



Flip Retail consults with online retailers on how to execute ecommerce best practices.

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"A lot of people spend their time trying to improve their weaknesses exclusively. You need to focus on leveraging your strengths as much as possible while boosting your weaknesses with others who excel in those areas." - Jason Billingsley, Entrepreneur

Jason co-founded Elastic Path Software in November 2000 and held the position of VP Marketing where he helped the company attract over 200 customers. Global brands such as Google, Aeroplan, Nike, Time Inc., Avis, Samsonite, United Health Group, Telus, Garmin, and Sony. Most impressively, this was done with no outside equity financing.

Q: Jason given your entrepreneurial success, how did you develop this talent?

JB: I think a lot of people look at nature versus nurture when it comes to entrepreneurs. I think it's a bit of both, but I lean more towards the nurture side. When I was younger I had a deep root in athletics. I played a lot sports, was always active, and was always hungry for winning. It was the motivator for anything I did. When I was sixteen I got into a really bad skiing accident and I wound up putting myself in a wheelchair permanently. So, after that I had to refocus from being physically competitive to being mentally competitive. Business was the perfect outlet. I developed a thirst for knowledge and it allowed me to

compete. In my entrepreneurial pursuits, focusing on having knowledge power and being the person to come to for information was invaluable, both internally and externally.

Q: What is your passion for the retail business?

JB: Not to sound conniving, but there's something really interesting about being able to influence consumer behavior. It's a little bit manipulative, but the intentions are good. Being able to tweak something and see what the results are immediately after is exciting to me. The other thing exciting about retail is there is always room for growth and improvement. It's not a very static environment. It can seem that way from the outside, but there are so many

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moving parts that it makes for a very dynamic environment. And there are usually some pretty steep challenges to tackle. It goes back to my desire to win. When something is changing that frequently, it makes winning a lot more thrilling.

Q: Can you share with us some of the strategies you used to manage massive growth in such a short period of time?

JB: [Elastic Path](#) was a really interesting situation because for the first four years or so we were doing a services business that had yet to evolve into a software company. Growth was not as fast as it was after 2005/2006. The key was to always be looking for opportunities beyond the typical day-to-day business activities. It may be a cliché - which are often true - but it's ultimately about the people you surround yourself with. It's really important to have a strong sense of identity - of yourself and those around you. You really need to know each other's strengths and weaknesses from top to bottom. A lot of people spend their time trying to improve their weaknesses exclusively. You need to focus on leveraging your strengths as much as possible while boosting your weaknesses with others who excel in those areas. At [Elastic Path](#) we each had different skills, but we had the same direction. It helped that we didn't have to convince each other of the path we should take. Likewise, when you are managing fast growth, cash is essential. We always had to be profitable because we didn't raise outside equity. When we decided to bootstrap we became more fiscally responsible which allowed us to develop really good habits.

Q: Tell us about the inspiration for Flip Retail?

JB: I left [Elastic Path](#) in early 2009. My goal was to start another retail technology company but with more of a consumer focus. [Elastic Path](#) is obviously in the B2B market where we sold ecommerce software to companies that want to address consumers, but we weren't actually doing much on the consumer side.

So I developed an offering and went to the market place to establish interest. The retailers I presented it to were excited and eager to see it come available. To be competitive in the long run, the business had to be big - it couldn't thrive at a small scale. It was going to be focused in revenue in terms of hundreds of millions to make it work. For that to happen I really needed an experienced team and you can't jump into business with the wrong people - it really is like a marriage. Unfortunately, I couldn't find the right team in Vancouver, nor was I willing to relocate my family. As time passed some extremely large and powerful retail companies started launching competitive offerings, so I decided to press pause on that version of the business. With that being said, the skill for any entrepreneur is knowing which rocks to push. Even more important is to know why you are pushing those rocks. If you can understand 'the why', 'the what' becomes much clearer.

I also took time to recharge and was secretly enjoying the increased flexibility in my life like being able to travel freely and spending more time with family. During the year I was doing some retail consulting, like I had done previously while at [Elastic Path](#). So, I decided to take Flip Retail in a new direction. In

early 2010 I'll be launching an ecommerce coaching service. Retailers often get tied up in day to day activities and have little time to investigate and learn about the evolving retail marketplace - technology, competitive landscape, tools and techniques for optimizing shopper interactions, etc. A coach that is connected into the vendor community, continually evaluates new offerings, has hands on experience with each retail function, and is networked with practice leaders in each area can aid a retail leader in delivering on the company value proposition - and make a lot more money. Just like golfers use swing coaches to identify strengths and weaknesses, an outside perspective on internal activities can be invaluable..

