

Max Irzhak (00:02):

During the pandemic while millions of us turn to social media for a break from reality, my next guest spotted a new trend and an opportunity that was calling his name. Taking a chance on himself. Adamm grabbed his camera and turned it quarantine startup into a digital empire raking in a cool million dollars his first year in business. This is Motivational Mondays. I'm your host, Max Irzhak. And joining us from Los Angeles is the founder of Rapid Launch Media Adamm Miguest. Adamm. Great to have you here.

Adamm Miguest (00:38):

Hey it's great to be here.

Max Irzhak (00:38):

I would love to hear a little bit about your journey before you launched rapid launch media.

Adamm Miguest (00:39):

Uh, long story short, I studied international studies and linguistics at my university, University of Illinois. Uh, my goal ever since I was young, since I was a kid, I've always had a passion for languages. Um, I currently speak nine languages ever since, you know, I was five. I started taking, uh, you know, new languages in class. I started meeting people, uh, who were from different backgrounds and learning as much as I could from them. So that led me to, uh, my major international studies in linguistics. And I always wanted to be, uh, either in the State Department or the CIA. So, uh, that's what I worked for through high school through college. Uh, that was sort of my goal. And when I got my degree from the University of Illinois, I, uh, that was the first thing I did. I took the foreign service officer test, uh, that is a test that, uh, only 25% of people pass on the first try from my understanding.

Adamm Miguest (01:38):

I passed out on the first try, uh, and I really, uh, use that to, you know, get into, get the interview for the CIA. And I actually interviewed for both jobs. I got pretty far along in the process for both of them. And the reason I sort of decided to pull back from that is because they both felt a little bit more like the military than I would have liked. Uh, and so what that made me do is it really made me just start over from scratch. Uh, you know, it's, it's crazy to spend your whole life working towards a goal and, you know, within the span of a couple of weeks, you realize it's not for you. And you know, I've always been, uh, artistic and I've always wanted to be an entrepreneur. And from that point on, I decided I wanted to go full-time toward something involving entertainment, social media, because this was the future.

Adamm Miguest (02:31):

You know, I mean, this was back in around 2017 when I made that decision. Uh, so I started a YouTube channel and at the same time I started a photography career. So while traveling the world, uh, filming some travel videos, all across Europe, all across the United States, uh, you know, I was able to pick up a lot of sponsors. Uh, I was, uh, sponsored by Best Western by The Four Seasons Hotel across Europe. And, uh, just some different countries, I was able to get a lot of the music festivals, a lot of the cool events that were happening to give me a media pass. And that really taught me how to reach out to these large corporations, how to pitch them and how to really explain what I was doing and a quick, fast way to get the people who I wanted to be interested in, what I was doing, interested.

Adamm Miguest (03:20):

And at the same time I was building my photography skills. I was shooting with influencers around the world. I was shooting with models around the world, and it really helped me hone my skills for photo and video. So fast forward from that, you know, we get to, uh, 20 at the end of 2019 and I'm starting to see this whole TikTok trend really blow up. Uh, I was invited to, uh, what is now known as the hype house about a month before they officially launched. And I mean, this is the house that launched people like Charlie Demilio, Addison Rae, some of the biggest names in entertainment right now. And, you know, I was lucky enough to be able to shoot with a lot of the top creators, uh, you know, people like Bryce hall, Taylor holder and Nick Austin. And that really, uh, you know, that really culminated those previous three years and the skills that I had amassed to really be able to shoot with the top people and people saying, wow, your work is really good.

Adamm Miguest (04:22):

You know, it, it went from me, you know, this being a huge opportunity, uh, shooting with these people that had millions of followers to like the week after, after, uh, those influencers posted. I had dozens of influencers with millions of followers, like DM-ing me. So it was sort of like an overnight thing where like, wow, like people really appreciate my work. Uh, and you

know, it really, um, validated what I've been doing the previous couple of years. Uh, and what that led to is, uh, you know, within the span of just the first part of 2020, I had every major influencer for my phone book. I had a ton of, uh, musicians also who wanted to do photography with me, uh, you know, reaching out, had them in my phone book. And what I realized is that TikTok was becoming the main way to push music.

Adamm Miguest ([05:10](#)):

And that was when a light bulb went off. I was like, there needs to be a broker in between these, you know, the record labels and musicians. They don't trust influencers to get the job done when they say they will. And influencers don't really, uh, just trust random people. DM-ing them saying, like, do a bunch of work for me and then we'll pay you later. So, uh, that is how Rapid Launch Media was born. Uh, I completely kind of pulled away from photography and I pivoted just because I saw this new, uh, this trend arising. And from that pivot, I started connecting, uh, record labels brands with the influencers that I had, and I realized I can make, you know, money on every single transaction that I did.

