

# Web Domination

20 MASTERS OF THE WEB REVEAL EVERYTHING  
YOU NEED TO KNOW TO CREATE A SUCCESSFUL  
COMPANY ONLINE



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# INCOME DIARY

HOW PROS MAKE MONEY ONLINE.

# Web Domination

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20 Masters of the Web Reveal Everything  
You Need to Know to Create a Successful  
Company Online



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20 Masters of the Web Reveal Everything You Need to Know to Create a Successful Company Online

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[Web Domination: 20 Masters of the Web Reveal Everything You need to Know to Create a Successful Company Online](#)

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# Introduction

## **WHAT'S THE VALUE OF A CONVERSATION?**

The answer depends on what you make of it. A conversation with friends may be worth a few laughs. A conversation with one of the world's most successful online entrepreneurs... well, that could be worth thousands of dollars in extra revenue per year.

We sat down with not one, but 20 online entrepreneurs and asked them directly about their path to success. How did they start? Exactly what steps did they take? What tools accelerated their progress?

Each entrepreneur is a master of a different field (website design, SEO, social media, webinars, or building successful companies) and so each of these interviews functions as a course in those areas. Altogether, this ebook is an all-encompassing resource – a faithful companion on anyone's online entrepreneurial journey.

We don't recommend you read it cover to cover. Start with the chapters that will help you on your entrepreneurial journey today. Just know that from now on, you have 20 masters of the web in your pocket – and you can get their advice whenever you like.

# Part 1:

# Making a Website

## DESIGNING AWESOME WEBSITES

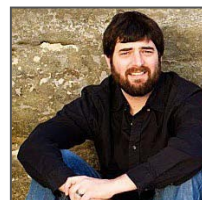


*“It doesn’t necessarily have to look good. As long as it solves the problem and the person can find what they’re looking for in an easy manner, then that generally defines good web design.”*

**Jacob Cass, [JUSTcreative.com](http://JUSTcreative.com)**

## MANAGING A MEMBERSHIP

*“You’ve got to figure out what you can teach these people that they’re willing to pay for. There’s a lot of information out there for free, so you’ve got to figure out what makes your information different.”*



**Matt Wolfe, [BusinessAndBlogs.com](http://BusinessAndBlogs.com)**

## OUTSOURCING YOUR WORK



*“I highly recommend getting your business to outsource as quickly as possible and set up the right systems in place. If you’re not there, then you’re going to be behind the game.”*

**Tyrone Shum, [OutsourcingLive.com](http://OutsourcingLive.com)**

# Designing Awesome Websites

with Jacob Cass

**J**acob Cass first got his first taste for graphic design as a young teenager, editing photos of his high school friends and putting up them online.

At the age of 16, he got his first job as a freelance graphic designer. In November 2007, he started a blog dedicated to design and creativity, [JUST Creative](#). Two more successful websites followed: [Logo Designer Blog](#) and [Logo of the Day](#).



Jacob went on to earn a degree in Visual Communication and received a job offer from a New York City design firm.

## Jacob Cass Today

Now 24 years old, Jacob continues to create award-winning design, both as a freelancer and for [Ammirati](#) (a firm whose clients include Powerade, Vitamin Water, and Jerry Seinfeld).

## WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

- The Design Process
- The Designer's Toolkit
- What Makes Good Design
- Designing to Convert
- Colors & Branding
- Working with Designers
- Web Design Trends



# THE DESIGN PROCESS

## Get a Client

The first part of the design process is getting the client. That's probably the hardest bit: marketing yourself, getting a potential client, and then getting the contract signed and the website underway.

## The Design Process

As for the design process, it depends on the size and the scope of the website. If you're working on a multi-million dollar website, you're going to have a huge team working on it, however for the sake of this conversation let's talk about small to mid-sized websites.

### *Learn More about the Project*

For that process to begin, you get a brief from a client, which is formed by questionnaires, meetings, and discussions. After that, you can start researching. Then, you can start building out wireframes, which is kind of like blueprints for a website design. You start building the structure of the website.

### *Make a Rough Draft*

If you have the wireframes ready and you know the goals of the website, you can fire up Photoshop or whatever tool you use to build the website. I personally use Photoshop.

If you have the wireframes, you should understand what content has to be on the page. So, generally you start putting the content on the page and you can start placing the building blocks. For example, you can use plain rectangles to roughly layout where you want content to go, along with the approximate size and the spacing on the screen.

I always use a grid system and the preference for me is the 960 grid, which I use for most of my designs. I'm pretty familiar with it, so that's my tool of choice. The 960 grid is a size which is divisible by a load of numbers. You can get it from [960.gs](http://960.gs).

After you've got that knuckled down and you've figured out the goals of the website, you can start designing. You will most probably go through a number of phases, from rough concepts to polished designs.

## ***Make a Polished Site***

From there, you can start to layout and add a visual look and feel to the site.

Some designers, such as myself, like to work on more polished presentations. I do more polished concepts and then send them through. But everyone works in different ways.

## ***Code It***

I personally don't do much coding as I don't enjoy it as much as design. I know the basics, but I leave the heavy development to the professionals.

## **How Long Does it Take?**

It depends on the budget, the scope, and the deadline.

The agency I am at the moment has very fast turnarounds. Sometimes I'll get eight hours to work on a design and will have to send it over to them, just to get some feedback. Then we can revise it as needed.

I've also been at agencies where you will get two to six weeks to work on a number of concepts. Then we send it over and figure out which direction to take. So, it really depends.

## **Managing Expectations from Clients**

A good way to make sure that clients understand the concepts aren't representative of the final product is to have the wireframes done in a simple sketch form, whether if it's on paper or a sketch style on screen. If you send that over, they will know it's not refined.

But, if you send something that's in the middle, it can get confusing. The client may think, "Will the final product look like this?"

So, if you go one way or the other – all-refined or all-sketch – I generally find that works pretty well.

# THE DESIGNER'S TOOLKIT

## Photoshop & Illustrator

I use Adobe Photoshop pretty much the whole time and have gotten very quick at it, so that's my preference. I use Adobe Illustrator for vector graphics. Photoshop and Illustrator are my main tools, as well as pen and paper.

### *Learning Photoshop*

I started with Photoshop when I was in high school. When I was working on my photography website, I did a lot of photo collages, morphing, and all of that fun stuff. I started using it that way and eventually got more into design for solving problems, rather than just mucking around.

I wouldn't recommend doing it like that straight off the bat, because it's pretty hard to learn like that. Tutorials are a good way to learn. There are tons of tutorials on the web now, and that's a much better way to learn. But you also learn from fiddling with the tools and exploring the program. You get to learn the ins and outs and ways to quicken your workflow.

# WEB DESIGN STRATEGY

## What Defines Good Web Design?

The word 'good' is very subjective. But I would say that if the design solves the problem of why you created the website in the first place, then it's a good web design.

It doesn't necessarily have to look good. As long as it solves the problem and the person can find what they're looking for in an easy manner, then that generally defines good web design.

## Are there General Rules to Web Design?

Yes and no. There are obviously some principles of design, but I don't think these principles apply just to web design. There are certain constraints you must work within so knowledge of this is crucial, however rules are made to be broken.

As long as it solves the goals of the websites purpose, I think there are no rules.

## Complex or Simple?

I like simplicity but in some cases, complexity may suit what they're trying to convey. As long as the user can navigate easily, quickly, and find the information they need, then that's the website working.

## The Role of Personal Design Style

Most designers, whether they know it not, have a way of working and a "look or style" to their work. As an example, some designers may have a very illustrative style and they'll like working in that way and that will directly influence the end result in some way or another.

Personally, I design strategically, with strong ideas and a clear concept. That's how I try to work with my process.

I guess that may influence how my designs look. I like clean, clear, and simple designs. I guess that could be my style but I don't "try" to enforce this on my projects, because every project is different and requires a different solution.

For example, at work I'm working on a brand, which is very grungy, so I need to work in that style. But I could be working on another website where it's extremely corporate. So you need to adapt yourself to the different needs of the clients.

## DESIGNING TO CONVERT

Designing to convert can be done through hierarchy, placement and calls to actions. As an example, if you wanted people to follow you on Twitter or could have a subtle CTA (Call to Action) saying "Click here to follow me on Twitter."

You can have that in different places, where it isn't going to scream over the top of the content – just a subtle reminder to follow you on Twitter. If you do that in a tasteful way, then you will achieve your goal.

## Call to Action Design

CTA design comes down to hierarchy, space, contrast and color. CTA's can large or small. As an example, a CTA could be below an article, just after they finish reading. That would be a good place to put a "subscribe now" button. It just depends on what you're trying to achieve.

On my site, I have it in the left sidebar, in the navigation, at the end of the articles, and also in the footer of the website. It's not screaming at you, but it's always there as a subtle reminder. If you're at the top of the website, if you're at the side, and even if you scroll down all the way to the bottom of the page, you'll still have that subtle little reminder that you can connect with me.

## COLOR SCHEMES

If the brand already exists, then generally they already have style guide to build from.

If you're creating the brand style guide for them, then that should be done before designing the website.

### Branding with Color

Branding is something that I work with more on the personal side of my business, through Just Creative Design, rather than at the agency. At the agency, I do mostly interactive design.

For branding, I have a questionnaire online that I have the client fill out, so I get a rough idea of what they're after. Then I can either talk to them on the phone or meet them in person, if they're here in New York. That's how I get to know about their business, their goals, and what they're trying to achieve.

Then I work through my branding process. I do research into the industry and their competitors. I do sketching, conceptualizing, and brainstorming. Then, I'll start working on the computer and create logos, experiment with type, and how the colors work together. I'll create a color palette that can be used on the web and print.

Websites generally have more colors than brand style guides outline, because you need interactive effects. As an example, if you're using blue for links, you may have a rollover color and an active color, so you'll probably have three blues.

### Color Psychology

Every color's going to have a different meaning to each different person so you really need to hone down your target audience and choose the best color based on what you're trying to achieve.

# WORKING WITH CLIENTS

If a client is interested in working with me, they can contact me using the form on my website. From there, we can either line up a time to talk or I can get them to fill out a questionnaire, or we can meet in person.

## Dealing with Differences

I think that you need to have a good relationship from the start and have that trust there, so the designer trusts the client and the client trusts the designer. You should be flexible in accommodating their needs, but you can educate them on why you think otherwise if there's a difference in opinion. It's important to remember that you're not always right and it is a collaborative process.

If clients are being very difficult, I often send both their request and my suggestions. That way, they can compare. Sometimes you win them; sometimes you lose them. You just have to choose your battles wisely.

## If a Client isn't Satisfied with the Final Product

I think the process to get to that point should be done in a way in which dissatisfaction is not going to be the end result. It should be a collaborative process. It shouldn't be just like, "Here's the end work. Tada!"

It should be collaboration, so the end result exceeds their expectations.

## The Collaboration Process

If we're creating a website from scratch, I'll probably do wireframes first. Then, I'll do a rough layout of what content needs to be on the page and an approximate layout of it. I usually try to get that signed off. If that's approved, then I can start the UX & visual design. Also, depending on their budget and how many concepts they're after, I can send them a number of concepts based on the approved wireframes.

# DEALING WITH DESIGNERS

## Picking the Right Designer

Do your research and don't just 'pick' a designer. Look at their portfolio, see how they communicate, how quickly they reply, and how they present themselves. Have they got a following? Have they got awards? Have they got a nice website?

It's just a mixture of all of these things and more that you should take into account.

After you have chosen some of your favorite designers, you can get a quote from them, then based on your budget and your perceived value of each of the designers, you can make a decision about which one of them to work with.

Most designers will have some sort of style or set of skills which may suit your project better than others. So, you should make an educated decision rather than just randomly picking a designer.

## **Make the Designers Job Easy**

Having a solid business plan and knowing what you want is a good first step in the process. Some designers may not want to work while the business plan is still being conceived.

It's nice when you have assets – such as photos, content and logos – all ready. Any branding elements and a style guide, if you have that, it's very helpful. Everything that you have currently as your brand, you should send over as well.

If you're just going to get visual design, then wireframes help. If you're building a website from scratch, you can work together to find the best user experience.

## **Day to Day Communication**

Every designer works in a different way. I personally don't give my phone number out on the web because I would rather have a conversation first over email and then later talk on the phone. That's just how I work. But some other designers will use the phone. I just like email as there is a record to come back to.

# **LOOKING FORWARD**

## **Responsive Design**

I was recently asked about the 'future of web design' and I'd have to say responsive design would be at the top of my list. A responsive website means that it will adapt to the screen that you're viewing it on. The content displayed will be relative to what device you're viewing the website on.

For example, a website will change its look when you're viewing it on a mobile device, versus a large screen.

## How to Create a Responsive Design Website

Responsive design is fairly new and I've only designed two responsive websites so far. The first one was for my personal website.

For my site, I used the [Skeleton responsive boilerplate](#). There's really no reason to redo everything if there are already frameworks in place. Another good one to explore is [Bootstrap](#), by Twitter.

## More Trends

HTML 5, CSS 3, web fonts and parallax scrolling are all on the rise. These are all fairly new and making good headway in 2012.

On the topics of trends, I would say don't follow trends for the sake of it. Stay up to date on the industry, know what's out there, and know what's being made, because it can influence your next designs and how you actually create your website. But don't directly copy or use a trend for a trend's sake. I think that should apply to all design.

## Parting Advice

Practice.

## ACTIONABLE TAKEAWAYS

### 1. Research.

Whether it's your site or your client's site, start with a design brief. Figure out the goal of the website and collect any branding elements that are already established. Then look at the competitor's sites to see how they accomplish similar goals. Build upon that and innovate.

### 2. Wireframe.

Determine all the pages you'll need to create and how you'll get people to follow through that funnel. Then sketch out where content will go with building blocks. Get the wireframes approved by your team members or the client.

### 3. Design.

Once approved, start designing it in Photoshop, or similar software. Keep the design consistent with the company's brand. Follow the principles but don't be afraid to break the rules. Polish it and send it to be approved.

### 4. Code.

If coding isn't your expertise, find someone who knows what they're doing. Consider using a responsive boilerplate like Skeleton.



5. **Problem Solve.**

Whether or not a design is good depends entirely on how well it accomplishes your goals. Just because it looks good doesn't mean it is good. Find the best possible solution for your goals.

# Managing a Membership

with Matt Wolfe

**W**hile still in college, Matt Wolfe started a blog on investing and finance called “How I Will Be Rich.”

After a few months building it, Wolfe was earning a little over \$100 a month with AdSense. He started another blog on fitness and soon was earning a modest income from his websites, about \$800 a month.



## Matt Wolfe Today

In January 2012, Matt Wolfe made \$22,899.14.

What’s changed? For one, he’s no longer relying on AdSense. Instead, he’s using membership sites as his primary revenue stream. His biggest website right now is [The WordPress Classroom](#). Members pay a monthly fee of \$37 to access regularly updated videos that guide people how to make great websites on WordPress.

He also runs a blog on business and blogs at [BusinessAndBlogs.com](#).

## WHAT YOU’LL LEARN

- How to Differentiate Your Content
- Inside “The A La Carte Method”
- How to Make a Site Members Only
- Setting the Right Price
- 4 Ways to Promote Your Membership Program
- Retaining Members
- Matt’s Plans for the Future

# STEP-BY-STEP OVERVIEW

## Build a List

You definitely want to start building a list with your audience. That way, once you get your membership site set up, you can push it to them over and over again until they finally buy or get sick of you and unsubscribe.

So, that's the first thing you want to do.

## Differentiate Yourself

You've got to figure out what you can teach these people that they're willing to pay for.

There's a lot of information out there for free, so you've got to figure out what makes your information different. A lot of times it will just be that what you're teaching is on video, whereas the rest of the content that's available out there is only text.

That was the case for me. When I started up the WordPress Classroom, there were a lot of articles about how to do different stuff in WordPress, but there weren't really very many people making video tutorials on it yet. I hadn't found a lot of sites of people just screen capturing and showing how to do it.

So that was kind of a differentiator for me that made people really like my program: they didn't have to read about how to do it. They could actually sit there and watch it on video.

Another huge differentiator is just putting all of the information in one place for people. There's free WordPress training scattered all over the Internet. But with The WordPress Classroom, you can pretty much find out anything you need to know about WordPress all in one spot.

## Create a Membership Site

After you've already got your niche picked out, then you want to get a website set up. The best membership scripts out there are all on WordPress, in my opinion. So you probably want to go out, [get your hosting set up](#), get [WordPress](#) installed, and start getting some membership scripts set up.

# CONTINUITY STRATEGY

## Format

Is it going to be just a perpetual continuity (where it just rolls on forever)? Or is it going to be a six-month course?

Are you going to drip-feed the content so that each month they get something new? Or is it just all going to be available when they get in there?

Those are a couple of things to think about when you first get in.

### *Drip-Feeding*

Personally, I'm not a fan of drip-feeding. I like to make everything available to everybody who signs up.

If you're drip-feeding the content, then basically somebody signs up to the website and the first month they get the content that's scheduled to come out the first month. If they're around for the second month, they get the content that's scheduled to come around for the second month.

The problem with this is that all of your most up-to-date content is only being seen by the few people who have been around since the beginning. The newest people who are just getting into your site won't see that content for several months.

So I like to just make everything available right from the beginning.

## Evolving Strategies

When I first started, I drip-fed my content. I actually thought that was the way to go, because I thought it was going to get people to stick around for longer. Thankfully, I've actually found ways to retain members for a really long time without drip-feeding.

Another thing that I've kind of learned over time is not to be afraid to give away some of your best training for free. That really makes people go, "Wow, he's giving away this for free. What kind of stuff is he teaching inside the membership site?" It really gets people to trust you and see you as an authority, even before they sign up for your membership site.

### *The "A La Carte Method"*

Lately, we've begun implementing a strategy that I call the a la carte method.

Basically, you take modules from your membership site and sell them individually as a separate product. For me, this has been really, really killer.

If you've had a membership site for six months and you've got like eight or nine different modules, then you can pull out one of those modules and sell it as its own standalone product. That's the a la carte method. I actually give them different product names and make them look like a separate, standalone product.

This method kills a couple of birds with one stone.

It makes it so that anybody who doesn't want to pay your monthly membership fee (or who just wants to learn this one specific concept) will still have a product to buy from you. You're selling them just the individual content that they want.

But it also adds perceived value to the members inside your membership site. They see that this module that you're giving them there is for sale on another site. So, in their minds, they're seeing, "Hey, he's giving me this entire product by being a member." So, it really increases the perceived value.

A third benefit is that you get people in there that pay for the training and they go, "Wow! This is really cool training. I want to see more of this guy's stuff." Then they go sign up for the membership anyway. So, since I've launched some of these little a la carte products, I've seen a huge spike in sales for my membership site.

## MEMBERSHIP SITE TOOLS

### WishList Member

Personally, I use a membership script called [WishList Member](#). It's a great tool and it basically does everything for you.

It can set up different membership levels. For instance, you could have pro-member levels, platinum, gold, and silver member levels. WishList Member allows you to give different content among the different member levels.

It also takes care of the integration with auto-responder services like [AWeber](#). It integrates with your payment processors, like [PayPal](#), [ClickBank](#), or [Infusionsoft](#), as well.

So, it pretty much is an all-in-one solution to lock down the content and set the different membership levels that people get access to. I use that on most of my sites.

## Themes

Most of my themes that I have for my membership sites are custom-built themes. All of the sites that I've been running for a while have custom built themes.

But for the newer stuff I've been setting up, I've been using something called [Optimize Press](#). Optimize Press creates really great-looking membership sites. It also lets you do squeeze pages, sales pages, and that sort of thing.

I also offer a course on a boot-strap method of creating membership sites, without buying expensive plugins. It's for people who don't want to buy expensive plug-ins like WishList Member or Optimize Press. I teach you basically how to tweak some of the code and then find a few free plugins out there to make something into a makeshift membership site.

I've recently sold that a la carte training course and over the course of a week it did like \$40,000 in sales.

## Auto-Responders

I use AWeber pretty much exclusively. I do have an iContact account and a Infusionsoft account, but I don't really use them as much as AWeber. AWeber is my main solution.

## Accepting Payments

Right now, it's pretty much all through ClickBank. For me, ClickBank is great.

They basically take care of affiliates for you. So, if an affiliate promotes your membership site and they make a sale, ClickBank just pays out that affiliate for you. You don't have to get the money into your bank account and then turn around and pay out the affiliate. So, that's a huge thing for me.

It also takes care of taxes for you. In the US, certain states have sales tax on digital products and certain states don't. If you're selling everything yourself, then it's your responsibility to figure out who you're supposed to charge sales tax to and who you don't have to charge sales tax to. That's just another thing that ClickBank takes care of for you.

Every Wednesday, ClickBank sends me a check. They're just really easy to work with. I have been working with them since the beginning and I've just kind of stuck with them.

## Forums

It's a plugin called [Simple:Press](#) and it's actually free. It will create a forum and it's fully compatible with WishList Member. It's also fully compatible with the free membership plugins that are available around the web.

# CREATING CONTENT FOR A MEMBERSHIP SITE

## Planning the Content

Basically, I'll sit there and write a list of seven or eight modules that I think would be good for the topic.

Let's say you're in a tomato-growing niche and you want to start a membership on how to grow tomatoes. You have to sit there and come up with modules. Module 1 may be the different types of tomatoes that are out there and the difficulty of how to grow each one. Module 2 may be different types of fertilizers and the benefits of those different fertilizers. And so on and so on.

You have to sit there and list out the exact modules that you can make. Usually before I start, I'll come up with seven or eight. Then, as we get going and I have members through there, I'll make more modules based on the feedback that I'm getting from the people going through the site.

### *Borrow from Books*

I go to Amazon.com and I look for books on the topic I'm going to be teaching in my membership site. So if I'm teaching on tomato-growing, I'll go to Amazon.com and look up the best-sellers in that niche.

In Amazon, they have this 'look-inside' feature, where you can look inside all of the different books in Amazon. So I'll go into each of the books, I'll open up an Excel spreadsheet and start writing down the chapters from the books.

After you do it for five or six books, you'll start to notice some patterns. You'll see some topics that are explained over and over again in each of the different books. That gives you a good idea of the more important topics.

## ***Listen to Your Users***

We're basically just monitoring the forum all the time. We're watching what people are talking about and what questions they're asking. We're basing our next modules around that. So we always know we're staying relevant to what our current members are looking for.

## **Different Media**

I do pretty much everything.

The WordPress Classroom is mostly video content. But then I also have my blog, my podcast, and my YouTube channel.

## **Video**

For the actual membership sites, I recommend video. People can find written content everywhere. Videos are a little bit harder to find.

I recommend going with videos because you can actually do 'over-the-shoulder' demonstrations, where you're showing people how to do something while you're explaining it.

## ***How to Make Videos***

I use [ScreenFlow](#) to record my screen and just show people what I'm doing. That's for Mac. If you're on a PC, [Camtasia](#) works great.

If you're in a niche where you can't just show people how to do stuff on your screen, then go out and grab a Kodak Zi8 or a Flipcam. Set it up on a tripod and show people how to do stuff that way.

## ***What to Say***

Personally, I just dive in.

If I'm setting up a hosting account, I'll simply hit record on my screen and start: "Okay, so today we're setting up hosting, so follow along." I'll just start doing it and explain what I'm doing as I do it.

I know some people who will go off on tangents that are really unnecessary. For them, it may be better to kind of script it. Try not to overthink it.



## ***Keep it Short***

Sometimes I'll joke around in my videos, but for the most part I don't. I like to keep training videos really precise and to-the-point.

People don't like long training videos. If they want to learn how to do something, they want it to be quick. They want it to be five or six minutes, max. "Here's how you do it. Boom, boom, boom, boom, done."

If you make a joke because you mess up while you're doing the process or something, that's fine. But for the most part, people want direct, to-the-point training videos.

## ***Outsourcing Video***

Once you've got your site up for a while, you could start outsourcing the videos.

I've actually done that with The WordPress Classroom. I found somebody else who was doing training on WordPress with their site and who had been a member of The WordPress Classroom. I contacted them and said, "Hey, instead of doing the training on your site, why don't I pay you to come over and do the training on my site?"

It has been a win-win for both of us, because he knows that he's getting paid every single month and I know that I'm getting content.

## ***Transcription***

I just hired a transcriber who's on staff with me. I send her my videos and getting transcriptions back.

That's been pretty cool. People have been liking that. The only problem with that is that if I am showing stuff on my screen about how to do stuff, it doesn't always come across in the transcription.

So I've been trying to give a little bit more description in my videos. Instead of saying, "Click this button right here," I'll say, "You're going to click this button up in the top-left corner that says 'home'. It's right next to the little icon with the picture of your face on it."

## ***Hosting Video***

To privately host my videos, I use [Amazon S3](#) and software called [Easy Video Player](#).

Amazon S3 allows you to take your videos and put them on Amazon's servers. The type of hosting accounts that most people have aren't really designed to handle a high

volume of video. With Amazon S3, you basically get to host your videos on Amazon's huge infrastructure.

Easy Video Player basically fetches your video from Amazon S3 and then presents it on your website for you. It makes it so that Amazon S3 video file is embedded in your site and people can watch it.

## PRICING

### Raising Your Prices

One thing that I've found really interesting is that when I raise the prices, I typically don't get very much price resistance.

When I first started my site, it was a \$47 dollar, one-time charge. \$47 and you get all of the content in the membership site.

At that time I wasn't planning on adding new content. But over time, I started adding more and more content to the site. So I started thinking, "This is crap. People paid me one time and I keep on adding stuff!"

So I moved my site to a \$10 a month membership. A lot of people came in and they stayed in for a long time.

Then I said, "People like this stuff and I'm adding more and more content. So I'm going to bump it to \$17 and see what happens." I bumped it to \$17 and I saw no drop-off in new sales. My conversion rate stayed exactly the same. The people who were in at \$10 stayed at \$10, but any new person who came in was charged at \$17.

After about six months, I decided to bump the price up again and see what the market would bear. So, I bumped it up to \$27 dollars. The same thing happened: there was no price resistance. The conversion rate stayed the same. In fact, I think my conversion rate actually went up, but there may have been other factors that led to that.

Three or four months later, I said, "\$27 is working. Let's try \$37." No resistance at \$37. To this day, I'm still pricing at \$37 per month for my membership site. I've found that there's not much price resistance between \$10 a month and \$37 a month.

There are a lot of people out there teaching microcontinuity (where you get somebody in at \$4 a month and just try to get like 10,000 people in). But I've found that if you're

giving them really good content, then people are going to stick around for a long time. If the content is sub-par and people aren't happy with it, they're going to drop-off. It doesn't matter if it's \$4 a month or \$37 a month.

## Pricing Options

### *Lifetime Option*

I started to play with some numbers and I decided to offer a lifetime option again. You can get into the membership program for a one-time price and then you basically get all of the content that I ever add for life.

I decided to charge \$247 for a lifetime membership. For that, you can get all of the content I add for life. That figures out to be about seven months of membership. The reason for that is that my average retention is between six to eight months. Why not just charge people what I would make over those seven months for that first payment?

### *Trials*

There are a couple of different trial options that I've been playing with.

I've got a one week trial, which is \$1 to test it out for one week. After your one week trial is up, it goes to that \$37 per month.

Then I've got another trial, which is a \$5 trial for the first month. So, you get a whole month for \$5 and after that month, it goes to the \$37 a month.

I've found that \$5 for one month is actually more effective. My theory is that when somebody gets in and they know it's just a one week trial, they sit there and put it on their calendar to cancel the membership in a few days. Whereas, for a one-month trial, they'll sit there and say, "I'm going to stick around with this, because it's really good stuff."

I have considered offering a free trial. The main reason I haven't is that ClickBank doesn't offer the option to do a free trial. The lowest they let you do is a \$1 trial. I do offer free content. If you go to my site right now, there's an opt-in form on the page. You opt-in and you get like the first eight videos for free.

# PROMOTING A MEMBERSHIP SITE

## Forum Marketing

When I first started out, I got pretty much all of the traffic through forum marketing. I went to various forums that talked about blogging, WordPress, or internet marketing. I just looked for people who were asking questions and I gave them really great, in-depth responses.

In forums, typically there's an option to have a signature on your forum posts and you can have a link back to your site in that signature. So, I would have my signature say something like, "To learn more about WordPress and to get some free training, check out The WordPress Classroom." The people who I helped would see my signature and then come back to my site to get more of my training.

That was the number one way that I got all of my traffic for the first year or so.

A cool resource for that is a site called big-boards.com. It's a listing of forums. You can go on there and find forums in almost any niche.

## Matt's 4 Traffic Sources Today

### *Search Engine Optimization*

I used to hire out other companies to do my SEO for me. But most SEO companies don't want you to know their secrets. I guess the fear is that, if you knew how they did it, you would just go around them and start doing it yourself. I got really frustrated because they never wanted to share their strategies for the SEO.

So, I brought all of my SEO in house. Now I have guys that work for me that go out and just do nothing but SEO for me. I focus a lot on things, like article marketing. I still have them do some forum marketing, some blog commenting, and just doing a lot of back-linking on social media sites and various link directories.

### *Affiliates*

Affiliate traffic is huge for membership sites. If you can offer an affiliate program, it will definitely be a huge traffic generator for you.

In The WordPress Classroom, there are a couple of training modules on monetizing your blog. I actually teach them to go around and promote The WordPress Classroom.

So, I turn many of the members that go through my course into affiliates. That's one thing that's worked out really well for me.

## **Facebook**

Being really active on Facebook has been huge for me.

I get in there and try to answer questions about WordPress and blogging. But one thing I find interesting is that doesn't always get that great of a response. It's when I'm like, "I just had a churro. It was great. Who else likes churros?" that I get like 100 responses.

It's just crazy. The people that go on Facebook like to see that you're a real person. That's where you really start building the trust factor.

## **YouTube**

I do a lot of training videos on YouTube and just put them up for free. That way people can get an idea of my training. If they want more, they click on the links to my site and opt-in to get the more free training on my site.

## **Recruiting Affiliates**

To be honest, I don't do enough recruiting of affiliate partners.

Most of the big affiliates that I have, I've met in person. I go to a lot of events. I just got back from the traffic and conversion summit in Austin a couple weeks ago. I'm pretty much at a different marketing event every single month.

So most of the people who make a lot of money by promoting The Wordpress Classroom are actually people that I've met in person and hung out with, bought them dinner, taught them some tricks, they've taught me some tricks... they're just people who I've built relationships with.

A lot of people do contests. "This weekend, the person who gets the most sales gets a free iPad." Stuff like that definitely works, but I haven't really played with that a lot. I've just personally focused on really building relationships with people. I go out and meet them personally. I go out to dinner with people. I buy them beers. I go bowling with them. I just try to get to know people personally, become friends with them, and then we end up working out deals where I promote their stuff and they promote my stuff.

