



# channel mastery

Channel Mastery Podcast, Episode #95: Kristin Carpenter Interviews  
Akville Defazio, President of AKvertise, Inc.

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Kristin: Welcome back, everybody, to another episode of the Channel Mastery podcast. I am very delighted today to introduce Akville Defazio who owns the social media advertising agency Akvertise. Did I say it right?

Akville: That is correct. Hi, Kristin.

Kristin: Hi. It's great to have you on. A mutual colleague and friend of ours, Chris Dickerson, who is our integrated director here at Verde, connected us, and I'm so glad he did because your area of expertise is highly sought after by my audience at Channel Mastery, and here we are, middle of the year of 2019, and I thought it would be great to have you on the show to talk with us today about paid socials, specifically on the platforms of Facebook and Instagram. Then, I think, we'll do a supportive role with LinkedIn and Pinterest, and then Twitter, not so much. I'd love to hear why. So, knowing that that's kind of where we're going to go, can you give us a little bit of the background on your company and how you developed your expertise, and we'll jump in from there.

Akville: Absolutely. So, I've been in the industry doing online advertising on search engines and social media channels for the last almost 12 years; however I launched my agency, Akvertise, in 2014, so going on year five and having a great time working with a variety of clients and we specialize primarily in Facebook, Pinterest, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn advertising, and have dabbled in some other channels as well, working with e-commerce brands, mobile apps, and events.

Kristin: Awesome. There's so many ... I love all those platforms. LinkedIn, especially, I think is a great one that we'll be able to talk about today, specifically just from a brand standpoint. So, I'm super excited to get into all of this, but that's one that I just have a personal affinity for. All right. So, with that, let's ... Can you give us kind of an overarching state of, what I call it, paid social or paid traffic on social? Tell me a little bit about where we are with that right now.

Akville: It is growing. I feel like over the last ... I don't know ... decade ... I started off my career on paid search, but as things started shifting with social channels, like Facebook when they went public ... There are businesses wanting/needing to make money, so obviously,

they started at advertising or providing advertising options to marketers. So, once that picked up, it's really continued to gain traction, and not just on that channel. I think a lot of other platforms, like the ones we aforementioned, are also following suit because there's a lot of users, there's a lot of opportunity to target people.

Akvile: At the end of the day, I think they're all really growing tremendously, especially Instagram as of late. So, if you aren't dabbling in, at least, Facebook, it's still a good place to start. It's robust targeting, the least expensive form of online advertising currently, and then working your way up to other channels where you might find your audiences.

Kristin: So, tell me this. I know that a lot of our clients at Verde ... Facebook has always been described as kind of a place you have to be, right? But as Instagram, I think, has really grown and developed just this incredible influence, and it's amazing how much that platform is growing, and obviously we have a lot to talk about in terms of how it's evolving with the ability to actually advertise on it and shop on it, et cetera, where are we with Facebook? It kind of feels like it's the red-headed step child right now.

Akvile: Yeah, especially with all of the privacy fiasco last year that took place and then general population just becoming more aware of how those platforms work and what privacy is and how advertising truly works, I think it's did quite a bit of damage, and unfortunately, Facebook hasn't really learned from their mistakes because there's other things happening, but it seems like a lot of people are gravitating towards Instagram, especially younger demographics, and older ones are coming there because they've lost some trust for Facebook, but they're still there, they're still looking, and they may not be engaging as much as maybe something hot and upcoming, like Instagram, where there's a lot of new features with stories and IGTV coming out. So, I feel like people don't ... haven't connected the dots, at least for the most part, that Instagram is part of Facebook. So, it's interesting to see how people are engaging between the two platforms, even though they're essentially one.

Kristin: Right. I agree. In terms of ... We can talk a little bit about how they're connected from a practitioner standpoint in terms of being able to create the advertising on both platforms, but before we do that, I'm just curious about Facebook. It seems to me like it actually is still very much a place that you have to be in business. The audience is there, undoubtedly, but that newsfeed is super confusing. So, can you talk a little bit about how you can rise above the noise in a way that, as you said, it's affordable, but give us a little bit of strategic insight right now because I feel like it's more than just paying to get views on your posts, right?