Q: What were the challenges transforming Get Elastic into the most subscribed blog in the world? What kind of tactics did you use to attract readers?

JB: Get Elastic is a really interesting story. That's definitely one of [Elastic Path](#)'s biggest marketing successes. It was started by an early employee and the content was largely internally focused (excluding a fantastic ecommerce podcast series) - to give the company some personality. Although the intent was good, it wasn't solving a business need for our readers. So, we really needed to adjust our strategy. My outlook on business and marketing is that you want to sell the holes, not the drills. People don't care about the drill; they care what the drill can do for them. We stopped talking about the drills and the tools, we really wanted to start talking about the things that could be

achieved using the tools and turn that whole message around.

Unfortunately in B2B marketing there's not a lot of companies who recognize that. We never had any intention of making money off the blog (though we continually got advertising requests – even from competitors). It was strictly to position ourselves as a thought leader in the marketplace. When the time came for someone to evaluate tools they knew of us and trusted us – that was our big success. Here's a couple ways that we did that:

1) We had anchor content. Anchor content is the stuff that people continue to come back to over and over again - it doesn't have a finite life. We created one post in particular that was an evaluation of the [Add To Cart button](#) for all the top 100 retailers online, by sales. And then we did some analysis of shapes, colors, wording, etc. Even today if you were to search Google for any variation of 'add to cart' that post is number one. On a daily basis it draws more traffic than any other post on the blog. And who searches for something like that? Web designers or developers involved with ecommerce projects do. So anchor content is extremely important on blogs.

2) The other thing is consistency - the posting schedule, the tone of the posts, and style of posts. So if you are delivering very tactical information set out in a step by step guide twice a week, people will come to expect more of the same. In fact, it becomes routine for them.

However, we did make one mistake very early on. Our market (retail) was not necessarily technology progressive. Most blogs have RSS feeds you can subscribe to and we have that, but when we added

the option to receive new articles by email our subscriber numbers jumped immediately by about 25%. Email subscription made it possible for people to pass around. We may have had some tactical people reading our blog, but in order to get to the decision makers email was the best medium. There is over [14,000 subscribers on the blog](#) today – a number that trumps many of the publications in the retail industry.

3) And of course the most important thing in the whole process was we had a super bright and talented ecommerce analyst, [Linda Bustos](#), who is extremely passionate about the topic. She really was the one who made that blog come to life. We may have worked together on some of the topics and direction of the posts, but it's really her knowledge and passion that made it huge.

Q: You've won lots of awards. What was your most honored moment?

JB: That's an interesting question for me. If I had to answer this last year, I think the answer would be a little bit different. My attitude has changed a little bit since I've stepped away from the business. I think I would have said the [BDC Entrepreneurial Award](#) that we won last year. It was really great being recognized, but it is what kind of life awards or life achievements that matter more to me now. When I was fourteen, I was a part of a hockey team that won the provincial championships, which was thrilling. I think that was probably the biggest award that I remember before I was hurt. After my injury, it was really about setting a goal and doing something that really didn't seem possible, especially at the time. I was paralyzed from the neck down and it was a really big deal. I made a little bit of a

recovery, but certainly not to the level that a lot of people imagine I could make. When I was in the hospital I made a goal. I said listen, I'm sixteen years old, I'm going to graduate high school in two years, I would really like to walk up to accept my diploma. I worked my tail off and I had a trainer who freely gave his time over the next couple of years. We were in the gym on a daily basis. When it came time to get my high school diploma, I did it. It was scary. It was emotional - for both me and my community. But I was able to walk up and get my diploma, using crutches. That was a huge achievement and was probably the biggest thing that I've accomplished in my life and certainly the most meaningful, especially for the people that were around me.

Q: Where do you think the next big thing in retail is at?

JB: There is a lot of interesting things happening. People are starting to get creative and create new business models. There's a lot of new technology coming out, but I think the thing that a lot of people are talking about right now is mobile. I don't disagree. In the future it has a pretty large place, but I don't think the time for mobile is now for retailers. If I was given \$50,000 or \$500,000 to spend on anything it probably wouldn't be invested there. I think it really is too early for widespread transactional mobile - people actually purchasing using their mobile device.

