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ACCELERATING ENTREPRENEURIAL SUCCESS PODCAST

EPIISODE  
**14**

**Dan Kuschell**

Show Notes at: <http://www.aesnation.com/14>



**AESNATION.COM**  
Episode #14

**John Bowen and Dan Kuschell**

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Best of success,



John Bowen  
Co-founder, AES Nation

**John Bowen:** Have you ever felt that your business is a little complicated? That if you could just simplify it just a little bit, get it so that the client-pathing is going well that the whole team is making everything... just go singing so that you could leave for 90 days and come back and not see the sheriff's notice on the office building or the factory or better yet, that it's running better? Well, I'm John Bowen. I am bringing you a great episode of Accelerating Entrepreneurial Success because I have a very good friend who does just that. He specializes in helping entrepreneurs like you and me really simplify their business... Dan Kuschell.

Dan, I got to tell you I am so excited to have you with us because you and I have been friends for a number of years now. You've given me all kinds of advice along the way. And I feel phenomenal that I get to share you with the world because you've been kind of a secret for a few entrepreneurs. So first of all, thank you for joining us Dan.

**Dan Kuschell:** Oh it's a real honor John to be with you here today and also AESNation. I'm certainly looking forward to it.

**John:** Dan, tell me, what it is you do?

**Dan:** Well I think the best way I can describe it John is there's the quote from Oliver Wendell Holmes that goes "I wouldn't give a fig to be on this side of complexity but I'd give my life to be on the other side of simplicity." And so what I feel I have the ability to do is take big complex ideas and really simplify them down overall. I've been able to do that not only for companies over the years and I learned a lot of this by making a lot of mistakes. I've run about 8 different companies and in my early years, I made a bunch mistakes. At one time, I had over 5,000 independent sales reps working for/with me and then I had a big large series of companies working together, 5 different companies where we had about 200 employees. And I found myself maybe like a lot of entrepreneurs at one point were, "Oh my gosh! I don't have time. What am I doing?" And dealing with overwhelm. And so I really went back and started studying and putting practices in place that allowed me to simplify the management structure, the operations structure, the finance structure, the marketing, the sales. I guess what pops up is book from Michael Gerber years ago I was introduced in my 20's that I lean back on and Michael teaches this idea that systems run your business, find good people to run those systems. And I know you're a master of that. I mean I'm just extremely, extremely grateful to be a part of what you're doing and seeing all the great things you do and running your organization with mostly virtual people and really dominating the financial field and transforming the people in your industry's lives.

**John:** Oh now I appreciate that and we need a lot of help from our friends. I mean Michael Gerber also was one of my earliest mentors. I hired him shortly after he did *The E-Myth* book. And just a phenomenal guy. I've done some webinars with him and I will definitely invite him

to be on the podcast but I want to touch on the concept of simplification for a second. Let me frame it because on the quote I think a lot of us mix that there's two types of simplification. There's the simplification that's kind of dumb. It's kind of where we first get in the business and we don't understand how complex things are so it's the wrong side of complex. And then there's after you understand all the issues and then you simplify. That's the right side of complex. So how do you get there?

**Dan:** Well, I think one of the biggest things John is that, it's... what game are you playing? Is identifying that at the core. What game do you want to play? And for my background, I came from the sports background. As a kid, my dream was to play pro-baseball and I had a career developing. I had some injuries. Then I ended up after playing semi-pro ball. I coached college baseball summer teams, all-star teams. And one of the key things was to have the right players in the right positions. You don't put a pitcher at the position of catcher unless you want to experience a losing streak and vice versa. You just have to have the right players in the right position. But even more than that is identifying what role do you play? I mean there's a different role if you're a first base coach or a third base coach or the head coach. And better yet, if you're the general manager of the team or better yet as the owner.

And what I found John and maybe like you, is sometimes because of maybe a lot false beliefs or false programming that we've been taught as kids that we find ourselves... many owners find themselves in the day to day operations of their business and having a hard time of letting go of some of those and I know I have experienced that took over the years. And having trust and faith in being able to delegate.

But the reality is, if you're a general manager or owner of a baseball team, you're not outplaying shortstop. You have a shortstop like Derek Jeter out there performing for you at the highest level. That's one of the most important things: a. understand the role you play, and number two, I would say one of the core success factors if you will, that I've learned and had to really hone in over time is to hire the best. I want to hire Derek Jeter's on my team. I want to hire the Justin Verlander so to speak.

Or if you translate it to other sports like football, Tom Brady at his peak. But every talent has a shelf-life as well. And as the owner like Jerry Jones of the Dallas Cowboys, you know you've got a quarterback right now how is arguably one of the top quarterbacks potentially in the game but in a few years that talent's going to erode a bit. And you've got to be able to replace and replenish that talent. So it's always an involving process and I know that's what you've been so good at as not only evolving with your team but also evolving your strategy in the business. For me John, I look at the core of how a business' structure, and again it comes back to really simplifying things as well. And I could go off on about...

