

## The Underground Marketer – Episode 5 – Transcript

Introduction 00:00:02 Marketing, explosive growth, and revolutionary secrets that can catapult your business to new heights. You're now listening to the Underground Marketer Podcast with your host, Tudor Dumitrescu. The one podcast devoted to showing new businesses how to market themselves for high growth.

Tudor Dumitrescu: 00:00:24 Welcome to the Underground Marketer. This is the place where we deliver the real truth about marketing and explore big ideas that can help new businesses thrive and grow into big ones. I am your host, Tudor, and today I have a very special episode for you because I'm here with a guest and that is Ioan Mateescu, who also goes by the name of Speed, by the nickname Speed, I should say. And he is a real underground marketer. He is a pro. And basically today we're going to hear a bit about his story and how he made it as an underground marketer and all the knowledge that he has. So, hi Ioan and welcome!

Ioan Mateescu: Hello, Tudor, thank you for bringing me on.

Tudor Dumitrescu: It's great to have you here. The pleasure is mine. So I guess we should start by hearing a bit about your story. Basically, how did you get involved in online marketing?

Tudor Dumitrescu: 00:01:24 Was this something that came all of a sudden, was it more gradual, or basically how did your involvement in marketing come about?

Ioan Mateescu: Okay. So I guess it was gradual, it was a long journey that started when I was quite young, actually. Should I go all the way back or do you want me to skip?

Tudor Dumitrescu: Well, sure, feel free to go all the way back.

Ioan Mateescu: Okay. So I used to be a pro gamer back when I was like a young teenager, like 13 ish years old, all the way up to like 16, 17. And in that world, in the world of e-sports, you end up encountering a lot of interesting people, usually people older than 13. Yeah. People who have a lot of different expertise and experience. And at the time back in the days, there wasn't that much money in e-sports.

Ioan Mateescu: 00:02:17 So you had to be very resourceful to actually be able to fund your teams. You know, to go to your events, to be able to fly to tournaments and do interesting stuff like that. So you have to learn how to look for sponsors, how to find out the deals and things, opportunities that you can pursue to be able to compete and have a good time in this community. And there's a lot to learn from that. And that was basically my first interaction with the idea of marketing. I didn't know what it was. I didn't know how it works, but naturally, to engage with these people, I picked up some things here and there. And as things developed, I got more and more involved with different organizations and with actually organized efforts to attract, you know, money into this community, into these sports in general. And that's how I first got involved in marketing and how I developed kind of my philosophy towards the idea of commerce, you know, free interactions between people and things like that, which played to the foundations or the expertise that made me successful in this industry.

Tudor Dumitrescu: 00:03:22 Oh, that's really cool. So it's really a fantastic story. How you sort of stumbled onto marketing as something that you needed in order to become successful in e-sports basically, is that right?

Ioan Mateescu: 00:03:34 Yeah, basically I had to write a lot of stuff. So I developed my writing skills as a teenager because I had to write proposals to different businesses and organizations to get sponsorship money. I had to write articles and blog posts and things like that, about the events that we're participating in trying to get the hype going on and get people to watch our players play and things like that. I wasn't generally the player myself, because I was more in a management and coaching position usually, but there's a lot of interesting efforts involved like that, which built the skills that became relevant later on. And how did they become relevant? Well, I always had this feeling that, Hey, the normal path through life is just not okay. Just doesn't make any sense. Why do you have to do all of these stupid things that everyone has to do?

Ioan Mateescu: 00:04:22 You know, get a job, go to school, go to university, blah, blah, blah. And at one point I decided: Hey, there has to be a better way. I need to find a better way. And I started looking for things and I found this guy called Dane Maxwell who created the foundation. And he introduced me to a few interesting ideas. You know, that you could actually just call business owners and talk to them, just ask them stuff, get ideas, figure things out, solve problems. And there I was like, Hey, I'm kind of doing this already with the e-sports stuff. Only it's for my problems, my needs, my team's needs, my organization's needs. Why don't I do that for their needs? And I started cold calling people. I started cold emailing people, which is direct, you know, interacting with them, trying to find opportunities to create value in the market, not just in e-sports, but now in general as well. And yeah.

Tudor Dumitrescu: 00:05:19 That's really cool. You mentioned I will backtrack a bit because you mentioned something that really caught my interest. And you mentioned that being in the sports world helped shape your philosophy of marketing. So, I mean, can you tell us a bit more

about how it affected the way you see marketing and what exactly you took from e-sports? Because I think that that's quite unique, you know, as a path into marketing.

So I think that there's a lot of value that people can get from there.

Ioan Mateescu: 00:05:49 Okay. Well, I'm from Romania and if you're not aware, if you're not from Eastern Europe, and the mentality here is not very entrepreneurial. It's not very, freedom-minded. We just got out of communism and like 1989 and our recent history is very, very authoritarian. So the way you're brought up in this country isn't really aligned with the idea of creating value and helping other people or abundance. I think that's the best word to describe it. Yeah. So Romania in general is very scarcity-minded. Everyone is trying to hold things down or don't make sure they're not wasting too much, because it might get lost on the way. Yeah. So interacting in the e-sports community, I mostly initially activated in the UK's team. I was in the Counter-Strike team and I played in the United Kingdom's team and I played with a bunch of European people, but as it grew and I developed, I moved further and further away from my borders.

Ioan Mateescu: 00:06:50 Yeah. And I met a lot of interesting American people and the mentality in America is a lot different. It's very, very different. And I started talking to those people and attracting them and then engaging with their philosophy that was more liberal, more freedom-minded, and more entrepreneurial. Like there, the idea of the American dream is about, you can get shit done, you can do things, you don't need to wait. You don't need to ask for permission, you don't need to scrounge resources, just go and do it. And that brushed up on me. And I started going and doing things because why not?

Tudor Dumitrescu: 00:07:24 It's very cool that you're bringing this up because back when I was 14, as you're talking just now about this scene, I had a flashback in my mind. When I was 14 and I was playing World of Warcraft. And I remember (because I'm also from Romania, right), I remember interacting with one guy from the server there and that guy was from the US. And I remember at one point saying to him, something like you know, but I'm 14, I'm too young for that. I don't remember what he proposed or whatever. And his reaction was like, so what, you know, age doesn't matter so much. But at that point I still had that in bread, let's say Romanian attitude of things, which is basically like a fixed mindset. This is what you're supposed to do. This is how you're supposed to go through life and you can't get out of those bounds, you know? But seeing that mindset in somebody else, you know, sort of freed me, it freed my mind.

Ioan Mateescu: 00:08:25 It basically tells you it is possible if you know. Yeah.

Tudor Dumitrescu: 00:08:28 Exactly. So it made me see that there's a different way of being, you know, and I don't have to let my age or whatever else hold me back. So I think that's really huge. And I think that I also got that from gaming because I mean, that was one of the only ways to interact with people from outside.

Ioan Mateescu: 00:08:36 Oh, cool. That's totally true. And what I want to mention is that a lot of these people that I was interacting with these organizations and teams, wanted to go to events. Like we had to go to these events to participate in tournaments and compete and do the things that we wanted as professional gamers. Yeah. And in order to do that, because there wasn't money from sponsorships and the industry was still small, we had to make up that money on our own, but we were like 16, 17, like 20. We can't get jobs, university and school, and stuff. So we had to figure out other ways of generating revenue so we could go to events. And we started doing all sorts of different things. With the owner of the organization, I spent most of my time with is a web designer. So he just built websites as a freelancer. And he actually built an agency eventually.

Ioan Mateescu: 00:09:41 And had a business that just made websites for people. Other people were graphic designers, or some people started coaching others. Like they had the skills, they were very good at this game. Why not share that knowledge and the ability with other people so they can develop their own skills for some money, easy stuff. Like the idea of private tutoring. I paid my math teacher, like \$15 an hour, so she can teach me maths because I wanted to be better at math. So I could graduate with high grades or whatever. Well, at the exact same time, same period, I was a coach in StarCraft, too and I was coaching people for \$15 an hour. Yeah, to play StarCraft better. So I was teaching the others to play. So I was making as much at 16 years old with no skills, really no practical market skills.

Ioan Mateescu: 00:10:29 Or, you know, if you look at it from this perspective of a regular person that you need to get a degree, need to get five years of experience in some random industry, whatever, from that perspective. From the real perspective, I actually did have marketable skills because I was actually marketing them. Yeah. But I was making as much money and probably more money than my math tutor by tutoring StarCraft, which was very liberating for me. I was like, Holy shit! If I can do this, then I can do way more. And some of the people that I was working with because they were a lot more in demand than me, cause they were popular streamers and they had an audience and whatever, they were charging more and more rates like not \$15, \$30, \$50, \$100, \$300 an hour, just so people had the opportunity to hang out with them basically on stream and learn from them directly because they're very strong players in that particular niche.

Tudor Dumitrescu: 00:11:20 Wow. That's awesome. And it really shows the impact that adopting basically this growth mindset and just being aware of the possibilities that exist, the impact that this can make. And I mean, it's not true just for marketing, but it's true overall, I would say, in life, you know, if you get stuck with a fixed mindset, then you're going to stay in

the same position pretty much forever because you're not going to take action to move anywhere else. You know, whereas with a growth mindset, you focus on learning and you realize that you can always learn more and basically become better, you know. Because nobody starts out knowing how to be an entrepreneur, you know, knowing how to start a business and all of this. It's stuff that people learn over time.

Ioan Mateescu: 00:12:09 Yeah. Precisely. And a lot of these people that I met ended up being very successful in this alternate reality. So to say, I had dreams, I wanted things to do, to accomplish, you know. I wanted to become a nuclear engineer and solve the world's energy problem, like figuring out nuclear fusion and things like that. And I realized, Hey if I want to actually do that, I need to spend like 20, 30, 50 years studying this stuff. And then I would have to be dependent on the States and various organizations just to give me funding so I can do research. And then who knows what's going to happen. And it was very, very nonautonomous. I lacked the autonomy on the top of the way I predicted. And I wanted autonomy. I needed autonomy to accomplish these goals. And I realized, Hey, what if I just make more money so I can fund myself?

Tudor Dumitrescu: 00:13:02 This story sounds quite similar to Elon Musk's story because he also wanted to do his Ph.D. in physics at one point and work as a researcher. But he realized that really if you don't have access to the capital that you need, you can't do all the cool experiments and research that you want to do. You know, you're forced to do basically what other people ask you to do, the people who have the money. And it sounds like you realize something similar here that if you wanted to make your own path, you had to do it from the very beginning, right?

