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EPIISODE
118

Darryl Hicks

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AESNATION.COM
John Bowen and Darryl Hicks
Episode #118

Dear Fellow Entrepreneur,

We are thrilled that you have joined us here at AES Nation, where we're dedicated to accelerating entrepreneurial success—your success.

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Best of success,



John Bowen
Co-founder, AES Nation

John Bowen: As entrepreneurs, we all want to build great businesses. That's what AES Nation is all about is accelerating our success. There's a key driver of our success is the people that we have around us, having a great culture, the right people on the bus as Jim Collins talks about. I have a remarkable, serial entrepreneur who's joining us today and he's going to share with us some of his hard-learned lessons that have given him an unfair advantage as an entrepreneur.

He's based in Montreal, Canada. He has built many businesses, directly and indirectly. He's created over a thousand jobs in Montreal. He's currently got a business with 145 employees. He is an amazing individual who's going to share some really great lessons. They are going to help you accelerate your success even more. Stay tuned.

Darryl Hicks. I am so excited to have you here. It was so great Jayson Gagnard introducing us at Mastermind Talks. We had dinner together at one of his Mastermind dinners. I think we sat next to each other. We just went off and some unbelievable insights that you shared. I wanted you to join us to share with AES Nation, our fellow entrepreneurs. First of all, thank you for taking the time.

Darryl Hicks: Thank you very much for having me, John. Great to be here.

John: There are a lot of guests I have. I have a lot of consultants on, top speakers and so on. You are truly a serial entrepreneur, you've been very active in the Angel Community really in the technology side, and you had been building businesses for a long time. What I loved about what we're talking about dinner is just all the lessons learned. I've been around doing a lot of things, but just taking notes there. We had to put all our cell phones and electronics as part of Jason's things. We couldn't do it electronically, so I had to do a handwriting and remember things after the fact, but Darryl...

Darryl: Jason is big on that.

John: Now, what I'd love to do, Darryl, is before we go into some of the lessons learned that our fellow entrepreneurs can go out and execute, what I'd love to do is have a little bit of your background. How did you get to where you are today?

Darryl: I started out probably about 20 years ago when I was in my early 20s doing ITIS consulting. So we were installing proprietary firewall technologies for Telcos up and down the Eastern seaboard. That was very much a business. It was a lot of fun. I was very passionate about technology. I've always enjoyed working with people even more. I realized that really, it was a business of trading hours for dollars. I wanted to get into some passive income.

One of my clients had an e-commerce business that really peaked my curiosity, and I pitched him on saying, "Hey, why don't we create a new business on the side and let's get into the e-commerce business together, and I'll hire some developers. We'll build some technology to do the billing." I had some great banking relationships back then, still do, and so we're able to facilitate all the merchant processing, and yeah, the rest is history.

We started our first business on a \$13,000 credit card, turned it into an eight-digit, very profitable business which we later sold and had just been continuing on that role for the last 14 years now.

John: It is amazing. Most of us have pretty humble starts. There's a lot of credit cards involved. It's the not processing part as you see them. Let me go to ... What I enjoyed particularly at dinner, we were talking, we were with a number of other entrepreneurs and we all got talking about culture. Culture means different things. We always question what that is, and so on. You got talking about how it gave a competitive advantage. I want to dive into this. One of the things that you said and we've talked about is that one of the most important things to you is getting rid of the culture vampires. I just thought, that's a term I hadn't heard before. What are we talking about there, Darryl?

Darryl: Every business has culture vampires if you're not careful. You picture a flower garden, if you want to have a nice, healthy, vibrant flower garden, you got to tend to the weeds. You're a player employees that you bring in, I like to think of them as these beautiful, exotic fish that you put in your aquarium. If you have fish in there that are just making a great big mess of the water, what happens when you get this murky, cloudy water is that your exotic fish are getting sick, they're getting slow and sluggish, and they just want to get the heck out.

