

Doberman Dan on Living With Gary Halbert

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Glenn: Hey! It's Dr. Glenn with a long overdue interview with Doberman Dan. What you all don't know about Doberman Dan is that he's one of the very few, if not the only person, who has actually lived with Gary Halbert. Is that true Dan?

Dan: That is true probably because not many people could take it for very long.

Glenn: How long did you live with him?

Dan: Well, he stayed at my place in Costa Rica for about three months or so. I used to know the exact number of days because it was a -- long story but it was around three months, a little less four months, I guess. Then he was just such a master persuasionist. He talked to me into doing something I said I wouldn't do and that's move away from the little paradise I had carved out for myself living in Costa Rica and moved back to the U.S. to live in Miami. I lived in the same building as him, I guess for about another three months or so.

Glenn: He talked you into that because he wanted to work with you more?

Dan: Yeah. Well, he had a bunch of client work come in and he insisted that we just had to work that way. I'm like, "Gary, you know, we've got the phone and email, can't we -- I just want to stay in my little paradise here." But he insisted that we had to be there in person to work on that. He talked me into moving back.

Glenn: Then you never went back, right?

Dan: No, I've been here in the States ever since.

Glenn: Cool! Okay. Well, I mean I would be very interested to know more about your experience in living with Gary Halbert but I would imagine that what most of my listeners is interested in is knowing what you learned and what can you share about persuasion and copywriting and some of the simple things that Gary taught you that they may not know otherwise.

Dan: That sounds good. I learned a lot from Gary. I'll try to keep it as concise as possible.

Glenn: Was he as good as everybody said that he was?

Dan: You mean for copywriting and marketing stuff?

Glenn: I mean, people hold him up as the king and is he the king?

Dan: Well, here's an interesting thing. You know, they say you shouldn't meet your heroes. I mean Halbert was a hero of mine. I believed all the stuff in his newsletter which he wrote, which was true. The thing is, he even admitted it that guys in his position as a copywriter or a guru or whatever you want to call it, earned itself aggrandizement business. The only stuff he cared about is their successes. You hardly ever hear about their failures.

Glenn: Right.

Dan: Working with him, I got to see the failures. I'm not saying it was a bad thing. It was a very good thing. But he went from like being a hero, from being up on that pedestal, to being a normal person again. Seeing him fail, see that his failure rate was about equal to mine and most other experienced marketing copywriting people was a huge lesson that -- he had his failures like all of us. Most of the stuff he came up with didn't work or a good percentage but --

Glenn: Most entrepreneurs fail nine out of 10 times.

Dan: Yeah. He even told me, I mean I saw a bunch of his flops. The stuff that we expected to work didn't work. He even told me one time -- this is why it's been a little bit hard, kind of getting all the Halbert lessons organized in my mind and on paper is because he -- Gary never sat down and said, "I'm going to teach you this." Never, he never, ever did that. In fact, he never "taught me anything". He just let me observe his life and I had to come up with my own lessons out of that.

One thing he did say after a piece of his fails was like, and a lot of stuff we worked on that month, just failed, didn't work. He said, "Look, a company like Agora who has more money than God, they've got the best product managers and people working for them that do market research and come up with products for this markets. They've got the best list workers in the world they work with. They literally pay their copywriters \$1million or more a year. They've got the best hired copywriters in the world and still, 7 out of 10 of the things that they try don't work. Of those 3 that do, 2 are kind of like "eh" - base hits and 1 would be considered a home run that does really well. That's Agora who has more experience and more money and the best people in the world.

What are entrepreneurs like us supposed to expect? Should we expect we're going to be as good as Agora? Probably not.

Glenn: I always tell people to fail small if you can and fail fast because it's going to take a while to get to the one that works.

Dan: That's excellent advice and that's funny. That's another Halbert lesson, the fail fast. In fact, he just moved on from the failure so fast he wanted to get through them as quick as possible to get to the stuff that works, where most people would either let that sideline them or stop them entirely. He's just moving on to the next thing. I remember a thing we wrote for a make money online book, a newspaper ad that was just a total stinker. I mean it was like the worst -- I mean literally, I think it ran in a whole of bunch of papers and we got three calls. They were all three from these cranky old people who didn't buy anything. I'm was a little disappointed. I didn't write the piece. He wrote the piece but I'm a little disappointed because we all thought it would work and his only response was, he just looked at the stack of stuff we had on the desk and said, "What's next?"

