FAQ MARKETING LOGIC

ARCHIVE AUDIO INTERVIEW

Richard Conduit

Guest Interview Transcript



April 2026 · FAQ Marketing Logic

Richard Conduit

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Lytchett House, 13 Freeland Park, Wareham Road,
Poole, Dorset, BH16 6FA, United Kingdom.

Richard Conduit Interview

Editor:

Today's guest is Richard Conduit, founder of SAVVii Media, a performance marketing agency specialising in paid traffic, lead generation, and helping businesses scale using smart, measurable advertising. Richard has been in the paid ads game long enough to have seen platforms change dramatically from those early days of manual targeting to today's AI-driven automation. If you want straight-talk insights on what actually is working right now with paid ads and what to avoid, then this should be a really useful conversation. Richard, welcome.

Richard Conduit:

Hey, welcome.

Editor:

Should we start with your back story? How did you get into paid traffic in the first place and also into agency life?

Richard Conduit:

Yeah, sure. I spent a long time, nearly 20 years in sales, everything from door knocking and telesales through to corporate sales in the end. And I had a gym, a dojo of my own, and I started to run in 2014 Facebook ads in order to get new members into my gym. Those were the days when you could run two pounds a day in ad spend, which you cannot do anymore, and it worked and I had no idea what I was doing. It was something that I built a little landing page, ran some ads, and we got a lot of members join. I then started getting other gyms asking me to do the same thing, and after a while, I was earning the same kind of money as I was for my job and I quit my job, and then at that point, I decided to do this sort of full-time, and that was in the beginning of 2016.

Editor:

So it's been quite a while now. So what first attracted you maybe to Facebook ads and paid ads specifically?

Richard Conduit:

There were two things. First of all, it worked really, really well for my own business, and then I realised everybody wanted it. Every person that I spoke to, they knew that we should be advertising on Facebook, and this was even before Instagram. It was always just Facebook. Everybody wanted to do it, nobody knew how to do it. And so it was just one of those conversations back in 2016, '17. Everybody just wanted to do it and I found it very easy to get a business.

Editor:
And in terms of how it looks for you now, was it just trial and error that got you to expert status?

Richard Conduit:
To be fair, in the beginning, yes, it was. Yeah, in the beginning, it was me that was doing everything, building the funnels, running all the ads. And yeah, it was very, very different to how it is now. It was all interest-based targeting, so it was a lot more intuitive than it is now.

Editor:
Sure, because the ad landscape seems to have changed quite dramatically. And particularly in the last 10 years, so from when you started to where we are now, what are those changes, and also, how can people embrace that change? Because it's happening such at a rate of knots, isn't it?

Richard Conduit:
It is, yes. Yeah, so it is so fast. All my ad managers are on a meeting with the Facebook policy guys and our reps every week because the policies change all the time and things like that, so it's completely different. At the beginning, it was all interest-based, which meant that you were able to pick interests that you knew your audience were interested in, places that they go, pages that they were interested in, all this sort of thing, job titles, credit scores, earnings, all this sort of stuff was in there. The big change happened when Zuckerberg was hauled in front of Congress and there was all the problems that he had with data leakage and everything, and basically, what happened was one of the things that came from this Congress hearing was that he or not he, but other advertisers were able to exclude certain demographics of people and certain types of people from their advertising.

Richard Conduit:

This was especially true in things like real estate ads, so they would exclude certain people from certain areas, jobs, employment were doing the same thing. And so what happened was immediately after that, they removed or they started to remove a whole array of targeted or targeting, specific targeting inside of the Ads Manager, so that that couldn't happen anymore. That has continued year after year, so there is very... Well, there is still some, but compared to what it used to be, very little targeting. And then you have the stuff that happened with Apple where people could opt out of things, and so now, the algorithm, although it's far better than it ever was now, it works in a completely different way.

Editor:

And what's the best platform to advertise? Is it Facebook, is it Instagram, is it Google? In your experience, where do you see the biggest returns?

Richard Conduit:

It depends a little bit on the business. For coaches, consultants, high ticket programme, and course creators, internet marketers, that kind of thing, it's always going to be, at the moment, it's always going to be Meta, both Facebook and Instagram. Google is good for certain businesses and we do run Google Ads for certain businesses, but they tend to be businesses where people are the first, their initial thought is, "I need to Google somebody. I need a plumber." or something like that, right? Facebook is by far and away, even though some people say it doesn't work anymore, is by far and away the most profitable platform still. We run, I don't know how much millions every month in ads on Facebook, and it still works very, very well. You just have to do things very differently than you used to.

