

Project Rubidium Interview

Mike McMillan, with

Jason James

<http://www.jasonmjames.com>



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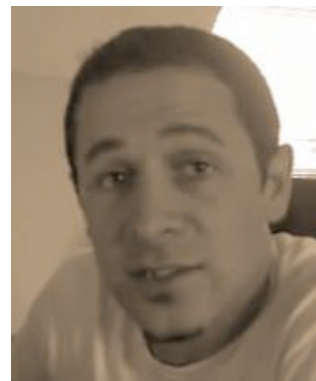
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JASON M. JAMES
www.jasonmjames.com

Jason James is an Internet marketer who has had four successful six-figure product launches. He runs his own giveaway events each year and has built a number of substantial lists that he markets to.

His blog, www.jasonmjames.com is filled information of great value to affiliate marketers. He started his business selling electronics equipment on eBay and has widened his activities to cover a large number of activities.

In this interview we will talk about list building; how to build a list, using opt-in forms, list building through product launches and giveaway events, and the use of pre-sell pages to promote products as an affiliate.

I encourage you to visit Jason's blog to get some valuable information related to affiliate marketing. And--if you post a question on his blog he will give you his best advice to answer that question.

Jason is a veteran of the U.S. Marine Corp. and currently makes his home in Boston, MA.

MIKE McMILLAN
<http://www.project-rubidium.com>

Mike was an inner-city math and chemistry teacher for 14 years. He left teaching in 1989 to devote full time to writing nonfiction books. He has written over 40 books in the education market, developed an online course for teachers which is currently offered through over 1,400 colleges and universities across the U.S.

He has done a large number of self publishing seminars, Barnes & Noble book signings, and has done over 100 interviews on radio and television stations including his ABC World News feature interview in Manhattan.

Mike has written over two dozen ebooks related to Internet marketing and his Project Rubidium site is devoted to showing affiliate marketers how to create their own products and how to promote those of others as an affiliate. Project Rubidium has over 800 pages of training materials and over 40 videos covering all aspects of affiliate marketing.

MIKE:

Hi Jason, thanks so much for sharing with us today. One of the things I talk about sometimes with people is that if we were to go into a big high schools and take a poll on what they would like to do when they get out of high school that very few students would say that they wanted to become an Internet marketer. A lot of us come into this business through very convoluted routes. I know in your case you got out of school and entered the service--the Marine Corps--and at some point got into selling products on eBay. Is that right?

JASON:

Yes, pretty much, what happened was that I enlisted in the military, I didn't go to college, I wasn't an officer--I pretty much showed up at a recruiting office and said I want to join. So I joined up and went through boot camp and got to my duty station and the barracks were small and modest and when you're enlisted in the military there's not a lot of pay.

As time went on I noticed that there were people coming and going and some of these barracks rooms were totally pimped out as the kids would say--they had the Xboxes, the PlayStations, the big flat-screen TVs, etc. A problem I was seeing was that people would get shipped off to a new duty station or were deployed overseas and they had no idea of what to do with the toys they had brought to the barracks with them. I mean what's a guy going to do with a plasma TV when he's shipping out to Iraq?

So like a light bulb in my head went off (and this was all while I was in the military with these guys) and I thought what if I sold this stuff on eBay and took maybe a 25% of the profits. So that's kind of how I got started. I was selling TVs, laptops, digital cameras, for guys that were getting moved around.

MIKE:

That's kind of what I said earlier Jason about how a lot of times people take unusual paths to find themselves in Internet marketing. I think that's kind of what you did, you saw an opportunity, got involved and then it grows into other things.

Well, Jason and I are going to talk about list building today. List building is one of those things that is not an isolated procedure. When somebody says they are interested in building their list up, there are a number of things that come into that. You have to know

some SEO to get some pages to show well in Google, you have to know something about PPC if that's the route you are going to go, you need to know about auto-responders and opt-in pages, and then you'll probably get into blogs and pre-sell pages.