Unfortunately, culture is only as strong as your weakest link. I had a story of someone when I first start my current business, Tungsten, about four years ago, I'd very carefully selected the first eight to 10 employees I wanted to start with. We had this one employee who was acting as a supervisor, and he was very authoritarian, very strict, and he was getting results, but it was not in the way that we wanted to.

We wanted a business that was much more about tapping into people's intrinsic motivators rather than imposing extrinsic penalties on them. When we met with him and tried to do a little bit of coaching, he said, "Look, I'm putting up the numbers, I'm delivering the results, this is the way I'm going to do it, let me do my job." He wasn't too surprised when we let him go a couple of weeks later.

We pulled a little company meeting out in the lobby, and we said to everyone, "We wanted everyone to understand. It's a sensitive thing. You're only a few months into your new business and now you're firing someone. It's a little bit of a jittery thing for people, but we

wanted to explain. Look, we have values, we have goals, we know where we're going and what we stand for. This is not the kind of atmosphere that we want to create in here," because the weakest link in your business, it tells everyone else what you stand for, what you'll tolerate as a leader. You have to really think about what you want your identity to be.

I mean, we all know that a company is nothing more than the people who are inside of it, right? So if you tolerate jerks and A-holes in your business, what kind of company do you have? A company that acts like jerks and A-holes, it's pretty obvious.

Dave Ramsey has got a great thing that he talks about on this where you're trying to build a company of thoroughbred horses. Every once in a while, you got to get the donkeys out, perform a donkeyectomy. I really like that one. The ironic thing that we've found is that if you get enough thoroughbreds in your company, the donkey will often fire themselves. They don't feel like they fit. They're not comfortable.

That's something that I think has really helped us a lot is making sure that everyone understands clearly from the get-go what our values are, what we stand for. If they break those values, you fire people based on breaking those values because your culture really is only as strong as your weakest link, and tolerating those people is going to suck the energy out of your company.

John: Darryl, one of the things that as I look at this, I mean, this is something I'm a big believer into. I've had as many as 400 employees in my current business. It's a virtual business or businesses, and I think it's even more important there, but it's important everywhere because all it does is take one and as you were saying your experience, I was thinking of a few along the way the various businesses I have. I could identify people and some unfortunately I let stay longer than I should. I'm sure our fellow entrepreneur as they're listening to us, they're thinking, Joe, Warren, Sally, somebody, and it creates so much disruption.

As you do this, there's a lot of energy that goes into building culture. One of the things is you're a data-driven guy, and we're going to go into that a little bit more of how you use that, but are you seeing increase in productivity. Forget all the fuzzy stuff about having a great life and all that which we all care about, but the hard-driven guy that you let go was getting the results. What happens? Are you getting that advantage when you go ahead and focus so much energy on culture?

Darryl: Absolutely. I really feel that we've learned some good lessons about why does culture matter. I mean, it started out because when I started my most recent business, I said, "I want to build a business to build it up to be a billion-dollar business, and I want to have fun walking into it every single day. I want to be surrounded with people that I enjoy working with because

I know that that really impacts me, and I want to attract the type of people that it really impacts them as well."

Investing in a culture like this and creating an environment where everyone understands or values and are aligned with those values, especially, we're in software, we're building technology, and we're coding proprietary systems. Developers are in constant demand. I'm constantly fending off the head-hunters. They're coming and trying to poach my people with dreams and stories, of better salaries and more benefits.

I can tell you actually twice now, I've lost senior developers, the head-hunters, it happens to everybody who have come back to me, one was six months later and the other one was a year later saying, "You know what? I would work for you for less money because it's you, because I know what you stand for, and because of the environment that you've been able to create and the people that you're attracting." Success creates success; momentum creates momentum.

When you go down this page, it's like what Seth Godin talks about in Creating Tribes. You shouldn't be shy to send a clear message out of what you stand for, and who you're trying to attract because it repels the people that aren't a good fit for you anyway, and the people that that really resonates with, they're going to come and they're going to be drawn to that.