Ioan Mateescu: 00:13:38 Exactly. And it was very obvious to me because on the one hand, I was interacting with these regular people who had degrees, they had like decades of experience. They're doing a lot of work, very smart people who are just standing still, not accomplishing anything. And I was also at the same time interacting with these other people for like 16, 17, 20, 25-year-olds who had no degree, they had no decades of experience in anything and they're making millions of dollars. Like some of them were poker players who literally were millionaires. Yeah. Because they just knew how to play poker really well. There was a lot of money in poker at the time. But they were also pro gamers in other areas because there's quite a bit of overlap in different gaming industries or niches. And the guy that I mostly worked with that I mentioned, ended up becoming a millionaire through streaming and having a large audience.

Ioan Mateescu: 00:14:30 He does a whole bunch of interesting things right now. He still does gaming like 10, 15 years after. He still does a little bit of poker. There's just a lot of interesting stuff in this other area, which normal people will never have access to. And they don't even know it's possible. So like, okay, what, what, what should they choose? Should I follow the path of my math teacher and barely make any money after 25 years or 40 years, or

however long she's studied and developed her skills and knowledge, or should I just make money doing valuable things in this other area?

Tudor Dumitrescu: 00:15:01 Right. I hear you. And I mean, that's how it goes. And you realize that you want your freedom, you know, more than you want that fixed path. Which, I mean, many people say that if you take that fixed path, you'll have more security. But personally, I think that that's wrong because you just have the illusion of security and fundamentally, in the end, you're not even a single bit more secure. You just feel like that because you're not aware of the uncertainty and basically what's going wrong,

Ioan Mateescu: 00:15:36 Right. There's an impression of control in the regular path. But the problem is that that control is not in your hands. It's in the hands of other people, the people who have the leverage upon you, you know, your employer or whatever. So going on the other path where you don't have someone else controlling you, you may have less control overall, let's say, but more of it is in your hands. So realistically you actually do have more control and you also have way more freedom. So more freedom would cause more opportunities to prosper and build value. So it's definitely a way better choice. And once I had this realization, I started looking for knowledge, for ways to understand it better. And for ways to actually scale it up, make it work for me. And through this quest for knowledge and interacting with these people who are way more experienced than me, I came across this book called "The Millionaire Fastlane" by MJ Demarco. It's a great book. It's a life-changer. It's what literally opened my mind. Like I had suspicions before, I knew, I felt it. I saw it. I did it in reality. Hey, there's a better path, but I'm not too sure about it. It's risky. It's weird. It's unknowable. Is that really something that I can access myself? But then I read that book and it all made sense. It was like, okay, this is, this is exactly what I suspected, put into words that I can understand and then make a hundred percent sense. So then I completely abandoned the slow lane and I completely accepted the fast lane and I've been working more and more to develop my life and my progress along the fast lane with the philosophy from that book, basically.

Tudor Dumitrescu: 00:17:23 That's really cool. So for our listeners who may not know, can you quickly basically summarize the difference between the slow lane and the fast lane?

Ioan Mateescu: 00:17:33 Well, okay. So we've kind of summarized it already through the dichotomy between the normal people and these other people. So the slow-lane is basically the regular life that everybody tells you that you need to live. You need to go

Ioan Mateescu: 00:17:50 To school. Do you need to go to university, get a degree so you can get a good job? You need to spend however long at a job, save a little bit of money, like 10, 20% if you can, put aside, you know, accrue interest, that's compounding interest and just acquire a little bit more experience, more skills. To build your career for decades and decades

so that when you're 75 or whatever, you can finally retire and have some freedom to live your life.

Tudor Dumitrescu: 00:18:00 And have one million in the bank (joking).

Ioan Mateescu: 00:18:03 Yeah. I mean, it's not even a lot of money. It's just, yeah, it's horrible. So I rejected that. I was like, there's no way! I want to live. Like what if I die when I'm 40? Like I just wasted my life. Like no way! I want to be retired and rich and capable of doing everything that I want to do when I'm 30. No, no, not 30, but 25. So that's what the fast lane does. The fast lane is basically just rejecting all of that and accepting that there are ways that you can create more and more value in a compounding way that is super, super fast. So instead of getting a shitty job, you build a business because a business that you control and that you can scale up and leverage allows you to not make \$1 an hour or a hundred dollars an hour or 10,000 thousand dollars an hour but allows you to make a million dollars a day just by having all of these slow people working for you and magnifying the value that it can create. So basically what Jeff Besos did, the reason he's a billionaire and he's not, you know, working for \$10 an hour as a teacher somewhere is because he had barked on the fast lane route and he built a business that he scaled up steadily until he reached a critical mass where it just boomed and he's making a lot of money. There's a lot of value in that business called Amazon.

Tudor Dumitrescu: 00:19:45 Exactly. For me, the millionaire Fastlane was also a turning point. And the main thing that I got out of it was the emphasis on value and the understanding that the more value you provide, the more money you can make. And I think that that is essential in marketing because if you think about it, a lot of people have this mistaken idea that marketing is somehow about tricking people, you know, and getting to buy what they don't want and so on. And that's not actually the case because marketing is just about identifying what people need and then giving it to them. You know, I like to think of marketing as bringing buyers and sellers together. That's what marketing does. It puts the action into the markets literally.

Ioan Mateescu: 00:20:35 Exactly. It's communication.

Tudor Dumitrescu: 00:20:37 Absolutely. Absolutely. So then how did you make the transfer from gaming into marketing? Like, did you start freelancing or how exactly did you do it?

Ioan Mateescu: 00:20:48 So, I mentioned Maxwell's foundation before, so I spent a lot of time after I read "The Millionaire Fastlane" when I was like 17 or 16 or something, I realized that hey, the stuff that I was learning before from Maxwell is exactly this. So I learned about value-

based selling, which is the idea that you know, you don't just sell something with tangible things you so proportional to the value that it creates for the other person. So when you're trying to negotiate with someone, we ask, okay, how much money do you make from the service that I provide, literally basically. And then you will offer, you ask for them to pay you like a percentage of that value that you just created. So if they have, for example, a problem, they cost them, for each employee that they have like five hours a week.

Ioan Mateescu: 00:21:35 Doesn't sound that much, but 5 hours a week at \$10 an hour is \$50 a week per employee, they have like 20 employees. Yeah. That's a thousand dollars a week. So it really quickly adds up. So you want to recognize these problems and see how you can optimize them or build a solution that reduces those costs. So if I can reduce that person's costs from five hours a week per employee to one hour a week per employee, because I have a software solution that makes it a lot more optimized and faster that they've literally won like a few thousand dollars a month, every month from then on. So I can easily ask them for like a couple of grants to hire a developer, to build that solution that takes, you know, 10, 20 hours of their time to build it.

Tudor Dumitrescu: 00:22:21 Absolutely. So that's a fantastic idea right there. So I mean, did you then use this?

Ioan Mateescu: 00:22:28 I did. I did. So once I, once the click happened in my mind and I realized that, Hey, these things are all real. They work, they make a lot of sense. I already have the skills to accomplish these things because I've done, you know, that I've got money for my team through cold emailing businesses and stuff. So I did it, it works. Let's do it for the actual real stuff. And I, at the time, was also working out competitively. So I was doing basically powerlifting and. And I was quite into fitness and I was like, okay, I have some fitness expertise. I know how these things work. I know nutritional stuff. Let's get into this niche because I, I heard, I read, I had the impression at the time that this was a good niche and it is a good niche. It's like a perennial industry.

Ioan Mateescu: 00:23:20 So for healthcare and all of these things, it's just very, very good. And I went on LinkedIn. I had no experience. I was a college dropout. I didn't mention that. But I did drop out of the university when I realized that this whole thing sucks, I had like three months. Let's go back a little bit. So I started trying to contact people and I started cold calling businesses. I got them off manta.com. That's basically a repository of all sorts of businesses. They have their phone numbers there, their websites, if they have them, most don't actually, emails, things like that. So I found some industries that were somewhat okay for software development. Like they, they weren't, you know, old people who didn't know technology. And I started calling them, I got a phone number, a US phone number that they actually answered because apparently, or back then, I don't know if it's still the case.

Ioan Mateescu: 00:24:13 When you call someone in the US from abroad, they are charged by the telephone provider. It charges them money to receive a phone call.

Tudor Dumitrescu: 00:24:19 It's the same here, though. If somebody from outside calls you.

Ioan Mateescu: 00:24:24 No, like I've never had that here for me. Yeah. Still, it was weird. So I got a US phone number. It cost me like \$10 a month or something. And I started calling people and I did a great job. I talked to them, I did idea extraction. You can Google that, it's very cool. And I found that they had all sorts of different problems and things I could solve, the problem is that I didn't know how to sell. I sucked at selling, especially by the phone. And I always, I dunno, I had limiting beliefs. I didn't trust myself and whatever I had to ask for money, I was blocked.

Ioan Mateescu: 00:25:05 I just couldn't. And I recognize this limiting belief and I thought I should solve it. So I got a job as a sales agent, basically selling stocks because I also wanted to learn about finance because that's what is important. You want to make money and you still know what to do with that money once you get it, right. So I got into this company, selling stocks and I sold for like three months. And I built my skills. Now I know how to sell by phone. And then I got into the fitness niche, and then I got on LinkedIn and I made a shitty profile. And I went to a fitness and wellness group. Like the biggest one, I just joined there. I then went to the list of the people who were in the group. I added like 500 of them, about 150 of them accepted.

Ioan Mateescu: 00:25:55 They didn't know me. I had no experience, nothing, just a blank profile. I had an interesting picture, I guess. I don't know. And then I started messaging them like, Hey, thanks for connecting, blah, blah, blah. Can I interview you for a few things? Can I ask you a few questions? Can I consult you about your expertise in the fitness industry, whatever? And these were all basically personal trainers or gym owners or people, you know, various things related to weightlifting and nutritional products and things like that. And out of 150 people like 10 of them responded, we scheduled the call, I called them. And then I did idea extraction on them basically. And I realized that they all had interesting problems, like things that I could do with software, but there was also a realization that a lot of these problems could just be solved by writing good stuff.

Ioan Mateescu: 00:26:56 Like their main problem was that they didn't have enough clients to just want it to acquire more clients. And I knew how to acquire clients. I knew copywriting. I was acquiring money from sponsors, which is like a hundred times harder. So I thought, why don't I just sell them copywriting. When I write, you know, an ad for them or something like put a poster on the door of their gym so that they get more people to get, like, instead of just a one-on-one program or a subscription to their gym, they can get like a six-month subscription. And that

basically pretty much doubled the lifetime value of those people who signed up for that offer because they usually, you know, they came for, new year's Eve or whatever they got a month. They went to the gym for a week and then stopped going, well, what if they got the subscription for six months?