# RETAINING MEMBERS

## Forums Create Community

The forum has been huge. It adds a community element to the membership site. People get in there and they get to know each other. They ask questions. They find out that, “I asked this question and somebody responded within an hour. This is awesome. I love this forum.” That’s been huge for keeping people around.

## Point System

I added a game element to my membership site. Basically, it gives members points for watching videos, commenting on videos, commenting in the forum, referring a friend, and even just for logging in.

The members can actually go through, be really active in the site, and then turn around and use these points to pay for plugins and pay for themes. There’s also a leader board on the site now, so you can actually see who the most active people are by how many points they have. People want to see their name up there on the leaderboard on the sidebar of the membership site.

That has actually been a really huge factor. But I haven’t actually seen anybody else implement it yet.

The funny thing is nobody ever turns around and redeems their points for the plugins or themes. They just want to build up the points and see themselves get higher and higher on the leaderboard.

## Game Software

I use a free plugin called [Cubepoints](#). That actually manages the whole point system. You go in there and say, “I want to earn this many points for commenting. I want to earn this many points for logging in.”

## Stay in Contact

Just keeping them engaged is huge.

I do a weekly newsletter. Every single Wednesday, all of my members get a newsletter that says, “Hey, here are some tips. Here’s the latest video on the site. Here’s what’s going on inside the forum.”

If you're just adding new videos every week, but people aren't logging in every week, then they don't know about the new value and they won't stay around.

## **Give the People What They Want**

Get to the forum. Keep an eye on the things they are talking about. Respond to them in the forum every once and a while and make content based around the questions that they're asking. If they see that they're asking questions and next week, all of a sudden, there's a training video on the exact question they just asked, that kind of stuff keeps them around. That's huge.

## **LOOKING FORWARD**

### **Changing Business Models**

One thing that I think we're going to start to see is actually what Josh and I are doing with our Beyond The Hype membership site. You're going to start seeing more and more people creating membership sites that are based around products. With Beyond The Hype, for example, we have a membership site, but every little piece of the membership site is being sold on its own as well. Every little piece of that membership site is an individual product with its own sales page.

Think of Groupon where every day there's a new product in there, there's a new deal for you. Well, imagine if Groupon said that for \$37 a month, you could have access to every new product that comes up. People would go crazy. Everybody would pay that \$37 a month to be part of that membership site and to get every single deal that goes through there.

That's kind of the concept that we're working on with Beyond The Hype. There's a new deal constantly in there, but if you pay this membership fee, you get every single new deal that comes through the site. We think it's going to be really big.

We've actually talked to other people who have had similar ideas. It's weird how the market moves together. You see a lot of people having similar ideas without actually talking to each other.

## Last Words

The important thing with membership sites is to keep people engaged. That's the only way that you're going to keep people around for a long time in a membership site. Use things like forums, Facebook, and a mailing list.

Let them know that you're a real person and tell people every time there's new content in the program. I think you'll find that people stick around for a really long time.

## ACTIONABLE TAKEAWAYS

### 1. Differentiate yourself.

Find a way to differentiate your paid membership content from all of the free content. You can do that by creating high-quality videos or by distributing your content more effectively.

### 2. Build your membership site.

Use WordPress to build the site. Use WishList Member plugin to create the membership area. Use AWeber to collect the emails. Use ClickBank to manage the transactions. Use Simple:Press plugin to add a forum. And use CubePoints to add a game element to your membership area.

### 3. Create your content.

Start with seven or eight modules. Then create content for each module. If you can, make how-to videos. Keep them short. Host them with Amazon S3 and embed them on your site with Easy Video Player. Also, transcribe the videos so people can scan through the content if they don't want to watch the videos.

### 4. Establish your pricing strategy.

You have a number of pricing options: (1) Upfront, one-time charge, (2) Recurring monthly charge, (3) Small trials, (4) Free trials, or (5) Lifetime membership. Matt started with a \$47 upfront, one-time charge. Then progressed to a \$10 monthly charge. Now he's at \$37 per month and he offers a \$1 one-week trial or a \$5 one-month trial. He also offers a \$247 lifetime membership. He also sells a few of the membership modules a la carte.

### 5. Promote your membership site.

If you're just starting out, find a relevant forum and answer peoples' questions. Include a link to your membership site in your signature. Then start optimizing your site for search engines and integrating your site with Facebook and



YouTube. If your site is set up to work with affiliate marketing, recruit affiliates to help promote your membership site. Just make friends and help people.

# Outsourcing Your Work

with Tyrone Shum

**I**n 2005, Tyrone Shum started an online business selling carbon-fiber Dragonboat paddles. Business was booming, but unfortunately that meant Tyrone was working 60 hours a week to keep up.



Wanting more free time, he read *The 4-Hour Work Week* by Tim Ferriss and began outsourcing much of his labor. Within six months, Tyrone was working just 10 hours a week.

## Tyrone Shum Today

Tyrone has since sold his Dragonboat business and began working as a full-time blogger. His sites include [TyroneShum.com](http://TyroneShum.com) and [OutsourcingLive.com](http://OutsourcingLive.com), where he teaches people how to follow in his footsteps and outsource work effectively. Shum is one of the world's leading experts on outsourcing.

## WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

- When and How to Get Started
- The First Position to Hire
- The Interview Process
- Shum's All-Important Management System
- Quality Control
- Training Methods
- The Future of Outsourcing

# GETTING STARTED

## Use a Virtual Staff-Finding Service

I've been using a service that actually goes out there and does the search for me. It filters through the first layer. So I don't really spend much time searching for people myself anymore.

When I first started, I spent weeks on end trying to find the right person, to negotiate the best price, the best working conditions, and all that kind of stuff. But in the end, they didn't even stay.

So nowadays I work with a very close provider in the Philippines and Chris Ducker from [Virtual Staff Finder](#). He helps me source out all the virtual assistants and people I need for my business.

### *How it Works*

They go through the whole process and you pay a one-time fee. They come back to you with three candidates, you meet them and find out if they've got the right skills for you, and then – bang –you're up and away.

That saves you a lot of time.

### *Alternatives*

If you don't want to spend that money up front, then you can definitely try out all the other outsourcing sites out there, like [Elance](#), [oDesk](#), and [BestJobs.ph](#).

I would not be so confident about going to Elance and oDesk because most of those people are contractors or looking for just one-time jobs. Usually, my goal is to find a full-time virtual assistant or full-time virtual worker who can focus completely on my business and concentrate on all the things I need.

## When to Hire

### *New Businesses*

A lot of people say, "Oh, I can't really afford someone right now because we're just starting out."

I say, “Look, if you really want to fast-track your success right now, hire a virtual assistant to overtake all of your administration, so that way you can start managing money much faster.”

Particularly in blogging, it’s a long journey. It’s a lot of hard work to be able to produce all of that content and you can’t do that all by yourself. You need help. So, the faster you can get content produced, the faster you can get your blog marketed, the faster you’ll achieve success. You definitely need an extra helping hand. But that is only if you’re just starting out.

### ***Established Businesses***

For the people who are already currently have a successful business running behind them, if you haven’t outsourced a lot of the administration side of things, then that’s the first thing that you need to get done. Get somebody to help – whether it’s by managing your email, customer support, backend posting of you blog posts, or handling any of the financial side of things.

## **HOW TO FULLY AUTOMATE YOUR BUSINESS**

### **Get a Personal Assistant**

The first position to outsource is the virtual assistant.

Virtual assistants can do quite a number of things – anything from handling emails to posting articles on your blog. With blogging, there’s a lot of behind the scenes that you don’t personally need to do and that’s the reason why I recommend hiring a virtual assistant.

Responding to emails can be very, very time consuming. Facebook, Twitter, social networks – all those things really take a lot of time. You could get someone to update all of that for you as well and manage all of those comments. There’s a lot of the behind the scenes things that you don’t need to do yourself.

People struggle with it, because they want to answer those emails themselves. I understand, but you’ve got to think like a big business owner and think, “If I’m going to manage a business, then I should find a team that can actually take over that side of things, train them up to be able to answer very similar questions and hopefully minimize it with an FAQ page.” That allows you to free your time up to focus on things that will generate income for your site.

I know that a lot of pro bloggers who have full-time virtual assistants. If there's anything that they need to respond to personally, they'll personally hop on and take care of it. But having a virtual assistant allows them to focus on producing more content.

## **Get a Programmer**

If you want to grow in blogging, then you could consider hiring a full-time programmer to manage the technical side of things. I think that's probably one of the biggest things that people struggle with, doing all of the graphical work, making sure that the blog's up to date, and creating a really neat, cool blog that will stand out. You shouldn't be doing that yourself. It takes a lot of time out of you.

## **Get a Writer**

From there, if your blog is going to another level, then you can hire full-time writers to be able to write articles for the blog and post them for you. Turn it into a magazine-style blog, if that's the direction that you want to head.

## **Think Full-Time**

I've tried using a contract virtual assistant who charged me by the hour. But that hasn't been very effective for me, because they end up having other jobs that they've got to do.

When they get distracted with other jobs (they might have five or six others), they'll probably put your work down at the bottom of the pile. That's not a position that you want to be in.

### ***Not Ready to Hire Full-Time?***

Find another blogger out there who also wants to hire a virtual assistant to share the load with you. You can both hire them on a part-time basis, half and half. If you're both doing very much the same stuff, then it makes sense.

## **Don't be a Manager**

If you're going to build a business, the most important thing is you want dedicated people to run your business for you. There's no point in you having all these outsourcers doing all your work, if you still have to be the one managing the whole process.

At the end of the day, you want to have these teams managing all these things for you, so that way you can be free to focus on other things that you want to do.

## **FINDING SERVICE PROVIDERS**

### **What to Look For**

#### ***Good Character***

The first aspect is whether or not they have the motivation and the drive. It's really all about their personality and character. I want a motivated self-learner and a happy learner.

They can have all the qualifications in the world, but if they don't have that character, motivation, and drive, they're not going to be able to succeed in your business.

Take the example of my video editor. As soon as he got on the phone, he greeted me as sir. When I started speaking to him, I just felt that there was a really good character about him. He was motivated. He was driven.

#### ***Skillset***

The first thing I look at is whether or not they've had work experience. I don't usually hire people who are fresh out of university, because they haven't had work experience inside an office.

The second thing I want to see is their full body of work. If I can see their work and I can see that it matches what I need them to do, then I pretty much offer them a job from there.

If you combine the right skillset and qualifications with good character, you've pretty much got yourself a winner.

### **The Hiring Process**

It's a pretty strong, lengthy process. It takes me about 40 minutes.

#### ***Get to Know Them***

First, get them onto a video call. I talk to them face to face, to get to know who they are.

I ask a lot of questions. I find out what their family's all about, what they like to do in their spare time, and what they like to do for work.

### **Set Expectations**

After that, I want to speak to them about their working hours and set the expectations. This is very, very important.

Set the expectations to say, "Look, these are your working hours. This is your sick leave. These are the holiday breaks that you have. These are the things that I expect from you to get completed. If not, then these are the consequences."

Once I've done that, I go through and discuss their salary, how they get paid, and all those kind of things.

### **Welcome**

Finally, I welcome them into the business. I send them a "getting started" guide, along with some more training information via email and then we just get started from there.

## **SYSTEM-BASED MANAGEMENT**

They manage themselves.

We have a good system in place. We use [Basecamp HQ](#) to manage all of the projects. So, whenever there's a new client that comes in, it gets straight away into the Basecamp HQ as a project.

That project is basically managed down into a step-by-step process. The managerial assistant takes over that process and she knows exactly what to do. Wherever it needs to go, she'll farm it out to the rest of the team and from there they'll be able to run the processes.

### **Communicating with the Team**

I try to minimize my emails. If I need to communicate with them specifically about any task, I use a tool called [Jing Project](#), which is free screen capture software. I describe most of the task inside there and once it's described, I farm it out straight to them and they can manage that whole process for me.

### **Quality Control**

In the past, I have come across a few struggles with this issue.

I used to try to manage them by setting up time sheets. I tried to monitor every hour that they were working. That was not really managing. That was basically just looking over their shoulder every minute of the day.

I eliminated that because I had a coach who trained me from a different perspective, with a different mindset. A lot of people don't realize that when you do want to hire somebody to manage your business, the whole goal is to give them responsibility. You're not the one to be responsible for them. They have to take ownership of their role. Once they take ownership of that role, then they can do it in the way that they're comfortable with and help you grow your business.

### ***How to Ensure Quality Work***

The one way to set that up is by setting the expectations and having rewards and consequences. As long as these boundaries are set, they know where they have to hit. If a job doesn't get completed, then they have consequences – either to their salary or they may potentially get fired.

But if they do succeed and they do really well and they finish things earlier, meet the demand of the client, then I give them a reward. It could be a monetary value reward, more time off, or anything else that will give them incentive.

That's really about letting go. It incentivizes them to manage the whole thing and be responsible for it. That way, it frees you up to worry about what's going on here. So, that's how I've successfully managed my team – or let them manage themselves, to be honest.

### ***Relinquish Control***

That's the thing about us entrepreneurs: we love being hands on. We want everything to be perfect.

But in reality, if it's 90% perfect, I usually let it go. If I spend my time trying to fix up that 10%, it will never get out there. At the end of the day, all I want to do is make sure that the client is happy and if it's 90% there, then they're not going to notice that ten percent. They're fine.

I have an eye for detail, but at the same time, I realize that I can't manage everything myself because if I do, then I won't be getting any work completed.



## How Tyrone Developed his Systems

It's taken me a lot of time. It's not something that I just developed overnight. I wish it was.

But that's the reason why I created my course, which is the [Mass Outsource Mastermind](#). It's got the whole system.

But I'll run through it with you, what I do and how I set the system up.

### **Google Apps**

I've mentioned one of the other tools that we use, which is Basecamp HQ. Another part of the system that we use is called [Google Apps](#) and it has a combination of email, calendars, and docs in there.

We use the calendar system inside Google Apps to be able to schedule things. All the team has access to this calendar. If they plug a deadline into their calendar, we can all see that. One of the great things about having a Google Apps calendar is that it can be synchronized with iPhone devices and iPad devices.

It's the same thing with my email system. We have internal emailing system here through Google Mail. The only emails that I receive for my work address are through my team. If there's any outside emails that I receive, it usually goes through the support system before it gets to me.

### **Dropbox**

[Dropbox](#) is used heavily for storing all of our documents, training materials, and any graphical or video work. It's all stored in there and that basically gets shared amongst our whole team. Anyone who is on that particular Dropbox email account can access everything that's there.

It makes it so easy for us because all we have to do is drag-and-drop the files in there and whoever needs access to those files just grabs them. That's why we have everything centralized.

### **LastPass**

The last system I'm going to mention is an automated password system called [LastPass](#). That is where we store all of our login information inside, encrypted. So that saves me time to send passwords over to people and find out where everything is. It's all centralized inside this linked system that my team gets to use.

# TRAINING

There are three main training videos that are broken down into shorter videos, which go through step-by-step processes of what they need to do.

Most of the videos are on our YouTube account, because it's free to store. It's on a private account that only employees can access. I don't post these videos freely anywhere, but we've got them inside the Mass Outsource Mastermind course.

## Getting Started Guide

It's got three main videos. The first video is a daily accountability video. It shows them exactly what I require them to report back. (They send me a daily accountability report on what they've done for the day. I don't usually check it every day. I mainly just do it so they can hold themselves accountable.)

## Payment Training

The second explains how they get paid, which is very crucial.

Basically, there's a step-by-step procedure for them to be sent an invoice at the beginning of each month. We pay all of the staff invoices at one time all at the beginning of the month, instead of separating them and paying them once every second wave or whatever. It's all done and prorated after the first of the month. That makes the accounting easier for us.

## Business Overview

The final video is an overview of the business. It just goes in and shows them exactly what our business does, how it runs, how to use the project management system, and pretty much everything else.

For their particular roles and for their specific tasks, there are other training materials which we store in Dropbox and send them out to them. In the case of a programmer, he needs to know exactly where to access the server, how to access the cPanel, all that kind of stuff. It's all in videos there.

# PAYING YOUR STAFF

I personally pay something around two grand a month for all of my employees and I've currently got four full-time employees on my team. But if you're going to be hiring a

team, like specifically, you're going to an outsource company, it will vary in terms of rates.

If you want to build a team like I have, then you could probably split it down to about \$300 or \$400 dollars a month depending on what kind of services you need.

## **The Going Rate for a Virtual Assistant**

That's changed a lot over the years, since I started. It had been roughly \$300 a month. Now I think you'd be reasonably paying about \$450 a month for a full-time virtual assistant working 40 hours a week. For part time, you'd be looking at \$250-\$300 a month. For contracts, I would probably say at least a minimum of \$5 an hour nowadays.

So you still can find reasonably good priced outsourcers over in the Philippines and other places.

## **Don't be a Bargain Hunter**

I'm not going to emphasize that you go out and get the cheapest out there, because it's not about hiring the cheapest person. It's about hiring the person with the right character, the right skillset, and the right qualifications. I've gone through that route where I hire the cheapest person and unfortunately they don't have the right skills or the qualifications and I just wasted my time paying them that couple hundred dollars a month.

So, before you even look at their price, look at their qualifications, their character, and their skillset, and make sure that they do match what you want to hire. If they do, then you can obviously negotiate. Anything's negotiable with the Filipinos.

## **Which Country?**

Personally, I use people from the Philippines.

For one, they're English-speaking. Two, they're honest and very high integrity. And three, they've got most of the technology that most of us use in the Western countries, so it wouldn't be a problem to work with them.

I've tried other countries and there's always been either a language barrier or some kind of cultural barrier for me, so I've just stuck with the country I'm familiar with, which is the Philippines.

Filipinos are the friendliest and most loyal people you could ever work with. So, if that's what you're looking for, then that's the place to go, I reckon.

## Payment Method

I'm currently using [PayPal](#) to pay my team. I think for each individual transaction, it takes anywhere from four to five dollars at this time. And that's reasonable in comparison to say [Xoom](#) or any of the other ones.

PayPal is great for international customers or international employees. If you're in the States, then Xoom would also be another option, because Xoom's restricted to only the United States customers.

## Taxes

My staff are independent contractors. That's the reason I get them to send me an invoice at the beginning of every month, because it's considered as a contracting role there.

I'm not a lawyer, but essentially in terms of accounting I get them to send me an invoice and they act as independent contractors there. They pay their own taxes and they manage all their own business expenses and accounting fees.

So, pretty much, everything from that side of things is handled. From my side of things, I treat their payment as a company expense. I don't really pay them an employee wage or anything like that, because if I did I would have to pay income taxes. I also don't have to pay their retirement package and all that kind of stuff. So we don't have any of that here.

But I would highly recommend that if you're going to do this, speak to an accountant and find out what the best way to do it is for your business because everybody's circumstance is different.

## KEEPING A HAPPY, PRODUCTIVE STAFF

Pay them well. Look after them. It's as simple as that.

## Punctual Payment

Whatever you do, just make sure that you pay your virtual team on time.

If you say that you are going to pay them on the first of every month, pay them on the first of every month. If you can, pay them a day early. It just makes life a lot easier for you and them because that way they're assured that they're going to get paid.

## Encouragement

Make sure you do look after them. Don't just give them the training material.

Compliment them, encourage them, support them, and give them as much feedback as they can receive about what they're doing. If they're performing really well, then say to them, "You're doing a fantastic job. I love what you're doing. Keep it up." Simple things like that keep them motivated.

They're simple words; it doesn't cost you anything. It keeps the team staying on board because they love working with you. That's what I've done with my team. That's the reason why they love staying with me, I hope.

## Bonuses

If you can, give your staff bonuses from time to time – or just reward them with something. It doesn't have to be monetary.

One of my team members had a baby, so I helped him out with supporting the baby. Things like that really make a difference for them. They're really, really, encouraged when they know that you're there to help.

The other day, one of my programmer's computers died. I said to him, "What's going on here?" And he said, "I need to get a new motherboard." So I said, "I'll help you pay for that and get that fixed up."

For us, it's not much. If you're paying a full-time employee here in Australia, it's about three grand a month. You're paying one tenth of that price, so you can afford to pay out little fixes and changes like that.

## Keeping the Morale High between the Team Members

All my team members have access to each other – particularly, my virtual assistant. She speaks regularly to all of the team members because she needs to farm out work to them and ask them questions. So, she has all the people's Skype data and email data so that she can talk to them whenever.

I want them to interact with each other because I know that it can be a bit lonely at home and having a team that they can talk to really helps their morale.

## **OUTSOURCING ADVICE**

### **Take Action**

I know it sounds very simple and I know it's a very common thing, but unfortunately even 80% of the students that come from my course just don't take action. They buy the course. They participate. But they just don't take action. Six months later, I ask them, "How are things going?" and they say, "Oh, I haven't had time."

### **Interview by Skype**

Make sure before you hire someone that you do interview face to face, on video. When you don't do that, you often don't find the right person. The reason is that if you don't see them, talk to them, and hear their voice, then you don't really know who they are.

By doing that through Skype, it pretty much eliminates 80% of the issues that you may face. Once you see them, you know whether or not they're the right person.

### **Make Your System a Priority**

When you have started to outsource, begin setting up your systems as soon as you can.

For example, set up Basecamp HQ and start recording all of your training material. It's going to take you a while, but I recommend that you just start saving all of your training material somewhere, because eventually you will need them again.

When you have to hire the second, third, fourth virtual assistant, you can just easily give it to them. That's something that I didn't do at the beginning. I missed that step and now, everything that we do, we just record it and save it. Whether it's good or not, we still save it just in case and we can compile it back together later down the track.

# LOOKING FORWARD

## Trends

A lot has changed over the last few years, particularly in the last five years since Tim Ferris released “The 4-Hour Work Week.” A lot of people have been outsourcing, particularly lifestyle entrepreneurs.

I’ve spoken to a few CEOs from a few outsourcing companies in the Philippines. I’ve even interviewed a few of them. I asked them, “What do you think is going to happen in the next five years or so?”

A lot of them said to me, “Well, it will continue to grow because we are such a large economy. We’re still growing in terms of the Western World.”

Even when I speak to my local business clients here, a lot of them have never even heard about outsourcing. They really don’t even know how it works. There’s still a huge market to tap into.

But in terms of the labor force over there, things will keep increasing. It may get to a point where the cost of labor is equivalent to the cost of labor in Western country. Therefore, we may have to find another country to outsource to. But until that happens, business is probably going to run as usual and it will probably be at least another decade before that happens.

So, in terms of the future, I think outsourcing is still the way to go. If you haven’t started, I highly recommend getting your business to outsource as quickly as possible and set up the right systems in place. If you’re not there, then you’re going to be behind the game.

## Last Words

If you are interested in finding out more about outsourcing and stuff, feel free to ask questions on my blog, at [OutsourcingLive.com](https://OutsourcingLive.com). You’ll be able to get lots of tips from me, and I’m more than happy to provide you with more information.

## ACTIONABLE TAKEAWAYS

1. **Start with a virtual assistant.**

The first position you should outsource is somebody to handle all of your

administrational activities and the simple tasks that collectively take a lot of time (i.e. publishing a blog post).

2. **Qualify service providers.**

Use a virtual staff finder service to pre-qualify people who are seeking a full-time position. Get them on a video call to learn about them, their family, and their ambitions. Hire for character, skills, and work experience.

3. **Set expectations.**

From the outset, tell them what you expect from them on a daily basis. If they fall short of expectations, establish consequences. Then talk about salary, how you're going to pay them, and send them a "getting started" guide.

4. **Help them manage themselves.**

Tyrone uses Basecamp to manage the projects and Jing Project to create screen capture videos. From there, he empowers his employees with responsibilities that encourage them to manage themselves.

5. **Train them with videos.**

Create a series of "getting started" videos to show them your systems for managing them and paying them. Then keep a database of every training video you produce so you can send them to your next staff member.

6. **Pay them punctually through PayPal.**

Tyrone pays about \$300-400 per month per full-time staff member. They're independent contractors so they send him an invoice and keep track of their own taxes. Then he pays it right away through PayPal and it only costs a few dollars per transaction.

7. **Take care of your outsourcers.**

Pay them well. Tell them that you appreciate their work when they do a good job. Give them bonuses every once in a while, not always monetary. When they need to fix something, take care of it. And encourage them to interact with one another.



# Part 2:

# Creating Content

## BLOGGING TO BE EVERYWHERE



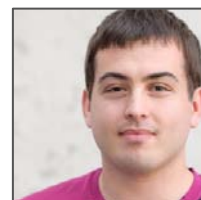
*“Selling to people through social media is like going to a party, meeting somebody for the first time, and then saying, ‘Hey, do you want to buy this Tupperware?’”*

**Pat Flynn, [SmartPassiveIncome.com](http://SmartPassiveIncome.com)**

## PSYCHOLOGY OF BLOGGING

*“If you know the psychology of that person, you’re essentially future-proofing your marketing efforts.”*

**Derek Halpern, [SocialTriggers.com](http://SocialTriggers.com)**



## VIDEO MARKETING



*“When you give first, your chances of receiving becomes much better. Give generously with good heart and it will come back to you.”*

**Gideon Shalwick, [GideonShalwick.com](http://GideonShalwick.com)**

# Blogging to Be Everywhere

with Pat Flynn

**P**at Flynn was working in the architecture industry when he set up his first blog. The site was a place for him to share what he was learning as he studied for the LEED AP Exam.



After Flynn was laid off from his job, he began to focus on his blog full time and [GreenExamAcademy.com](http://GreenExamAcademy.com) soon became the go-to place for architects looking to study up on sustainable energy. In about a year, he turned it into a \$100,000 business.

By late 2008, Flynn was earning so much money through passive income that he decided to start another blog: [SmartPassiveIncome.com](http://SmartPassiveIncome.com).

## Pat Flynn Today

Today, Flynn is a 29-year-old professional blogger. He devotes himself to helping people follow in his footsteps through Smart Passive Income.

## WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

- Picking the Right Niche
- What Makes a Good Post
- Driving Traffic
- Multimedia Content
- How Social Media is like a Party
- Complete Email Marketing Strategy
- Pat's Road to Blog Profits

# OVERVIEW

Making money blogging sounds like it's super-easy, but it isn't. It takes a lot of work and dedication and passion.

It takes a lot of time up front, but I honestly believe that you can do this.

## Pick a Niche Your Passionate About

First, you have to decide what the blog is going to be about. You want to pick a niche or a project that you know you'll be able to write about consistently. You should be able to imagine yourself writing about this topic five years from now.

Some people get into a topic, but then their passion dies out because they just don't have much to write about. After the honeymoon period, when traffic turns out to be not as much as they thought it would be, their passion dies out. What's really going to pull you through is that passion and understanding that, you're in this for the long term.

### *Money-Making Niches*

If you're blogging with the intention of making money, you really want to make sure that it's about something that other people have interest in. Unlike a personal blog, this kind of blogging is about the reader and the visitors.

You really have to keep them in mind and understand what they want to be and what's on their mind. That's what's going to make your blog successful. The more you can help out your audience, the more they're going to help you out in return through shares or getting subscribers or becoming a customer for any products that you may have.

## Create Content

After you have the blog up, you want to write content for it. When you're just starting out, you just need to put something out there so you have something published. I wouldn't worry about making it perfect.

Really it's just about posting as much as possible and consistently. I like to say that every day without something on the web is a day with potential readers, subscribers, and income lost. You just need to get something out there.

## ***Learn as You Go***

Experience has been the best teacher. You can learn all you want about this stuff. You can read this interview hundreds of times, but you're going to learn the most by just taking action.

The nice thing about blogging is that it's relatively cheap. The risks are low. You're not asking for millions of dollars in angel investing, so just do something and learn as you go.

## ***Design***

I wouldn't worry about the design too much now. There are a lot of things that are making design easier, like premium themes for WordPress and stuff like that. But I wouldn't worry too much about that now.

## **Attracting Readers**

I'm a really big fan of first developing the relationship and trust with your audience before attempting to make any money. When you do that, the audience tells you what they want and what they would pay for, instead of you having to guess.

With the Green Exam Academy, it was all totally free first. I monetized when the audience was ready. It was a lot easier that way. It was the same thing with SmartPassiveIncome.com.

## ***Getting Traffic***

There are different techniques and different sources. People want to rank really high in Google, but that's just one element of the overall traffic strategy that can make a successful blog.

## ***Social Media***

And then we want to talk about email and social media and stuff like that, which just takes our blogs to the next level, helps us stand out from the crowds a little bit more.

## **HOW TO PICK A NICHE**

I like to take this technique from Glen Allsopp, from ViperChill.com. He says that if you're having trouble finding something, you should start out with something from your pool of passions, your pool of fears, or your pool of problems.

Those are the types of things that people will pay for – especially fears and problems. People want to solve those issues and are most likely willing to pay for it.

### ***Example: Green Exam Academy***

With the LEED Exam site, the problem people had was not understanding the content needed to pass this exam. People were willing to pay money to get that information that would help them get from point A to point B a faster.

## **Research**

If you come up with an idea, see what other sites are out there already talking about that same subject. See what they are doing to monetize or if they're having problems monetizing. If they are, then maybe that's not the best thing to get into.

### ***Benefiting from the Competition***

On the other hand, maybe they're crushing it and there's room in the market for you. I wouldn't let other sites out there scare you. I would actually take that as a good sign because that means there's a market out there for what you want to talk about.

You can go to those competitors and see what's missing. See what their audience is asking for and use that when you build your own brand. Fill in the holes. That way you will really stand out from the crowd.

### ***Keywords***

Keyword research plays a huge role, probably more so for niche sites. Use a free tool like the Google Adwords Keyword Tool to type in some potential ideas and see how many people are searching for those ideas as well. That way, you can get an idea of what topics are popular by understanding what topics people are searching for in Google.

### ***Another Method***

If you go to Google and just type in your keyword, obviously, you'll find stuff that way. But you can get a little bit more ninja with it. You can type in "blog:" and then you're niche and then find a list of all the blogs that talk about that subject.

You can also type in "forum:" and then you're list and then you'll find a whole list of forums that talk about your specific niche. The nice thing about forums is that people are in there every day looking for advice. So when you go to forums in the same niche that you might be interested in blogging about, you can see what people need help with. Find the critical questions that you can answer in blog posts.

# PRODUCING GREAT POSTS

## Post Ideas

There's no such thing as posting a wrong blog post.

If you're just starting out now, you can look at forums or Twitter. If you know about your subject, you're going to have an idea of what people are going to want to read about.

Another trick you can use is to go to Amazon.com and look up books that are related to your subject. Some of the books allow you to look inside the cover and see the table of contents. That's a great way to understand the different topics in your niche that people are actually interested in reading about.

