

Douglas Burdett:

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James Robert Lay:

Greetings and hello, I am James Robert Lay and welcome to the 157th episode of the Banking on Digital Growth podcast. Today's episode is part of the exponential insight series and I'm excited to welcome Douglas Burdett to the show. Douglas is the host of the Marketing Book podcast where he interviews authors of best-selling marketing and sales books. So, if marketing and sales books are your thing, listen to the Marketing Book podcast to get even smarter and I promise that you will continuously increase your knowledge which is exactly what we're going to do together for you today on the Banking on Digital Growth podcast. Welcome to the show, Douglas.

Douglas Burdett:

Good to be here.

James Robert Lay:

Before we get into some of the best books that you've read and you've read a lot, you've had a lot of conversations over the past year, really, going all the way back to 2015 and the insights that you've gained, I just want to start off what is good for you personally or professionally right now?

Douglas Burdett:

Oh, gosh. It's funny, today, I was participating in some sales training that I've been going to for 15 years and they were talking about goals and you look at all these different types of things and I was struck by gratitude. So, a lot of good things financially, health wise, family, dogs, lots that's really good. And I guess over this last year and all the change that has been brought on by the lockdown and so forth, I've, once again, felt a sense of gratitude because there are a lot of people going through some tough times out there in various ways. So, I would say it's all good, yo.

James Robert Lay:

I love it, I love it. And you talk about this idea of looking back at where you've been and being grateful in the present moment. I'm curious about how you got to this present moment. When it comes to the books you've read and the conversations that you've had, what's the story behind the Marketing Book podcast which has been named by LinkedIn as one of the top 10 podcasts that will make you a better marketer? And, by far, Forbes is one of the 11 smart podcasts that will keep you in the know. What inspired you to start this journey going back to 2015 in the first place?

Douglas Burdett:

It's a great question. It's a real personal reason that I'll share with you but I can remember years ago, I met, I think, it was Mark Hunter at a sales conference and he's an author who's been on the show twice. He listens to the podcast of all things. He said, "Are you making money with the podcast?" And I said, "Well, gosh, I don't think that's why I started it," but the reason why I started it and why I continue to do it is that I came from an advertising background, I worked at these enormous ad agencies in New York starting in the 1980s then, ultimately, started my own firm 20 years ago and it was very much advertising.

Douglas Burdett:

If there were other things clients needed, we would bolt it on and take care of them but it was advertising and I started to notice things were changing. And, even though I was still chugging along with these advertising clients, I was having to bring website people to client meetings and they were asking me questions about fads like social media and the internet. No, I'm kidding, those aren't fads but I was starting to feel-

James Robert Lay:

That's like the metaverse today, right?

Douglas Burdett:

Right, right, yeah. So, I was starting to feel a little bit like I was growing dinosaur scales, I was starting to feel a little more irrelevant. So, you think about an ad guy and that had been my whole world. Television advertising, all kinds of other advertising and I loved it. And so, it really bothered me a lot. It bothered me more than most people this feeling of irrelevancy, I was too young and immature to retire, I'm still immature but I went back to doing what I had done when I got out of the army and I went to grad school and I just started looking at all these different books and looking at different careers.

Douglas Burdett:

And I didn't quite know where things were going and I stumbled upon an early edition of David Meerman Scott's book, *The New Rules of Marketing and PR*, and it was a cloud parting, eureka moment and I said, "Ah, that's where it's going." I felt like I got a second bite at the career apple and I pivoted my business to digital and we buy hardly any advertising for clients now and I didn't stop reading the books at that point. I kept reading them because it so frightened me, it so bothered me that I felt so out of touch.

Douglas Burdett:

And so, I continued reading what I thought were the latest books and I realized I've got to get back to continuous learning. And so, I always like listening to podcasts, particularly marketing podcasts, and I guess my favorite thing was listening to authors of books being interviewed. So, I thought, "Maybe I should try this podcasting thing. I've read so many of these books and I've met a lot of these authors." I looked on GoDaddy and [marketingbookpodcast.com](http://marketingbookpodcast.com) was available so I took that as a sign from on high and my very first guest was David Meerman Scott.