Max Irzhak ([05:55](#)):

Of the things that really stands out there is how good you are at knocking down doors and forming those relationships, whether it's with sponsors when you didn't really have a following or with any of these influencers, can you kind of share what your approach is to getting people, to trust you to get those first couple of meetings?

Adamm Miguest ([06:15](#)):

Absolutely. Um, I think you really have to force yourself to be uncomfortable, to learn how to be outgoing. So I think that is my number one. Uh, one of my best qualities is that I'm very outgoing and I actually love to learn about people from different backgrounds and whether, whether it's like an ethnic background where they have a different culture, or whether it's a different business background, I really enjoy learning about that stuff. So I'm the type of person when I travel, you know, I do, I solo travel a lot when I go to Europe. A lot of times, uh, you know, what I realized from studying abroad is when I studied abroad the first time in Barcelona, Spain, I spent a lot of time hanging out with, uh, with, with the Americans on my trip. And I didn't make a lot of friends from Spain.

Adamm Miguest ([07:06](#)):

The next time I did it, I started going out alone every night. Uh, I went out at least the first couple months I was there. I would go out alone and I would, it would force me to be uncomfortable and to reach out to these different people. And I really, I sort of trained myself to get used to that. So that's what I did. Um, when I started getting into the influencer industry, when I moved to LA, it was, I would DM a ton of different influencers, a ton of different people from different backgrounds. And then I would just go out in LA, I would plan these little trips. I would go out to the hotspots and I would just go out and meet people. And it was never me sort of wanting to meet people in a specific, uh, area. It was just like, I'm going to go out.

Adamm Miguest ([07:48](#)):

I'm going to meet people that I've never met. People who are different, who do different things than me. And, uh, you know, over the course of doing that for, you know, a few months, that really just is what helped me take off. So I think you have to be genuine. I think, you know, when you try to target certain people, uh, it comes off disingenuous, uh, or doesn't come off genuine. And, uh, if you really just set your goal to be uncomfortable, meet new people, learn from people around you. That is what will build trust, because people will really see like, oh, this person really wants to know about me. This person really wants to learn. And this person's also really outgoing and approachable.

Max Irzhak ([08:36](#)):

That seems to always be the number one thing that it comes down to is just being naturally curious, right? Whether it's about people or topics when someone is organically asking those questions, because they actually want to know, and they're not just trying to wait for their turn so they can speak, that's when the best conversations happen. And I hear it on this podcast. And over again, that's the secret sauce right there.

Adamm Miguest ([08:58](#)):

Yeah. I think to add to that, I think another thing is always figuring out how to add value to other people. You know, I think a lot of people, uh, start to reach out to, uh, people who are on a higher level than them in terms of business before they're ready. And I think, uh, you know, to give this specific example for me, I think of a lot of photographers whose work isn't there yet, but they'll start, reach out to photographers when they've only been shooting for a couple months and their work is trash.

And so then they get, they get sort of, uh, you know, people can tell that you haven't put in that work. So for 27, you know, from 2016, 2017, all the way to 2019, I really didn't reach out to any big people because I didn't feel like my work was there.

Adamm Miguest (09:48):

So when I started to reach out to the bigger people, I knew my work was at the level where I could bring value to them where I wasn't just going to be some random person like, Hey, let's shoot. Maybe the pictures will suck. Maybe they won't. I knew that the fixers are going to be good. And I knew what I was doing was going to add value. So I always, whenever I initiate a conversation, uh, for business or for collaboration or something, uh, I always want the person I'm reaching out to, to know that this is going to be mutually beneficial for them. And, and I always try to bring value and I want it to be a fair exchange. Uh, and I think you can do fair changes without it being just like, you know, using someone for, for their business, uh, for where they are in the, in their, in their industry, as long as you're giving them value. And, and, and you're genuinely, uh, curious and want to learn more about them and, and work with them, help them. I think that that's a very big recommendation, uh, that I could get.

Max Irzhak (10:49):

We talk a lot on this podcast about recognizing opportunities and seizing them. How do you balance feeling like you're going to miss out versus chasing after the wrong opportunity?

