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John McIntyre: Hey, it’s John McIntyre here, Autoresponder Guy, and it’s time for episode 71 of the McMethod Email Marketing Podcast where you get nitty – gritty techniques, tips and strategies to make more money in your business with email marketing, with sales funnels, with all those little conversion elements and marketing. Okay, now today I’ll be talking to a good friend of mine. His name is Brendan Tully.

He’s one of the most knowledgeable guys I know on e-commerce, so setting up an e-commerce store and more importantly, not so much for beginners, he really knows what he’s talking about, especially when it comes to helping people who already have an e-commerce store, helping them make more money with all these sort of little conversion hacks. He’s just built a product which I think is a fantastic product with just a basically a long list of simple steps that anyone can take who already has a store to increase their profitability and make more money and make more sales.

Today, we’re going to be talking about four classic email marketing mistakes. Now, the interesting thing here is that it’s a little bit controversial, not crazy controversial, but a little bit. The reason why is that I’ve done a couple of podcasts before with e-commerce email marketing experts, Ezra Firestone and X Wang. Now, they’ve mentioned things that Brendan sort of takes a different slant to. He goes off in a different direction. He has some interesting, compelling arguments for why he does so.

Now, he’s a very known honest, down to earth Aussie guy, so you’ve got two Aussie accents in this show, in this episode not just one. Okay, to get the show on the road for this episode of the Email Marketing Podcast go to themcmethod.com/71.

Now, here is this week’s McMaster’s Insight of the Week, the DAT formula. Now, what is the DAT formula? I love formulas. First of all, before I tell you what the formula is, the reason why I love formulas like this is that it makes writing copy and it makes writing emails, it makes creating marketing pieces for your business really easy and really straightforward, so I’m a big believer in breaking things down into a formula or a framework. Whatever you want to call it, okay. Now, the DAT formula is like this:

Number one, you describe the problem, all right? That’s step one. Step two is you agitate it, and step 3 is present your solution. Now, this, I introduced this DAT formula in one of the products inside McMasters in pages that convert because this is the simplest easiest way to write a great sales pitch for any sort of products your selling even if you’re trying to get someone to sign up to your list. Anytime you want someone to take an action, the DAT formula is fantastic for it.

Now, it’s a little bit finicky. When you describe the problem such as “Are you sick of being fat?” Then you agitate it, and then you start talking about, well, “Here’s why it sucks to be fat.” You’re trying to get them feel the pain of what it is like to be fat. Before you present your solution, instead of going like “Well, are you sick of being fat?” and then agitate it. “Well, here’s why it sucks being fat. You don’t have energy. You can’t run around with your kids.” Instead of them going, “Well, that’s where my product comes in.”

Before you present your solution, you really need to present your solution in a general context, so you describe the problem: “Are you sick of being fat?” This is a very colloquial, casual example. “Are you being fat?” You agitate it by saying, “Well, now you don’t have energy. You can’t run around with your kids. You’re going to die early,” all this sort of stuff. You see what I’m doing? I’m just making them feel the pain of their problem. That’s all the agitation stage is about, okay?

Then before I present my solution though, I’m going to say, “What if there was an easy, simple way to lose weight and get fit?” Alright, and the problem there’s tons of products out there that don’t work. You’ve tried pills.

You’ve tried blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, so I sort of talk about the solution in a general way, before I actually present the actual solution, so I’m like: “What if there was a simple way to do things that didn’t involve dieting, that didn’t involve painful workouts and didn’t involve all of this stuff?” Then I go: “That’s where lose weight in 10 days -- lose 10 pounds in 10 days comes in, my product.” Lose 10 pounds in 10 days is my simple step by step program on how to lose weight blah, blah, blah.

The idea is you describe the problem, you agitate it, but before you present your specific solution, you need to describe the solution in sort of a general detail so that when you present your product so that it’s pre-framed as the ultimate solution. That’s a bit like saying you describe their problem, “Are they fat?”; you agitate it, “Here’s why it sucks to be fat …”; and then you might talk about “Well, there is a solution, but here’s the problem …”

You go back to the problem: “The problem is with most solutions they don’t work because of X, Y and Z, and because they don’t work …” You agitate it again, so you’re going problem, agitate, and then the solution is obviously to buy a product on weight loss, but then there’s a new problem: “Most products suck. The reason why that’s bad is that then you go and spend money. You waste money and time, and you don’t get what you want,” so we’ve gone problem, agitate, solution, and then we’ve gone back to problem, different problem this time, that most products suck. We’ve agitated it, and then we present your solution which is: “That’s where my product comes in.”

