

Ian: 00:00 My guest this week is Jason Bay. Jason is the founder of blissful prospecting, which may sound like a contradiction, but it's an interesting backstory and that the way I met Jason was he reached out to me via email and we get requests every single day from people who want to be on the podcast and Jason knew the right way to reach out that capture our attention and he's on the program. Today we're going to talk about the biggest mistakes that organizations make when it comes to prospecting and kind of their perceptions. We're going to talk about why purchasing lists may not be the right solution for you and we'll talk about specific strategies and how you can get greater results of attracting the right clients to your business. It's really a stimulating conversation with Jason Bay.

Ian: 00:50 Jason Bay, welcome to the show.

Jason: 00:53 Thanks for having me on. Ian,

Ian: 00:54 can you start by sharing something surprising about you that our audience may not know?

Jason: 01:00 This is always a tough one. But, uh, I think one of the big things just over the years I've learned is that because I do a decent amount of speaking and I get on podcasts and I of course sell on a regular basis. I'm actually a pretty introverted person and pretty shy for the most part. Um, to give you an example, when I was five my parents signed me up for a soccer team and I remember walking up to our first practice, my mom dropped me off at the field and I was walking up and I had to put my hands over my eyes cause that was so like shy and embarrassed about other people like putting their focus and attention on me. I had to sit out the first 10 or 15 minutes of practice cause I was like too embarrassed to go on the field and for the coach to be like actively looking at me and giving me feedback. And, uh, I've sort of been the quiet, shy, more observational person my entire life, which, uh, I think there's a big misconception that introverted people don't do sales. And you'd have to be extroverted and be a big talker when in reality, in my experience, and I'm sure yours is the same, it's the people that listen and ask questions that actually do well at sales. So absolutely, this is something that people don't really know about me.

Ian: 02:14 Yeah. And that's, that's one of those big misconceptions. I think that as professional speakers, I mean, I'm probably the anomaly and that I'm a pretty introverted or extroverted person and a professional speaker as, as my primary business. But many, many, many of my dear friends and fellow speakers are introverts. And people say, how was that possible that this person is standing up and performing in front of thousands of people is an introvert. And I think that it actually, there's a, there's a balancing act. And for me, it's, you know, there's, I certainly have some introverted traits because I'm not one who wants to go hang out

at a party with a ton of people. But, uh, but I'm also not reluctant to start conversations and introduce myself to total strangers. So I probably fall into that strong extrovert category. But, um, regardless of the introvert or extrovert, the, the main topic I want to address with you today and have you share with our audience has to do with prospecting. And it's something that we'll get into as, as we, as we dive into our discussion. But there's some things that you did that caught my attention. And so for starters, what's the biggest misconception that businesses have when it comes to prospecting?

Jason: 03:34 I think the biggest misconception is approaching prospecting is if the prospect already knows that they have a challenge or a problem and then already assuming that they know you're the person to fix it. So a lot of the emails are so aggressive right, it's that, I know this about you, we can help you with this challenge. Let's hop on a call. And in reality, most B2B sales don't work like that. Um, especially if you're selling something that might be relatively new at the prospect that you're reaching out to, isn't aware that they have a challenge or problem in most cases or they're just not thinking about it. So when you approach a prospecting, the thing that I always like to say is don't prospect to make a sale prospect, start a conversation or not going to sell someone through the email that's never met you before. You should be pushing to educate the person, help them offer value, get a conversation started. And that's what kind of uh, allows you to earn the right to sell them.

Ian: 04:36 No, I love that. Earn the right to sell something. And it's something that, uh, my, my friend and fellow author and Speaker Phil Jones says that sales is about earning the right to make a recommendation. And, and, and I agree with that completely. And this, this notion, I mean I get, I don't even want to say how many, but I got a lot of emails every single day from people either who want to come on the podcast or are trying to sell me something. And my favorite is the ones that I get when someone's trying to sell me something. And the most frequent one I get is, oh, would love to help you with sales and business development services because I'm sure in a business like yours, you really need our help. And I always respond because I'm snarky and I say, great, what is it about my website that gives you the indication that I needed help in this area? And most of them don't even respond. It's like, yeah, that didn't work out. And I think people take this shotgun approach of, I'm going to send the same stupid generic message to everybody. And my hope is that I get a small percentage of people who respond and it's just, I mean, theoretically something's working or people wouldn't be doing it or just people were okay wasting their time. What do you think it is?

