



ScratchThat Podcast Episode 12: Started From The Bottom

- Emily: Hey, I'm Emily Chenevert. CEO of the Austin Board of REALTORS®. Real estate is changing. Disruptors are flipping the script before most of us have even had our morning coffee, so we're taking it to the experts to peel back the layers on what you need to know. Scratch what you think you know about this business and listen up for a new version of an old industry. Ryan Rodenbeck isn't any broker committed to brand. He's grown his brokerage and personal brand appeal by sharing relevant and actionable content on a consistent basis. He's not afraid to share what's real about this business. His social media doesn't gleam with pictures of closing tables all day long because we all know that's not how it works when you're in it for the long haul. Join me in our first podcast featuring one of my very own from right here in Austin, Texas. I started by talking with Ryan about how he does content marketing and why it's working for him.
- Ryan: It's been working out good and I think where that came from was I was already doing that for Spyglass Realty, right? I did it for our spyglass Instagram and
- Emily: Spyglass is your brokerage?
- Ryan: Correct.
- Emily: Cause you're an indie broker?
- Ryan: Yep.
- Emily: Got it.
- Ryan: I realized that I wanted to get more into growing in our brand and there needed to be a figurehead of the, of the brand, which was a little bit hard for me to get over myself. And...
- Emily: So, like you were nervous about being in that kind of spotlight or in like felt uncomfortable or ostentatious?

Ryan: Kind of cynical about it, right? And so, my idea was that, you know, I would, it started kind of ramping up, but like the content and the reason I put out so much content and the reason I have so much content is this is the content that I was already doing for my agents anyway.

Emily: Okay. Right. Okay. Yeah.

Ryan: So, if I put something on my Realty Hack Instagram or Realty Hack Facebook and share it to my own personal, nine times out of ten it was either something that I have either planned on doing for my agency anyway. Right. Or it was inspired by something I'd already done for my agents.

Emily: Okay. What does inspire you with the, you have a huge breadth of content. You talk about all kinds of things and I always learn about new stuff from you, which is part of the reason I love following you. But what do you like to talk about most that you feel like yields the most traction in the content you're creating?

Ryan: I like to talk about things that agents can do that are going to set themselves apart because you know, there are so many agents in Austin, so many agents in the nation and there's a lot of them that, that don't have the proper training and they're not at a place where they can learn. So, I am a student of real estate and I having had the advantage of being a top producing agent for the last 10 years. I'm also a student of transactional real estate. So, if I can, if I'm in a situation where I'm using something I learned five years ago, uh, like how to write a multiple offer that would, would win a bid, then I'm going to teach that to my agents. I mean, I literally keep a notebook and write stuff down as a topic. And it can be from an agent coming to me saying, hey, you know, um, I, I use your multiple offer technique. It's not working. So, okay, well, have you used the backup technique? Right. Right. And so then write that down. Well that's a topic.

Emily: You're curating it from the field based on your own experiences on your agents' experiences.

Ryan: Yeah. And what I did with my, my personal brand is that I realized, okay, I've got to get over myself. I'm the figurehead for this company. Um, I'm using this content to get referrals from people outside of the city. I'm using it to attract people that may want talented people that may want to work with me. I need to put this out, not just as something that I'm putting on my own private workplace account. Right. But for the masses,

Emily: How has that transition been from running your own business, trying to create your own transaction volume, then serving your agents. Now trying to kind of elevate your brand, you've become a regular indie contributor, you're serving in a high level of leadership here locally, that transition been difficult to manage.

Ryan: Absolutely. It's been true. It's been difficult but enjoyable. And the reason it's been difficult is because I think we're at 16, 17 agents now. We're starting to see the light at

the end of the tunnel. Yeah. At 10 agents I need to be doing the producing. And I'm still, I'm producing a lot less than I was last year.

Emily: So, you're speaking to that transition that happens when you, you just said, okay, I'm going to go all in on brokerage. Right? Yeah. But from a financial perspective, stability happens at a certain agent count and based on the volume of their transaction.

Ryan: Absolutely. I need them to produce.