I think about it like that. I could probably come up with a 2X DAT formula, where you describe the problem, agitate, present a general solution, then describe the problem with the average solution then rinse and repeat the same formula, okay? That’s the problem I said that most people having with this formula, this problem, agitate, solution, is they go straight into their pitch, rather than talking about the solution in a general context of pre-framing, okay, so that’s this week McMasters Insight of the Week.

This insight came from McMasters, obviously. McMasters is my private training community. There is a forum. There’s monthly webinars, several products inside the community, including the McIntyre method which is a four-week training program on how to write an autoresponder, so if you want to learn more about that, go to themcmethod.com. There is a link in the top header. Learn more about McMasters and find out how to join.

I’ve got one review and then we’ll get into this interview. This review is from Mr. Sean Markey. Sean says, “Five stars. Love it. Hey man, super love the show. Getting into the thick of things with my business and really starting to be able to use a lot of things that you teach in the show. Going to be joining your membership site soon, I suspect. Rock on.”

Well, Sean, I can’t wait to see you inside McMasters and we can jump on these training webinars and we can talk about these insights inside. Yeah, it would actually be cool to have you in there, man. Anyway, if you want to leave a review for the show, you will put a huge smile on my face and make me crack up like this when I forget what to say.

Go to Itunes. Search for the McMethod Email Marketing Podcast and leave me your review. Tell me what you think. Good and bad, I’ll take it. Okay, now, let’s get into today’s interview with Mr. Brendan Tully and the four classic email, well, e-commerce email marketing mistakes.

It’s John McIntyre here, the Autoresponder Guy, and I’m here with Brendan Tully. Now, Brendan’s a consultant who I actually met way back in Sydney about three years ago before I’d moved to the Philippines, before I knew anything about copywriting business, or any of that and had all of those starry stars in my eyes about what sort of lifestyle you can get from it. I found Brendan on this forum and we … you lived in Sydney at the time, as well, so we met up. We had a beer and a lunch or something like that, and I was telling you about content site that made 400 bucks a month, and Brendan told me that it wasn’t a business and … we just had a conversation about that. It just totally blew my mind.

Anyway, today, I thought I’d bring him on, he’s an e-commerce guy or a marketing consultant, but he’s got an e-commerce product coming out, a training product, which …. He’s just done a lot of cool e-commerce stuff and I’ve been through some of the product. While I’m not an e-commerce guy, it’s really actionable. Some of these screen shots, there’s just a lot of time put into this, so we’ll talk about that, but first, we’re going to talk about the four classic email marketing mistakes when it comes to e-commerce store owners.

If you’ve heard the other podcast with, I think it was X Wang and Ezra Firestone, this is going to be a little bit more of a not so much controversial, but a bit of a different take, coming at it from a different angle which is … Brendan usually does this. I’ve seen him do this in forums where everyone’s coming out saying one thing, and then he goes, “Look guys, this isn’t how it works. This is how it works.” That’s what today’s going to be about. Anyway, we’ll get into that. Brendan, how are you doing?

Brendan Tully: Yes, good mate, good mate. You make me sound like a grumpy old man. Come on.

John McIntyre: Just flowing with it man. It’s like … with these intros, like I said, I don’t plan them out too much these days. It’s just see what comes to mind like get a bit of inspiration from the divine and see what comes out.

Brendan Tully: Nice, I have some contrary viewpoints that I think often they’re very valid.

John McIntyre: I think they are, too, but are we bracketing this one in the rant tag like the …

Brendan Tully: I don’t think it’s quite a rant, so yeah, I don’t think we need to put the rant tags around this one.

 John McIntyre: That’s a good one. All right, before we do that, I’ve kind of given you a sort of the JMac intro, how about you give a list sort of a background on who you are and what you do.