Jason: 05:55 I think it's a little bit of both, but honestly I think it's laziness. It's a lot easier to purchase a big list of thousands of emails, put a template together and then wait

for a 10th of a percent of people to respond and then set up those appointments. And the shotgun approach is, unfortunately what that does is it kind of ruins prospecting for everyone because then, you know, the g suite and Gmail and outlook, they start cracking down on cold emails and making it harder for the people that actually do it right for torque. I just think it's laziness. And I, I'll admit when I first started doing this several years ago, I was one of those people that tried doing it that way. Cause I, I honestly didn't know any better. And the responses I got back, I lit up. People would literally tell me to f off in the email and it was the same type of responses that, uh, you like giving that are kind of snarky. It's like, well, did you look at my website? Because if you looked at my website, you'd realize that I do the thing that you're trying to sell me. It's like insulting that you're trying to help me do this. You know, it's laziness,

Ian: 07:00 one on one on one, one of my favorites was this guy calls me up and it was, it was a phone call. I didn't know who the person, I didn't recognize the number. I made the mistake of answering the call anyhow. And this guy says, hi, and this is Justin and I know that speakers and authors struggle with something and I'm sure we can help you see we help speakers and authors because we know that you're uncomfortable in sales situations. And I said, and I said, wow, Justin, that's awesome. What is it about my website that, that told you so that you could tell that I needed help in this area? And you hear the Guy typing on his keys and he goes, ah. And then he paused, he says, yeah, I've read the same side selling. And I said, well, Justin, you may want to read it again.

Jason: 07:51 Is this some of the tips from my book?

Ian: 07:53 But, but, but, but the challenges that someone taught him that this was a good idea. It's not like he was born with the idea of doing something stupid. Someone actually taught him that this would be a good idea. I'm going to call up people and make all these assumptions and I loved the notion where you say, look, your goal is not to sell something in that cold call initial outreach. Your goal is just to spark a conversation. And the reason why I invited you to be on the podcast is because I get requests every single day from people who want to be on the podcast. And it's very flattering thing that this thing that we started a few years ago that people actually reach out every single day and say, can I be on the show? And we ignore just about every single one acutally, we don't ignore it. We just say, hey, thanks so much for your interest. No thanks. And you sent some things that kind of piqued our attention because it was personalized, it was individualized and I thought to myself, man, if Jason can cut through the noise and capture our attention, he's got some insight into how other people can do the same thing. So what, what were some of the keys of what you've learned that

have helped your clients that other people can learn from?

Jason: 09:13 I think the big thing, and it's like just to kind of step back a little bit, where I see people making a lot of mistakes as it, if you're that person that it's just going to go through it, that organization that's just going to purchase a big list of companies because they fit the industry that your ideal client profile is. I think that's the first mistake you're making. Silicon, when we looked at podcasts this year as being like a big way for us to kind of grow our brand and increase our reach, we treated it just like an ideal client profiles if we were prospecting. So we called it an ideal podcast profile. So what I wanted to do and my wife Sarah and I who helps run the company together, we looked at like, well, what are the podcasts that might have an audience that would benefit from and value from the message that we want to share?

Jason: 10:01 So we looked at your podcast, it was, hey, are they, is it geared towards salespeople or people that run sales organizations? Is it business to business? Um, do they talk about sales and prospecting? Is there opportunities for prospecting type content? Um, so we did a lot of research just on you and your podcast prior to even reaching out at all to make sure that it was a good fit. Because we don't like to send to any outreach that isn't personalized. And if we're going to take the time to personalize stuff and have our team help with all that, or if I'm going to take the time to record, uh, you know, one minute, 60 second, 90 second video, I want to make sure I'm reaching out to the right person at the right company. So that was a lot of what was going on behind the scenes. With podcasting, it's a little bit different than reaching out to a company and that you know, it's fairly easy to identify who the host is and your contact information is fairly public, so it's not quite as difficult as reaching out to a company with a thousand people.

Ian: 10:59 You know what? I would argue that with the benefit of tools like linkedin, it's a whole lot easier than it used to be.