Editor:

And with Meta who own Facebook and Instagram, as you say, they seem to now be embracing AI more than ever. Is that a benefit or is that a curse or is that a little bit of both?

Richard Conduit:

It's a little bit of both. It makes running the ads harder, especially if you're trying to do your own ads, but it's actually a blessing and it is something that

is a lot better. The algorithm now is far better than it ever was. In my opinion, it's the best algorithm out there. If you run the ads properly, everything now, the targeting now is all about the creative. Facebook wants your ad, your copy, your creative, your video, whatever it is that you're using in the ad to attract and call out the correct market, the correct target, and to repel the wrong people. If you can do that in your ads as opposed to actual targeting in the audience, then the algorithm is extremely efficient at finding the right people. There's two things that you really have to do. One is set up the right, the correct ad copy and everything to attract these people.

Richard Conduit:

The second thing is to give the algorithm lots of choice. So it wants lots of choice, lots of different ads, different audiences that you pick, and the tracking, this is the part that people just ignore. The tracking has to be right because inside the Ads Manager, Facebook does not track things very well, so you have to send back the information to Facebook and make sure it's doing that correctly in order for it to learn. If you do that and it learns well, it will work better than it's ever worked before. So yeah, it's kind of six of one half a dozen of another. It's both. It's really, really good, but it's actually really bad if people are trying to do their own because it's quite complicated and the setup and the structure of the ad campaigns is the key thing with all of it.

Editor:

And that's I guess where most people could do with a little bit of guidance because we've all heard the horror stories from over the years. People are getting their ad accounts closed down and so on. What are the red flags that people should look out for? Is it now easier to avoid those kind of closures?

Richard Conduit:

No, it's even harder. You have to be very, very careful, and again, this is a very boring thing for people to do, but you really do need to take notice of the policies. If you get your ad account disabled, it's very hard to get it back. We are able to get it back a lot of the time if somebody does have their account disabled, but you are highly at risk if you are making big claims or you use before and after photos. The language that you use in your ads can get your ad account banned. One of the biggest things or one of the biggest reasons

why your account gets banned is the ratio, this is something that people don't know about, the ratio between approved ads and disapproved ads, so we always try and keep that ratio down as low as possible.

Richard Conduit:

There are some big red flags in the back of your ad manager that you're never going to see. If your disapproved ads to approved ads ratio is 1 to 10. If you go above that disapproved ad to 10 approved ads, you're at high risk of your ad account being disabled. Payments not going through. If you don't talk to your credit card provider before you start running your ads and tell them that you're going to start running ads and that payments are going to go out regularly to Facebook, a lot of the time, the payment of the banks will protect you and not allow the payment to go through, and Facebook, they will spank you for that, so your ads will skyrocket for three or four days before settling back down again. So yeah, Facebook does punish you for these types of things.

Editor:

And how competitive is it now? Because obviously, a lot of ad spend from traditional advertisers who used to maybe advertise on TV, radio, newspapers, they seem to have migrated into this digital landscape with Facebook and Instagram and so on. Does that make it more competitive and more costly than it used to be?

Richard Conduit:

It does, yeah. Depending on the market, it's extremely competitive. Costs go up every single year. The cost of your advertising does go up. I mean, it's not hugely, but it definitely goes up every year. Quarter four of every year, you can expect your ad costs to climb what with Black Friday, Christmas, things like that, Cyber Monday. The amount of advertisers going for the same audience increases dramatically, and so you'll see the ad costs go up then. We do see, and I don't know whether this is a real thing, we believe it is, nobody will ever tell me any difference. I am absolutely convinced that if you continue your advertising all through the year, once January hits again, you will get kind of rewarded that you've been doing it all year. Because a lot of people stop their ads when it gets more expensive during quarter four, but we see

that this happens every year, your ad costs do go down. So Facebook does, as far as I'm concerned, reward you for keeping your ads going permanently.

Editor:

I think a lot of people as well, they tend to perhaps avoid Facebook because you have heard these big horror stories over the years. It's almost like a dark art, being able to get your ads on the platform and approved. So the benefit, I guess, of using a company like SAVVii Media means that you can avoid many of those early pitfalls.

Richard Conduit:

Yeah, exactly. Yeah. I don't want to tempt fate here, but we do not get accounts disabled. You're always going to have ads that get disapproved always, and no matter how careful you are, it's an algorithm that looks at these things first. It's no longer a human. But the ad managers that we have, we have several ad managers for both Facebook and Google. Their whole job all day every day is to monitor the accounts, run new ads, lots of testing, and as soon as ads are disapproved, they go in, they will put the reviews in, they will talk to the Facebook staff to try and get it overturned, or at least if it doesn't get that ad out, delete it out and rerun new ads. People really don't appreciate how long they're going to have to spend in their ad manager running the ads. It is not a case of building spending ages on this perfect ad that you think is going to be fantastic sticking it out there, and it's all about consistent testing all the time, and that's one of the biggest reasons why people fail with Facebook ads.