Brendan Tully: Yeah, sure, so as you said, I run Home Marketing Consultants, so I run a consultancy called The Search Engine shop. It’s been around for five years, five and a half years; started in 2008. Before that, I actually ran an IT company for about eight years. We had 20-25 staff, and as well as owned a fairly sizable online store that back in the day, we actually acquired it for free. Then the first year, we took it from doing a 100k revenue a year to a million, and then in the second year, took it from doing a million to 6 and ½ million. It’s a long story, but we were fairly young at the time like 24-25 and had no idea how to manage that much cash flow and that many people and a business of that size.

 There’s a big division between growing a business and business growth, and completely uncontrolled explosive growth where you’re so out of your depth that the business has just outgrown you by a long way, so ultimately we ran out of cash and both businesses failed as a result.

 Other than that, I started doing online marketing stuff. I started getting a lot of calls from people asking about e-commerce and SEO’s. This was back in 2007 and 2008, and that’s how the Search Engine Shop started. I was very lucky in 2009 that with some friends, we won a government contract to do workshops and trainings for small business owners, so we’ve actually been doing those workshops for contractors. They enrolled in various forms for the last few years. I basically built the business on the back of those workshops.

Over the last five years, I’ve worked with around through the workshops and one-on-one consulting and services with around 2,000 businesses and most of them, they’re probably broken down into three, [durasale 00:09:40] small business, bricks and mortar, retail kind of businesses, e-commerce businesses, and bigger corporate businesses and marketing departments.

That’s the primary business of the Search Engine Shop. I’m actually in the process of taking the e-commerce bit out and splitting it out into its own brand called the Pareto E-commerce, so as you mentioned, we have a new product that we’re kind of in beta testing called the Pareto E-commerce Blueprint. What that is is basically the same consulting process that I run through with e-commerce clients in a DIY format because today a lot of people, e-commerce business owners are tech-savvy and can do the work themselves. They just need a bit of guidance and need to know what to do.

John McIntyre: I went and took a look at it. I like the idea of just like a list of I don’t know how many tweaks it was when I checked it out, but just a long list of here’s call up your bank and ask for a, I think it was a cheaper rate on the processing and then it was like just do this and just do this and then just do this. It was kind of cool. It was just a list of actions that you could take. Someone could sign up and just go through them and I don’t know, aim to set up one of those things once a week or something, and by the end of the year, you’d have a much more profitable store than you did at the start.

Brendan Tully: Yeah, absolutely. Like a lot of it, there’s no rocket science, and a lot of its common sense. It’s kind of like those things that people just forget about or they ignore or it’s not on their radar, so I have four things to talk about today, classic email marketing mistakes that e-commerce business owners make.

I think a lot of these come from people reading a lot of blog posts online and just following the general wisdom that’s out there on the internet that’s not necessarily that hasn’t been, I guess, checked or logic-checked and they haven’t run it through because they’ve read it online and they just assume that’s what they need to do. They haven’t really run it through their own filter and thought about it in detail and logically approached it.

I guess they’re in a way contrary in viewpoints or again these are like kind of obvious things like they’re just like, “Ah, yeah, that makes sense. Let’s try it and see what happens,” and you can get a completely different result. In a sense, they’re kind of 80/20. You do them. They’re small little tweaks, but they can have a massive impact.

John McIntyre: Cool, all right, so four classic contrarian. We’ll make sure to put that contrarian in our marketing mistakes. This is stuff like I haven’t done e-commerce before, so I have spoken to Ezra and this guy X and like it makes sense to me that you should do an abandoned cart email that you should do some auto follow up. What you’re talking about here and what we’re getting into is sort of doing it with a little more finesse instead of just firing away emails at these places with these events actually put some strategy into it.

Brendan Tully: Yeah, exactly, I think a lot of it comes as well … I’ve got a lot of real world sales experience like selling in person, selling big IT projects and things like that so for me a lot of these things are common sense, but a lot of people who run online stores and doing email marketing haven’t necessarily sold in person, so they wouldn’t necessarily think about these when they’re setting them up. The first one is abandoned cart emails and absolutely, you’ve done podcasts on it before – you need to have an abandoned cart email system placed. It just makes sense. It’s easy.

John McIntyre: What’s an abandoned cart email system?

Brendan Tully: Abandoned cart basically is anytime someone comes to the website puts together a shopping cart, gets some way through the checkout process and leaves the website. The abandoned cart email system or cart abandonment system will detect that and send them a series of emails based on where they are in the checkout process, so basically asking them why they didn’t checkout their order.