Jason: 11:08 There's just no excuse anymore. I 100% agree with you. I mean, I pay 80 bucks a month for or use a free linkedin account, but for 80 bucks a month you can have a linkedin sales navigator account. It was telling you all the insights you need to know about the company who works in our, most people put their contact information public email address, public and LinkedIn, or you can message them. But the amount of resources out there to do research these days is, it's, it's very inexpensive to do the research. But again, I think it just comes down to laziness or if you're going to take the time to do that, it does take time, right? I mean, we put together a list of maybe a dozen or a couple of dozen podcasts we wanted to get on. It took hours to find those podcasts and to think about what we're going to say to them, what might be valued to them.,

valuable to me that to them, excuse me. And it takes work.

Ian: 11:58 Yeah. Well and but, but the thing is that what I want people to hear and understand is that you took the time to understand your market and in essence prequalify before you reached out. And I think the mistake that a lot of businesses make is in essence, they shoot first and ask questions later. And it's just what I think the, the uninformed sales leader says, yeah, but it's just a numbers game. The informed sales leader says, you know what? When we do that, we damage our reputation. So just because someone's not a good fit today doesn't mean they never will be. But you know that that guy, that Guy Justin, who reached out to me and sounded like an idiot. If somebody, if somebody, if one of my clients said, hey, I'm thinking about using this company, I would say, yeah, you don't want to use those people.

Ian: 12:51 Now it's all based on my experience with this one person. But I'm thinking if that's the way you run your business, that's probably not a business that I'd be comfortable recommending or my clients using. And if you just operate with integrity up front, you're going to have a much better chance of success down the road. So what are some of the things that, what are some of the initiatives that you put in place? Obviously you're doing research upfront. You're identifying who's likely to be a good fit for what you do and who's going to see value in what you offer. Um, what are some of the things that you, that you guide people towards doing to achieve better results?

Jason: 13:29 So the number one thing even to work with us as a client is we say, hey, we're going to that murder by numbers approach. We flipped that on its head and we do the exact opposite and we take an account based approach. So we're literally going to look at every single company we're going to reach out to for you and everything we do is going to be personally. So if they're not bought in, like if I can't get them bought into that approach, uh, we're not going to work with them because we don't, we don't want to have that battle with them. So where I see people messing up is, isn't a couple of different areas in where we really try to guide them is segmentation is so important. And it starts out with an ideal client profile. The big mistake that you can make, especially if you're a larger company, is say our solution is industry agnostic.

Jason: 14:13 That's like my huge pet peeve and it's just because your solution would work with most industries. It doesn't mean that that's the way you were going to sell it. And the reason for that is if you're segmenting the different ideal client profiles, let's say you're doing it by, by industry, maybe you're looking at employee counts, maybe we're looking at if you're selling sales solutions, you're looking at the size of the sales department, whatever it might be. The message that a sales manager or a VP of

sales gets that's selling in the manufacturing industry is going to be a lot different than someone that's selling in tech or doing SAS. And if they can get a message, that feels like, hey, you're addressing my challenges in SAS and that I probably have a really large sales quota and a really aggressive targets that I have to hit because we just secured our series A funding of whatever million, uh, amount of dollars.

Jason: 15:07 And I had a lot of pressure from, uh, you know, our investors to hit these sales targets. It's a lot different than in manufacturing company that like needs to find and build relationships with like distributors, right? So segmenting is really where we push people to and a lot of companies surprisingly don't want to segment because they feel like they're limiting their opportunities. And what we say is that you're just creating a filter because what people don't think about is yeah, you're qualifying the company up front, but when you send outbound outreach to people, whether through phone, email, linkedin, the prospect's qualifying you too. So they're looking for the same things that we are looking for we're segmenting. At the beginning they were looking at like, does this solution feel this is speaking to me, does this person empathize with me? Do they understand my goals, my challenges?

Jason: 15:57 So after you do the industry and a ideal client profile segmentation, you gotta also segment by persona and we try to make the message in different, have you heard of the uh, the above the line below the line selling approach? No, I haven't. So William Miller wrote this really great book. I definitely recommend checking. It's called selling above and below the line. And what he talks about in there that's really interesting is he says the above the line, uh, decision makers at companies. So it's typically vps and c-level. Their initiatives and goals are really centered around like quarters in years and they're mostly focused on things that are going to drive for afternoon or increased profit or reduce risk below the lines a little bit different. These are people that may maybe directors or managers and they're doing the actual work. So like if we're using blissful prospecting as an example, this is the people that might actually be sending out the emails or managing the people that are doing the outbound processes.

