

EPISODE 201

#### Joseph Kashurba

Show Notes at: http://www.aesnation.com/201





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Best of success.

John Bowen

Co-founder, AES Nation

John J. Bowen Jr.

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John Bowen: I have a special treat for you today. One of the challenges of entrepreneurs is we always want to get our message out. One of the most powerful tools we have is our website, but I'm very much like you ... One of the things that we're all doing is running really hard in the business, we want to serve our clients, deliver a lot of value, but we miss a huge opportunity for really making sure our website is updated to do what we want to do and to be really effective. And today I've got a fellow entrepreneur, a remarkable entrepreneur, introduced to me from Jessica Rhodes. I was asking her, "Who is out there that could really help my fellow entrepreneurs go and make a huge difference with their website?"

And this remarkable entrepreneur, not only does he help fellow entrepreneurs, but he teaches the other web designer, web masters and design agencies how to build great businesses serving us. If you've been wondering, and I know you have ... I mean, I just, matter of fact, updated my website, but if you're wondering whether your website is really serving you well and serving your community well, you don't want to miss this. I'm John Bowen, co-founder of AES Nation, and we are all about accelerating your success and making a huge impact. Stay tuned.

I am so excited to have you here. You came strongly recommended, we didn't have a chance to work together, and had a little chance before we turned on the cameras to have a discussion, and you got some great insights you're going to be sharing. First of all, thank you for joining us.

**Joseph Kashurba:** Absolutely, thanks so much for having me, John.

**John:** Joe, one of the things I always like to do is to start out ... We all get ... Very few of us wake up at age of five and want to be this type of entrepreneur. You started earlier than most do, and I'd love to get the backstory of kind of how you got to where you are today.

**Joseph:** Yeah, absolutely. First off, you mentioned being an entrepreneur at five. When I was five the thing that I wanted to be was I wanted to own a cheese factory. I already had that entrepreneurial mindset, but we didn't end up going in the cheese direction.

John: I've always had a fondness for cheese though too.

Joseph: Absolutely.

John: But not at five.

**Joseph:** Basically, I started the web design business in high school. I had a group of friends who had a band and I filmed ... I actually started as a video production business, I filmed their band playing at a restaurant and sold videotapes to their parents. And that was my first real

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entrepreneurial endeavor, and that sort of morphed into a web design business as I had to learn to build a website for that video production business. And I never got any video production clients, but I started getting web design clients. And then it was something all through high school and college that I did on the side, sort of freelance work, and then after college ... I graduated college ... I had a start-up company in college that sort of fell apart graduation week, and so I graduated with no job lined up or anything and just had this freelance web design business. And that's when I moved back in with my parents and sort of set up a makeshift desk and office in my mom's basement, and really focused full time on building the web design business. And after a lot of struggle eventually got it to work and started adding in team members and building a virtual team and everything.

John: Now, it's always interesting, and you're probably very fortunate. It didn't probably feel that way, Joe, but failing quick early is much better than doing it later in spectacular size type thing. But one of the things that I want to do ... Because what I loved about your background and what you're doing is the impact you're having and helping not only business owners, like myself, build out their websites, because this is one that's so challenging, but also, you're teaching the other designers how to do it. And as a fellow entrepreneur who's not good at this ... I'm a good technology user, but I'm not ... I'm a decent marketer, but I'm a financial guy primarily. And, all business owners have one thing they're really good at, and very few are website design.

I want to go through some questions. These are ones that have I've always thought about, and I know these are lessons that you've learned. But one of the things ... When we were talking kind of getting prepared for the interview, one of the things we talked about, the difference of traffic versus conversion, and getting really clear what you're looking to accomplish in your website. And I've never had anybody ask me that first question and I thought, "Whoa, that's a pretty good one" because there's a huge difference here depending on what's going on. But give us some framing. As we're thinking about, okay, we're getting ready to update our website, why are we asking this question traffic or conversion first?

Joseph: Yeah. I think it's a important distinction to have, that if you want to generate sales or leads online there's the two pieces, there's traffic, which is how many people actually go to your website, and there's conversion or conversion rate, which is does your website actually get those people to call you or fill out a form? And if you have one without the other, you don't get anything. And I think a lot of people think, "Okay, I'm going to put up a website and all of a sudden I'm going to get sales or leads, and that's the conversion piece, right, there's the ability for people to call you or fill out a form, but there's not a traffic piece, there's no way to actually get people to the website. And so, I think it's just important that you're always thinking about both of those and understanding the distinction.

