



## THE MILLION DOLLAR STRATEGIES PODCAST WITH SHAUN BUCK & JON BUCHAN

Shaun Buck: Hey everyone. This is Shaun Buck, and I'm here with another Million Dollar Strategy podcast, and I've got Jon Buchan on the line with me today. And I'm actually really excited to interview Jon. He came to my attention because he basically sent me this absolutely crazy email. And it was so damn good. It actually didn't make it to me but it was so good that my assistant saw it and was like, "You have to read this email. This is like one of the best emails I've ever seen." And then, it got up to me. And so, anyhow he's just ... It was so interesting, and I went and did some research, and got a little of the back story, and what he's doing. And I'm like, "Man, we've got to talk to this guy because he's just knocking it out of the park." And so, Jon, welcome to the podcast.

Jon Buchan: Thank you for having me. I really appreciate it.

Shaun Buck: Awesome. So, why don't you do this. Give us a little bit of your backstory. Tell us a little bit about who you are and tell us a little bit about your business.

Jon Buchan: Sure. So, I've been in business pretty much since I've left school when I was 16, I've had an online business. And I've always been into digital marketing and putting websites together, and even back in the day, coding and some design. So, I was always into, I've developed this sort of perfect talent stack for the times we live in, all these different skills. And in the last few years, well the last 10 years of my life, I've worked in digital marketing at agencies. And even had my own agency after I worked at other peoples' agencies for five years, and I thought, "I can do this better myself." And for a year it was fine. We had word of mouth leads. But when they dried up I was like, "Oh, okay, it's really hard to ..." It's really easy to close deals when you have really great sales people giving you great leads and coming along with you to close the deals. Now I have to open deals myself. And I realized without just without word of mouth referral I don't know how to generate leads. And I dealt with that the only way I knew how, which is to say I got blind drunk. And decided for some reason to write the most absurd cold email I could. And in the morning I was still tipsy enough to think it was a good idea to send this email to some of the most senior marketing people at Red Bull, Pepsi, Semantec, Hewlett-Packard, all of these big brands. And to my amazement it worked. I've got some of the most gushing complements and offers for sales meetings. And my favorite email, wasn't the most gushing one, but it was just funny because the sentence was funny. It was a one line email which read something like, "My colleague forwarded me your spam email and we would like to meet you to discuss opportunities." I just thought, "I wonder if that exact sentence has ever been written before?" And I realized the more I sent these emails out to the right people I just kept booking big sales meetings. And then, I used it to get journalists to reply to me to cover my clients to get people events and seminars. To get my estate agents to fix things in my apartment more expediently. To get my friends as many job interviews as they wanted even if they have no experience in the industry. And I just realized there's a disarming way of writing that is useful for whatever ask you might have. And after many years, five years, of getting these amazing

compliments and being quite good at this cold pitching stuff, I realized actually this is what I like doing. I love the digital marketing stuff but this is what I'm good at is helping people get the attention of busy people. And that's when I started the Charm Offensive Facebook group. I went through a period where I was quite depressed and I managed to get myself out of this bad sort of situation. And I thought actually I'm gonna start telling the world about this. And I started my Facebook group Charm Offensive. Started teaching people my weird methods, and I couldn't believe it, it resonated and it took off. And we got to 1000 members in a month. And that is I think over 8000 is where we're at now. And I run a ... Basically my whole business has changed. I don't do any private client work. I run a paid subscription offering where people can get access to all my templates, all my courses, and me one to one even for a monthly fee. And that's where I am now and I can't believe I get to make a living doing this. I absolutely love it.

Shaun Buck: That's awesome. I mean the best stories start out with, "So, I went out and got drunk." The best stories start that way and so this one was no exception. So, let's talk. Let me ask you, tell me about this email you sent out. So, is this the same email that ended up getting sent over to me? The audacity email, the audacity of this email, is this that same?

Jon Buchan: That's a certain line that I've used and recommended before. I think it will be different to the one I originally sent out. But the same principles will be within the template. There'll be an order that is present in both.

Shaun Buck: So, can we talk about that order? Is that trade secret stuff?

Jon Buchan: No, no, no, I've gone through, I'm happy to give it out. I even, people can even look at the exact email, although it's in ladder form because I started sending these in direct mail form, by searching for the hashtag foundtheferret on Twitter. That's foundtheferret. But I'm happy to run through it as well. I can ...

Shaun Buck: Yeah, let's run through it.