Douglas Burdett:

I started this podcast in the beginning of 2015 and, every Friday since then, I publish an interview with the author of a new marketing or sales book. And what happened was, I had read about the first 10 already and then, I got to about the 11th book and I realized, "Wait a minute, I'm actually going to have to read every one of these books on this show." And it was like that feeling when you miss the turn off on the interstate-

James Robert Lay:

Right.

Douglas Burdett:

... and you realize you're going to be driving for a while before you can do anything about it but it's just one book a week and I set up to do that and it's just been enormously helpful. And I feel like, if I'm continuously learning, that I'm not so much drifted at sea and then it's been able to help clients and it's helped me but then, the thing that really sustains me is, almost every day, from around the world, I hear from listeners who I've never heard from before and they say, "Hey, I've been listening to your show for a

couple of years." Even guys like James Robert Lay and they say, "Hey, I've been listening to your show for a while and it's really helpful. It helped me get a promotion." Or, "I listened to every one of them," and I'm just thinking, "Why, my goodness. Nothing's better than knowing that you're helping someone."

James Robert Lay:  
Absolutely.

Douglas Burdett:  
So, that's why I do the podcast and that's why I continue to do it. And also, the other thing is, we're both friends with David C. Baker who's the author of the Business of Expertise and, when I interviewed him a few years ago, as you know, he is a member of Mensa-

James Robert Lay:  
Yes.

Douglas Burdett:  
... which is the highest IQ people. In the beginning of that interview, I said, "When you walk into a room, any room, it's very likely you're the smartest person in the room." And I said, "I have never ever felt that way." The more that I learn, the more I realized I have more to learn and I just never have felt like the smartest guy in the room and I've worked with a lot of really, really smart folks. So, there's a saying that the more you learn, the more you realize you still have yet to learn. So, that's the groove I'm in.

James Robert Lay:  
Absolutely and, as you're unpacking some of that, thoughts are just flooding my mind. I can't help but think about [Jim Rouse 00:09:01] and Jim talks about how he has undergone this continuous transformation to stay relevant, he's had multiple versions. And, even coming back to David Baker, I pulled up something that David recently wrote, he said, "My own biggest fears in financial ruin of any kind, it's irrelevance." So, David defines success as always learning, always improving, "And if I go down still learning, I'll be able to live with it." And I think that's-

Douglas Burdett:  
Yes, I saw that. That's great, yeah.

James Robert Lay:  
And I think that's where, sometimes, we're going to be the teacher, we're going to be the guide. Other times, we're going to be the student but, in either experience, there's always something to be gained to make us and others around us even better. And I'm thinking, now, as you're unpacking some of this, it's almost your podcast has been a forcing function for you to continue to learn, to gain knowledge and I can't help but think of one CEO at a bank that we have coached and have advised his team over the last, probably, 12 months, 14 months more or less.

James Robert Lay:  
And I know, for him, he reads a book every week like yourself and I can see the CEO also starting a podcast as a way to communicate internally, because they have about 1000 employees, or externally, they've got about 80 branches as a way just to transfer knowledge, expertise, build trust, relevance, all of this comes back into play. I'm a big believer that the personal brand of an individual has the potential in a digital world to be just as important as, say, the corporate brand as a way to build trust because people do business with people.

James Robert Lay:

What have been the biggest lessons that you've learned on your podcast journey and we'll move from here in a bit to get into some of the conversations that you've had. But this is just fascinating, what you just downloaded and I'm thinking about one particular banker and maybe a couple more that I've had conversations with who are big readers themselves of taking what you're doing and applying it to the banking space and their little communities. What have been the biggest lessons that you've learned and how have you stayed committed to something like this over a period of time to when, I think, that others it's easy to fall off the trail?

Douglas Burdett:

Well, it is a forcing function, it's like having a workout partner where you know you're going to meet at 6:00 a.m. at the gym or whatever or running friends, you don't want to let them down.

James Robert Lay:

Right.