Glenn: That's the right response. What did you manage to observe? Like he wouldn't teach you anything but I imagine those -- I know you talked about those three months frequently and it seems like you talk about them fondly even though he drove you crazy. What did you manage to observe that's been useful to you today?

Dan: Well, probably the most important Halbert lesson was motion beats meditation. Of course, he'd written that in his newsletter but it was cool to see that he actually lived that too when -- when you didn't know what to do, you just did something. Even to the point where when he didn't know what to write, he literally would write anything. If he sat down to write, once he finally did sit down to write, because there was an incubation period before that, but he didn't know what to write, he wouldn't sit there looking at the blank page. He would literally write blah, blah, blah. For the simple fact that motion, just any kind of motion is better than sitting there doing nothing even if it's wrong, at least you're moving.

Glenn: I actually wrote a blog post somewhat to that effect about writer's block. Because I think what most people don't understand about writer's block is that it's really not the experience of an empty mind. It's the painful experience of suppressing something you really don't want to say.

If you get yourself saying something, sooner or later what you don't want to say is going to come out and then you'll see it wasn't so dangerous to say or there is a better way to say it or you can revise it or say the opposite or edit it down or whatever it is. But, if you're not willing to vomit first and make it look pretty later, then you don't get there.

It's a very frustrating experience. I think that's so important. I think it's so important.

If I'm running a creativity workshop, I will always have people start out by flipping the problem on its head. So if the problem is, we need to come up with a better brand message for Whirlpool, for Whirlpool kitchen appliances, then I'll tell everybody, the first thing we're going to do is figure out how can we ruin the

company. I want to come up with the worst possible brand messages so that we can absolutely ruin the company. I don't want any of you to have a job tomorrow, can you do that?

People get themselves talking and writing and everybody giggles about it but don't you know, that once they do that, that all these other great ideas start flowing for how to make the company better. So yeah, I like that. I like it very much. Start writing.

Dan: That's ingenious. I never thought about that. But you know what? That would take all the pressure off. I would feel so free if somebody came to me and said – usually, it's the exact opposite. People want you to perform a miracle and they expect a miracle. If somebody said that, I would feel like the shackles were just taken off and I could be completely free.

Glenn: There is a book all about that kind of intervention called Making Things Better by Making them Worse. It might be out of print. I haven't seen a copy for a while, but that's where I got the idea.

Dan: That's ingenious. You know what else, Glenn? I've never heard anybody explain writer's block that way. You've just caused a major paradigm shift in my demented mind here. What you're trying to avoid, if you're trying to avoid saying something, whatever that is.

Glenn: Well, because if you think about it, why would it be so painful otherwise, right? If you really had nothing to say, well, having nothing to say is just like having a pleasant nap.

Dan: Yeah, that's not a problem. Having nothing to say is not a problem.

Glenn: The problem is having something to say that you don't want to say, you don't know how to say or you're afraid that people are going to judge you for saying. The last part of that article by the way was that, if people think about writing for their children rather than writing for their teachers or their audience, they do better. Because if I'm on a seminar and people are saying they're having writer's block, I say, "Well, do you have a kid?" If they have a kid, I say, "Well, do you have something to tell your kid today?"

They have plenty to tell their kid because their mindset with regards to their children is that they want to feed them.

They are not judging themselves constantly about what they're feeding them, but their mindset about talking to a teacher or writing a sales letter or putting some copy together for a client, is that they're going to be judged on it and people are going to buy or not buy. What you really need to do is put yourself in the mindset

of feeding the people rather than being judged by people. I find that that's very helpful but I meant to talk to you about Gary Halbert.

Dan: Yeah, that's a great idea. I just picked up three really killer tips.

Glenn: Good. So he said motion beats meditation.

Dan: Yeah, that was a biggie, yeah, yeah, yeah. That was a big Halbert lesson that I saw actually in action, which was nice. It reinforced the truth of it. By taking the action, even if it was wrong, it got you at least in a position where you could correct and get on track to doing what was right. Whereas sitting there with your thumb in your mouth gets you nowhere.