Akvile: Yes, very much so. So, Facebook has been devaluing the like over the years and, as you may notice as a business page owner on Facebook, that people seeing your content organically or without doing paid advertising is maybe, if you're lucky, one percent of your actual fans. So, another way to do that instead of just boosting boosts and driving engagement, get them off of Facebook and on your own properties, like your website or your mobile app so then that way you can do a lot more with those people already into your funnel, and something happens to Facebook again in the future, you have those

people tracked, whether it's on your website through a pixel or the tracking code or if you've gotten them in your newsletter for email subscriptions.

Akvile: There are other ways to do that, but to answer your other question of how to stand out in the noise, video content is excellent. Not everyone's doing it yet, and it's a really great way to do that because if you're doing it on mobile, which most people are on mobile devices to browse through Facebook, you're thumb-scrolling, but you need something to catch your attention, so something with subtle motion works very well to at least get people to pause their scrolling and see what you're about, and if you have a good enough message in a video story to convey, then you can get people into your website that way.

Kristin: Is Facebook still doing a lot in terms of policing what you can put in a post to try and get people off of the platform and joining an email list?

Akvile: That's up to you. They're not very friendly with overlay text on any images or videos that you have, but if you put that in your ad copy or use the Call To Action button to sign up and get people to your website, that's a really effective method of doing so.

Kristin: Okay. They are still ... Are they putting any organic muscle, if you will, behind video still or is that not happening?

Akvile: Not so much.

Kristin: Okay. I wasn't sure because I have a feeling ... I hear about that on LinkedIn, but I'm not sure what the [crosstalk 00:07:52]-

Akvile: Oh, LinkedIn. Yeah, LinkedIn's great for that. You still can get a lot of organic reach in comparison to something like Facebook.

Kristin: Is there anything on Facebook that is catering to organic these days?

Akvile: Facebook groups, but there aren't ads in there just yet, but I imagine we'll see that in the near future because it's another area that people are really building out. Instead of having business pages, a lot of businesses ... I've noticed a trend over the last maybe six months, that businesses are starting to build out groups where people can join and they get a lot more organic visibility that way.

Kristin: Interesting. Okay. So, Facebook groups are obviously something that we really want to keep an eye on. All right. Anything else on Facebook before we hop off and get into, I think, what everybody's here to listen to, which is Instagram?

Akvile: I was going to say ... The thing I was going to say is start doing Facebook stories, but one great way is to start doing that on Instagram and then just sharing them over organically through Facebook because a lot of older demographics may not be used to ephemeral or short-form content like we're seeing in stories or similar if you're familiar more with Snapchat where content disappears every 24 hours. But doing those short videos and

then sharing them to Facebook because it's not oversaturated in that medium yet, that's a really great way to introduce that type of content to different demographics that might be on Facebook more so than Instagram and then maybe migrating them over to the other channel.

Kristin: Okay. This is a perfect jumping-off point. So, now, everybody, we're on the continent of Instagram. So, basically, what you're saying is create the content in that ephemeral, short form in Instagram, share it on Facebook. Is that something that you have to use the ad platform for or is it something that's pretty easy to do in terms of just checking a box on Instagram going back over to Facebook?

Akvile: You can do that in the Instagram app in your business account and just click the little Facebook icon in the stories once it's already published on Instagram, and it automatically just shares it if your Facebook page is connected, which most people have theirs connected, if you're doing advertising especially, between the two platforms. But if you want to turn it into ads, within Ads Manager at the ad set level, there is an option to choose the placements that you want your videos to show or even static images, but for stories that are much shorter than some other placements.

Akvile: So, for instance, for Instagram stories, they're 15 secs in duration where Instagram feed is 60 seconds max or on Facebook you can do much longer. I think up to 240 minutes, which, realistically, no one's going to watch a video that long no matter how entertaining, interesting, helpful, useful it might be. So, just put your best foot forward in the first 10 seconds, and I think stories offers a really great opportunity to do that since it is short-form content.

Kristin: Do you have any examples of some clients that you've worked with subject matter that has just made a killer Instagram post in that way?

Akvile: For stories or newsfeed?

Kristin: I would say stories.

Akvile: For stories, just ... So, those are overlay text-friendly, so you can ... Simple things, actually. Just anything that you can just show a picture, maybe you have it move a little bit, but have a strong call to action because you want people to do something other than just either keep watching what the next 15 seconds is or whatever the next post is. But since people are still getting acquainted with ads in stories ... There is that little arrow where you can swipe up, but just if you're reaching a colder audience that might not be as familiar, just do overlay text or arrows or some sort of animation that points to swipe up and indicates that so you can send people to your website. Anything colorful, it's moving, images. You can do images in stories, but video always outperforms that, at least from what we've seen with our clients.