Jason: 16:54 They're thinking like on a weekly basis there's thinking on a monthly basis, am I hitting my quota? What can make my day to day job easier? And the reason why we separate those two and reach out to both is that I think there's this common misconception that you have to start at the top and work your way down. When people that are below the line, they might not have the final say in pulling the trigger on something, but they could have just as much influence because they're like, hey, you got to hire Jason. I spend an hour talking with them. He walked me through all of these different techniques that we could start using and I think it's

going to save me a lot of time, but most importantly it's going to help me hit my sales quota with my team? Um, that person's going to have a lot of influence with their, their VP of sales or chief revenue officer.

Jason: 17:39 So we try to segment the outreach that way because again, if we use like manufacturing as an example, the VP of sales is having a lot different challenges in the messaging needs to be different than like a sales manager who's like actually there working day to day pushing his or her sales reps. So that's the approach that we really want to deal with and that allows you to do really great personalization. Absolutely. Yeah. Cause personalization now is instead of just saying, Hey, I saw an article, uh, that your company wrote and thought it was really interesting. That's all right. You know, but if you can say, hey, I not only saw this article, all this stuff was really great, but uh, I know that like, as a sales manager, you're probably feeling a lot of pressure to hit your sales quota. It's just like every other sales manager is and, and you might be experiencing some pain in productivity or whatever it might be that's related to your solution.

Jason: 18:33 Um, are you open to talking about your challenges in this area? I have some ideas for you of, could I send him over, you know, something like that as a great way to start a conversation versus the example you gave earlier. I know that sales managers are struggling with their closing rate and hitting their quotas. You're probably struggling too. Am I right? It's like those emails are so bad. When do you make the assumption that you know the person and you know their challenges instead of just saying, Hey, I think I might know what your challenges based on other companies that we help just like yours, but most importantly I'd like to just learn a little bit more about those and send over some ideas at that I think might be able to help you.

Ian: 19:12 I love here Jason was that you're talking about and then someone would write a lot about in the same side selling and it's something will be magnified even more in the second edition. That's I'm, that's newly out and the, the idea is that we want to market to and have conversations about the problems that we solve rather than the services that we provide. Meaning you're not reaching out to people saying, Hey, do you need prospecting services? Instead you're reaching out saying, look, a lot of people are struggling to hit their numbers because there can't get the attention of their ideal customers. Yeah, we're having that problem now. You have something worth talking about, but you're describing the problems. And one of the keys that we've found in our research is that it often comes down to the disarming notion. Meaning if I, if I contact you and say I have the greatest thing, you just don't know it yet.

Ian: 20:07 You know, it just feels slimy. There's not enough Purell in the world to, to rectify that. But, but if, if instead I say, look, when I deal with other technology companies who are struggling to get their foot in the door in the right opportunities, they usually find that either they get no response from people or they can't capture the attention of their ideal customer, or they're just having trouble standing, standing out above the noise of their competitors who are often inferior to them. And for the right organizations, they tell us we deliver amazing results, but only about half the people we talk to are the right fit for how we approach that. Is that something that you're struggling with? And now it's like, if they are, then you've got their attention and if not, they're probably not right for you today. Anyhow,

Jason: 20:57 I love that. The other thing too is that the reason why it's so important to segment by industry and persona is like for example, we work with nonprofits. Nonprofits don't say revenue, they say impact. So we helped them grow their impact. So like the language in the email is even going to change depending on the industry that you're reaching out to. Um, what I really liked about what you said there was disarming. I think that a lot of times when you're prospecting, if you don't lead with something that could be helpful or offer a suggestion around something, it makes it really tough to get a conversation started because depending on what you're selling, if you're selling an a in a red ocean, as I've heard it referred to where it's a very competitive, um, people might want to see thought leadership or some sort of social proof. So just mentioning companies that you've worked with that are similar and also sharing content that would help that person or sharing a white paper or a case study, anything that would be like very specific that would offer value to them or display some sort of social proof that you know, what you're talking about and could help them really, really helps to break through the clutter as well.