So whatever path you take to begin growing your list, I think you pick up a whole bunch of outside correlated skills along the way. So list building depends on a good many skills that one must be proficient in. So I tell people starting out is after they get a domain name and some web hosting, and then one of the first things they should do is to go to aWeber or somewhere and get a good auto-responder service so they can begin building a list.

Now there are two facets of list building. You have to have a way to build your list. So you have to have some kind of opt-in page, you're going to drive traffic to that page and get visitors to opt-in to your list. But then equally as important is what you do with those names once you get them on your list.

So Jason talk to me. You've got a number of lists in different niches. I have people who are considered gurus or super-affiliates and I get emails from them every single day. And basically their emails are filled with nothing of any interest to me, just a tons of affiliate links. And you open those a few times, but then you get tired of them and you either unsubscribe or simply quit opening them. So I tell people you have to build relationships with your list and get your subscribers to trust you enough to take your advice on products.

I tell people to send out two emails a week with no affiliate links in them. Just fill the emails with good information and build a relationship with your subscribers. Give them a reason to believe in your and to trust in what you say. It makes it a lot easier to later sell them on products. I mean, is that what you've found Jason?

JASON

Oh yeah, definitely! And just to go back to the beginning, you'd be amazed at how many people wanting to build a list like my students or yours... and when I ask them what steps they have taken, and when I ask them what auto-responder service are you using and what are you doing right now to build your list. And they say, oh well, I don't have an auto-responder service but I want a big list.

So the first step is to get a reliable auto-responder service. Mike, you mentioned aWeber, I use aWeber--there are other ones out there but aWeber is a pretty good one. The point is that once you get going and you get your first 5-10 subscribers, it's just like a windfall after that. We can get into specific techniques later, but once you do have a subscriber list, no matter what size, building trust is very,very important because if you're just bombing your list with promotion after promotion after promotion, over time you will get a high rate of unsubscribes.

Your list is not going to trust you and they are not going to purchase on your recommendations. In my case I want to see a review copy of what I am going to be promoting. I actually want to try and put it into use before I promote it and make sure it works and that it's not junk.

I paid special attention to the products I promoted, because like you said Mike, once you get that trust with your list going--basically the bottom line is going to be, well--the bottom line is going to be more money in your pocket and you're going to have a better relationship with your subscribers and your business is going to flourish. Building trust with your list is super, super important.

MIKE:

Well, you mentioned this Jason, if you just go out there and promote sight unseen products, you know--it really only takes one time for someone to buy through one of your links and get a junk product--and like you said, then they've lost the trust. SO if you can get a review copy, try it out, that's almost a must. Because if someone buys something and they're unhappy with it they are probably never going to buy from you again.

Now, in your own case, I know you've had some very good product launches, and of course that's a very good way to build a list quickly, but realistically, someone starting out is not going to have a hundred thousand dollar product launch, it just can't happen like that.

So what I do is work with people and try to get some organic traffic and try to get some pages listed in Google--maybe some articles, maybe some pre-sell pages but try to do it on a free basis.

I know people do pay-per-click and some are very, very successful, but starting out it can also be a nightmare for somebody because it takes a while to learn that. So until one gets proficient at that it can be a wallet flattening endeavor.

Now in the past few days, since we got hooked up here, I've looked at some of your pages and products, so on and so forth--now when you opt people in, and I know you have a number of ways to do this, but what do you look at when you have a squeeze page set up? I signed up for one of your lists last night and you have a great funnel set up for sales. But in your view what are the components of a good squeeze page in terms of maximizing opt-ins?

JASON:

Well as far as the squeeze page itself, I'm not a very good copywriter myself, but as far as the content you are giving away, what you want to do, and this is super important--is deliver value. Because you're going to want people to give up their information to you and that is kind of a big deal. A lot of people, I know I am) are very protective over what mail comes in my inbox. So for people to be able to trust you enough to give up their email address to you, you have to give away tremendous value.

If you do that, if you offer a product that's normally pricey, maybe \$97 or up, and it's a high quality product, and someone opts into your list and they see this value they are going to form your opinion right away on whether or not they are going to stay with you or they are going to unsubscribe. Because when I join somebody's list I'll stay on for just a couple of emails and then I will subconsciously determine if I am going to unsubscribe if the quality of the information isn't there.