**John:** Let me jump in because I want to do two things. One, I want to go back to one of the businesses you did where you were leading the charge and putting it together and then I want to go where you've now come in and where I've met you is you're leading the charge for a very good mutual friend of ours, Joe Polish. And he's created a great marketing empire and he was at the center of great complexity too and you're helping him move out of that. So tell me kind of the big breakthrough you first had.

**Dan:** Sure. And so I'll speak about the breakthroughs from two-folds. One from a marketing and selling point of view is... number one is to be involved in direct response marketing. I think that's one of the most important factors as business owners, entrepreneurs that we can really see transformational results in our business when we take the time to get good at that. Number two, is the structure of the organization.

For years, I built structures and hierarchies and I've seen a lot of hierarchies in companies. And at the end of the day, I've come up within my own head, now I'll share it with everyone here is that simple structure to keep in mind in riding the company.

Number one at the top, usually it's the entrepreneur/owner which we call the visionary or the driver of the company or the business. And then below or next to however you want to look at it, you have someone that is the facilitator or executor of the visionary ideas or driving ideas that are being shared.

Then compartmentalizing the business and we call it four main areas overall: Sales, number one. Marketing, number two. Operations, number three. And finance, number four. And putting someone in charge to be able to operate those where I've seen a lot of company... where my company's had struggle, where I've seen a lot of entrepreneurs' companies struggle is they try to be up here as the visionary and down here driving the sales piece of it or the marketing piece of it, or the operations or the finance. And better strategy from what I've discovered is to be able to put someone in charge to be able to handle that and then you can just have huddles with these people that are ideally experts. They are your Derek Jeter's. They are your Justin Verlander's, the best at what they do at that moment in your particular company. So that's one side of it.

In Joe's side of it, I've been able to come in to his program and he's an incredible visionary as you know right?

**John:** Oh fantastic.

**Dan:** A brilliant marketing mind. A brilliant thought leader is probably a better way I would describe him. And I've been positioned not only into a role that helps simplify things and so I see my role as the facilitator and executor, supporting those ideas. And then we've got people

in charge of sales, marketing, operations, and finance. And we're always refining. We're not perfect either. It's always an evolution. We're working to get better and better all the time. But I think that at the core of... part of the biggest breakthroughs I've experienced and seen others experience too.

**John:** You are pretty creative; I mean actually "pretty" would be the wrong word. Very creative. And a lot of the operational people that I've worked with, I don't want them to be creative. I want them to put the system in place and you've got to bring both of those together. But tell me what you're most passionate about you're working on right now and share with your viewers and listeners?

**Dan:** I would say the biggest thing John. Number one is I feel my real gift like I shared is taking complexity and simplifying it and what I seem to do really well is to be able to integrate marketing and operations together and culture. And I think when you bring a team together with integrating with great sales and marketing, I mean transformations happen overall. One of the transformational ideas that I discovered is when you speak to large groups of people at a time, kind of like the platform you're building here with the podcast. Hundreds and thousands and potentially millions, if not multimillions of people that you're going to impact and transform their entrepreneurial lives through what you're doing. And this is a great example of one of those parts of the technique. The other is to... speak to large groups of people at one time, and then put yourself in a position where you do the work one time and get paid over and over again.

Reason I bring up to you these two strategies is because I think of you and how well and how effective you are at doing just that. So through the podcast platform, through your webinar platform that you've been able to develop and build and really create an automated system.

So for me, I love building these types of models and integrating those models. And what I'm doing right now with Joe that I'm really excited about... Hey I get to work with one of the great thought leaders of our generation in my opinion. And the great connectors I know you've been able to meet and I know a lot of people that you'll have through AESNation like Peter Diamandis, Dan Sullivan who you work a lot with.

**John:** Yeah, so many of these people I met through Joe. I consider myself actually a pretty good networker. What I love is talking about those systems. What we all want to do is get people to raise their hand to consider working with us, to explore working with us and then we have to have a good customer path or client path no matter what we're doing. What you do is you think big. And you're thinking, "Okay, can we get those systems in place?" And then really expand them. And I've seen you doing that for Joe.

**Dan:** Yeah, I mean we're having a lot of fun being able to do that and I feel I have a pretty strong background with being able to do it because we have built our companies fairly decent amount of revenue, \$20-25 million a year. And we had an ability to take people that were customer service-oriented type people and in a way with our unique approach to things, turn them into sales people, which is quite a unique approach to building a business. And with Joe, what we're doing now is we're really looking to build a model where people actually buy into it versus being sold into it.