Ioan Mateescu: 00:27:48 Or they didn't go just for a week. They went for like two months and then they went back home or whatever. In any case, there was a definite gap in their revenue. And we actually were able to measure that and they appreciated the solutions that are implemented. They were just very simple. I just wrote an ad and told them, put it there, you know. And basically, what it allowed me to do by interacting with them, it gave me the opportunity to understand the value of copywriting that could basically create money out of thin air, just by writing a few words. I made money for them and they gave me some of it. And it made me realize this is an actual business. This is an actual skill that you can sell and scale up and do for other people. So I started studying what copywriting is and got into direct response and became basically a professional copywriter after like a year.

Tudor Dumitrescu: 00:28:44 Awesome. That's a really inspiring story, you know because it really shows what's possible, you know. Basically starting with little resources and navigating to where you can get into an industry, which allows you to make quite a bit of money. And I mean, do you think that somebody could follow in your footsteps today or do you think that the market has sort of changed and shifted and they would need to do different things?

Ioan Mateescu: 00:29:11 I don't think it's changed much at all. It probably has changed a little bit. It's probably a bit more saturated with people because people realized that they can actually do this. But I think the demand is growing where it has grown and it's probably higher than it was back then. So you can still do this with zero investment, pretty much. Like I didn't invest in anything. Like back in the day I was, you know, all of my money I spent on food, that's it. And like, I want to buy a new computer so I can play more games. Yeah. I have money to invest

Ioan Mateescu: 00:29:42 On ads and contacting people. I didn't understand that stuff. Like I was just a newbie. So I had zero investment whatsoever. Everything that I did, I did with other people's money. And I scaled up from there because they appreciated what I did. And once I got the first three clients, I just got more and more clients because, like a referral from them, they appreciate what I did. And they had friends. Yeah. They're like, well, look, this guy just wrote an email that I sent you, the people, and more people signed up to my stuff or more people bought my supplement or whatever. They're like, that's awesome. Here. I have like three other friends who also sell supplemented. Yeah. I didn't have to do anything. I didn't have to ask them. Of course, I knew that I should ask them, but they usually offered that on their own, but things are a bit more sophisticated now. So it's a bit more difficult to do that, but it should all work the same. And there's so much information out there that it's super easy to get into it.

Tudor Dumitrescu: 00:30:36 So what would it be your advice to somebody who is basically in your position? Let's say that they're in university or maybe they have quit university and they want to get started in marketing. They basically want to learn online marketing. What would you say?

Ioan Mateescu: 00:30:53 Just do it, that's the simple way to put it. So there's a bunch of ways in which you can market. The first way would be to find a problem that you can potentially solve. People have mostly solved most of the problems. If you're lucky enough to find a new problem, if you have the skills, you know, to interview the right people and find the gaps in the market, you can fill in somehow. That's awesome, but you don't have to do that to get started because other people have already solved some problems and you can sell those solutions that other people have come up with to the people who have yet to solve their problems. So you can just start talking to people, try to identify things that they haven't personally solved. And they'll look around for ways to solve the things that they haven't found, and then just sell it to them.

Ioan Mateescu: 00:31:43 Just, you don't even have to sell it in the sense that you don't have to convince them to do those things, but it's a no-brainer sort of sell like, Hey, this costs you a thousand dollars a month. Here's this thing which costs you a hundred dollars a month, which solved that problem. You make \$900 a month profit. Here you go. Just give me \$50 and I'll set it up for you. Like they don't even have to do anything. It just gives you access to their system, whatever they have, or if it's like a local business, you just go there and do it. Yeah. And you buy the service, you pay a hundred dollars a month. They pay you \$250 a month and you make \$150 a month profit. Then you find like 10 other people who have the same problem through their network, not your network. You asked this guy, Hey, do you know any other people who might have the same issue? They're like, yeah, of course, everybody has this issue because yeah, why wouldn't they? And then you just find out of the 100 other people, you find like another 10 who have the same problem. You sell the same

Ioan Mateescu: 00:32:40 Solution to them. You even use these people that you've already helped with as authority figures. Like, hey, I'm working with this guy and helping him do this stuff. This is how much he's making because of it. Can I do that for you as well? Like sure. Let's give it a try. And with 10 people, you're basically making a salary or whatever. It depends where you're from. But for someone in university, it's passive income, it's like a thousand dollars a month easily just by doing nothing. Just by setting things up in like a couple of months.

Tudor Dumitrescu: 00:33:08 It's definitely something that's very appealing to anyone in that position. And I mean, I think that this whole thing revolves around finding problems, right? Because the solution always comes after, but it all starts from developing this eye for spotting problems and seeing opportunities. What's your advice? Like how can you develop this skill? Is

it based just on talking with people or what would you recommend to somebody who is interested to get started?

Ioan Mateescu: 00:33:40 So there are two things that people need to understand. The first is that value is subjective. Okay. Different people value things differently. So something that might cost someone a little bit like \$10 - \$50 or whatever might cost a different person, thousands of dollars every single month. So of course the solution would be way more valuable for that person than the initial person. So you have to realize that things aren't equal and different people have different needs. So you have to talk to them and figure out what those needs are, try and help them. And the other point that I want to make is that you need empathy. You put yourself in these other people's shoes and empathize with them and try to figure out what their frustrations are, trying to figure out what kind of things they struggle with most, what frustrates them the most, what things they hate at an emotional level because those are the biggest pains and solving

Ioan Mateescu: 00:34:38 The biggest pain is where the most value is. If you, if you stub a toe, you know, that's going to go away in a few hours. You're not going to sell someone a special treatment that solves, you know, toe stub pain. But if someone has arthritis, and they're in chronic pain every single day for like a decade, and they don't know what to do, it is just so infuriating. Because every time they get up off their chair, or they bend over, try and pick something off the ground, they just have this painful burning pain that they cannot get rid of. Now that is very valuable if you can get rid of it. So this is obvious once you start working in the healthcare niche because you have these hierarchies of different solutions for healthcare problems. Based on how big the pain is, you can charge more for the solution, the product that you're selling.

Tudor Dumitrescu: 00:35:38 Right. That's all super interesting. I wanted to ask you, actually, at this point, you sort of mentioned it, but do you do anything to basically filter your prospects or your clients and how do you do that? Because the trouble that a lot of people who are in marketing run into when they try to do it freelance, is that they have great skills, right? But then they approach these business owners and they identify their problems. But the business owner, for whatever reason, just doesn't have the money to solve it. Do you know? So he's like, yeah, I understand this is a problem. I understand that it should be fixed, but I just don't have the resources to do it. And so obviously to avoid that, you have to sort of vet your clients and to not waste your time, even before you talk to them, you should know if it's worth basically your time talking with them. So do you have any process around that? And if so, how do you do it?

Ioan Mateescu: 00:36:42 That's a very important subject. Thank you for bringing it up. Basically, I don't want to be mean, but you don't want to deal with broke people. But there are two different kinds of broke. There's wealth broke, someone who doesn't have anything and there's cash flow broke. There are a lot of businesses which are pure big. Like they have a lot of employees, they have big headquarters, they have stuff, but they're broke because they don't

have cash flow. They can't afford an extra \$2,000 a month because they're basically at their limits. And they're very tight-knit, their margins are very low and they just can't afford things like that. And their mind isn't open for potential outside investments. If you just come along and say, okay, I can do this for you. I can save your life. Like, oh, well I can't afford to save my life. Happens.

Ioan Mateescu: 00:37:36 So the way I do it is I don't really deal with businesses like this. I deal with people because if you have a solution that truly solves people's problems, they're going to come up with the money, somehow. People have opportunities. Like they have something stored aside, or they can just get a loan or whatever. But corporate businesses don't have that liberty. It can't do that. So you always want to interact with business owners and you want to interact with business owners who have cash flow businesses. So if they have something that is based on sales, direct sales, that you can get instant, you know, or increased revenue for them, that's good. Or like with sales, they always have money put in advertising and production costs and things like that. They have to keep the money flowing in so that it keeps falling out.

Ioan Mateescu: 00:38:29 And they have this, you know, cycle, this commerce going on, which is what generates their profits. Or if they have, like, gym owners, they have subscriptions. Subscriptions are a form of cash flow every month. People pay money because they come in, they use their facilities. So you don't want to deal with businesses, which are, you know, stuck in a single place. Like let's say, I tried at one point working with agricultures, people basically who keep bees and they sell honey. And on paper, it makes sense. Like, hey, they have a lot of bees. You have to keep the bees running. They sell honey, but it's not actually a cash flow business because the way that it works is that they don't do anything for like three months. Then they get an influx of a lot of honey. Then they sell it in bulk.

Ioan Mateescu: 00:39:28 And then that's it. They're doing nothing for another three months. So it's very seasonal. And I've also worked with another type of business, which is the tourist industry, hotels and stuff like that. And on paper, it makes sense. Or it seems like a cash flow business. You get people who come in and rent your stuff all the time. Well, it depends on what kind of people they are. So if it's like, short-term weekend stuff that might make sense, but only if it's like a luxury type business, if it's a regular run of the mill bed and breakfast type place that doesn't have the right mindset for it, because they're always in the scarcity mindset, going back all the way to this idea. So my primary way to vet people is to try to empathize with them and try to figure out, are a person with an abundance mindset or scarcity mindset,

Tudor Dumitrescu: 00:40:21 Right. So that's, that's actually super interesting right here. So do you try to go watch their mindset? And if you see that they don't have the right mindset, do you sort of step back, or do you try to basically break through their limiting beliefs? What's your process there?

Ioan Mateescu: 00:40:39 So I tried initially to educate people. So basically in Europe, copywriting isn't a real thing. Like most people just want to do things on their own and they're like, Oh, well, I'm going to hire someone in-house. So they handle all my writing. And instead of hiring a copywriter, like a direct response copywriter, who is an expert on marketing and sales, they hire a PR person or a technical writer, right? Yeah. To do their manuals and do their brochures and do all of the stuff. And he's just a generalist. So the approach here is not really that specialized and trying to educate people like, Hey, you need a specialist who only focuses on the sales part of your copy so that they can bring higher conversions and more revenue in that particular area that they're an expert in. It's very, very difficult.

Ioan Mateescu: 00:41:36 It's like fighting against windmills. That just slowly moves, slowly. So you can't, you can't accelerate them. So I've given up on that endeavor. I don't think educating people into understanding that what you're doing is valuable for them makes sense. Like they need to at least philosophically or in terms of their personality or how they're set up their business. Yeah. They need to already be set up to understand that, hey, this guy can just come into my business and give me a product or a service or some solution that just grows my business overnight or over a period of time, depending on what the solution is.

