



Episode 15:

Addressing Buyer Doubt and Closing More Sales

[A transcript of this episode.](#)

Welcome to the Professional Website Investor Podcast, the show where we talk about what it takes to successfully buy, operate, scale, and sell a thriving Ecommerce business. When it comes to doing business online, we believe that buying an existing website is far superior to building one from scratch. So, if you're a career professional who's looking to become an Ecommerce store owner, listening to this show will give you the knowledge, tools, and community support you need to be successful.

I'm your host Ryan Cowden, and this week we're joined by Ian Bond from professionalwebsiteinvestors.com. In this episode of the Professional Website Investor Podcast, Ian and I discuss some of the best practices that will build trust with your clients and increase your chances of making more sales. There are many paths that lead to website investment and physical goods Ecommerce. People who jump into this field are more often than not looking to make a change or supplement other ventures they have.

Which is to say we all come to this work with skills and experience but that doesn't always include sales. Operating with a functional level of sales skills will make your job a whole lot easier. Presenting yourself well, understanding your buyer, and knowing how to close the deal are all essential parts of Ecommerce business. Fortunately for us, Ian Bond is a career salesman and is opening up his bag of tricks for us today. In this episode you'll hear what your priorities should be when making a sale. These will include building trust, educating your buyer, and reducing perceived risks.

Next, we'll discuss what to put on your website to communicate legitimacy and authority to your customers. Your most visited page will probably be the about us page. So start there. You can also display badges from organizations you belong to, video testimonials, shipping and returns policies and more. Then we'll focus on the content you need to address buyer doubt. Make sure you have great looking product pages, tell stories, and try to address buyer questions before they can ask them. And finally, we'll talk about how to engage directly with your buyers on the phone in order to close the deal.

Train your virtual assistance to handle questions and concerns but always be ready to jump in yourself and talk to your clients to ease any other concerns they might have. If you're looking for a way to build your sales knowledge and close more deals, this is surely one episode you won't want to miss. There's a lot of actionable advice in this episode, so grab something to write with because you're going to want to take notes.

As always, I'll be back on the other side to wrap up any loose ends. So without any further ado, here's my conversation with Ian Bond.

RYAN: All right Ian, welcome back to the program, how you been? It's good to see you again.

IAN: Ryan, I'm doing great, it's good to see you and I'm excited to talk about this. Today's topic has some personal perspective and meaning for you, doesn't it?

RYAN: Yeah, for sure. Yeah, I mean I'm not far along in my journey into freelance work and getting into online investing. So when I think I'm more in the creative side. I like working on the content and I like the tech diving in but when it comes to sales, I have zero background in sales. I don't know what's going through the buyers head and getting into that interaction with them, I just don't know what's going on or how I should be acting. So these are kind of really personal questions for me.

IAN: So it would be fair to say, I'm guessing, by the way I think you're far away in the majority of people out there. I happen to be a career sales guy, okay?

RYAN: Oh, okay.

IAN: I think far away you're in the majority. I think selling anything including selling yourself like you are is daunting. No one wants to feel sleazy and I actually think that with regards to physical with Ecommerce sites there's so many things that you can do that the site can do for you that you don't have to do. And so it's actually a really ... might be it's probably a lot easier than selling your own service, to be honest. So fire away.

RYAN: Okay, good. Yeah, so for me it's like I'm trying to get inside the buyer's head. I want to know what's going on in their mind. And from your experience in sales, what are their questions, what's popping up in their mind that might keep us from closing the deal?

IAN: Okay, let's start at the beginning or the presumption okay which is this episode of the podcast is gonna presume that you own a website or if you're listening that you plan to and you want to maximize sales.

RYAN: Right.

IAN: And let me just add and I think this is crucial, you may have a trepidation for sales but for sure you probably want to minimize personal phone time as much as possible. The idea of working, of owning a website is going to be in your picking up the phone all hours of the day or night, okay?

RYAN: Uh-huh (affirmative).