Another thing with potential is augmented reality. Physical retailing in stores is still massive – much bigger than online. Online makes up five to six percent. We may get to 10 percent or a little bit higher down the road, but right now it's just a sliver. Anything that you can do to improve the retail

environment offline is going to be much more impactful. Augmented reality allows a shopper to learn additional details about products - like reviews, accessories, in-use photos, etc. - right in front of them using a mobile device.

We're even seeing the ability for people to take a photo of a product, of which they don't know the name, and have it automatically identified along with the best price for it across the web. It's more information at people's finger tips and it allows them to make more educated decisions and improves the retail experience, or buying experience in general. I think it has a big place in the future, but it's not quite there yet. For me, technologies like intelligent merchandising are the most accessible and valuable at the moment. It's putting the products that have the best chance of catching the shopper's attention in front of them as early in the shopping process as possible. Various techniques are used such as wisdom of the crowds or simple/complex data mining. [Amazon](#) is the grand daddy of personalization in merchandising.

Another very interesting retail trend right now is penny auctions. They are very novel, but they seem somewhat solid. It is entertainment shopping - there are a couple sites that come to mind: [Swoopo.com](#) and [BigDeal.com](#). People purchase tokens and those tokens allow people to bid on the right to purchase the product. And when they bid, the time of the auction increases by fifteen or thirty seconds, but you are seeing people able to buy a digital camera that's worth a \$1000 for \$75. And all these 75 cent bids have gone into supplementing the cost of that product. So, the model is very interesting because it's the only time that a retailer can make more than the manufacturer's

suggested retail price. It's a little confusing at first. It's extremely entertaining. I'm from Canada so I'm unable to purchase from [BigDeal.com](#), but I like watching the shopping event happen. It's on the edge of your seat shopping!

Q: How do you grapple with the paradigm of ecommerce and shopping online while at work?

JB: It's going to happen. The truth is most of the clients I've worked with have peak traffic during working hours. It is at this time most people have access to a PC. They will sneak in some [Twitter](#) or Facebook time before meetings, or some shopping during lunch. There's an interesting result of that for retailers - the buying mode becomes a lot faster. Because people don't have long chunks of time to be shopping they are a little more aggressive in their shopping behavior. There are a couple of things a retailer should do:

1) They have to start converting the shopper's off-site which means tweaking their title tags of their web pages so that it includes incentives or value propositions like free shipping, or 100% Canadian (implying no border issues). This can be the difference between a click on your search listing or a competitor.

2) The other thing people are going to be looking at is when they hit the page, is there a clear value proposition? Does this site offer what I am looking for and why should I continue to invest time here? Burying your key value items at the bottom will not serve this type of shopper well. They are going to be a little more visual, so put top sellers,

what's new, buttons for action items like add to cart or check out near the top of the page.

3) Another thing is the content that goes along with products should really be chunked. Include bolded information, have summaries with bullet points with 4 to 5 points about what the product is and why it's great, and summarize review content. A lot of people will go directly to in-site search especially if they are in a hurry and in hunting mode, so your internal search engine has to be accurate and has to have effective merchandising.

I've seen a lot of people who have really poor sorting on their search results. For instance, they might do it alphabetically or by price and that's really not the most effective way. They should be looking at top sellers in the category, what others have purchased after searching for similar keywords, or handpicked items by the merchandiser. Basically, people shop faster when they shop at work so adjust accordingly.

Some retailers are also experimenting with lunchtime flash sales. It's a one hour sale and you can only get it at lunch time. It's as though they are forcing lunchtime shoppers to pay attention to them. It goes back to creating a habit.

4) It's important to have a persistent shopping cart since a lot of people don't convert on their initial visit. If they've only got ten minutes then chances are they'll come back to the site if your value proposition has stuck, or they quickly identified the products of interest. We see 30 to 60% of people will convert after that first visit and even more in some instances depending on the market especially if it's a considered decision.

You want to offer items in the shopping cart that aren't going to disappear the next time they visit the site. Unfortunately, there are still a lot of retailers who don't persist their shopping carts. I would recommend a minimum of 30 days, but infinite persistence is better. You don't have to necessarily hold that inventory because other people are going to be interested, but if they do come back they should still find what they added to their cart, with appropriate messaging to point out current inventory availability or pricing changes.

5) You really want a fast checkout process. If shoppers do find something that they want, let them get in and out quickly. Include upfront information on shipping, don't require account creation and don't force someone to enter their account information especially if they have purchased from you in the past. Many will never remember the password used for your site and bail. These are simple guidelines to increase conversions of people who are shopping at work.