Tudor Dumitrescu: 00:42:18 Would you say that as a marketer you're better off, or for example, in your case, as a copywriter, you're better off going directly to people who are used to hiring copywriters, or can you still try to reach out to people who are not so much used to it? Like they've never done it before, but they have that growth mindset and they're open to the idea. Either or is one preferable to the other?

Ioan Mateescu: 00:42:47 Yeah, you can do both, but it depends on how much money you want to make. This brings me to like a few years after I got into this. So I started off for the fitness niche. I built up my chops, you know, writing copy for all these people. I got a bunch of results. I got somewhat of a portfolio though. I've never used the portfolio. And then I realized this kind of sucks. There's a lot of sketchy stuff in this industry. Like a lot of people were pitching to me like, hey, let's sell this supplement or this heart disease medicine or whatever. And like 90% of copywriting is research. So I would look at these people that then my research, their products, their marketing machine, their business in general, and figure out that what they were selling was scrapped. Like there wasn't a good product and it was actually scamming people for their money and not giving the solution that they actually wanted to get. And for healthcare stuff that is pretty sketchy on an ethical perspective, because, you know, they're sick, they need a solution. If you give them a fixed solution, they're not going to get better. They think they're getting better, but there's, you're just stopping them from finding a real solution.

Tudor Dumitrescu: 00:43:59 Yeah, but they will still buy because at that point they're probably willing to try anything.

Ioan Mateescu: 00:44:03 Yeah, yeah, yeah. And they might get a placebo. So there's some marginal benefit, but it's not the real thing. Yeah, of course. So I realized that, hey, this is too much effort for me to align my work with my ethics. So let's find a different niche. Let's find a better niche. Let's move on from this. And I moved into finance because I started off in finance with the sales that I did and I studied and I had the experience and I had the skills and the understanding of the industry. So I was like, okay, money is here. Technically this should make you a lot more money. Let's find things out. And I did find things out. Basically in the finance niche, there's a whole bunch of investment advisories, or however, you want to call them. People who sell people information about how to invest better.

Ioan Mateescu: 00:44:58 And this is like a multi-billion dollar industry, with a whole lot of money in it. And it's built by copywriters. And all they do is they just write a lot of copy and they have a few people who teach them how to invest better and make money. So I went in there and again, I didn't really have a portfolio. I didn't really have any practical experience, but these people are hungry. They are hungry for copywriters. They just need more and more offers because the market is huge. There's a lot of money in it. And they have just so much demand for more offers and more opportunities to sell to these people. So I started emailing them and just calling them, getting in contact with them, and trying to find people to get me to write sales letters, basically, and emails, and other pieces of content in the finance niche. And I felt a couple of people and it was basically like three times more money overnight. Like just by switching the niche pretty much.

Tudor Dumitrescu: 00:46:05 Yeah. I agree. The finance rate niches are one of the best I think for copywriters. And I've certainly made a lot of money in the finance niche as well. The thing here with finance, I think that there is indeed a lot of money in it. So that's one thing. And the other thing is you mentioned that these people, they're open to hiring you and giving you a chance, even if you don't have that much experience. And I've noticed that this is true because compensations tend to be based on results. And there's a minimal loss for them. If your copy doesn't work out, you know, they tried for a couple of days, they send some traffic to it, the results aren't there, that's it. They throw it away. They haven't lost that much. And you only get paid with a lot of money in most cases when you actually deliver them results. So it's low risk for them.

Ioan Mateescu: 00:47:01 Yeah. And if you're in their area, like in the US, or the UK, or wherever these places usually are situated, they're actually willing to pick you up and train you. Like if you don't have any experience or whatever, they're so hungry for more copywriters, you can just go there and be like, Hey, I want to become a copywriter. And they give you a job, a salary, all the training that you need from top-tier experts with like decades of experience. And they give you solid contracts to write offers and the chance, you know, to show what you got, just like that, you don't have to sell anything. You don't have to convince them. They just want more people. So I know there's a few in Baltimore and a few in like, Fort Lauderdale, Florida, London, of course, like, there's just so many of these businesses that need more copywriters. So you're asking me what kind of advice I would give people. Well, if you're interested in financial stuff, and you're interested in writing for money and for, you know, creating value and

doing resourceful stuff, try and find a lot of these financial advisories and try and get hired. Right?

Tudor Dumitrescu: 00:48:13 Yeah, absolutely. I mean, it's a great thing to do if you're just getting started out and you're going to basically shorten the learning curve big time, because one thing that's special about copywriting is that you really learn by reading other people's copy and interacting with copywriters and seeing how they make the decisions that they do make, you know, and you shorten your learning curve big time. If you have a panel of experts who are basically going to read what you write and criticize it and tell you how you can make it better. So absolutely for somebody who is just starting out, that's a great way to do it. I also wanted to ask you, because it's related to this, what would you say are your favorite resources, when it comes to marketing and copywriting art, as in books, programs, you know, what would you recommend to people? If somebody asks you basic questions, what should I read? You know, what would you say?

Ioan Mateescu: 00:49:13 That's really hard to answer because there's just so much stuff. But so the primary way of learning about sales and marketing and copywriting and all of these things, advertising in general, is by being immersed in it. Okay. Just doing it, reading it, learning it, buying products, getting assaulted with advertising, just being so far involved in it, that it becomes part of your life. And then you build this small type of understanding. But beyond that, I'd say books and courses are probably the primary way that you want to acquire knowledge and a more sophisticated, theoretical understanding of how to do these things. So I would recommend Cas\$vertising. That's a great book. For copywriting specifically, you can start off with the Boron Letters by Gary Halbert. Great insight there. For general marketing, I mentioned, yeah Fastlane Millionaire.

Ioan Mateescu: 00:50:13 So it's just marketing essence, right there. All you need to know for business and everything I got. And personally, I prefer a more decentralized form of knowledge. So if you just start Googling about these things, you learn so much interesting stuff in bite-sized chunks that you can easily process and apply and train and build up. So you're not overwhelmed, you know, hundreds of pages of information. So, if you look online for things like emotional writing or conversion copywriting, or how to write headlines, simple stuff, you know, you're going to find a lot of point information on Google. Very superficial in terms of how far you need to dig. And that should be enough to get you started. And after that, you're going to encounter people like by working in this industry, you're going to find people who just talk about these things like, oh, I read this book, oh, I had such awesome insight. There's something in there that I've never heard before, or you're going to read that book after that, if you want to do it. And you're not just going to get the initial, extra piece of insight. You're also going to get the foundational 80% that everybody includes in all of their books.

Tudor Dumitrescu: 00:51:27 Absolutely. So I mean, that all sounds fantastic to me. And these are great resources. Like I've read, all the resources that you've mentioned.

Cas\$vertising, the Boron Letters, and Fastlane Millionaire, they're all great reads. And I think that everybody who wants to be in online marketing should at least read them once, you know, and get that knowledge even upfront. And it's a great way to get started. One thing that really makes you stand out based on your story so far is the fact that you didn't go the route that most people do when they want to start. Most people would just open an Upwork account nowadays, at least. And they would just start trying to get clients like that. And then, you know, they complain that you know, I've spent so much time on Upwork and I'm barely making any money. You know, I'm barely making a thousand dollars a month. So I think that by going through the more difficult routes that you went through, you can get much further. And I mean, did this happen on purpose for you? Like, were you aware of the platforms like Upwork and other places like that and chose to focus your interest elsewhere? And if so, how did that come about? Like, what were your thoughts?

Ioan Mateescu: 00:52:52 Well, it was more natural. I mean, initially, I wasn't aware of belt freelancing at all. I didn't know that what I was doing was freelancing. So I didn't know about freelancing platforms and things like that, but as I started doing things and I became more professional, let's say, in my approach, I did encounter them and I started off, you know, on oDesk and Elance, like Freelancer.com or whatever, and those worked fine. But they weren't the primary way of doing things. They were like a supplementary thing. And they're the lazy way like when you don't want to put in the effort you have these staffers, or you can just apply to people's jobs like you already know what they want, whatever you have to offer and have to actually do the groundwork. But I think the roundabout way is a lot more profitable and a lot more productive in terms of actually building your skills and building your marketing ability in general.

Ioan Mateescu: 00:53:49 And around that, the idea of general understanding, I think that's what makes a marketer great. Like being a specialist makes you very, very good. Okay. It makes you a lot of money. If you're the best at writing emails, you're going to be fucking amazing, you're going to be super-rich. Okay. But in order to be a solid marketer that can just go into any business, make them money, you need a very general understanding. So I also want to recommend, besides the things that we've mentioned before, which are specific for marketing, there are things such as Influence by Robert Cialdini, or Thinking Fast and Slow, or books by Harry Brown, psychology type books, How to Win Friends and Influence People. And I mentioned the Roundabout, one of my favorite books, I would say for investments and economics, marketing and applies generally in life. It's called the Dao of Capital. It's basically about the idea of roundabout investing and how by not being super direct going, you know, pinpoint whatever the easiest barrier of entry is for the particular solution they're looking for. And instead, going roundabout way, the less beaten path, okay. You have a lot more opportunity to win by creating value and doing productive things.

Tudor Dumitrescu: 00:55:22 How does that work in terms of investment? I mean, going the roundabout way. Can you give an example of that because it's sort of abstract? I mean, I haven't read that book and it's hard for me to wrap my mind around it.

Ioan Mateescu: 00:55:37 Right. So it's based on Sun Tzu's Art of War and a lot of different things, like a militaristic sort of analogy. Which are very relevant in investment because, in war, you're basically investing human capital, soldiers, and logistical resources, to acquire different benefits. Yeah. But the main aspect is the idea of patience and about doing by not doing. People forget like most people are very short-term event-oriented. Like they have a very narrow or time perspective. So the one thing is now like, Oh, how do I get clients? Oh, I'm going to go to a place where clients are, and I'm going to get them, you know, very direct, very narrow-focused because all they see is the event getting the clients, but they don't see the process of first building a relationship with a person, understanding their problems, empathizing with them, all of that stuff. And then finally, once you have a mutual understanding of rapport relationships, yeah. Then you acquire them as a client. And that client that you acquired after the roundabout building up of the relationship is a thousand times more valuable than random clients that you got on Upwork. And you worked for a hundred dollars project, and you never talked with him ever again because you were just one freelancer over hundreds, you know, for them.

Tudor Dumitrescu: 00:57:09 It sounds to me like a distinction between basically being tactical, you know, and trying to find a quick solution and being strategic. And doing something that maximizes your long-term benefits.