Kristin: I've heard, even just recently, Instagram referred to as a living, breathing look book, if you will, for a brand, right? Obviously,-

Akvile: [crosstalk]

Kristin: Yeah. So, can you talk a little bit about how you think this is evolving for brands now that you can actually buy ads in stories, now that you can have shoppable experiences on Instagram? Can you talk a little bit about just how it's evolved and where you're seeing it go for brands?

Akvile: Absolutely. So, if you worked maybe, say, e-commerce, and you're showcasing your new line of summer clothing or shoes, a really great way to do that through stories is to do lifestyle videos or images of the actual product and then link to that product specifically instead of another broader homepage, because you want people to have a seamless transition to actually acquire that product. If you're doing something with the newsfeed, you can ... They just launched shopping with Instagram, so you can click on organic posts and they have a little shopping icon, it looks like a little bag, in the bottom left corner. Only about 12 brands currently have access to this. They're larger ones, like Nike Women, ULTA Beauty, and some other makeup and apparel brands.

Akvile: So, you can check out on Instagram blog which ones are doing it and then go to their pages and see what it's like so you can start preparing ahead of time for when you might want to explore this when it's available to more businesses on Instagram, which is definitely going to happen since they've announced it quite broadly and just start thinking of the different imagery that you can use and tag different products. Lifestyle images tend to work best because it's native to the platform. You want to see what it's going to look like, so as a consumer, you can imagine that, "Oh, this is what I might look like with that product and it might make me feel a certain way."

Akvile: So, just try to put yourself in the position of the person that's viewing it and what might interest you instead of just thinking ... Actually, a really great example that I saw somebody tweeted yesterday, a little two-strip comic, and it's like how do you think of it as a marketer and advertiser versus how the customer might feel, and it was a drawing of women looking at a mobile over a baby's crib and it looked really cute, it's a bunch of animals, but then it showed it from the baby's perspective, and it was just the bottoms of all these animals. That's a good way to summarize it, but step out of your role as the advertiser and see what would entice you as a potential consumer.

Kristin: That is a perfect analogy, actually. What I love so much about this example is in marketing, I think we've all ... We know we're supposed to be focusing on a very specific target consumer. We want to get in their heads, we want to finish their sentences, we want them to read our copy or watch our content and feel like, "How are they in my head like that?" Ultimately, what this is enabling us to do is create a visual experience around that that you can shop. That is super powerful.

Akvile: Yeah, very much so.

Kristin: How about a game changer? Yeah. I'm really curious to see if we had ... Nike's a bad example, but if we had a brand that has independent retailers like ... Let's say, for example, our client SCARPA, they have ... I always talk about them in the podcasts. They

probably are going to start being, "Can you talk about a different client?" But I always talk about them because they have a healthy, wholesale business that's independent retailers that have multiple brands that they're carrying. They also sell direct off their website, but they don't have a SCARPA-branded storefront, right? So, if I'm watching this and I'm able to watch this Instagram content and I can shop the feed, that's obviously going to go back to the mothership that SCARPA is. Is there any way that you can actually direct people to a other place that's, like, a brick and mortar store or a different ... even a different e-commerce site?

Akvile: If you have the tracking pixels set up on those sites, you can track those sales, but if it's not on your domain, then you'd go blindly into it, just sending them to another website to shop. You wouldn't necessarily know if something's working or not in terms of your creative, your ad copy, your targeting, and so forth. So, for something like that, maybe a carousel ad would work a lot better because shopping's not available to everyone yet, and if you can't put all the different products within the one image, carousels work better, but you still would need that pixel so you're able to track the people that are clicking on it and how they're ... the actions that they take after the fact.

Kristin: I also kind of have to correct myself there because that's not the best consumer experience. They want to have everything right there at their fingertips. They don't want to have to pop over to a different location. So, that's also really interesting. Okay. Great. So, we have a couple big stalwart brands that have access to this. You and I both know they're going to have a lot more availability, especially for back to school and holiday, I would imagine.

Akvile: Oh, yeah.

Kristin: Do you have any-

Akvile: So, start prepping now.

Kristin: ... insight line on that? What do you mean by prepping? Help our readers understand ... our listeners ... Sorry ... viewers understand how they should be prepping right now in June for what's definitely coming down the pipe probably in a couple weeks, couple months max, I would imagine.