IAN: And by the way, I think one of the biggest pit falls that website investors fall prey to is that they underestimate the requirement to actually get on the phone. And so when you're looking at niches and I think sellers are pretty smart, they underplay how many times they actually close things on the phone. So I want to tackle this head on. Let me just tell you that our strategy is now very much that we are gonna tackle more technically sophisticated niches where buyers need lots of information to go, "This is a very big deal for us and we're raising our game here." This is something that's really timely right now. We're tackling this right now. Just also to set the stage ... remember that in high ticket, drop shipping, our demographic is covering

upper middle class wires, these are folks who will pull out a credit card and spend a thousand dollars if we could hook them.

They're not allergic to doing that. They are people that are knowledgeable shoppers and they're people that are going to be fairly demanding. Sometimes outrageously so on the one hand. So, you want to bring your A game.

RYAN: Okay.

IAN: And so to ... I'm gonna give you a few suggestions on how perspective buyers and new buyers, investors should think about this. And the way we approach it is essentially what we're trying to do is on our website is to build trust, to educate people, and also to kind of reduce the perceived risk of a transaction. So you think of a triangle, those would be the points on the triangle. So here's the kind of the first thing, and this isn't gonna require you to get on the phone with anybody, okay. This should be right up your alley.

RYAN: Okay, great.

IAN: This is really just the site basics. Okay?

RYAN: Okay.

IAN: We said before that most people are intuitive online shoppers. You and I can look at websites and probably 90% of them we agree ugly or good or somewhere in between. We probably get a sense for it and so that's one of the great opportunities. But let's just talk about some of the site basics where you can do the three things that I said which is build trust, educate buyers, and reduce perceived risk. Kind of the first place and one of the places a lot of people go to on a website is the about us page. If your story is that as a girl you grew up on a farm around horses and you competed in shows, and now you're in the equestrian niche helping other people that have the same passion that you do for horses, access world-class equipment, you're got a great story.

You're somebody that I already trust. I can't spell equestrian. But your about us page is someplace that can be compelling and help you a lot and

everyone knows it's the kind of one of the most visited places on any blog or website or any place, okay. Also ... by the way, the same is true for the why buy from us page, which a lot of people are using. And by the way, most of the newer versions of these are going to video and I think people can pretty much tell when you're using an actor. It may take a little bit of courage to get in front of a camera, get over yourself. Everybody ... I could certainly use to lose a few years and a few pounds and I say too many ummms and ahhhhs and just do it. Just get it done.

About us or buy from us and think video because that's the direction it's going. You can review a lot of trust and tell your story there in your own way. Now let's go to some other things on the site that are just ... what I consider blocking and tackling trust badges, better business bureau, industry badges, like the National Kitchen and Bath Association, (NBKA). We sell on a platform called Houzz. I mention it many times, Green badge with a weird looking H. Funny enough, people trust Houzz, they should, it's kind of rocked the whole household world because it combines designers, decorators, suppliers, like us and they provide a lot of comfort that people aren't necessarily savvy at buying on websites and we find the people who come to us directly even though we have the Houzz badge on there-

Find the people who come to us directly, even though we have the House badge on there, that it kind of imbues that we've been ... at least House thinks we're good people, so that's a good one.

Now, for social proof, you'll see more and more onsite testimonials. If you're going to a site that doesn't have two or three kind of head shots with a testimonial from Arizona, or in Indiana, or something like that, talking about their experience, harping on the free shipping, or the speedy delivery, or the great customer service, the awesome value, you're going to see more and more of that going forward, and you should have that.

A lot of people use other social proof, things like Facebook pages, Facebook likes, they engage people on Facebook. We do less of that because big ticket drop shipping doesn't have that big ... people, they'll go to Facebook to look for the things that we sell that are household things and are more boring things, but I do think Pinterest, for example, which is much more visual, is House like in that visual thing, and gets customers seeing it.

And by the way, something we're going to talk about later, which is re-targeting and re-marketing is something that you can do particularly through Facebook.