Ioan Mateescu: 00:57:24 So in that book, one of the main comparisons that are used is between a forest of evergreen trees, which takes many, many years to grow, decades, even a hundred years before you can actually cut it up for valuable wood and agriculture. Okay. Wheat, you plant it. And then at the end of the year, or after six months, or however long, you've got your grain and you can sell it on the market. So the investment perspective for grain is about six months or a year because half the year it doesn't grow. So every year you have the production cycle, but with the forest, the production cycle was 40 years, 80 years, 120 years. And the question is, what is a better investment? How do you take a piece of land and most efficiently put it to good use? And in certain places, you know, planting grain is better because food is valuable.

Ioan Mateescu: 00:58:30 It's scarce. We should eat, you know, food to grow cities and develop society. But in other places, in a mountainous region, for example, you don't need wheat, it doesn't grow fast enough. It doesn't grow well. So you have trees which grow better in that particular region. But the whole philosophy of it is that the trees are very patient. Okay. And planting these trees takes a long time. It might take more than your life for them to actually bring a return on investment. But once they bring that return on investment, it's much greater than all the ROI of the wheat over that entire period.

Tudor Dumitrescu: 00:59:08 Right. So it sounds like it's about taking care basically of the entire context, you know, and not just going with something because you heard somebody else

do it, you know, but rather really assessing and coming to terms with your situation and acting from that larger strategic context.

Ioan Mateescu: 00:59:32 Right. Exactly. Yeah.

Tudor Dumitrescu: 00:59:34 There's also a great book that goes over this, but it labels the distinction as strategic versus tactical. And it's also about marketing and it's a great one it's written by Chad Holmes. Basically, the book goes into this distinction and shows how, if you act tactically for the short term, you're actually going to ruin the long-term for you. So the book is the ultimate sales machine. It's a great read. And it also teaches you about how you have to build an organization, how you train people. And that's very relevant for somebody who does marketing in the context of, you know, being an entrepreneur and growing inside their business, right?

Ioan Mateescu: 01:00:24 Yeah. This is very valuable. And not just if you're trying to grow and scale the business, but if you're just an individual trying to build a career for yourself or build a way to market your personal skills, you still can benefit a lot from these things that you just understanding internally, the idea of delayed gratification and opportunity costs and expected value and things like that, makes such a huge difference in how your approach your decision-making and it gets you so much closer to accurate risk management. Yeah. It super increases your success as a business owner in general. So I would say use if you're just starting out just by marketing your skills and use this opportunity to build your understanding of more complex mechanisms in terms of risk management and dealing with opportunity. And as you're building these skills and you're understanding the world more and more, and you get a better understanding of marketing in general, you will be much more, better positioned later on to help a successful business, because these skills lay out at the foundation of entrepreneurship and business building.

Ioan Mateescu: 01:01:37 The problem is that if you're just, you don't have them yet, and you just go into business, you know, head-on, chances are they're going to fail, and you're going to learn these skills quickly and efficiently through those failures. But those failures might be very big. They might be too daunting. They might, you know, leave scars in terms of your psychology and your mindset. And it might stop you from pursuing business ever again, if they're too big initially. So if you're not ready, you know, you don't want to have the skills yet, or the capital to fail and start off a business, then this is definitely a good way to go just as a freelancer or even an employee and the right niches or industries to develop skills. So I would recommend just getting started today, figuring out where you want to go and start going.

Tudor Dumitrescu: 01:02:25 Do you think that it's possible to sort of be an employee, but be entrepreneurial at the same time? A lot of people nowadays call a talk about intrapreneurs. So

basically people who are employees, but they take initiative in a company and they develop basically a new area of business or a new source of cash flow or whatever it is. So what's your take on that?

Ioan Mateescu: 01:02:51 Exactly. Yeah. I was about to bring up the term intrapreneur, but it's definitely an avenue that you can approach, and I even have an example of myself. So, after the fitness niche thing, and in between that and the finance thing, I had a stint where I went to business, where I was like, you know what, I need something more local. I need like a community to feel like I belonged, all sorts of stupid things. Yeah. And I wanted, you know, some, material gains, like I was making money, but I couldn't do anything with that money. It's like, I dunno, like I want to experience fancy rich life or whatever. So I found this business and I saw that they were looking for a marketing person, like two months ago or whatever, the ad wasn't available anymore. They probably hired someone to like, but hey, if they were looking for marketing then, they're looking for marketing now,

Ioan Mateescu: 01:03:47 You're never enough looking for marketing. So I found the contact details of the CEO and I sent him an email. I was like, Hey, I saw that you had this need, I have solutions for your needs, expertise, skills, whatever. This is me. Let's talk. And then we talked, he gave me a call. We met for dinner. I met with his wife for dinner, and then two days later I was working for his business. Yeah. And it was an interesting business. The council here in the resort where I'm living, basically, it's a touristy type thing, but it's all fancy. Like they have classical music, concerts, famous people coming along. Like they have a fancy restaurant on the bottom for like French cuisine, but it's way too expensive. And I will never eat there in my life, but I was like, I want to eat there, but I'm never going to pay for it.

Ioan Mateescu: 01:04:45 So I'm going to work for this guy. And then it'd be like part of my deal. I get to eat there whenever I want. And that's what I got. So part of my deal, I was able to work from home because I was like 50 minutes away, not a big deal. But I had all my freedoms that I acquired on my journey. Like, I didn't want to sacrifice anything to get this job, but I knew that I could provide value for this guy without sacrificing anything. So I have location freedom. I had free time. And I got all the benefits without any of the costs. So I went tonight. I wrote a copy for this guy. And I also handle PR and a bunch of other things, but I got to ride in his fancy Mercedes. And I got to eat at his fancy restaurants and I got to meet the fancy opera singers and whatever.

Tudor Dumitrescu: 01:05:32 Wow. That's quite something, that's awesome. And I mean, if you're going to work a job, that's the kind of job you want, haha.

Ioan Mateescu: 01:05:38 Yeah. So I thought it was a dream job. Like that's the way I view it. I was like, okay, this is the dream job. I'm going to go there. And I'm going to, if it's not, I'm going

to make it. And I went there and I had big plans. I tried to make changes. People don't like it, by the way. And I tried to improve the business and try to be entrepreneurial inside that business because my relationship was not as an employee. Like I wasn't just hired to do a particular task. I had a job description shared for appearance's sake, but I was at the same level basically, or like right under the CEO, I was answering directly to the CEO. I was independent. I had autonomy inside that business. And I got to do things that I viewed would bring, you know, benefits and they will improve the whole thing.

Ioan Mateescu: 01:06:26 So I was basically an entrepreneur in the context of that business and it also wasn't just one business, it was like three different businesses in that cooperative type situation. Like the restaurant was its own thing. So I collaborated with a chef trying to improve the menu and do some marketing stuff. The castle and all of those things were their own separate business. And there was also a commercial business where they have products that they sold and things like that. So I was working on three fronts trying to improve their systems, improve their marketing, and create extra value from an entrepreneurial perspective. So you can get in this position from an employee position. Like you can just go there and talk to the boss and negotiate like, hey, I want these additional responsibilities and these additional freedoms, I want to be paid in this particular way.

Ioan Mateescu: 01:07:17 As long as you have, you know, the confidence, I guess, to know what you want and the value proposition that you offer to that person makes sense. Like they gain more than they pay you. Then it's rare that they would say no, as long as they have the right mentality for it. And this guy did. So before I engaged into this, or I vetted him, like I wanted to make sure that he was, you know, a proper entrepreneur. And he was, because he wasn't Romanian. Yeah. He came with, you know, foreign ideals, he has a whole bunch of different businesses. He has like multiple different ventures and that she was the proper target for this type of intrapreneurial venture. But the people who worked under him were Romanian, they were not.

Tudor Dumitrescu: 01:08:12 That was the problem. I see. That was the problem.

Ioan Mateescu: 01:08:16 Through my efforts, what I encountered, that experience was a lot of roadblocks. And I felt like I was hitting my head on the wall. Every time I tried to do things, because people don't like change. Who is this guy who just came out of nowhere and now he's demanding that we do things differently. We've been doing these things for years and they've been working fine, you know? So direct change never works. So I had to do things a different way, you know, and try to bypass these people pretty much and try to improve things, like on top of what they were doing without changing whatever they were already doing. And there are a lot of different roadblocks in terms of the actual company philosophy and the personality of the people who work there. So they were very conservative in terms of the actual things that were going on there.

Ioan Mateescu: 01:09:05 And like, they thought I was a spy, like where did I come from? Who is this guy? Yeah. Cause I guess I just moved in the area for like six months until I got hired there with this expertise that nobody had anywhere in like 200 kilometers around this place. Nobody knows what a copywriter is. Nobody knows marketing. These guys are just pencil pushers. Yeah. So I was coming with an American understanding of things, bringing it into. And they didn't like that. So yeah, if you want to do the entrepreneurial stuff, you need to find a company which has the right philosophy. So ideally it would be like a startup. Startups are very good for us. Because they're generally entrepreneurial. Like you have people who start them up are literally entrepreneurs. So if you come over and they hire you as a sort of employee, you have a lot more opportunity and freedom to, you know, upgrade your agreement from just an employee where you do a particular task and you're like a robot, to having more autonomy and more freedom and more opportunity to create value. And also because you're creating more value to your entrepreneurial efforts, intrapreneurial efforts, you also get the opportunity to ask for more money or ask for equity in that startup, or do various things. So instead of being just an employee, you become a partner in that business.

Tudor Dumitrescu: 01:10:30 In the business. Absolutely. So I think that's actually, if you ask me, what's the simplest way to make a lot of money, I would say that it is to join a startup where you have a strong team alongside you and you have access to capital. And I mean, if the company makes it big, you're also going to make it big. Obviously not as much as the CEO or the owner, but you're still going to be easily a millionaire. And I mean, I've seen this happening. I know somebody who used to work for quite a few years ago in EY path and of course, they've just gone public now on the New York stock Exchange and the value is 36 billion,

Tudor Dumitrescu: 01:11:14 A lot of people who work there from the beginning, they're millionaires today and you see all that is possible because they've worked in the right place. You know, they didn't waste their time working at a government job or pushing penciled somewhere or doing something stupid. You know, they actually searched for companies where they could add value and companies that had potential.

Ioan Mateescu: 01:11:40 Yeah, it's definitely possible to be on the fast lane, inside the company where you're not the owner.

Tudor Dumitrescu: 01:11:46 And I would say it's much, it's much easier. I mean, the owner goes through so much pain to make the company work. Ultimately I think he's the one who goes through most of the pain to actually make it work. He's the one who takes on most of the stress, whereas everybody else, they sort of get their energy from the team, you know? And if you are surrounded by other smart people and you're all working towards a certain direction, things tend to sort of start developing by themselves in that sort of environment. And I think that the pressure is much lower. So basically the risk reward ratio, or rather, I should say, the reward to

risk ratio is much greater as an employee rather than a founder or a CEO. I mean the founder and the CEO, they assume the entire risk, the employees, even if the startup goes belly up, they take their experience. You know, they've lost no capital, they've disappointed no investors, and then they can be on to the next startup. So I would say that if somebody just wants to get rich, the fastest way to do it is to get yourself in a strong startup, in a strong team, you know, and just work there and make it happen. And if that one doesn't work out, try to pick a better one next time and keep going from one-to-one until you find one, which is a winner.