Akvile: So, typically, we start these conversations around this time of the year, if not a little bit earlier even, for the upcoming holiday season because if you're starting in September, you don't have too much time. So, the earlier you can have these conversations with your team or your clients, the better, and to start strategizing, "What type of creatives do we want for which types of products that are coming out?" or, "What kind of promotions do we want to have, especially around Black Friday, as we're leading up to the holidays?" and just start thinking about that because once Instagram shopping is available for everybody, I feel like people are going to really dive into that later this year and utilize it.

Akvile: The advertising landscape changes as a whole around the holidays because costs do go up, competition increases, and there's only a limited amount of advertising space between Facebook, Instagram, or other channels that you're advertising on. So, if you can get ahead of that curve and have a strategy together and launch before it gets too saturated and be rewarded by those lower costs, then you most likely will see better results. So, for something like shopping, as marketers, we're going to see that coming up. I wouldn't be surprised if it came out September for everybody to start launching campaigns.

Akvile: They haven't provided details as to the different specs for the types of creatives you can use or what it's going to look like, but they have announced that if you are doing Instagram shopping, there will be an additional cost for the company that's running the ad because they want to incentivize people to use it and not put those costs on potential customers because when they shop through Instagram shopping, they don't even have to leave the app, they can put their credit card information right within that unit and make it very seamless and easy for them to do that. So, start thinking about the creatives, what type of ad copy you're going to want to use, and the specific products or maybe even services ... Although not for Instagram shopping for services, but different products that you're going to want to have for that time of the year.

Kristin: Okay. This might be a little bit of a left field question, but you just mentioned that the brands are obviously going to have to carry the brunt of the investment on that, which totally makes sense because, again, we're trying to appease and be remarkable to the end consumer. What about influencers today? Are they going to be able to have a shoppable feed? How does that work and [crosstalk 00:18:59]-

Akvile: Oh, yes.

Kristin: So, tell us what your thoughts are on that?

Akvile: So, as of this week, they announced that you might start seeing a lot of more ... a lot more influencer-type of content in stories and in Instagram in general, even from influencers that you are not following. So, Instagram is really making a big push for them because something as big as Kim Kardashian, for instance, people have used ... or brands have used her, maybe other celebrities of that caliber in the past to do different types of ads in their feed; however, they don't convert as well, but it's kind of a ... There's this shift to micro-influencers now, which Instagram is really diving into and taking advantage of showcasing those influencers that might be able to sell products better because people like ... normal, non-celebrity people might be able to relate better to somebody that you can imagine lived down the street from you, that might be similar to you, and that you can afford certain things from them. So, you're going to start seeing a lot more of that.

Akvile: As a brand, if it's relevant to you and what that influencer is doing, start developing those relationships. They're really good, not just for PR purposes, but also to drive sales for your products, maybe get more people to download your mobile apps, and just make it as relevant as you can for that audience using real people.

Kristin: That's such good advice. Wow. Okay. Definitely mark that one. So, anything else? There's so much on Instagram, but is there anything else that our audience needs to really have as a key takeaway right now going into their holiday planning and all this other big, big sales windows on the horizon?

Akvile: Yeah. So, another things that's kind of popping up is IGTV, which is Instagram TV. They launched last year and all the media outlets were like, "Oh, it's YouTube's killer," and-

Kristin: Yep.

Akvile: We haven't really seen that happen. I feel like they launched stories and they got really popular about the same time, and I think there wasn't a very seamless user experience between ... going between those two areas of Instagram and people gravitated more towards the short-form content. So, if you do have longer-form video content, IGTV doesn't have ads yet, but I assume that since Instagram is growing so quickly, they're going to offer ad placements there because they only have two currently.

Akvile: So, if you have longer-form content, start publishing it there organically. You can do 10-minute videos if you are a verified brand. Usually, larger brands have to get up to 60 minutes of video if you want to do that. So, for instance, Lululemon has a really great IGTV channel if you want to check it out just for examples, but they don't promote their clothes, but people are wearing them, and they'll just do 10-minute morning yoga sessions that you can watch and have an instructor teach you. So, just another way to really put your brand out there.