**John:** Those are very different cultures. Why do we care?

**Dan:** That's a great question. I mean think about the experience. I think that people love to buy things or own things but they hate to be sold or pressured is probably the better... Joe did an incredible that's on YouTube called "Is selling evil?" that people can check out. And in is selling evil, he kind of talks about really the psychology behind it. But when someone buys in, they're essentially enrolling themselves into the process, whereas when someone is being sold, there's usually a third party or some other person that's really convincing or it's the difference between being compelling versus convincing John. And so what we're doing, I think it stems back to Joe, one of Joe's top values which is education-based marketing. That we want to be into a conversation with someone that's predisposed, pre-qualified, pre-interested, pre-motivated, and pre-ready to do business with us because we already shared the incredible value that in many ways that's transformed their life.

**John:** I work with... I coach financial advisors, and when we coach financial advisors, they're working with the affluent, people with a million or more financial assets. And what happens is the average affluent person today is getting 4,000 marketing messages a day. Somehow you have to filter that out and shouting louder is not it. But attracting them by giving tremendous value in advance is huge and then having that systematic way to deliver a great experience, that's really what we're talking about isn't it Dan?

**Dan:** Absolutely. In fact, Dean Jackson, I think he calls it taking that turn that you shared value in advance, he calls it results in advance. I mean in the financial field imagine, I know this might be a utopian idea but imagine if a financial advisor was able to work with a client in advance, upfront and help produce a tangible result ahead of even a commitment of being asked to work with them.

**John:** In essence, they do that through presentations, through white papers, eBooks, webinars, and what we teach. And our fellow entrepreneurs who are watching and listening, what I'd like you to think about is what could you do in advance? How can you differentiate yourself from all the noise in the marketplace systematically? I know that when we do a webinar, it's going to get x number of hands in the air that will result in about 50,000 or more

of revenues so I like running them very regularly. And people are coming to us versus the other way around.

**Dan:** I'll share something John that one of the things that transformed my entire business career years ago that I think feeds in line with what you do and what you teach advisors. One of the differentiators for me that worked extremely well that I seek and work for a lot of people is simply writing a book because it positions you as a preeminent expert. I mean today to be able to get a book published like this... a couple hundred paged book, I was fortunate enough to be with Tom Hopkins, Jack Canfield and a few others, it was really cool. I mean it's a few bucks per book. And what I did was I actually got the book published. Then I went on radio and created a 30-minute essentially value-oriented event. Put it on radio. Then we sent it out to multiple stations all over the country and drove to an 800- number of people inquiring, where they were calling us because of what you just described - the attraction mechanism, the attraction factor. And now we had that lead.

Now we put them into a value added sequence where we could follow up with them with education-based marketing. Then we drove them to an application if you will, to see if they wanted to engage further on a higher level relationship. And we were able to enroll people into different types of coaching, different types of services, different types of products using that simple mechanism that started with something as simple as a couple hundred paged book. Then a simple radio thing that essentially you just write a check for. Write a check to buy the radio time in different markets across the country to generate ultimately what became thousands of leads a week at one time to then enroll them into a higher level type of programs and services.

**John:** I mean once you map all this stuff out and you test it, that's the beauty of today's technology, we can test it. We can see what's working. It almost becomes... you can put in a quarter and get a dollar out of the slot machine and you can ramp up the marketing to generate whatever volume of business that you can deliver great experiences on. It is amazing.

**Dan:** Yeah, and the other part is that in today's economy, people want to know and I know you teach this as well as anybody, it's about, what do you do that's unique to anybody else compared to anybody in your marketplace? And what differentiates you? And so the better material, the better resources... for example, the tools you provide to advisors that are looking to advance their businesses and do better with what they do. I look at the white papers you provide, the webinars you provide, the support you provide, the tools, the resources... I mean it's phenomenal what you do and you're just a great role model for people to model not only for the financial business but in any type of business.



**John:** What I want to encourage you to do is... Dan and I get really excited about this stuff because we know it works and we want you to do it too. The very first book I did was in the early 90's and was a big turning point in my career. And now, we stamped out eBooks about a minimum of every quarter.

Dan, we have a segment where we ask our guests for the application of the day. Is there an app that jumps out of you that you want to share?

**Dan:** As crazy as it sounds, I don't know if I have an application that I absolutely love.

**John:** You like systems and most apps don't work that well.

**Dan:** So I was embarrassed to say that I do work with a lot of apps that I like and they're okay but one that I love, I don't know that I really actually have one that I truly admire and just love.

**John:** Let me go to the key takeaways that I'm getting and I want you to add some color to this to make I'm getting it right.