And then there's other ones where I just can't wait to get the next email--and you want to be like that. You want to make it so that people can't wait to get your next email. And the initial trust is formed by giving away a product of very high value. And hopefully it is a paid product normally so that you are telling your list I deliver value so they will know that what I recommend is good.

MIKE:

Jason, you didn't use this word, but I think it was on the tip of your tongue, and that is over-delivery. It's kind of about giving more than they expected. Maybe you offer a free

ebook or something, the opt-in and then confirm and then you also give them a couple of videos or something like that. SO they think, hey here's a guy that gives me not only what he promised, but he's over-delivered and if that's the way that he's going to do business, then I'm going to be more apt to do business with him again. That's a big thing too.

Now, one thing I noticed Jason, I signed up for one of your lists last night, and I downloaded a free ebook and you used a technique I have seen before, but you did this quite well. I noticed that you offered a free report to get people to opt-in, and then follow that with an up-sell for related materials at a fantastic price. That way, you're not only getting names and email addresses, but you also have a chance of making some front-end sales right out of the gate.

JASON:

Yes definitely, like you just mentioned with pay-per-click, so for example what if someone opted in for a free ebook on how to do PPC marketing with Google AdWords. And they opt-in for their free report and there's an up-sell for a list of 100 keywords in ten different niches so you don't have to find keywords you can just plug them in to Google AdWords for maybe \$47.

I only do this on a couple of different offers where I have a complementary offer, but the key is to offer something very complementary that will make the subscriber's life easier and I'll try to offer it for a good price.

So it's something to test and try with whatever you're offering if you have a complimentary offer because they've already shown an interest in what you've given them so if you can offer them something to make their life easier and to make them more money I think a large percentage of your new subscribers will take a good hard look at it.

MIKE:

Sure, and like you said, once they've indicated an interest in your opt-in bonus, if you've got a product that fits in with that very nicely. Now another thing is, as people build lists, and I've got some pretty big names in Internet marketing whose list I am on, who, without fail, send emails to their list every single day without fail. And

these are big names who are on the leader boards all the time for product launches and so on. And I'm not sure what kind of open rate they have on their emails, but they are hitting that button every single day.

And I know from my own experience that I have some lists that I work more than others, but if you go weeks between sending out emails, it is very easy for subscribers to forget who you are and what you are doing and your unsubscribe rates will balloon. So, I don't personally recommend sending out emails every day, but I do think it is important to work your lists regularly. I mean I usually send out a bout three a week. I think the frequency is important. Do you find that or what do you consider a good frequency to be mailing at?

JASON:

That's a great point you raised there Mike. There is definitely a fine line between mailing too much and not enough. You want to mail a bare minimum of once per week, but I generally like to mail two times a week like maybe on a Tuesday and a Thursday--maybe sometimes I might follow up on a Saturday, but I think 2-3 times per week is a good number to work with. I know you just said you do three times a week and that's a good number.

You don't want to do it every day, and you also don't want to do it once a month--again they'll forget who you are, they'll unsubscribe, they'll get upset, and if you mail too much--same thing, you'll get a lot of unsubscribes. So yes, 2-3 times a week is what I would recommend and that has worked well for me.

MIKE

Sometimes I hear people say I've got a hundred thousand names on my list, and I open their emails and I look at them and I have to wonder how many people on that list are actually opening them, you know, just how responsive their list is to their offers. If I get six emails in a row, and I never get anything useful--I'm unsubscribed. And you know the headlines, something like newbie makes \$50,000 in three weeks or something like that.

What I do with one of my membership sites is I give them a couple of what I call relationship building emails to copy and send to their lists. And I tell them don't put any affiliate links in them. Their sole purpose is to help them provide valuable

content to their subscribers and build that trust we talked about earlier. Then, once a week I give them an email promoting a product and show them where to put their affiliate links in so they can make some money.