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And so, then if you're looking to get a website built or if you're looking at doing anything, whether it's SEO or digital marketing, you're thinking about "Is this helping my conversion? Is it helping my traffic? What am I actually trying to do here?" And you might be in a situation where you're already doing a lot of marketing, that could be anything from billboards to online marketing to anything, and you don't need to focus on the traffic piece because you're already getting traffic through the website, but you need to focus on the conversion piece because nobody's taking action. Or you might be in a situation where you need both, so you need to understand those two pieces and then get clear about what you need more of and what you're actually trying to do. Does that make sense?

John: Yeah, it does. Because, one of the things, I have multiple businesses and I'll just give two. One where I have the privilege of coaching some of the top wealth managers really in the world and we're the largest organization doing that, and there I don't need traffic. I mean you can always use more traffic, but I'm known in that audience, we've got a good flow of attention to our website, at the same time conversion is very important. On the other hand, AS Nation started out kind of as a hobby interviewing really remarkable entrepreneurs like yourself, and it's now really morphed into a business where we're doing all kinds of research on entrepreneurs and helping them, really successful business owners, take where they are and use that research of what we do with the super-rich, people with \$500 million or more, kind of family office ultra-wealthy business owners, to use those secrets to become seriously wealthy, to accelerate that personal wealth. Because we can do it in our business, but a lot of times we don't build the wealth outside.

And that one, no one knew us, so suddenly, we had to think of ... It's great, we could have the best conversion marketing sales funnel on the website but if nobody comes it doesn't make any different. And it's so important for us to think through ... Really, this is such a fundamental issue, and it's usually we need to turn on both faucets, but ones more important than the other because if spend too much time on one then we can't have the other be as effective.

Joseph: Yeah. And I think this piece is one of the biggest things that's both people looking to buy websites and people selling websites, web designer make the mistake of. What I see so often is the business owner says, "I want more leads," or "I want more sales", the web designer doesn't explain the different between traffic conversion and conversion and just says, "Okay, I'll build you a website." And then the business owner's not happy because they don't get more sales than leads, and nobody's happy in the situation. On both sides it's a important thing.

**John:** Okay, so number one, we talked about then traffic versus conversion, getting clear on that. And really number two, once we get clear on that what is the ultimate goal when you're helping somebody design a website? And I think this is so fundamental, but what happens is

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it gets lost and we want to have these pretty things along the way. But when they're thinking about what is their goal, what should they be thinking about, Joe?

Joseph: I think they should be thinking about one goal, right? It's not just to get your name out there and have a bunch of information out there, it's what is the one particular service or product that you want to sell, what is the one particular action that you want their visitors to take? Do you want them to call you? Do you want them to fill out a form to request a quote? Do you want them to schedule an appointment? Really think about sort of both those levels. What's the product and service you're selling, and then what's the particular action you want them to take? And oftentimes, I talk to business owners that have never really thought about that, "Okay, what do I actually want the person to do?" And they haven't really thought about it.

John: It's so funny, I'm going to admit some failures on my part, which is always hard to do. It's not hard to find them, it's hard to admit to them having a lot of success in the financial advisor kind of consulting, coaching, training business. And we're really ... I want to be careful saying "well-known", nobody's ever as well-known as they'd like, but we're known in that industry. And I have a good friend, a national branding expert, written a number of books, on TV all the time, and we just happened to get together, and he goes, "Yeah, I'd like to take a look at your website. If you're okay, I'll give you some comments." We're having a glass of wine, he's over at the house. And I kind of hesitantly pull it up and he takes a look at it, he goes, "John, I have no clue what you do."

And what happened was we thought ... We know our audience so well that we had kind of forgot to mention that we were coaching financial advisors. Now, somebody coming in could kind of guess that, maybe, but I think this is one the clear things is we took things for granted, we weren't clear on the goal, we were putting so much information up there and it was real impressive. And he just came up with one little tagline change that almost doubled our business from the website. I mean it was amazing. I really think this is true. Let's go to the next step. And you kind of touched on this, and to me they're kind of combined, what's the goal and then what's the call to action? Because as entrepreneurs normally you have more than one product or service, you want to have the laundry list on the website and everything else, and yeah, that doesn't always work.