Glenn: Yeah. One of the things that Gary was really known for was drawing you in with the story, I mean anybody who's read the Gary Halbert newsletters online knows that they kind of start to read and they can't stop reading and they're thinking, what the hell am I reading? Did living with him cement for you or amplify exactly how he does that? Because you're a master at telling stories in your newsletter as well. Could you talk a little bit about that? What did you pick up from him about this story?

Dan: Back when we first didn't really know each other that well, it took a couple years but I had specifically engineered things and situations so I could get on Halbert's radar. Ironically, most of the things I did is stuff I learned in this newsletter. I turned it around on him and he didn't even realize it, which is kind of funny.

I was on his radar and we've been corresponding for a couple years. The first time we met in person was we went out to dinner when he was in Costa Rica visiting his girlfriend. He was asking about what I was doing. At the time, I had a business in the bodybuilding niche, info products and supplements.

We were out for dinner and he was asking about the bestselling product and then he kind of just zoned off and then asked the waitress for a piece of paper and a pen. He started writing and it was all a story.

It was for a product that didn't exist yet. I created it after reading his story. But it was all about how, while he was in Costa Rica, he went with a guy to explore the jungles and there they explained some of the miraculous drug-like effects of some of the plants and how those have been used in all kinds of medical research and stuff and how one particular plant they found that boosted testosterone levels and blah, blah, blah. It was a typical Halbert story that just sucked you in. Then he gave me the piece of paper and he goes, "There you go." I had to figure out how to actually create a real product and make that story into a real product. But yeah, he was just the master at it. He could come up with that stuff, just off the top of his head because he'd been doing it for so long.

Normally, his process was very unsexy. It was actually a lot of work. You just load up your mind with all the possible information you have. Once you've done that, you literally goof off and allow those idea to "percolate" in your brain and that's how he came up with the story. Somehow, all that information, that dry information, percolated into a story or some sort.

Glenn: Sure. that's the secret of creativity. It's not a linear process. You actually have to be somewhat dreamlike and allow loose connections to come together to work that out. It sounds like he had to capture at the moment of inspiration, right?

Dan: Oh yeah, definitely. You could almost see when that moment of inspiration occurred. Now, that was unusual that it occurred right then and there at the table because normally what would happen again like I said, he'd load up on all the research or just keep digging and digging, deeper and deeper, just asking more and more questions. Then that was followed by what I thought was goofing off. I really didn't understand. I mean we had this huge pile of work on the table. Every single day, he'd tell me, "You need to be here 8am sharp because it's nose to the grind stone and we really got to go this far."

We have such a volume of work that I expected, I really expected we'd be there sitting at his table at least 12 hours a day writing copy and doing all that stuff. But every morning, what it was, I'd show up at 8am and he'd be like, "Let's go get some breakfast." Then after breakfast, it was, "You know what? Let's go out on a boat." After that, it's "Let's ooh, there's a new -- so and so came out with a new CD, let's go get the CD." I mean, literally weeks of that. After a couple of weeks, I even said something like, "Hey, shouldn't we be doing some work for the client?" He's like, "Well, you know, there's other stuff to do." He didn't explain to me what he was doing but that was the -- I don't even know what you want to call it, that was the percolation period I guess.

Glenn: Incubation, right?

Dan: Incubation, yeah.

Glenn: Incubation assimilation.

Dan: I like that. Incubation assimilation. But you could almost see when the moment of inspiration – See, he wouldn't be thinking about that stuff; Honestly, just be letting it work in the background. When we're out on a boat, we're never like, "Well, what ideas we can write about that." No, we talked about stupid stuff, just mundane stuff.

Glenn: That's funny.

Dan: Like one day, I remember, he's like, we're on the boat, he's like, "Turn it around, we're going back." We went back, docked the boat. He didn't say anything at that

time - docked the boat, walked up to his apartment. He walked in, grabbed the yellow pad and paper because he always wrote everything out by hand. What sucked is he required anybody working with him to do the same, you know, sat down and just started writing, wrote non-stop for at least a couple of hours and the ad was done.

Glenn: Do you think it matters whether you write by hand or not?