Now Jason, you've had a number of what I'd call high powered product launches of your own Jason. Even though that's not something someone can do starting right out, a product launch is more than--"Okay, I've got it listed in Clickbank so now let's see what happens." That's not a product launch. There's a lot of work that goes on behind the scenes unnoticed like finding JV partners, providing them with resources and tools--but when you get to that point, a product launch can be an incredibly power-packed way to build your list though too, can't it?

JASON:

Oh yeah, without a doubt, I've had I guess five pretty big product launches now, and the product that really changed my life was the Product Launch Formula by a guy named Jeff Walker. His system pretty much covers the entire process, from the pre-launch, and then having the launch... and the big hitter for me was doing a pre-launch for my products, and having a two week period where affiliates would mail out using their affiliate link, to set their cookie and what they would do is mail out, to their lists and get their people to my squeeze page where I would opt them into my list and what they would get would be a free report that would pre-sell the product. During this process I would be building a huge, huge mailing list. I think on my best launch I think I did, I think, add 22,000 names to my mailing list during a two week pre-launch period.

You know Mike, these JV partners worked really hard to get their names on their own lists and they pretty much handed them over on a silver platter to me.

MIKE:

I know a lot of beginners out there look at the claims and the figures and they see someone making \$200,000 from a product launch and they look at that and say, I could do that, I could write an ebook that good, but that's not the crux of the issue--the issue is getting some people behind you, doing some pre-launch work, doing all of this stuff that doesn't really show up--and that's where a lot of the make-it-or-break-it hard work comes in. In spite of this, a successful product launch is certainly a huge list building tool.

JASON:

Oh, you bet. I probably have ten or fifteen ways I build my list, but a product launch is certainly one of the bet ways to build your list. You know, I've been to something like 22 Internet marketing seminars, and at these seminars I've build good JV relationships, I've met hundreds if not thousands of people, and I've built these relationships and the payoff is they promote my products and that helps me to build that hot, new, fresh subscriber list.

Once I get those marketers in my circle of trust, my list is going to be bigger, and I'm going to make a ton more money. So product launches, no matter what scale, are a great way to build a list.

And like you said Mike, it's easy to for marketers to throw around their gross sales, but when a marketer says I did \$500,000 in gross sales, but they're not making that much, but product launches are still very lucrative for the money you make and the relationships you build, the things you can leverage and the list--the list is pure gold.

MIKE: Jason, someone might come to me and say, hey--I contacted Jason James about promoting my product during its launch and I never heard back from him. I tell them, in the first place, he doesn't even have a clue as to who you are.

He doesn't know anything about your product. And contacting someone a week before your product launch is way, way too late in the process to bring people on board. Aside from that jason probably gets a hundred emails a day.

I mean, one of the best ways to get your name before a potential JV partner is to actually sell some of their products for them. If you've put up a pre-sell page and got a front page Google listing for the name of their product you will make some sales. Helping others sell their products is one of the best ways to get them to help you sell yours.

The other thing is that the big guys are only going to promote products they believe in personally. If they promote junk products their subscribers will lose trust in them and end up unsubscribing before long. Their list is important to them and they want to protect it. They do that by promoting only high quality products.

So if you can go to a potential JV partner, (and maybe you didn't sell 200 units) and say, I wrote some articles, set up a pre-sell page, and drove some traffic to your sales page-- at least you have established a connection.

And it's like you talked about going to seminars. You meet someone, shake hands, and make connections that can be important down the road. So what do you think Jason, what are some techniques you would recommend for newbies to make some connections with the big guys?

JASON:

To be honest, that's kind of a tough thing. In my case, I first just tried to build my list and then start promoting for people's products. That's really the important thing. In my own case I had been promoting for Anik Singal and his Pay Per Click Classroom. He's a super big marketer with a huge list. I've promoted pretty much for all of his product launches.