Editor:

I know a lot of people as well tend to think that once you've been given a black mark, shall we say, by Facebook, that you are then into almost automation hell because it's very difficult to speak to a real person and to understand why your ad has been disallowed, shall we say. Once you're in that position, are there a few little tips or tricks that you could share to be able to pull back from that position?

Richard Conduit:

Yeah, it's a very difficult position to be in. You are exactly right. It's almost impossible to speak to a human at Facebook. It's not how it used to be

anymore. They do not hand out reps anymore. We're very fortunate because we do have reps, but the reps are based upon the clients and it depends on how much they're spending. We have a client that spends a huge amount of money every month, and so Facebook has given them a human rep that we can talk to. Fortunately, they talk to us about some of our other accounts as well when I know they're not supposed to, but it's very good to have somebody there on the end of the phone. The only reason we have that is because they're spending a couple of million dollars a month just on Facebook.

Richard Conduit:

So that's the only reason nobody will get a rep unless you're spending a lot of money and it's very difficult to talk to people on... It's infuriating when you go through the chat and everything else. You are completely right. If you have a black mark against you with Facebook, you're in real trouble. We are dealing with a woman that's come to us now who's every time she runs ads, the costs are just unbelievable, and that's one of the reasons that she has this, is because she bought likes for her page and for her Instagram account from some third-world country and doing anything dodgy like that, Facebook will find it and punish you for it.

Editor:

So for anybody who's listening to this or reading this, they've got their own small business maybe with limited funds, where should they start first, would you say, Richard?

Richard Conduit:

To be fair, buying courses for Facebook is a dangerous game because Facebook courses are out of date within a couple of months of you buying them. The best way to do this is to structure your campaigns properly and you need to have various different ads in there, video ads, image ads, carousels, lots of different copy, different headlines, and allow Facebook to test all of these things and let it do its thing. Do not cut off ads where spend is not going to them. Facebook will automatically direct spend to the better converting ads, and the most important thing is to make sure that your tracking is correct. If you are going on what it says in the Ads Manager about how many leads you've got, you are in real trouble because it does not report leads correctly, it

does not report purchases correctly, so you need to make sure that you are sending that traffic... You need to be checking your backend, whatever CRM system you're using, to make sure that you are actually getting the number of leads coming through.

Richard Conduit:

There are different ways, conversion API and things like that, that you can set up to send that information back, but to be quite frank, even on a small budget, it is worth talking to somebody like us that can actually help you with that, even if it's just for an audit. I mean, a lot of companies, we do this as well, do consulting. So if you can't afford to have somebody that does it all for you, consulting is a very good way of going about things because we have calls with people once a week, we tell them what they need to do, how they can structure their campaigns, and then when they come back the following week, they begin to learn, they begin to understand why we're doing the things that we're doing, and then eventually, once it starts to work for them, they kind of realise, actually, I don't really want to do this even though it's profitable, it's too much work. I really don't want to do this, and then all of a sudden, it becomes obvious and clear why people like us exist.

Editor:

Yeah, no, absolutely. For anybody who's interested in finding out more about SAVVii Media and the services that you offer, where do we need to go for that, Richard?

Richard Conduit:

Well, obviously, we have our website. We can go to savviimedia.com. The spelling for SAVVii Media is S-A-V-V-I-I Media. So if you go to savviimedia.com, you can fill out the form there, book a call with us, or you can call us as well on the phone number there. If you want to. You can also reach out through Facebook. You can find me on Facebook. I'm pretty much on there all the time. So there's numerous places that you can find us all. LinkedIn, for instance, I have people monitoring my LinkedIn.

Editor:

And you're based in the UK. Does this just apply to UK businesses or again, can you offer this worldwide?

Richard Conduit:

Yeah, not at all. Yeah, the vast majority of our clients right now and for the last 10 years have been in the States. We work with the States mostly. We work US hours, so even though we have people in the UK, we have people in the US, Canada, Australia, South Africa, Europe, South America, as well as staff there, we have clients all over there as well.

Editor:

That's amazing. Well, Richard, it's been an absolute pleasure having a conversation with you today about, as I say, what many people consider to be this dark art of Facebook ads and Google Ads. So thanks for your time and we wish you well.

Richard Conduit:

Thank you ever so much. I really appreciate it.

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