Dan: Well, it did. I have to agree even though I still probably only do it 10% of the time now, just for convenience sake, it seemed like he was correct when he said there was more of a connection. He used to say, it accessed you're neural pathways. I don't know. I think it does make a difference. Things seem to flow better for me if I write it out by hand.

Glenn: I know when I was trying to learn copy that it seemed to help to write out. I didn't write out the whole ads but I would write out the piece of the ads that really appealed to me by hand. I know that that seemed to make more of a connection. But actually writing, I find that -- I type so quickly, it's very frustrating for me to have to write by hand.

Dan: Right. I remember the first piece -- I think one of first pieces I ever wrote by hand because prior to working with him, I just did it all on computer. It's funny, shortly after that guy came out with that book the "The 12-Month Millionaire" and he'd gotten rich selling penis pills. [laughter]

Glenn: Right, right.

Dan: So Halbert wanted to start his own penis pill business.

Glenn: Really? [laughter]

Dan: He really did. It never came about.

Glenn: You couldn't get enough good penis pills - I always say. I'd just been saying that the other day.

Dan: You wouldn't believe the research we did for that project. So here I am, reading a bunch of penis ads. He tells me he's going to take nap so I went up to my apartment and things had just come together really fast in my head. I sat down and wrote a penis pill ad. I wrote it out by hand. It really flowed, like everything just came out almost magically. I don't know if writing it out by hand helped that but I think it did. Maybe that's why he insisted on it. He definitely insisted on it when people were learning how to write ads but if you're working with him, he did want you to write just like he did.

Glenn: Interesting. Now, what's this potato box story that I always hear about? Is it okay to ask you on this call?

Dan: Yeah. That's probably, aside from motion beats meditation, that's probably another big important Halbert lesson. He loved his boat. I hate to say it but that thing was a piece of crap. It never works right. He was always fixing it. I swear his boat mechanic, I think, made six figures a year just from Halbert. But we're out on the boat and the thing dies, like it did so frequently and we're drifting off to somewhere. I don't know if we were drifting towards Cuba or Bimini, you know this little island in Bahamas that he always talked about his boat could reach but we're drifting. Finally, somebody came to help us and hauled us in. I guess he figured that I put up with so much crap like that for so long, I deserve one of his best secret.

So he points to this potato box in the corner. It was just a wooden box with a hinge lid with a few decorative holes in it, like moon-shaped holes and stuff that I'd never taken noticed of. He said, "There are million dollar secrets in there, Dan and today we're going to find us one." He literally dumped it out in the middle of the floor of his apartment and we sat there sifting through what he called fodder. The potato box was his fodder file, fodder is actually -- it's what they use to put in cannons. It's just like filler I guess, that would let the canon ball sit in a bore of the canon titer. He called that fodder and it was anything that he ran across that he thought might at some point generate some kind of an idea.

There were articles in there. There were ads in there. It was just anything he ran across. He'd circle something even if it was just an article on something, some weird topic. He'd circle something within the article that he thought at a later time might spark an idea. So we're sifting through all that stuff, just not looking for anything in general, just looking for something that may be a million dollar idea or may spark a million dollar idea which by the way is how he found the coat of arms idea which you're probably familiar with that whole coat of arms business, aren't you Glenn?

Glenn: Yes, but I don't know that everybody else is.

Dan: Well, allegedly, he wrote a sales letter. It took him over two years of writing sales letters that all failed to finally get the one that worked. But allegedly, that sales letter, a one page letter, has been the most widely mailed sales letter in the history of direct response, allegedly. It was selling a coat of arms drawing which is you know, the old -- your family code of arms. So you'd get a letter in the mail that said, "Dear Mr. Livingston. I've been doing a research. I found the Livingston code of arms and it offered a drawing of your family coat of arms. What most people don't know -- That was a huge successful multi, multi million dollar business that was -- what was called Halbert's and then it became Newma's and was a publicly traded company up in Canton in Ohio too.

Glenn: Really? Wow.

Dan: Yeah, I don't know if it still exists today but it lasted for decades and how they made money is a totally different story. It wasn't in selling coat of arms but it was a huge success story. How he found that entire idea was through this potato box thing, what he call the fodder file, of just keeping little articles. He ran across an article about a lady who would hand-draw your family coat of arms but she was just doing it on a onesy twosy basis for friends. He took that and put it on steroids, of course.