John McIntyre: Okay, and so what we’ve done, from what I remember in the previous podcasts, usual thing is you just send them out three emails, five emails. One goes out an hour after. One goes out a day after, and you could offer them a discount. You could give them a testimonial. You could remind them about the guarantee, and they’re all sort of standard things that you might do, but you’re talking about something that’s a little bit different. That’s the mistake, right, is doing just that?

Brendan Tully: Yeah, so what I think is really trying a close-harder approach, so pushing them into the sale rather than trying to find out why they didn’t purchase in the first place. Basically, people have their priorities wrong, so with cart abandonment emails, the typical or the standard approach is I want to get the conversion. It’s like trying to make the sale like really, “Here’s a discount. Here, try this. Check this out. Here’s a bigger discount.”

If you think about it, if you were in a physical retail store, you walked in there, you poked around, picked out some products, had a look around, decided not to buy and walked out. If the sales guy came out and ran down the street chasing after you screaming that he’d give you a 10% discount, and you said no and he was like, “20% discount, 50% discount.” That’s not a very sophisticated … it might work you know if the discount’s big enough, but that’s not a very sophisticated way of selling, and it cheapens your brand and it’s not very effective. Instead, the priority should be to uncover why they didn’t check out, so find out the reason why they didn’t complete the purchase.

Now, obviously, there’s going to be some people who got interrupted that had internet connection problem. They got distracted. They walked away from the PC. There’s going to be a proportion of those, so typically on the first email any sort of reminder is going to pick up those people, but asking them what was wrong if we did something wrong, why you didn’t check out, and then using those insights, asking them for a reply.

You’ve talked about it – the basic email structure should always be sent from a real person’s email address so they can reply to and asking them why they didn’t check out and using those insights to improve the website, make tweaks and changes, change the pricing structure or whatever it is. Long term will work a lot better than just simply throwing discounts and focusing on trying to make the conversion or the sale.

John McIntyre: Okay, so we’re thinking much a long term perspective where you sort of bringing that sort of iterative process when every time someone gets a reply, you might create a Google doc or a spreadsheet with all of the different reasons why people aren’t checking out. Then once a month you go in there and you kind of go, “All right, everyone’s saying that they didn’t know the kind of guarantee, so maybe we can make our guarantee more visible in the header of the page or something like that or that we have free shipping.” That sort of thing, using the information that will reply to these emails to sort of drive the development and the optimization of the website.

Brendan Tully: Absolutely, and you’ll notice, over time, you’ll see the trends, so it might be that your shipping cost is too high or all of a sudden there’s a cheaper competitor on the market and your prices are too high compared to those. Just throwing away the discounts and trying to close harder is a stupid way to approach it. If you approach it with some finesse and find out, uncover the objections basically and then answer those objections in updating the website content, changing the marketing strategy or whatever it is, long term it’s a much better approach than simply just trying to make the sale.

John McIntyre: I like the story there, too, when you got like, “If you went into a store, and you didn’t buy something. You walked out and some guy is chasing you down the street yelling out discounts at you,” maybe it works but that kind of – that story sort of highlights just the stupidity like it’s a bit silly. It’s just silly. There’s much better ways to go about it.

Brendan Tully: Yeah, absolutely.

John McIntyre: All right then, well let’s do the classic contrarian email marketing mistake number two.

Brendan Tully: Okay, let’s go into the next one, using unsophisticated sales and marketing tactics. The classic one is just like what we’ve talked about, discounts, so throwing away discounts without any strategy around them. Discounts really should be the last option. You don’t want to cheapen the product or throw away margin when a better sales tactic will work or be more effective.

Discounts are really the last resort. You shouldn’t use them so often. You shouldn’t be throwing them away every month; doing a sale without a good reason. I would share and say whatever you do, make sure that the discounts are the last thing that you try in all your marketing. There are other things you can try upfront for example, a buyer’s guide or top ten tips for things people don’t know about this product. Something like that is going to be more sophisticated and probably work better than just throwing away the discounts.

Again, if you take the real walking into a retail store analogy, you walk in there, you look at products, sales guy comes up to you, the first thing he says is he has 10% off. It just doesn’t make sense, so you want to explain the products, help the customer make a buying decision rather than just saying, “Here’s a discount, quick buy.”