Douglas Burdett:

So, there's that and I also have a lot of fun doing it. So, in lieu of a midlife crisis, I started performing stand-up comedy. I'm all better now, thank you. But actually, as I'm reading these books, I'm actually writing jokes in the margins that I could tell during the interviews just because I love doing that. So, it's a lot of fun but it's funny you mentioned that about banking and, obviously, your audience is really keen on that and financial services. I went to a Christmas party recently with a client and I ran into some banker friends and I was reminded how they have all probably worked for, at least, 15 different banking brands. I'll say, "Now, where are you?" And I'll say, "Are you at such and such a bank?" And he goes, "No, that was three banks ago." And it's not because they were jumping ship all the time, it's the banks kept getting acquired.

James Robert Lay:

Correct.

Douglas Burdett:

And then, at the same time, I have this other friend who, he and two other bankers, they all seem to move together and they had a growing, the commercial lenders, growing book of business.

James Robert Lay:

Yes.

Douglas Burdett:

And I think some of the banks they've worked for aren't even around anymore but they are. And that's why I think that in this particular line of work, your personal brand is even more important because you really can't rely on your bank to still be around, it might be acquired. I ran into another guy at another Christmas party, you should get an impression I party a lot, but I was at another party and I ran into this former banker of mine and I said, "Are you with that financial" ... He and some other guys went off and started this advisory company with Wells Fargo and then they left them and started their own all by themselves and I was just thinking, "Of course you have."

Douglas Burdett:

You just keep moving around and I think the personal brand is really important. And there have been a few books on the show about building your personal brand and one of them is by Dorie Clark. I've

interviewed her four times and her book is called Stand Out. Her first one, she's written, really, a trilogy but now she's written four but the first one was called Reinventing You which is a great book about somebody that needs to reinvent themselves. She was a journalist and was fired on Monday, September 10th, 2001.

James Robert Lay:  
Oh, wow.

Douglas Burdett:

The next day was 9-11 and she has ultimately become a paragon of reinvention becoming this author and expert. And then she wrote a book called Stand Out which is very much about what we're talking about, building your brand, becoming known for something and then the third one was called Entrepreneurial You where she writes about how to monetize that. I think Stand Out is a great one. There's another great book by Mark Schaefer who I've interviewed seven times on the Marketing Book podcast and he wrote a book called Known and it was just brilliant.

Douglas Burdett:

So, those are two books that I think would be very helpful. And the one thing that I don't want to hear anyone listening to this who's in financial services cop out and say, and I have a feeling if they're listening to this podcast, they wouldn't say this but they'd say, "Oh, no, I can't build my brand. I'm in a highly regulated industry." Nonsense, that is an excuse. You tell me but there are people in pharma, there are people in financial services, there are people in other highly regulated industries who are able to build their own brands and become known as an expert. And, ultimately, you become the kind of employee that every CEO wants and can't afford to lose.

James Robert Lay:

As you were going through that, Marcus Sheraton, who we were talking about before we hit record, he came over and addressed that same exact concern in episode number 83. This idea of don't let regulation be what stops you from building a personal brand. I literally had this conversation with Paul Long who is a commercial lender and he is doing some of the stuff and he just doesn't talk about the banking side but he talks about the expertise which, back to David Baker, the Business of Expertise is a great book for the dear listener to really look at how to build around this expertise.

James Robert Lay:

And, back to your point on Mark Schaefer, Mark Schaefer, had a conversation with him in episode number 98 about the most human company wins. And so, I'm right there with you. There's so much potential to learn from just these conversations that we're having, you and I, and don't let fear hold you back from achieving your full potential because I think, as a banker, whether you're in the marketing side, the sell side, the leadership side, you have knowledge, you have expertise that can truly transform someone's life to help them achieve their full potential, to move them beyond financial stress towards a bigger, better, brighter future.