His technique had been proven and that was a huge lesson for me. I've continued that to this day. I don't use a potato box. I'm a bit more organized. I do just a third in a stack but I do have file folders that anytime I find something interesting, I stick it in there.

We just went through the articles and perhaps, it was a direct mail piece and we do some research and find out that the thing is successful, there's a ton of list available or we could sometimes even find the particular list from that company and then use that as an idea generator to come up with our own idea either something related or something we could piggy back on that or whatever.

Glenn: Is it difficult at first to get to the point where you just say, "Well, this is an interesting thing, it belongs in the potato box" as opposed to "I know why this is interesting and I know what I'm going to do with it?"

Dan: Good question. There was some stuff I ran across that was just really weird. I couldn't think how it applied to anything. I'd ask him, "What was your thought process? Why'd you put this in a potato box?" He'd looked at it and say, "I have no idea. Do you think this has any relevance to anything? You know, product ideas, marketing ideas, anything?" He'd forget and he'd say, "Sure doesn't now but when I first saw it, it did, so let's put it back in the box."

Glenn: [Laughter] When I was in college, or more in high school, I was known to indulge in certain substances. When I did that, sometimes, I will get these great ideas and I just thought I had solved all the worlds conflicts and I'd write them down and in the morning, I'd look at it would say on a piece of paper my sister's feet smells funny.

But I think that the true essence of creativity, you need to have a potato box and you need to be willing to say, this is interesting to me. I'm very excited about it now. I don't know if I'll be excited about it later. I don't when or how or where it's going to be significant in my business but I know that for whatever reason, this changed my emotional state when I saw it. The things that changed your emotional state have the capacity to move the needle with your audience at some point later on.

I've trained myself when I see those types of things, to write them down or if I don't have the potato box but I got a file that I keep those kind of things in. I might use 1 out of 20 of them but I treasure that box.

Dan: Oh, yeah. Even the stuff that changes your emotional state at that time - you save it but later that, whatever you saved it for, you'd forgotten. It's still worth keeping around because who knows, two months down the road it may come back to you or it may work out that it's just the right thing you need at the right time for whatever it is you're working on. I totally encourage people to start their own fodder file. If it's in a potato box or however you want to do it, it's really valuable. Even if you're not an entrepreneur, even if you're a service provider, a copywriter or something like that or graphic designer, it still is a really profitable thing to do.

Glenn: Cool. Could I zero in on a particular aspect of copywriting that I'm very interested in at this point? As my career has evolved and I've looked at literally hundreds of campaigns and I've had all these coaching students and built Rocket Clicks and sold Rocket Clicks and looked at what works and what doesn't, what seems to strike me as more important than the copy is the offer.

When I've helped people the most, you know, sure, it's helpful when you can identify the unique selling proposition and sure, it's helpful when you could wordsmith their headline and add some scarcity or something like that. But what really makes a difference is when you can get them to change the offer. I'm just wondering, what can you share with us that you may have learned from Gary Halbert about the offer?

Dan: Yeah, I'm glad you brought that up because I've learned a lot. I learned a lot from him. I learned a lot from like groping in the dark on my own, back when I was first starting. It's kind of funny, I've had other people say really complimentary things about me or about my work. Like I've had some people say I'm a good copywriter. I have heard some people say I'm a great copywriter. I was introduced at a business meeting a couple months ago as Doberman, Dan copywriter extraordinaire. I will be the last person to contradict people when they're saying those nice things about me. [laughter]

Glenn: Right. By the way, one of the really interesting things in marketing is that, it's so rare that someone actually understands why a campaign is working, that they're very quick to ascribe phenomenal properties to you that you just don't have. [laughter]

Dan: I wish I could live up to some of the things that have been said. I mean, to be completely transparent with you, I don't think I'm all that good. I've practiced that a lot so I've become pretty confident but I don't think I'm all that good. I think what I've become good at is figuring out that the copy's not really all that important. Everybody is going to cringe because everybody thinks it is -- what's even scarier is when people hire a copywriter and they think that's their -- especially, somebody

who is self aggrandize really well like Halbert used to do. They hire Halbert and they think they have now just found their savior. This guy is going to save them when the copy is actually a very small part of the success of this whole deal.