Joseph: Yeah. Call to action is important. And I think if we're drilling down and looking at that conversion piece, what percentage of visitors take action, having a really strong and clear call to action is probably one of the biggest things that determines that. I've seen websites that were converting maybe one or two percent of people actually into a phone call or into a contact form, and just by putting a big phone number up on the top and saying, "Call now for a free estimate" having a big form right there with a very clear call to action, you can increase that conversion rate from 1 or 2 percent to 10 or 20 percent because now it's very, very clear to

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people how to take that next step, and it's super easy for them to take the next step. That call to action piece is both about what is the call to action? Are they requesting an estimate, an appointment, a consultation, are they buying this? What is it, and then also making it super easy for them to be able to do it. Putting a big phone number, or a big button, or a really simple form right in front of them, so it's easy for them to actually do that thing.

John: And this is one that so many entrepreneurs make a big mistake on. And I've done it several times. We love the look and feel, we want to impress people, we want to establish credibility, so we put a lot of stuff up. And, yeah, we do put our phone number usually really far down on the bottom, we have maybe some button they can do call to action. In the old days ... Nobody reads newsletters anymore, but you could a free newsletter. And the challenge I think is for all of us, we got to make sure that it's easy to do. Anybody on the internet today is so distracted, they've got something else ... They can't find something, the next thing they're looking at is a car or a cat, your competitors. How do you get clients to focus on that, Joe?

Joseph: It's honestly tough sometimes because so many people don't "the a few years back" of "What are we actually trying to accomplish?" And so, when I'm meeting with a business owner, it's often sort of me asking question after question and over and over again, "What are you actually trying to do here? What is the goal here?" Until finally the light bulb goes on and they say, "Oh, we're trying to get more quote requests." "We're trying to get more RFPs" or "We're trying to get more free estimates." And it's almost this epiphany that they have that that's actually what we're trying to do.

And then once that happens then I can show them, well, if you're trying to get more quote requests, the existing website doesn't have a quote request form on it, then doesn't say "Request a quote" anywhere and ... And then we jump sort of to the side of how working with other web designers to help them grow their businesses, I show them how if you can get the business owner to have that epiphany it's easy to then sell the service because you've helped them realize what they're trying to do, and then you've laid out some real tangible things they can do to get more of those quote requests.

John: Well, I mean it's entertaining because this is so often mistakes I made early on, is we do a lot of research and we pile a ton of research ... And definitely the website builds credibility, but then it didn't generate that much business, which is kind of to do all this you got to have ... We've got to find the right clients to raise their hands, so we can deliver value and great value. And what happened was that when we started really being clear ... And I'll take the coaching business, it's just doing a strategy session. Well, we initially did the strategy session and we got flooded with it, but we didn't have as high a quality. And as soon as we just made just a little bit of qualifications ... And on the honor system, there was no way we could proof them coming in the door or anything, but their income levels and type of EPISODE 201

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businesses we could best serve, our requests went done probably over 80 percent. I don't remember the number exactly because this is a while ago, but they were almost ... Over 90 percent were the right clients.

And all of a sudden, we had a great systemic way of starting super conversations with right fit clients, and we could decide together whether we were the right solution. And making those fine-tuning adjustments, being really clear on what we're asking of them or offering to them and how it works, and really not so much the process. I used to get mixed up in the process. They want the results, what are the benefits coming, whether it's a strategy session, if I'm downloading an infographic or an ebook, that type of thing? Has that been similar, Joe, on your side?

Joseph: Yeah. The fine tuning, that's a good point because you start thinking, "Okay, what's the action, what's the call to action?" And you can really drill it down to exactly what you want to do. And so, as an example, we work with a lot of manufacturing and industrial companies that the main thing they're looking for are RFPs and RFQs, Request for Proposal, and Request For Quotation. And in a lot of cases when we really drilled down to how that actually works, they want somebody to send over a document with all their specs and everything and requirements, and so oftentimes that contact form on the homepage we add in a file upload field or some other questions so that the kind of RFPs, the kind of RFQs that they get are all the information that they actually need to send over the quote or the proposal. And that's something that's not happening before. Before people were emailing or maybe somebody calls, they don't have the right information and its sort of a mess. When we can really drill down to exactly what that is, it makes things so much smoother.