John McIntyre: This is going to – I mean you can give the discounts and get the sale, but you’re saying what’s going to lead to sort of I mean more of a long term profitability with the store or maybe even a short term profitability that’s going to take more time to massage the sale.

Brendan Tully: Yeah, absolutely, so stop trying to … there are some reasons to use discounts, right, so they can be used strategically to increase the size of orders for example, so you can have an opt in pop-up when people get to the site where there’s a $10 coupon if they spend more than $200 or something like that. That’s using discounts in a smarter way because you’re using that to increase the order value, but simply just throwing away money is a bad idea.

 It’s important to think about there are things customers need to know in order for them to make the purchase, so they need to know about shipping methods. They need to know about payment methods, returns and warranties, so those sort of things. A lot of people forget that they need to remove the friction from the sales process. Updating the website, copy and content to help the customer uncover more of those things or find that information out more easily will often work much better than just simply throwing away the discount.

 Classic one is we see on e-commerce sites product page copy that really has a line of text about the product and that’s it. It has nothing about shipping, returns, warranty or payment information, so simply just being better about the sales copy and the sales message will work a lot better than just throwing out discounts out there.

John McIntyre: Okay, so is this the sort of thing you’d have in like the product description or could you have like in the header, you might have free shipping on all orders over a $100 or you could make it sort of like a site-wide explanation or would you have product specific sales copy?

Brendan Tully: It depends. There’s definitely … The header is something that a lot of e-commerce stores underutilize. It’s a big chunky bit of space that displays on every page, so if there is something like free shipping or there’s some advantage you have over competitors, absolutely that should be in the header because that appears on every page and a lot of people for an e-commerce store in particular, most customers are not coming in through the home page. They don’t read all of the sales copy on the home page, so having something in the header is more likely to make them stick around.

 I like to think, the way I explain to my clients is that the product copy, the copy on the product pages should really act as a sales letter in itself. The customer should be able to get the majority of the information they need to make the purchase without having to leave that page, so that means really that product description should have something about shipping and something about payment information and warranty and maybe some videos or a link to a buyers guide or some extra information. If the customer has the click around to find out about shipping information, it’s adding more friction to the sales process, and it’s probably going to hurt your conversion rate.

John McIntyre: Okay, so what you could do is you could have a widget on the side, in the sidebar or something like that that explains sort of in more detail because you’re not going to be able to fit that in the header, that sort of explains how it like [buy process 00:20:02] how it works or something that’s like, “Well, first you make an order and second, this happens and third, this happens,” really just so they know exactly what’s going to happen when they make an order and the shipping, the returns and all of that sort of stuff and then you have product specific copy just explaining the product itself in the description which is usually the more words you’ve got, the more selling you can really do, as long as it’s interesting.

That’s the usually the idea, so kind of take some time to actually sort of articulate what the product is and who it’s for and what it’s going to do or them.

Brendan Tully: Yeahp, absolutely. It depends on the site layout as well. Ultimately what you’re going to be able to do, so different site layouts are going to allow you to do different things, but yeah. It’s a classic mistake, not enough sales copy on product description pages. One good tool that we use that you often – because it’s hard when it’s your site, you’re so blind to these things and you’re not the customer, so you don’t see a lot of these things, you don’t feel a lot of these problems.

Two tools that we use to uncover a lot of this stuff, one is CrazyEgg Heat Map Analytics, so you can kind of see the visitor behavior as they’re poking around the site. Another good one is ClickTale Analytics Suite and actually see videos of user behavior on the site. You can see them clicking around and scrolling up and down the page, moving through all different pages and it gives you a good feel for what they’re looking for. You see them land on a product page then click out to the shipping then click the contact us page and bounce around the site, so you get a much better feel for what the customer’s looking for and what they’re doing.

John McIntyre: Okay, okay. Well, cool, what’s mistake number three?

Brendan Tully: Okay, number three is – we kind of talked about this already, but caring more about the conversion than the customer, so a classic one, auto-follow-up emails, post-purchase emails, and I know you’ve had podcasts about this before with other guests talking about there’s a whole bunch of strategies around you could have automated sequences and order respondents about following them up and if they have consumables, emailing them after three months or whatever, following up to see if they’re going to buy more consumables.