A lot of these authors will spend millions of dollars trying to figure out what the best kind of things are to put in their book and you can kind of feed off of that. Obviously, you don't want to copy these things verbatim, but use it as inspiration as far as what can be used on your blog.

That's a great tip that I like to use if I'm stuck for what content to write about.

### *Pat's Post Ideas*

Because I have a big audience, it's really easy for me to determine what they want to read about. I simply ask them, "What do you need help with?"

For example, one of my emails in my email newsletter asks my audience what they want me to write about. That gives me a lot of good ideas about what I should write about, because honestly a lot of the content that I put out now is an answer to specific question.

## The Parts of a Post

### *Headline*

People aren't going to read your posts if your headline isn't attention-grabbing or magnetic. This is especially true if your post gets shared on Facebook and Twitter. The headline is what they're going to see first.

If that's not interesting, people are not going to read your content. Your content can be the best content in the world, but if your headline sucks, then no one is going to read the content.

There are a lot of tricks that you can do to make the headline stand out. Ask a question in the headline, for instance.

Also include some keywords in there as well, because Google looks at the title of the posts when deciding where to rank a page.

## **Body**

You want to make the lead paragraph very interesting. You want to really entice them to read further. If you start out with something boring, then people are going to leave. I like to start out my posts with a quote, a story, or just some interesting facts.

You'll also want to divide your posts into sections. A lot of people just write huge blocks of text. It looks like an essay. But people aren't going to read that.

When you read online, you scan the information. You look at bolded text. You look at the various headlines within the posts to see what's interesting. To be honest, I don't read every single word of every single post that I come across. I look for the parts that stand out.

So I would use different headlines within your post to break sections down.

This is a tip I got from Derek Halpern from SocialTriggers.com: write your paragraphs to be a maximum of two or three sentences. Blogging is different than writing an essay. You're actually talking to people through your text. When you talk to someone, you give them breaks to consume the sentences that you give them.

If you look at SmartPassiveIncome.com, you'll see that most of the paragraphs are just one or two sentences. That helps the reader get through the content a little faster and it's just easier on the eye.

It also it helps them get further down in the post. This is a little mind trick: the further down you can get someone in a post, the more likely they are to continue reading. That way, they'll be more invested in the post. They'll think, "I'm already this far through, so I might as well keep reading."

So actually another trick is to use images in your post. If you embed an image in the upper right hand corner of your post, that squishes some of the text that you have in the left hand side so that actually gets them further down the page quicker.

I would also make sure to include any links within your blog that are relevant to the topic that you're talking about. That's a great way to keep people on your blog with interlinking on your side.

If something is very helpful, then link to another blog. The blog owner is going to see that you're talking about them and that might get their attention. You need to build relationships with other people in the industry or other bloggers out there.

To be honest, the way that Smart Passive Income came to be as popular as it is now was with the help of other bloggers, like ProBlogger, Entrepreneurs-Journey, and Income Diary.

### ***Call to Action***

Always provide a call to action at the end of your post. Give your readers something that they can do, because if you just end with information, then that's it. They just finished reading 500 to 1000 words. They're trusting you right now, so give them instructions to do something, whether it's subscribe to an email list or click on another link that's related to another post. If you're selling a product, that's the perfect time to sell your product.

### **Follow Through**

It doesn't end after you write the post and publish it. You really want to interact with your audience. Reply back to their comments. I think that's one of the best things that you can do to show that you're a real person, someone that people can connect with. That will help you stand out from the crowd and connect on a deeper level with your audience.

## **MULTIMEDIA CONTENT**

I'm just going to be frank: not everybody's going to read your blog.

Not everyone likes to read. I don't read that many blogs; I mostly listen to podcasts. There's a big crowd out there who are not going to find you if you just stick to blogging.

So now I have what I like to call the content trifecta: video for people who'd like to watch, blog posts for people who like to read, and podcasts for people who like to listen.



No matter how people like to consume content, they have a way of getting Smart Passive Income in their brain.

## Podcasts

It was through listening to a podcast that I learned that the Internet business was the way to go. I started listening to Internet Business Mastery off of iTunes and that's what really why I started doing business online.

So, I knew that podcasting was a great way to reach people, but I had no idea that it would be as successful as it has been for SmartPassiveIncome.com.

### *Podcasts Attract New Readers*

I did a survey to my readers at the end of one of my blog posts. It just said, "If you have time, just go to this page and answer this one survey question from me."

The question was, "How did you first learn about Smart Passive Income?" I gave a whole bunch of different options from a Google search, from other blogs, from Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, from word of mouth, or podcasts.

Of over 2,000 survey entries, the number one way that people found out about Smart Passive Income was the podcast. Until then, I had no idea that a podcast would have so much reach. But when I think about it, I literally get emails every single week from people saying, "I found you on iTunes, now I'm reading on your blog. I love what you do. Can you tell me more about what you can do for me?"

19% of my audience has found me through my podcasts and that's why I know that I have to keep producing more podcasts.

So the podcast is a great resource out there for bloggers. iTunes is a search engine and it's very untapped. My podcast is actually ranking number one for blogging and it's ranking number two for online marketing. That's just crazy.

I've only had the podcast up for maybe a year-and-a-half and I have over a million downloads. It's just incredible.

### *The Power of Podcasts*

A podcast is an audio show. People download these shows to their mp3 players and they can listen to them wherever they are in the world. They can be at the gym. They can be traveling in their cars to work. They can be anywhere and consuming your content.

Another great thing about a podcast is that there's no exit button. There's no little 'x' at the top corner of the screen. They put on those headphones or they put in your player, and they're just listening to you.

The voice is a powerful thing. Reading this interview right now, it doesn't have the same effect as it would with our voices. You can literally hear the tone of people when they're talking about stuff and how passionate they are about a subject. That means you can really tell if people know what they're talking about on a podcast. So it's a great way to increase the authority that you have.

## Videos

Video is a great teaching tool. There are things that I can teach on a video that I just can't teach in a blog post or in a podcast. So video kind of helps me round out my blog.

YouTube is actually the number two search engine in the world, second to Google. And who owns YouTube? Google does.

So you can actually get a lot of SEO things going on with your blog by posting videos. If you upload a video onto YouTube and embed it onto your blog, there's some SEO stuff happening. You're more likely to be found for those particular keywords.

It's a huge search engine. YouTube actually has its own keyword tool that you can use. You can see what people are searching for on YouTube and then can create videos that answer people's questions based on what they're searching for most. You get new people on your brand that way.

## CONTENT STRATEGY

If you look up content pyramid on Google, you'll find an image of my content pyramid. That's basically just a mix of different types of content that you can post on your blog.

### Case Studies and How-To's

The foundation of the pyramid, at least for Smart Passive Income, is the case study and the how-to post.

The case studies actually show analytics and results of different experiments that I've been doing. At Green Exam Academy, for instance, I talk about the progress of my iPhone application company.

The how-to's get into a lot of detail about how to create those things. People are on our sites to learn how to do something, to achieve something, or to get to the next level in their business. So how-to posts are always some of the most popular posts.

## **Analytical Posts**

I'll share analytical posts that show very specific traffic numbers and income reports. For example, I have a post that's titled, "Why My AdSense Revenue Increased by 275%" and that post I get really detailed about why that happened.

## **Right-Brain Posts**

I also have a lot of philosophical and theoretical posts that go into the more strategic stuff that's not so concrete. I'm using my experience to show why I think things are the way they are.

## **Opinion**

I also do a lot of opinion and news type articles. If Facebook changes something, I post about that and show people the latest information about that.

## **Questions**

A lot of my post popular videos and blog posts are answers to people's questions.

## **Product Reviews**

When you're making passive income, there are a lot of tools you can use that can use to help build your passive income up higher. So sometimes, I'll review a tool that I've used and share my thoughts on it.

## **Personal Posts**

I also like to incorporate just a little bit of personal stuff on the blog. It shows people in my audience that I'm a real person.

A personal post helps build your connection with the audience, so people will actually read it and be more likely to become your friend, rather than just a visitor or just a reader.

You don't want to share everything, obviously. But I'll share that I have a son and that he just started walking. A lot of people can relate to that.

I'm big into fantasy football. So everyone in my audience who likes fantasy football will be like, "Oh that guy likes fantasy football too. That's cool. We have this connection."

It's really about the relationships and the trust that you have with your readers and a great way to build that trust is by incorporating those types of personal stories into your posts.

## Experience Helps

It all comes from experience. I didn't know this stuff when I started, but just by doing it and seeing what works best, I've been able to create the formulas and theories that I'm explaining to you now. So, I encourage you to just go out, experiment, and learn that way.

## GETTING TRAFFIC

The podcast is the number one way that people found out about me, but as far as traffic is concerned, it's been a mix of social media and also links from other blogs.

So my number one tip would be to really focus on the relationships you have with other bloggers and people who already have an audience. It's the best thing that you can do.

SEO is important. But to be honest, only about 25% of my traffic for Smart Passive Income and Green Exam Academy comes from the search engines.

## Connect with Other Blogs

Getting onto other people's radars is really important.

I learned this strategy from Corbett Barr of ThinkTraffic.net: find the top players in your industry and then write about them and focus on them on your blog for a little bit.

Corbett took it a little bit further and asked each of those people to respond to one question. Then he compiled all that information and put it into one blog post with pictures, links to their sites, and their Twitter handles. That becomes a really powerful post.

If somebody features my name in their post, I'm pretty likely to share that with my followers, since I'm in it. So, if you do this with 50 people in your niche, probably more than one or two of them will share that post with their followers.

That's going to be a huge boost of traffic to your site. People learn about you and if you write that content really well, they might be more interested in subscribing to some of the other posts that you have.

So that's a great way to launch a blog or get noticed in your niche. Sometimes, the blogs that you feature will be very thankful and remember who you are. They might write about you and that could become the beginning of a JV partnership. A lot of possibilities there.

### **Tip:**

It's smart to target the A-list bloggers, but I think it's more important to target the B and C-list. They have an audience too. It might not be quite as big, but you can be sure that those B and C-listers are going to be extremely happy to be featured in your post. That means they're going to be more likely to share your post with their followers. You're also more likely to become a major player on their radar.

### **Example:**

I had someone email me yesterday who is in the tarot card reading industry, which is a really specific niche. She did a post where she featured the top 10 tarot readers online. She emailed me back saying, "I followed your strategy and it's working out really well. I now have some potential partners that I'm going to be working with on some projects because of this post and I've gotten more traffic than I've gotten in the past."

So it really does work. I would look the structure of other posts like that, so you can use that as inspiration.

## **Guest Posting**

In the beginning, guest posting was the best thing ever. It's kind of died down a bit, but it's still a fantastic strategy – especially if you get in front of a large audience.

It's a great way to get some good backlinks to your site as well, since at the bottom it links back to your own site. You can target some good anchor text keywords to help your own site get ranking in Google for certain keywords.

# SOCIAL MEDIA

## Frequent Contact

I like to think of social media as something that allows me to connect with my audience more. By more, I mean more often. People are on Facebook and Twitter all the time, so they can see Pat throughout the day if I'm posting on those sites. That gets my brand in their brain a little bit more.

## It's a Party

You want to approach social media like you're at a big party.

What do you do at a party? You get to know people. You get to understand who they are.

You don't sell to them.

Selling to people through social media is like going to a party, meeting somebody for the first time, and then saying, "Hey, do you want to buy this Tupperware?"

You're not going to get any sales that way.

The way you get a sale is by meeting those people, developing a relationship with them, and then inviting them to your house (or your blog) so that they can get to know you a little better. From there, they might be more interested in what you have to offer them.

## Social Traffic

Facebook and Twitter have been amazingly successful at bringing in returning traffic to my site.

We have the RSS feed, that people use to subscribe to the blog, but people are more likely to come back to your blog if they see your post on social media.

## Interactive Community

I have a Facebook page that has about 16,000 people on it now and that's been very active.

It's great because I can post questions on there and people answer. It really brings a community feel to the brand and that's a good thing about social media. If people have

questions, other people can answer for me before I even have to go there. So that really helps a lot.

## Making Your Blog Social

As far incorporating like buttons and tweet buttons, the number one thing to do is to make it extremely easy for your audience to share your content. The more brainless the effort is to share the information through social media, the better.

That means including buttons in really convenient places for people to share.

Sometimes it's just a matter of asking other people to do it. Especially on bigger posts that I write, I just ask people, "Hey, if you really liked this post, click on the Like button below." It's just that simple and it really drives a lot of traffic.

## Social Media Apps

### *ShareBar*

If you have a WordPress blog, one plugin that I like to use is called [ShareBar](#).

It shows social media icons on the left or right hand side of your blog, depending on how you set it up. It keeps those buttons there, no matter where on the page they're scrolled to. So as they're scrolling down it just kind of floats along with the blog. Those social media buttons are always there.

### *BufferApp*

[BufferApp](#) is another great tool. It allows you to schedule your tweets or your Facebook posts ahead of time.

You don't want to automate your entire Twitter stream or your entire Facebook thing, because that defeats the whole purpose of social media. You're taking yourself out of it.

But it's a really good tool to help you, when used correctly. For example, at the beginning of the week I'll put 100 tweets that go out at certain times of the day during the week. That allows me to just feed tweets or feed posts on Facebook to people even while I'm out shopping or whatever.

I only have it scheduled to three per day, at random times, and it's a great way to kind of automatically drive traffic back to your site or connect with people. It doesn't even

have to be a link. It could just be a quote or a question. And since it's automated, I can just set it and forget it.

I presented at BlogWorld this year and in the middle of the presentation, I had BufferApp schedule a tweet that said, "Hey, thank you to everybody who's watching my presentation right now." The people at those expos are always on Twitter and when they saw that, they thought it was pretty cool.

So BufferApp is really cool and it's actually free.

## **EMAIL MARKETING**

Email's still a really great strategy for reaching people. I don't know about you, but I check my email first thing in the morning. And I hate when there are unread emails in my inbox. It's kind of like a phone ringing: you just have to answer it or see what's in it.

I've got 30,000 people on me email list. I have a 70% open rate, which in this industry is kind of unheard of. 20-25% is more usual.

I approach email a lot differently than a lot of other bloggers. I have a weekly newsletter with content that is different from what you can find on the blog.

This is my style and you should explore other styles too just to see what's best for you.

### **Pat's Strategy**

#### ***Where People Subscribe***

I have people subscribe to my list through my blog. There are a number of different pages on the site where they can do that.

You can subscribe through my about page, which is actually a really good tip: I recommend that you put a subscribe box on your about page. It's a perfect time to do it. I also put it in my sidebar, obviously.

#### ***Lead Magnet***

When people subscribe, they get a free ebook. My ebook is "Ebooks the Smart Way," which is an ebook about how I created the ebook for my LEED site. That ebook totally launched my online business and took it to the next level. It kind of changed my life.



So, I have that free guide and that's my lead magnet, the incentive for people to subscribe to my list.

You might think, "Well, then you'll get people who subscribe just for that lead magnet." That's true – which is why you should make that lead magnet the best thing ever.

I actually spent about two-and-a-half months really crafting this book. People have emailed me saying, "You are an idiot for giving this away for free!" I give it away for free because I want people who subscribe to my list to know that I'm dead serious about what I'm talking about and that I will always provide the best information about a subject. I want to just blow them away right from the start.

I actually get a lot of messages from people, saying, "I only subscribed so I could download your book, but now I'm looking forward to your emails. If the content in them is as good as the book, then they're going to be very beneficial."

### ***Auto-Responder***

I also have an auto-responder that's set up with about thirty different emails every one or two weeks.

The auto-responder is important because it allows you to continue to contact people over time. If you just have them subscribe, give them the free thing, and then let them be, when you email them six months later with something, they might well have forgotten who you are. They're going to be like, "This email's kind of random." Or they might just know that you're trying to sell them something.

So, I like to keep constant contact with people for as long as I can through my auto-responder. These are pre-set emails that go out sequentially over time, seven days after they subscribe. So, no matter when they subscribe, they go through the same sequence of emails to start out.

### ***Email Content***

These emails are just more tips and more content. I don't sell anything.

I don't sell on the email list, because people in the online marketing industry are tired of getting sold to in emails. People are getting bombarded with emails, which is why I take a totally different approach and just give them pure, amazing, epic content to get them to stay on the email list.

The reason I have a 70% open rate is because people know that I'm not going to be selling them stuff. Most of the things that I put on there is extremely high-lead, high-quality content. The strategy is to use the email to build even more trust with my readers and to connect with them on another level.

If you can connect with people consistently and consistently provide high value content, they're going to be more likely to open your future emails, connect with you on a deeper level, and purchase from you in the future.

That's why a lot of people tell me, "I've unsubscribed to all my email lists but not yours. You don't sell me anything."

I don't have my own product yet on the site. I'm actually working on my first one right now. But when that happens, I know that I'm going to have a lot of people reading that email. Since they probably got an email from me a week before with some awesome content, they're more likely to open the email about my product.

## Your Email Marketing Strategy

Find out what's best for you in your niche, because a lot of other niches probably wouldn't mind getting sold to every once in a while. It depends on your niche. For me, this is my style on this particular blog.

# BLOG MONETIZATION

## Green Exam Academy

I had Green Exam Academy set up for a year-and-a-half before I started monetizing it.

I already had the audience. It's best to get the audience first and build that authority. It wasn't until I got laid off that I decided to monetize the site.

### AdSense

I started off with [AdSense](#). I still believe AdSense is a great way to monetize. I do it with all of my niche sites. But it's probably not going to get you to a level where you can live off of the income.

AdSense is a great way to start off because it's almost instant. You can just put up some code on your site and see ads come up fifteen minutes later. Any time somebody clicks on those ads you earn between ten cents and two dollars per click.

I was making about two or three dollars a day when I first started and I thought that was amazing. That was really my first taste of making money through my blog. But obviously it wasn't enough to live off of.

### ***Private Advertising***

Sometimes you go to a blog and see those 125x125 pixel banner ads. They're actually renting out space on their site to people who want the traffic.

So you can contact companies in private, negotiate with them about putting an ad up on your site, and get a contract. Sometimes companies will have their own programs where you can sign up with them and they'll give you the banner ads upfront, without you having to send them a personal email.

For a while, I was getting \$200-300 a month from different companies who wanted my traffic from Green Exam Academy.

When you post ads on your site, it should be related to what you're talking about on your blog and actually help your readers.

For instance, on Green Exam Academy, one of the links I had on my site was for practice exams. I didn't have my own practice exams (it was way too difficult to create them) so I contacted a company who had practice exams and I offered them advertising on the site. That worked out really well.

But again, the money was not enough to live off of.

### ***Selling a Product***

What really took that bar to the next level was creating my own product. There's nothing like creating your own product, because you make x amount of dollars per sale and, unlike affiliate sales, 100% of the profits go back to you.

So I sold my product for \$19.95 and, in the first month, I made \$8,000 with that book. It was just an incredible feeling. Actually, the next month it went up and up and up.

Then I introduced an audio guide along with it. I hired a professional to record that with her voice and I packaged that along with the ebook. For a while, I was making \$30,000-40,000 a month with that site.

There's nothing like creating your own product. It doesn't have to be an ebook. It could be an online course or a membership site. There are a lot of different possibilities for products that you can create.

## Smart Passive Income

Most of the income from SmartPassiveIncome.com comes from affiliate marketing.

For those of you that don't know, affiliate marketing is when you recommend someone else's product to your audience and when people click on that link and make a purchase, you get a commission off of it.

Now, you could recommend any product that you want. A lot of products have an affiliate program. If you want to sell stuff that's on Amazon, you can sign up for the Amazon Associate program and make a commission off of any sale that people make on Amazon after clicking through your links to get there.

But I have a strict rule that I use on Smart Passive Income and that is that I don't promote or recommend any products that I haven't use before and that I'm not familiar with. If I'm recommending a product to my audience, that means they're trusting me that the product is going to help them.

A lot of people contact me and say, "I have this amazing product. It's awesome. I promise. You can make \$100 bucks every time you sell it. 50% commission." It's tempting, but I don't do it. I have no idea what that product is about. I wouldn't risk losing trust with my audience over making money.

So, I really want to make sure that the products that I recommend are great products that help them. That increases my authority and the trust that I have with them. So it's a win-win. If I help them by recommending these products, they're reaching the next level in their business and at the same time I'm getting paid for it.

The nice thing about affiliate products is that you don't have to create that product yourself. It's already been made by somebody else and you just send people through your link to purchase that product. So that's your only task.

### ***Be Transparent***

In the beginning, I revealed all of my affiliate links just because I wanted to be honest with people. But I actually found that when I do that, the link is clicked on more. Since people see that I am getting money in return for helping them. So, I always reveal it now.

### ***Be Familiar with the Product***

If I'm recommending a product as an affiliate, I make sure that I know everything about that product. I'll give really detailed video tutorials about how to do certain things on

those different products. That way, I also make sure that when people purchase that product, that they're already familiar with it.

## LOOKING FORWARD

There are some new trends happening that I think we should all be aware of.

### Authenticity

One is the trend of being authentic and transparent. This is something that I've always been in tune with, but I think more and more people are doing it now.

People are becoming less dumb online.

When the internet first came out, there were ads saying, "Congratulations! You're the one-millionth visitor. Click here to get your prize." That ad got clicked on all the time back at the beginning, because people didn't understand how the Internet worked or what they're doing.

But people are way smarter now. Everybody's online. Everybody understands that there are a lot of people out there trying to make money by scamming people or feeding off of people's hopes and dreams.

But you can't refute honesty and truth. So, the more transparent you are, the more likely that people are going to trust you.

One of the things that people like about me is that I don't just share everything that's good that happens in my business. I share all the bad things too. Good or bad it helps them either way, so that's why I share it.

### Multimedia Content

Getting into video and multimedia content is another trend.

If you just stick with blogging, you're going to get lost in the crowd. You really need to expand onto different types of content.

I know that it's difficult. The nice thing about blogging is that you can edit your posts and you can kind of hide behind the text and on your blog. In order to do videos and audio, you're going to have to step out of your comfort zone a little bit.

It's not a comfortable ride. You're going to have to step out of your box and get uncomfortable a little bit. But in order to succeed, that's what you're going to have to do.

## The Rise of Social Media

I don't think social media is going away. It is changing.

There's nothing more powerful than somebody else recommending your product to their friends. I could tell all of you out there that I have the best product in the world. But if your friends tell you that, it's going to be worth so much more.

## Last Words

Whatever you do with your blog, just think about your audience and whatever they would want.

## ACTIONABLE TAKEAWAYS

- 1. Dedicate time to nailing down a niche.**  
Choose from your pool of passions, fears, or problems. Pick an audience you're passionate about helping and a topic you enjoy writing about.
- 2. Create consumable blog posts.**  
Start with an interesting intro. Break it up with subheads. Keep paragraphs to two or three sentences. Link out to other bloggers to build relationships. End with a call to action.
- 3. Implement the content trifecta.**  
Write for people who like to read. Produce videos for people who like to watch. Record podcasts for people who like to listen. Then incorporate all three into as many blog posts as you can.
- 4. Integrate your blog with email marketing.**  
Dedicate a lot of time to creating your lead magnet, the resource that you give away in exchange for their email. Then set up an auto-responder series so they get a relevant email from you once a week for as long as possible. But avoid selling to your list because they'll lose trust for you.
- 5. Make money from your blog.**  
Pat's philosophy is to nurture an audience first, sell to them second. He started with AdSense and made a couple hundred bucks a month. But his site really

took off to the tune of \$30,000-50,000 per month when he created and sold his own product.

# Psychology of Blogging

with Derek Halpern

**D***erek Halpern was introduced to the concept of making money with a blog back in 2005, when he started reading humorous dating stories at TuckerMax.com.*



That year Halpern started his own blog, but he soon discovered that his own dating stories weren't nearly as audacious (or popular) as those of Tucker Max.

Undaunted, Halpern started a celebrity gossip site. The site went live in early 2006 and by February of 2007 it was already generating millions of visits per month.

## Derek Halpern Today

In 2010, Halpern started a new website, one dedicated to helping entrepreneurs understand the psychology behind getting more web traffic, leads, and sales. Halpern plans to build [SocialTriggers.com](http://SocialTriggers.com) to a readership of 100,000 (as of April 2012, he's already racked up 26,000 subscribers). He's been featured or quoted in Forbes, Fast Company, and Entrepreneur.

## WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

- When to Start Selling Online
- How Psychology can “Future-Proof” your Marketing Efforts
- How Derek Collects Data
- The Role of Blogging in Business
- Triggers that Encourage Social Sharing
- Step-by-Step Guide to a Psychologically Effective Blog Post
- Where to Put Opt-In Forms on your Site
- How to Write “Hard-Hitting” Content



## STEP-BY-STEP OVERVIEW

First, I would make sure that you're starting a business. You've got to make sure you're selling something.

Actually, if you have the luxury of being able to go after a ten year play, then you should make yourself an authority first, then sell later. But if you don't have that luxury, it's really good to start selling something off the bat.

You might not have many sales right off the bat, but everyone who buys your product will view you as an authority.

## PSYCHOLOGY IN MARKETING

### Why it Matters

Right now, we have an obsession with shiny objects. Everyone wants to talk about the latest tools, Pinterest, Facebook, and all this garbage. It always changes every six months. It drives me insane!

The only thing that doesn't change is that you're talking to people and that those people have problems that you need to solve.

If you know what makes those people tick, it doesn't matter which tools you use. The tool is just a mechanism to get your message to that person. If you know the psychology of that person, you're essentially future-proofing your marketing efforts.

### Getting Data

A lot of my data is about understanding the person I'm talking to.

When you enter your email into my feature box, you're going to get an email from me saying, "Thank you for signing up. You're going to learn how to use psychology to turn traffic into leads and sales. But first, I want you to reply to this email and tell me what you're struggling with right now."

That's the first question that I ask in the first email. I try to help out everyone with their question. But more importantly, I take that question and log it anonymously into an Excel document. Then I have a research assistant who codes all of those responses and actually pulls out the phrases that people use while describing their problems.

Like I said, it's all about the psychology of the people

### ***Data Pays Off***

When I write blog posts now, I get emails from people that say, "Derek, how did you know what was going on inside of my head? It feels like you're talking right to me!"

I think, "Yeah, I know I'm talking right to you because I have this whole cheat sheet of responses with all these phrases that people use to describe their problems. So I know exactly how to talk to people in the way that they think."

### ***More Ways of Collecting Data***

I also do some surveys. I try to do mainly open-ended surveys that let people type in long answer responses. Again, we will review that data, code it and try to figure out what people are actually saying.

Another way I collect data is through my Facebook page. I often ask questions that help me research a particular idea. Or I may just ask a question to try to get people to explain their feelings on a subject in their own words.

So, I'm always out there putting these feelers out to really understand exactly who I'm talking to.

## **BIG PICTURE BLOGGING**

### **Blogging for Business**

Essentially, blogging is one of the best ways to generate ongoing leads and exposure for whatever it is you're selling. It all starts with what you're selling.

I believe that blogging can work for a lot of businesses. The high multiple is blogging for consulting or software. But if you're selling something else, like custom jewelry, you could use blogging as a way to build a community of buyers. You could feature people once a month that wear your custom jewelry and that's a great way to sell more.

### **Positive and Negative Stories**

If you're not going to be out there telling your story, someone else is going to be telling it.

Let's say someone goes to a restaurant and thinks, "Man, that meal was good!" They probably won't go home and write a bunch of great reviews as soon as they get home. No one does that.

However, if they go to a restaurant and they have a bad experience, they'll feel cheated. This is actually proven: people have a psychological need to go for justice. That's why, when people have a bad experience, they come home on the Internet and flame you everywhere that they can.

Blogging fits into almost every marketing strategy because it gives you the opportunity to share your positive stories. You need to share your positive stories, because chances are that people out there will be sharing your negative stories.

## PSYCHOLOGICAL TRIGGERS IN BLOG POSTS

### How to Increase Shares

I've written about something called sound bites. People are more likely to share a blog post if you give them a sound bite to share. I can't believe more people aren't using this strategy right now. It makes my head spin.

For example, the blog post that I want to call your attention to is an article I wrote on [socialtriggers.com](http://socialtriggers.com) called "How to Get 2,281 Subscribers and Increase Traffic by 69% in 27 Days." In this blog post, I included a sound bite ("For a successful launch, you don't need unique ingredients. You need a unique recipe.").

Then right next to it, I put a link: "Tweet this."

This blog post is one of the most shared blog posts on my site. There were over 1600 tweets, most of which were sharing that particular quote that I gave.

I ran a couple of blog posts where I didn't have a sound bite but then I tried it again in my latest blog post, which is called, "The #1 Sales Killer on your Site and How to Get Rid of it for Good." I included a sound bite there ("You don't need to be interesting to not be boring"). Again, this one was shared over 200 times and people were sharing that particular sound bite because I gave them the option.

You could tell people to share your post, but that's a very generic thing to say. Every blog is saying, "Hey, share my stuff." That's not unique.

But when you give people something specific, they're more likely to do it. The more specific you are, the better.

### ***Avoid Analysis Paralysis***

A lot of people have five different social sharing buttons on all of their blog posts. That works. Don't get me wrong.

However, when you give people five options they often choose to take none of those options. It's analysis paralysis.

There's a study that found that if a post has 1,000 or more retweets, people are less likely to share it. It kind of implies, "Why should I tweet this? Everyone else already tweeted this."

## **How to Write a Psychologically Effective Blog Post**

### ***Derek's Headline Writing Process***

First I have to drink a cup of coffee.

Then I'll promptly write a headline.

Then I'll usually start writing the article.

Then I'll promptly rewrite my headline 100 times. Finally I settle on a headline three cups of coffee later (after pulling out 40 pieces of hair, punching myself in the face a few times). It's not usually perfect. I just spent so much time writing that headline that I get sick of working on it.

### ***Thinking About Your Headline***

I usually think about the source of traffic. Where is the traffic coming from? If you know where the source is coming from, you need your headline to match that source.

When I did those site review videos, almost every time I did one, I sent them to a custom landing page targeted directly to that audience. For example, when I did Pat Flynn's site review video, I had people come to a page that started with, "Hey, Pat Flynn readers." So, I already had that introduction to them.

So, you always want your headline to match the source. That's the first step.

Second step: I love benefit driven headlines. It's not like I invented this. This has been said for hundreds of years: you want to write benefit-driven headlines. You want a headline that promises people something they want.

A lot of people do curiosity-based headlines. Curiosity-based headlines work, but in my experience benefit-driven headlines almost always work better.

### ***The Introduction***

This comes down to something I read in a Joe Sugarman book called *Advertising Secrets of the Written Word*.

In this book, he talks about something called "The Slippery Slide." The point of your headline is to get people to read the first sentence. The point of your first sentence is to get people to read the second sentence. The point of the second sentence is to get people to read the third.