John: Well, and I mean it serves kind of both sides, too, which is really great because the person or the company requesting the proposal, they're really clear, they know what they want or at least they think so at that point in time, and they're looking for the right vendor, partner, sales person to help them through this, and if you have a really general website and it's not clear you're going to be helpful, they're not going to reach out. But if you have a compelling process that looks like it's going to get the results they want, and you make it easy for them to do ... All of us want to make ... Our lives are not easy, I mean there's enough stuff going on, anybody that can help us along the way that looks like they're intelligent and they've got a good follow through and they're going to deliver on their promises, that's real value. And that could be communicated in a website before the sales person even has a chance to have that conversation.

Joseph: Yeah, absolutely.

**John:** Yeah. Let's take it a step further. One of the things we were talking about, too, before we turned on the camera, because what we all want to do is have the website accomplish a

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lot, and the temptation is to have it do too much. But now so many of us have gotten so focused on creating the marketing sales funnel and leveraging a website for that, that we forget that the website can do more than just that. Help us out, should we be thinking anything else, and if so, what should we be thinking about?

Joseph: I think most businesses there are probably a whole variety of ways to save the time and make things easier and things like that via the website, and sometimes people don't think about those things. So, I'm always talking to business owners about "Are there people always calling your business for directions or for answers to these different questions or things like that, information that we can get up on the website and then you're not spending the extra time worrying about that." Are there things they can go to the website and download? We build a lot of internal members areas for businesses where ... I worked with a healthcare company that had different HIPAA forms and different things that their different traveling employees needed to download, and it was this whole big complicated thing of printing them out and faxing them and stuff. And we just made a member's area where the employees could log in and download that information and it saved everybody a ton of time and paper and things. And so, I just always encourage people to think about business-wise how can we save some time with the website, how can we make things easier for clients, employees, via the website? What can you do besides just the marketing and sales piece?

John: Yeah, no, I mean it's so important for all of us to get very systemic when we're delivering our client experience. We have the opportunity to deliver a lot of value, the more value we deliver and get compensated for, we can build great businesses, so we got to nail that experience. But a big part of that is using technology, and the website's kind of that core way of doing it. And we used to have all these different ways that clients could go to different things and, just like you said, is let's have a client area that they can go to and it can access, they don't have to remember all these different passwords and so on. And then also, most of us are good thinking about the client, we may not do it but we at least think about them.

Second part though is I think a big part. I have virtual companies as well and they're all over the place, people working with us, we got about 50 people working with us, and what we look at it is making it really easy for them. And the website is the hub for that too, for the business they're involved in. And thinking through what are the operational processes that we can make systemic, so we don't make mistakes, so it's easy, it's effortless, so people want to work with you and they enjoy that experience, both clients and employees. And it sounds like that could be a really powerful part.

Joseph: Absolutely. And even on the recruiting side, I have a lot of companies that I talk to that they tell me that one of the main things they want on the website is they want make it look like a great place to work, have lists of job fairs they're going to be at, make it easy for

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people to apply online, and they're focused on that whole side of things. And so there's a lot of things you can do like that to help bring in those good people in the first place.

**John:** Well, and we do that too. We found it to be extremely valuable. And then what's so good is you can put a video of what exactly you're looking for. We can record a video like we're recording this video podcast and it's just one and done. They have it and they can see it. One of the big breakthroughs we had is that we now request them to do a video back, and by doing that we get about 10 percent of the applicants and, again, an independent contractor in our situation, but I'll call them applicants, and they're all qualified though.

We give them seven questions to answer, tell them not to do a high-quality video, use your smartphone, do this, and you really see whether ... And for non-creative type roles, it's certainly non-video production, and it's just saved us so much time it's ridiculous. And that's all done through the website, too, so it's pretty amazing what you can do. One of the things you told me, and we were talking about kind of bringing this all together, and it's a big one. As we're updating it's the next version of your website, it's not the final one. Give me a little background on what you're thinking on that, Joe.