Akvile: Then, do another type of post that links to IGTV from your Instagram page. So, you can do that 60-second video in the newsfeed. Then, there's a button now that you'll start seeing, like the shopping icon where there was a little shopping bag, there's a little TV now. It started popping up in the last month. It says, "See more on IGTV." So, then that way, you could take that short-form content, maybe do a little teaser of something if you're in the B2B side of things, maybe you have a webinar coming up or a conference, or maybe if you're even doing products that you can show a little teaser of like, "Hey, we're launching this new product next week. See more on IGTV." So, it's another way to segment over and get people to see more content to learn about you. So, just think about what you can do there. There's a lot of opportunity.

Kristin: It's almost overwhelming. A lot of the people that listen to this podcast are like, "I'm just trying to keep up with my normal 7 to 9:00 at this time of the year it is with everything we have going on," meaning AM to PM, but they have to make time for this. Before we hit on to some different platforms, let's talk a little bit about the importance of creating this visual content. Why is it becoming even more important and how can busy people on these teams within these brands make time to make the content and maybe take some of the stage fright out of it or the progress over perfection? Maybe we can get that embedded in their head a little bit more.

Akvile: Well, it's funny that ... A lot of people tend to resonate more with raw content where something's overproduced. It tends to, at least from what we've seen, it doesn't

perform as well because people are like, especially when it comes to celebrities and things like that where you're like, "Oh. Maybe I can't afford that," and you start making assumptions. But with video content, you don't need very much. All you need is your phone. Pretty much everyone has one these days. It's a smart phone, has a camera. So, just take that out. There's some really great free and premium apps that you can use just to get started to add any sort of embellishments to it, per se, if you want to do overlay text or different types of graphics or overlays.

Akvile: But just start fresh, get some content recorded, take some pictures. Facebook has a really great free tool that was launched a few months ago where within the ad level where you're creating your ad with the ad content, selecting your creatives, if you don't have any video content, there's an option where you can have static images turn into video, and Facebook will automatically do that for you. So, that's a quick, easy way for you to get started with it.

Kristin: That is genius.

Akvile: Right? There's tons of stuff. Even Taylor Swift, I think, last ... or I guess two years ago at this point when she launched her latest album, she was doing just raw footage off her cell phone that ... She partnered up with AT&T, so they ran these as ads as a promotion for her upcoming album, but even somebody like her is doing just video off of her phone. It's not overproduced and it was just her in the recording studio giving little teasers of her upcoming album. So, just what I often tell smaller business owners is that you don't necessarily have the time, the resources, the staff, so see what bigger brands are doing and save yourself some of those things and just borrow from their playbook and how that can be applicable to your own business and just start small. Just start recording maybe 15-second video until you start seeing all kind of content people are engaging with and just optimize from there.

Kristin: Is now a good time to go onto LinkedIn or is there more that we need to talk about with Instagram?

Akvile: Oh, goodness. I feel like even I could talk about Instagram for days.

Kristin: I know.

Akvile: So, I hope your listeners aren't feeling overwhelmed, but just start with something small and build it from there. It doesn't have to take up too much time. You did ask one question of why people should do that kind of stuff with video.

Kristin: Right.

Akvile: When we see images, we have to interpret them, and it takes longer for our brains to do that psychologically, so if you show somebody something, it saves that middle step and you can manage their expectations better instead of like, "Oh, here's this mobile app," and it's like, "Okay. Great. Well, how does this really work?" If you can show somebody using it, like, "Look how easy," you've already saved that step and you're going to get

people into your funnel a lot quicker instead of having them trying to imagine what it is themselves. If you're on the B2B side of things, I think the stat Forbes put out last year is that, like, 58 percent of executives prefer to watch a video, and that makes sense, right? They're busy, they don't have a lot of time. So, if you can show something very quickly and make somebody's life better, then by all means, try that out over images because that extra effort will be much more worth it.

Kristin: Absolutely. Okay. It's obviously more engaged with, too. The reason I'm so excited to bring up LinkedIn is not only because I just love it personally, but they've introduced so many amazing features. Like you and I talked about at the beginning, you still get some organic push from the actual video on LinkedIn. So, everybody knows that, yet we're still hesitant to shoot a video. Chris Dickerson's like, "What I want you to do is, before every episode of the podcast comes out, just do a 10-second video on LinkedIn talking about it." Have I don't this yet? No. It's been five weeks or more since he asked me to do that, and I think I'm going to make myself do that after talking with you today. All right?

Akvile: Awesome.

