that I'm good to go?

**Joey Myers** 18:47

We've had this conversation

**Austin Rickles** 18:49

\*\*\*people off as well.

**Joey Myers** 18:50

Yes, but talk about from like a customer information standpoint, like keeping your customers information.

**Austin Rickles** 19:02

We do a lot of ecommerce as well. The main reason we use Amazon for none of it is like we literally have zero Amazon stores ourselves. It's all either Shopify or e commerce, any other platform.

**Austin Rickles** 19:15

Amazon, anything you sell on Amazon all your customer information is theirs not yours. It's like you're bringing all these customers, you're doing great and then like you want to remarket to people or anything, you don't have any of their information.

**Austin Rickles** 19:30

You might have their name just because you must fill it but even then, most of the time Amazon's doing all that anyways.

**Austin Rickles** 19:37

You're just kind of left holding the bag and waiting for the next sale instead of being proactive and expanding on your audience based and trying to resell, get second or third sale for the same people.

**Austin Rickles** 19:48

From my experience that really hurts your customer lifetime value and because you can't market and beyond that initial sale.

**Joey Myers** 19:57

Right and I speak from personal experience, we've had this conversation and I paid the dumb tax so everybody doesn't have to and my first book, my Amazon bestselling book 2000, was it 17, I wrote it January and then it was actual bestseller briefly in January 2018.

**Joey Myers** 20:19

I don't think it went a whole year where I finally got smart and it was like well wait a minute, I'm not getting these emails, I'm not getting these addresses, Amazon's getting all of it.

**Joey Myers** 20:30

I smartened up finally and where they could go through the website and we do it through our website but then we use a lot of the Zapier stuff to connect it to my Shopify store and then a Shopify have a little, what do you call it, not widget but the extension or whatever it is, plug in that you can have access to called Lulu Express.

**Joey Myers** 20:55

They're the ones that will print the book and then send it out, but I have access to all that information now, it would have been nice 10,000 copies before to have 10,000 people's information I could have had all that stuff, but I didn't.

**Joey Myers** 21:10

I paid the dumb tax and so everybody out there listening that want to be authors, they don't have to

**Austin Rickles** 21:17

There's usually a price tag on knowledge.

**Joey Myers** 21:21

I paid it; I paid the tax. I love that. Before we cap this up, before we tell people where they can find you and stuff like that, if they're interested.

**BEWARE of this Facebook niche Dumb tax ad story: “...we went from doing \$220,000 in sales the previous month to I believe it was like \$13,000.”**

**Joey Myers** 21:34

I know, I wanted to set that up that you're not a political guy, you don't listen to all that kind of stuff, but I do want you to tell this story where you just kind of mentioned again another personal story, you paid the dumb tax.

**Joey Myers** 21:47

You had three or four conservative news sites at the time and then you had a store where you're selling Trump 2020 coins before the election so take it from there, so you're doing really well, if you can

discuss numbers if you want you don't have to it's up to you, but I mean numbers would be important in this story because once you get to the end, it's like whoa

**Austin Rickles** 21:55

Here's the reason I love email, here's just another example. When we had these commemorative coins, they were going great, we had done close to half a million in sales at this point over the course of three or four months

**Joey Myers** 22:29

This is during COVID by the way, 2020.

**Austin Rickles** 22:31

Yes, right before leading up to the election and for the people on the left I'm sorry you don't buy products as well as on the right.

**Joey Myers** 22:43

Just looking at the numbers

**Austin Rickles** 22:49

Ads are going wild Facebook's crushing it for us, we literally couldn't scale fast enough, we couldn't keep up with demand and so we did, I think about \$215- \$220,000 in sale one month and then Facebook decides we're going to pause all political advertising no matter what it's about.

**Austin Rickles** 23:15

I remember specifically November 4, 2020, they shut down all our ads, they didn't take us out of our ad account or anything, they just want us to pause everything.

**Joey Myers** 23:26

What happens when you pause an ad for those Facebook ad people out there. What happens when you must pause an ad?

**Austin Rickles** 23:32

All your optimizations and everything go out the window

**Joey Myers** 23:36

You got to start all over again almost, not all over but pretty much

**Austin Rickles** 23:41

At least have your audience and everything and but each literally you can have 20 different ads rolling and each individual ad has grown up optimization process and the second those get paused everything you had rolling for you has to be relearned within the Facebook algorithm.