Jon Buchan: So, it's I can remember off my heart anyway, my computer's going a bit slow. But it starts with something that's far different to what people normally expect from a cold email or a cold direct mail piece. So, you'd expect most cold pitches start with something really formal and then they'll say something like, "Do you have problems navigating the ever changing world of social media?" It's in this I can't even say it without using that ridiculous infomercial tone. And no one speaks like this, at least no one I hang around with. And everyone's writing emails this way. In this very formal, serious, jargon filled way. Whereas, mine starts with, "Greetings Shaun. You've never heard of me. Hi, I'm Jon. I got your details from a list, gasp. But hey, at least you're list worthy. That's got to be worth something, right?" So, instead of shying away from the fact that I just got their data from a list. I brought it up immediately. Immediately I say you've never heard of me, and I mention where I got their details, and then turn that into a compliment. So, how different is that versus, "Dear Shaun"? You can see the difference.

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Shaun Buck: Yeah, sure.

Jon Buchan: And then, the email continuous with ... Shall I read it out word for word?

Shaun Buck: Yeah, why not?

Jon Buchan: Sure. So, okay let's get down to brass tacks. I'm writing to you from the office of [inaudible 00:15:46] a highly creative marketing and advertising agency I run with my brother Gary and a team of 20 people far more talented than me. For over five years we've run our own amazing agency and we absolutely love it. It's a wonderful feeling to know that we're not ripping clients off and we are producing the best work of our lives. We're looking to win new clients over to our side and away from those evil, okay maybe not evil but not as good, other agencies. If you'd let me have a chat with you about your digital marketing needs I will buy you lunch, or coffee, or tequila shots and promise to be somewhat entertaining. If you're lucky I may even wear a top hat. First off, I'd love to provide you with some ideas you're free to steal. I've included a sticker containing a picture of a ferret that has been dressed up. According to the internet his name is Colin. I trust this will charm you into submission. I'll be in touch on email when you least expect it. Dun, dun, dun. I await your profanity response. Have a splendid day. And then, my name."

Jon Buchan: So that, as you can imagine, is not what senior marketing people at big brands usually get in their inbox whether digital or otherwise. And it stands out, it's super honest, it's cheeky, and there's loads of different reasons why it works. But one of them is it's just the most honest thing that I could have written. And how different is that compared to the very serious jargon filled approaches they've got? I'm talking to them like a friend and people respond like a friend. They respond informally and they try to match your humor rather than being stuck in that sort of business zone where it's a whole different approach. And I found it to be very effective.

Shaun Buck: Yeah. Well, it's great. I mean it made me laugh. So, I think there's two interesting things on that. One I think that people confuse the idea that businesses buy things. And businesses don't buy anything, people buy things.

Jon Buchan: Exactly.

Shaun Buck: And so, you're entertaining, charming. And so, in turn they're like, "Yeah, I mean this was the most creative thing I've seen in a long time. Let's give this guy a shot." Right? And then, I think the second thing at least, I don't know if they do this over there across the pond, but here in the United States every time there's a presidential election there's like a survey of, "Would you have a beer with the guy?" Right? That's the measuring stick, I guess, is do you like him as a person? Would you have a beer with him? And I think that that's kind of what you've got going on there. They're reading it and you're getting the, "I'd totally have a beer with this guy," kind of thing. So yeah, at least this isn't going to be a boring crap meeting." And so, you're getting some of that as well too. And so, super interesting. It's a great email, good job.

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Jon Buchan: Yeah, it does. I've never heard explicitly that before. I know the term, "Have a beer with him." But I'll use that in future, that is completely it's a good explanation for it. And it's basically, yeah, the liking principle of persuasion. People like to do business with people that they like, and they have things in common with. And that's another thing about this approach. And it's also a concern people have because as well as this [inaudible 00:18:57] in this email, my LinkedIn profile for instance, my main profile picture is a obviously photoshopped picture of me rescuing a baby and a basket of kittens from a burning building. And people often say, not often, but people have said, "Aren't you worried people are not gonna want to do business with you because you're not professional?" And I said, "That's not an unfortunate side effect but is a deliberate feature." The bland, the stern, the self important, they disqualify themselves. And I get to do business with people that are like-minded. So, it has that immediately built in that if you share this obviously silly sense of humor and cheekiness in my original approach, we probably share other things in common. And if we're gonna be this honest from the start, that's probably gonna be a better relationship than one where you don't share those things in common. So, it has a qualifying attribute to it as well that is very good because you get to do business with people that at least think a little bit like you.