I have made a career in my own businesses and my own projects of making a really good living with what I call crappy copy, just getting something done as quickly as possible. This was a term I use from Halbert, "Running it up the flag pole just to see how many people salute it." Instead of spending months agonizing over every word choice, you just crank that thing out, run up the flag pole and see how many people salute it with their wallets and the thing about that is, you're right. The offer is really important and that's probably how I've done well in the past with really so so copy, really making an irresistible offer.

Glenn: Is there anything that Gary taught you about irresistible offers that you could share?

Dan: I'd love to. One of the things I resisted, trying this for the longest time, I found most people do -and then I discovered he had been right all these time and I'd of course cheated myself out a lots of income because of it. He used to talk about making an offer on a 30-day hold because this was back in the direct mail days, That's what they called it, Glenn. Its people in the good old days used to pay by check and the offer was postdate by your check 30 days and we'll send you the product now. Try it, give it a full 30 days, if it's not everything we say it is, send it back, we will send back your uncashed check. Now, there are variations of it since most people pay with credit cards. But you can do the same thing online with a credit card. It's just, you don't bill him for 30 days. You give him the product and you don't bill him for 30 days. He used to say, "What that will do is triple your response and double your refund rate."

Glenn: I've actually tested that and that's what happened.

Dan: That's what happened with me too, when I finally did test it. Most people resist testing that because they're worried that it's just going to -- well, there's a lot of logistical issues to doing that also but they're worried about the logistical issues, I guess, or worried about just getting ripped off.

But those kind of irresistible offers even with really so so copy, that can make a difference. In fact, that's the first thing I'd prefer to test than headlines or copy changes or any of that stuff as the offer. Because if you can get the offers as irresistible as possible and as risk-free as possible, then that can make huge differences in your response. I'm not saying that a headline change cannot make a big difference in your response, but in all likelihood, an offer change will probably make the significant difference.

Glenn: Well, especially for people that are getting started and don't have a lot of proof. Because if you've got a good unique selling proposition and you've written decent copies so that people actually want what you have, what's going to stop a reasonable person from making a reasonable purchase is that they don't trust you. If you can really come out balls to the wall with your offer, right? I tell people that they haven't made a really good guarantee unless they feel a little nauseous about it. That can make up for the lack of proof in the beginning.

Nobody can tell you -- nobody can tell you how much of a risk to take because you have to analyze your own business and in the end, you take the risk and you make the money. But I can tell you that the vast majority of my clients are much more nervous than they needed to be. Because if you think about the math for a second, let's say you have a 10% refund rate, and let's say you double your sales and you double your refund rate. Let's say you don't triple your sales. You just double your sales and you double your refund rate, you're still better off, aren't you?

Dan: Yes.

Glenn: If you're going to get hung up on the actual people that rip you off, you're going to keep a lot of money off your table and a lot of good products from getting to the right people. I think that the longer I'm in this game, the more I try to encourage people to be a little gutsier with their guarantees and their offers. It requires that you feel very, very confident in your product or service ability to accomplish its goal. It requires that you're very, very careful about your math and you study it -- but in the end, I think that I would rather play around with the offer first until I got something that was really working before I started messing around with all the copy. So that's it.

Dan: I agree. I've had this conversation with several experienced marketers who - I can't believe they get hung up on this, but doubling your refund rate doesn't matter. Your actual, your response percentage doesn't matter. People seem to have-- their self-image sometimes seems to be tied with refund rates. These two experienced guys I spoke with recently have done everything possible they can think of to keep refund rates to near zero. They're absolutely killing their business by doing that but it gives them bragging rights, "You know, I don't get any refunds."

Well, we are in the numbers business. Your refund rate doesn't matter. Your response rate doesn't matter. None of this stuff. So you 'd do a 30-day hold, it doubles your refund rate. It doesn't matter that it triples it. I don't care. What matters is, when it's all said and done that your numbers work out which basically means more is coming in than going out.

Glenn: Right, right. Dollars in, dollars out. Right.