Ian: 22:05 Oh yeah. I mean, I'm, I'm very fortunate in that in my business, almost all of the business we get is inbound coming to us. If someone contacts us for a speaker bureau or something else and hey can and help us. And very often it will be, oh, we saw what happened with such and such a company that went from 20 million to 100 million in two years with your help. So, um, we want to talk to Ian, and my first thing is, look, just because they had that level of result doesn't mean that what I would propose for them as the same thing for you. So let me understand more about what it is that you're doing and it's not some great manipulative tactic. It has the added benefit of being true. I truly don't know whether or not the same method we applied for that company is going to apply to the one that's calling you now and in most cases it's not going to be, it's going to be a variation on that and that humility to say, I may not be the right fit I think goes a long way. I had somebody who contacted me a while back and they said, oh, we have this conference in it's women

in sales that we want you to come speak yet. And I said, well, I'm really flattered that that you'd reach out to me. Have you considered the fact that your audience might respond better to a female speaker?

Ian: 23:22 And it was like, what do you mean? I said, well, I'm just trying to put myself in your, in your attendees shoes. This is the women in sales conference and then you bring a guy on stage to speak. There are some amazingly talented women who, who are speakers on sales who I think your audience might connect with better than a guy. Um, are you open to at least speaking to some of those people before we make a decision? And, and it's funny cause I've shared the story before and I get notes from people saying, yeah, but you just turn your back on a sale. I said, well no, I guarantee and in fact those people brought me in for a bigger event later. I guarantee that I'm not top of mind for that company anytime they need a speaker because they know that I'm always looking out for their best interest, not just my own.

Jason: 24:10 That's a really interesting point too. I think that is so important with prospecting is that the reason why you can say no to that is that you have an abundance of opportunities already, right? You are already going to have other speaking gigs and other clients to work with. So if you don't get this gig, it's not a big deal. And I, a lot of people approach prospecting like every single opportunity they need to capture and close on when, if you make a habit of prospecting and doing it the right way and building the relationships, you can vet the client in and you can say no to people that are not a good fit either. And you, you don't have that approach of desperation. It's, it's what they said in that movie super troopers, a desperation as a stinky Cullen. Right. And when you approach this in a really desperate way, it just, ugh, it's so dirty looking at people don't want to hang around desperate people. So yeah, I love everything that you said there.

Ian: 25:05 Yeah. Your, your client is, you know, and for anybody listening, your prospect is not sitting there by their phone saying, man, I hope someone's gonna call and try and sell me something today. Cause you know, it just hasn't happened in a few days and I'm feeling, you know, I'm not feeling the love. And so if someone could just call up and pitch me something, that would be just awesome. And, and my, um, my friend and fellow speaker Ron Tite refers to that as pitch slapping. It says, you know, for clients just get pitch slapped all day long. And anybody laughing that's Ron Tite who gets credit for that. But I just think it's hilarious because people just pitch all day long. So what are the two or three things that people should be doing aside from reaching out to get your help? What are the two or three things that they should be doing to really stand out and not be seen as that bottom feeder? Who's desperate?

Jason: 26:03 So the number one thing is take the

time upfront, spend an hour or two if you're, uh, if you're a sales organization with multiple sales reps and just sort of leading the charge, it starts at the top. You know, it's just exactly what we talked about at the beginning. But take charge and think about, you know, how can we take a more intentional approach to prospecting and say, hey, instead of wanting to work with everyone, let's say, who actually do we really want to work with and how can we start creating those ideal client profiles based on our dream clients? So just start with a list of a hundred companies that you'd really want to work with. The second part of that is start doing a little bit of research around, well, who are the key decision makers at these companies? The above the line and the below the line contacts.

Jason: 26:47 Who are the people that I wouldn't want to talk to? And the biggest way to break through the clutter right now. And the reason for this, a multichannel approach is it's just getting harder and harder to get conversations with people. All the studies I've seen show that the number of quality conversations for Sdrs are going down per day, and the number of attempts per prospect to get those conversations are going up. So you've got to start thinking about what our prospects already being inundated with. And that's cold emails. And right now, I'm sure you've noticed as well, Ian, you'd probably get a lot more cold messages on linkedin that you never got in the last six or 12 months too. So if you're just doing the email, if you're just doing linkedin, that's not really enough anymore. So you need to kind of throw in video it is a really, really, really great way to differentiate yourself because you can't really fake personalization in a video like the video I sent you. I, there's just no way I can fake that. Like I literally have to be the person sitting in front of the computer to record that. So getting started with videos, the best way I think to differentiate yourself because so few people are doing, I've only ever received one cold email with a video in it.