Once you get people to five sentences, it doesn't matter. Because once you get people to five sentences, chances are they're going to read the whole thing. So, my headline and the first five sentences are almost always geared towards making sure that people are ready to read the whole thing.

So what do I do in my openings? I almost always try to open what they call an information gap. "Information Gap" was actually coined by the guy George Lowenstein, a psychological researcher who was researching curiosity. He found that when there's a gap between what people know and what people want to know, they desperately need to fill that gap. So, the point of my opening is to open up those information gaps to a point where people have to read the rest of the article because they need to fill a gap. I'm taking advantage of just common curiosity.

### ***Keeping their Attention***

There's that whole thing where people say people have short attention spans on the Internet.

And that's true: people do have short attention spans for bad content.

If you write great content, people will read that whole article. If you're great on video, people will stay with you for that whole video. But you have to make sure that you're opening these information gaps. You have to make sure your headline's persuasive. You have to write succinctly. You have to do all these things and that's how you can get people to have huge attention spans.

## **Body**

Almost all of my content that I give is backed up by research and data. That's a key selling point for SocialTriggers.com, because when I started Social Triggers in March of 2011, I remember people were complaining about how Internet marketing blogs are all fluff with no data to back it up.

So I thought to myself, "If people are complaining about this, that could be my unique selling proposition. Social Triggers won't be like every marketing blog. It's going to be a marketing blog that only talks about data to back up all the advice that it gives."

So, throughout the body of that blog post, I'm giving advice while also backing up that advice with specific facts, data, and personal stories and anecdotes.

## **Conclusion**

I usually reiterate a reason why they should be subscribing to my site. If they're already subscribed to my site, they usually just gloss over that and they don't really see it. But if they aren't subscribed, it encourages them to then subscribe to my site.

## **Comments**

All bloggers want comments. Comments feel good.

I know that personally, comments do nothing for my business. But when I go and I write a blog post and it has less than 50 comments, I actually feel bad about myself. But here's the thing: comments are not something that you try to build. Comments are the result of something that you have already built.

When I send out an email broadcast to 20,000 people, I don't have to try to get 100 comments. 20,000 people are seeing that article. It's easy to get the comments when you have 20,000 people coming to read an article. So, it's really just a numbers game.

I don't think anyone should go out of their way to try to encourage comments. You need to write great content that people actually want to read and then solve a specific problem – and guess what? People will comment on that.

## **Methods to Increase Comments**

Now, if you want to write a blog post that is going to create comments, usually a nice controversy works.

For an example of controversy, I wrote a blog post called the "Content is King Myth: Debunked." This article started out with just saying, "If you leave your web design up to

the designer, you're an idiot. You've got to make sure that you focus on your design and you take full control of your design, because content isn't the most important thing, your design is."

Within the first three seconds of visiting a website, the main reason why people distrust a website is because of the design of that website. They haven't even read the content yet. They just got there. But they saw the design and they thought, "I don't trust this site."

That article sparked a whole controversy – especially in the blogging and design world. Designers were like, "Yeah, you're right! Design is king!" Then bloggers were coming in there fighting, saying, "You guys are crazy! Good design doesn't mean you're going to have good content." And they were fighting in the blog post.

That's a good way to get more comments.

But I don't think anyone should go out of their way to do that. Your main goal when you're creating a blog is to get some leads and sales for your business and then the comments are the result of that.

## **LEAD GENERATION IN BLOGGING**

### **Opt-In Form Locations**

There's really no strategy, per se. I just have the opt-in forms on the right places on the home page.

I've got a big feature box. When I first started promoting that, people started realizing how great that converted. So implementing the feature box was the first step of lead generation.

Just make sure you have the opt-in forms in the right place, like in the side bar, the bottom of the blog post, and on your about page. You always want opt-in forms on your about page. Your about page is one of the most visited pages on your site, so not putting an opt-in form on your about page is probably the dumbest thing that you could ever not do.

Once you have that, you can tweak and test conversions. You can test copy. You can do all those things. But in the end, once you have the opt-in forms in the right places, your next goal is to start getting some traffic.

## Traffic

My lead generation strategy is always about traffic. The more traffic you get, the more opt-ins you get. Once you get a decent level of traffic, you can start testing your opt-in methods to try to increase your opt-ins.

When you're getting 1000 hits a day, a simple ten percent increase could be the difference between 100 emails and 200 emails. When you're getting 50 hits a day, a ten percent difference might be five or ten emails. But in the end, what's an email really worth to you? It's not worth that much. You're better off getting more hits.

## Is there such a thing as Too Many Opt-Ins?

No. A lot of people ask me that. They're like, "Derek, when I come to your site, you've got one in your sidebar, one in the bottom of your blog post, and then another one in your footer. Isn't that too much?"

My site has one goal: my site is to turn a visitor into a subscriber. Once I get people as a subscriber, they don't see the opt-in forms anymore. They just read the content. They become blind to those opt-ins.

## BLOGGING MINDSET

It's not really about writing a lot of content. It's about writing hard-hitting content.

Social Triggers has fewer than 60 articles. It's not about how much content you create; it's about how good that content is and how you get exposure for that content.

A lot of people get in this content treadmill where they feel like they've got to write content every day of the week. They get burnt out after two months because they just wrote one blog post a day for two months and they start looking at their stats and they're like, "Wait a second. I'm not getting any traffic. What's going on here?"

The reason why blogging isn't working for them is because they're doing the wrong things. They're updating their site every day of the week. When you're first starting a website, you don't want to update daily. You want to have maybe five or six articles that are packaged up into a resource page, a good resource that solves a problem. After you have those articles, you want to update maybe once a week.



Then spend all that time you saved not creating content and spend that time marketing your blog by pushing more guest posts than you put even on your blog itself and doing more video interviews.

## How to Create Hard-Hitting Content

You have to know what you're talking about.

Almost every piece of content that I write, there's a lot of research that goes into it. There's testing that goes into it. Just in this interview, I must have mentioned at least five books that I've read.

It's about reading. I think I read two books a week. Don't just read stupid blogs that don't ever really say anything. You've got to read the good stuff. Read the research papers. Read the academic papers. Read books in the fields of science, psychology, marketing, and writing. Read books about everything.

That's where you get the information. That's where you really learn your craft. Then after you learn your craft, you start experimenting with all of these things you're reading and then you simply write about your experimentations.

That's how you write hard-hitting content.

## WORK ETHIC

I don't really like to talk about time management.

I don't manage it. I just put a lot of time into everything.

I wake up at seven or eight o'clock in the morning and I'll be working until midnight, every day of the week.

It's Friday right now and I'm working this evening. I'll probably be working all night.

Tomorrow is Saturday. Guess what I'm going to be doing tomorrow? I'll be working tomorrow.

You know what I'll be doing Sunday? I'm going to work Sunday too.

I don't manage my time. There's a lot of stuff that needs to be done and I work a lot of time. But the benefit is that I love psychology. I love Internet marketing. I love building Social Triggers. This isn't work for me. This is fun. So, I just put a lot of time into it.

# LOOKING FORWARD

Experts like to try and predict the future. I'm not a fortune teller. I don't try to predict the future. I look at what's working right now and I do that.

So, I don't want to predict where the Internet's going to go.

What I am going to say is this: there are more than 2 billion people with email accounts out there. Chances are some of them are your customers. Start building that email list.

## Psychology is Consistent

People don't change overnight. Human beings are human beings are human beings.

If you think that the human beings you're targeting are different than any other human in the world, you're wrong. You're targeting people. They might have different reading levels. They might solve problems a little differently. There might be some people who are more efficient than other people.

It doesn't matter. Bottom line is that people have problems and that people want to solve their problems. If you can be in the business of solving those problems, you don't have to worry about predicting the future. You just need to solve problems.

## Last Words

When you're in the process of researching how to build a blog, you can spend all the time in the world researching. But researching doesn't build your business. You've got to take action.

# ACTIONABLE TAKEAWAYS

## 1. Research your audience.

Ask your readers about what they struggle with through the first email in your autoresponder, on Facebook, or with a qualitative survey. Take their responses and group them to create data. Track the phrases they use to describe their problems so you can write specifically to them and their needs.

## 2. Write data-driven, research-based posts.

People appreciate when you give them advice based on data and research, not just your personal opinions. To become well-learned in your niche, read academic articles and insightful books about everything.

3. **Build information gaps into your blog posts.**

To encourage people to stay interested in your content, constantly allude to the benefits of continuing to read within the post, especially in the first five sentences of the introduction.

4. **Strategically place opt-ins.**

If your website's goal is to get email subscribers, put your opt-ins everywhere. Feature an opt-in on your homepage, at the top of your sidebar, at the bottom of your posts, and throughout your about page. If a reader is already subscribed, they'll train themselves to gloss over your opt-ins.

5. **Update higher quality, less often.**

If you're just starting out, it doesn't make sense to update your blog daily. For a lot of effort, you're only going to get a few extra visits. Instead, focus on writing higher quality posts and spending a lot more time promoting your blog.

# Video Marketing

## with Gideon Shalwick

**F**ive years ago, Gideon Shalwick had a good job in New Zealand, but he wasn't satisfied with it. He was sick of building an asset for someone else and not being able to follow his passion.

So he and his wife decided to quit their jobs, immigrate to Australia, and start a business.



Gideon's first venture was to write and sell a self-development book about his experiences. After six months of writing and preparing for an online launch, he and a promotion partners released the book. It was a success and Gideon was instantly hooked on entrepreneurship.

### Gideon Shalwick Today

Gideon has since transitioned from writing books to making online videos. Today, he runs a very successful business-centered blog on teaching people how to use video marketing to grow their business. He achieves this primarily through his YouTube channel ([GideonShalwick](#)) and his ebook, [Rapid Video Blogging](#).

## WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

- How Gideon Learned Video Skills
- The Best Camera, Microphone, and Software
- How to Dominate YouTube
- What You Need to Know about Video SEO
- How to Get More Views
- Selling with Video
- The Six Weapons of Influence
- The Future of Online Video

# HOW TO START OUT WITH ONLINE VIDEO

## How Gideon Started

My first video project was very soon after my first little online venture kind of failed.

After writing and marketing that first book, I realized that I didn't know how to get traffic. So I started interviewing some of the world's top internet marketers at the time. The first guy I interviewed was Mark Joyner, who's known as the godfather of Internet marketing.

Anyway, I got him on video at a conference and that gave me an idea: I could just interview everybody else on video.

### *Learning the Ropes*

This was five years ago, when no one was teaching online video production or online video marketing. So, I had to learn everything from scratch, through trial and error. It was terribly frustrating and the tools that I was using were very different from what you can use today.

I had to learn all about video file formats and the right camera and lighting and microphones and all this sort of stuff. I kept on pushing through.

I taught myself how to do video editing. I tried a ton of different programs and settled on the ones that I thought were best for my purposes.

I didn't realize at the time the essential and powerful skill that I was learning. I did it just to get the content done. But I was actually learning a very technical skill that no one else at the time really had.

## Building an Authority YouTube Channel

Building an authority YouTube channel or video blog is a really great long-term strategy for ultimate freedom.

The only issue with it is that it can take a little bit of time and focus to pull it off. But if you're entrepreneurially-minded and you don't mind putting in a little bit of effort before you see results, then it is an amazing strategy.

In fact, that is what I've done now with three different businesses. I've seen tremendous success with it. But each one of them would take perhaps six months or a year to build enough authority to launch a proper business from.

## ***Case Study: Rapid Video Blogging***

For example, my latest business venture that I launched is a product called Rapid Video Blogging and it's based on what I've learnt for the last five years about video marketing. Within a week or so, I managed to get 10,000 people to join my subscriber base and that led to a very comfortable, six-figure launch.

Since then, my list has doubled. I've got over 20,000 followers now. That was a few months ago and I've got a really solid business just from that now. That's the third time I've done that.

## ***Formula for Success***

I basically have a little formula that I apply and it's pretty straight-forward, but it works like gangbusters.

The first three things are a YouTube channel, combined with a video blog, and then a list-building mechanism.

But then what I do to put that whole thing on steroids is I multiply those three things by YouTube growth strategies. That's really what makes the difference between mediocre results and getting really excellent results. That gives you the potential for fame, fortune, and influence. Once you have this following, you have influence.

Once you have influence, you have the potential to do lots of wonderful things: make money, be a thought leader, change people's perspectives on certain issues, build charities ... whatever it is that you want to do with your business or organization.

## ***Making Money with an Authority YouTube Channel***

Now, if I want to make money, it's a matter of sending out a couple of emails and maybe making a little video on YouTube. I can make a ton of money that way.

My best example so far is an affiliate promotion I did a while ago where I sent out a couple of emails and I created a five minute video. The video only had about 4,500 views on it, but because the audience was so targeted, I managed to sell close to \$100,000 worth of product.

Now, of course it's an affiliate product, so there was a 50% commission fee and there were some refunds as well. So it's not like I got all \$100,000 for myself, but it's just an example of the sort of power you can have.

## Consulting

Now, if you're a bit stuck on cash and you want to get some cash flowing in really quick, another strategy that I used starting out is essentially to become a consultant.

Start by learning a core skill. Let's say that you learn the skill of video marketing or video production. Then you can do it for others. You can find clients, do it for them, and they pay you for your time. They'll pay you handsomely for your time, because people want to pay for video stuff.

So, with that strategy, you can basically learn as you go and get paid for it. While you do that, work towards building an authority presence as well.

That's quite a cool way of entering into it and I see a lot of people doing that successfully. Sure you only get paid once for your work, so it's not as capable of being leveraged. But if you need some cash flow, it's a wonderful, wonderful way to get started.

### *How to Become a Consultant*

I guess if you're starting from scratch, you could start by doing some projects for your friends, family, or even for yourself. Create your own case studies and start putting those on your website, blog, or whatever you're using for advertising yourself.

Maybe you could do some free projects for people and say, "Look, I'll work for free. You don't have to pay me. I'm just looking for a case study and a testimonial from you."

As you go, you will build more case studies to add to your portfolio and build from that. That way, you have something to show future clients, so that you'll be prepared if they ask, "What is it that you can do for me? Or could I see some of your work?"

I think that's very important. People always want to see proof that what you're doing can help them.

## The Two Sides to Online Video

There are two parts to this whole online video thing. There's the online video production side, which is sort of the more technical side. Then there's the online video marketing side.

They're two very different kettles of fish. You could be a very good online video producer, but you may not be a very good online video marketer.

Some clients may only be interested in your video production capability and they'll want to take care of the marketing themselves. In that case, it's just you creating cool videos for them and making sure they get online in a nice way. You manage the whole process for them, but you don't do any marketing.

If you want to do the marketing, that's another added benefit that you can offer for your clients.

### ***Start with Production?***

I think that the video production side is relatively easy. It's the video marketing side that's a bit harder.

So maybe a good way to get started is just to create videos for people where there's not much marketing or strategy involved (product display videos, member content videos, or interview videos).

Then as you learn, you can start adding a video marketing component to your service as well.

## **TOOLS OF THE TRADE**

### **PC or Mac?**

I started on PC and that was a nightmare. An absolute nightmare. But I settled on Sony Vegas back then, that ended up giving me the best results at the most reasonable cost.

That worked okay for me, but then I switched over to Apple. Immediately my productivity for video production increased by about ten times.

### ***The Apple Advantage***

They've just nailed it. They've nailed the workflow, making the videos look amazing, and making it easy to get them online.

When I switched over to Mac, the video editing programs that I used were just so much better and more intuitive. The rendering times were much faster and the end result was much better, much clearer, much more pretty. The software allowed me to do that easily.

PC has caught up in a big way since I used it, but back then it was just very, very difficult to create videos that looked good.



## Video Editing Software

I started with iMovie, worked my way through to Final Cut Express, and I ended up settling with ScreenFlow.

Once I started using ScreenFlow, I thought, “Why bother with Final Cut?” ScreenFlow did everything that I wanted it to and it was much easier to use and gave me amazing results.

Even to this day, if I want to get a video done really quickly, just something with simple cuts and very simple editing, I use ScreenFlow. Just record, get it on ScreenFlow, export, upload, done. It’s just so good.

### *Outsourcing Editing*

Currently, I don’t do much editing myself anymore. My business has progressed so well now that I can afford to have a team of video editors to do all my editing for me.

That’s really helped me take my business to heights that I couldn’t have even imagined. My videos look so much more professional now than I could have ever even tried to do on my own.

## Camera

At the moment, the camera that I use is a Canon 60D. For me it’s the best DSLR camera for video production.

The Canon 70D is pretty awesome too, but it’s much more expensive and it doesn’t have a nice flip LCD screen that you can turn around so that you can see yourself while you’re recording. That’s one really key feature in the 60D.

The other really cool feature in the 60D is the ability to adjust the sound levels for your audio. On most of the other models, there’s this thing called automatic gain control in the audio. They do that to help consumers, but it’s actually bad if you want to have more professional sound. As soon as you stop talking, it increases the white noise sound. It just doesn’t sound professional.

The main drawback with the Canon 60D is that the maximum recording time per clip is about twelve minutes. So it’s not a good idea to use it for recording seminars. But if you’re just doing short, ten minute videos, it’s a brilliant, brilliant camera. You can put all types of different lenses on it to make it look super cool.

## ***A Beginner Alternative***

If you're just getting started with this, maybe you don't want to use a DSLR camera, because it's got quite a steep learning curve.

A great camera is the Kodak Zi8. It's a little camera, about one or two hundred bucks. Great for just getting started and it records in HD. It's got an external mic jack on it.

I've used the Zi8 many times to record some great videos.

## **Lights**

Lighting is very important.

I use professional lights now that are a bit more expensive. They are white, fluorescent, professional video lights. I use them because they create a nice, white light. They don't get hot and it creates a very beautiful, professional effect.

I started with some halogen lamps that I just got from a hardware store. They cost me like \$50 bucks. But they had a sort of yellow tinge and they got really hot, so I stopped using those after a while.

I've seen people use the power saving little light bulbs now as well. They're a lot cheaper. You can get away with probably \$50-\$100 bucks and you can have your studio set up pretty well with really nice lighting.

## **Microphones**

My microphone that I currently use with my Canon 60D is a wireless microphone from Sony, the UTX-B2. So that plugs into my camera and then I can have a very nice, little, wireless lapel mic on me when I record the videos.

They're a bit more expensive, \$700 bucks or so. You can probably get it cheaper on Amazon.

## ***Beginner Microphones***

You don't need to start with the UTX-B2.

I actually used a \$30 Audiotecnica microphone that I got from an electronics store. It provided near professional quality audio and the only drawback was that it was not wireless. It came with a four meter cord.

You don't need to spend a lot of money to get a great result.

# USING YOUTUBE

## Why YouTube?

Really it's all about traffic on YouTube. That is the short answer. Last time I checked, YouTube is the second biggest search engine, after Google.

Three billion views a day is pretty impressive. Personally, I can't really fathom the number three with nine zeros next to it. It's just incredible.

There's a ton of people who hang out on YouTube every single day and it's not just teenagers any more. The main demographic now is between 18 and 54, which is quite a wide range. As we progress through time, since we're still on the growth curve, more and more people will get on it. So more and more niches will get opened up on YouTube.

## Linking Outside of YouTube

I create my videos and my content on YouTube, but then I redirect the views that I get from that off to my own online assets that I've created, like my video blog and my email database.

I think that it's absolutely critical that you do that, because you don't own your own YouTube channel. YouTube does.

So if something goes wrong, you want to make sure that you've built your own asset that you can continue with.

### *Strategies to Get People onto Your Site*

One very simple thing you can do is to just say at the end of your video, "Hey, look at my site. I've got some cool stuff there."

If you can offer them a free resource, that's even better. You can tell people to go to your site and download your free resource, like a free ebook or free report or some free videos.

That works really well, especially if the content that you have in your video is aligned with the free content that you're giving away. So, that's a very, very simple strategy and you can immediately see a difference when you start doing that.

### ***Putting the Link Directly in the Video***

If someone watches my video on YouTube and they like it, they might embed it on their own site. Then the description area for that video wouldn't be on their site. So, if someone else comes and watches that video on that site, there won't be a link in the description video that they can access.

So then it's important to have your URL just straight in the video itself.

### ***Using the Description Area***

This is so elementary, but always have your URL in the description area. Even point people there to click on it and go to your site.

### ***Annotations***

If you've got a ton of videos on YouTube already, but they don't tell people about your website, make use of YouTube annotations. Just list your website address in an annotation inside your video. That can give an instant boost to traffic as well.

## **Custom YouTube Background**

You want to have a nice, professional look. Spend a couple hundred dollars on having a nice YouTube background developed for you. You can outsource that to places like [99 Designs](#), [E lance](#), or [Guru](#) – just get it done to look nice.

If you're good with graphics yourself, just create something that looks in line with what you're trying to achieve with your channel. It doesn't have to be super fancy. It just has to be simple and professional, so that when people visit your channel, they know you're not just another teenager who's started a channel to upload videos about cats, dogs, and babies. People can tell you're a bit more serious about creating valuable content.

## **Encouraging Subscription**

I value an email subscriber higher than I value a YouTube subscriber, but YouTube subscribers are pretty important too. That's one of the things that YouTube looks at to figuring out if you have an authority channel or not.

I've been pretty privileged. My growth for subscribers has been pretty healthy, even though I haven't asked people to subscribe to my YouTube channel. I guess when you have great content, people naturally want to subscribe.

But certainly all of the big guys in YouTube have a very strong call to action to subscribe to the YouTube channel.

## Monetization

For some of the top guys on YouTube, their main monetization strategy is through YouTube's partner program. Some of them make very comfortable, six-figure incomes just from that.

From the tests that I've done, the income you make from a partner program is actually very, very small in comparison to the money that you can make if you implement the system that I teach. In that system, you have a YouTube channel, a video blog or squeeze page, and a list-building mechanism.

So, with that sort of growth system in place, you can still make money from a partner program but you can also increase your income a hundredfold. Seriously, there's so much potential. So, yeah, get subscribers, but also get people onto your email subscriber base, because that's where you're going to make more money.

## GETTING MORE VIEWS

### Going Viral

There are naturally viral videos, like some of the music videos you see on YouTube or some of those baby videos. They go viral with the built-in mechanism in YouTube and that's why YouTube's such a great place.

But you can also apply some cool strategies to encourage your videos to go viral.

One strategy is to run competitions. As part of the entry requirements for the competition, you get people to spread the word about your video.

For example, you could say, "I will give you access to this report, that normally sells for \$100. But in return, I would like you to share this video with five of your friends." So each of those five friends, if the process works, will come and watch the video and then share it with five of their friends.

So, that's one thing that you can do to help it go viral. If you want to put it on steroids, you can start doing social media competitions with Facebook, Twitter, and Google + to help spread the word. You can get very creative in helping your videos go viral.

## Partnerships

At the moment, I don't do too many collaborations on YouTube. That's simply because I have a pretty nice following right now.

But partnerships played a big role when I was developing a project in the magic niche, selling magic tricks. To kick start the process we started leaving comments on the videos of the key players in the niche on YouTube. Eventually, we asked them for an interview.

There's this one guy who had maybe 10,000 YouTube subscribers. On top of his 10,000 YouTube subscribers, he had 30,000 email subscribers, which is pretty cool. So we thought, "Ok, let's see if we can interview this guy." So we asked him for an interview and immediately he replied to us, "I would love to do an interview. You're the first person to ever ask me."

That person later became one of our key promotion partners for our launch.

We just rinsed and repeated that process for a number of other big players on YouTube. Some people didn't have an email list, but they had 30,000 YouTube subscribers. This one guy we interviewed really loved the interview and he posted it to his own channel. So instantly we got audience with 30,000 of his subscribers. It gave us an instant spike in views and subscribers on YouTube – and hence traffic and leads, because of the way that we set up the system.

So, joint venture partnerships are very, very powerful and developing them is probably the most effective strategy that you can apply.

## VIDEO SEO

It all starts with a bit of keyword research. Try to find keywords that people are already searching for, so that you know there's demand for that keyword or that keyword phrase.

I ask myself the question, "What would people type in naturally to find the kind of content in my video?" So, I would type in whatever comes naturally into the search box on YouTube and see what comes up for the suggestions.

That gives me just an idea of what people are already searching for.

Next, I go to the [YouTube search keyword tool](#). It's different than the Google Keyword search tool, because people search differently on YouTube than they do on Google.

## On-Page Optimization

Once I have my main keyword phrase decided on, I throw that in at the beginning of my title. I throw it in the description area as well, among other nice, organic content.

Then inside your tags, you will have that as your first keyword phrase as well, alongside other keyword phrases. But put your main one right at the beginning.

That's really simple, basic stuff, but a lot of people don't do it. So, if you do it, you're going to be the hit of the crowd already.

## Off-Page Optimization

The key word here is *backlinking*. Create high quality backlinks to your videos on YouTube for the keyword phrases that you want to rank for.

I'll give you an example. Recently, someone approached me who was running a very, very successful blog who had a page rank of seven. You don't see that too often. That means the site gets a ton of traffic and is very authoritative.

They said, "Gideon, can you create some videos for us we want to throw on our site?"

I haven't gone through that yet, but if they were to embed one of my videos on their site it essentially creates a PR7 backlink to my video.

In turn, YouTube and Google will then notice and they will say, "There's something happening here. There's this big, authority site that's giving this video a vote of confidence. So therefore it must be valuable."

I'm not an SEO expert, so I don't know all the details about that, but I do know that if a high-page ranking website embeds your video, your chance of getting ranked in higher in Google and in YouTube is very good.

## Backlinks through Your Own Blog

Backlinking comes part and parcel with a strategy that I teach.

When you build your own authority video blog and you embed your YouTube video on your video blog, you can create a high-quality backlink to your own video on YouTube.

For example, my own blog right now, GideonShalwick.com, is a page rank five site. Every time I have a new YouTube video, I embed that video on my site. Then, it automatically creates a page rank five back-link back to my YouTube video, which immediately gives YouTube and Google the signal that this video is important.

### ***Optimizing Video Blog Posts***

Often I have the exact same keyword phrase on my title for my video blog post as the title on YouTube. It seems to help make both your video on your video blog and your video on YouTube (the same video) rank better in Google.

So I have cases where I'll have two video thumbnail results on the first page of Google.

Another thing that I do for each video is I have a very small, very brief two or three paragraph little introduction that's unique content about the video. After the video, I always list the full transcript of the video as well.

## **Captions**

The obvious reason to have captions is for people who have a hearing disability, so they can follow along by reading what I'm saying. Also, people who might be at the office and want to turn down the sound can still follow along. Some people just like reading the text in any case while listening to and watching the video as well. It just reinforces the content.

So, all those things are pretty cool. But there's another reason that I use it for on top of all of those reasons, and that's for search engine optimization.

### ***Automatic Captions***

YouTube creates captions in any case. They have a voice recognition algorithm that tries to figure out what you're saying. Now, if you're American, that's fine. But if you're a South-African-Kiwi-Australian like me with a weird accent, the automatic captioning doesn't really work. It comes up with some really strange suggestions.

### ***Upload Your Own Captions***

It's really simple: YouTube gives you that option just to upload a text file of your transcript. They then figure out where the text needs to go and when. It's pretty clever.

But what's really awesome about uploading your own text file is that the text file that you upload gets indexed by YouTube and Google. So, all of that text becomes searchable by YouTube and Google. So there are some pretty cool SEO benefits,



especially for the long term. My gut feeling is that manually created caption files will become more and more important as time goes by, so you might as well do it.

Apparently, the automated captions don't get indexed.

## THE VIDEO ADVANTAGE

I've been involved in a number of promotions now where I've competed with other promoters who had email lists far greater than I had. I've out-performed them with my much smaller audience.

I think the reason for that is because I have a high level of engagement with my audience.

### Engagement

The main advantage for me with video is the connection it helps me make with my audience.

I just went out to Los Angeles about a month ago and spoke at a BlogWorld Expo event. There were about like 4,000 people there. Just amazing.

A ton of people came up to me and said, "Gideon, you know, I've been watching your videos for two years and I just really feel like I know you. You're like my friend."

I hadn't met these people. I'd never seen these people, never talked to them, but they felt like they knew me because they had watched my videos. That results in a very high level of engagement from my audience.

### Preference

People seem to be more keen to watch videos than read text.

For something like 70% of people, their first learning mode is visual. That means that 70% of people, potentially, would be more interested in watching a video than reading the text on your blog. So, you've got access to a really wide audience.

Especially if you have engaging content, people would much rather watch a movie than read a book.

## Persuasion

When you're reading a text-based site, for all you know the owner could have paid a copy writer \$10,000 bucks to write a bunch of text and then put their name on it.

But if you're on video presenting an idea yourself, people can see and hear the words coming from your mouth. So the trust level is much higher because intuitively, subconsciously, people know that the words are coming from your own mouth. It creates a stronger authority and credibility.

## Conversion

When you get that engagement with your audience through video, it automatically increases your conversion rates.

### *Gideon's System for Selling*

I have two levels of free, before I introduce people to any of my products or more sales messages.

The first level of free is my videos on YouTube. This is where people can watch my videos and they don't have to opt-in for the content. They can decide to subscribe if they want to, but they don't have to.

The second level of my free stuff is where they have to come to my website. They have to give me their email address to be able to get access to more advanced stuff, like my 92-page report.

Now, by the time they get into my business funnel by giving me their contact details, they've already seen two or three of my videos. So they already feel like they know, like, and trust me.

So, since they trust me because of the process that they've come through, their chance of taking action is much greater. Video just lends itself so well to help you increase those conversion rates.

## INFLUENCE

A wonderful book to read is [\*Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion\*](#) by Robert Cialdini. He talks about the six weapons of influence, which you can use for good purposes to help people to take a certain action.

I will give you a quick summary, but I really recommend that you read the book as well, as it's just excellent. It's the most important business book that I've ever read and I've read a ton of books.

## **The Six Weapons of Influence**

### ***Reciprocity***

If you give something to someone free, without any strings attached, they automatically want to give something back for you. It really is like the golden rule: give first before you expect to get. It's just built into our psyche as human beings.

When you give first, your chances of receiving becomes much better. Give generously with good heart and it will come back to you.

In my process, I give people my free videos and the free report. It's a reciprocity thing.

### ***Liking***

When people like you, they want to do business with you. Your ability to influence a person who likes you is so much greater.

Video lends itself to people liking you. They build a relationship with you by watching your videos, so they automatically start liking you.

### ***Commitment and Consistency***

This one is a bit trickier to pull off. Basically, the principle is that when somebody makes a commitment in a certain direction, they're very likely to stay consistent with that commitment.

Let's say that somebody has watched ten of my videos already and they sign up to my Rapid Video Blogging report for free and for my free video course as well. That's about two hours of content there.