Adamm Miguest (11:02):

Over the past couple of years, I have just got such a huge radar. Um, that I personally, I like everyone everywhere to pitch me everything, because now I know almost immediately from within the first 10 seconds of reading someone's pitch, whether it's BS or not. So, um, I personally like to see everything that's happening and I always like to see what opportunities are out there, because I feel like it's up to us to understand what is, what is, um, BS and what is not. So to answer your question, I think you should look at every opportunity, but I think it's up to you to decide which ones are worth going after. Um, just throw out a few examples. I don't touch anything. That's affiliate marketing. The reason why, especially if it's a new company, the reason why is because they have, they have all the upside.

Adamm Miguest (12:07):

I avoid all projects where the person hiring me has all the upside, because when you're an affiliate marketer, they're essentially saying, Hey, leverage your followers, leverage your connections to try to blow up our brand, to try to increase our revenue. And if we make a ton of money, you'll make a ton of money. But the downside there is you can essentially, you know, you can essentially pitch all your followers, something that's a piece of crap and, you know, they might get off at you and they might not take the next thing that you promote as serious because you pitched something that was sub par. And then the affiliate marketer has no risk whatsoever because they lose no money. They're essentially saying, we're not going to pay you a dime unless you make us a ton of money. And then at that point, you're like, why wouldn't you just leverage your following to promote something that you own a hundred percent. So, um, that's just one quick example. I tell everyone, stay away from anything affiliate marketing. Um, you know, it's different. Like if apple is like, we'll send you a laptop or an iPhone and you put an affiliate marketing link there, that's different obviously. But if it's a new company, if it's, if it's a company that you're even slightly unsure about, I would say, stay away from it.

Max Irzhak (13:26):

If we step back a little bit and not focus so much on this particular field, other than developing that BS meter over time, are there any other kind of quick things you can do to recognize whether it's a good opportunity or whether it's something that you could easily let yourself miss out on?

Adamm Miguest (13:44):

I would say keeping an eye on what the emerging markets are, you know, um, for example, I, I think to it's, it's hard to keep it like super broad. I kind of have to bring it back to like the stuff that I, that I know personally, uh, and, and people can kind of, you know, make their own parallels to this. But, you know, I started to see the rise of TikTok. So, I mean, you know, let's go back to like early 2019, I was starting to see people post these videos. Like it wasn't big, it was a very small subset of people, but I saw people starting to focus, like starting to post these videos on TikTok a little bit more and more as well as with cryptocurrency. That's another, uh, another one I could say, I started to see crypto slowly becoming more and more accepted.

Adamm Miguest (14:36):

I started to see places like Coinbase becoming a safe place to store your money. Um, so I think the way to keep it broad is to just say, you have to, you have to identify these small little groundswells, you know, you have to keep up with the chatter, whether it's like people posting it on Instagram stories, people posting on Twitter, people doing all this. Once you start to see it happening a little bit more and more from people, uh, from a lot of different backgrounds, you start to realize what opportunities are worth going toward. And that is why I went sort of all in on Tik ToK. That is why I'm an avid crypto investor. And I made a ton of really good crypto investments early on, because I started to see that these things were happening. So, uh, you know, it's, it's something like Gary V says, you know, he reads every single comment and it was something I saw. And he said, he reads every single comment on his Instagram, every single comment on Twitter. And he starts to see where you get all these little cross sections of people on different platforms talking about similar things. That's how I know when things are about when things are actually picking up organically and not manufactured. I try to see where people just spend a ton of money on something, and they've manufactured this, uh, virality, as opposed to me starting to see it happen organically.

Max Irzhak (16:02):

During the pandemic, we saw creativity flourish. People were launching a ton of new businesses and making really innovative ideas come to life every single day. I'd love to hear about your experience with launching and growing your agency. What doubts did you have and what surprised you the most?

Adamm Miguest (16:21):

So, for me, I had the doubt of how I have the doubt that, like, I mean, when, when these new fads happen, I mean, you think they could happen overnight, uh, army. You think they could, you think they could go away overnight? So my biggest doubt was starting this agency. I mean, we primarily focus on TikTok. So you got to understand, I started this company in April of 2020, right when the pandemic got really bad and I was in full tinfoil hat. I moved back here with my parents. Like not, you know, not like I had my old place, but I was like, I don't even want to be tempted to go out. Cause I, you know, I was still thinking this virus is going to kill me. Um, so I moved into my parents' third floor. I was wearing masks.