To say that all of a sudden I'm getting back key people that I had lost twice, I mean, my turnover ratio when I talk to fellow entrepreneurs who are in the technology space, my turnover ratio is way, way lower than the average of them. I haven't lost any key people that I really cared about losing in over a year now. I don't know many technology companies that can really say that, and that's in my project management, account management, senior developers, QA, anything from top to bottom.

John: With this, I mean, this is such we can think all about. When we lose someone who's talented, I mean, it's great when we hire someone who's talented, but the pain of losing someone who's really talented is just ... I mean, it is awful. It's not only awful in the effect. We've got to find somebody to replace them, but it's just the whole morale of losing those key people.

On the other hand, when they're working with us, and they're building the culture, and it's their company, they're enrolled in it, I mean, it changes dramatically. I have very low turnover for the same reason. I invest a lot of time and energy in this too, so I'm really passionate. I'm in Silicon Valley, so I'm going to ask a tough question. In Montreal, Silicon Valley, we've got all these big names and they buy ping-pong tables, cappuccino machines, a lot of them just stamp that and call it culture.

Some do much better than that, so I don't want to be too hard. What are you doing to build the culture because it's one thing to say, "Hey, let's have a great culture of really tough people? We're going to go make a difference in the world." That's what every one of us wants as an entrepreneur. How do we actually make it happen, Darryl?

Darryl: I hear you. It's a really good question. We've learned some really good lessons and great takeaways. One of the things is that we've learned that we have to empower the team. Culture really does start with leadership, the CEO, the COO. We're the enablers of culture. We empower it. It goes in the direction that we set for it, but we don't actually make it happen.

We've had a lot of success in appointing culture ambassadors. This is an idea that I poached from a really good friend of mine who's also in Mastermind Talks, Jason Atkins from Incentives 360. He's just a phenomenal guy, 140 employees, and fantastic culture in his company. They run a campaign where there's an election that everybody has to vote and do video interviews that get posted out to the rest of the company about, "If I was voted as the Culture Ambassador, this is what I would do for company culture," and all that stuff.

The interesting thing that happens is we used to spend a lot of money on free lunches and free Red Bull bowl and free coffee. That stuff all costs money, but when the Culture Ambassadors come in, they actually look at that stuff and they say, "You know, we could get way better bang for our buck if we spent it on this or that." They take the initiative and they go out and they create a dialogue and Survey Monkey surveys with the employees and they say, "What do you want? What do you really care about? Would you be willing to give up the free Red Bulls if we did this instead?"

Taking culture and actually putting it as a line item on the PNL, giving it a budget, set budget to this group of people that are very passionate about it, you turn it into a big celebration. They win the election, and it's a big celebration. By the way, these people aren't paid extra. They're doing it as a labor of love because they really care about it. They're responsible for going and making sure that again, according to the vision and the values and the purpose and our big audacious goals like Google talks about that we're creating, they go and they make it happen.

They're having the conversations, and they become the glue, like the water in that aquarium that is fresh and clean and oxygenated, and keeping everyone performing at a high level. I can't say enough about the importance of empowering people, asking people, "What are your values?" Even in an anonymous survey that you sent out to everyone, "What are your values? What is the most important to you as a person?"

Sometimes it's shocking what comes back to you as feedback, and that helps you to really tailor what it is that you're going to do with the ambassadors and pushing the culture out.

That's been absolutely huge for us, empowering the individuals to go and make the leadership's vision happen.

John: I love this, Darryl, because really, one of the things as being a CEO, you've led many organizations, I have too. You want to inspire your team. You really want to make a difference but you can't do everything. One of the things is you got to stop, all of us have to stop trying to do everything because we've got talent all over the place. I love the idea. I haven't heard that before, having the Culture Ambassadors because what we all care about in today's world, we're all spending a lot of time at work.

We all want... I mean, you don't have to be a CEO, you don't have to be an EVP, and everybody wants to make an impact. They want to have a great environment to work and make a difference in the world. You can harness those people who are most passionate, who are able to articulate it. Boy, I mean, that really sounds like that's coming together very well. If somebody were going to start that, what would be the starting point to reach out to their team, and have somebody raise their hand to be that Culture Ambassador?