Kristin: So, I'm going to start doing that, but it's just literally ... I think that the people listening to the show will relate with me. When you're sitting there, ready to push that button, you're like, "Who really wants to see a video of me talking about this?" Get out of your head and just do it, right? See how it performs and just try and get that critic out of your head and serve your people. That's what they need to see. That's what's going to help them connect the dots sooner.

Akvile: Exactly.

Kristin: So, let's talk about LinkedIn and all of the great ways that that channel has been enhanced. So, I think that it's becoming more and more relevant for brands. What's your take on that?

Akvile: Yes, though it's surprising to see some e-commerce brands coming on there now. I keep getting Chanel ads on there and I'm like, "Hm. Not really looking for expensive perfume today, but thank you."

Kristin: Yeah. Yeah.

Akvile: But it's interesting to see the shift because it's no longer just a resume-posting website or job-searching site. People are really going there to network, to post professional content, to help one another, and it's really great just for content marketing organically. As you said, there's still a lot of organic reach and not so many ads because ... I feel like we'll get there in due time, but they're still in their infancy compared to some other online advertising channels. But if you have video content, that's a really great way to grasp people, especially with the executives being on there, that if you can get their attention a lot quicker through a quick video and maybe show your software, maybe upcoming webcasts, podcasts, whatever you have. That tends to be very effective, even without doing ads.

Kristin: That's great. What about the ... I'm not the only one who holds this assumption that LinkedIn ads are super expensive. Like, yes, we hear that they're effective, but boy, are they expensive. Talk with us a little bit about the evolution of that. Is it more user-friendly from a wallet standpoint and from a setup standpoint today?

Akvile: Much more than it has been over the last few years. When I first started advertising there, I think maybe even six, seven or so years ago, costs were about 20 dollars a click for some of the clients that we had, and it was outrageous. It didn't really make sense unless you were a huge brand with a huge audience and a substantial budget, but they've made a lot of changes to where it's still more expensive than, say, Facebook or Instagram because they're not as robust, they haven't been around as long, they don't have as many advertising placements. So, now we're seeing, for most of our clients, the average cost per click is about four dollars. So, a huge, huge improvement over that 20 dollars a few years back, but I think they have a ways to go, especially if you get more brands advertising outside of IBM and ...

Akvile: There's some other smaller brands diving in, but LinkedIn, to be honest, is not as effective for really small audiences where Facebook, you need maybe a thousand people in an audience to be able to run your campaign for a little bit. But with the way that LinkedIn's algorithm works, it tends to work better if you have an audience of over 10,000 or more and you have a decent-sized budget just because there's only three ad placements. And if I may touch on the ad placements if you're just diving into LinkedIn ads to save you some time and some money and maybe some frustration-

Kristin: Absolutely.

Akvile: ... that you're not seeing results. So, there are three. There are text ads, which are really tiny. They're at the top right screen on your desktop, but there are not a lot of characters for putting something meaningful in terms of ad copy and the images are very small. So, those are the least expensive, but we haven't seen them perform very well, and we usually just tell clients, "Save your money. Just forgo those."

Akvile: The next one in the middle, it's kind of mid-range in terms of price, are the sponsored content ads. So, essentially, it's like your boosted posts that you'd see on Facebook, but you would post these to your business page on LinkedIn, and then from there, you can promote it to a larger group of people, depending on who your audience is. With those, you get a lot more real estate to the ads. So, you can do videos, you can do images, you can tag people, you can use hashtags, send people to your website. So, there's a lot more opportunity within that and people can engage, and the more people that engage, the algorithm rewards you with that because they deem you as relevant to that audience that you're targeting and the lower your costs.

Akvile: Then, there's a third one, but you have to be really careful with how you do it, but you've probably seen them, the sponsored in-mail, and those are the ones that go to your LinkedIn inbox, and those are-

Kristin: I don't love those, by the way.

Akvile: No. Very rarely do I ... I think I could probably count on one hand how many actually good ones I've seen over the years, but those ones tend to ... They're very salesy. When you meet somebody in real life, if you're targeting somebody in a networking event, per se, and you're just going to ... you're not going to come up to me like, "Hi. Nice to meet you. Give me your wallet." You're going to start building that relationship, where I feel like a lot of these sponsored in-mails are coming from people like, "Oh, yeah. Sign up. Give us your money. Do this." I'm like, "I don't know who you are. Why are you in my inbox? What's the value proposition here?" and, "Make my time worthwhile to actually communicate with you." So, if you're doing that type of advertising, especially with a cold audience, it is very expensive, and if you want it to work well, which I'm assuming you do, just make sure that you are starting off like a real relationship with anybody that you might meet in real life.