James Robert Lay:

And, you're almost doing the world a disservice by letting your own fear stand in the way and, as a natural result, growth will come from that. Speaking of key trends and patterns that you're seeing here from conversations, and you've already referenced a couple of good books around this idea of the personal brand, maybe let's move up to a macro level. Because I think as of today's recording, you've had 361 conversations of your own with authors and the books that you've read. What might be some of the

top three most powerful ideas, insights that you've been able to package up for a marketer, for someone in sales to help them grow?

Douglas Burdett:

You ever heard the expression history doesn't repeat itself but it rhymes?

James Robert Lay:

Yup.

Douglas Burdett:

There are trends that I see over and over. So, I start to do this thing that David Baker, David Baker on the brain, it was-

James Robert Lay:

Pattern matching.

Douglas Burdett:

Pattern matching, yes. Damn, it's like you and I are brothers from another mother. We were separated at birth here. Well, before I get to those three, let me mention there is something that will possibly hurt a lot of feelings of your audience and I hope you don't lose them because of what I'm about to say.

James Robert Lay:

Let me put your mind at ease with this because one of the things I always talk about, I call them the three T's for transformation. And there's so much hype around digital transformation and I believe, personally, human transformation must precede digital transformation. In fact, because we lack human transformation, that's one of the reasons that digital transformation fails, historically, 60 to 85% of the time because it's not the technology that fails, it's the people. And it's not that people are failures, it's just our ability to deal with change at the pace that it's been occurring and will continue to occur, it's where some of the challenges are. So, the very first T of transformation is just telling the truth. Telling the truth about where you've been, where you're at and where you could go next. And it's not that we're here to hurt people's feelings, if we don't tell the truth, we will not transform, we will not become even better, we cannot grow from good to great if we don't tell the truth. So, that's me putting your mind at ease, Douglas.

Douglas Burdett:

So, what you're saying is your audience can handle the truth?

James Robert Lay:

They can handle the truth and, if they can't handle the truth, well, then we might lose a thousand here or there but we'll make them up somewhere else.

Douglas Burdett:

Yeah. Oh, I'm full of book recommendations. A great book in digital transformation is Howard Tiersky's Winning Digital Customers. Really, really well done. So, let me talk about the problem, though, and that is marketers have an image problem.

James Robert Lay:

Oh, yes.

Douglas Burdett:

And it may not even be accurate or true, but there is a widespread perception of marketers as being arts and crafts party planners who work in the make it pretty department. And that is born of ignorance but it doesn't really matter because perception is reality and there's just so much misunderstanding and not really understanding what marketing do. Particularly all the aspects of modern marketing and how it's gone from, it used to be very much about the promotion of something, now, it's much more about those first three Ps, product, price and position or distribution. But there's been a number of books that talk about how there's a very small number of people on boards of directors with marketing backgrounds, a lot of CEOs don't come up through marketing and they're not really very familiar.

Douglas Burdett:

And there was a study by Fournaise Group several years ago about perceptions of marketers by CEOs and 80% of CEOs do not trust their marketers, they're CMOs. And what that meant was, it didn't mean that CEOs wouldn't have the CMOs watch their children or house sit for them, it meant that they did not trust that marketers understood the financial realities of the business they were working for and that's just a real indictment and I've seen it over and over again. Salespeople are often thinking the same thing. So, there are a number of books, again, on the show that talk about this thing. So, we've set the stage, the conflict of the story, there we are. It's like if you are a fan of a particular sports team and you meet someone from their rival, you just have this perception of people-

James Robert Lay:

Yes.

Douglas Burdett:

... and it's not necessarily accurate but that's just the way you might feel. So-

James Robert Lay:

Well-

Douglas Burdett:

... there-

James Robert Lay:

... we definitely are brothers from a different mother because we're thinking the same exact thing. And, even in *Baking on Digital Growth*, I wrote about the problem for marketers is they're viewed as either, A, glorified in house kinkos or, worse, kids that just play with paint and crayons. So, I love how you're articulating this because it is so true. You talk about the board of directors problem, not many marketers there are CEOs, they typically come up in the banking space or a credit union. They come up through the CFO route or the finance route or the lending route, they don't have a marketing perspective. So, we're in 100% agreement with the problem here.