Shaun Buck: Yeah, yeah, that's always been my take too. I'm gonna be who I am because it's the only person I know how to be. And if you don't like me and don't want to do business with me then I'm okay with that. And the interesting thing is when you do put yourself out there, if you're for everybody then you're for nobody, right? If you stand for everything you stand for nothing. So, I think that that's kind of what you're saying there, right? Is that ...

Jon Buchan: Exactly.

Shaun Buck: Take a stance, be who you are, and own it. And people will, you'll attract people who are like you, and you'll be happier in business.

Jon Buchan: Exactly. And often when people talk about this mode of being yourself, I have this image of people, these unfiltered people that are being profane or being deliberately contrarian. It doesn't have to be that way. You can be yourself, and you don't have to be deliberately polarizing, but you should be yourself. And that that's ... Yeah, you attract the people you're gonna best work with. And I think that's something that people, it's kind of an intangible thing, you can't put on a spreadsheet like response rates or open rates. But it's something that's important. And I know that some people are probably worried about doing it because they want every deal they can. They're probably just starting out and every deal is really important. And it's ... I wish I could tell those people, because I used to be in that same position, "No, you shouldn't try and win every single possible client. You want the ones that are right for you that you know you're gonna work well with." And this approach can do that for sure.

Shaun Buck: Yeah, yeah. So, I'll tell a quick side story. So, I'm a Christian guy and I decided a long time ago in our newsletter that I was just gonna put just some Bible verses. And I was really scared to do it because I ... Everything you see is don't talk about politics, and religion, and things like that. But I was like, "You know I'm just gonna do it anyways." And I've had one person tell me they didn't want to do business with me because of it. But I've

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had numerous people, and this wasn't why I did it, I didn't know any better, we were brand new, right? But I've had a number of people come to us including one of my largest clients who spend well over a million dollars with us and continued to spend money with us every month for the last six or seven years.

Shaun Buck: And the conversation started with, "Hey, I think it's really cool that you put those Bible verses in your newsletter." That was the start of the conversation, right? And this gentleman doesn't even know it, but he was very early customer, spent a lot of money with us, literally funded my entire company. We would probably not be here if I hadn't done that. And so, to your point, you've just gotta be who you are. If you're boring and lame and dull then maybe these emails aren't right for you because when they do show up there's gonna be an issue there, right?

Jon Buchan: Imagine if you hadn't put those quotes in how different your life would be. I always find that fascinating. How different it would be if you hadn't of just these slight changes and look at the result just because of that message resonated with that prospect and it changed your business.

Shaun Buck: It changed my business. So, you're doing, you're using this a lot in cold email marketing, cold contacts, cold reach out, right? So, and this is just curiosity question, you may not have an opinion on this yet, but what about GDPR? I mean that seems to be the hot topic right now.

Jon Buchan: Yeah. In the European Union I would say this charm offensive approach is not just for, it's not channel specific. So, it will work just as well with Facebook ads, chat bots, LinkedIn ads, Reddit ads, I'm testing all these things right now. Don't think that it's only, you can only do this through email or through the post. These are just delivery mechanisms. There are so many ways of reaching customers. It's really the principles of being yourself, being super honest, being disarming, being funny. And that can be done on any media type. Indeed, I actually think, and I'm doing these experiments now, that Facebook ads will be a better media type for this because of the targeting options you get. I actually think it would be better. I'm doing those test experiments at the moment.

Jon Buchan: I want effective templates for every single media type. Even things like Bing ads I want to great at because there's so many ways of reaching customers. And the right words in the right order will persuade them and you can use all these different platforms. I don't want to give any specific guidance on GDPR because I'm not a lawyer. But I actually think if you sent a charming one to one emails to someone you really wanted to work with I don't think you're gonna get into much trouble. But if, obviously we don't know what's going to happen with that law, you can just as easily send them an invitation message and then a follow up message and there you go, you're okay. So, hopefully that was a good answer to that.

Shaun Buck: It was a great answer, yeah. In fact, it was exactly what I was hoping you'd say which is like it doesn't ... Whatever media that you happen to be using media is media is media, right?

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Jon Buchan: Yeah, channels come and go but principles endure.

Shaun Buck: Yeah, absolutely. So yeah, it's killer stuff. So, let me ask you this. So, talk to me a little bit about your, you decide to go into the membership subscription business, right? So, tell us a little bit about that. But also why that? Why didn't you stay with the agency model? I mean obviously you've hit something pretty cool here. You could have ... So, I'm just curious what's your logic behind that? What'd you decide to do?