Dan: I think -- that seems to be one of the things that hold people back from making those kind of irresistible offers and guarantees. I think they're worried about that. But time and time again, I've proven that we worry about those things like, "I don't want to get people ripping me off." "Oh, gosh, my refund rate's going to be high." Well, you know what? You're going to get people ripping you off regardless of what you do. Another thing I was worried that, "Oh, a bunch of people taking advantage of this and then do a refund or turn it back in before the 30th." Well, yes, that's going to happen. It's impossible to avoid. I think it's really stupid attempting to avoid it.

The reality is, even people who want to do a refund just because of human nature, they'll sit on their hands and they'll never get around to it, literally, either just calling an 800 number and asking for a refund is too much work for some people and they won't do it. But like you said, to make all this work, you really have to be confident with your product. If you are selling crap, then you are going to have problems with this kind of offers and you are going to have a really high refund rate and it may not work out for you. But if you're selling a good product, these irresistible offers can make a huge difference in the amount of business that you bring in and your net bottom line.

Glenn: Here's something else to consider. The speed at which you can gather testing intelligence is directly proportional to the purchased velocity that you generate. Even if your profit margin goes down in the early stages, your ability to generate a volume of sales so that you can test the headlines so that you can test for whatever you're going to test.

If you integrate the irresistible offer into your promotions sooner, I think that your speed to market actually dramatically improves as opposed to trying to go out there and just sell to the really motivated buyers who are going to give you the high-end prices and that's it. Because you're only going to have a handful of organics you can't do the testing. That just underscores the need for the irresistible offer.

Dan: That's true.

Glenn: So hey, Dan, one of the reasons I'd wanted to do this interview with you was because you are a friend of Terry Dean and you guys live in the same area, He and I were talking and he said that, you actually got a call from the Halbert people and they're interested in more or less having you carry on his tradition with the newsletter. Can you tell me a little bit more about that story? What it is that you're doing now and how this came to pass?

Dan: Actually, I didn't -- the truth is I kind of -- not kind of, let me be honest. I appointed myself or should I say, anointed myself as the guy to carry on the Halbert tradition because at the time, I didn't see anybody doing it. Von Kevin, his sons had kept his website going but there was no new content being added or anything so I didn't

want to let all this stuff die. At least, it was up there on the website, but I didn't see anybody picking up the torch and going forward with it. So the truth of the matter is, Glenn, I appointed myself as that guy.

Glenn: Well, hey, more of us should appoint ourselves as what we want to be. Declare yourself the king. Why not?

Dan: Well, it works. I found it works. It's actually way outside of my comfort zone and it's probably not consistent with my self image. I'm more of the guy who'd like to like lay back. I'd prefer to be under the radar, behind the scenes kind of guy. But the fact of the matter is, is you can grab whatever position you want. You can make yourself the king of whatever. If nobody else is claiming it and the simple fact that you claim it, people will take it a face value.

Glenn: What is it that you're doing? You've declared yourself a king. You've declared yourself as the anointed one to carry on the tradition. What does that actually mean? What are you doing?

Dan: Well, I started what initially started as just a static website. When blogs became a thing, I changed to a blog. I just started posting some of the lessons I learned from Halbert and also the lessons I've learned on my own from being in direct response marketing and starting online businesses since like, '95,

I started that at dobermandan.com and that was the initial phase. January last year, January 2011, I picked up another torch from Halbert and carried on the tradition of the actual paper and ink newsletter and started publishing that.

I didn't set off to rip out, rip off the Halbert newsletter. But I've learned a lot of lessons from him. One of them is the perceived value of something appearing in print as opposed to appearing online. Even with all the technology we have, that lesson from Halbert still is true today. There's a higher perceived value of something that arrives to you in print -- usually, there is -- than if they get it digitally.

So I started this print newsletter. It's Paper & Ink Newsletter in January of 2011 and that's really where I focus my attention and time and that's what I'm passionate about is putting my lessons in that print newsletter as opposed to the blogs.

Glenn: It's a very good letter. I have like 14 of them right under my bed.

Dan: Oh, thanks. I thought you're going to say, "I'll take that under my bed so like it's nighttime reading." I'm much more flattered by that than you telling me it's your bathroom reading.

Glenn: I'm not against reading it in the bathroom. For some reason, it seems to be nighttime reading.

Dan: Well, thank you.

Glenn: Sharon's like, "Turn off the light." "Not till I'm done."

Dan: Well, thank you. I'm glad to hear that. I've enjoyed it and it's been a really good learning experience.