By the time people have gone through all that, they've made a commitment to online video, just by spending all this time learning about it. Because of that, they're likely to stay consistent with that commitment to online video. So, if I then have a product that's in line with that, that extends their video knowledge, their chances of continuing in that direction is much higher.

So commitment and consistency is more subtle, but it's very powerful.

## **Authority**

This is where you basically use other authorities to endorse what you're doing. So, for example, you get the authorities within your niche to endorse your product, your services, your blog, or you as a person. That can be very powerful and people really respond to that.

## **Social Proof**

This is very, very powerful. This is basically where other people in your audience give you testimonials, reviews, and basically say that your business is awesome.

Other people see that who come into your business and they think, "Okay, all these other people are saying this is a great business or a great product. That gives me confidence that I should be part of this too."

Social proof is tremendous. It's very, very powerful.

## **Scarcity**

The sixth one is another very, very powerful one. You've got to be careful with this because some people use it in a way that's not very honest. Scarcity, basically, refers to the fact that people respond to deadlines and scarcity in numbers and they take action because of those factors.

So, what you see with some of the bigger launches is that people only have their product available for a week and then they close doors. Often you see results double in the last day, just because of that deadline. Sometimes people limit the number of people they get into the product or into the course.

## **Influence Responsibly**

With all these things, you can use them for good or evil. My recommendation is to think very clearly about the reasons why you want to use these triggers and only use them for good purposes.

There's a difference between influence and manipulation. There are manipulation strategies that are much more harsh and that are based in fear and greed. I think it's best to stay away from manipulating people, because it comes back to bite you in the end.

# LOOKING FORWARD

## Video's Growth Curve

Back 20-25 years ago, the product adoption life cycle of the Internet began. About 15 years ago, it just took off. Very steep growth curve.

That was mainly text based and mainly audio-based stuff at the beginning. Now, how long ago did online video start? About five or six years ago, right? So, the rest of Internet has had a big lead on the online video.

So, the online video curve is still lagging behind the Internet curve. What that's telling me is that we ain't seen nothing yet. There are some very, very exciting things coming.

## Mobile & Social Media

Something to watch out for is online video and how it's going to be used on mobile phones and tablets. That's a pretty big trend.

How video interacts with social media is also something to watch.

## Niches

On YouTube, I see the expansion of more niches and also the specialization of niches, as we go further and further ahead.

The Internet has just gone nuts with digging down into different niches and specializing and specializing to the point where it's difficult to find an untouched niche. Whereas, with YouTube, there's still opportunity to tap into new niches. Even though there may not be traffic and demand on YouTube for it right now, in a year's time that may be a very different story.

So, get in and start positioning yourself now, ahead of the crowd. Once the crowd gets there, you'll be well-positioned and you can take advantage.

## Last Words

It's difficult to predict the future because it changes so quickly. A year ago, we couldn't have seen exactly what we have now. A year from now, who knows what it's going to be?

All I know is that it's a very, very exciting ride.

# ACTIONABLE TAKEAWAYS

## 1. **Create your YouTube Channel, Website, and List-Building Mechanism.**

Pick a brandable YouTube channel, try to get the same domain, and create a free gift that's relevant to your viewers. Then set up an email opt-in landing page so people can give you their email in exchange for the gift.

## 2. **Set up your video production studio.**

If you're a beginner, you can start by getting a \$200 Kodak Zi8 camera, \$30 Audiotecnica microphone, and makeshift lighting. As you grow, upgrade to a nicer camera (Canon 60D), a wireless Sony UTX-B2 microphone, and professional video lights.

## 3. **Point people back to your website.**

When you upload your videos to YouTube, put the url at the end of the video, in the description, and linked through an annotation. Your goal is to send them to a landing page where they can opt-in for more information.

## 4. **Optimize your videos for search.**

Start by using YouTube's keyword research tool to nail down a keyword. Make a video for that keyword. Put the keyword at the beginning of the title, beginning of the description, and as the first tag. Then, transcribe your video and upload the transcription so YouTube can generate captions. The transcription tells YouTube/Google what the content is about so it ranks higher. Plus, your video will have accurate captions for the hearing impaired.

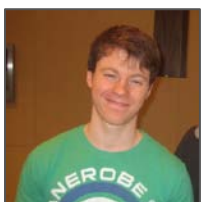
## 5. **Influence people through video.**

Video is the most influential communication channel. There's less competition, people prefer watching videos, and people connect with you more if they see you in a video. It's the next wave of the internet that people are going to start using more.

# Part 3:

# Getting Traffic

## SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION



*“There are tons of different factors that go into ranking well, but the biggest is high-quality content.”*

**David Sinick, [Media-Beast.com](#)**

## SOCIAL MEDIA WISDOM

*“Social media is not about one time hits. It’s about building a loyal following over time.”*

**Syed Balkhi, [List25.com](#)**



## FACEBOOK DOMINATION



*“You don’t want to start if you don’t have a funnel. If you just have a fan page, that’s the fastest way to blow your money. Make sure that you have a solid funnel with a product or multiple products.”*

**Brian Moran, [Get10000Fans.com](#)**

# Search Engine Optimization

with David Sinick

**D**avid Sinick first tried to make money online when he was in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade. He designed some novelty t-shirts and began selling them on an online forum. Ten years later, he still has about 50 of the shirts sitting in his attic.



David's next attempt was Fitpreneur, a blog on which he interviewed professionals in the fitness industry. Though he learned a lot from running the site, he never made a dollar from it.

## David Sinick Today

Today, he runs a successful SEO company called [BeastMedia](#), with his partner Tom Lambert. His clients include Michael Dunlop and Media Beast actually doubled Income Diary's search engine traffic over a period of five months. He's also the co-author of the [WordPress SEO Blueprint](#), a comprehensive course on search engine optimization for WordPress websites.

## WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

- What Google's Looking For
- Blogging and SEO
- Social Media and SEO
- On-Site SEO Optimization
- Tactics Building Off-Site Links
- How to Avoid Getting Punished by Google
- Rising Trends in SEO



# OVERVIEW

## What Google Wants

Google is all about helping people find what they're looking for.

Basically, if someone goes to Google and they search for something and they find exactly what they're looking for, they're going to think, "Google did a good job, so I'm going to use it again next time." Maybe next time they'll click on an ad or two.

So your goal should be to make your site high enough quality that Google's going to want to rank you to be the first result. If you have a high quality website with high quality content, Google's going to want to send you that traffic. It all fits in with their business model.

## Focus on Quality

There are tons of different factors that go into ranking well, but the biggest is high-quality content. So, create content that people want to read, that is useful and valuable to people.

That's why a lot of these big sites are run by guys who don't know anything about SEO. They still rank really well because they started with high-quality content. That foundation of super-high quality content is the biggest thing. You're not going to go very far if your site is a bunch of garbage.

## Off-Site SEO

Off-site SEO is link-building and having other sites link to your website. Basically, that signals to Google that this site is high-quality.

You want to get people linking to your site, be it through web 2.0 properties, guest posts, or social bookmarking. There are a ton of different methods, but the ultimate goal is getting links to your site.

## On-Site SEO

On-site SEO is optimizing your site properly so that Google knows what you want to rank for and what your site's about. It's basically like decoding your website for Google's little search engine spiders and robots.

## How Google Works

I can give you the basic gist of what I know.

Basically, a piece of content goes online and there are servers somewhere that are pinged. That signals Google like, “Oh, there’s a piece of content. Go check it out.” Then their little spider robots go and crawl the content and see what it’s about. They either index it or they don’t index it and if they do, then you’re into the search results.

Indexing can happen almost immediately, like on sites like TechCrunch and stuff. When they post an article, it’s indexed like right then. But on a brand new site, it might take like two to three days, or even longer.

I honestly wish that I could give you a more in-depth, technical explanation, but it’s not something that I’ve really focused on. To me, that’s kind of more like trivia.

## FULL CIRCLE SEO STRATEGY

### Bloggging

I’m really attached to blogging. We also do ranked product pages, but it’s not ideal. Those pages are not really designed to rank. A lot of times, eventually, they get busted.

#### *Example of SEO through Blogging*

We’re starting with a new client who’s in the self-defense market.

Basically, he’s got his product pages and those are two separate websites. We’ve also got his main blog, where he’s going to write tons of really, really high quality content. I’ve told him to write 2000-3000 word articles about certain subjects. Then we get those pages ranked and those articles basically become sales letters, in the sense that they’re selling his content.

I should say this: they don’t all have to be 2,000 or 4,000 words. It’s just that longer content ranks better, period. The stuff that ranks the best on IncomeDiary is about 6,000 words.

#### *Blogs Designed to Sell*

Some of blog posts are really more like sales letters. Sometimes they don’t even look like a blog post, it’s a single column page. That works really well even though it literally

will look like a sales letter. It will have like little “Add to Cart” buttons and especially if it’s an affiliate program.

### ***Sales Pitches Disguised as Content***

One of the biggest things that I don’t see people do enough is promoting articles that are really just a pitch disguised as content. Those are so freaking effective and people love it.

For example, Joe Marion is like a ridiculously successful fitness marketer and a lot of times he’ll write these articles that are like, “One Secret Food for Fat Loss.” Then, at the end, it’s like, “Oh, if you liked this, then you’re probably going to like this other thing.” Those sell really well.

## **Social Media & SEO**

It’s becoming more and more important now. In search results, sometimes you’ll get Twitter results. You’ll get just like your friends content and Google + results and all that. Google is moving more towards social media and social networking based partly on the fact that they just released Google +.

Aside from links, it’s a way for them to determine whether a site is quality or not. If people are liking, tweeting, and +1’ing the content, that means that it must be important and people must like it. Therefore, it should get some relevance. So, that’s why Google got the +1 thing, so that they could have their own measurement tool.

I think they’ve experimented with rearranging rankings based on +1’s, though I doubt that’s ever going to be a permanent change in terms of how important it is. It will be a ranking factor, but not the single determining ranking factor. So I think it’s really important to have on your site and that’s one of the on-site factors: having the like button, the tweet button, the +1 button, and encouraging people to share their stuff all over the web. That’s huge.

# ON-SITE SEO

## Starting Out

### *Use WordPress*

The first thing I would suggest is that if you're publishing content, use [WordPress](#). It's so much easier to do it in WordPress. There are so many fewer steps that you have to deal with. So just use WordPress, please.

### *Use Yoast's SEO Plugin*

The next thing I would do is get Yoast's [WordPress SEO plugin](#).

It lets you write the title, description, and keyword tags for each piece of content that you create. The title and description meta tags are kind of like the first things that Google will see when they get to your page.

### *Get the Right Domain*

Your domain name has some importance. Basically, you want to find a healthy balance between a brandable domain name and something you can rank with as well.

Ultimately, if you know SEO and you know what you're doing, you don't really need to get a domain name with a keyword in it. Like, IncomeDiary is proof of that. We rank it without trouble. But it does give you an advantage when you have an exact match domain or a domain with a keyword in it.

### *Page URLs*

Go to Permalinks in WordPress and you change them so it's `/%postname%/`. That makes it so that you when you do a new post, it uses the actual title of the post.

## Fundamentals

### *The Title Tag*

The title tag is 60 characters and you basically want to get your keyword in there while also describing the thing. That's not always easy because there's not that much space to write it, but you don't have to go too crazy. It doesn't have to be an elaborately written title or anything. It just needs to say what it is.

With your title tags, let's say there are three keywords. It will be Keyword #1 and then a pipe (shift + \), then Keyword #2 and then a pipe, and then Keyword #3. That's not the best in terms of clicking on it, but in terms of SEO it definitely does help rank.

### ***The Description Tag***

Then the description tag is 155 characters, I think. You want to describe the content while also drawing the click. Again, you've got to find that balance between being blatantly SEO content and actually being salesy and drawing clicks.

### ***The Keyword Tag***

Tom keeps telling me that it has no relevance at all anymore and Google doesn't care. But I just do it anyway because it takes like literally less than 10 seconds. I just put in our top three keywords that we're trying to rank that post or page for.

### ***Headline***

The headline is basically the title. This isn't necessarily the title tag; it depends on what theme you're using. You're going to have to see.

The headline's html tag is h1. Basically, your goal is the same as with the title tag: you want to get your keyword in there and you want to write a good headline, write a good title.

### ***Keyword Density***

You want to focus on keyword density a little bit, but you don't want to go too crazy with it. We try to go for 2-3% keyword density. Basically, if your keyword is "Make Money," then you want to get that keyword to show up two or three times for every 100 words.

However, it has to make sense. It has to be clear English. Try to write at an eighth grade level, please. If it's gibberish, Google knows. They're not stupid. If the word is just randomly put in the sentence and it doesn't make sense, they're going to be like, "Seriously, dude?"

So, try to get it in there as much as you can as long as it makes sense.

## On-Site SEO Essentials

### *Media*

Images and videos are a big part of on-site SEO – especially YouTube videos. Obviously, YouTube being owned by Google is very helpful. So, a lot of times we'll put YouTube videos in there.

We definitely put up multiple images. With images, we set up the alternate text tag. When you're importing the image, it will say "alternate text" and you can just fill it in.

By the way, for file names, always use dashes, not underscores. I think I've read before that that's the proper formatting that Google likes. They just like dashes.

### *Content Length*

Longer content means better SEO, period. My buddies over at SurfIQ.com did a survey of like 15,000 keywords and the average first page result for any of the top ten results had over 2,000 words in it, so that's something to consider.

You can rank shorter content, but it's not easy. You're kind of trying to walk with missing a leg.

### *Interlinking*

Interlinking is another thing that's really helpful. The easier it is for Google to navigate through your site, the better it is for you.

So, if you have a page and it links to another page inside your site, and the anchor text is "Fat Loss," it's telling Google that that page is about fat loss and therefore it will give it some extra emphasis for that keyword. If you have a lot of pages linking to that page inside of your site, it tells them that that page is an important page on your website.

It's very similar to how you do out-bound linking into your site, just inside of your actual site. You definitely want to get into the habit of interlinking between your posts. Just do it when it makes sense to. I don't have a set number of links per post, but I would say two to three. It depends on how long your content is, too.

## OFF-SITE SEO & LINK BUILDING

### *The Basics*

Linking to your site is about two things: relevance and quality.

## **Relevance**

If your site is about making money online, links from Internet marketing sites and other related websites would be considered relevant. Getting a link from a site about car detailing is not as relevant and will therefore not be as helpful.

However, I will say that we do a lot of link-building from non-relevant sites. It's just always better to get relevant sites.

## **Quality**

One of the biggest determinants of quality is page rank. That's kind of like the big be-all-end-all for Google. It's kind of like the easiest way to measure how high quality a site is.

If a site has a page rank 8, for example, it's a pretty high-quality site. If the page rank is 4 or 5, that's still pretty solid. So, you want links from relevant sites with high page rank. That is usually the way we go.

## **Where to Send Links**

You definitely want to send a lot of links to the home page of your site, but you also want to be mixing and matching where you're linking to on your site. You want to be doing what's called deep linking, which is linking to different pages on your site.

Google's all about the natural link-building. Making natural links, all of the links wouldn't just go to your home page. They would go to different pages on your site. So, linking to deep content helps a lot.

## **Anchor Text**

You want the anchor text to be relevant for what you want to rank for. So, if it's a fat loss page, the anchor text should be "Fat Loss." However, you want to make sure that you don't use the same anchor text too often. Again, it's not natural if every link to your site is just "Fat Loss," right?

You get something called an anchor over-optimization penalty and that will knock your site down forty spots in the results. Getting penalized by Google is like someone punching you in the face repeatedly. It's not fun. So, you want to be careful there.

## **Link Velocity**

This is the principle of how quickly you're building links. You want to start off slow and then slowly build up. Then you can kind of exponentially increase. Basically, this is another thing about being natural. Initially, a site is not going to get millions of links

unless it goes viral. But usually, the viral pattern is an exponential curve. It doesn't just happen all of sudden.

So, you want to be careful. You want to start off slow.

### ***NoFollow Links***

NoFollow links supposedly don't pass page rank. So, people like to say that NoFollow links are not worth getting. However, a link is a link is a link.

Nobody is naturally going to get all DoFollow links, so you want to mix and match getting NoFollow and DoFollow.

## **Ways of Link-Building:**

### ***Guest Posting***

I really like guest posting because it has many more benefits than just SEO.

First off, in order to be able to write a guest post for blogs, you need to be a good writer. If you're not a good writer, then maybe it isn't the best thing for you. You also need to set up good relationships with people.

The truth is that most bloggers are lazy. It helps their site when they have high quality content coming in, not just from them. A lot of bloggers will get started hot and they'll write all their content themselves. Then after a while, they'll be like, "Dang. I really need help writing posts." So, they'll look for people to do guest posts for them.

Depending on who you post for, they might mail to that post. So not only will you get a link from that site (which is ideally a relevant site with the proper anchor text), you'll get actual traffic as well.

### ***Web 2.0 Properties***

Guest posting is really fun, but you can't really get that many links at once. Writing blog posts is a time intensive thing. So our real core of our strategy revolves around web 2.0 properties.

Basically, a web 2.0 property is a site that allows you to post your own content. Some examples of web 2.0 properties are sites like Squidoo, the hosted WordPress sites, Blogger, Blogspot, and the wiki sites. There are literally like 300 hundred.

Since they are constantly being updated with thousands and thousands of new pages of content every single day, Google considers them to be super-high quality. Squidoo is



a page rank 8, for example. Granted, the page that you create on Squidoo is not necessarily going to be page rank 8, but it is going to be high quality.

So, we'll write a high quality article and post it onto Squidoo, then have that article link back to our site. Or, if we can get away with it, we'll spin an article and we'll post it to just Google. That's for people who are either lazy or cheap. It's not really a long-term strategy.

### ***Link Reels***

This is a nifty little strategy that we use. Basically, if you want to make a link reel, you create a piece of content on Squidoo and you link that piece of content back to your main money site, either your home page or a deep link.

Then you have that Squidoo lens link to another web 2.0 property. So, it could be another Squidoo lens; it could be a wiki page; it could be an article that you've written elsewhere. It could be any piece of content on a web 2.0 property.

That piece of content links back to your main money site and then links to yet another web 2.0 property. But they don't reciprocate links.

It goes around and around in a circle. It ends up looking like a bicycle wheel, where you have the money site being linked to by every web 2.0 property and each web 2.0 property links to another one.

That basically passes authority between all of those web 2.0 properties and makes each one a little bit more powerful. Since you link all of those back to your main money site, it helps a lot. So that's a big part of what we do and it works extremely well.

### ***Spamming Web 2.0***

One of the cool things about web 2.0 properties is that, since there's so much content being posted on them all the time, you can build a whole bunch of spammy, low-quality links to them and they don't get penalized. It just gets mixed up in the mash of the thousands of other posts. Since, everyone's doing it, it's impossible for Google to be like, "Oh he's doing something wrong. Stop him." It just works really well.

### ***Link Building for Links***

We'll even build links to our web 2.0 properties. We'll build links to our links, basically. That will make them even more authoritative, which passes the authority back to the main money site.

That's something called link laundering, which sounds really illegal. But it's not, I promise you. Though I guess people would consider it black hat.

Usually the way you do that is you use lower-quality links than the initial ones, just because it's faster and easier. So, the links could be on social bookmarks, through article marketing, forum profiles and that kind of crap.

### ***Article Marketing***

A lot of people will tell you that article marketing is dead and I think that's the absolute truth. If you're writing high quality articles, posting them to article marketing sites, and expecting them to get picked up and used, that isn't a good use of your time.

However, those links are still good. So we like to do it in bulk. We'll use two pieces of software. The first one is called The Best Spinner and the second one is called Article Marketing Robot.

### ***The Best Spinner***

[The Best Spinner](#) spins your content, so that you can post it to like a 1,000 different article directories and it will be a different piece of content each time.

Now, granted, it's low-quality content. I guess you have to really consider the ethics of doing it. They're trying to crack down on that kind of stuff so you want to usually spin it really well so that it makes sense, it's not total gibberish. If you don't want to spin it all, then just get written content, but that can be expensive and time consuming.

### ***Article Marketing Robot***

[Article Marketing Robot](#) takes that spun article and then it submits it to hundreds of different article directories. It does this at different time intervals, so that looks natural and everything. We've used article marketing like this on some of our sites and it's worked exceptionally well. It's also very auto-pilot.

So that's just something to try. If you're afraid of using it on your main money site, then I would just use it on your links.

### ***Social Bookmarking***

Social bookmarking sites are sites like [Delicious](#).

[SocialMonkee.com](#) is a free tool that automatically submits your site to social bookmarking sites. It works pretty well. Sometimes, we'll buy social bookmarking services from Wiki Fire (a really awesome site for buying SEO services).

We usually do one round of social bookmarking our sites and then we use that to build links to our links.

## BLACK HAT SEO

The truth is that any link-building is black hat, according to Google. Google is all about this natural, invisible hand of link-building: the higher quality stuff will rise to the top naturally.

This is total crap. If anybody actually believes that, they should be hit in the face with a sledgehammer.

If you say, “Oh, I’ll let Google decide what’s the higher quality stuff and I’ll be okay,” you’ll lose every time. You’ll get outranked by everybody.

### Common Black Hat Tactics

All black hat tactics will eventually not work, in theory, but here are a few of them:

#### *ScrapeBox*

If you have a WordPress blog, you probably get tons and tons of spam comments that are total gibberish and make no sense. That’s ScrapeBox. It will find other blogs and tell you if you can comment on them or not. Then it will let you comment on them automatically, for example, if the site has auto-approved comments.

So people will put links in these auto-approved comments. Those are just more low-quality links that you can back to your other links.

Sometimes, we can use ScrapeBox in a white hat way. It can be used to do research, like finding blogs with page ranks that have comments, so you can manually post comments. That’s usually a better way to do it.

#### *Forum Profiles*

Any time you have an account on a forum, you get a profile and usually you get a link to your website. There’s software that does that all automatically, so you’ll get like hundreds of thousands of links from these things. But it’s super low quality and super spammy. So that’s another thing that you would link to your links with.

People say it’s not as effective anymore and that’s probably true, but it still works. Otherwise, people wouldn’t be doing it.

## **Buying Links**

Buying links is stupid. We just don't do it.

Basically, you can buy text links on people's sites through Text-Link-Ads.com. But if a Google employee just signs up for an account on Text-Link-Ads, they could see every site that's selling text links and just be like, "Oh, all those are discounted."

Then you wasted all this money on it. So, I just don't see the point. It's so risky.

## **Words of Warning**

You just want to be careful. You want to mix up the links. You want to have link diversity. Make sure that you have links that are high quality, low quality, relevant, non-relevant, anchor text, non-anchor text, and links from different sources. You don't want to go too black hat or you'll end up getting in trouble.

## **LOOKING FORWARD**

### **Big Brand Dominance**

I want to tell you that it's all going to be about good, quality content but I have this horrible gut feeling that it will be more and more about big brands getting the results. If you've seen the most recent algorithm changes, it's more and more big brands getting emphasis, whereas smaller business is getting crushed.

### **Focus on Quality**

Ultimately, it still comes down to having super-high-quality content and being super-valuable to people. If you're not, then there's no point in ranking you.

That's really the main thing: always focus on high-quality content and high-quality links and you'll be good.

There's not really much that you can do other than that. That's literally the best practice you can do and if that doesn't work, then you might want to find a different traffic source at some point.

### **Don't Lean on SEO**

Once you learn search engine optimization, it's easy. But, it's only a starting point.

Use it kind of leverage initially, then move into other sources of media and other sources of traffic. Build a list.

It's a bad idea to solely rely on Google for your business. It's very risky because Google just doesn't care about anybody at this point. They're just a bunch of big bullies.

## Last Words

Diversify.

Diversification is key – in traffic sources, in links, in everything. The sooner you can build up your email list of people, your fan page, or whatever it may be, the less you have to worry about Google.

Ultimately, if you provide value and your content is high quality, then you should be set for a very long time.

## ACTIONABLE TAKEAWAYS

1. **Write long, high quality content.**

David recommends 2,000-3,000 word blog posts. The top spot for every keyword is almost always taken by an article that's more than 2,000 words long.

2. **Check off the fundamentals of on-site SEO.**

Use WordPress and Yoast's SEO Plugin. When you post a new article, optimize the title tag, meta description, meta keywords, headline, and watch your keyword density. Then include other forms of media (images and videos) and interlink your posts.

3. **Build up links and off-site SEO.**

When link building, be mindful of the relevance and quality of the sites linking to you. Build links through guest posting, web 2.0 properties, link reels, article marketing, and social bookmarking.

4. **Avoid common black hat SEO tactics.**

Using black hat tactics will eventually get you black-listed from Google. Don't use Scrapebox, don't spam with forum profiles, and don't buy links.

5. **Diversify your traffic sources.**

If you rely on SEO for all of your traffic, you could one day lose all of your traffic. Focus on simultaneously building up your email list and social media profiles.

# Social Media Wisdom

with Syed Balkhi

**S**yed Balkhi first became an online entrepreneur buying and selling domain names as a teenager.



Shortly after, he started using MySpace and selling his statuses. Syed began developing his own websites and learning skills like coding, graphic design, and search engine optimization. While still in high school, he launched Genuine Web Directory, grew it to an Alexa rank of 30,000, and then sold it so he could focus on his studies.

In 2006, Syed founded [Uzzz Productions](#), a website development service. Then in 2009, he launched [WPBeginner.com](#), a free resource site for everything WordPress. His latest site, launched in the fall of 2011, is [List25](#) – an entertainment site which features lists of 25 things.

## Syed Balkhi Today

Syed doesn't consider himself an expert in social media, but the facts say otherwise. In just three months, List25 has garnered over 100,000 Facebook fans, 10,000 Twitter followers, 1,000,000 views on YouTube, 3,000,000 collective Stumbles, and 5,000,000 monthly page views. Syed Balkhi is 21 years old.

## WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

- The Importance of a Cross-Platform Brand
- Building Relationships with Your Competitors
- How List25 got its first 30,000 Fans
- Tips for Higher Facebook EdgeRank
- Advice on YouTube
- The Importance of su.pr URLs
- Pinterest, Tumblr, and Google+

# GETTING STARTED

## Cross-Platform Brand

The very first thing that I would do is reevaluate my domain. Your domain name has to be catchy, but it also has to be consistent throughout all social networks.

Let's say that you're able to get this phenomenal domain name, but you don't have the Twitter or Facebook profile. That will hurt you over the long run. People want to find you by just typing whatever your brand name is throughout.

So first thing I always make sure whenever I'm registering a domain name is to check if all the social profiles are available.

In the case of List25, it was not available. But I knew the right people, so I was able to get the Twitter name and the YouTube name back to us. So sometimes you have to compromise and other times you can leverage your network.

## Get to Know the Competition

The next thing I would do is research all of my competitors.

Sometimes you're getting into a niche where you don't have competitors. Other times, you have a lot of competitors. Either way, target a few of the big name sites and see what their strategy is. What are they doing to get traffic?

There are amazing tools out there for this. [SEOMoz](#) has tons of tools. You can see which sites are back-linking to your competitors. It's not as accurate as you would want it to be, but you can see where they're getting all of the traffic.

### *Friend or Foe?*

You may think that your competitors are your competitors and you're not supposed to mingle with them. But in a lot of cases – and especially in blogging – you want to become friends with your competitors.

This is crucial for your success, to have an arch-rival. Basically, you pretend like you're rivals but you're really friends. You will still look like rivals on the front end, but you are good friends on the back end.

Take John Chow and Shoemoney for example. They look like they're arch rivals and they each trash each other, try to compete with each other. But they're really good friends and they share their technology and strategies with one another.

The idea is that there's enough money and traffic to go around.

In List25's case, when we looked at our competition (e.g. Cracked, CollegeHumor) we saw that they were sharing each other's content on Twitter and Facebook! They even share each other's content on their own sites.

### ***Fair Trade***

When you try to reach out to a competitor or relative site, you want to make sure that you can offer them as much as they can offer you.

So, at the beginning, we probably would not be able to reach out to a site as big as like Cracked and say, "Would you be interested in doing a traffic exchange with me?" We didn't have anything to offer to them. Cracked is doing hundreds of millions of page views and we were just starting out.

We can't go and work out a deal with Cracked. We could have sent them an email, but most likely we wouldn't have heard back.

So, the strategy I used was to find smaller bloggers who were doing the same thing as us. Most importantly, I was tracking their Google Analytics to the dot. So, if a small blog linked to us, I went back to them and I said, "Hey, thank you for linking to us. Would you be interested in working on this partnership?" The idea was just to establish a relationship.

It's the same thing if someone tweets you, then you establish a relationship. Thank them. They will remember you once you thank them.

That's the way we grew as a new blog: networking.

### ***The Benefits of Building Relationships***

Let's say that I work out a relationship with you. I say, "Hey, can you retweet my stuff and I'll retweet your stuff?" (Obviously, we only do this if we like you and your stuff).

Then, maybe once a week or every few days, you can suggest a link for them to retweet (if you don't see them retweeting it already). Obviously, when they retweet it, their followers are going to see it. If they like it, then they're going to become your followers.



# GENERAL SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY

## What Really Matters

Content, content, content.

Having a lot of images helps and having good content above the fold.

Compelling content is the number one thing that you need to have. But it's not everything. You can have compelling content and still not get anywhere in social media.

## Use Your Personal Network

I actually sent out an email to all of my friends on Facebook. It said, "Hey, would you please 'like' List25 and help us grow?"

So, use the network that you have. Often people are afraid: "Oh, I don't want to ask my friends, because I might be selling them out."

No! When you open a local restaurant, who are the first people that you invite to your place? Your friends, so they can test it out.

Your friends are probably going to be more up front with you than anybody else. So, if we do something wrong our friends will be able to tell it to us a lot faster than anybody else.

I always rely on my friends. Obviously, I make a lot of friends over time. So, that's my number one social media strategy: leverage my network to grow.

## Why Social Media Matters

If your audience or your client is a person, then social media is important to you. If you're targeting robots, then you can probably ignore it.

The whole idea of having a Twitter or social media base, is so that you don't rely on a traffic boost from one-time sources. Like, "Oh my God, Yahoo news mentioned me! I got 80,000 views! But, that was it. I didn't get anything else for the next six months."

That's because you don't have the social media following. With a social media following, whenever you post something, they will come back to you again and again. Social media is not about one time hits. It's about building a loyal following over time.

## Little Known Tips

### *A Picture is Worth 1000 Words*

Sharing images almost always works better than sharing links. You can see me doing that very often on [our Facebook](#).

For our List25 articles, we have images associated with each item sometimes. So, I would share one image (sometimes I would customize an image to make it catchier) and then I would add my link to the site. That way, every time somebody re-shares my image, they're also re-sharing that little text that's at the bottom with a link. People are going to click on that link and then go to my site.