Darryl: We're big fans of corporate social media, replacing e-mail with corporate social media. For us, it started out as a post that we made in the Watercooler section of our corporate social media. The buzz started right away. We said, "Hey, here's what we're going to do. This is the vision of the business. It's all clearly articulated and it's spelled out. These are our values. This is what we really care about. We want culture ambassadors. If you think you've got something to say what you would do if you are in-charge of culture, what you would do, we want to hear your story. Record a little video on your iPhone, your computer or whatever, upload it to this Watercooler and start campaigning." Then we started the voting process.

Again, for us because we're a technology company, we did the voting process in our corporate social media where people can go and vote on candidates and they're out there lobbying and campaigning with their peers. It turns into a lot of fun. Again, you make it a really celebratory moment for the people who win. Some of the other companies, my peers, people that I talk to, they've done things like flying the culture ambassadors down to a Zappos boot camp on culture or flying in some consultants who talk a lot about culture and letting them take two days off to really just immerse themselves in that world.

It doesn't have to be that high-tech. It can actually be very low-tech. Set up a white board with some columns on it, and let people go in and vote for who they want to vote or set up an anonymous Survey Monkey. There's lots of ways to go and do it.

By the way, John, I find that this is just as important with the clients that you decide to work with outside the company as it is inside the company. What I mean by that is that we go through a process not just of getting the donkeys out internally. We also fire clients that we

believe don't align well with our core vision. It's really hard especially when you're a startup to let go of revenue like that.

I got the idea from Seth Godin. He talked at a conference. I had the privilege of meeting him in New York a while back. He told me a story about a client, and it was one of the largest sources of revenue that he had in his bookbinding company for book marketing and publishing books, but they were so litigious. There was constantly a threat of the acts and the guillotine hanging over their head, and it started to impact the culture of his business that all of his employees the way they started to behave, it started to affect the way they treated other clients. Everything was about covering their own butts all the time.

He took a really tough decision to give away a massive chunk of his revenue, taught them everything they needed to know to go and replicate what he had, but he said, that was the point when he fired that client that was like a culture vampire from the outside. Their business shut up. Within two years, they were at 400% revenues of where they were before they had fired that client. He said, it was one of the single most impactful things that happened.

This idea of culture, obviously, it starts in its most important insight, creating the unified team that's working together. You can't overlook the impact of who you choose to work with outside.

John: We do a lot of research on this, and releasing inappropriate clients is one of those big upward ticks. It's not only... While we lose revenue, all of us works so hard to get top-line revenue but we don't realize particularly if it's affecting the senior leadership, oftentimes, it's really affecting the teammates, and it just can be unbelievably disruptive as Seth was saying there.

I'm not going to let you off, Darryl. You're too good. We're talking about a soft subject, and I don't think of you as a soft, fuzzy guy at all, but this is the reason why we're talking it is we both love result, and you're getting result. I also want to go to another way that you're getting results which is data. I mean, today's world, your business is just all about data, and you help fellow entrepreneurs using it effectively.

I know over the last year, the explosion of data, I track every little... I have so much data and its hard turning that data into knowledge and wisdom and actionable. How do you really use... How would you recommend to your fellow entrepreneurs to use data effectively to make smart decisions?

Darryl: Really, it starts with measuring like crazy. It's easier now than it ever was. When we first started measuring, we had to do it the hard way. We had our own silo of information. The challenges a lot of e-commerce marketers, they're starting with a very small piece of business. It's very hard to optimize a trickle, but it's very easy to optimize a flow.

For us, what we found is a book business needed to be at about a thousand customers that you're billing on a recurring basis before you can get in there and start to optimize it with our tools. It started to change. That's no longer the case. You can now do these data appends. There's a lot of databases depending on the verticals that you're in. If you're in a direct response, you can be going out to Targus and AmeriBase. If you are doing direct marketing in the mail, you can be working with Abacus and I-Behavior.