Ian: 27:57 Yeah. You know, and, and it's, and it's truly what stood out for me is I just thought, man, you know what? I ignore these things all day long and people on my team do, and you sent this thing in. Denise on my team said, wow, that was kind of an interesting approach. And it caught both of our attentions, which, which is, you know, is not a trivial thing to do given the volume of stuff that we see. And I thought, man, if Jason could capture our attention that way, he's got to be able to help our audience capture attention to my, my least favorite thing is when I get the linkedin thing that says, I see that we share some connections in common. So I'd like to add you to my network and I respond and say, Hey, thanks for reaching out. What inspired the connection? And 90% of the time I get no response to that, which shows me that it was just some automated garbage. And I think for most people you have to understand is if you're not personalizing your invitations on LinkedIn, then you're telling missing the boat. Because the notion of just sitting in

a generic soandso wants to connect with you is, is the equivalent of just flinging a business card at somebody at a networking event.

Jason: 29:05 Yeah. And you're nice enough to actually respond back. Most people are probably gonna hit block.

Ian: 29:10 Yeah. I mean there's, there's that and I get the people where I'll accept their invitation and then I get pitched 30 seconds later and I'll usually say, wow, that's so nice. Thank you so much for pitching me. I was concerned that it might take longer than this for you to pitch me something.

Jason: 29:31 I love that

Ian: 29:33 now. And then I'll usually say something like, would you mind if I use this in an upcoming article or keynote as an example,

Jason: 29:41 what not to do?

Ian: 29:43 Well, the funny part is I don't say that and people will say, yeah, if you could mention me, that'd be great. I'm like, yeah, I don't think you get where this is going. I don't think it's the kind of press that you're looking for. So Jason, what's the best way for people to learn more about what you're doing at blissful prospecting and to reach out and connect with you?

Jason: 30:04 I was actually put together a link for your audience specifically and what had put together was, so last night I was thinking about this before this interview, like what could I give people that would like allow them to get started with video right away. So I put together a quick guide to get started with video prospecting in like less than five minutes. So it's got the tools that we use and recommend loom has set it up. It's got a quick script of like what to say and you can get at blissfulprospecting.com/Ian or just check us out. It was cold prospecting.com uh, we got a couple of different things going on there. A newsletter that we send out. It's not just some company updates newsletter, we actually give out tips that you can consume in five to 10 minutes a week, a prospecting sales tips. That's a good way to get a flavor of what we're doing. And then I'd obviously love to connect with anyone on linkedin. It's Jason Bay. Just type in Jason tables. We'll prospecting. I'm on linkedin and we can connect there. But yeah, we post a lot of content through the newsletter and on LinkedIn, so that's the best way to get it. Kind of a taste and a flavor for us.

Ian: 31:11 I know Jason, there are a whole bunch of people that do this poorly and you've caught my attention as someone who does it well, so I'm hopeful that my audience will reach out to you, subscribe to your newsletter or follow what you're doing

and just maybe just possibly they might, they might glean some insight and it had it had to do this well and get much better results for their business. So I really appreciate you for coming on and sharing your wisdom.

Jason: 31:37 I appreciate you having me on again.

Ian: 31:39 Jason shared some great insights. Let me give you a quick 32nd recap of the key information I think you can use and apply to your business right away. Remember, don't just purchase lists. The greatest misconception that people have is that the person you're calling already knows that they have a need for what you have, and the goal should not be to make a sale. The goal and that initial contact is just to have a meaningful conversation. Remember to think about what the audience would benefit from you. Remember that it's not about the numbers, it's about personalization, not volume, and that notion of selling above the line and below the line. Ultimately, remember that video is something that is going to continue to grow and for you're not using video in your prospecting. You may be missing the boat. Remember, this show gets direction from you, the listener. If there's a topic you think I should cover or guest I should have in the program, just drop me a note to Ian, ian.altman.com have an amazing week. Add value and grow revenue in a way everybody can embrace, especially your customer.