Ryan: So, you're riding both, both strains right now.

Ryan: Yeah. It's happening very fast where I'm not having to worry about it, but from, from a standpoint of a lifestyle, I'm doing exactly what I love to do, which is I'm doing marketing, I'm working with my agents on their own personal brand. I'm doing training. Like I love doing that stuff. Yeah. I've fallen out of love with traditional transactions.

Emily: But then that happens, right? Your passions take you in new directions. What are the top takeaways you could give listeners about the kind of content that they should be looking for in their own lives? Like how do you turn your life into influence and other people's worlds?

Ryan: I think you need to be situationally aware of what you're doing that could help someone once you start training your brain to recognize that, that that could be helpful to someone else and then recording it. Right? Just writing it down.

Emily: Like this is a moment that somebody else needs to hear about because somebody else is having this problem if I'm having this problem.

Ryan: Yeah. So, when you think about content on social media, you want to think about what can I put out there that someone did not know they needed to know? Or what then can I put out there? What do they realize that they need to work with me?

Emily: Yeah. So, you're either finding the solution for them or identifying a problem that they didn't even know existed, but, *aha*. That is clearly an issue in my life.

Ryan: Yeah. And it's more than, you know, the sold photo. I'm not mad at that, but I mean, you could go to...

Emily: I'm a little mad at it.

Ryan: I'm a little mad at it, too.

Ryan: I think it's disingenuous, you know? I mean, I think if all I saw was you with sold signs,

Ryan: It's awkward.

Ryan: What I know of our membership and the way that we served 13,000 people is, this business is a lot harder than rolling up at the house with a sold sign.

Ryan: Absolutely. So, delve into that, you know?

Ryan: Yeah, so that's one of the things I love about you is that I have seen you be authentic and really genuine about the struggles in this business as much as you celebrate your successes. And I seems like, I remember even maybe it was end of last year, beginning of this year, you wrote a post about how it had been a hard year and a hard period of time for you. And I think that, I wish that more of your colleagues were saying that and making it acceptable to say, this business is changing. It's evolving and it's a hard one to be in right now. But I'm still really passionate about it.

Ryan: Yeah. And I think that comes from wanting to be authentic. I never want to be someone that I'm putting myself out there to be better than I am. I'm just a normal human being. That works really freaking hard. Yeah. And I think people can relate to the struggles of it. And if you're out there, if everything's rosy all the time; work on the content you're putting out there, but also embrace the struggle as well.

Emily: Yeah. I think people feed on energy and it seems like if so much of your energy is just focused on everything, that's great. You know, I might perceive that you don't need my business cause you're looking just fine from here. Sure. But I like seeing somebody who will put their head down and work hard. Because I know that I do that in my business in different ways.

Ryan: Yeah. And you're attracted to those people 'cause you know that they're going to do a good job for you.

Emily: And I think that's true of a lot of consumers. I think that, I think they want to see your value in a way that is not just rolling up at the closing table, but because so many of your colleagues are having trouble articulating the value of a realtor in the transaction. Yeah. Part of that is that we're leaving glimpses of that experience off the table in our social media and our marketing. We don't talk about how hard it is to get from contract to close.

Ryan: I would say you're more defined by your failures than you are than your successes.

Emily: Yeah. If you're the realtor that can take me through the multiple offers and make that a success. Yeah. That's awesome. Because not everybody's doing that. Yeah.

Ryan: Yeah, and then, any good advice that I give out to anyone is because it's because I failed at that before.

Emily: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. What have been the most important failures in your career? What do you feel like have been the ones that have marked for you how you move forward now?

Ryan: I had a property management company that was an amazing failure.

Emily: Yeah. It's a hard business.

Ryan: It's a hard business. We got 500 doors in three years and went from being an investment specialist to now on basically helping people clean up an apartment because we had to get it done that day.

Emily: Yeah. Yeah.

Ryan: That was a real humbling moment

Emily: because you lost it or because...?