I use the term right side of complexity but you run right to getting it simple. And I just have this awful habit of making things complicated and surround myself with people who really are good at keeping me thinking simple and on the right side of simple.

And second thing that I really saw is the ability that once you get the simple or systems in place, there's kind of two areas that we can really leverage. The first is getting more people to raise their hand. I mean you guys have done such a great job of creating systems around. I look at some of the materials you shared with us on running all these ads in all these major publications and you know to the penny, exactly what the revenue is and it's bringing in... all the different systems so that, guess what, things that aren't working, you stop doing. And the things that are working, you throw more money at it.

And then the third thing is delivering a world class experience. I've been involved with you guys. You guys do it consistently over and over again so there's that whole client-pathing that you really do a phenomenal job.

So the three takeaways: Simplicity. Have a consistent way of attracting the right people and then delivering the value. That's what I'm hearing.

**Dan:** No doubt about it John. I think what one of the things that pops out for me too is that as entrepreneurs, one of the best things that we can do is protect our confidence, right? And having a team that helps do that is a key part of building that success.

And in fact, I have a little formula that I created for my own reminder which I'll share with everybody here, which is maximum performance = execution x ideas x confidence. So if you take anyone of those out, like you can have great ideas and poor execution and great confidence but your performance will be off. You can have great confidence, great execution, poor ideas, and your performance will be off. So really takes all three - execution x ideas. And admittedly, I actually stole that piece of the formula from Dean Jackson and Joe Polish directly and then I added the confidence piece because as entrepreneurs, sometimes it can feel like it's a lonely place. You're writing checks, payrolls, x number of dollars, etc. But when confidence is high, ideas are at their peak, and execution is at its peak. That's when we get maximum performance and it's creating a winning environment to be able to do just that. And I've seen and noticed that most of the successful, if not all of the entrepreneurs that are having the best success, are in that space more times than not.

**John:** I actually think the third element you brought is the most important is confidence. You've got to recognize that you're capable of doing it. If you're not, that's fine but there's no one in the world that isn't insecure at times, have moment of self-doubt... that's what the marketplace is all about. And so the opportunity is to get together with a group of entrepreneurs which share values, who really want to make a big impact, and deliver value.

One of the groups... I'm going to put up the website. First one that I'm putting up is Joe's Genius Network Mastermind Group and why don't you give us a little background of what this is and what you guys are doing?

**Dan:** Yeah, I'd love to John. The Genius Network and what members have now called it and turned it to as what we call the 25K Group and people can go to [25kgroup.com](http://25kgroup.com) for that. But what's interesting is that I'm a team member with Joe but originally I was actually a client. It's like that old hair club commercial. I'm not just a member, I'm a client. So I kind of feel that way, representing Joe here. And it's a place where the highest level entrepreneurs play at their best. And they're able to take their game to a whole new level because they get access to more connections, better ideas, as well as access to best practices and strategies. Just really, in my opinion, not available anywhere else.

**John:** And I love it. I mean it's been... I've been in it for the last four years and I write a check every year for \$25,000. I don't like flying. I fly down Tempe to hang out with you guys and... tremendous value.

**Dan:** And it's almost hard to describe because calling it a seminar, or calling it a networking group, or an event type thing or a gathering. It almost does it injustice. Until someone's really a part of the group, it's hard to explain.

But like you, when Joe originally was creating it back in late 2006, early 2007. I remember he called me he said, "Hey, I'm thinking about starting this group, it's \$25,000. Do you think you want to be a part of it?" I said, "Well, actually if I write you a check, I'll probably show up at your office more." So I was one of the first people that cut him a check and I think I've referred about a dozen or so people, colleagues, entrepreneurs, fellow clients to Joe in the group.

And it's been transformational for all of us. I was in the group for many years and when I sold the main core of my companies. And in '09, I took a break, really to be a full time dad. And about 2+ years ago, depending on when someone's seeing this recording or hearing it, Joe basically said "Why don't we figure out a way to work together?" And it's been a great relationship. So I'm a big ambassador. I'm a big fan.

**John:** Why don't we put up your company as well that you're just launching here too? Why don't you tell us what you're doing there?

**Dan:** Yeah, someone could just go to [DanKuschell.com](http://DanKuschell.com). Follow me on Facebook and we've got different resources, educational tools available as well.

**John:** Well Dan, I want to thank you. This has been great. For those who even want more resources, you can go to [AESNation.com](http://AESNation.com) and get access to the video, the audio podcast, as well as a transcript of all of this and the link to the resources along the way. Now go out and make a difference. Wish you the best of success. Your current clients and customers, they're counting on you! But more importantly, if you're going to build all these systems, your future clients as well. All the best!

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John Bowen  
Founder and CEO  
Financial Advisor Select