I don't see a lot of people doing that. Most people don't realize that images have better ranks in every system, especially Facebook. You have a higher EdgeRank, by default, for an image. So images are more likely to show up in the news feed than a link would.

### *Repeat Sharing Images*

I always share the link first. Then maybe a day or two later, I re-share that link, but I don't want to re-share the link itself, so I share an image from the link. Since there are usually 25 images in our articles, they could be shared 25 different times in 25 different ways. That way it looks like it's a unique thing every single time.

## FACEBOOK TIPS

### **Getting 100,000 Fans**

It's really exciting to hit 100,000 likes, which only happened about twelve hours ago. It was a monumental achievement for us.

### **Content Strategy**

Most bloggers come out with one article a day. They'll just post their link after link after link after link on their Facebook walls. They don't interact with their audience.

That causes EdgeRank to start going down. You need to share different types of content.

For List25, we're coming out with a new video once a week. We share that video on our Facebook. Then we share a link. We also share an image. Sometimes we mix it up with a question or a status. So it's always fresh.

That way, Facebook doesn't see that we're just pushing out the same exact type of content (lowering our EdgeRank). That's absolutely crucial. Share interesting content day after day.

I always like my own stuff on List25. Everything that List25 publishes, I automatically hit the 'share'.

## List 25's Facebook Contest

The key to our growth was the contest that we ran. I did a [detailed post on WPBeginner](#) on how we used WordPress and a few plugins to run this amazing contest. It pushed us over 30,000 fans in less than a month.

At end of November, I asked, "How about we do a Facebook giveaway?" Ok.

We decided to give away 25 \$25 Amazon gift cards for 25 days, starting from November 30<sup>th</sup> to December 24<sup>th</sup>.

The contest was so timely because it was around Christmas. We made it a holiday giveaway. If we held a contest at any other time, it could have looked like spam. People could purchase whatever they wanted for Christmas, using the gift card that we give them.

### **Facebook Ads**

We did Facebook Ad campaigns when we first started the contest. You need to get the word out to a few people somehow.

Our budget wasn't that much. I think it was five to ten dollars a day. We targeted the ads to the people to the younger generation who were interested in humor.

### **How the Contest Worked**

I set the contest up as the default landing page for anybody who comes to our Facebook page. To see what the contest was, you had to like our page.

Then, in order for you to be qualified to enter, there was a little button that said, "Click here to share this contest and enter." So, you clicked there and up came the text and the image I wanted people to share. Basically, the text said, "I just entered to win a \$25

Amazon gift card from List25,” and then there was a little description and a really cool image. They could also add their custom text if they wanted.

Once you share that image, then you’re taken to a page that will tell you how to enter our contest. The entry would require you to give us your name and email. That means they’re subscribing to our email newsletter, which sends them daily List25 posts.

So this was like a three tiered program that I was spending about \$625 for.

The contest got people to like List25, which automatically shows up in their friends’ news feed. But, liking a page has a very low EdgeRank, so it doesn’t show up on all of your friends’ news feeds.

But, the contest also has the user share our page. So, now our EdgeRank just improves for that user. Once that user shares it, all their friends see it. So it just created this viral platform for us and by the end we had 30,000 fans.

## Reaching Critical Mass

The trick to Facebook is that you need a certain number of fans in order for you to grow a lot faster. If you have 100 fans, you won’t be as viral as if you have 10,000 fans.

30,000 fans obviously brought us a huge reach. Today, we have a total of 100,643 likes.

‘Friends of Fans’ is also an important number. We have 35 million friends of fans.

## Get Friendly

I also got a lot of my friends to retweet it or like it.

I also asked a few of my personal friends who I think have a good influence on Facebook, “Hey, I will take you guys out to a meal if you enter this contest and share it with all of your friends and invite all of your friends to like our page.”

The meal was not going to cost me that much – \$15 or \$20 bucks a person at most. We’re not going to some fancy restaurant. So, I temporarily made them admins of my page and had them invite all of their friends. Only admins can invite all of their friends to join a page.

The social connection on Facebook is very crucial. You would not ‘like’ something because a stranger tells you to do it. You are more likely to do it when a friend tells you to do it.

So, that was a crucial aspect of how we grew so fast. As we produced content, it was much more viral because our total reach was so much higher. We just kept on building up and building up. I think now we're growing at about 800 to 1200 likes a day. It's insane.

## Facebook Tools

### *Simple Facebook Connect*

Make sure the correct thumbnail shows up for each of your articles. That is very crucial.

Download this plugin for WordPress called, "[Simple Facebook Connect](#)." It's not rocket science. Just activate the plugin and it will make sure the right image shows.

The plugin is very powerful. With List25, it allows Facebook comments. So people can just connect to their Facebook and leave comments if they want to.

It also allows you to install Facebook Insights. We have a [huge article on WPBeginner](#) about the plugin. It's a little bit technical, but we explain it pretty well.

### *Facebook Insights*

You know how you have Insights for your fan page? So, you can also have Facebook Insights for your website, which would pretty much show you all of the stuff that you see for your fan page.

So, you can see, "This is the country that's getting the most likes. This is the language that most of our users speak. This is the stuff that most people are talking about. These are our most popular articles with Facebook users."

For our site, I got Facebook Insights and I looked at which article was being shared the most.

It was "[25 Epic Fail GIFs](#)." So I decided to reshare that article more. I shared all 25 of our epic GIFs on our Facebook.

Now that article alone has 29,000 Facebook likes. How many articles do you see that get 29,000 likes? Insights helped me do that.

I also used the Insights to check which Facebook like button are people clicking on.

In the beginning, we played around with the Facebook Like placements on our site. There's a good blog called HyperArts Blog. He has a [great tutorial](#) that shows you how to attach Google Analytics tags to your social media buttons.

Then you can see which social media buttons the user actually is clicking the most. You can get rid of all the other ones. A lot of people have a lot of social media buttons, but that causes the site to load super slowly. We don't want our site to load slowly. We want it to load fast.

## TWITTER TIPS

### Socialize through Search

[Twitter Search](#) is by far one of the most helpful things.

That's the bottom line. Who is your competitor?

At List25, we have a few competitors. So, I just started sitting on the Twitter search seeing who was retweeting those sites and I was just replying back to them, replying back to them, replying back to them.

I like these sites myself, so I can relate to what they're sharing. I can just reply back, like, "Oh, I like that stuff too."

That makes it a little bit less spammy, so I'm not just saying, "Hey Cracked is good. Check out List25. It's even better." That would be total spam.

But if you can relate to them with the first tweet, they will probably reply back to you. Then in the second tweet, you can say, "Oh yeah, and by the way, did you check out our site? It is pretty amazing."

So, for Twitter, that's the number one thing: target your competitors in Twitter search and interact with their audience.

### Create a Separate, Personal Profile

Often people don't have a personal network on their Twitter, so they just go by their site.

Darren Rowse is a very big example of that. He doesn't have a personal Twitter. He just goes by Probblogger. Don't get me wrong: he has 156,000 followers. But he can never sell probblogger.net.

With List25, on the other hand, if I get a good offer, I can sell it.

That's why I always keep my personal brand a little bit separate, so that I can build that on the side. I don't have a lot of followers, maybe 4,000 or 5,000. But all of the people who are following me are real people who help me get retweets and stuff like that. I have some of the top name editors from big magazines that are following me.

## Retweet it Right

A lot of people that I know will retweet, but they won't say "via WPBeginner" or "RT WPBeginner." For some reason, Twitter people kind of feel like their tweets aren't as valuable if they say that they found it from somebody else.

So, I always ask them to do that – especially people who I'm partnering up with or people who are good friends. I'll say, "Hey, can you please write 'via List25' so that people know that it's coming from List25?"

If someone sees that the content is from List25 right in the tweet, they're more likely to go back and follow it within the same day. But if the user doesn't mention it, then that connection will almost never happen.

## YOUTUBE TIPS

### Professional Touch

You need to have amazing video intros.

I have a real good friend who helped me out with this. His name is Nick Scheidies of [Next Level Ink](#). So, again, networking. I met him at one of the events.

I try to keep in touch with people I meet. He has this video production company, so I asked him if he could help us out with video. He helped us make an intro for our videos and now an outro as well.

We're not video guys. We don't know how to make videos. But having a professional intro, somewhat animated is always better. It's like, "Oh my god, these people like, put

time into making these videos.” So, that was our number one step, to have a video that was like kind of good quality.

So the tips from Nick were most helpful.

## Reddit

Reddit has been great for our videos.

Reddit doesn't like when people submit items linking to their own sites. Reddit does not like that. Reddit users do not want to go to your site and see your ugly ads. They want the direct content.

So, if they like an image off of your site, they will right-click on the image, take the image URL, and just submit that image in the 'funny' area or the 'picture' area. I know that from personal experience, because one day we did 4.5 terabytes of bandwidth.

With video, we were able to get higher up in Reddit. Instead of sharing the videos through our own List25 URLs, we shared the YouTube video URLs.

## Tumblr

The second big thing was getting the smaller Tumblr bloggers to re-blog our videos. Videos are very easy to embed and very easy to share. They're also very easy to re-blog. That's the best part about video. Bloggers can share it with their whole list with just one little embed.

So, I asked a lot of smaller Tumblr bloggers, “Hey, would you be able to re-blog our videos if you like?”

Keep in mind, I wasn't just some total jerk-off who came up to them and just said, “Hey, re-blog this video.” I was actually interacting with them and liking their stuff. Then I suggested a video.

They were like, “Sure. Let us know if you have more.” So, we got a lot of views that way.

Once your video starts getting a lot of views, it automatically gets higher placement in the YouTube search.



## Advertising Your Videos

I also ran AdWord campaigns for our videos to get some views. I was paying about one cent per click, for our video. I had so many keywords that you ought to hit one of them, so I didn't care if I was at the bottom placement.

So, I did that on Google Adwords for our YouTube videos and that helped. I've stopped doing it now because our videos are doing relatively well. We have a good following and now our Tumblr is doing good. So we can re-share our videos on our Tumblr and have it re-blogged by a lot of other Tumblr bloggers.

## Don't Copy

Have unique content. If you try to copy content, you will get hit with copyright infringement.

One of our videos of 25 pranks got hit by a copyright infringement by one of the very big YouTubers. But that actually allowed me to become friends with that guy.

He told me, "Dude, I hit copyright infringement every single day on so many videos. But you are the first person who actually went online, found my phone number, and gave me a call."

Now he's friends with me and he's shared our videos too.

## Video Length

When you're trying to make a product commercial, you don't want to make it 25 seconds.

But our videos are not product commercials, so we can afford to be long. We can afford to be like 25 minutes long and still get a lot of views, because people want to view our video. They're coming to the videos naturally.

At first, we had a limit on our YouTube. That's why our first few videos were under 15 minutes. But now that limit is off of our account, so we can upload videos for however long we want.

# STUMBLEUPON TIPS

## Focus Above the Fold

The number one thing for StumbleUpon traffic is the content above the fold.

StumbleUpon users usually click, ‘stumble’, ‘stumble’, ‘stumble’, ‘stumble’, “Oh – I like it! Like!”, ‘stumble’, ‘stumble’, ‘stumble’, ‘stumble’. So, it’s very fast.

In order to make the StumbleUpon user stick, you can’t crowd your header area with ads.

We’ve designed List 25 so that when you click on a single post page, the first thing you see is the title and then you see the post content below. You don’t see any ad in the top. So, you see that little bar of ours and then our content.

So, that’s the number one thing for StumbleUpon: do not crowd with ads.

## Digestible Content Ranks Higher

The second thing is that you need to make your content easy to consume.

A real estate blog would never hit it big on StumbleUpon, because the content is practically impossible to digest.

You want your content to be entertaining so that the StumbleUpon users get hooked to it. You also want it to be very easy for them to consume so they can go through it fast, rather than just click and go Stumble again.

The more people like your site on StumbleUpon, the higher your site’s ranking goes in the StumbleUpon algorithm. So, if the user just goes to your site and clicks, “Stumble” it doesn’t help you at all. Sometimes it even hurts you. But if the user comes to your site and clicks ‘like’, that’s when your site does well.

So, we optimized our site’s layout so that it’s very simple, very up-front. You can see the site’s content and it’s spaced out well. That way, the user is more likely to ‘like’ it.

## Su.pr Links

[Su.pr](#) links automatically add a StumbleUpon tool bar for most users, if they have a StumbleUpon account. So, by sharing the su.pr links instead of the bit.ly URLs, it gives us an inherent advantage over anybody else who is not sharing those URLs. Our chances of getting a ‘like’ are much higher.

That's the trick. Su.pr links are basically just a shortened version of the StumbleUpon link for your site. So, if I have an su.pr link that got retweeted 500 times, StumbleUpon notices that. They like that it's being shared.

Going back to Facebook, when I shared all of our epic fail GIFs and had a link to our articles, that was a su.pr URL. Imagine 29,000 likes turning into 1.1 million StumbleUpon views. So, every time I shared an image, I shared my su.pr URL.

## **Become a Community Member**

Obviously, there's a lot of grunt work that goes into StumbleUpon. You have to be an active member of the StumbleUpon community. You have to like stuff, Stumble stuff, and be a regular user.

# **PINTEREST, TUMBLR, AND GOOGLE+**

## **Pinterest**

I didn't even know Pinterest existed, for a long time. One day, I was watching the Google Analytics stats and I saw this Pinterest site just jumping up in numbers. Apparently people were pinning our site.

So, I'm like, "We need to get a profile on Pinterest."

I created my personal profile and I connected with all of my friends who were already there.

Then I added the Pinterest buttons on my site, making it easy to pin. Now I'm slowly interacting with the people on Pinterest. I'm liking their stuff, commenting on it, and re-pinning it.

It's almost like Twitter, except much more visual. Everything is visual on Pinterest.

We're also using Pinterest to find new sources of content for us. So, Pinterest is not just a traffic driver. It is also a place where we find a lot of our content, especially for our Tumblr blog.

## **Tumblr**

It's huge. It's so easy for people to just like your blog and reblog it. It's much more powerful than anything I've seen.

So, we created [2to5.list25.com](http://2to5.list25.com). We chose that name because we wanted to keep it brandable.

We just created a custom theme on Tumblr and we began sharing bits of our own articles. It's like what we were doing with Facebook, except on Tumblr. It was much more visual and much better because we could have each image linked to our own site.

We were also able to work out deals with like other Tumbloggers. The limitation of List25 had been that we couldn't work out partnership deals with anybody, because our articles had to be lists of 25 things. (How could we share somebody else's article on List 25?) Now that we have a Tumblr page, we can work out something where we say, "Hey, you mention our stuff on your site and we'll mention your stuff on our Tumblr." So, Tumblr has given us that leverage in that we can offer it to other bloggers.

Tumblr has also allowed us to network with a lot of exciting Tumbloggers, who are already popular. It's much easier for them to re-blog stuff than to always be creating their own. You know, finding stuff outside and bringing it in. Re-blogging almost always looks better, because the number of notes is just higher.

So, we have done that with our Tumblr. We're trying to diversify our sources of traffic. You can't just rely on StumbleUpon or Facebook or Twitter. We want to leverage the power of every social network that exists, within our reach, and Tumblr has provided phenomenal results.

## Google+

Google+ is rather interesting. We're not doing much social interaction there, not as much we would want to.

But one reason why we're doing Google+ is to have the search advantage. Anything that you publish on Google+ is going to help you rank higher in search engines, because it's allowing you to have +1. Plus, all of your Google+ statuses are indexed in Google. So, the reason for us using Google+ is more about SEO, rather than social.

I've hit the "What's Hot" section of Google+ once. But that was only once and I don't think that Google+ has been driving us significant traffic.

It's also allowing us to have verified authors on List25 with the rel=author tag. So now whenever you search for something on List25 that's written by me, you'll see my picture next to it. I think that gives you like a higher ranking in search engines as well.

# LOOKING FORWARD

Social media is something that's not going to go anywhere.

Big companies are investing a lot of money in it. If it were about to go away, the big companies would not let it go anywhere, because they have spent so much money – especially on Facebook and Twitter.

## Facebook's Future

I think that Facebook is going to grow even more and more. However, people who are leveraging it will need to get creative.

As more and more people get on, the competition increases. But there are so many people, that if you do something unique, you will almost always have results.

So, I think that Facebook is a good place to build a long term audience and loyal readership. We have seen our Facebook just grow up, day after day and it's just increasing in results. So, I think having that is crucial.

## Quick Content

Previously, data was presented in tables and there was a crazy amount of data on a post. I think the trend now is to have easy to consume content.

We're seeing an emergence of infographics and motion graphics. The idea is that we're going towards an age of data consumption and we need to make it as easy to consume as possible, because people's attention span is so low.

To captivate that short attention span, you have to have very, very compelling content that's very easy to consume.

We get a lot of compliments, because our lists are made up of about two sentences and then an image. People say, "Man, your site is so easy to read. It makes me want to read more!"

When you capture their short attention spans once, they're going to come back again and again. Sometimes it's just for entertainment, sometimes it's for knowledge's sake, and sometimes it's to kill time.

I think that's where the trend is going towards.

## Last Words

Tumblr is sending us a lot more traffic than people would imagine. So, having a Tumblr version of your site could be crucial.

It's crazy just to utilize the Tumblr network. I got the idea after seeing the Cheezburger network doing it and doing it so successfully.

## ACTIONABLE TAKEAWAYS

### 1. **Get to know your competitors.**

Find the top blogs and sites in your niche. Start figuring out what they're doing, socially and otherwise, to build up their sites. Once you have something to offer them, reach out and befriend them. Then you can collaborate instead of compete.

### 2. **Start a Facebook campaign.**

Create a Facebook page with your domain as the vanity URL (i.e. facebook.com/List25). Start by inviting your friends to like it. Consider running a competition or giveaway. All the while, regularly update your page with links, images, videos, and questions. Then evaluate your Facebook Insights to figure out how else you can maximize Facebook.

### 3. **Build up a Twitter profile.**

Spend some time monitoring Twitter Search and interacting with people as a friend. As you build relationships with people, share their content and ask them to do the same.

### 4. **Maximize video content.**

If possible, start recreating your content as professional videos. Upload them to your YouTube channel and embed them on your site. Then sparingly submit them to Reddit and ask Tumbloggers if they'll re-post your videos.

### 5. **Consider getting involved in StumbleUpon, Pinterest, Tumblr, and Google+.**

StumbleUpon doesn't like ads. Pinterest likes images and infographics. Tumblr likes short, digestible content. And Google+ is good for increasing your search engine rankings. Get involved in multiple social platforms so you can diversify your traffic and not be dependent on any one source.

# Facebook Domination

with Brian Moran

**I**n 2009, Brian Moran graduated from college as an All-American baseball player with a degree in Marketing. Unfortunately, that didn't translate into a career right off the bat.



He started a website called TrainBaseball.com, where he taught people his baseball know-how. Brian started a Facebook page for the site, but he mostly abandoned it after getting only a couple hundred fans.

Then, in the summer of 2010, Moran began experimenting with Facebook ads. He set up a funnel system to collect people's emails and sell them a baseball training product. After some tinkering, Brian eventually hit a formula that worked and his money spent on Facebook ads started to pay off with sales and leads.

When the [Train Baseball](#) Facebook page reached 10,000 fans, Moran knew that he was onto something. He started a new website and fan page dedicated to helping other people succeed with Facebook and called it [Get 10,000 Fans](#).

## Brian Moran Today

Get 10,000 Fans went from 0 to 140,000 fans in just about a year and today it's a million dollar business.

## WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

- How to Get Started
- Customizing Your Fan Page
- Website Integration
- How to Get More Fans
- Effective Status Updates

- Building a Community
- Facebook Monetization
- Facebook's Future

## STEP-BY-STEP OVERVIEW

### Look Professional

Make it look professional.

Get a nice, large image for your profile image for your fan page. If you look at mine, it's really tall. Facebook gives you a lot of real estate to work with and you can use that image to direct people. Put a little arrow there that says, "Click 'Like' above," or "Click the links down below." You can use that to tell people what to do.

The profile images (little thumbnails up at the top) are also important. If you go to my page, you can see what I'm talking about. Getting a couple of those made, just to round out your fan page so it doesn't look like you just threw it up. People can tell when you just threw it up.

### Promote a Product

The next thing I would do is find a product to promote – either an affiliate product or your own.

Your fan page isn't really going to do a lot for you unless you're selling something online to make money. I think that's where we all want to be. You're not just making a site to blog for free.

### Get Fans for Free

We go over all this stuff in a lot of our training.

But one of the best ways to do it is called @ Tagging. It's kind of like on Twitter. You can post a status update on your fan page and you can use the @ symbol and tag any other object on Facebook.

You can tag people, pages, or groups. If you tag that person or page in your new status update or your post, that gets shown on that other page. So if that page has a bunch of fans, you're going to get free exposure to all of those people. It's kind of like guest blogging, but you never ask their permission.



Hopefully you're saying something productive and they're not going to delete your post. Be careful with @ Tagging, because if you just start tagging people all over the place and you're not really adding to their page or complimenting them, you're going to get banned from their page. It's not a good way to start a relationship by any means. So make sure that you're being productive.

@ Tagging requires time and patience. You're not just going to get 10,000 fans overnight.

## **Buy Facebook Ads**

Facebook Ads are the best way to get going fast. You can turn up Facebook Ads as high as you want. You can get 100 clicks a day or 5,000 clicks a day. It's just a matter of knowing what you're doing.

When I start my new businesses now, I make sure that my product is ready so that I have something to sell on the backend that can pay for the ads. Then I can just run the ad all day long.

### ***Minimum Budget?***

You can spend as little as you want. You can spend a dollar a day or five dollars a day. Facebook doesn't care how much you're spending as long as you're going to pay them.

If you don't have a product to promote, you can still create an ad campaign, keep it polished, and play around with the different settings. See how it works.

As soon as you get a product to promote or a product to sell, probably the best place to start is \$25-\$50 a day, just to test out your funnel. Just send a little bit of traffic through your fan page and start to see, "Hey, I spent \$100... Did I make any of it back?"

### ***Fine-Tune***

If you didn't, then stop the campaign as fast as possible. Go back and tweak your funnel. Most likely, people didn't buy because your message is wrong or something's broken in some way. Tweak, improve, and then go back and restart your campaign. Spend hopefully another \$50 bucks and then maybe make a sale. Now you're getting closer to breaking even and off-setting the cost.

The more you tweak things, eventually you'll get to the point where you're actually making money. Sometimes you can get to that point right off the bat. If you really

know what you're doing, you go off and you spend \$50 bucks and you earn \$75 bucks. Then the next day you have \$75 bucks to spend and it just kind of snowballs.

I used to spend \$15 bucks a day and now I'm spending \$1,000 bucks a day. It makes me \$1500 bucks. So, it just pays for itself.

### ***The Cost of a Click***

It depends on what niche you're in. If you're in the real estate niche, you're probably going to get less than 100 for \$100. It's going to be like a dollar or two dollars a click. The reason is that people make a lot of money in real estate and those clicks are worth a lot of money.

So, it's not a bad sign if your clicks are expensive. It just means that you're in a competitive market where the traffic is really worth a lot of money. If you're in a smaller niche, like my baseball niche, I can get clicks for like 25 cents. If I really create a sick ad that just crushes, I can probably get clicks for five or ten cents.

In the Internet marketing world, you're going to pay anywhere from fifty cents to a dollar. Again, you can pay more if you don't know what you're doing and you can pay a lot less if you really create an awesome ad. So, it just all depends on what niche you're in.

## **The Value of a Funnel System**

You don't want to start if you don't have a funnel. If you just have a fan page, that's the fastest way to blow your money. Make sure that you have a solid funnel with a product or multiple products.

## **Build Your List**

Even if we have a day where we don't make any money, we spend a \$1,000 and we only make a \$1,000 back, we're still building our list. We're building our fan page for free. People would die for that.

Let's say someone starts off and you have your whole funnel brought out and you send \$100 of traffic to your fan page and you only make two sales of your \$47 product, so you technically lost six bucks that day. But if you also got 30 people to opt-in, then you just got 30 people to opt-in for \$6. That's freaking awesome.

If you can make money, obviously that's the best case scenario. We're getting paid to build our list, which is just huge. But losing money on Facebook ads is not the end of the world.

## FACEBOOK MARKETING STRATEGY

In my experience, you really can have your whole marketing strategy be through Facebook.

### Brian's Funnel

I create a Facebook ad, where someone clicks on it from their profile.

They get taken to my fan page, where they opt-in.

After that, they get taken to my thank you page, where I deliver my content. That thank you page is on my website.

So Facebook is my first two steps: it's where I get the traffic and it's where I convert the traffic so that I build my list. Then I get them back to my site.

### Websites are Essential

I believe that you have to have a site. After somebody opts-in on my fan page, I bring them to my site where I use [Optimize Press](#) (a nice theme for WordPress made by James Dyson) to create sales pages and squeeze pages.

So, the site is still critical. I think that you have to have a site, where you can really customize things and put your video sales letters up. If your product is like mine – if it's a video product or ebook or whatever – it's probably best delivered on a website. You can't really protect a product on Facebook. You would basically be giving it away.

Facebook is really where it all starts. It's really where the power is for me. It's my first two steps before I get them back to my site. But, I use my site for all of the backend stuff.

### Diverse Traffic Streams

We're trying to go back and ramp up our SEO. I definitely believe in it. I just never had time to blog day in and day out. So, I never saw a big increase in my SEO traffic. We're going to be ramping that up this year.

Right now, probably 80-90% of our traffic is from Facebook. So, we're getting a [Google Adwords](#) campaign started in the next month. We've got a couple guys working on that. Hopefully, this year it will drop down to 50%.

That way, if we ever got shut down we're not in trouble. Anyone that's been around for a while knows that there's danger anywhere. You can get shut down anywhere for doing something Facebook, Google, or AWeber doesn't like. So, we definitely want to diversify and I would encourage anybody to do the same.

If all of your eggs are in one basket, stop. Try to get something else kicking for you.

## **What Makes Facebook Special**

There are two things that make Facebook work. If Facebook didn't have them, I would not be using it.

### ***Facebook Ads***

The first one is their ad platform. [Facebook Ads](#) is just outrageously powerful. It's cheap too, though it's getting more expensive by the day because more people are jumping in.

You can just get so targeted. For example, I can make sure all of my ads are only being sent to people who like Facebook marketing, Internet marketing, or Income Diary. I can target whatever I want to target to make sure that those ads are going to be as effective as possible.

But it's also simple enough that it lets a complete newbie come in and set up an effective campaign.

Google AdWords, on the other hand, if you go in there you almost have a seizure from all of the settings. It's outrageous to set up. Not to mention, they hate Internet marketers, so if you're going to throw up squeeze pages, you're going to get banned. I got my account banned about a year ago. I wasn't even doing anything wrong. It's just one of those things that Google's so big they can do whatever they want.

### ***Fan Page Customization***

You can add a custom tab, which is basically a mini web page inside your fan page. If they didn't have that, I would have to send Facebook Ads off of Facebook onto my website. I'm not going to send ads to my fan page wall and just build up a bunch of fans

that are just commenting on my wall. That doesn't help me at all. It doesn't build my list. It doesn't sell my products.

So, I have to be able to send them to a page where I can embed an [AWeber](#) form and thankfully Facebook allows me to do that.

## FAN PAGE DESIGN

### Get a Designer

If you're not a designer, get somebody to do it for you. It can be a little bit of a cost, but it's going to be worth it. Hopefully, you're not going to have to change it very often.

### Profile Images

It's a pretty small graphic. I mean, the profile image can be approximately 200 pixels wide by 600 pixels tall – which is a pretty tall image. There's a lot of real estate that you're giving up if you just put up a small logo that says, "Get 10,000 Fans."

So, I think of it like your own free advertisement on the left. You can really use that real estate to let people know what you're all about. Let them know why you're there, how you're going to help them, and convey the end result that they're looking for when they come to your page.

Use that real estate to tell them what to do next. You can tell them to click "Like" by putting a little arrow up to the Like button. You can tell them to click one of your links down below.

### Page Images

The same principles apply to the page profile images up top. It just makes it look more professional. You don't have to have them. But if you do, it separates you from the other fan pages out there.

If you go to my page and see them, they look like little icons. You can actually click on them and the image is actually bigger.

We have a free tutorial on this after you opt-in and get on our list. We show you exactly how to make those. But, basically you can put a little preview image or an icon there and when they click on it, it's a free ad. You can put whatever you want. We have

all of our different products up there and when you click on it, it tells you a little bit about the product and gives you the link to go get it.

We don't make a ton of sales from there, but any sales are good. We would have never made those sales had we not just taken the time to make those tiny images and put them up there.

## Custom Tabs

If you're going after fans, one of the best things to do right when they hit your page is to have either a graphic or a video that plays on that page. It would say, "Welcome to our page! Click 'Like' above," and then go into whatever you're going to go into.

If it's an opt-in, tell them why they need to opt-in. You can't succeed online without telling people what you want them to do. If you just send them to a random fan page that has a couple of nice graphics and stuff like that and you're just hoping that they're going to click 'Like', opt-in, and buy your product without you telling them... they're not going to do it.

Your custom tab doesn't have to be pretty or flashy and you don't have to spend \$500 or \$1000 bucks on it. But as long as it's concise, simple, effective, and you're telling people what to do, they're going to do it.

## GET MORE FANS

### Find Your Ideal Customer

My best advice is to target more narrowly than you've ever targeted in your life. Do some research and try to figure out who is your ideal customer.

Let's go back to the baseball scenario. For me, the first time I created an ad, I went in there and I said, "I don't care how old, how young, or if they're male or female. If they like baseball, I'm going to target them and I'm going to sell them my stuff."

It sounds great, because if you go in and put in the word baseball and target everyone that likes baseball, it's like 20 million people. So I was thinking, "I'm going to sell 20 million ebooks! I'm going to make a million dollars in the next week." It's just so many people.

But I didn't realize how ignorant that was. Not everyone who likes baseball needed to buy my baseball training. I targeted players for a long time before I realized that players don't have any money to spend on this kind of stuff. So, I quickly had to learn who my ideal customer was.

I found out that my ideal customers were middle aged coaches and parents who had a vested interest in their son succeeding at the game of baseball. So, instead of targeting players or baseball fans, I switched my targeting to baseball coach – just by changing that keyword and adding the keyword 'baseball coach'.

I was kind of upset because that 20 million mark dropped down to like 50,000 people. I thought, "Man, I'm never going to be able to make a ton of money." But my campaign was so much more effective because those people were actually the people most likely to buy my product. They had the money to buy my product. They had a reason to buy my product.