Douglas Burdett:

Yeah. So, the reason I say that is not to upset people and I'm sure your audience isn't upset but just always be mindful of that. Always be mindful of that. It's like people who've gone to certain schools. For instance, I was an Army officer at one time and I didn't go to West Point but I had a lot of friends that went to West Point and most of them were really careful about not talking about that.

James Robert Lay:

Right.

Douglas Burdett:

Because not everyone had that opportunity and it was misunderstood and they just were sensitive to that, so I'm saying the same thing with marketers. So, there are three things out of, gosh, a hundred that we could talk about but the three that I wanted to mention were focusing on your company goals and your customer and continuous learning can dramatically increase a marketer's impact and influence. So, let me unpack those three things as the kids say. So, company goals, I speak to a lot of marketers and they are not able to tell me what their company goals are. And I think they've got their heads down, they're working hard but they're, really, almost 100% focused on activity and-

James Robert Lay:

The doing.

Douglas Burdett:

The doing. Yeah, the execution of it.

James Robert Lay:

Yup.

Douglas Burdett:

And there was a book on the show a while back called Marketing Flexology by Engelina Jaspers and it was a beautifully written book, only 150 pages and I'm the only guy that keeps track of how long each book is because I read each one. But it was really beautifully done and she looked back over a, gosh, probably a 40 plus year marketing career and she identified the things that the most successful marketers always seem to have and she also looked at what the failures all had, so I would recommend that to your audience. And one of the things is what she called a company first mindset. Just over and over and over again, she saw that the most successful marketers understood what the company was trying to accomplish and she joked that you can't build a marketing career working for an insolvent company.

James Robert Lay:

Right.

Douglas Burdett:

So, if you're only worried about your department, your headcount, your budget without understanding how that's connected to what the company's doing, you will fail. So, when we talk about a company first mindset, what most specifically that means is something that was talked about in another book called The 12 Powers of a Marketing Leader by Barta and Barwise which is a massive study of marketers and the people who work for them and the people who hire them and so forth. And, back to the thing I said earlier, about only 20% of CEOs trusted that their marketers understood the financial realities. In their book, they said the number one way to solve this problem, of course it's not easy, but you get in the revenue camp, get in the revenue. That 20% of marketers, they are in the revenue camp and it means that they are, ideally, able to link what they're doing to revenue-

James Robert Lay:

Right.

Douglas Burdett:

... which is hard to do but, even if you can't do that initially, there are certain things you can do to better anchor your activity with what the company is trying to accomplish and one of them is to ... This is another one where, I know you have a very well-behaved, very professional audience, but one is I don't want to hear you say you can't build your brand in a highly regulated industry. And the other one is, if a marketer says, "Well, I was never told this information," get out, you're on the wrong line of work. So, you may not be told this information but you need to go find out.

James Robert Lay:  
Correct.

Douglas Burdett:  
Okay? What are our company financial goals? If you're a marketer and you don't know that, well, start a journey of finding that out, you will immediately separate yourself from the rest of your organization. Now, I think people in your audience probably have a better idea of that because they're financial organizations but, still, what are our company sales goals? Who is our most profitable customer? There was an entire book on the show about anchoring your marketing to finding out where are your most profitable customers because way too many companies are hemorrhaging money going after customers they're not profitable.

James Robert Lay:  
You'd be surprised. And I've done some episodes around this, some solo shows just with my own personal thinking of, for example, lifetime value.

Douglas Burdett:  
Yeah.

James Robert Lay:  
What's the lifetime value of a retail consumer account? What's the lifetime value of a commercial account? What's the lifetime value of an auto or mortgage? That was actually chapter 12 in Banking on Digital Growth because, if we can connect those dots, now, we're back to your point we are getting into the revenue camp and that's how we transform marketing from being viewed as a cost center to a growth center because we're able to connect the doing with the actual results that are informed by the thinking, back to your point, on company strategy.