Jon Buchan: I just, I did this on a whim like setting the Facebook group up. And I helped people in that first month when I started it end of last march. I started helping people for free because I was posting my results. But I realized this is gonna get tiresome. But if other people post their results that is gonna inspire other people to take a chance on this admittedly weird approach to B2B sales. And when I started getting those results for people, and I only did this for a month because obviously there's only so much time I can help people for free one to one, those people started posting their results. And then, that created an engine where all these other people would try my methods and see these great results. And that gave me an amazing buzz because I got to see all of these responses and the feeling of helping people without having to take the clients on which is a win-win.

Jon Buchan: And then, I started launching products and I started selling eBooks, and whole courses, and realizing I just preferred this business model. One, because I get to help more people at scale. I don't have any deadlines other than my own. And I get to experiment a whole lot more. And I kept doing all these different launches for different types of courses different templates that people wanted. And I got good at that, because that's a whole new skill, that's direct response copy writing something I've never studied before. Learning how to create a sales page and all that kind of stuff. And then, I was like, "I'm getting tired launching stuff all the time. And doing these separate launches and bombarding my group with sales pitches all the time because it's my career now." And I thought, "Well, what would be better is a subscription model." I've got about 6000 dollars worth of stuff in there already. I want to create new stuff all the time. Let's try it. And I knew it would be tough to start with because it's harder to get subscribers than people to buy one off stuff. Even though they can quit anytime they can see that this is a commitment and they're not gonna want to unsubscribe.

Jon Buchan: But it was the right thing to do. I can do far more now. I can do more bespoke templates for people if they need them. I just have so much more time. And obviously, loads of people join each month when I open for enrollment, obviously a few people leave, but it compounds. All I've got to do is keep doing this and I am gonna keep building up my following, my audience, and my paid audience will grow as well. That paid subscription will grow. And I just realized the business model is better and I have more free time. And if anyone is ever unhappy for any reason I will just refund them and then it ends there. And usually they'll come back and buy other stuff it just wasn't right for them ten. And I just feel that it's less stressful.

Jon Buchan: Longterm it's gonna be more profitable. All I've got to do is keep increasing membership and my costs are not high. And just in every single way I am enjoying business and life more because of this model. Firstly, obviously selling information products, but even

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better than that, the subscription model. I'm actually loving it. So, I can't think of any reason why I would stop at this point. It just ... Everything seems to have come together perfectly.

Shaun Buck: No, that's great. Yeah, the perpetual launch model is, I've done it before, it's brutal.

Jon Buchan: Yeah, it gets you after a while. You're like, "Oh my God, I can't." Yeah, so I thought I've got, I love this, but even this is getting annoying. So I thought, "What if I just had one thing to sell? And I've got one variable to focus on?" And that's been really good too. Focus on one variable. That's been really really beneficial.

Shaun Buck: Yeah totally. And we're watching, you're watching a lot of people go to this model too. So, this isn't Ben Settle, Frank Kern, you're watching a lot of people who have gone from selling product, after product, after product to this model. So yeah ...

Jon Buchan: I keep training a separate community as well as the paid subscribers. Especially, because I've got the paid Facebook group, you're creating something new there as well. There's a free Facebook in my email list but then there's the paid community. So, you're creating a community that maybe could exist because you could easily create a community just around the products you've built. But there's something about a subscription. Everyone's in this community and we're all subscribers, there's something in that, that I can't quite put my finger on, but there's something there that is important.

Shaun Buck: So, no, I agree. Let me ask you this. Let me ask you about cold B2B, that's kind of obviously where you put your teeth and you do a lot of work in. So, what are you seeing effectiveness wise right now in that? Because there's a lot of people who, I've been seeing more and more about, "Hey I don't know if this ... this doesn't work anymore." Right? Which rarely is that the case. But I've definitely read a few articles about, "stop doing this" type of a deal.

Jon Buchan: I think if your approach is entertaining, funny, honest, cold pitching is still incredibly effective. I think people, some people especially some of the bigger brands and the more senior people that I met with, they kind of liked the go getter spirit that came in such a cheeky cold pitch. That was a reason why they wanted to meet me was, "I like the moxie or the chutzpah on this guy." And they found some new talent. There is a some psychological thing going on where people like to help people that want something. There's a storytelling aspect there where, "This really this guy really wants it and he's had the guts to send me this completely ridiculous letter or email." There's something in people that, it's almost like when people find some funny content and they want to share it, it's a similar thing with new talent. It's like, "Yeah, I'm gonna help this guy. There's something there."