One of the big things on your site has to be your return policy, okay. So, you have to have a return policy. It should be spelled out. You should also have a shipping policy that spells out kind of what the shipping terms are so that people have a reasonable estimation of when they're going to receive something, and when you update your inventory, if you have to handicap when someone might receive something, that's a good thing. On our sites, we have "If bought today, you can expect to receive during this window." That's something that helps people ... a lot of the stuff that we sell is for home remodeling, and people have contractors, and they have deadlines and all that stuff, so that's helpful in a certain price range for a certain type of buyer. The niches that we're moving into, which are more custom niches, higher priced niches, that's very much a negotiated conversation, and I think people expect that, too. But if you have a contractor or a designer waiting for something to be delivered, you're under the gun, and you could be very inconvenienced if something doesn't come quickly.

One thing that might be counterintuitive based on what I said earlier is you must have a phone number on your site. Yeah. Now, you may not want to talk to people, but you must have a phone number. We use Grasshopper. People call, they get a wonderful recording, and we ask them to leave a message and their email address, and we get a transcription within moments of when they leave it, and if we're free, I call them back right away. We call them back right away. If they've left their email, we'll email them as quickly as we can research their question, and if we can keep the conversation on email, we will. However, we will always do something that I'll talk about later, which is we have a big sale on the line, we'll get some personal intervention, but I'll talk about that in a minute.

So, the first thing, site basics, that's about 10 things that I mentioned that are site basics, that Ryan, you don't have to talk to anybody, right?

RYAN: Right. Right. Why do you-

IAN: It shouldn't be too intimidating to get those things right.

RYAN: Right, right. Why do you like to keep conversations on email as opposed to phone?

IAN: For a couple reasons. First of all, people don't answer their phones. I mean, I don't answer my phone. Yeah, so if you're calling somebody and they see a weird number, they don't answer it. It's just hard to get people on their phone. We've experimented with Facebook Messenger. Email's still for most people, seems to work really well. It lends itself well to fairly detailed answers, too, and so if someone's calling about something, we can jot off a really quick email, hopefully they can get it fairly quickly. They certainly can find it, but it's just hard lots of times connecting with people by the phone. Then you get into this thing where you play phone tag, and if we're not picking up the phone, it can frustrate the person that's calling, so we do try to convert people to email if at all possible.

RYAN: Okay.

IAN: That's a great question. It's a great question.

RYAN: That makes sense, because you're probably working with people from different time zones across the world if you're doing e-commerce, so it's going to be hard to get on the same time.

IAN: Yeah.

RYAN: Yeah.

IAN: People are busy, and so it just is what it is, and if there is a need, we'll certainly make the phone call, and I'll talk about that in a second, but particularly for preliminary stuff, we try to train people to use email. First of all, a lot of times if there's a technical question, we're going to have to call back later, so if we have it on email ... I don't really want to disrupt our people in the flow of what they're doing for a out of left field question.

RYAN: Oh, okay. Okay.

IAN: Yeah.

RYAN: Do you want to take in-

IAN: So-

RYAN: Yeah.

IAN: Let me tell you the second thing that I think you can do without being intimidated being a creative, and this is going to be right down your alley, and it's called content. Okay? On our sites, we strive to have the best content available. I'm going to break this down for you in a second, but this will effectively position us as authorities in our niche, people that you can trust, people that you can go to to get judgment and information. We're not Sears, we're not Walmart, and we're not Home Depot. Probably none of our demographics shops at Sears. I don't think Sears is around anymore. Walmart, not so much. Home Depot, though, in the household space still has people.

So what do I mean by content? Whether it's our product pages, or the pages that we call collection pages, or the pages for the brands that we represent, or the things in our Learning Center, or our blog, we want to be the best in the internet on all of those things, so let's just talk about that for a second. On a product page, what is best in the internet mean? Well, it means an incredibly well organized site that has as many of the things that any customer would want when they go to the site. It's going to have manuals, it's going to have descriptions, it's going to have high resolution product pictures, it's going to have high resolution, what we call, lifestyle pictures, which is the product actually in use some place. All of these things, and of course, we're going to have call to actions. If there are variants, different colors, different sizes, although we tend to, each product tends, in our world, tends to be identified by one size. Although, if there's different sizes and they're exactly the same product, we can create that kind of a product page.