Now I could gear my message towards coaches instead of towards players. So, my whole campaign just got ten times more effective. Making that change is what allowed me to actually make money online for the first time. I was finally targeting the right people. The more targeted you get, the cheaper your traffic gets.

You've got to put your product in front of someone who wants it and has the funds to buy it. It's just one of those things that a lot of people get wrong. They get target happy and put in 1,000 keywords. I think the difference between me and a lot of people out there is that I target one keyword at a time, to make sure that it's going to bring in highly targeted, highly qualified traffic.

## EdgeRank

The other biggest tip is that Facebook has this thing called EdgeRank, which basically ranks all of the posts on the home feed.

If you go to your home feed, you'll see everybody else's status updates. There is a formula for which status updates show up highest and which show up longest. The status updates that show up there at the top are generally the most liked and most commented on status updates.

So, if your best friend puts up a picture of their new baby and twelve people comment and 24 people like it, then it's probably going to show up there all day long, because Facebook sees that as more important and probably something that you want to see.

To translate that onto your fan page, you want to post things that are going to get liked and going to get commented on. One of the biggest ways to do that, even with boring posts, is to say, “Click ‘Like’ if you agree,” and then put your comment.

### ***Example of a Post Optimized for EdgeRank***

So, let’s go to my baseball fan page. Let’s say the Yankees just won the World Series. I would put a status update that says, “Click ‘Like’ if you’re a Yankee fan,” then I would say, something like, “Congrats Yankees fans for winning the 2012 World Series. Comment below if you’re a Yankee fan or you’re a Yankee hater.”

Mostly likely that’s just going to get bombarded. People will probably get into arguments and that will make them comment more. It’s also going to get a lot of likes. People are going to share it and now you can actually see how many people share your status updates on Facebook.

Simply because I had a kind of provocative comment-related post, now it’s going to be shown to all of my fans on their home feed, all day long. If it didn’t get any engagement, it would only show up for ten minutes and then it would be gone.

Most likely, throughout any given day, 99% of your fans are not going to visit your fan page. They might visit once a week or once a month. Or they might forget about you. So, if you can show up on their home feed and remind them, it’s going to get more likes and more comments which are going to show to all of their friends and hopefully all of their friends are going to end up back at your fan page. So, strategically posting on your wall is kind of the sum of an effective fan page and the best way to get free traffic.

## **FOSTERING FACEBOOK COMMUNITY**

### **Increasing Interaction**

That goes back to just having effective status updates. Just trying to engage feedback and interaction on your page, which is going to help it show up in more of your fans home feed which is going to show to more of their friends.

### ***Contests and Voting***

You don’t have to have a fancy app. You can just use your status updates or whatever you’re going to post on your page and have a mini-contest.



We could have a Labor Day contest that says, “Submit your fan page link below and the person that gets the most Likes will win a free one-on-one consultation with me.”

Then people will post all of their links, because they’ll want to get more exposure to their fan page. Then everyone can go visit their pages and then come back and click ‘Like’ on their posts. So, now you get a ton of comments and a ton of likes on each one of those comments.

There are a ton of ideas like that. We have a ton in our courses and I’m sure there’s a bunch on our website.

## **Status Update Frequency**

We used to do it a lot more. Now, it’s between me and my brother, so I would have to go back and see. Probably a couple times a week.

I know some people have a schedule. It’s good to have a schedule, I would think. People get used to it, if you do a Friday night post or a post every day at 5 pm when people get home from work. But we don’t really follow a schedule right now. It’s just kind of when things come up.

We don’t bombard the wall. A lot of people are posting five to six times a day. Unless you’re giving away incredible content, I would shy away from posting more than two or three times a day. I think it just reminds people that they don’t want to be a fan of yours, if you’re just posting random stuff. You’ll probably lose a bunch of fans that way.

## **Effective Status Update Example**

Around the holidays people are in a good mood. People want to talk about themselves, so you can ask them questions.

So, one of the biggest ones, this New Year’s we posted an update that said, “Click like if you had a great New Year!” Everyone has a great new year, so we got a ton of likes there. Then it said something like, “What are you going to do in 2012 to change your business or to get more fans on Facebook?”

Everyone’s online during the holidays because they’re not at work. So, that was just a big one for us. We got a ton of comments and a ton of likes.

## Long Term Relationship

It's all about trying to build a relationship. We're not pitching out products really hard. We let people know that they're there, but we try to deliver really good value and good content. It's a lot like what Michael does with Income Diary.

If you build a relationship, that's lifelong. If I ever go off and do something else, my community will probably follow along or they'll at least be interested in what we have coming up next. There's no way that can hurt your business, having good relationships with people. If we ever had an event, I'm sure we would pack the house, just because people have fun on our fan page and we give good value and good content.

We don't bombard them with other affiliate offers. You have to draw the line somewhere. Our fans came in to learn about Facebook, not to get pitched to the latest biz offers or the latest one-click-magical-software. So, we try to really keep our fans in mind and keep our list in mind when we put stuff out there.

## The "Talking About" Statistic

I've read that that's the number of people that have liked the page, commented on the page, liked a status update, or shared the page in the last week. So it just shows you how active your page is.

# FACEBOOK AND WEBSITE INTEGRATION

## Facebook Integration

Until we get our SEO ramped up, most of the people who hit our blog are from our list already. So they don't necessarily have to go back to our fan page, because they've most likely already been there. We want our blog to give good content and then let people know about our other products.

When we get more SEO traffic coming in, I definitely will make it pretty clear so that people can go back to the page and become a fan or opt-in.

## Plugins

There are a ton of plugins out there. You can embed a 'Like' button on your website that lets people either 'Like' a comment or a blog post – or they can actually click that button and become a fan. So, there are a ton of different tricks out there.

I used to mess with a lot of them. But what I figured out is that they distracted me a little bit. I would spend all day trying to customize some WordPress plugin when I should have been sending out another email or doing something that was actually going to make me money that day.

It's not that those things are a waste of time. It's a good thing because it goes into rounding out your business and making sure that all corners are covered. But it's also just one of those things where, being a one man show over here and not being a developer, if I wanted to perfect it, it would take a day or two of my time. I would be better off spending that day, writing another post, moderating the fan page, or building another product.

## **Brian's Top Priority**

My goal is getting opt-ins. If I didn't get opt-ins, my business would not be running the way that it is. Fans are just a by-product of traffic. So, the fact that I have that many fans is just because I've sent that many visitors to my fan page.

But, I'm not really worried about the number of fans. I used to be, but right now, fans don't make you money. Neither does traffic to your website.

For me, what directly translates into me making money is getting email leads. Those are the people who see our offers and see our products. Those are the people who we get to really connect with them and build a relationship with them.

I do make some money from some fans that don't opt-in, if we post a link to a product or something like that. So, it's not wasted. But the most valuable person that I can get in my business is an email lead, because it's someone that I can follow up with consistently and really build a relationship. I get to reach them in their inbox, not just in their browser.

# **FACEBOOK PROMOTION AND MONETIZATION**

## **Brian's Funnel**

### ***Step 1: The Ad***

They see an ad over on the right that probably says something like, "Are you using fan pages?" "Do you need more fans?" or "Are you using Facebook for your business?" It's

something that is just kind of short and sweet, with a pretty eye-catching picture that gets them to click on it.

### ***Step 2: Welcome Video / Opt-In***

As soon as they click, they get back to our fan page where they're greeted with a video. The video says, "Hey, welcome to Get 10,000 fans. I want to tell you why you haven't made a single dollar from your fan page."

So, I just start in that video talking about the couple things that they're most likely doing wrong. Then I say, "Give me your email below and I'll show you one key thing that I do on my fan page and I'll give you a step by step tutorial that will hopefully help your fan page start to monetize itself in the next couple days."

Now we've given them free content and we have their email. So now they're the highest quality lead to hopefully invest in one of our training programs, because we've given them some value for free and we've hopefully helped their business make a little bit more money without hopefully asking for anything in return.

### ***Step 3: Email Content***

So then we follow up with some really good, high-quality emails over the next week. We tell our story and give them some more free videos and tutorials.

Then we nonchalantly let them know that there are other products we have. So, if they really want to take things to the next level and go beyond the free training and get coached one on one by me, then there are the products that we have.

That funnel has worked like a charm for us for the past year and a half and that's pretty much it. Everything else is kind of extra. We post on the wall and post new blog posts to our blog, just to kind of get some extra side traffic. But a majority of it is from that first funnel.

## **Developing a Product**

### ***Choosing a Product Idea***

Find out what their biggest need is. What's a product that you can make that really solves that need and gives them the result they're looking for?

When I first started and I didn't have a product. I thought that probably the most urgent need for people was to know how to get a fan page up. How do you create it,

monetize it, and how do you customize it? What kind of images do you host? All those different things. If some of your settings are wrong, your page is never going to grow.

So that's kind of what I did when I first started. We called it Fan Page Secrets. It was just a complete step-by-step on how to set up and monetize your first fan page.

### ***Creating the Product***

I just thought, "What's each little bullet point that you need to cover?" How to create your page. How to get your page set up. How to choose the right title. How to get your custom URL. The list just goes on and on.

We break them up into chapters and then I just create a short video. I use [ScreenFlow](#) for videos. I just kind of walk through each step. They're five to ten minute videos. I like to keep them nice and short and break them up into chapters.

I like to break my stuff up. I feel like people learn a lot better that way and we've got some good feedback for it.

### **Pages that Sell the Products**

I use WordPress for basically everything I do. [Optimize Press](#) is a lifesaver. [Wishlist Member](#) is a WordPress plugin that actually protects content for a membership site.

That's really all I use. I'm not really technically savvy. I'm not a developer. I don't have any of that background. So those two things can really help you set up a nice, good looking site that gets the job done.

## **LOOKING FORWARD**

### **New Features**

It's tough to say.

Facebook just created their new timelines for all of their profiles. I don't know if that's going to be across the board soon. People are wondering if they're going to put that on business pages. So, I have no idea.

I think that they're pretty much just going to stay where they are and add some new features. Facebook seems to add a couple really good new features each year that allow you to customize your page and get some free, organic traffic.

They're just going to make fan pages a better place for business to be. So, wherever it's going, it's going to be a good thing for anybody using it.

## Facebook's Longevity

I think it's here for the long haul, definitely. They're absolutely huge with however many millions of people are on Facebook now.

Advertisements aren't going away any time soon. That's how they fund their business, so I think you're pretty safe there.

## Start Now

Now is probably the best time to jump in.

Facebook Ads are just going to get more and more expensive. I see that every day. So, it just gets tougher to jump in. The people who get in early are the ones who can really learn it and take advantage of where the prices are now.

It's just one of those things: if you don't start it today, then you're going to have zero fans tomorrow. If you don't start it tomorrow, you're still going to have zero fans the next day.

So, why not start it now? Even if you don't put all of your time and effort into it, you're probably going to start building a small list of fans and be able to build your list and hopefully make some sales from Facebook.

It's free. There's no hosting cost. It's cheaper to put up a fan page than anything else online. So, why not do it and at least get some growth started?

## Last Words

A lot of people will buy our Facebook Ads course and they have no product to promote. You just can't do that. Fans are great and they do a lot for making your page credible. They get you a lot of notoriety around your industry and can really make you look like a thought leader. But fans are not the name of the game.

In its natural state, fan pages really suck. It's just a wall where people can comment. That doesn't result in you making any money whatsoever.

So, don't get too antsy. Set up your back end. Create your product or find a good product to promote. Customize your fan page so that you're actually building a list. And really think it out.

Facebook fans are worthless to you unless you can get them off of Facebook and into your AWeber account. As much as Facebook has helped my business, in the grand scheme of things, it's not the be-all-end-all. I want to get my traffic off of Facebook so I can actually build a relationship with them in their inbox. That's the name of the game.

## ACTIONABLE TAKEAWAYS

### 1. **Create your Facebook Fan Page.**

Make a tall (200x600 pixel) profile picture that grabs and directs their attention. Use the thumbnail area to add photos of products or other things you'd like to promote. Then add a custom tab for your welcome page.

### 2. **Build out your funnel system.**

Put a short, engaging video on your welcome page with an opt-in form beneath. Once they opt-in, immediately send them to your thank you page where they receive the content you promised. Then send them to a sales page where they can get more info.

### 3. **Experiment with Facebook ads.**

Start with a few bucks per day. Target your demographic as much as possible. If you're not at least making your money back, fine-tune your funnel until you at least break even. Increase your budget, increase your bank account.

### 4. **Boost your EdgeRank by engaging your audience.**

Ask controversial or timely questions, post links to interesting content, host mini contests, and show that you care about your fans. Consider starting your status updates with, "Click 'Like' if you're..."

### 5. **Sell solutions for your audience.**

When Brian develops a new product, it starts out of a pain he knows that they have. Then he creates a series of screen-sharing videos that show people how to solve that pain. He uses WordPress, Optimize Press, and WishList Member to sell and deliver the information.

# Part 4:

# Converting Traffic

## CONVERSION OPTIMIZATION



*“A web page is an automated salesperson. So, we want the website to replicate your best possible in-person salesperson.”*

**Ben Jesson, [Conversion-Rate-Experts.com](http://Conversion-Rate-Experts.com)**

## COPYWRITING MAGIC

*“If I’m going to take a serious pass at a letter. I will write about 75 to 100 headlines. That might sound a little crazy, but it’s something that is well worth it.”*

**Yanik Silver, [InternetLifestyle.com](http://InternetLifestyle.com)**



## EMAIL MARKETING



*“The blog is reactionary. Your list is proactive. So it’s a humongous asset that everybody needs to be developing.”*

**David Risley, [DavidRisley.com](http://DavidRisley.com)**

## WEBINAR DOMINATION

*“Think about the psychology of a live webinar: you’re actually getting people to come to an event. Since it’s an event, people actually stop what they’re doing and pay attention to you.”*

**Stephen Beck, [WildlyWealthyWebinars.com](http://WildlyWealthyWebinars.com)**





# Conversion Optimization

with Ben Jesson

**A**fter earning a degree in graphic design, Ben Jesson went to work as a designer for a telecommunications business.



Once he optimized the company's website for search engines, it was getting plenty of traffic. Unfortunately, despite strong search rankings, the industry was in decline and business was waning. Jesson and his co-worker Dr Karl Blanks (a former Cambridge Ph.D. rocket scientist) began focusing on web analytics and conversion, implementing split-testing and multivariate testing to create highly effective pages. The result: they tripled the company's sales in 12 months.

Around that time, Jesson and Blanks wrote an article called "[101 Ways to Use Google Website Optimizer](#)." Just 18 hours after they published it, they received an email from Google inviting them to be consultants. [Conversion Rate Experts](#) was born.

## Ben Jesson Today

Today, Conversion Rate Experts has a team of 18 people, from all over the globe. They optimize websites to convert better, turning visitors into customers. Their clients include some of the world's biggest companies, including Google, Apple, and Sony.

## WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

- What to Know Before You Optimize
- Optimizing to Get More Email Subscribers
- Practical vs. Pretty Design
- Why to Avoid "Best Practices"
- Free Split-Testing Tools
- The Value of Real Life Salespeople
- Optimizing Your Funnel

# OVERVIEW

The first thing that we do is take a step back from the website and really think about the goals for the business and their long-term strategy.

## Vision Comes First

A lot of people make the mistake split-testing straight-away. That often leads to problems later down the line.

We always start with the vision and strategy for the business. You must know how you're actually going to measure success. Ultimately, the reason you split-test a website is to get it to the point where you want it to be, dominating your marketplace or niche.

So, it all starts with the KPI's (Key Performance Indicators) and the strategy. Are you optimizing the website to get more email opt-ins? Are you optimizing the website to get a better lifetime customer value? Average order value? Number of sales? Number of free trial users?

Different websites have different goals. Obviously, you need to optimize to the right goal.

## Focus on Funnels

Once you've agreed what the goals for the test are, the next thing you need to do is figure out what part of the website to work on first. All web businesses have different pages, different opportunities. If you work on a homepage, a product page, a squeeze page, a thank you page, a shopping cart, an email auto-responder sequence, a refer-a-friend program – all of those areas are a huge opportunity for any business. But you really need to focus on one part of the conversion funnel at a time.

We recommend that you sketch out your whole conversion funnel. Do it on a whiteboard if you have to.

### *Blocked Arteries*

You need to analyze your conversion funnel for two things. The first thing you need to look for is what we call blocked arteries.

Blocked arteries are parts of your web business that are essential for you to make money, but for whatever reason, you're having people abandon at those points. So, look for the blocked arteries, where you're leaking money.

## **Missing Links**

The other thing we look for is what we call missing links. Missing links are parts of your conversion funnel that don't yet exist, but that would add value if they were implemented.

One example of a missing link would be the lack of an up-sell or a cross-sell through the shopping cart process – turning a one-stage sale into a multi-stage sale. Another would be the lack of a refer-a-friend program on the thank you page.

## **Set Priorities**

You want to focus on the part of your conversion funnel that has the biggest financial opportunity, but that is also easy to make changes to.

It's really important to analyze it for both of those purposes. With most websites, the big opportunities tend to be in areas that can be difficult to make changes to – either technically or politically. So, you really want to focus on the things that you can make changes to immediately. Then agree on what page or page elements you're going to be focusing your efforts on.

# **BLOGGING**

## **Identify Your Goal**

It depends what the blogger's business model is. If the goal of the blog is to position yourself within the industry and to generate clients, then that's very different than selling an info product or collecting email addresses. So it really does depend on the blog's purpose.

## **Goal Example: Get More Email Subscribers**

I'm going to say something slightly controversial now. I'm going to suggest you avoid best practices.

If we were working on [IncomeDiary.com](http://IncomeDiary.com), we wouldn't just say, "Hey Michael, you need to change the offer. You need to add more testimonials. You need to change your call to action. You need to improve your bullet points." We wouldn't go there.

The first thing we would do if Michael asked us to get him more email addresses, would be to find out why his existing visitors aren't converting. Before we would make

a single suggestion, we would want evidence of why his visitors aren't signing up to his email form.

It typically comes to research in three core areas. This research doesn't take forever. You can do it in a week or two. It's very hands-on.

### ***Visitor Intention***

The first reason people don't convert is that the visitor intention doesn't match up with what you want them to do.

If somebody's already signed up to Michael's email list, then they're not going to sign up again, so straight away you've got a reason a lot of people aren't converting. So, it's important for a site like Michael's to look at either just new visitors or people who come from specific traffic sources, not from his existing emails or his existing campaigns. You don't want to make decisions based on traffic that can't convert because it has converted already.

So the first thing that you need to look at is visitor intention. You can do that by asking people as they exit the site, "Why did you come to the site today? Were you successful in what you wanted to accomplish? If not, why not?"

You can get a lot of visitor intention using exit surveys, like 4Q, and tools like KISSinsights that pop-up and survey your visitors. You can also take a look at your web analytics and get a feel for what keywords people type when they come to the site and what traffic sources they come from.

### ***User Experience***

Once you know what you're visitors' intentions are, you then need to look at user experience. Every single project we've worked on, there are people who don't convert because a poor user experience prevents them from doing so. So, they're willing, but not able.

With user experience, there are a whole host of different reasons why people don't convert. Did the website load too slowly? Were there errors when they were completing the form fields? Did it render incorrectly in their browser? Did the navigation get them confused? Did they click on the wrong thing? Did they get lost, frustrated, angry, and give up?

There are loads of different user-experience issues. You need to discover the ones that are affecting your website.

## **Overcoming Objections**

The final category that prevents people from converting is the visitors who simply aren't persuaded to take action. They come to Michael's site, but they don't want to give their email address. They're not persuaded by his offer. Quite simply, they have objections.

Whenever you're in a situation where you're trying to sell something, you have to deal with objections. You have to come up with a corresponding claim to that objection, to turn that prospect into a customer.

You have to go through the same process on the web, but it's really, really difficult, because you don't interact directly with the visitors. They come to the site, click around, and leave – but all you know is what your Google Analytics tells you. So, you need to put feedback mechanisms in place to understand the non-converting visitor.

## **Goal Example: Get More Retweets**

By far the most important thing is the quality of the content itself. Again, it's got to match visitor intention: it's got to be content that the visitors want to share.

Assuming the content is something that the visitors want to share, you obviously need to ask them to share the content. A prominent call to action somewhere on the page that says, "We would really appreciate it if you could retweet or share this content with your friends."

You really want to present your call to action at the time when your visitors are ready to take this action. So, just use text links throughout the article, saying, "If you found that helpful, maybe you'd like to retweet it?" Obviously, have Twitter icons in prominent positions.

# **DESIGNING TO CONVERT**

## **Practical Design**

Obviously, the design that converts is the design that you want to be using. It's not so much an argument of pretty vs. ugly, professional vs. amateur, or blue vs. green.

In our experience, what you say is much more important than how you say it. If you only had a day to work on your blog, work on your offer rather than your design. What you're selling is obviously more important than how you sell it.

Imagine that you're going to buy a car and the salesperson comes out one day in a blue suit and the next day he comes out in a green suit. Ultimately, all you care about is the car that you're buying. The color of the suit the sales guy wears is irrelevant.

Website design is a little bit like that. As long as your website doesn't repel people and isn't actively damaging your conversion rate, prioritize the offer, the copy, and how you describe and explain your product, this will have a much bigger impact than spending loads of time on the aesthetics.

## **The Right Design for Site**

With that said, there are certain expectations that your visitors will have when they arrive at your website and if your design doesn't pay off on those expectations, then that can cause problems like high bounce rates.

So it depends on your category. If your blog is for a bank, for example, then the website will have to look like a bank. It will have to look trustworthy. It will have to look professional. It will have to match with what visitors expect from the organization.

On the other hand, if people are looking for maverick investing tips from someone who spends all day on the beach while they make millions in their sleep, then they may be expecting something totally different – maybe something anti-corporate or a little bit more personal and amateurish.

### ***Get Feedback First***

If you're ever going to do a redesign or adjust your positioning, use things like Twitter to ask your followers to review redesigns of your website.

It's really just about interacting with your visitors as much as possible. Instead of guessing at what they want and guessing at what your website should look like, actually involve them in the process of the design.

### ***Ethnio***

There's a great tool called [Ethnio.com](https://ethnio.com) that allows you to recruit your visitors to participate in usability studies. So, you can recruit your website's visitors, get them on the phone, get them on a screen sharing application and actually show them the new design and talk them through it. You should also split-test any changes you make to your design and measure the response it gets.

## ***Look Around the Web***

You can learn a lot about your visitors from reading things like Yahoo answers, forums, and social networking websites. Just take a look at what the marketplace is saying about your business.

If people say, “The offers sound great, but I’m worried about the company. I don’t think they look trustworthy. I don’t think they look professional.” Then you know that that objection exists and that’s something that you need to fix.

Design decisions need to be based on solid grounding and understanding of what your visitors want. Don’t just outsource it to a graphic designer and hope that he does a good job.

## **The Problem with Relying on Best Practices**

What happens when all of your competitors adopt best practice?

Everyone’s got the same amount of testimonials; everyone’s got the same call to action; everyone’s using the same layout; everyone’s using long copy; everyone’s using overlays; everyone’s using email marketing etc.

*Then* what differentiates you from everybody in your market? It’s your positioning, your offer, your pricing, and your customer service. It’s the big picture stuff.

Most ecommerce websites look as good as Amazon and most ecommerce websites are fairly user-friendly. But Amazon is thrashing them. Most social networks look the same as Facebook, but Facebook is thrashing them.

If you’re in an industry that’s underdeveloped and everyone’s website is terrible and people don’t have a call to action or testimonials and they’re not using the so-called best practices, then you may well get some quick wins by adopting those things. But ultimately you want to be working on the big picture stuff. That’s what’s going to differentiate you from your competitors once everyone does adopt these so-called best practices.

## **COPYWRITING**

If we were to rewrite a sales letter from scratch, we would make sure that every part of the page is addressing a specific issue that a prospect has had.

## Case Study: SEOMoz

I'll use an example: we ran a promotion for SEOMoz a couple of years ago, that brought them in a million dollars. The promotion was one landing page and about three emails.

The process that we went through to understand how to create a sales letter that converted well started with research. There's actually a [schematic of the actual page](#) that we created on our website that you can download, it contains cool tips of all the different persuasion elements we used on the page.

### *Learn from Existing Customers*

In order to create that sales letter, we asked their paid members – their actual customers – what convinced them to sign up for the tool and how they would describe the service to a friend. It's really useful if you can use language and wording that relates to your prospects. You need to communicate with your prospects at their level.

So, a great way of understanding how best to sell your product is to actually ask your customers how they saw the product. Ask your paying members, "How would you describe the service to a friend and what persuaded you to sign up."

The next thing we did was ask non-paying members (people on a free trial), "What would make you sign up for the service? What tools do you like the most and least? What are your most time-consuming SEO tasks?"

We then talked with paying members that had cancelled, asking them, obviously, "Why did you cancel?" We wanted to know what would bring them back.

### *Learn from Salespeople*

A web page is an automated salesperson. So, we want the website to replicate your best possible in-person salesperson.

So, with all of our clients we learn from the people that sell the product face to face. We spend time with the people who answer the phone. We spend time with the people that work in the stores. We spend time with the business owners that are out there pitching their products to investors and people at conferences.

A great starting point with copywriting is to use whatever the best converting salesperson says. Get it transcribed and turn it into a sales letter. They handle customers and prospects every day and they're used to coming up with counter-objections. They're used to answering the common questions. They're used to



tweaking their scripts to get the best kind of response. So, compare how your website sounds to the person who sells it over the phone or in person.

At SEOmoz, we spent some time asking Rand Fishkin (the CEO of the business) how he saw the service. He mentioned to us that at trade shows he could close every inquiry that people had about his software, but the website couldn't. So, we simply asked him to record his sales pitch into a video camera and put that on the website. What he said to his customers in person took well over five minutes, but what was on the website was about a two minute summary.

### ***Long Copy Websites***

The issue that you have with the website is that you have to overcome a lot of your visitors' objections, whereas when you're selling over the phone you only need to overcome the objections of one prospect.

That's why long-copy websites tend to work, because you're able to overcome lots of different objections from different visitor types. It's often tempting to try to use less text on websites because you think, "My visitors don't want loads of information. They don't want to be bombarded with text."

But if you think about your website as a real salesperson, you tend to have a very different approach.

### **If You're Just Starting Out**

If you haven't already, get out there and try selling to real people. How can you expect a website to sell a product successfully if the copywriter has never sold the product successfully?

Especially if you don't get very many visitors and you don't have any customers, your first attempt has to be based on something real. It has to be based on the customer, not just ideas that you're randomly plucking out of your mind.

Nobody wants to hear the answer to their problem is a ton of work. But in this case, the answer is to get away from the computer, get out of the office, and go speak to real people.

Nobody wants that to be the answer, which is maybe why there are so many poorly converting websites. A lot of people think they're too busy and important to do that. They think that the answer lies in some kind of trick, hack, technique or algorithm.

But ultimately, your website's a robot-salesperson – and what better role model for your website to have than a real, effective salesperson? I recommend getting out there and hanging out with the prospects because it's cheap, it's fast, and it's very rich in terms of the level of feedback that you get.

## **SPLIT-TESTING**

Split-testing is showing different visitors different content and then measuring which content has the highest conversion rate.

### **Before-and-After Testing**

The mistake that a lot of people make when they are testing different versions of their website is that they just throw up their new content and then they look at the data before and after the new content went live. Then they make a decision on whether the new version is better or worse based on that.

The problem with before and after data is that it's not an accurate way to measure the impact that particular content had. Every website's conversion rate goes up and down day-by-day, week-by-week, season-by-season, and your conversion rate is sensitive to many things. It's sensitive to the traffic that you get, any positive or negative PR your company receives, and outside influences in your marketplace or the economy.

Because your conversion rate is sensitive to so many different things, you can never be 100% certain if it was the change you made to your website that made the difference rather than just some other random factor. So, before and after testing is not an accurate way to know if the changes you're making are actually working or not.

For example, if you put up a new sales letter and then for the next three days you get loads of high-quality, qualified traffic, you'll have more sales and a better conversion rate. But it may be that if you had used your old content, you might have had an even higher conversion rate. You would never know.

Split-testing shows different content to visitors during the same time period. So every visitor in your test has been exposed to the same outside influences. It's really the only scientific way to measure if one element is better than another.

### **Split-Testing Tools**

There are a lot of testing tools in the market, but the great news is they're all pretty similar. Obviously, there are enterprise tools and there are free tools.

If you want a free tool and you want to start split-testing now, [Google Website Optimizer](#) is easy to set up. It's incredibly robust and it won't cost you a cent. The only downside with it being a Google product is that there's no support.

If you need some help setting up and implementing your testing, there are a few other platforms out there that are really low cost. There's [VisualWebsiteOptimizer.com](#) and [Optimizely.com](#). We've got a huge list of them, actually. We've got a comparison website for split-testing tools that lists them in terms of all the different features they have and it has customer reviews.

So, if you're interested in which split-testing tool is best for you, visit [WhichMVT.com](#), for a comparison of the different testing tools. It's totally unbiased. We don't make a dollar from it. We created it internally for our consulting team and clients and then realized that it would be valuable if we released it to the public.

## Set Up Process

The first thing you'll need to do is copy and paste the tags onto your website, as you would with any such tool. For those of you who use WordPress, there are various WordPress plugins for tools like [Visual Website Optimizer](#).

The next thing you need to do is create an element that you would like to test. There are two different types of test. There's a split-test, where you show one version of a page versus another version of a page. You can do an A / B test, an A / B / C test, or an A / B / C / D test (and so on).

Or you can do what they call a multivariate test. A multivariate test allows you to test different elements within the page, rather than the page itself. So, if you wanted to test two different versions of a headline, two different versions of a call to action, and two different versions of a product picture... instead of creating all the different pages that you would need to show those different combinations, you can do a multivariate test, which would show all of those combinations to visitors at the same time.

## Statistically Significant Data

Some people say it takes two weeks to run a test; some people say 1,000 visitors. They're wrong. The only correct time to end a test is when you've reached statistical significance.

If you want to estimate how long it will take a test to reach statistical significance, use one of the statistical significance calculators provided by the software vendors. Search

for “[Website Optimizer Statistical Significance Calculator](#),” and you’ll find pages where you can input your data, the conversion increase you’re looking to detect, and the calculator will tell you how long the test will take.

Really put an emphasis on testing big, bold, changes that will have a significant impact. When you just tweak page elements, it takes so long to collect the data that you’re missing opportunities by not testing other things. We call it meek tweaking versus bold-targeted tests. There’s a huge advantage to carrying out bold-targeted tests.

## What to Split-Test

### *Headline*

Headlines are really, really important.