In fact, we have one direct marketing entrepreneur, an e-commerce company that we're working with. They actually got their response ratios on their direct mail marketing pieces to increase by 250% over six months by working with companies like Abacus and I-Behavior to send them all the data on the people that are responding, and have those companies come back and say, "This is what we know about the customers that your product is resonating with, and you should be targeting more of these kinds of companies." If you're in the online...

John: Darryl, I'm going to interrupt just for a second. We've done that and we've had over 500% increase.

Darryl: There you go.

John: I want everybody to be paying attention to this because this was something that I wish I had known earlier. It's one thing that collect the data and make it useful. When we talk about appending, we're reaching out to some other group that has information about those individuals. Darryl, my experience is for really nominal cost. I mean, there's huge expense. We can accomplish a lot. I interrupted but I just wanted to ... Boy, if there's a time to pay attention to this because I see so many people collecting data, including myself that we're all wondering, "Okay. How can we use it more effectively?" This is the answer.

Darryl: I'm really happy that you jumped in with that. That's great validation. We've also seen a lot of our online marketing companies have great success, similar results to what you're talking about, John, with LiveRamp and Neustar. If you're doing a lot of work on Facebook, you can get great profiling and segmenting from eXelate.

There's all these companies out there that can feed you in extra data. Really, it's just about, "Do you care enough to pay attention? Do you want to go through that build measure or learn feedback loop and iterate on what you're doing based on that data?" That's I think the even more important thing. The data is available, what are you going to do with it? Are you running on systems? Do you have a culture in your business that celebrates testing, iterating on things, taking this knowledge and actually putting it to good use, learning? It becomes a momentum thing. Momentum builds momentum; success builds success. You really start to flow down that way.

We've had some really fantastic results from just focusing on testing. That's really why we ended up building a lot of our own proprietary systems in-house because as we were learning things, for example, I know more about you as a customer. I can go out to all these third parties that I recommended, but still for us, the single most powerful indicator that we have in the e-commerce business about what kind of customer you're going to be is the first six digits of your credit card. I know if your credit card starts with 5332355 that that means that I want to throw the kitchen sink at you. It's up-sell, cross-sell, down-sell. I want to take my most expensive ways of engaging with you by phone or anything else because you are a golden customer.

If you have another six digits in your pocket, a number that I won't mention, I know that I need to treat you with kid gloves, put you in a completely different tailored funnel on the backend for customer service to make sure that we're not ending up with charge backs or maybe I'm just going to sell you different products that are at a lower price point or might have lower margins, but I know it's going to be better tailored to your needs.

The first six digits of the credit card is called the Bank Identification Number. Customers that have a Bank of America platinum credit card behave very, very differently from someone who let's say has an HSBC Nevada debit card or a JP Morgan Chase Visa debit card. Again, we had the luxury of being able to pull trends like that because we had millions and millions of records of e-commerce clients that we were able to pull together.

There are third parties out there that are starting to pull together that data. Even if you have a very small amount of customers in your own business, you can get a huge lift by going on to those third parties and say, "I don't have enough data to learn this myself. Teach me what I can learn based on these customers, score them for me, pay this nominal cost." Sometimes it's pennies for record, and then use that. That's the key. Use it to actually go tailor your marketing efforts, so that you're offering the best and most lucrative and high-margin products to the right people and not to the other ones.

John: Let's dive a little further into this, Darryl because this is to me, this was a big lesson over the last few years that I've learned this whole concept of lead scoring where both with your own data as well as appending the data, the ability to really judge the qualifications. I'm going to go two matrix. I don't know what you do, but what we do is we're looking, "Okay. What is their qualification where we have the ability through outside data to be able to tell and profile them so we know roughly their income, their pattern for the type of businesses we're doing?"