Kristin: That's great advice. What about ... Does it benefit you at all today to actually post content on LinkedIn? They used to have ... They used to say, "Go and use their publishing platform. It's really good," and then you heard, "No, it's not so great anymore." What's your take on that mid-year of 2019?

Akvile: Do it.

Kristin: Okay.

Akvile: It is effective. I do it for myself personally and I do it for our business and we advise a lot of our clients, and they seem successful with it as well, but still get that visibility and, compared to some other channels, it's probably the best organic visibility that you can get for your business.

Kristin: That's great to hear. Then, is it still okay to publish on Medium and LinkedIn, like, the exact same verbiage or your blog and LinkedIn or, if you're a Forbes contributor, can you just go ahead and ... I see people doing it all the time, but is that still ... Is it okay or is it becoming frowned upon?

Akvile: Well, I don't specialize in SEO, or search engine optimization. I do know that duplicate content is kind of a no-no. So, I don't know between those platforms in particular, but I would recommend just sharing it as a social post if you publish it elsewhere, especially if it's a larger publication that might have some more authority. So, just schedule that as regular posts and share it to people could go there, but if you do want to share it across platforms, I would change a few things just to make it sound different. So, it's still essentially the same topic, but it has different verbiage.

Kristin: Okay. Good advice. Good advice. Okay. Anything else on LinkedIn before we swan dive into Pinterest?

Akvile: Post frequently-

Kristin: Post frequently.

Akvile: ... if you can.

Kristin: Okay. How frequently are we talking? Three times a week? Three times a day?

Akvile: If you can do three times a week, perfect. I try to do something at least once a day just because it does help with our business and we've seen direct results from it. So, if you have enough content, whether it's your own or maybe something relevant to your industry, just so you seem like an authority of yourself, and people will want a reason to follow you because you're sharing content or creating your own meaningful content. We found that incredibly helpful. So, if you're looking for a little bit more reach, try that out.

Kristin: Okay. Great advice. All right. So, let's go into Pinterest. I think everybody understands that ... Anyway, maybe it's a past view, but high dollar conversion can happen on this. Obviously, it's a really great place to see and experience a curated visual experience. What is leading with Pinterest today? Why is it important to have in our arsenal as brands, as specialty brands?

Akvile: It is growing very rapidly. It's been around for a while. Organically, people use it to plan their lives out, whether it's events or just visual, digital dream boards, per se, but Pinterest put up some really interesting stats, that 90 percent of the people that see something from a brand on Pinterest ended up purchasing that item. So, we've noticed it with our clients, that doing Pinterest ads, whether it's drive website traffic, conversions, they also have mobile ad campaigns if you're looking to drive installs for both B2B and B2C, that it's a really great way to get new users into your funnel and then get them maybe to convert through some other channel because we don't really live in a one-click, one-conversion type of world anymore where there's multiple touch points.

Akvile: So, Pinterest is ... I'm going to correct myself. I said that Facebook was the least expensive form of online advertising, but Pinterest is actually much less expensive. So, I think we've been seeing cost-per-click of, like, 15 to 25 cents for a lot of our e-commerce brands that we're advertising on there, so it's a really good time to get in and explore and get people into your funnel that way, especially if you can get them to your website, tag them with a pixel, and then do remarketing campaigns later if they haven't purchased.

Kristin: Awesome. Do you have any tips for us in terms of a specialty brand with a presence on Pinterest. For example, should it be product-focused? Should it be maybe athlete or ambassador-focused? Should it be something that's a real-life scenario or is it still okay to do your glory hero images that are shot in a studio? Tell us some of the things that you think are working really well.

Akvile: We've seen a little bit of both work well. I would recommend testing out both because what might work for one brand may not for another, so see what works best. But something that's native to the platform tends to work well, like lifestyle imagery, obviously videos are really huge ... It's still heavily under-saturated for that type of content.

Akvile: One thing that Pinterest does offer to advertisers that's really great compared to something like Facebook or Instagram where you can't do overlay text because they will serve fewer impressions or none at all, Pinterest is very overlay text-friendly, so don't be afraid to put your logo on there and maybe design a button that says "Shop Now." Just make it ... Some of the great ones that I've seen if you have a company that has steps involved ... So, maybe ... I've seen some for wine delivery services where if you're a new user and you're not quite sure how this works, they put steps one through three written out onto the ad with some nice visuals of their actual products in the background. So, those types of things work very well.