Douglas Burdett:  
Right and you're a moving target when you're a marketer and people are always saying why are you doing this, why are you doing that activity? Well, what you don't want to have to say is, "Well, that's what we were told to do." I can understand why you would say that but, if you can say, "Well, we were told to take that hill," to use a military term.

James Robert Lay:  
Correct.

Douglas Burdett:  
"So, this is how what we're doing here is going to help you take that hill." That's very helpful and it helps you to advocate for more budget but it also lends clarity to what you're trying to do because, otherwise, if you don't have that direction, you're committing random acts of marketing and those are deadly. And, back to the military thing, the joke I like to tell sometimes when I'm giving talks is, I was an artillery officer for a few years after college overseas and I'll say, "What are the most important things for

artillery? The big guns, the cannons, the howitzers." And people will say things. "Well, ammo, gunpowder, water, fuel, food, training," and all those things are really important. But the most important thing to the artillery is a target.

James Robert Lay:  
Yeah.

Douglas Burdett:  
Without a target, you are completely worthless.

James Robert Lay:  
Very true.

Douglas Burdett:  
And so, maybe that background I had is what makes me want to find out what are we trying to accomplish here, what hill are we trying to take? So, the first one is to understand more about what your company is doing and I can almost guarantee, if you as a marketer are going off and asking your organization, maybe it hasn't been told to you but you're trying to infer what the financial goals are, they will start to see you as a different kind of person, you'll be considered more as a business.

Douglas Burdett:  
So, the first one is understanding what the company is trying to accomplish and I think baked into that is this thing called marketing leadership. And what I mean by that is not charging up a hill with a platoon but you are quietly walking the halls, you're constantly teaching, you're listening for problems and then you're helping people achieve them. They don't necessarily know what you do and. We were talking about the expertise that a lot of your audience has, a lot of people will say, "Oh, but everybody knows that." No, they don't.

James Robert Lay:  
Yes.

Douglas Burdett:  
Do not assume that they know what you know but, more importantly, people appreciate that and you will start to get more of a place at the table. So, let me go to the other two quickly because I know we're pressed for time here. The second thing I talked about was the customer. Be the customer expert, okay? And just a real quick story, there's a listener I have in New Zealand who contacted me some years back and he said, "I used to work in marketing," and he [inaudible 00:32:20] something else, I can't recall what it was. "I think I want to get back into a marketing role and I've been listening to a lot of your podcasts and I'm actually interviewing at this company and I've been able to talk about some of things you've talked about on your podcast and I really appreciate that." And I said, "Wow." He's a pretty sharp guy like a lot of our listeners but he later came back to me and said, "Hey, I got that job."

Douglas Burdett:  
That's great and you're always telling your listeners are there any books you can recommend to contact you?" He's working for some engineering company related to water filtration, some B2B technical thing. He goes, "Is there a book I could read about that that you know of?" And I said, "Well, I'm afraid I'm stumped there. I don't know about that particular area and I'm sure there is quite a bit you can learn about and you should learn about your products. But you've got a lot of engineers working for your company, a lot of experts and they're probably going to forget more about your product and your

technology than you're going to be able to learn there. Why don't you become the expert on your customer?" And I recommended a book that he read called Buyer Personas by Adele Revella.

James Robert Lay:

Yes.

Douglas Burdett:

And we could talk about that and I think I pointed him to a couple other resources and he said thanks. And then again, I don't know, four, six months later, he contacts me again and he said, "I did what was in that book, my goodness, I can't believe it. When I'm talking about the customer, everyone's quiet. They're all listening to me even the salespeople and the engineers. I have a seat at the table now."

James Robert Lay:

Yes.

Douglas Burdett:

"I'm Mr. Customer expert." And so, he said, "It worked, it worked." So, my point is, the more that the marketer can be the expert on the customer, it's a major source of leverage and strength and expertise. And when I say that, it doesn't mean go ask your salespeople or your commercial lenders or whatever. There have been book after book and I can recommend lots of them to your audience. Basically, you've got to go talk to your customers.

James Robert Lay:

Yes.