So whether it's a product page, or it's a collection page, there's a story that we want to tell people about the brand, there's a story we want to tell people about the collection. There's a story we want to tell people about the item that they're looking at, the heritage of it, the functionality of it, the benefits

they get if they buy it. Also, we want to address any of the reasonable questions they might have. So we want things dimensioned out there.

Last year alone, we commissioned 500-ish product videos, and this is product videos or collection videos, which were a minute a half to two minutes long. Mostly we narrated over slides, since we don't have the products. We narrated over slides. Works great. People shop on phones. They can watch a product video on a phone just like they watch YouTube on a phone. People consume things in different ways, and video is one of the ways.

Obviously, we have as much text as you can imagine. As a matter of fact, we look at the competition, and if the competition, and we know what those best-sellers are from any supplier, and if the competition is at 300 words on best-seller A, we're going to be at 500 words, and we're going to have a better description, and we're going to have more brochures, and as many pictures as we can get our hands on. We're going to put our trust badges up there, and we're going to put our video up there, if we have a video. We're going to try to have kind of best in class on the internet.

RYAN: Okay.

IAN: Actually, I was just looking at one of our products that we just updated today. We've made it into the number two ranking on the internet, and I'm sure we're going to make it to the number one ranking on the internet. Right before the podcast, I saw that we just sold one, so-

RYAN: Oh, wow. No, that's great news. Congratulations.

IAN: So we go lucky. So, for items one and two, site basics and content, you should not worry at all about your phobia of sales, but I got a little bit of bad news coming, because on number three, my third suggestion to address buyer doubt and to close more sales is that we have to have reactive engagement. So, now someone has come to the site, and they may have just come, or they-

... they may have just come or they may have actually abandoned a cart. And so if they've abandoned a cart, we have a abandoned cart sequence

that everyone gets where we do several things. And there's a science behind this, or at least a theory behind this. And the theory is to engage people. It's to educate them. It's to build trust. And our last resort, to be honest, we'll offer a discount. Okay?

RYAN: Yeah.

IAN: I hate discounts. Don't want to give discounts out, but if I've got to do a discount I'm not going to do it on the front page of the website. That's really cheesy.

RYAN: Yeah.

IAN: I'm going to do it on the last, the very last deal, email in our abandoned cart sequence.

RYAN: Okay.

IAN: I mentioned this earlier, but if you come to the site and we can re-market it or re-target to you through Google or Facebook, this is another form of reactive engagement. There's studies that say that people need to see a product seven or eight times before they buy it. I will tell you one of the things I'm proudest of is I've seen over the last couple of years the branded search when I look at our Googled analytics, our branded search, which is that they've typed in some variant of the name of our, of one of our websites. And they come and purchase something from us. That means that some of that remarketing is working in some way, shape or form.

RYAN: Okay.

IAN: We're not sure that Google can, you know, track this stuff perfectly. If a wife sends an idea to his husband on his phone and then he types it in, I don't know how Google captures all this stuff, but if it shows up that somebody in the branded search column for some variant of the name of our site, we feel good about that.

The final strategy in my reactive engagement pillar is we do have VAs reach out to customers to see if there's any way they can help. Our VAs are very

well schooled in our products. If, they will try to answer the easy questions and we then will followup if we get any kind of an open door, but maybe the VA couldn't close it, we will followup with a sales manager call.

RYAN: Okay.

IAN: And if at all possible, and as I mentioned earlier, we're going into more information, intensive niches, things maybe that have a bigger B2B component, things that are certainly much higher dollar ticket. So things that are \$5000 and up. And we're working actively on strategies to employ that, you know find a sales manager or find a high ticket closer to solve that equation because we think there's a lot of value in that and that we can, we actually can dominate that.