Jon Buchan: And so, cold pitching can work really effective. But if you're not someone that likes cold pitching you just ... There is part of it where you are interrupting someone's day you can't get around that. There is some people that are annoyed no matter how funny and brilliant your approach is, you're still a stranger in their inbox. I would suggest LinkedIn and just building network. Because you can add with sales nav, LinkedIn sales navigator

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essentially, especially, because you've got all the additional search queries fields. You can just add your ideal prospects. And then, just write good content that is gonna be relevant to them and if you can make it funny all the better. You're gonna get seen by your exact audience because you're the one adding, building your LinkedIn profile up.

Jon Buchan: So, if you don't like cold pitching LinkedIn is a great network for adding your exact ideal prospects and then just writing content that's gonna get in front of them. And obviously with LinkedIn the more people that like and comment on your posts it gets seen by people you're not even connected to. So, it's a really great platform and I need to up my game with it because it's something I'd like to improve on. But that's something I'm working on that the moment. So, cold pitching and LinkedIn are two really successful methods and continue to be.

Shaun Buck: Super interesting. So, let me ask you this. What are you seeing that is, just what do you feel, is there something out there that you feel is just crushing it? So LinkedIn, maybe it's just the LinkedIn that we just talked about, what do you think is crushing it?

Jon Buchan: Well, what I would say on LinkedIn is there's one particular search field that's really important. So, I've always said, or I've said in the last few years, that the right words in the right order to the right people can get you almost anywhere in life. But there's one crucial variable missing from that which is the right time. And what you can do with LinkedIn sales navigator is you can search and then segment that search by people that have only been in those roles less than 90 days. So, they've either been promoted or they've move companies. That is the perfect time to catch someone with a cold pitch because they're ... Just had a career change and they're likely to wanna hear new ideas, new suppliers, put a stamp on their new job.

Jon Buchan: So, that is something that works really well is you can catch people just at the right time. And if you put the job title in, founder and then less than 90 days, essentially you've got a list of startups there. Some of those may not have any money and some might have investment but it's a great way of finding start ups in your area or in a sector that you like. I've found that method to be really successful is with LinkedIn sales navigator. I pay that subscription fee just for that one search filter. It's just so powerful.

Shaun Buck: Yeah, that's amazing, that's great tip. What are you seeing out there that's maybe you feel is over-hyped? Maybe it's not a ... kind of a technique or tactic or what do you feel is maybe a little bit over-hyped out there right now?

Jon Buchan: Let me have a think. I think any ... I don't like to discredit anyone's methods. But I think generally high ... I think the reason my way of writing has worked, not only in cold pitching but for building this group up, is I've tried to stay away from using any hype-y tactics and going over the top with my marketing. If anything, my marketing is understated and self effacing, and that's so different to what people are normally getting that it's been effective. So, I just think any kind of ... But I'm probably wrong on that, because I just learned from someone the other day that Facebook ads with pictures of lambos et cetera do incredibly well. So, it's annoying because that method is very effective but I think a good cantor to that is avoiding using those tactics you will stand out because of that. So, I don't know if that's a specific tactic or I don't like to



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discredit anyone else. But I would say that in particular is something that people are more and more aware of. And you can get an advantage by doing the complete opposite of that which is being understated and self effacing et cetera.

Shaun Buck: Awesome, great. So, Jon, tell me if someone wants to go and just find out more where are the one or two places they should connect with you at to just learn more? Because I mean if they're here they're here at the end of this. I know I took notes. So, I'm sure that people took notes and were like, "Wow, that was a great idea. I got to go look that up." The email was awesome. So, how can they connect with you?

Jon Buchan: Sure. Well, there's a few different ways. So one, my Facebook group, Charm Offensive. Look for the group there's probably, there's a bit over 8000 people in there. My website, [charm-offensive.co.uk](http://charm-offensive.co.uk). And if you're not into the Facebook group, or for some reason you don't want to go to my website, LinkedIn. If you search for Jon Buchan you'll see me with a profile picture where I'm rescuing the baby and a basket of kittens from a burning building. So, you can add me on LinkedIn as well. Those are probably the best ways.

Shaun Buck: Awesome, perfect. Well hey, thank you so much for taking time to chat today. I really appreciate it.

Jon Buchan: Thank you so much, man. I really appreciate it too. Have a great day.

Shaun Buck: Thanks. Alright guys, that's a wrap for this episode of Million Dollar Strategy, and we'll see you on the next podcast.