Q: How do you see the recession affecting the retail market?

JB: It's been an interesting year for retail. Buyers are preparing a lot more and they're a little less spontaneous than they used to be. So, you're probably seeing the amount of purchases made after the first visit increase as they do price comparisons and go looking for coupons. Google has come out with some research that shows the rate of searches on queries for coupons has increased tremendously this year.

There's also interesting information about email open rates when you have a coupon code attached to the subject line of an email - the open rate is much higher. You can see the modality of those shoppers is definitely on the price sensitive side and they are looking for bargains. Because they are discount hunting there is downward pressure on prices. You're seeing a lot of sales go a little bit longer, a little bit earlier, and certainly more aggressive.

Another thing to take into consideration, especially in the shopping season that we're in right now, is a lot of retailers aren't carrying as much inventory as last year or in previous years. Because cash flow isn't as good as it was previously they are little bit tighter on inventory levels which means shoppers are going to need to go to the stores a lot earlier to get products before they're gone. Traffic patterns on search engines have reflected this behavior. Everything has shifted backwards in time a couple weeks.

Alternative payments are also coming on strong right now. Instead of just whipping out the plastic and worrying about paying it off months down the road, while incurring large interest expenses, there are more people looking at alternative payment options like Bill Me Later or e-BillMe, which allow them to defer payments to a later date. It gives them a little bit of time to get more money in the bank yet get the products now.

What we're seeing in Canada is an increased amount of people who pay with interact online, which allows people to pay for merchandise without having to use credit. Perfect for those with no credit, poor credit, maxed out credit, or

responsible folks who want to avoid interest payments.

Q: Gaining some of the world's best companies, what was it that led you to sales success with them?

JB: I believe strongly in something I call 'puffer fish marketing' - playing bigger than you are. The puffer fish is small, yet if he is faced with a challenge or backed into a corner, he can puff up and look a lot bigger than he is. That's really what we did from day one at [Elastic Path](#). We always tried to look and act bigger than we actually were.

Secondly, we not only understood the pain of the business, but we tried to understand the pain of the people in the business. Instead of selling to company metrics, we created champions by appealing to their personal metrics - then helped them sell upwards into the organization. This included things like the code they're working with being too difficult, not having the freedom or flexibility to actually do their job, or people are breathing down their necks because it takes too long to do things. Certain features and functionality were put into the software package specifically to address those needs.

Lastly, we did a lot of creative marketing because we didn't have a huge cash reserve to go buy market share. When we launched [getelastic.com](#), we were the only ecommerce vendor with a resource that repeatedly attracted a range of retail readers. There were really no competitors who had a blog informing people on how to accomplish ecommerce tasks or evaluated the current online selling techniques used in the marketplace. If they did, it was more

like an underhanded marketing pitch for a product they were selling and that just doesn't work. We also had some interesting branding, so when we renamed the company to [Elastic Path](#) it really supported our value proposition of ultimate flexibility.

Q: As an entrepreneur starting a company without financing, is that your strategy for the future?

JB: If you tried to start a company like [Elastic Path](#) today you'd probably bootstrap it just like we did, but if you did it back in the late nineties there's no way. The cost was way too high for hardware, software and talent. If I were to start another technology company today I think I would definitely look at the window of opportunity. How fast is it closing and what is my go to market strategy? If you have to go huge right away, make a big splash, and be disruptive – having capital can not only help you attract talent but it can also act as psychological validation when selling into large corporations. Risk mitigation is also a factor in the buying process – no one wants a solution from a vendor that will not be around in 6 months. Personally, I think most web technology businesses could be started today using bootstrapping - fast iterations, fast feedback, and fast failures. It allows you to refocus on what the market is truly interested in paying for fairly quickly. [Youtube](#) was intended to be a dating site – who knew.

Q: What technology do you use that you simply can't live without?

JB: I'm not a technology focused individual. I actually like unplugging

from tech. I thoroughly enjoy traveling with my wife and have no problem leaving behind the laptop and cell phone. I think if I had to name one thing it would be my Xbox. It's probably that competitive thing again - I just really like winning and competing.

Q: How does social media play into the retail experience?

JB: That's an interesting question. Social media is so misguided for a lot of retailers. Their approach is just wrong. There are social media necessities - for retail I think reviews are essential in 90% of cases. If you're not doing reviews and doing them well you're probably going to be left behind as retail moves forward.