Douglas Burdett:

Now, it doesn't mean sit down and ask them what kind of barbecue sauce they like. You're in Houston, so I had to say that. There's certain insights you want to get but it doesn't take that many to start to understand where the friction is in their life, what irritates them, what they like, what their expectations are and there have been a number of studies over the years that I've read about in these books, there was one by Bain where they looked at 362 companies and they asked the executives at the company what percentage thought that they were providing a good customer experience. And I think it was 82% said, "Yeah, we think we're having a good customer experience." Well, then, what Bain did was they went and interviewed customers of those companies. Only 8%-

James Robert Lay:

Yes.

Douglas Burdett:

... of customers said they were getting a good customer experience, so there's a big gap there. Let's say you're working for a bank or credit union and you say, "What does our customer want?" I don't want to hear people say, "Oh, they want mobile banking." No, "They want a lower credit card rate." No, no, no, no, no. Go past that, go way past that. Understand what their latent anxieties and desires are, what are they worried about and there's a lot of great resources out there. But if you can become the customer expert, you will have a lot of power, you will be doing your company well and there's just been book after book on the show that talk about how companies that have the deepest insights into their customers always win. And, you don't have to be an expert, you just have to understand your customers a little bit more than your competition.

James Robert Lay:

Yes.

Douglas Burdett:

And when you demonstrate that in the sales process and in the content you're providing and the questions you ask of your customers, it doesn't take much for them to think, "I like these people. They get me, they understand me." So, when I say you focus on your company goals, understand what they are and then understand your customer and I mean that on an emotional level. And then, the third thing I want to talk about was continuous learning which takes us back to the beginning of this conversation where you and I were talking about continuous learning. And, in that same book I mentioned by Engelina Jaspers, one of the things that she saw the most successful marketers, the trait they had is that they were continuous learners.

Douglas Burdett:

I believe it was a study she quoted in the book about something Korn Ferry had done 40 or 50 years ago where they analyzed all these executives. And it might have been only 15 or 20% that were focused on continuous learning but they over indexed dramatically in terms of CEOs.

James Robert Lay:

Right.

Douglas Burdett:

So, when you talk about that CEO who was reading a book each week, you see that a lot. People who are continuous learners tend to go to the highest levels of their businesses.

James Robert Lay:

I literally just facilitated a coaching session for a credit union who's been in our Banking on Digital Growth program for six years now and they started by coming to a workshop that we hosted in Houston. Now all that's gone digital but I made the comment, I said, "You're in the position that you're in because you're committed to continuous learning, you're committed to continuous education, you're not getting stuck in the cave of complacency and it's that new knowledge, that new insight that keep pushing you forward." And you might be in some uncomfortable situations every now and then but just like being the customer expert, I can't help but think of a conversation that I had with Jane Clays and Renee Newman and they are talking about going on a listening tour to, literally, go out and ask questions. I teach what I call the go all in on people because that's part of human centered growth, all being an acronym.

James Robert Lay:

Like Blair ends talks about Blairtopia, I talk about digital growth-topia. And, in digital growth-topia, we have acronyms galore because it's the only way that this ADD mind can actually remember things that I say, so I have to create little rules for myself. But going all in is a great way for continuous learning. Tying it back to being the customer expert where you're really good at asking good questions, you listen to what people are saying and then you can also just learn through observation, not by just what they say but also by what they do in the context of financial services. And you're 100% correct, it's more than just I want to lower rate on the [Oddle 00:39:35]. What are the pains? What are the questions? What are the concerns? And then, on the opposite end of the spectrum, what are people's biggest hopes, what are their dreams and then figuring out a way to communicate a bridge, a path forward to guide them beyond that present state of conflict, confusion, frustration to a bigger, better, brighter future.

James Robert Lay:

And I think that's also what we were talking about to begin with this conversation and it's really neat how it's come full circle, it's almost like a J.J. Abrams production where we've literally gone in a 360 loop, but it is continuous learning. If we can leave the dear listener with something very practical from the role as a marketer, as a sales leader at a bank, at a credit union, at a fintech to continuously learn, to continue to elevate themselves, what would that one thing be? And I'm going to go ahead and throw it out myself and I'd love to get your take on it. My recommendation would be to listen to Marketing Book podcasts because I feel there's a lot of knowledge that they can gain from you very practically. But what would be a recommendation you would have over there on your side?