 One of the key things that people forget is if you care about the customers and make them feel cared for, that’s one of the best ways to improve your conversion rate. Classic way to make the customer feel cared or a really easy way to do that is have the order follow-up emails and typically that’s a review request email that goes out, so 10 - 20 days after people order, the e-commerce system will send them an email automatically saying, “Can you put a review on our page? How’d the product go?” Adding a couple of lines in there to just ask the customer if they received the order. What do they think about the product? Is it doing what it needs to do?

 Just asking them a few questions and caring and asking them to reply with their feedback will work a lot better than just saying, “Hey, could you put a review for the product?”

John McIntyre: Okay, so sort of treating them like a person instead of just a sale?

Brendan Tully: Mhmm. You’ve got to think if you think about the customer if they’re your best friend, if your best friend orders from your site, 10 days after the order, you’re going to shoot them an email and say, “Hey! How’d you go? What do you think about the product?” If you treat the customer like they’re your best friend, then the whole email marketing system is going to work much better for you and the conversions will just be easy. You won’t be pushing uphill all the time.

John McIntyre: Okay, so I guess it would be worth having someone on the support staff to reply and respond to those emails that come in from customers.

Brendan Tully: Yeah, absolutely, it really depends on the size of the store, so if you’re a small store, you can have the emails coming out from your name. If you were running a site, you could have the emails actually the automated emails come out with john@mcmethod.com or whatever, and they reply and they go directly to you, but if you have a bigger site where you have customer service people you can make someone dedicated in the customer service team to stick their name on the outbound emails and they handle the replies.

John McIntyre: Okay, okay. I like this. Would you have like an email going out first that says, “Hey, I just wanted to know how the product was?” and then after that you’d send another email about the review?

Brendan Tully: I usually do it in one because a lot of the time when dealing with a small business clients that the e-commerce system will only support on email, so usually, we’ll put up – you could do both, but usually we’ll just lump it in together with the same emails so we start of, “Hey, it’s John from McMethod or whatever. We just wanted to see how the order went. Did it actually arrive?” We set the order follow-up email usually to go out 18 to 20 days after the sale because by that stage, they should actually have the order.

The product should have arrived, so ask them whether it’s actually arrived, what they think about it, if they have any feedback, so just ask them to reply, so we ask them, “Do you have any feedback or ways we can improve the website or anything you didn’t like about the website?” Then we have the blurb, the kind of standard copy with has the link to the product page where they can submit a review on it. Ask them for a favor, “Can you do me a favor? If you have three minutes, just put a review for the product and let us know what you thought of or think about the product itself.”

John McIntyre: Okay. What about things like, so within that sequence you’ve got the review, sort of like the asking treating them like a person asking them for a review, can you do things like say, ten days in you send them an email with sort of like “Here’s how to get the most from your new kitchen knives” or something like that?

Brendan Tully: Yeah, absolutely, I mean it depends on what the product is and it’s definitely product and market specific, but yeah, again just caring and treating them like your best friend. If they’re your best friend, if your best friend ordered, what would you send them after the sale? If you think about it through that sort of lens, you’ll write much better emails and the whole order respondent post-purchase sequence will work much better.

John McIntyre: Okay, does that mean, so like when I’m emailing my friend sometimes, I kind of write pretty casual. Can you get away with that sort of thing with follow-up emails?

Brendan Tully: Yeah, I think so. I think you’ve got to walk the fine line. It depends how casual. It needs to be casual sounding, and one hack to do that instead of opening a blank word document or opening the email tool and trying to write emails from there is actually just open your Mac mail or your Gmail and write the email in there because your mind will frame it differently and it will sound more natural and more casual rather than a bit more forced and … You don’t want it to come off like being kind of cheesy or even sleazy, so …

John McIntyre: Yeah, okay, well, what if I were, I don’t know, friends with Rob Hanley? He’s got this way of doing – this sort of thing where you go on Facebook, he’s got a few fake accounts with pictures and sort of like an avatar that he’s drawn up so they each have a personality, and then he pretends he’s writing to them and writes them a message and copies and pastes that message to his email to send it out to his list.

Brendan Tully: Yeah, I mean anything you can do kind of hack it, and get it out of your own way like it’s really hard to stare at a blank page where you’re in your own email client or in Facebook half the time, well, half the day, so it’s really comfortable to start writing in there. You just got to make it sound more natural and flowy rather than forced and kind of manufactured.

John McIntyre: Okay, well, let’s move on to the last one, number four.