Akvile: Then, for video content, there are two different types. So, there are the regular-sized pins, but if you don't mind paying a few cents more, which with Pinterest being as the less expensive as it is, that you can do full screen ads, so it'll take up the entire screen, and it's only on mobile devices, and I think 80 percent of Pinterest users are mobile, so they'd be covered there pretty well, but you'll dominate the screen and be able to showcase things a lot more effectively instead having all those different pins everywhere.

Kristin: Boy, that actually seems like it would be perfect for people who are shopping in a store physically, but also looking at their phone, which is everyone, right?

Akvile: Yeah, exactly.

Kristin: So, that's a really-

Akvile: [crosstalk 00:38:00] that?

Kristin: Yeah, that's a great tip. Cool. I want to be mindful of your time. Thank you so much again for being gracious with us here today. But I do want to talk about why Twitter maybe is not the place to go for paid placement, paid traffic.

Akvile: If you have the budget, certainly test it out, do it; however ... I love Twitter personally. If there's one social channel that needs to stay alive, it is that one for me, but in terms of an advertising perspective, it's just we haven't seen the return on ads spent on it. People just don't engage like they do with other platforms and we've decided to shift our clients' budgets to other, more effective channels. We've tested a variety of brands and they were just not seeing consistent results to anything that's worthwhile. Certainly if it works for you, test it out, see how it does. I can't speak for every type of brand out there, but if you've got the budget to play around in it, sure, but we just haven't seen too many great results. So, that's kind of where I personally stand with it.

Kristin: I was curious because you are super active on Twitter. You have ... We'll have links to everything in the show notes, everybody, but you have a great Twitter presence and LinkedIn.

Akvile: Thank you.

Kristin: That's obviously what you do for a living, but I just was curious. "Why isn't that converting?" I guess it's just people don't go there maybe necessarily to browse, shop, do consumer research. I don't know.

Akvile: Yeah, it's interesting. I've been trying to pinpoint it myself, why click through rates aren't as high. I don't know. I'm stumped on it. I would love to know other people's perspectives on the platform. Yeah. Other channels have a lot more opportunity. Thinking Twitter's been struggling with the advertising aspect of their business for quite some time, but I hope it does improve. I'd love to go back and test it, but it just hasn't really proven itself yet.

Kristin: Just before we wrap up here, obviously, I think if anything came out loud and clear, it's that video is still really important. You've given us some great tips in terms of just progress over perfection. It's okay to shoot things that look unpolished, unproduced, not well-produced. Anything else that you think, like even duration or things that you've seen your clients do where, "Hey, we're going to do batching, like, once a month?" Anything you can share in that regard that would really help my people? I would appreciate it as we wrap up here.

Akvile: Absolutely. Before you start doing videos, [do a] story board, because oftentimes, clients will create really wonderful videos and they're too long or they're incorrect specs or don't show the product within the first maybe 15 seconds. So, create a story board first so then you're efficient with your time and start with something, maybe 60 secs, and then break it down into smaller segments so then you can use more of that content for a longer duration and just in different formats and in different channels.

Kristin: Okay. That's great. Then, obviously, you had mentioned before, but I want to emphasis again, make sure that you are putting your story out there in the lead, which is the first 10 seconds, right? Because you'll lose people-

Akvile: Yes.

Kristin: ... if you don't. So, don't back into it.

Akvile: Exactly.

Kristin: Awesome. Well, is there anything else that you'd like to share with us before we wrap up here today on a sphere that you are working in with paid social?

Akvile: Just have fun with it. This industry's great. It'll keep you on your toes. There's always something coming out, a new channel, a new ad placement, and new features, so just stay up-to-date with those and be on the forefront of it and just test it out with your brand. If it doesn't work, that's okay. Not everything's going to. Try something different.

Kristin: Right. It is all about testing and learning today, so that is great advice. Thank you so much. It was great to have you. I would actually love to have you back on as our correspondent going into holiday. I know we're going into holiday right now in June,

right? But at the same time, as Instagram becomes more available with different mediums on Instagram, I would love to have you back on and maybe give some more best practices and help our people stay on that forefront as you just described.

Akvile: I would be delighted. Thank you so much for having me on. I hope your listeners enjoy our episode.

Kristin: I do, too. Thank you so much for your time.