Ioan Mateescu: 01:13:21 Yeah. I agree. And there's a lot of skills which you can use to do this. So you can get an equity based position if you're just like a sales agent or if you're like a web developer or a general programmer.

Tudor Dumitrescu: 01:13:35 I mean, if you are new in a startup, they don't have money. Right. So they're going to give equity also to motivate.

Ioan Mateescu: 01:13:42 Of course. Yeah. So just, you know, find businesses with potential, try to find ways to create value for them, be value-oriented in general. And there's going to be a lot of opportunities that you can look at on websites such as AngelList. There's just so many startups looking for people in so many different areas and they're just advertising that they're giving equity away. And places like, you know, Y Combinator, like so many big companies worth billions of dollars have sprouted from these venues that you just have direct access to. And if you have skills that you can offer, bring to the table, go there and do it. It's not difficult.

Tudor Dumitrescu: 01:14:23 Yeah, absolutely. Uh, I think that for you to be an entrepreneur directly and start your own business, I think that you also need to desire something more than money. You know, you need to desire to sort of make an impact and really transform something, change something, because if you don't have that sort of desire it at some point, it just gets so hard that you just going to quit and give up, you know, because it's, it's not going to be worth it for you in that mindset to keep going. And I think that every person should have a clear idea of where they stand on that. Like, do I want to be the guy who's going to take all the risk and go through all this loneliness and pain and so on building a huge business, you know, and making a huge change or do I just want to be part of a team which does this? I think that in order to be satisfied, it's very important to make the right choice when it comes to this. And so to understand yourself,

Ioan Mateescu: 01:15:26 I agree. Yeah. And if you want your own business, it needs to be your baby. Like you need to commit to it and bring it all the way to adulthood. But if you just bring it, Alex, you created whatever you invest a couple of years in and did like a post-term abortion of your business is not going to work. If you're going to waste a lot of time and effort

and resources, then you would be better off if you just signed up to someone else's business and help them build their baby instead.

Tudor Dumitrescu: 01:15:53 Absolutely, it makes a lot of sense. You know? So that's why I say you need to have a desire that's greater than just money. So you need a purpose. Exactly. So it's about purpose. So you brought something that's really interesting.

Ioan Mateescu: 01:16:12 And a real, clear vision, like you need to know exactly what you're trying to accomplish and what great goal you're doing with this business. So that even when things aren't working and you have to, you know, bring money from home, like sell your house or get another mortgage. So you can fund the business because it's going to collapse otherwise you need to justify that you can't just give up.

Tudor Dumitrescu: 01:16:33 You need to know why you're doing it, basically. Absolutely. So that's the purpose. And I think that purpose is very powerful. So in business, I think it's essential. And, it goes back to one of my favorite books that I still recommend to entrepreneurs these days, which is Think and Grow Rich. And one of the things that's emphasized right in the beginning there is that you need to have a clear, major purpose, and that needs to be clear and you need to remind yourself constantly of that purpose. And I think that as an entrepreneur, that's a must, you know Like you absolutely have to have that purpose and it needs to be crystal clear what it is and why it's important to you because otherwise when you get punched in the face and it's going to happen sooner or later, you going to feel like giving up.

Tudor Dumitrescu: 01:17:28 And if you don't have that purpose to rely on, well, then you will give up, you know? So that's just how it goes. You mentioned earlier, when we discussed the book about Dao, you mentioned this idea of non-doing. And just hanging around in entrepreneurial circles and being involved in this world, I've noticed that there are two different tendencies that people tend to adopt. Let's say, when it comes to solving a problem, some people have the mindset that you sort of have to let go and go with the flow and let life guide you. Whereas other people think that you sort of have to envision how things must be and then actively pursue them with a burning desire to succeed. I was just wondering, where do you stand on that? Basically, do you favor the approach of, surrendering to the present moment and seeing what comes out of that or more the approach or having a burning desire and using that to sort of push yourself to success.

Ioan Mateescu: 01:18:43 Probably somewhere in the middle, but leaning more towards the burning desire thing. Although I wouldn't describe it necessarily that way. I think it's, a matter of locus of control here, whether you have an internal or an external locus of control, there are things that you can influence yourself and change and not that change into your reality or not. And I, I think having an internal locus of control, believing that you, in fact, as the actor in this reality can actually change reality and make an impact through your actions is integral, it's necessary to be a successful person. Like if you don't believe that what you're doing has an

impact where it has an effect on what is happening around you, or if you believe that you at the whims of the things happening around you, like whether it's luck or the powers that be or whatever, you're just not going to do a very good job. Yeah?

Tudor Dumitrescu: 01:19:40 Yeah. It makes sense. Like, I mean, you have to believe that what you're doing, both has a purpose and has a chance to succeed. If you think that it has no chance to succeed, you're probably not going to do it.

Ioan Mateescu: 01:19:54 Right. So it's very important to believe that you can do things, believe that what you're doing is going to lead to certain outcomes and then guide yourself to the outcomes that you want to accomplish your purpose or your vision, whatever you want

Ioan Mateescu: 01:20:08 To call it. The place where the not doing comes in is that you don't have to do the first thing that comes along. Like opportunities are everywhere. There's always an abundance of opportunities, but some opportunities are better than others. And if you just pick the first one that comes along and you just take it and you just go with it, go with the flow, take action, go, go, go, go, go. Then once you're engaged in this opportunity, there are better ones that come along and they just fly by and you miss them and you can't, you know, maximize the amount of growth or progress or value that it can create because you're already engaged in the inefficient things that came along first. So this is what most people do actually. Like if you see someone who just got fired or like their business went under and they lost their job or whatever, what do they do?

Ioan Mateescu: 01:20:58 They throw their CVs out there and the one in the wind to like a hundred different companies or whatever. And then they get interviewed. And the first offer that they get, they're going to accept that offer, you know, because being unemployed is painful. They need to be employed because otherwise they don't have money to eat or whatever, because they don't have, you know, the freedom, the opportunity to wait, to be patient. They don't have savings. They don't have, you know, a runway of like six months, a year is whatever, just to live without having to worry about getting the first opportunity that comes along. That's where the Dao philosophy comes into place.

Tudor Dumitrescu: 01:21:36 Right, but I mean, that's the risk with that sort of philosophy because I mean, we also have people who just sit there and meditate the whole day and they say, maybe the next one, maybe the next one, you know, I won't go for this opportunity. I'll wait for another one. I'll wait for another one. And by waiting for the best, you know, they never go for any of them. You know, I think that that's a big risk with this approach.

Ioan Mateescu: 01:22:02 So you can't be a perfectionist. It's not about the best, but it's about being decisive at the right moment. And of course identifying what the right moment is takes, you know, experience and skill and level of intuition or, you know, knowledge and some systems in place that help you better identify these things. So you do have to take action, eventually, you do have to be decisive when you do take action, but it shouldn't be on the first opportunity unless that first opportunity qualifies as you know, a very good one. I'd say that most people are leaning too much towards the goal with the flow part of things. And just being constantly engaged in things and not having the freedom and the room to accept greater opportunities and to invest in longer term perspectives of growth and development. So by promoting this idea, since most people are too far to the left, pushing them more to the right, gets them closer to where they are supposed to be somewhere in the middle. Yeah.

Tudor Dumitrescu: 01:23:06 Yeah. I see where you're coming from. Yeah. So earlier you mentioned how when you made the switch from fitness to finance. Initially you were good basically at marketing, but you're bad at sales. So how do, how do you make sense of that sort of, because many people intuitively would say that if you're a good marketer, you're by default a good salesman. So what do you think is the difference between the two of them and what actually helped you become good at sales?

Ioan Mateescu: 01:23:41 Okay. So generally marketing is about communication. Okay. And most products that get sold don't have to be sold, you know, quote unquote. So the way that they are marketed is basically about putting them in front of the right audience, that people are already hungry to buy that product. They are already in such great pain, that if you put the solution in front of them, they have no option, but to say yes to it. So there's no selling involved there. It's just about identifying the problem and the solution and just getting them close together. So that's the most efficient form of marketing and probably the best way that you should do things. But where sales comes into place is where the gap between the two is a bit larger. Like perhaps people are not already in sufficient pain. So you need to agitate their pain a little bit, make them realize that: Hey, this is actually a problem that I need to solve. So I'm going to take some action in order to do it. Most people are not ready to take action. And that's where sales comes in each to not just communicate the product or the solution to their problem. You have to communicate the emotional aspects of why that solution is important, how exactly it services them and solves their problem and all the other things that go around it.

Tudor Dumitrescu: 01:25:09 So how did you get good at sales in the end?

Ioan Mateescu: 01:25:12 Practice. That's the main thing.

Tudor Dumitrescu: 01:25:14 Like one thing that once you learn that one thing, it sort of clicked and it all went along or was it more like a gradual thing that just came along with practice? Like what exactly was the thing holding you back and sales in the first place?

Ioan Mateescu: 01:25:23 Probably mindset issues, beliefs, things like that. Like some people you see them and they're like, Oh, that guy is a natural salesman. It's just, he's just so good. Like some of these maybe you've seen on YouTube, perhaps a video of people who just are door to door salesmen, and they're just so charismatic and so easy to listen to that you have to buy whatever they're selling even if you don't need it. Yeah. The way those people do things is because they have the right mindset. They have the right personality for the right things. Yeah. And they subconsciously or naturally

Ioan Mateescu: 01:26:04 Developed the skills needed to be a successful salesman. I didn't have those things. Like I'm a very introverted guy. I didn't really interact with people very much. I never try to convince them of things. Like, I don't need to convince people of anything if they don't want to agree with me, that's their problem. I don't care. Yeah. So I didn't have the foundational understanding of the soft skills of salesmanship. So I had to develop those in order to be a successful salesman. So I put myself into the environment where I could do that. And then I started doing it and I sucked at it. I sucked really, really bad and I kept doing it and I kept doing it. I didn't know why. And people would tell me, you need to do this and you need to do that. But those things came naturally to them.