Brendan Tully: The last one: we’re just not paying enough attention to email in general. One really common mistake or one really probably more of an oversight than a mistake is e-commerce business owners set up a site and business is running great, been running for a few years and the owner themselves or anyone in the business hasn’t been through the checkout themselves in years, so they don’t actually know, they’re not familiar with what the extent of the checkout, how it’s working, what’s wrong, what the emails look like.

By not paying attention to emails and caring about even just those automated transactional emails, often they’ll be saying the wrong things and it won’t look good or they’re missing out on a huge opportunity to do better emails and send better emails to the customer because I know in the X Wang podcast, he talked about leveraging those transactional emails and they’re a huge opportunity because people read them. Also not just from a conversion perspective, but from a customer service perspective, answering common email uncommon questions in those emails can also significantly reduce the customer service overhead as well.

I’ll say that email is probably in almost every business is probably the cheapest marketing tool they have and one of the easiest ones. There’s a very low barrier to entry and once you are doing email, it’s very easy to tweak it and do it better. I’ll tell you it’s just generally not paying attention and not caring about it enough.

Those e-commerce businesses that are giving so much time and attention to SEO and Ad words and they’ve got all of these consultants and management going on for those marketing channels and there’s nobody really caring about the email marketing, so I would say giving it more attention, some dedication is really going to pay off and you’ll see it - how it impacts the conversion rate if you consistently give it some attention.

John McIntyre: I liked it, too, how - I mean the cool thing about email is that it’s such a automated sort of system, so that once you’ve got this setup, you might want to check it once a month or once every three months going go through that check out process to see what’s actually going can, but once it’s all done, you can kind of just … then you go back to SEO and page traffic and you just kind of pour leads into that funnel email sort of part of that conversion process.

Brendan Tully: Yeah, absolutely. It’s the ultimate way to clone yourself because you do something once and it because it’s systemized and automated, it happens every time without you thinking about it. That’s why it’s easy to forget about it, as well, like it’s easy to forget that it’s so powerful if you give it some time and attention or put some attention towards improving it over time.

John McIntyre: Hmmm, but with the transactional emails, so you’ve got the like order confirmation, the shipping confirmation emails, what sort of – like do you have like a sort of like a template or three different emails or five specific emails that you put in those? How do you do it?

Brendan Tully: I don’t have anything templated, apart from just giving them some attention and the big win there particularly the transactional emails is getting ahead of any customer service inquiries, so you want to tell the customer how they can find the tracking information about their shipment. You want to tell them what to expect next like in the selling process as a general rule you should always, the customer should always know what’s next, so you should be leading them and leading the way, so in those transactional emails you should be explaining them or telling them what to expect as the next step.

 You see, the default emails that come out of e-commerce systems are terrible. They’re badly formatted. They have a whole bunch of words in there that are not very marketing-friendly, I guess, so I’d say, again, with the transactional stuff, it’s bare the focus on the customer and caring about the customer as opposed to simply trying to make the transaction, and so if you can anticipate what they’re asking or take those common customer service questions and rework the transaction emails overtime, the customer will feel better and their general experience with you will be better so I think that’s where for me, that’s where I’ve seen the win on those transactional emails.

John McIntyre: Okay, and what about some sort of referral in there when they’ve bought say, I don’t know, a big steak knife or a set of steak knives to cut up steak and of course. Then you offer them some you like, “Well, would you like this big meat cleaver, as well?” Would that be the sort of thing that you could put in a transaction email? It doesn’t have to be the main topic, but it could be just down the bottom, so they read the email, they read the customer service stuff. Then in the bottom, it might say, “By the way, people who often buy steak knives, they also buy this meat cleaver.”

Brendan Tully: Yeah, I think if it adds value then it’s definitely worth trying and testing – I think you need to test it and see what offers work better, but if you think if there’s something that’s going to add value to them if they – maybe they need a sharpener for their knives or they need to know. Maybe you could just send them a link to a page with “How to Sharpen the Knives” and on there, your sharpening product or whatever, but if you’re going to if there’s something that will add value to them or the sale or the whole transaction process in general, you should absolutely be promoting it.

 You should be there to help the customer. Selling is not – people have a bad – selling typically has a bad rep. It’s really solving someone’s problems, so if you can solve their problem better by if there’s a complimentary product or service or there’s another company that you’re partnered with even, maybe getting affiliate or a [fill 00:31:27] permission then anything like that absolutely can go in transactional emails or just like a proposed purchase follow-up.