Glenn: Tell me why should people consider going over to KillerNewsletter.com and take a look at what you have to offer. What is it that's so cool about the letter? What is it that you're teaching people that they really need to know? I definitely endorse it, by the way. It's a rhetorical question in some ways, but I want to hear from your mouth.

Dan: Oh thanks, Glenn. Well, like I said, I've learned a lot since publishing it. I mean, this newsletter was really lost. It's kind of a ready-fire-aim kind of thing and I knew nothing about writing or publishing a print newsletter when I did it.

I think positioning it initially as a newsletter was a mistake on my part. In addition to the newsletter every month, it's more of a membership thing. Members, I do a monthly teleconference with members where I usually teach on something and then do a Q&A or sometimes, it's just open Q&A. People can participate by phone and actually talk to me or if they want to listen to it on Web simulcast, they can do that and then send questions in to me through the website.

I also set aside certain days a month where a few hours a day, I'll have open calling time. Members can just call in one-on-one and talk to me about whatever it is they want to talk about.

Glenn: You're an easy guy to talk to, too.

Dan: Oh, thank you.

Glenn: I've actually gotten some very good advice from you. I think that's a valuable asset.

Dan: Thank you. Well, that's the goal. I'm trying to do what I wish somebody would have done for me when I was starting and keep me or get me on the right track and answer all these questions I have and basically cut through the BS. There's a lot of things that are being taught by alleged experts that are just wrong. That's my goal, is to help people steer the waters or navigate the minefield I've already navigated.

I affectionately call it my marketing Camelot because the goal was not to have newsletter subscribers or be a newsletter publisher. It was literally to gather people around a round table and create a community that we can help each other.

I try to put as much value in the newsletter as I can but that still leaves a lot of people with questions. There may be some holes that the newsletter doesn't quite cover. So that's the reason for the monthly group calls and the ability to do some one-on-one calls with me.

Each issue usually has a different topic. Sometimes, I do a two-part or have to spread it out into two issues. But it's -- I'm sharing all the lessons I've learned and whatever it's been now, what? Seventeen years of being in this crazy business and a lot of the lessons I learned from Halbert and then have applied to my business and I share those.

Glenn: What I'd like to say is that, I know that a large proportion of my list has what I would call on-line-itis, which means that most of their exposure to direct marketing has been through just a couple of online gurus. And you know what? In my circles, they tend to be good ones. So myself, Terry Dean, Perry Marshall, and maybe Ken McCarthy, I guess there's a fringe part of my list where people's only exposure to direct marketing has been Frank Kern and you can learn an awful lot from him.

But the reason that I think that people should go to KillerNewsletter.com and consider signing up is that you're missing the offline world. You're missing a lot of the essentials of direct marketing as translated to you by someone who has really been in the thick of it offline as -- I know you do online as well, but I mean, this guy lived with Gary Halbert and he's endorsed by Terry Dean and he's endorsed by me. I really encourage people to go over to KillerNewsletter.com and take a look. In fact, I would encourage them to buy.

Dan: Well, thank you. You know, I started offline. That's how I started a mail order business to get me out of a civil service job that I really had started to hate and realized it was literally going to kill me. That's how I started with direct mail and offline ads. Of course, when the Internet became a viable media, I jumped on it right away and it was considered a viable media, I jumped on it.

In addition to the online stuff, I've never abandoned the offline stuff. I think if somebody has an online business or their only exposure to all this marketing stuff has been online marketing, they're leaving a lot of money on the table. Still, there's a lot of money to be made with the offline marketing techniques. Believe it or not, they're not outdated. In fact, in some instances, you may be leaving half your money on the table by not using them. If you're not familiar with any of those, you'll be exposed to what really works in offline marketing and the newsletter also.

Glenn: One of the things that you pointed out to Terry and I in the Total Conversion Code was that most marketers, most online marketers have never sent a snail mail piece to their customer list and the economics of sending snail mail to your customer is almost always works. So anyway, everybody, head on over

to www.KillerNewsletter.com, www.KillerNewsletter.com and go gobble it up. I endorse it.

Dan: Thanks, Glenn. I appreciate it.

**See Doberman Dan's Print Newsletter at
www.KillerNewsletter.com**

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