Ryan: Because I knew I had to get out of it. I knew how to get about this and not what I wanted to do. I was wanting to get into sales. I kind of got pushed into this property management piece of it. I was overwhelmed. I worked for three months straight. I mean through the weekends, a group of 15 employees that I had to go into that office and pretend like everything was okay when actually it was not. I think that was like my graduate degree to me, you know? Um, 'cause if you can get through something like that, I feel like you can get through so much more. Yeah.

Emily: How did that shape how you approach risk? Sometimes I think when you've had it all and then you lose it all. Do you just like crawl under a rock and stop accepting risks?

Ryan: No way. No. No

Emily: Yeah, I know you well enough to know that you don't do that.

Ryan: I think I think You're more careful. You know what you're not going to get into. But I've also, I mean I've had moments up to like four years ago where I traveled so much. It was I was working 30 hours a week. I had this referral business that came in and it was a good year and that year it just dried up because I took my foot off the gas.

Emily: You got a little cocky.

Ryan: Yea definitely got a little cocky. I thought my referral business was self-sustaining. I wasn't really working on the brokerage and I said, "I have to get out of this". So literally went into my office, bought some leads, did some expire and withdraw, which was horrible, and make as many calls as it takes to have two valid conversations in a day and two appointments that week. Dug Myself Out of that hole in about two to three months and eased up a little bit enough to where I can focus on, okay, now I need to build a brokerage.

Emily: So fair to say though, that you kind of went back to basics. You took that foot off the gas, it dried up. That's scary, but you go back to what you know when that happens.

Ryan: And I've always what I've known about myself, is that I can always work myself out of any situation, you know, If I get pushed into that corner. Yeah.

Emily: Yeah! Grit. I think that's called grit. What would you tell a new agent in the business about the failure that they should expect? Because this is not easy. Always.

Ryan: I would say if you're a new agent, you make sure that you are going to have a work ethic like crazy, the stuff that you're going to be working on is not going to be the cool stuff. You're going to be calling leads, going to open houses, expanding your network. Second thing is you need to have some kind of mentor that is going to teach you the ropes. I think the third thing is get out there and network with as many top producing agents as possible. And when I say top producing agents, you take that with a grain of salt, right? If you're, if you're just starting, you know, top producing agent is doing four million.

Emily: So, just with people doing business.

Ryan: People doing business.

Emily: You can be with people doing business.

Ryan: Yeah. And like one of the biggest successes in my career has been in conferences. You can learn more about what your competition is doing in another city than you can in your own.

Emily: I think something interesting to you about both your tip about mentors and then in traveling to conferences, all that businesses that I know you to be somebody that that holds onto relationships tightly. And I know you've told me before that if you invest in them properly, they come back to you. My tip to somebody might be that you don't know the relationship that's going to come back to you as big as some of them do. And, so, you have to just embrace them all to some extent.

Ryan: I've always been a big fan of the movie and the book, The Godfather, you know, 'cause Vito Corleone Kinda got his way by helping the neighborhood shops or whatever. For what I have done in my relationships, I would get the cards and you know, people I met at the bar, at the conference that I really liked. We had a good connection and I would keep in touch with them. And that turned into sometimes it's strategic relationships where we're trading, you know, secrets of, of the day. And then the biggest thing it has to turn into is that it's turned into referral. Tell my wife this all the time, gives gain, right? And I do stuff for other people without thinking about the result.

Emily: I love that.

Ryan: But I know that the result will be there.

Emily: I also think that that's just a good way to live generally. Right?

Ryan: Absolutely.

Emily: And then, you know, business is business, but at the end of the day, your brand is who you are and it's your values and how you wear yourself in your business is really how you are yourself in your life.

Ryan: Yeah.

Emily: Well that's an awesome place to stop. Thank you, Ryan, for coming to hang out with me.

Ryan: Yea thanks for having me.

Emily: Hey team. Let's make this a thing. If you like what you heard today, share this episode on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram and tag me at @EmChenevert that's E.M. Chenevert. You can also subscribe to Scratch that on Soundcloud and iTunes and grab show notes at ABoR.com/ScratchThat. Thanks for joining me today. Now, let's go get some stuff done out there.