Joseph: Yeah. That's an important one in a couple ways. One is that I've seen so many web design projects that have stalled out or taken forever to get done, not because the technical work's taking a long time but because the organization, the business owner's trying to get everything perfect. They're trying to get all the wording perfect, all the photos perfect, figure out exactly how they want to do things. And one, it's just sort of a pitfall to avoid. And the other things it you want to get that website launched to see what happens. Maybe people ... Rather than spending too much time on it we need to see what happens and get some visitors to go to it and see do they fill out the form, are they confused by this or that? And we may have to go and change some things.

And then the other thing is that the internet is changing. Just a couple years ago websites weren't mobile friendly, and now they absolutely have to be. And just a couple years ago they weren't linked to Facebook or LinkedIn or Instagram, and now everybody has all those links. And so, no, there's no way around the fact that in a couple years things are going to change a lot, so let's get this website up, let's get some visitors to it and see what happens, what adjustments we need to be making, and then realize that we're going to keep making changes as the technology changes and the environment changes online.

John: Yeah, I'll tell you, I couldn't agree more. Because, first, I do like perfection, I've never achieved it in anything in my life. We're all working toward perfection, we never quite get three. Website is one that can be a huge sinkhole. And one of the best marketing advice I ever got is when you get to about 80 percent of what you want, launch it, because nothing happens until you launch it. And I think the most important part of what you talked about, Joe,

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is the market feedback. You'll find ... I'll give an example where we did something that I thought was brilliant, advice I got, and it worked. And then we decided to improve it, and we went from a 25 percent conversion, which is a huge number, to 2 percent.

And more often I go the other way, we're incrementally improving, but this is just last week so it's like, okay, stop doing that, go back to what worked. And you don't know that unless you go and test this stuff. And this is why I love digital, I mean it's so easy and it's relatively inexpensive. If we stop having all the change orders, get it out, see what's working, and then "This isn't hitting what we expected, but we have a baseline now, our control that we can measure against and then see if we can beat it versus this magical thing that we're doing." And I know it's got to be frustrating on your side because you want to serve the entrepreneurs but if they don't get the website up, nobody gets served.

Joseph: Yeah. And that's a frustrating ... I see that so often where the project is just stalled out, trying to perfect and things. And then what you said about the conversion rate is so true. I consider myself pretty proficient at building websites and marketing and landing page conversion and things, and still I'm often surprised by, "I thought that version would perform better than it did," or "I thought this." And that's just sort of the nature of marketing. Even the best marketing people are still only right a percentage of the time, and a lot of it's that experimentation and testing.

John: I'll just give another example. I was at a workshop in Las Vegas with a bunch of talented marketing people, and I considered myself reasonably good at it, and we have a website micro-site that's converting really good, and for a project we're doing. And one of the guys looks at it, he goes, "Nah, not very good." I go, "Look at the numbers." He says, "You could do better." And he just changed the headline and I go, "You know what, I don't like it." He goes, "It's not whether you like it, it's whether they like it" you know, the market we were doing. And it increased conversion 50 percent.

Joseph: Wow.

John: Yeah. Again, you don't get these too often, so I want to be careful, but I'm sharing the wow stories. And, matter of fact, I ran it by my internal team and they said, "Are you sure you want to use this, because this isn't the language we would normally ..." And I said, "Let's test it. I want to just show this guy he's wrong." So anyway, I still owe him the call to tell that him he slightly outperformed on this here. But how you do that testing, too? How do you help an entrepreneur? Are they doing good analytics? Some business owners do, some don't, but I don't really hear very many people ... We talk about revenue, but we don't talk about the analytics on our website very often.

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Joseph: Yeah. In most cases I've seen business owners do nothing. I mean maybe they have Google analytics or something like that set up and they're sort of looking at some of those numbers almost as a hobby or something, very few business owners are doing anything in the way of just getting a basic sense of even roughly those conversion numbers. How many visitors are you getting, how many leads are you actually generating? So that's the first thing I want to do is just let's run this thing for a couple months and actually keep track of the leads that came in right ... Keep track of the phone calls that came in and ... I sort of consider it a success if I can help a business owner even get a little bit of a sense of what's going on, and then in a few months we can look, "Okay, do we want to Tweet something or not?" I think most people, even a little bit of doing that's going to really help things.