John McIntyre: Okay, cool. All right, well, we’re right on time. We’re running 30 minutes, now. Before we go though, let’s talk about Pareto E-commerce. What’s the deal?

Brendan Tully: What’s the deal? Well, the website’s paretoecommerce.com, so if anybody’s interested in checking it out, they can head over there and stick their email address in, and they’ll get a whole bunch of information. Like I said, it’s basically my consulting product broken down into DIY format, so once it’s on up the site, it will walk you through a bunch of modules and you’ll also get the tools that I use when I’m working with clients, so you get like a framework document, which is really just this spreadsheet with the list of their improvement items and some conditional formatting in there, as well, so you can actually track where you’re at with those improvement items.

Particularly if you’re a bigger store, it’s a good way to manage a delegate that goes out. Typically, there’s something like 120 improvement items in there, line items and typically, when we do consulting with clients, we’ll get three to five improvements done per month. It really is, there’s a lot of meaty stuff in there, and it’s probably realistically, if you’re hustling, you could probably get all the improvements done in 6 or 12 months, but if you’re a bigger site and a bigger business, then there’s probably a few years worth of improvement action items there.

It’s a bit different to your standard information product where it’s not just throwing information at you; it’s giving you the tools to actually go out and be able to do it yourself. The add-on tools and cloud tools that we use to do things like abandoned cart emails and post-purchase follow-up and all that sort of stuff.

John McIntyre: Okay. This isn’t like – there’s a lot of other products out there where they teach you about drop shipping and e-commerce as a sort of like a Biz-Opp, business opportunity, whereas this is more for someone who’s already got a store, who’s already making money and just wants to get better results with it, so they’re sort of like an experience entrepreneur, they’re already getting results.

Brendan Tully: Yeah, so it’s definitely, it will work better for established businesses and typically you need to be earning six figures a year revenue or more to get the most out of it. If you’re a small authority doing five figures a year, you will get some benefit, and the price is right now, the price is 197 Australian a quarter which works out every two bucks a day, so it’s not super expensive anyway, but …

John McIntyre: It’s less than a Starbucks coffee a day, right?

Brendan Tully: Yeah, exactly, but the bigger you are, these are kind of multiplier type improvements, so if you have a big site to begin with, making an improvement that improves sales by five percent. If you have a million dollar business that’s going to be a much bigger improvement than a business doing a hundred grand a year.

John McIntyre: Yeahp, yeahp, yeahp, absolutely, okay, so they sign up and they go through it, and they can sort of pick and choose which direction they want to go in?

Brendan Tully: Yeah, they get – so it’s broken down into sections. The first section is quick win, so whenever I work with a client you want to hit the quick wins first. Then some of these things are super simple like for example, the abandoned cart emails. Just by implementing something like that can be a massive win for conversion rate, so start off with quick wins which should within the first couple of weeks, the product should pay for itself and making you money

John McIntyre: Cool, and then after that, that goes into the main list of changes. This – I like the idea here where you kind of go in there and maybe you can do it yourself or do it to some contractor or an employee and you just pick like you said, three to five things, maybe ten things, depending how busy you are, just hand them out and then that’s sort of your work done for the month.

Brendan Tully: Yeah, and I’ve got templates like Swipe files where you can just – I have some examples in there where you can just simply cut and paste and change out the words to your business name and you’re away.

John McIntyre: Yeahp, and just to get back to the name, I don’t know if we’ve mentioned it yet, but this whole idea of the Pareto principle of – I’ve had Perry Marshall in here to talk about this whole 80/20 idea, so you’re talking about little changes that produce big results?

Brendan Tully: Yeahp, absolutely.

John McIntyre: Sweet, so that’s the paretoecommerce.com. I’ll have a link to that in the show notes at themcmethod.com, and if someone’s interested in your consulting or wants to learn more about that, where would they go for that?

Brendan Tully: Probably, head over to my consulting website thesearchengineshop.com, and shoot me an email through the Contact Us form.

John McIntyre: Cool, all right, so links to all that at the McMethod. Brendan, thanks for coming on the show.

Brendan Tully: Yeah, of course, man. Thanks for having me on.