RYAN: Okay.

IAN: Now if we could write tickets all day long at \$1500 to \$2000 and never pick up the phone, we'd be delighted. But the reality is that you always got to be constantly raising your game.

RYAN: Yeah.

IAN: And there are some niches that I think are attractive, where that's a component of it, but again, it's just something you could hire out. We're certainly gonna hire out at it. We're not going to be making the calls ourselves. So it's gonna come with an associated cost so you have to have the margins, but we've been fortunate and be able to, been able to land some unique distributors, particularly we have sold distribution capabilities for North America for some people. And so it's clearly worth our while to pursue this strategy.

RYAN: Okay.

IAN: How does that sound to you?

RYAN: Oh, that's good. So there's a lot I can do before I even get on the phone to close the sale.

IAN: Absolutely. That's the goal. You know my definition of passive income is if it has to be done and I don't have to do it and I make money, that's passive income. So I feel ya. I want to solve for exactly you want to solve, maybe not for the same reasons, but you know, the reality is that you want to put these systems and processes in place. I will tell you Ryan, that is just shocking to me being in the investment world in my day job, in a website world you can still find niches where the websites, you and I would both agree, that the websites are subpar. They don't have the best page on the Internet for the product or the collection or the brand. And there's a lot you can do. Will this be this way in five years from now? I don't know. I don't think so, but the opportunity is today, and it's real. It's certainly real.

RYAN: Okay.

IAN: And by the way, if you've ever shopped for something that's relatively expensive and been frustrated because you haven't been able to get the information either on the site or through email interacting with somebody, then you know exactly what I'm talking about. And I'll just end my diatribe with the number one place where people try to return products that they purchase from is Home Depot. So we know from a customer service standpoint that while they imbue trust to people purchase, which drives us crazy, that we get a lot of people that try to return things through us because we do a great job in customer service. And our people are niche specialists and can answer questions. But unfortunately we didn't make the sale and we're not going to let people return to us.

RYAN: Yeah, okay. Great. Well that was really helpful Ian. You put a lot of my fears to rest.

IAN: What did I miss? Did I miss anything?

RYAN: I don't think so. I mean I feel a lot better. I think-

IAN: Well you know, I don't know, and I'd be interested to hear when you're pitching yourself as a service, it would seem to me that you're gonna be interviewed. You're gonna have, you know, almost every sale is gonna be an interview.

RYAN: Right, yeah.

IAN: At least on the product side you can go a lot by what you do on your site. It very well may be it actually has more personal interaction when you're selling a service. I know that when I'm looking for somebody, like you and I are talking, that chemistry's really important.

RYAN: Right. Right. Right. You got to believe in what you're selling.

IAN: Yeah, I was just gonna say, maybe that's not, maybe that's not as threatening as getting on the phone every day with somebody and you know, look, we certainly have our fair share of people that are irate for some reason or difficult. Or at least difficult, but more and more that becomes a minimum and it's just, it's not that frequent, but it is what it is.

RYAN: Okay. Great. Well this was really helpful Ian. Thank you so much and I guess we'll see you next week.

IAN: Okay Ryan. Look forward to it. Enjoy merry England. I hope the weather cooperates with you there.

RYAN: As much as it can in England.

IAN: Exactly.

RYAN: Yeah, yeah.

IAN: Thanks much. Look forward to catching up with you later.

RYAN: For sure. Me too. All right folks, there you have it. That wraps up my conversation with Ian Bond of Professional Website Investors. He shared a ton of valuable insights and advice today on several ways to build trust with your buyers and how all these strategies increase the likelihood of closing the sale. We also shared some tools and resources, which will all be linked up to the show notes at ProfessionalWebsiteInvestors.com.

I hope you enjoyed our conversation. Please consider subscribing, sharing with a friend or leaving us a review in your favorite podcast directory. Until

next time, best of luck in all that you do and we'll look forward to seeing you on the next episode of the Professional Website Investor podcast.

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