From a social strategy in general we're seeing retailers try to get into places like [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [MySpace](#) and really it's kind of like a bad dinner date. You know when you go out with someone and they just don't stop talking about themselves – you start to tune them out and your mind drifts to other places. They aren't going to get a second date. Retailers are approaching social media the same way right now. So what retailers really need to be doing is less selling and just more active listening.

Social is not transactional. People are not looking to buy products and services in most instances while they are interacting on a social level with their friends and colleagues – yes, some ask for advice on what to buy, but they are asking their network, not the retailer. Retailers would be better served to actively listen, get feedback from the marketplace, and adjust their products and services and value propositions. It goes back to 'selling holes, not drills'. Retailers need to be invited into the conversation, they can't butt in.

ROI on social media for retailers has been pretty much negligible and the bottom line is most people haven't even attempted to measure the ROI for social media. If you go back to what I said previously - if I had \$50,000 cash to spend on any marketing vehicle I would not touch social media, not even close. Most people point to a company like [Dell](#) as a [retail social media success](#). They have sold 7 million dollars of merchandise [via Twitter](#). The harsh reality is, they are a 60 billion dollar a year company - which makes 7 million a rounding error. That's not a success in my mind.

Q: What should companies do with negative reviews in your opinion?

JB: They need to embrace them. They need to encourage them. A lot of people are fearful, especially manufacturing companies. People are going to talk about your products whether they tell you or not - they're telling everyone else. Retailers really need to learn from those things. For example, is the product being used wrong, or are we marketing it to the wrong kind of consumer?

Sometimes it's all about accuracy. If someone uses your product incorrectly their experience is not going to be positive and they'll leave that negative review. You may need to adjust the content or the product description and set better expectations. So, as long as the consumer feels empowered to make a decision based on all the facts they're going to convert more.

It even allows you to make better products if you are a manufacturer. If you are a reseller, it allows you to choose better products from the

manufacturer for you to sell. If all else fails and you cannot fix the problem, I recommend if someone leaves a negative review, follow up with them and see what you can do to rectify the situation. Replacing the product, suggesting an alternative, or instructing them how to use the product properly is often all it takes. It's not unsolvable. If all of those things fail it just gives you the opportunity to sell them more appropriate products. They may balk at an item because of bad reviews, but by suggesting alternative options the odds of conversion still increase. The average rating for across most sites is 4.2 out of 5 stars which is really high.

Q: As a fan of the Vancouver Canucks, who is your favorite Canuck and why?

JB: The easy answer is Luongo or the Sedins (who are having an unbelievably productive year), but I like the underdog. I like the Burrows of the world - guys who have taken the long road. He had to make a name for himself through hard work and grit. I really like his style of play.

Q: What type of work do you find most rewarding?

JB: Going back to that winning thing, I love a challenge. Anything that has plagued a company for a long time, but they haven't figured out a way to fix it or how to assign resources to do something about it. I love that stuff. My wife and I love to watch the TV show House - it's all about problem solving. House is really interesting. There's one episode in which an amputee is miserable due to phantom pains in his missing arm. He felt like his fist was clenched extremely tight and he couldn't find a way to unclench it. House taped

the guy to a chair, put his arm in a box and place a mirror in-between his missing arm and his real arm and told him to look at his hand in the mirror so that it looked like he had two arms, and told him to open his hand. And when he did, he unclenched his phantom hand and the pain went away. That's the kind of stuff that I love - simple solutions that are not obvious to everyone else.

Q: Tell us about some of your favorite things to do in Vancouver?

JB: Vancouver is an interesting city. Many people are here for the nature and are generally outdoor people and before I got hurt I was certainly one of those people. Though I'm more of a home body now, I love the scenery and the fresh air with trees everywhere. It's a visually enticing place to live. I enjoy spending time with my wife and my extended family. We are thinking fishing may be the next hobby we try to pick up - it is something I did lots growing up on the coast of Northern BC. Canucks games are obviously a huge thing for me and I'm super pumped for the Olympics as well. Vancouver is great place to live.

Q: Text message or phone call?