Recently I asked if you guys would promote for my most recent product launch which is going on right now. And they said yeah, sure, and I said REALLY? Well I didn't say it that way, but I said really? Their list is hundreds of thousands of people and they've mailed for me and it's still going. But the point is, to try to do something for someone before asking them to do something for you. Like you said, Mike, you just can go to someone you don't know and say, here is my product, promote it for me next week. They will say, who are you and your email is going to go directly into the junk folder.

So that's kind of a tough thing when you are first getting started. I would take it slow, find two or three marketers you want to work with, and try to promote their stuff. Once you get on people's radar--maybe you've met them at a seminar, maybe you've promoted their products, whatever it is--do something for someone before you ask for anything in return. It's the law of reciprocity.

MIKE:

Ya know, sometimes people come to me and say, What does it take to be a super-affiliate in this business or to become a guru? And in just a couple of words I can say that if you've got a big list--you can do business with the big guys. It's all about the list.

Now, one thing I wanted to touch upon are giveaway events. I know you've used these

to build lists yourself. So let's just talk a bit about what a giveaway event is and how they can help you build your subscriber list.

JASON:

Well, at this point Mike I run my own giveaways, but before I started doing this I got involved in a number of giveaways by other people. Basically you find out where these free giveaways are you can get started. If you simply Google "Internet giveaway events" or "Internet giveaway schedules" you can find when these are and who sponsors them.

Basically, you submit a free gift to these events and in return you promote these events. If there are 50 different marketers who have submitted a gift and 50 different marketers the site, then the more people you refer to the site the higher you go on the list. SO basically it's one big site and all of these people are clamoring to get to the site and download all of these free gifts there. And this is just a great, great way to build a list.

I have run four giveaways, one is called "Greedy Giveaway" and I'm going to do Greedy Giveaway v. 5, probably in December, and each time I add between 10-15 thousand subscribers to my list and there are often up-sells involved and it's just a great, great way to get a big boost in numbers to your list.

MIKE:

Jason, in your own case, when you were just starting out, at what point in your list-building process did you feel that you had enough names to feel comfortable approaching others in the business and say, hey--could we do some kind of swap mailing or something like that where you promote their product to your list and they promote one of your products to their list?

JASON:

Well, what I did was once I had 1,000-2,000 names I would try to approach people with lists at about the same level and try to do business with them. I met a ton of people on the Warrior Forum who had lists comparable to mine and I would approach them about mailing for each other and doing some kind of swap mailing.

And it isn't really about the list size, it's more about the results you can deliver. There are products out there, for example a buddy of mine, Brian Edmundson, had \$15,000 in seven days for a product launch by Mike Filsaime and his list was something like only

1,200 people. So it's not about the numbers on the list, it's about the results you can produce. So if you can get good results with a smaller list, go ahead and contact the larger partners. Because they'll be happy to work with you in most cases if you want to promote or do a list swap.

MIKE: Jason, that pretty much covers what I wanted to talk about with you. But let me ask, do you have anything you might like to add that we didn't get to this morning?

JASON:

Sure, I do have some final words I'd like to add.

Your first step to effective list building is to sign up for a reliable auto-responder service. I use aWeber (www.aweber.com) which is very good. And many people don't have much money when they get started, so use the free methods. Put an ad in your email signature, go to forums such as the Warrior Forum and put it in your signature file there, use Twitter, use FaceBook, write articles and submit them to the article directories, etc. I know you know this, but once you get 25, 50, 100 subscribers, it's going to start ballooning to big numbers.

It's just a matter of getting the wheels in motion and start building that list. Do giveaway events, start a bog where you have an opt-in form. DO a product launch, go to the Warrior Forum and do a WSO. Diversify. In my own case I have probably 25 different lists at aWeber and they all pull in names every day. So diversify the techniques you use to build your list.

MIKE:

Hey Jason I just wanted to mention, I was at your blog the other day and--well, it really is a professionally designed thing. In fact I downloaded a couple of free files you had there and sheeze, I kept saying to myself that here is a guy giving me stuff for free that is worth far, far more than what I get in a lot of those \$97 ebooks out there. So nicely done, I appreciate that and I encourage others to visit your blog and get some information with some genuine value.

The End



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