Ioan Mateescu: 01:26:46 I couldn't do those things. They just were not me or impossible, but I tried and I tried and then I didn't try. And I tried something else. And every once in a while, like with any sort of learning curve, there's like a soft progression. And then there's some realization, some paradigm shift. Then there's like a jump upwards, a spike into the learning curve. And then you plateau and then you get some new information, some knowledge, you start ascending softly again, and then you get another paradigm shift. Bam, you spike again. So I wouldn't say there's like one event, which makes you a great salesman, one realization, whatever, but it's a series of realizations that occurred after you accrue enough effort and enough investment in that particular task or disciplined, in this case selling. So that happened to me. I just called people eight hours a day, business people.

Ioan Mateescu: 01:27:39 And I talk to them. Most people just, you know, shut the phone off and swear at me and were aggressive about it because they didn't appreciate being cold called, whatever, I got over it. It was bad only for like the first two days and then I got used to it. Then after a while I realized: Hey, I need to be more natural. What does that mean? You know, sounding natural when you speak to people, when you still like, there's nothing natural about this. You're reading off a script, you know, you're trying to shove words in their mouth and ideas in their head and trying to, basically, bully them down a certain path in terms of the rhetoric of your argument or whatever. There's nothing natural about that. So how do you sell natural when you do it? Well, by not caring about what they say, by having certain benchmarks, some points

in which, you know, the conversation, gravitates towards, and just try to get through them. Pinpoints. And you let things drift off a little bit. You don't apply a strong resistance. A lot of people will do this wrong because they just, they fight the fight against the other person. For them, it's a battle. You call the person and now you're in combat trying to make them do something they don't want to do. That's wrong. You don't want to make them do anything that they didn't want to do. You want to

Ioan Mateescu: 01:29:02 Identify whether this is something that they do want to do and then show them that it is something that they do want to do. If you realize along the way that the person doesn't want to buy this thing, it's not useful for them, just call someone else. It's a waste of time. You're never going to convince them.

Tudor Dumitrescu: 01:29:19 Yeah. I mean, you absolutely have to qualify people when you get to the level of sales, because otherwise you're going to waste your time with some people who are never going to buy. You know? So I think that that's an essential part of sales learning, basically who is a good prospect and who is not. And the earlier you can do it in the sales cycle, the better you're going to be. But what you said earlier is important, and that is that you ended up finding a style for selling that worked for you because you noticed that you had a different personality than the other guys, and some other style was working much better for you than for them. And I think that that's absolutely true. So I actually have the philosophy that there is no one best sales style, you know. The best sales style is the best combination for the given personality of the salesman. You know? So given that personality, there is a certain style, which is the best, but there is no best generally because we always get people who ask like, Oh, what's the best sales book, or what's the best salesman or this kind of stuff. And I think that it varies and it depends a lot. It's contextual, it's relative. And it depends on the personality and how that personality best feels natural in the sales process and can execute for you

Ioan Mateescu: 01:30:52 Exactly. And it's not just the best fit for the person who's doing the selling, but also for the person you're selling to. So in my case, my experience, like I had a good time with a certain subset of women. So all these people in the business, the way they were approached or who basically was selected as a successful salesman in the business, it was all just hyper-aggressive, hypermasculine guys. And businessmen who are hyper aggressive and hyper-masculine responded well to the competitive nature of the selling. It worked well for them, but I wasn't like that. I was non-confrontational. I was soft-spoken. I was like letting them do whatever. And those hyper-competitive people were kind of walking over me getting on top of me and I couldn't deal, guide them to where I wanted to get them.

Ioan Mateescu: 01:31:51 They just took the reins and controlled me. And that was it. I lost the sale, but these other people, because they were hyper aggressive, they immediately put off all of these softer sort of, basically the feminine type of audience. Yeah. Who didn't appreciate being aggressed basically by some random salesman, they wanted to know time, they wanted a space to think about things, you know, navigate around, to be comfortable in order to reach their

own conclusions. They never gave them that. Yeah. And I came along and I recognized this and I was like, Oh, well, I can do that. Like, I don't mind spending two extra minutes with them and to give them the time to process and ask questions and be curious about things. Like these guys never answered questions because the people that they talk to, they never ask the questions. They always try to back away.

Ioan Mateescu: 01:32:47 They're always like retreating in this combat situation, but I wanted to make them come towards me to pull them towards me. So that it's much easier for me to dive into the sale. So what happened in that environment is that we recognized that different people did well with certain types of people, and other people did well with other types of people and we would pass context around. So once they recognize, Oh, this guy I can't sell to this guy, I hate him. He's horrible. He sucks. But I know one person in my team because we were split into three teams so that we were competitive with each other and we had like more motivation, whatever. But the idea was that we would cooperate to get better results for the whole team. And once I recognized that this guy is a good fit for that guy and this other guy is a good fit for that guy. And we were traded contacts and everybody was better off this way, so we had better results. So that was cool.

Tudor Dumitrescu: 01:33:42 That's, that's a great experience to have. And I mean, I think that everything that you've said so far in your story have been all great experiences. And what surprises me is that they're so varied. Like you, you went from basically being in esports to getting into marketing and then having a stint as an entrepreneur, as you said, and then back to marketing, I presume. So my next question is going to be, how did things develop from then on to today and where are you basically at today?

Ioan Mateescu: 01:34:21 Okay. So after the entrepreneur's stand, I got burned out. That was not a great experience. It was for a while, but once the walls started encroaching on me more and more than I lost my autonomy and freedom, I had to leave and I took a break. And during that break, I had a bunch of capital stored up, you know, so I had the opportunity to wait and do things around the beltway. And I started investing in more resources, knowledge, education, courses, a whole bunch of stuff. I spent like \$20,000 on just courses trying to learn from other people.

Tudor Dumitrescu: 01:34:55 And is it good that you bought that, you would recommend this to others?

Ioan Mateescu: 01:35:05 Sure. Um, so I guess there are a few people that stood out to me, so Doberman Dan for copywriting and like direct response type stuff, generally direct mail, things like that. He's very solid.

Ioan Mateescu: 01:35:13 So there's one concept, just sell the damn thing. Yeah. It's very simple as a concept, stop beating around the bush. It's like the opposite of how I'm trying to do things actually, which is why it's interesting to me. And he's like, just go to the people, who want to buy your stuff, and just sell the damn thing. Like, stop trying to convince them and just sell the damn thing. Yeah. And it's, it's mind opening in a certain sense that hey, this is the way to do it, but there's also the other way to do it. And that's Ramit Sethi, who is more like a modern copywriter. He has a whole bunch of businesses. He caters quite a bit to non-entrepreneurial people like actual employees who want to get a better job or negotiate a higher salary or whatever. And he has a more roundabout approach to things.

Ioan Mateescu: 01:36:03 And he's very focused on long-term content and relationship building. And he also has a course on copywriting, which is based on, you know, good copy principles. So I recommend some of his stuff. Like if you want to become a freelancer, he has Earn One K, it's a copywriting course called Call to Action. Those are pretty good. And I got a whole bunch of stuff like for email or whatever, I wanted to specialize at that time. But I'm just a very generalist guy. Okay. I dabble in a lot of things. My tagline on LinkedIn is literally: jack of most trades, master of some.

Ioan Mateescu: 01:36:46 So yeah. So that's how I describe myself. I don't like focusing on just one thing. I get bored. So I get really good at multiple things, but I'm not the best at any of them, but yeah, this is very good because what I can deal with this expertise is varied expertise, this variety of experience is that I can do most things on my own. And then I can find an actual super-duper specialist who's way better than me at other particular things and instruct them and guide them and get the best results out of them. Like someone who doesn't have a varied experience, can't exactly extract the maximum value out of another person who is the specialist. They have to trust that they can do that thing. So what happened after the courses? I don't know what else I should mention there actually, in terms of what to recommend. So many...

Tudor Dumitrescu: 01:37:41 You've mentioned a lot so far. I mean, yeah.

Ioan Mateescu: 01:37:44 So a lot of clients, we don't want to overwhelm people with content, but yeah. So I started actually trying to start a bunch of businesses and I was doing it in my spare time. I got back into esports kind of a little bit, I have a lot of experience. Well, I had a lot of free time and I've always been engaged with it at least superficially, but I wanted to put my experience to good use and when I gave up the job, the entrepreneurial job at the council, the first thing that I did literally was fly over to Germany and attend a Counter-Strike tournament. Oh yeah. So I wanted to go back to my roots basically, cause I'd been playing Counter-Strike since I was six years old. Literally all my life. It's like over 15 years. Pretty much all the time. Yeah.

Ioan Mateescu: 01:38:36 So I have way more than 10,000 hours in Counter Strike. So that would be basically what I am a master at. Yeah. Definitely more so than copywriting or marketing or whatever. So I went back to my roots and at the time sports betting and the esports scene was kind of booming. Like it just started, there's a lot of dumb money in the industry. A lot of kids with like skins and the game, trading stuff and betting on stupid games and I had so much experience and such a well-developed intuitive understanding of this industry, and I also knew from poker like how to bankroll manage and how to manage expected value. And I knew about the Kelly criteria on and all those things. So I had a very sophisticated approach to betting that I could make just a lot of money by watching Counter Strike tournaments, which I did for fun anyway, understanding the teams who played and betting on their games.

Ioan Mateescu: 01:39:36 I had way higher success rates than the market, then the average person who bet on these games or the bookies who made aunts and all of that. So I spent like two years in sports betting, and I made quite a bit of money just by betting on games. And, I used a bunch of that money to try and build my very own online casino, with this aspect of sports betting and using the benefits from gaining that sort of pseudo currency because it wasn't based on actual money. It was based on virtual assets in Counter Strike, that game. So with those assets, I had a friend who I was working with and I met through the betting stuff and he was getting to web development. So he created the website. He also had another guy who knew JavaScript.

Ioan Mateescu: 01:40:31 So he did the more internal core development type stuff. And I did the marketing and the copywriting and built the casino and we launched it and we ran it for like a week and then we shut it down because we had to get licenses. It was set up in the UK. And literally at the time when we launched it, a huge scandal showed up in the industry. Like a lot of people got sued and most scary, or you kind of got scared and were like, Oh, we need to spend \$50,000 on a license from the UK. I don't know if you want to do that. And we kind of gave up on it along with my \$15,000 of investment, plus like, I don't know how much time

Tudor Dumitrescu: 01:41:13 Yeah. Those businesses tend to be quite regulated.

Ioan Mateescu: 01:41:17 Yeah. They are. They are. And we didn't do our due diligence on any. We kind of did. We knew what we were getting into, which is what we expected was that we could run this shit for like six months, make a bunch of money really, really fast. And then with the money that we got from it, we can pay all the regulation stuff. Yeah. But at the time it was just off. Like we were just late to the party and we missed out on it. So that's that. But then I went into other things and I just had a few attempts with different businesses until I ran out of money. And then I stopped, then I kind of freaked out a little bit. And then I got back into copywriting and I've been doing copywriting ever since. And like I work with various businesses, help them with their marketing, nothing really super deep because I'm kind of lazy.