JB: That's an interesting question. It is actually quite a big deal. The thing about the phone is there is a sense of immediacy, there's intimacy and you can also judge the tone of the persons voice so you can get a more true reaction. If it's really important someone's going to keep attempting to call you. If it's really not that important, email is sufficient. People also use email as a cop out. If they fire off an email they think 'I've tagged you and it's not my responsibility anymore.' Another thing is people can

play a role by email and be more aggressive, but if you actually had that same conversation in person they would be much less gritty. They wouldn't have that tone with you and they wouldn't misconstrue anything that you've said or to perceive you as aggressive when you are actually passive. The phone is important. Most of our communication cues come from non-verbal actions. Nothing beats face to face.

Q: What is the most valuable lesson you've learned?

JB: One of the things I've learned is no matter how much you know someone or situation, things can change. It doesn't have to be the situation or the person, you can change as well. My suggestion is go forward and pursue things with trust and enthusiasm, but you have to have a really healthy dose of skepticism and have to plan and prepare for the undesirable things that may come in the future. This is just as applicable in one's personal life as it is in business.

Q: Who are the mentors you have surrounded yourself with?

JB: My dad has always been the person I've looked up to most. He's definitely a hard worker and very smart. He has knowledge power and I think I acquired my love of learning from him.

The other people I like to surround myself with on a daily basis are vertical experts. In retail in particular you cross so many different niches - you have email, usability, web analytics, merchandising, sourcing, fulfillment, etc. and there are so many different experts in each. So in order to be a good retail coach you've got to be versed in all of them and I make sure that I'm in

communication with the people who are on top of each one of those verticals. Then I soak it in like a sponge.

I think it is important to have a life mentor as well. Someone who is doing life the way that you might want to do life and that goes way beyond business. For instance, how much time do you spend with your family and what does that time look like? Do you have a painted picture of what your life looks like 1 year out, 5 years out etc. Cameron Herold is constantly pushing me on this. He is a former executive at 1-800-GOT-JUNK who now runs a coaching company called [BackPocket COO](#). I really like how he's tried to model his life and we are in constant contact. I'll be implementing many of his methods over the coming year.

Q: What methods do you use to explore new ecommerce technologies?

JB: I'm always learning. I read a lot of blogs by vendor and niche experts in retail areas. I'm constantly engaged in conversations on Twitter or by email with various practitioners, vendors, and service providers. But the biggest tool for learning is often just by observation - exploring retail websites constantly and thoroughly. If there is something new I might try it out with clients and run some tests on it.

When it comes to exploring new ecommerce technologies, it's kind of like a really hot car. It's something you might see on the street that looks great, it's got great marketing behind it, but under the

hood it could be a complete pile of junk. It could work for someone else, it could be perfect if it's driven in L.A. where it is sunny, but if you bring it up to Vancouver you find out it's horrible in the rain. When any new technology is being evaluated, it's about fit. It could be right for someone else, but is it right for you?

Q: What do you hope people take away from your speaking engagement on January 13th?

JB: I'm going to be talking about tactics, pure tactics. None of the theoretical stuff or strategic fluffery that often gets talked about at events. I really want to deliver information that will help people who sell online or even people who are doing lead generation online that will allow them to make money at it, next week. They can immediately take the information back to the office and start to apply it right away.

About the International Internet Marketing Association

The International Internet Marketing Association started in 1998 to bring marketers, agencies and professionals together to discuss the capabilities and potential of Internet marketing. With over ten years of experience since our first event and our association remains focused on its original mandate – education. Each year, IIMA delivers a series of networking and speaking events hosted by subject matter experts, thought leaders, experts and panels of marketing practitioners. Each event has the same objectives:

- to provide insight into current and emerging practices in online marketing
- to deliver practical insights that are immediately relevant to your business
- to challenge participants to achieve greater levels of awareness of digital marketing
- to assist in the integration of digital marketing into your big picture marketing strategy

To engage you in the community of marketing and business practitioners passionate about the future of internet marketing. The meet-ups provide a theatre for the discussion of the trends, tools and technology shaping how marketing practitioners who are using the digital space to greater involvement with their publics. By providing a series of networking and educational events, IIMA creates an environment in which the trends, tools, opportunities and risks that are shaping how people interact with the online market place.

For more information about IIMA, go to: www.iimaonline.org

Contributors to this interview



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Ean Jackson, Director of Events IIMA- When not running a marathon or snow Shoeing in gorgeous powder conditions, Ean helps us connect with professional speakers and industry experts to present to our membership. For speaking opportunities and events contact Ean online via [@eanjackson](https://twitter.com/eanjackson)



A special thank you to [@jbillingsley](https://twitter.com/jbillingsley) for his talent, drive, inspiration and contribution to this interview.