John: I tell you, I didn't do it for most of my business career, I managed money and we were analytical to the nth degree on every statistic, and then finally somebody convinced me that, "Hey, we should be doing this" and we started doing weekly meetings where we reviewed the high level ... Because in today's world you get so much data. And we use a marketing automation system we do more enterprise level, but with Salesforce. And that combination of seeing the statistics and it becomes very easy to test ... Don't test everything, test one variable and you could just kind of incrementally improve. And it's the easiest thing in the world to do, but we just don't do it, we're off to the next adventure, most entrepreneurs, the new shiny thing.

Joseph: And the other thing that I see that I think is important is focusing on the right numbers, because at the end of the day what matters is the actual leads generated and the actual sales made, right? But people spend a lot of time looking at almost sort of ... I heard the "vanity metrics" like how many likes they got on Facebook or what the cost per click is on their ad campaign, all these metrics that may be related but may not really be related to actual leads and actual sales in revenue.

**John:** Yeah, I've had some campaigns where I'm really liked, which is great, but you know what, the only thing that really counts is the ability to deliver new perspective clients raising their hands, your sales team taking them through. The cost of acquisition, keeping that reasonable.

And this is where to really look at the analytics. I mean it's great to have a million people coming to your website, but if there's only one person that's qualified, who cares, type thing. I want to kind of pull this all together on resources. And, Joe, you have a website, let me pull up your website here. The web design one. I mean, Joe, you have all my favorite things, race cars, pasta, all these different websites that you're working on. Tell our fellow entrepreneurs what the site is. And, again, all the links are going to be at AES Nation, but tell me what you do and how you're doing it here as a resource for them?

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**Joseph:** Yeah, it's webdesign.com, and that's the website for the web design agency where we can help you with web design or online marketing campaigns. And on there you can get some information about pricing as well as some ... There's some blog entries where I go into a little bit more detail on that traffic and conversion piece and some of those other things.

**John:** I'm going to flash on the screen ... One of the reasons I got attracted to reaching out to you, Joe, and it's been a great interview, is your other site where you're out there teaching other freelance web designers and digital agencies how to really serve their clients well in this. That's something ... I mean all of us have hired people who weren't the right ones, so I appreciate you doing that. Okay, let me go to the next one, which is really key takeaways. And I want to just share with you kind of my takeaways. One, we went way too long to update our websites. I just updated ... As a matter of fact, I'm going to flash mine on really quick.

You can go to AES Nation for all the show notes and everything. And what we've done is aesnation.com ... And we've gotten clear, and I'll kind of walk through ... Actually, why don't I do it ... We looked at this and we said, "Traffic or conversion?" In our case we're not looking for the website to generate traffic, we're sending traffic to it, small qualified traffic, and we want to convert the right people, we want to convert it in two ways. And when you look at the website you'll see that. What is the goal? The goal is to kind of separate those people who want to become seriously wealthy, because we can really serve them well with our global concierge service that we have on the financial side for personal wealth. It's just really amazing.

At the same time, we're giving a lot of speeches now at CEO group, so we wanted to create that bifurcation, and you can see that on the website call to action very clear. Once you click those buttons it makes it clear. And then consider what else. What we did ... What else we want, we have all this research, some of it available for free, on business owners and being more successful. And so, we're publishing now each of those books and some of the research is available at a reasonable cost investment, and then the other ... There will always be something available free for our podcasts. And then all the podcasts are there, it's easily searchable, and we're already thinking ... We just published, Joe, last week, the next version type thing.

For all of this you can go to aesnation.com., right above me here. Joe, again, I want to thank you for really sharing the insights of how our fellow entrepreneurs can be extremely successful. And for all our entrepreneurs, remember your clients, your future clients that are going to be coming through the website and your future partners, they all are counting on you, don't let them down. We wish you the best of success.

**Joseph:** Hey, thanks so much for having me.



**EPISODE** Joseph Kashurba

Show Notes at: <a href="http://www.aesnation.com/201">http://www.aesnation.com/201</a>



#### A Second Opinion on Your Finances

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However, you may not be entirely satisfied. You may be wondering if there's a financial advisor who is better-suited to address your family's very specific financial challenges. If so, you are not alone. In today's uncertain economic climate, many successful entrepreneurs are wondering if they have the right financial advisor.

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Best of success,

John Bowen

Founder and CEO

Financial Advisor Select

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