Adamm Miguest (17:07):

I wasn't going to be within six feet of them. So I was thinking like, man, like, I'm going to start this business on TikTok, but it could go away at any time. Because at that point you had Trump trying to ban it. That's when those talks started about getting banned. And then on top of that, um, I think the funniest thing that I tell people is during COVID my company took off because everyone was home and it was, it's a digital company. And so all this, all this content was being produced and everyone was consuming it. I thought I had a full proof company. I was like, nothing can touch it, but then, you know, what happened is, um, George Floyd, the George Floyd incident happened, uh, and that took me completely off guard that shut down my business for a month. I went from doing, I went from doing early stages, like 15, 20 K a month in revenue back down to zero for a month because artists didn't want to drop music while we were in the middle of the national protests for George Floyd.

Adamm Miguest (18:08):

So, um, those were huge doubts, you know, I didn't know whether TikTok was going to get banned. I didn't know whether, uh, the unrest that we were seeing due to, to do to George Floyd, as well as other incidents like Breyonna Taylor was going to make it so that, you know, uh, shut down the industry for months on end. Um, so, uh, that, those are the doubts in terms of what surprised me. Um, I would say those things did surprise me, like the fact that, uh, national unrest somehow connected to the music industry, promoting music on TikTok like it's a jump. You would never think what happened, but, uh, that directly affected my business a hundred percent. Um, what else surprised me is that a lot of these big influencers that you see with millions of followers, they actually aren't making that much money.

Adamm Miguest (19:02):

Um, I think, uh, there's sort of a smoke screen here and in Hollywood or here, just in terms of like the follower counts, you have these people, um, I mean, you have these people with 3 million, 4 million, 5 million followers on Tik TOK and they're broke and, you know, it's just because they don't understand how to monetize. It's like most things it's like, you can be really great at something and you can amass a following, but if you don't understand how to monetize it, uh, you will, you will just end up sorta like swimming in circles. And, um, so I realized that I could get a lot of these big creators who are getting really good engagement for really cheap. And that is one of the reasons my company started to do well and still does well is because I'm always looking for the next big person.

Adamm Miguest ([19:50](#)):

who's getting this really good engagement, but they don't have any, they don't have any managers. They don't have that many opportunities coming towards them. And so I try to bring them a good amount of revenue. You know, I'm never trying to take advantage of a creator, but it's like, there is a point where a creator is starting to blow up and they're starting to get really good engagement, but they have no other opportunities. So I try to find that middle ground where I could come in and get them for a cheaper price that maybe their engagement, uh, says they're worth, but I'm still, you know, giving them enough money based on the opportunities that they have on the table.

Max Irzhak ([20:28](#)):

Considering your entrepreneurial mindset. Do you think people should find a job or create their own job?

Adamm Miguest ([20:36](#)):

I mean, look, it's one of those things where we get into this existential thing of, are you going to say this existential mindset of like, you, you sort of need, like, you need to do these jobs, you know, like you need janitors, you need, you know, they are essential. Um, you know, so it's, it's hard to say that everyone should just be an entrepreneur. I mean, I also don't think everyone's fit for it. You need a certain level of risk. Like I have a relatively high risk tolerance. Um, so I mean, to answer your question, I don't think everyone should be an entrepreneur. I don't think it is for everyone. Um, I think you have to have certain traits. I think you have to have a lot of the innate self motivation that we discussed. I think you need to have a decently high risk tolerance because if you play it too safe, you're gonna, you know, you're going to end up staying at your nine to five forever and never making the jump, or you're going to miss opportunities to pivot.

Adamm Miguest ([21:35](#)):

You know, for example, when I was doing photography, I was pretty comfortable. I was making like 70 K a year and I had a really good photography business that I could have kept going. I could have stayed in Chicago and just kept that going. So it took a lot of risks for me to pivot and move to LA and essentially leave my 70 K a year photography job in Chicago and start in an entirely different, uh, you know, entirely different region and, and start from scratch. But I did that because I knew, I felt internally in the long run, I would make way more money. Uh, and, and I would make way more connections. It would just be a better opportunity for me. So, um, yeah, I think it's really down to that person to look at the traits that they have and ask themselves, do they have a motivation to do this every day? Um, do they have enough, uh, do they feel comfortable taking risks? Do they think that they have good enough people around them to sort of bring in once they start to see a little bit of growth, uh, in the company? And, you know, if you have, I would say if you have those three things, then I would lean towards being an entrepreneur for sure.

Max Irzhak ([22:50](#)):

Cool. One of my favorite quotes that I've heard you say is it's never too early to chase your dreams. I love this because it's the polar opposite of common belief. Can you elaborate a little on why you think this mindset is so powerful?