Douglas Burdett:

And on the Marketing Book podcast, the host is not the brightest bulb on the chandelier but his guests are phenomenal and he has enough sense to just let the guests talk. Kidding aside, I do read the book and so I try to pull out questions that are interesting to me but also to listeners. And also, there's so many myths around this line of work we're in, I try to help people understand what the myths are. So, in terms of continuous learning, we talked about a workout buddy, a running buddy, there are various certifications you can be taking to even put on your LinkedIn profile from outfits like Google, if it's relevant to what your role is, or even HubSpot. We use their software and they have this HubSpot Academy and it's got, gosh, maybe 20 or 30 different certifications and they're not about their product. There's, I think, only a small number. You have to be a customer to have any value there but they teach about all these different things and they're really, really well done.

Douglas Burdett:

I know the folks that work at HubSpot Academy and they analyze, as good marketers do, all those types of things and you can start to build this culture in your organization. Let's say you're a supervisor and you want folks to start learning on a continuous basis, assign them a certification every quarter and take it. You could do a lunch and learn, the Marketing Book podcast does come out every Friday. There are things like that. Like I said, Google that type of thing, you could set up book clubs at your organization. But finally, the HubSpot, one of the co-founders, Brian Halligan, I saw him on one video on one of the certifications, I think, it was a couple years ago and they were asking him ... They're a multi-billion dollar company now and they've been very successful and their culture is very celebrated and they said, "What is the number one thing you look for when you hire people at your marketing and sales software company?" And he called them learn at all. He said, "We look for learn it all." I just thought that was so interesting-

James Robert Lay:

That's great.

Douglas Burdett:

... where he said, "We want people who are continuous learners, who are able to teach themselves figure out what needs to be done to help us or our clients and go do it."

James Robert Lay:

Yes, I love that. Don't be a know it all because we'll never know it all-

Douglas Burdett:

Right, right.

James Robert Lay:

... be a learn it all so that we can, at least, just be 1% better. I think about James Clear and Atomic Habits now with being 1% better than we were the day before. For someone to continue the conversation and, Douglas, thank you for the knowledge and the insight, the wisdom that you've imparted on the dear listener today from all the conversations that you've had over the last, was it, seven years now you're going on, going back to-

Douglas Burdett:  
Gosh.

James Robert Lay:  
... 2015. What's the best way for someone just to connect with you? Once again, you have your podcast but is there another way that they connect and just say hello?

Douglas Burdett:  
Let's connect on LinkedIn. And I say in every episode of my show, I say if there is a specific book recommendation I can make, I don't want you or any of your listeners to have to read 350 to 400 books to find that one or two books that are going to help you right now, please let me help you so I can tell you or any other resource that I know of. Not all aspects of marketing are in books these days. For instance, the latest on a particular social media platform, unless it's about strategy, there's some other places you should go, I'm happy to direct folks there. So, I'm Douglas Burdett on LinkedIn. The one thing I would ask, though, is please include a message when you connect, when you send me an invite and do that for anyone.

James Robert Lay:  
Yes.

Douglas Burdett:  
Because unfortunately, I get a lot of these spammy messages and I had to stop connecting with everyone that was connecting with me, I think it's a lot of bots. I'm not even sure how many carbon-based life forms are actually doing that. So, do that. On Twitter I'm MarketingBook but, otherwise, if you go to [marketingbookpodcast.com](http://marketingbookpodcast.com), that redirects you to the section of our agency website about the podcast.

James Robert Lay:  
Well, thank you. Thank you, Douglas. Connect with Douglas, learn from Douglas and we will all continue to grow together Douglas, this has been a lot of fun. Thank you so much for joining me on another episode of Banking on Digital Growth.

Douglas Burdett:  
My pleasure.

James Robert Lay:  
As always and until next time, be well, do good and make your bed.