Ioan Mateescu: 01:42:04 I'm not sure lazy is the right word, but I do very highly value my freedom and my free time and the activities that I generally do. So getting engaged into serious projects for long periods of time, it's kind of stressful because there's always diminishing returns. So unless I get like conversing more and more and more because I get bored and the satisfaction of participating in our project goes down. So does the value proportion of the investment. So I started doing other things which are more valuable to me in terms of my perspective.

Tudor Dumitrescu: 01:42:38 I see. So you really value your freedom a lot and that makes you make some decisions that others maybe would not.

Ioan Mateescu: 01:42:45 Sure. Yeah. So I will never work a regular job, maybe as a sort of punishment, or as a challenge. I've done that actually. Or if it's for someone else. So this is like a tangent, completely unrelated, but my aunt, my mother's sister basically, has a church restoration business. Yeah. So we're in Eastern Europe. Okay. There's a whole bunch of churches here. People are very religious. And what's cool about this place is that in Christian orthodoxy, most of these churches are painted and they're painted by, you know, not super amazing artists necessarily, but like historic artists, like they've been painted in the 16th century and you have to maintain that painting. It's been 500 years. Okay. How do you do that? So you need experts who are capable of restoring that art and maintaining and making sure that it's sound. And that's what my family kind of does.

Ioan Mateescu: 01:43:49 And, uh, my uncle was involved with this stuff as well. And, I have a pretty good relationship with him and he asked me for his help. Okay. We need people to work on this stuff, there's not enough. Like it's hard to find a place. Nobody wants to do this thing. Cause it's hard, whatever. Do you want to come and do it? Like, I have nothing better to do. Let's go and do this. And I basically worked as a regular employee, like physical labor, pretty much like, half of it being artistic, sort of painting on walls for like three months twice. Actually. I only do these things for three months because I don't like to commit myself to a bond because of what I just mentioned earlier. But, those were very interesting experiences. Working in that environment is a lot different from working as a freelancer and it develops a lot of different skills.

Ioan Mateescu: 01:44:38 Like you have to actually have a structure, you have to actually be there on time and do things the right way and listen to other people's support. And like, you have to defer your knowledge, your expertise to someone else and trust what they're saying, what you're telling you to do. Which if you're the expert, because you're like a consultant or like a specialist in the particular seal, you never do that. You never listen to other people. You're only telling other people what they're supposed to be doing. So that's interesting. And I also attempted to do the entrepreneurial stuff in that environment. Like of course it's my aunt, her

business sucks. I want to help her business stop sucking by my marketing expertise and like business organization type stuff as well. So why not help? It doesn't always work. Like a lot of people are not open to outside suggestions. And even if they are, they are very slow to implement them.

Tudor Dumitrescu: 01:45:31 Yeah. I mean, it goes to that mindset thing that we said about the fixed mindset and if somebody doesn't have it, as you mentioned earlier, it's very hard to get them to sort of change their mind and see the light on that.

Ioan Mateescu: 01:45:45 Yeah. And even if you have a very great report with them, like this was my aunt, we've known each other my entire life. Okay. We have a very, very good relationship. Why the hell is she not listening to me? You just do this and it's going to be better. Why aren't you doing it? You know, I don't know exactly how it works from a psychological standpoint in this case, but some people just don't listen to outside advice. They have to come up with those ideas on their own.

Tudor Dumitrescu: 01:46:13 Yeah. I think that some people, unless they really see it as their idea, they don't act on it.

Ioan Mateescu: 01:46:21 Yeah. Or there needs to be a very, very strong authority. So if they're like an American Republican and Trump says to do something, they're going to listen to Trump. But if their neighbor who is way more qualified in that particular thing, like they have a PhD in that thing and tells them that same thing, they're never going to listen, you know, kind of like that.

Tudor Dumitrescu: 01:46:46 So basically at the moment, you're mostly doing copywriting and I mean, are you doing other stuff or is that the central focus of what you're doing at the moment?

Ioan Mateescu: 01:46:56 Well in terms of my skills and discipline it's copywriting, although I've also picked up a business recently because e-commerce has been growing a lot in the past, however long actually. But especially now with COVID like Amazon, you know, it's like the third-largest company in the world. It's just huge, Bezos became the richest man on the planet for a while. When I was working at an investment company selling things, the biggest offer that I ever sold was for the IPO of Alibaba. Yeah. So the Chinese Amazon basically. So I did have quite a bit of understanding of eCommerce because of that. And I was like, okay, let's get into that as well. And I was provided with an opportunity to pick up this company, which basically services

FBA sellers on Amazon, people who just, you know, sell products through Amazon's fulfillment service.

Tudor Dumitrescu: 01:47:53 Nice, nice. Right. So, I mean, if anybody wants to find you, you know, maybe to work with you or just to interact with you, is there any way that they can reach out to you at the time?

Ioan Mateescu: 01:48:04 Uh, sure. Well, I'm not really very public. Yeah. We can put the stuff in the description, I guess, but I'm not really a very public person. That's a big benefit of this type of life actually being as an entrepreneur or a freelancer or whatever. You can be successful without having to be a public figure. Go figure. So, I do have a LinkedIn though, so you can find me on LinkedIn. We'll put a link somewhere, I guess. And also if you have anything to offer, like have some questions or whatever, I dunno. You can also shoot me an email, put an email there, maybe like a website for the business that I took over if you're involved in Amazon and e-commerce type things. Maybe we can talk about that and I'd love to chat and encounter each other and build a relationship may be to solve some problems to create value.

Tudor Dumitrescu: 01:48:52 That's really cool. So, I mean, tell us a little bit about what the e-commerce business does. Exactly. So if those guys want to contact you, anybody running an eCommerce business selling via Amazon, basically, why should they contact you? What do you do for them?

Ioan Mateescu: 01:49:07 Sure. First of all, basically, Amazon is stealing from you. So what happens is that there's a bunch of slippages. You know, every business has some level of losses in terms of their inventory getting damaged or lost in transit, or there are defects or things like that. And when you're using a fulfillment service by someone else and things get damaged during that fulfillment process, like the way Amazon tends to do, the responsibility is on the person doing the fulfillment, the provider of the products, with the value of the products that they've messed up. So if Amazon loses your stuff or they break your stuff or they have bad refunds, or they do all sorts of things that they're not supposed to do, what they normally should be doing is giving you your money back. And they do that sometimes. Okay. Like not that often actually.

Ioan Mateescu: 01:50:01 And there's a lot of money that they don't return to people. And then they just keep it, like, why would they return it if they don't have to? And what people should do is they should let Amazon know that, Hey, Amazon, you have money. They should be giving me back and you're not giving me back. Please give it to me. But most people don't know that they're supposed to do this. They don't know how to do it. They don't know what they should do it for. So that's what this business does. We identify these problems, these issues that Amazon creates that they don't properly compensate you for it. And we start to fight with

them like, Hey, Amazon, you owe these guys money, give them their money back. And then they give you your money back. And you may basically profit out of nowhere. So generally we cover like one to 3% of people's gross revenue every single month.

Ioan Mateescu: 01:50:49 Wow. That can be quite a bit. Yeah. So if you have small margins, like e-commerce, if you have 10% profit margin, that's pretty good. Some people obviously aim for a lot more, but the bigger you get, the smaller your margins get. So if you're making like \$10 million a year and your profit margins are like seven, 8% getting an extra one, 1-2% is like an extra \$20, \$30, \$50, \$50,000 a month in revenue out of nowhere. In profits, sorry, not revenue, profit every month. By doing this though, it is quite big. It scales up.

Tudor Dumitrescu: 01:51:29 Basically, the fastest way to make money from such a situation is to save on what you're losing, you know, rather than grow your bottom line.

Ioan Mateescu: 01:51:38 Yeah, exactly. Yeah. So it's very difficult to increase conversions. The bigger you are, you've already done all of the optimizing processes. Yeah. You've already improved their conversions. As far as they go, you've already acquired as much market share as you can get like 10, 50% or whatever, you've already reduced your cost as much as you can. So what do you like, do you need additional ways of increasing your margins? And this is an additional way to like 90% of Amazon sellers aren't even aware that it exists. So that's what I'm trying to do, trying to raise awareness for and you know, get people to actually do this. And obviously, if they can get us to do it for them and we can win-win out of it, that's perfectly great. It's also a marketing opportunity. Hey, by the way. So if you want to get into marketing, if you want to build your skills or whatever, you can talk to me and we can maybe do an affiliate deal or something. I definitely wanted to talk about affiliate marketing here a little bit, but we didn't really get into it cause I'm not really an expert in it, but it's a wonderful opportunity to get started for very cheap, for practically nothing, to build your skills and build your own business with revenue.

Tudor Dumitrescu: 01:52:51 Yeah. That's absolutely the case. And I mean, we're going to have an episode sometime about affiliate marketing. And I mean, maybe we will meet sometime again to have a chat and we can cover it in more depth then. And I think that there's a lot of value here. And I mean, guys who have e-commerce businesses on Amazon, I'm sure that they would reach out and check out your services. It all sounds fantastic. I mean, you recover their money, it seems to me zero headaches for them.

Ioan Mateescu: 01:53:25 Yeah, they don't have to do anything. Free money, it's free money. It's pretty much like ironically when the offer is just so good, it's harder to sell. Like, people are very skeptical, like, Oh, free money out of nowhere. No, there's no way. Do we need to give you access to stuff? No, no, we don't want to. It's very difficult. Like I'm actually thinking

of charging more like charging an upfront fee just for the privilege of telling them the success. Like I dunno, whatever. Cool stuff. Yeah.

Tudor Dumitrescu: 01:53:54 Makes sense. Makes a lot of sense. Right. So, I mean, you've had a fantastic series of opportunities until now, so I think there's many more waiting in the future. And thank you very much for coming on here.

Ioan Mateescu: 01:54:10 Thank you very much for inviting me.

Tudor Dumitrescu: 01:54:12 You're literally the perfect fit for the underground marketer, because that's literally what you are, as you said, you like to stay in the shadows and make things happen behind the scenes. But yeah. So thank you very much, Ioan. And for all our listeners, thank you very much for your support. It means a lot to us. I know that this is a much longer episode, but there is a lot of high value here. And I'll just tell you now to stay tuned for the next one. And until then, you know, keep growing your business and providing massive value to the world. And don't forget that you're basically the reason why we're all growing richer. Our freedoms are expanding and we're all living in greater prosperity. You know, entrepreneurs are the ones who actually make things moving. So that's you guys. So thank you very much and until the next time.