The second thing we look at is we're looking at level of engagement, how are they interacting with our businesses. The ability to segment that and have campaigns, I mean, I got to say, it's changed our lives here. I feel like we're just getting started on it. Maybe you can talk about

how you see other entrepreneurs doing this and doing it well because I didn't know what lead scoring was a few years ago. I mean, Targus is one of the groups, I mean, I looked at how they could profile for next to nothing 50 different profiles for financial services. They would identify individuals. One, whether you're flying around in private jets or the other, whether you're on the verge of filing bankruptcy and everything in between. For all of us as entrepreneurs, how valuable is that to know immediately? It's huge.

Darryl: Absolutely. We've got case study after case study that we've been putting together. I have a division of my business where it's just a fund sort of side business. It's much more quality over quantity, but we act as a third party administrator running the back office for some e-commerce partners that we handpick and select where we want to really help them out. We do all these modelling for them on the backend.

We've seen significant lift in top-line revenue per customer, for a thousand customers. Gross margin has been increasing which by the way, a rule of thumb if anyone listening has an e-commerce business, there's a lot of great content that's been published on HubSpot about this, but a good rule of thumb is that your e-commerce business needs to be running at a minimum 70% gross margin. If it's not, you really need to get in there and do some optimization because you're not going to be able to spend the money that you need on your acquisition, but you get so much more bang for your buck once you've done that on your acquisition by doing this lead scoring, by understanding.

Then what do you do once you have that data? There's a few things that we do. We take the top 15%. Once we've scored all of our customers, we look at right now, I think it's about 13 different data elements, and a lot of them are the same ones that you talked about: first six digits of the credit card, area code and zip code, how many times did they log in to the website, how many times have they been visiting our website before actually signing up. Tracking all of that information, how are you going to know if you're not tracking it?

It starts with tracking all that information, profiling these people based on your internal data. Then once you've got that, we turn it, we flatten that data out, and we turn it into a score, one to 10. We take the top 15% highest profitability, lowest risk customers, and we put them into an outbound dialing campaign where we try to get them on the phone, and we talk to them, we thank them for being our members. That's when we go into the up-sells, cross-sell, and down-sells. We make sure that what we're offering them is relevant.

Again, you go out to these third parties. You learn about who they are, someone who's flying a private jet, someone who has a pet, pet as a cat. The amount of data that you can get from people now is crazy and then, "Well, we've got really great pet insurance. We got this pet club. You know what? We're going to give this to you for free just as a special thank you for being with us." You got a customer for life after that.

The bottom 15% most risky customers, we also do outbound campaigns on them but it's about holding their hand, doing fraud scrubbing, making sure that we've got the right customers on the books. In e-commerce, we struggle a lot with charge backs, so being able to mitigate that risk, we've significantly reduced charge backs. I can give you exact numbers of some of the case studies if you're interested on what we do, but there are massive impacts that we've been able to have in increasing revenues and lowering the risks.

John: We're all in commerce. Whether you're in e-commerce, you're in commerce, and all these things apply. This is really powerful. Darryl, I'm going to switch to another segment and this is the Book of the Day.

Darryl, you are a lifelong learner, that's why we're hanging out together at Mastermind Talks. You're out there making a big difference. What would you recommend to your fellow entrepreneurs that they should be reading?

Darryl: It's a book that I wish that I would have read a lot earlier in my career. I have an e-commerce product that got really passionate about. I invested seven digits into it, and it completely flopped and failed. I haven't completely given up on it. We just recently resurrected it using the principles from this book, The Lean Startup by Eric Ries.

If you're interested in getting a start-up and really making sure that you avoid the waste that I went through in that particular product, I can tell you already early on, we're seeing so much greater ROI by applying the principles that we learned in that book for how you want to get a product out there, especially something that's direct to consumer-facing. The principles worked just as well in B2B and for non-profits. I can't say enough good things about what we've learned from that book.

John: It is a great book. Let me go to the next segment. This is the Application of the Day. On your smartphone, what would you be recommending to your fellow entrepreneurs?