Adamm Miguest ([23:04](#)):

I think it's powerful because I think everything you do should culminate into what you want to do in the future. Uh, for example, like I said, when I was really really young, I mean, even like pre high school, um, I realized I really love to learn languages and I really love to travel and, and be, you know, do things with different cultures. So it was at that moment, I started to work towards being in the CIA and, and work towards being in the state department. So everything from that point was a small step towards getting my goal. Uh, and it got me, it got me where I want it to be. I, you know, I got it into the interview process with both those agencies and, and, uh, you know, the same thing when I started over from, uh, going towards a social media background, I knew my goal was I wanted to start a company based on social media.

Adamm Miguest ([24:04](#)):

Uh, I wanted to be able to shoot content with creators and now Rapid Launch Media allows me to do all of those things. So when you start, as soon as you have that idea of what you want to do, um, that is the moment you really should start making small goals towards it. You know, it doesn't have to be like, oh, I have to do this next year. I have to do this in the next two years, but you should start taking little small steps that will put you in the right position to, uh, do that. And you know what I am thinking of next, you know, when I'm older, when I'm in my mid to late thirties, I eventually want to run for Congress or, you know, run for the Senate. And so eventually once, uh, I have my company here where I want to, uh, where, where I can run itself and I can step away. That's why, that's what I started doing. I'm going to start going back to Chicago, start, uh, you

know, meeting with local groups, uh, in Chicago and start figuring out what small steps I can start making towards an eventual run for office. And, and I'm thinking about that, you know, five to eight years in advance right now.

Max Irzhak ([25:18](#)):

What's the number one lesson you want people to walk away with? What's some actionable advice?

Adamm Migest ([25:23](#)):

The most actionable advice I can give people is figure out what you want to do and try to be the best. Once I saw that the company had legs, my immediate next thought was, how do I become the best? And I think that if you just strive to be the best, then the money and the opportunities will come. So that's definitely some actionable advice. Like, you know, once I started to see that, uh, you know, I, I would, I would learn from my competition. You know, I, I would hear like these people would just send a bunch of links over, uh, not in a spreadsheet. They wouldn't count the views on the videos, stuff like that. And it was just, it was just sort of lazy. So I was like, I'm going to start using Google docs. I'm going to track all these TikTok links in a spreadsheet.

Adamm Migest ([26:14](#)):

I'm going to, uh, track the data in a graph. I'm going to really, you know, take this to the next level so that when I finally can get a full report and really see everything that we've done on this campaign, and I just started making small little tweaks like that, you know, I would hop on calls with clients. I'd spend an hour on a call with a client just to assure them, you know, that their money is going to be spent well. Um, and so to sum it up, just be the best, see what other people are doing and whatever they're not doing, do it, like whatever they, whatever they're not doing that they should be doing, or you feel that they should be doing, add that to your repertoire. And slowly clients will start to see the difference. Um, I had a client who said I had interviewed 10 different agencies, similar to Rapid Launch Media, it's usually just people saying that they'll connect them with influencers with no real, uh, process. And they said you were the best one. You spend the most time talking. You're the most knowledgeable. You said, you're going to give us a report. And these are things that over the course of the year, I've slowly made Rapid Launch Media the best in the industry. And that is what brings me to the clients that come in.

Max Irzhak ([27:25](#)):

If people want to learn more about you, where can they follow you?

Adamm Migest ([27:29](#)):

So, uh, definitely Instagram, everything is on my Instagram. Uh, it's Adamm — it's and then Adamm with two M's, uh, I have a link to my Rapid Launch Media page on there, which, uh, same thing, rapidlaunchmedia.com. Uh, I also have an Instagram for that. And then, uh, my handle on TikTok is exactly the same.

Max Irzhak ([27:58](#)):

Awesome Adamm, it's amazing to see what you've accomplished so far. You're a powerful reminder to all of our listeners that determination and grit are a timeless skill and that you're never too early to chase your dreams.

Adamm Migest ([28:11](#)):

It is never too early. I hope, uh, everyone who listens to this, like I hope this is motivation enough for them to, uh, whatever they want to start working on. Like start now start ASAP. I think to end, I will say this, something that I, I meant to say earlier is people are afraid to start. I think people, uh, I think they call it, uh, like project paralysis. Like people are just afraid to start projects because they think they're going to fail. Uh, and you know, the best advice is just to start, whether you start and fail every time —every time you fail, like I've, I've worked on a ton of different companies that didn't get to where rapid launch media is, but I learned something from all of them and um, and I made some really cool connections while I'm doing those other projects. So just start whatever you do, whatever you want to do just today, start!