**Austin Rickles** 23:58

The pause button there on November 4, we went from doing \$220,000 in sales the previous month to I believe it was like 13,000.

**Joey Myers 24:10**

Wow

**Austin Rickles 24:11**

Yep. That was the issue, like you said, what do you call the dumb tax. We got just smacked down and that's why I do not like to be dependent upon Facebook ...

**Austin Rickles 24:29**

We were fortunate enough to where we did have all our user information, we have built up an e commerce email list and everything since we were using Shopify not Amazon

**Joey Myers 24:41**

Big difference there.

**Austin Rickles 24:42**

Yes, but it got to the point where we even realized Okay, what still works within the niche that's not political. Okay, let's commemorate coins or like to honor our military branches.

**Austin Rickles 24:57**

Facebook still said no. They won't even let us do that. The store was not the same until I think it was either late February, early March of this year 2021, where they finally lifted that pause on global advertising.

**Austin Rickles 25:15**

We had to let Facebook relearn everything we had already done and that took about another three to four weeks of just learning getting the ad set again.

**Austin Rickles 25:27**

Unfortunately, by then it's almost too late because it pauses during the height of the political season,

**Joey Myers 25:33**

People don't know that now, and probably maybe it's changed, but probably what six eight months ago I heard that even I think it's just one ad set, one ad set is like \$1,000 that you'd spend in a week in order to get it optimized so it's not even optimized until you spend up to \$1,000 or maybe you can get if you're taking emails, you get 1000 emails, before you can create a decent look alike.

**Joey Myers 26:04**

You got to have at least 1000 emails, so you got to spend a lot of money now it's not like in the old days when I started on 2015 or 16 and it was crazy, I was ignorance on fire.

**Joey Myers 26:15**

I knew enough to be to be dangerous but 100 emails and boom it would spit out this look alike that lowered your ad rate from like 50 cents per lead and I was trying to get emails down to like 10 cents per lead was like whoa and then they just changed everything and now set the bar even higher, so it makes it harder for smaller businesses to even compete

**Austin Rickles** 26:37

That's the unfortunate thing. Facebook, we used to call it the Wild West Facebook days where you can just almost create your entire traffic network and your reach was just insane and then now everything is pay to play.

**Austin Rickles** 26:54

If you want anything done through Facebook, you want any luck, you got to pay just to get in the game and then optimize from there, they changed up everything.

**Austin Rickles** 27:06

I think I've told you this story, I'm not going to give away the client, but I was doing ad ops and we're making about a half a million a month in ad revenue for this client.

**Austin Rickles** 27:18

Then, Facebook decided to delete their Facebook page, and they jumped to \$5,000 a month.

**Joey Myers** 27:27

Wow,

**Austin Rickles** 27:28

It went from here's 40 or 50 million pageviews per month to like maybe 500,000

**Joey Myers** 27:39

Crazy. Again, you're building a good case for email. If you can, you can get the phone number that's good, too for SMS and text and stuff like that.

**Joey Myers** 27:53

Awesome. Thanks for your time. I want you to give people out there who want to reach out, want to know more about your services? Where can they find you?

## Where can people find you?

**Austin Rickles** 28:01

Feel free to go to MainLine.media. That is our website. To clarify, I'm not a web designer. I'm currently getting professional one done.

**Austin Rickles** 28:12

Feel free to reach out at Austin@MainLine.media. That's my direct email. I'm happy to answer any questions, just give me a shout.

**Joey Myers** 28:20

Sometimes the bad websites, the people that digital marketing guru types are the better ones because they're spending more time in the trenches doing what they do best than actually designing websites.

**Joey Myers** 28:33

We've grouped together on a couple projects on a gold side project in a crypto one. I kind of bring that side, the SEO and the UI UX design and that kind of thing. That's kind of why we've gone in on that.

**Joey Myers** 28:47

I want to thank you, Austin, for your time today. I'm sure we'll do plenty of other tactical, more tactical, and strategic stuff, then people get to know you, but I think this was a good video to do so that people could actually get to know you.

**Austin Rickles** 29:01

I appreciate it. I look forward to going further down the rabbit hole.

**Joey Myers** 29:05

Cool. All right. We'll talk soon.

**Austin Rickles** 29:09

Yep, I appreciate it.

**Joey Myers** 29:10

Alright.

**Austin Rickles** 29:15

Recording button.

**Joey Myers** 29:18

There we go.