Darryl: I love Pipedrive. I had such a horrible time organizing all of my Biz Dev, and we're all out there and we're forming great relationships with people. I dumped stuff in Trello, and then once it's in Trello in my task list, now what do I do with it for actioning. Pipedrive has been transformational for me. The desktop app is great, but having it all synced right there as a smartphone app, the dashboards, I feel like nothing slips between the cracks anymore. I'm not losing track of people. It's really been a life-changer for me.

John: I'm not familiar with that one, so I'm going to take a look at that. Let's go to the next segment which is Resources. We've been talking about a lot about what you're doing. Tell me a little bit about your business, and I'm going to put up on the screen your corporate website.

Darryl: Tungsten Revenue has a couple of divisions. One is the e-commerce division where we act as a third party administrator and we run the back office on a profit share. It's never a revenue share like a lot of TPAs do, Third Party Administrators. We actually always do ours on a profit share because I find that alliance are interest much better. The more profit you make, the more profit we make. We're in this together.

The second division is the SaaS division where all the technology and tools that we leverage in our own e-commerce efforts as well as in our third party administration, we're really taking them and spiking them out. We're making a big play right now. We formed a new joint venture relationship with a Fortune300 financial institution to do something. It's never been done before, opening up bank accounts electronically and real-time in all 50 states, and leveraging that to completely automate and turn a very paper-process and the payment of insurance premium especially major medical healthcare and turning that into a completely electronic process and between the payroll, the insurance carriers, the employers and the employees.

I'm really excited about that. Then obviously, applying our data-driven skills and all of our analytics into optimizing that business. We got the technology and we've got the e-com division.

John: Darryl, how would they reach out to you if they want to, if somebody was interested in that service to explore that further?

Darryl: The Contact Us page on Tungstenrev actually comes to my personal inbox. I don't screen it. I like to receive those contacts myself. You can also go to my About Me page. You can find that on Google just by Googling for Darryl Hicks. You can see some of the videos and talks I'm giving. Obviously, a link to this wonderful podcast will be on there, and a few things like that, but it's pretty easy to find me or just e-mail me at dhicks@tungstenrev.com.

John: Darryl, this is great. Let me go to the last segment here. This is the Takeaway. How we can accelerate? I've got a whole bunch of notes. This has been one that you definitely should go at aesnation.com. Get the show notes, download the transcription. We'll have all the links to everything we talked about because there were a lot of great ideas there.

Number one, Darryl talked about the power of culture. One of the first things is get rid of the culture vampires. That's critical. It's so freeing. He talked about it not only as employees or contractors but also as clients. Inappropriate people are inappropriate no matter what function they are with you. They will make a huge difference.

Make sure that you really do care about the culture and don't take it all on your own. Enroll your team and let them run with it. Find the ambassador. I just love that idea. Darryl, I will be putting that into action.

One of the reason I'm going over the key takeaways is so that all of us, this podcast, this time together, it's great to have Darryl and I talking to each other, sharing. We do it, we've done it over dinner. This could be we're doing it in the mornings over a cup of coffee here, but what it is sharing it with 10,000 of our fellow entrepreneurs. We want you to take action so you can have the success you want.

Also, what I really love is we talked about the culture side, but the data side and this is where if you are not using data as a full advantage, and probably none of us are using it to full advantage, but how can we go ahead and make better decisions. I love that in our group we no longer debate whether, "Well, you should do this," or "You should do that." Everything's split tested and you have the marketplace tells us. There's never been a better time to be an entrepreneur to be segmenting our data, being very focused on who our ideal clients are, really delivering a great experience, and using a different segmentation services, the appending services that Darryl talked about.

Darryl, this has been phenomenal. I want to thank you. I want to encourage everyone out there to take what Darryl shared with us, and go out execute. Your clients, your future clients, those strategic partners, all your teammates, your partners, your shareholders, they're counting on you. Don't let them down. We wish you the best of success.

A Second Opinion on Your Finances

A Complimentary Service from Financial Advisor Select for the Members of AES Nation

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John Bowen
Founder and CEO
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