Obviously, people normally look at whatever’s above the fold first. So all of the elements above the fold need to encourage the visitor to take your designed action (this could be clicking a call to action, scrolling down the page, entering an email address etc). Having an effective headline is essential.

Though you don’t necessarily have to sell the product in the headline; you just have to engage the visitor enough to consume your sales message. Try to sell the content of the page. Instead of saying, “Sign up for these weird, wonderful, life-changing widgets now,” you could say, “Read this page to discover why companies like X, Y, Z are benefiting from an exciting new technology.”

So, the headline is important, but you don’t always have to go for the immediate sale with the headline. The headline’s job is to get attention, to get them to read on.

### *Social Proof*

Obviously, any social proof is valuable. Anything that gives you credibility or will persuade your visitors that they’re not the only person in the world considering buying your product. Testimonials from customers are good. If you have been featured in the media, it’s definitely worth mentioning that.

### *Competitive Advantages*

Every client we’ve worked with has really special things about their product or business that they totally take for granted and don’t even mention. It’s really worth telling somebody about the history of your business and then asking what impressed and/or

surprised them. There will be things about you as an individual or your business that your prospects would be really reassured by, but you just take it for granted.

### ***Call to Action***

Obviously, the call to action is important. But don't always assume that you need to show somebody the call to action straightaway.

With some of our experiments, we've seen it's best to leave the call to action at the bottom of a long copy page, because you really want to give people the full sales message before they click away from the page. The more sold they are on the product page, the more likely they are to go through the shopping cart and the rest of the process. Don't always assume that getting them to the checkout page fast is the optimal goal.

That's why you always want to measure the right things. If you measure things like click-through rate, that can lead to bad choices. Try to avoid split-tests where click-through rate and bounce rate are the goals. Instead, align your goals with your business metrics.

### ***The Offer***

The offer is everything: what you're selling and how you're positioning it. Spend a lot of time on your offer.

### ***Risk Reversals***

If the product is perceived to have risk, or if one of the objections is that it feels like a risky decision, it's important to include risk reversal within the offer itself. Examples are guarantees, free trials, low-cost offers, basically, anything that removes some of the risk from the prospect should be tested.

### ***Price Levels***

A lot of people that sell information products or software create different versions (often known as gold, silver, and bronze). They do those things for a reason, because different visitors want to spend different amounts of money.

Having upsells and cross-sells is a quick way to make sure that you're getting the most revenue per visitor.

### ***Body Copy***

Again, it depends on the product. If you're Amazon and you're selling a Kindle, you may need a lot more technical information and specifications, rather than just hype.

Depending on the product, comprehension is one thing that often kills conversions. People like the offer; they like what the product does; but they don't really understand how it works.

So, it's essential to do a good job of explaining your product and how it works, how it would benefit the prospect, so they can really comprehend exactly what it is. If someone doesn't understand what the product actually is, they're not likely to convert.

## **INCREASING CONVERSION**

### **Nurture Relationships**

One thing that's really useful is to start building a relationship with the customer.

It's much easier to get a customer to reorder from you than it is to acquire a new customer. So, do whatever you can to build a genuinely valuable relationship with that customer.

So, have a monthly email newsletter where you send them valuable tips, advice, free reports, tools, widgets, and anything else that they will find genuinely valuable. You want to become a trusted advisor. You don't want to be just some cold, boring e-commerce store or yet another info-marketer. You want to genuinely help them. Sometimes that may mean recommending things that are slightly against your own self-interest, but that will win the trust of that customer.

The goal with any website is to become the visitor's trusted advisor and to hold that position by genuinely doing whatever you can to understand their needs and to help satisfy those needs.

### **Cross-Selling**

Cross-selling's a great one.

One of our clients owns an ecommerce store. They had a specific product and they came to us and said, "We want to sell more of this product." We surveyed all of these customers and visitors, asking them why they weren't purchasing it. The overwhelming feedback was, "I love this product. I always buy this product when I need it. It's fantastic. I wish you guys had other products."

So, we designed a sample product, which people could buy for just a few dollars to sample all of the other products he sells. Obviously, that encourages people to sample other products they may not know exist, and they'll hopefully buy the "full version" next time.

## Upselling

People may want more from you.

A really useful thing to do is to survey your customers and ask them what else they would like to buy from you. This is a question that we actually use in surveys, "If you could have me locked up in a cage creating anything for you, what would it be?" Customers will tell you what they want you to create.

If you have a good relationship with them, your customers will develop your up-sells and your cross-sells with you. Again, they like you, they trust you, and they've already chosen to do business with you, so obviously they would prefer if you became their supplier for other products and services as well.

## Refer a Friend

A great thing that most websites forget is a refer-a-friend program on the thank you page.

The best time to ask a customer to recommend a product is when they've just committed to buying it and they feel good about the purchase that they just made. So, have a refer-a-friend program on the thank you page. If possible, incentivize the refer-a-friend referral program by giving the friend an offer and the customer an offer and then track them. There are lots of tools out there for doing refer-a-friend programs.

If you have a good relationship with your customers, a refer-a-friend program should become a real benefit for your business.

# LOOKING FORWARD

## Ahead of the Curve

I think that at the moment, most people still don't run split-tests. So even though more people are thinking about conversion, we don't see many people actually running split-tests and scientifically measuring what page elements and what changes have the biggest impact on their business.

I think that more people adopting split-testing is important. It's definitely going to happen, because if you're not running split-tests, then you're going to get squeezed out the marketplace.

It's no secret that those companies that have been split-testing the longest are the most successful ones. You look at the likes of Amazon, Google, Expedia, Ebay – all of these hugely successful websites are data-driven and invest heavily in testing.

There are many tools out there for split-testing and you can do it for free, so there really is no excuse.

There are also a lot of good tools for interacting with your visitors. Again, at the moment, most website owners don't actively gather feedback from their visitors. Those that do will be the ones who are going to stick around and the ones who are going to dominate their niches. Those who don't will get squeezed out of the marketplace.

## Future Trends

Ad costs are going up. It's going to cost more to get customers on the web. It's going to be more competitive. Every day, millions of new websites, and therefore competitors, are created.

There are a lot of big web businesses out there now. Ten years ago, you could start a website with zero budget, from your bedroom, and you could have a very successful business very quickly. SEO was very easy and prospecting costs were fairly low. That's different now. It takes money and investment to get a web business off the ground.

So, I think the barriers to entry are higher, it's really important to have a great product. Obviously, you can have the best website in the world, the most user-friendly website in the world, the most persuasive copy in the world, but if your product is something that lets your customers down, you likely won't succeed. Ultimately, spending time on your product is time well spent, because the product should sell itself.

I think the Internet really accelerates people's expectation for quality products and it's near impossible to be successful with a product that isn't a category-dominating product, which is why so many people choose to niche themselves. That's a smart move. It's much better to dominate a small niche with a very personalized, very good product, than it is to bring a broad product to huge niche and not be the best. Being the best is really important on the web. It's a winner-takes-all environment.



The person with the best lifetime customer value and the best conversion rate is the person who can bid the most to get visitors. The person who can bid the most to get visitors is the one that gets all of the super affiliates, the one that can spend the most on AdWords, the one that can hire the best SEO's, they're the one who can afford all of the offline marketing as well, and they're the one who squeezes the smaller players out of the marketplace.

So, it really is a winner-takes-all-environment and if you're not doing this stuff already, you really need to be. It is going mainstream. It's really important to start focusing on your conversion rates and your lifetime customer value, because it's a bidding war to get customers.

## Last Words

There are lots of tools out there that are really low cost, if not free, and really useful. We could probably talk for another hour just about the tools.

We have a couple of free reports on our website. You don't even need to give us your email address. There's one called "[15 tools that reveal why potential customers abandon your website](#)." Visit any page on our website, [conversion-rate-experts.com/blog](#) and in the sidebar, there's a "Most Popular" list featuring that report. It's worth checking out.

We also have a list of [108 things to test](#). So, once you really understand why your visitors aren't converting and you understand what areas you need to address, we have 108 things that you can test to overcome those issues. Again, that's on our website in the "Most Popular" list in our sidebar.

We also have numerous [case studies](#), where we show you, in detail, how we've applied our methodology and this thinking to real web businesses and what the measurable outcome was. So, the case studies are really valuable too.

The main thing is this: traffic becomes easier when you have a high conversion rate, because you can afford to acquire it. So, it's really something that's quite urgent. The great news is that most people still aren't doing this stuff, so if you can get started today and you can start making progress, you'll really be in a strong position when everyone else piles into your marketplace.

# ACTIONABLE TAKEAWAYS

## 1. **Define your vision.**

What do you want your website to do? What metrics will you try to increase? Before you can start testing, figure out exactly how your website funnel works with your business model.

## 2. **Survey your audience.**

Use a tool like KISSinsights to find out why people don't do what you want them to do. It comes down to one of three things (1) visitor intention, (2) user experience, or (3) overcoming objections.

## 3. **Learn from selling in person.**

If you can't sell your product or service in person, then you probably can't sell it on a website. Take some time and talk with real people. Figure out their objections and record your actual sales pitch. Then, take what works in person and transfer that to the website.

## 4. **Begin split-testing.**

Once you have the solid understanding of how to actually sell your product, start split-testing that sales video or sales copy. If you want a free split-testing tool, use [Google Website Optimizer](#). Go to [WhichMVT.com](#) to find an unbiased list of multivariate testing tools. Test your headline, social proof, competitive advantages, call to action, the offer (most important), risk reversals (i.e. guarantees, free trials, etc.), price levels, and body copy.

## 5. **Test out other revenue-boosting strategies.**

Once you have a solid, high converting sales page, implement cross-sells, upsells, and refer-a-friend programs to boost the lifetime value of your existing customers.

# Copywriting Magic

with Yanik Silver

**Y***anik Silver's father immigrated to the United States from Russia with just \$256 in his pocket. He started a business selling medical equipment to doctors and soon recruited his young son to help make sales.*



Through his teenage years, Yanik mastered his craft as a salesperson and helped the family business grow.

That's when Yanik got a bright idea: by putting direct response ads in medical journals, the company could sell medical supplies all across the country. The business thrived as Yanik became an expert at writing effective sales letters. Before long, Yanik was working as a consultant for other businesses.

One day, Yanik Silver woke up in the middle of the night with a question on his mind, "How do I create fully automatic websites that makes me money while I sleep?" He wanted to take his knowledge of making sales and start turning profits on the fast-growing Internet. A month and a half later, he had created [InstantSalesLetters.com](http://InstantSalesLetters.com), a website where he sold sales letter templates. He made \$1800 in the first month. Within three months, he was on track to make six figures from the site.

That was 2000 – and InstantSalesLetters.com is still bringing in thousands of dollars every month. It was so successful that Yanik has created a whole new career in helping people taking their expertise and leveraging it to earn a passive online income. He has since made over \$15 million from the Internet.

## Yanik Silver Today

To that end, he's started an online seminar called [Underground](#) that is sold-out year after year and [Maverick Business Adventures](#), an unconventional consulting company.

# WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

- What You Must Do *Before* You Begin Writing Copy
- The Importance of Story
- Formulas and Strategies
- How Visuals Can Make Your Pages Pop
- Video Sales Letters
- How to Overcome Their Objections
- The Risk in Hiring Somebody Else to Write Your Copy

## OVERVIEW

Copywriting is probably one of the most important skills that you can learn. It's really powerful.

It's a very learnable skill. It's not something that you either have or don't have. It comes down to understanding human psychology and influence. You've got to come up with the ways to frame things that are in your audience's best interest.

Of course, some people have better natural instincts for it.

## Before You Start Writing

### *Get inside the Mind of your Reader*

Let's say we're sitting here and we've got our product and idea. Before we even write anything, we've got to understand what's going on in our marketplace.

If you come from your marketplace, you'll have an easier time with this. But if you've decided that you want to tackle a marketplace, you've got to get a little bit deeper in the research.

We've got to understand is what's going on in our customers' heads. What do they really want? What are they really, really fearful of? What keeps them up at night?

You have to go deeper than the surface level. That will come either from conversation or reading discussion forums. Reading a lot of forums is an interesting way of getting some market insight or research. The ones that let you be anonymous can be especially valuable because then you see all sorts of crazy stuff on there.

## ***Scope Out the Competition***

You also want to figure out where your direct competitors are. That helps you find the gap in the marketplace, where your product or service is going to fit in. I'll even make a matrix of the competitors' headlines, offers, guarantees, hooks, and – especially – their pricing.

You want to do some competitive intelligence to see who is spending money and running the marketplace. What are the keywords? Who comes up for the Google Adwords? Whoever comes up is spending money and making the marketplace work. You want to go through your competitors funnels and see what they've got. Then use that as potential material. I would use a tool like [SpyFu](#).

Most people are able to figure out their direct competition. But then what's the comparable? If I'm a yacht charter company, a villa rental is a comparable service. My customer could be spending their money on a villa rental instead of my yacht charter. So, I'm not just competing with the other yacht companies.

## ***Craft a Story***

Start thinking about the story behind the product or the service – like how it was developed, who did it when, and why. There's usually a big selling point inside of that creation story that you just have to dig out and find.

## ***Brainstorm Objections***

Then I would start writing down the objections that people may have to start using your product or service. Some objections are standard: "That's too much money," "Why should I start going on this right now?" and so forth.

You really need to bring up the objections when you're writing your pieces. If you try to just sweep it underneath the rug, it's not going to work. People are automatically thinking about the objections or the catches. What's the, "Gotcha?"

## ***Brainstorm a Hook***

You really need to have a big idea or a big hook to stand out.

There's so much competition out there in every marketplace right now. There are too many me-too products and services. So the big idea becomes a shortcut for people to figure out if they want to buy from you.

## How to Get a Hook

So, I've got five formulas that are pretty easy, that people can think about and use.

### *Give them the Fish*

Formula number one for creating a big idea is to give them the fish. There's a saying that if you give a man a fish, you feed him for a day; if you teach a man how to fish, you feed him for life.

But people want the fish handed to them, especially today. So, the more push-button-simple you can make it, while maintaining integrity, the better it is.

That's why you'll see things like site builders that really are push-button simple. Wordpress has become the go-to platform because it's kind of the fish. It's gotten rid of a lot of the difficulties of content management for people.

Another example is the [Instant Sales Letter](#): you fill in a few blanks and a sales letter pops out on the other side that you can use for just about anything.

### *Be Specific*

Make your promise specific. Generic promises are too easy to make. I critique a lot of copy and that's one of my most common critiques.

There's a famous product that sold millions and millions of copies, called "8 Minute Abs" and they made a fortune with that hook, because it was that specific and easy.

Numbers are a good way. Instead of "Make Money from Home," I would say, "Why don't we do a product that's 28 ways for moms to make an extra \$327 dollars a month with a digital camera?" That's a lot more specific – maybe too specific.

### *Be Different*

I also like going in the opposite direction from your competition.

When I got started with my very first Underground Seminar about eight years ago, the marketplace was pretty saturated with other Internet marketing events. So I decided, "Hey the thing to do is to be different. Instead of having the exact same speakers that almost everyone else does, I'm going to do it completely different and feature unknown speakers who are really making it in the real world. And I'm going to make it an experiential theme (a spy theme)."

That's really worked well. Underground has been a really huge event and it's sold out for pretty much the last seven years now, going on eight. That's a perfect example of going the opposite direction.

A good book on the subject is [\*Different\*](#) by a Harvard professor, Youngme Moon.

One of the big things is taking what your difference is and exaggerating it. A lot of companies look at their competitors and they say, "They've got this feature, this feature, this feature, and this feature." So they start adding all those features and then they get lost in the shuffle with all of the other competitors. Basically, they end up with a mediocre product.

It's better to stand on a few key features and really extend them.

### ***Repurpose Proven Successes***

Another way of creating a hook is by applying a proven idea in a new way.

With traditional time shares, you can rent an apartment or a condo. But then people took that time share concept and applied it for private jets, yachts, luxury second homes, exotic cars, and that became a new hook. So, you can look around and see what is out there already and apply it to a different marketplace.

One of my mentors is Dan Kennedy. He had a product called [\*Magnetic Marketing\*](#) that he sold for years and years. My buddy John Alanis created a hook all around that for dating, which is [\*Women Approach You\*](#) – the same thing, Magnetic Marketing is business comes to you, for John it was women approach you.

### ***Be First in the Market***

Being first in the market gives you prominent positioning. Get in your own first place position. It gives you an opportunity to create prominent positioning.

A really good example is Five Hour Energy. Red Bull was pretty dominant in the energy drink market place and there were a whole bunch of other competitors that were trying to come in, like Rockstar. So, Five Hour Energy decided to essentially create their own category. It's a little shot bottle.

# COPYWRITING STRATEGY

## Templates

Templates help because they're a way to shortcut the writing process. So, I have bins and bins of letters downstairs. I don't use them as often anymore. I've kind of internalized a lot of it.

But, I still break out a swipe file for a couple things. I literally created a swipe file for myself of headlines, openings, closes, P.S.'s, guarantees, power words, and copy transitions (ways to stitch together different paragraphs).

## Headlines

I typically start with headlines. They help establish the structure for everything else.

If I'm going to take a serious pass at a letter. I will write about 75 to 100 headlines. That might sound a little crazy, but it's something that is well worth it.

Typically the first ten or twenty headlines will be pretty easy. I'll think, "I've got it. I've got what's going to be a great headline." But you've got to push yourself beyond that, because all of the really good stuff that helps create a deep, emotional connection really comes from numbers 50 onward.

Then you start combining them together and making different things happen. That's where the good stuff happens.

## Formulas

If you just want to have a simple structure that always works, here's an almost no-fail one: provide a problem, agitate that problem (turn that knife a little bit deeper), and then provide the solution.

That's a real simple one. Now, you can get more complex:

Start off with a benefit, headline, sub-head that elaborates on the benefit, initial story (talking about how this was created), some authority block (anything about your reputation or why I should listen to you), and then an introduction of the product or solution, followed by testimonial or any sort of proof elements (a couple of those), then followed by a heightening of desire, an "apples to oranges" price comparison, and then some sort of deadline or penalty for not taking action right now.



So, that's a good structure right there. That's a more elaborate one, but a pretty good one that you can fit into most things. There may be a bonus or additional things that help them out. It's all about pumping up the visitor's impression that, "Wow, I'm really going to get something great here."

## **“Apples to Oranges” Price Comparison**

When you're making the pricing comparison, try to make it an unfair advantage for you, in some way. That way the pricing seems like a complete no-brainer.

I did a fitness product once a few years back and we sold it for I think \$29.95. It was an ebook that I think was called *Get Fit While You Sit*. Basically, it's about how to do exercises while you're in front of your computer or watching TV. It's pretty good.

With a fitness product, it's not like I can say you're going to make \$1000 tomorrow. There's not a monetary return on your investment. So, you've got to have a different way of combining that solution for them.

So we never compared the price to another workout video or even another book or anything like that. We compared it to the cost of going to the gym or the cost of getting personal instruction from Jeff, the trainer, who charges \$50 an hour.

## **The Story**

This is a big deal. My letters are a lot like stories. That's a pretty important psychological hot button that you want to use in a lot of your copy, if you can.

Stories are super-engaging, even in sales copy. Think about when you're listening to a speaker. They'll talk about concepts, but you love it when they say, "Let me tell you a story about this." Then it becomes even more engaging.

Stories really sell, since ancient times and even today. I have two kids and they still want that bedtime story. That's the way we disseminate and share information.

But people tend to neglect their story. So you want to ask yourself, "What is my creation story? How did I come up with this thing?" People want to know that.

## **Length**

How long should a sales letter be? It needs to be long enough to make the sale. They're not intentionally long. At least, the ones that are good aren't.

I need to present my entire and full argument to them. So, that requires a full-on presentation and typically a lot of space.

On that longer formula that I rattled off earlier, I probably missed one or two elements. There was no objection recovery there, so that's another element that we do. That could even be a separate little piece that says, "By now you might have some questions."

Instead of just a single, long, flowing page, we've been experimenting with breaking it up into sections that people can click on and get more information. I'm not 100% that that's been more effective, but aesthetically it looks a little bit better.

That's what I've done for the higher end stuff like the Maverick 1000. I'll sacrifice viewer response for having a higher end look.

## **Editing**

I have a nine phase editing process, so it's a significant edit.

I write the full copy. Then I actually read it out loud and find all of the pieces that aren't working right. Then I edit for copy transitions to make it flow together better. Then I edit for what I call a double readership path. That means that if I only skim through the document (if I only read the subheads, bolded and yellow-highlighted text), that I could get an idea for what the product or service is and make a sale that way.

## **Tips to Keep People Reading**

There are readership studies that say that after 500 words, the next drop-off is at 5,000 words. So, you've got a pretty good amount of room there.

### ***Headlines are Key***

On the web, our reading habits are different. We're definitely skimmers.

All those 100 headlines I write don't go to waste. Obviously, I will use the best one for my headline and the second best one for my subhead. Then I use a lot of them for subheads throughout the sales letter. I'll use them for opening sentences sometimes. I'll use them for my P.S.

### ***Visual Elements***

We add more visual elements to the letter in order to keep the reader engaged.

One of my editing phases is graphical enhancement. That could be going through and bolding certain phrases or words. It could be putting highlighter on certain things. It would be adding images and copy doodles.

Adding just a layer of visual enticement helps people to smoothly go through it. You want it to look like it's not hard to get through, because you want to get people through those first five hundred words that we talked about.

## VISUAL COPYWRITING

Engaging graphics keep the visual elements interesting for people to look through. They'll be like, "Yeah, I want to keep being engaged in this."

You can do a fair amount with visuals right now. It depends on what the product is, but certainly you'll see a lot of screenshots or photos on our sales pages.

### Captions

One simple trick to add more readability to your photos is to add a little caption underneath. That's the way we've always been taught to read.

### Hire Graphic Design

It's worth spending some money on a graphical artist to help you with it. It doesn't cost that much now. You can get somebody off of [Elance](#) or [oDesk](#) to really give a nice look and feel to your site.

We have a graphic design team that we recommend off of [UndergroundX.com](#). But there are a lot of people that you can use for this.

### Video

Video plays a big part in the sales process today. It's a whole new element.

A lot of people have gone only to video. Some have gone to a hybrid of video and copy. I don't know which way is better. I think you've got to test it for your market. I've seen different results work in different marketplaces.

#### *Writing Copy for Video*

There's actually not that much of a difference between video copy and conventional sales copy.

For Instant Sales Letters, I took the main elements of the copy and just turned it into a video script. That alone would be enough to get people excited and interested.

We probably could have even made that [video] a little bit longer. We were cheap and doing it on budget. So, we probably would have done a few more minutes and then given them a call to action to order it. Where we left instead, it was just an introduction to get them excited to read through and see what the rest of it was.

### ***Infomercials***

If you're not looking at the old school infomercials, you're missing out. Those give you a really good framework for how to deliver your sales message. If you're really serious about this, transcribe a few infomercials. Go look at the best-selling infomercials and see what they're doing right.

### ***Effectiveness of Video***

It's hard to say. I've seen mixed results from the people that I hang out with. Some people, it hurt their conversion. So, I think it's up to you. You've got to test it and see where you are with it.

But if you're not trying it, I think you're missing out.

## **HANDLING OBJECTIONS**

You've got to bring them up to the front. You can't just sweep them underneath the rug and hope that people aren't thinking about it.

### **Brainstorming Objections**

Before I write, I might make a map of what the key pieces are, what the bonuses are, and other key elements. One of the big topics on my map is always objections.

So, I will write out the objections and then I will write below it what the counter is to that objection.

### **Countering Objections**

Inside the sales letter, I will typically bring up something like, "By now you might have a few questions. Here are some of the most prominent ones that we get."

It might be in a Q&A format with the question being the objection. You might make that the biggest objection a whole subhead.

## **Example**

Let's say you're selling a money-making product. One of the biggest objections is, "Why aren't you doing this yourself? Why are you only teaching it?"

That's a big, big objection and you've got to face that. Tell people why you're doing that and when they have a legitimate reason, then people will believe you. So, I would make that a big subhead. It would be like, "You're probably thinking, 'Why would I even teach this?'"

It always comes back to reason why, which is a huge psychological hot button. You should be giving people a reason why you're doing what you're doing and the reason why the price is what it is.

## **Common Objections**

The objections will vary based on what your product is, but here are some pretty common ones:

"Too much competition."

"I've seen this before. How is this different?"

"Why should I even do this right now?"

"The price is too much."

Let's talk about the price. We talked about that already with the apples to oranges comparison. I might throw that in, so that it looks like a real good looking return on investment proposition for them. They look at it as it's going to be a complete no-brainer for them to get it.

Sometimes it's even breaking it down into the absurdly simple: this costs less than one cup of coffee a day or something like that. That can be a way of breaking down the costs too much objection.

# COPY STRATEGY

## Power Words

There are a few headline words that I use a lot. With Instant Sales Letters, you get this little guide called Ultimate Copywriting Toolbox. I'll read a few of them out and you could see how they could be used.

The word "Free" still works. "Facts" still works. "Discover" is a big one for sure. I use "Discover" a lot. I use "Announcing," "How To," and questions a lot.

But be careful with questions. You don't want to make it a "Yes / No" question. You want to make it like, "Which of these three common mistakes are you making with your taxes?" or something like that. That's a better question than, "Are you making a mistake with your taxes this year?" That's too easy to just say yes or no. You want to create engagement.

## Emotional Connotation

A lot of words have a bit of an emotional attachment or picture to them.

Picture "Discover," for example. Discover is sort of like stumbling on something and doesn't feel like as much as work. If you say, "You'll learn," that's not that exciting. It sounds like work. But, if you say that you'll "discover," that sounds cool. That sounds pretty easy.

That's one of the other ways that I edit. I go through and look for words that can be changed to have more meaning and better emotional context.

## Formulas

You could take some of the headlines that have worked for a long time and just rework them.

One example of a headline is, "Which one of these five skin troubles would you like to end?"

It's not hard to change that to, "Which of these [blank] would you like to end?"

Here's another headline that I have: "They thought I was crazy to ship live Maine lobsters as far as 1800 miles from the ocean." Obviously, now in the mail-order

Internet age, that would be a pretty silly headline. But, we can say, “They thought I was crazy to [blank].”

You can take the concepts behind some of these tried-and-true headlines and apply them to what you’re doing. That’s a good way to sort of get through your list of 100 and then you’ll start adding onto those.

## The Road Less Traveled

I try to go back to the opposite of what everyone else is doing.

So, if I’m in a market where there’s a lot of hype, I’m going to take the whole opposite road. I’m going to go almost completely non-hypey and turn it against them.

You can really downplay the hype, especially if you’re in a super-hypey market place. That creates a new position for you.

So, I’m more about being strategic with the copy, rather than, “Let’s just go in there and be the exact same as somebody else and except more! If somebody’s giving 3,000 dollars of bonuses, we’re going to offer \$5,000 dollars!” That’s like a nuclear arms race. You don’t end up anywhere.

## OUTSOURCING COPYWRITING

I think copywriting is a very learnable skill. You’re the one that knows your market and your product the best. So, if you did want to hire somebody after that, they’re going to be starting at a disadvantage. So, I would actually spend some time investing in resources and tools that could help you learn to write your own copy.

## Buyer Beware

There are a lot of bad copywriters out there. Actually, they’re not necessarily bad, but they charge at a level that they shouldn’t be charging. I credit this to a couple of things out there that are all about how you can make six figures as a copywriter. What happens is they just go through too many shortcuts and create very template-like letters and they don’t end up selling. Sloppy copywriters are something that you’ve got to look out for.

You also have to check references and make sure that somebody actually wrote the piece they say that they wrote. I have copywriters who say that they’ve done this piece

where really all they did might have been the bullets. There's a big difference between writing the bullets for a winning piece versus writing the entire thing.

So, check out references carefully.

## Create Competition

If you've got the resources to go hire someone, then it's potentially even worth it to hire two people. Let them both put something out there that you can test against each other.

## LOOKING FORWARD

I don't think the fundamentals ever change. People are going to respond to the same stuff.

They're going to respond to the benefit of gain and they're going to respond to the fear of loss. It's just how we present it. None of that is going to change.

## Mobile Technologies

If anything is going to change, it's going to be more people accessing your site via mobile and tablet. So, that means that you've got to make sure that your copy is really ideal for someone coming off of that device. So, maybe that means even shorter paragraphs. Maybe that means keeping it really tight and engaging.

For someone to scroll through on their iPhones through a twenty page sales letter is going to be a lot tougher than watching a three minute video about it. So, you've got to balance the device with the message that you can deliver.

## Keep the Story Going

I think you're going to be able to string out your story and sales message more using auto-responders or something like that. You want to keep the story going and keep people engaged in the story.

Take a page from anybody who writes a story. The TV shows *Lost* and *24* are always good examples. They might answer something in an episode, but then they'll leave you hanging with another thing. The more you can do that and keep your customers engaged, that's certainly somewhere where you're copywriting skills can really help you.



## Last Words

Understanding the psychological hot buttons is a big deal.

I always tell people to pick up this book, [\*Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion\*](#) by Robert Cialdini. He talks about likeability, authority, scarcity – and when you start piling those elements on together, you’ll really see big increases with your copy.

Certainly, it’s got to be done in an ethical way, but it’s really interesting to see how that comes together.

## ACTIONABLE TAKEAWAYS

### 1. **Get inside your customer’s head.**

What are their hopes, fears, and dreams? What keeps them up at night? In order to write good sales copy, you need to understand what makes your customers tick.

### 2. **Create a hook.**

You need a hook to stand out. Yanik gave us five formulas that he uses: (1) Give them a fish, (2) Be specific, (3) Be different, (4) Repurpose proven success, and (5) Be first in the market.

### 3. **Write your copy.**

Start with 75-100 headlines. Choose a benefit-driven headline and a subhead. Tell them your story to build credibility and likeability. Introduce the problem and provide the solution. Present testimonials and other social proof. Give them an “apples to oranges” price comparison. Handle all of their objections, including the ones they didn’t know they had. Then wrap it up with a legitimate deadline or penalty for not taking action right now.

### 4. **Boost engagement with power words.**

Good sales pages read like a story. Find weak links in your copy and replace them with power words like, “Discover,” “Facts,” and “Free.” Get people to feel an emotional connection to your story.

### 5. **Add visual copywriting.**

Once you have your copy in order, begin adding images, screenshots, copy doodles, and other visual elements that’ll make the copy more engaging. Consider creating a video with your copy as the script and adding it to the top of the page so they can choose to watch or read.

# Email Marketing

## with David Risley

**I**n 1998, David Risley founded a website called *PCmech.com*, which provides do-it-yourself computer help.

He first monetized the site by putting up banner ads a couple years later. Eventually, Risley began collecting email subscribers and turned email marketing into a six-figure business.



### David Risley Today

In 2008, David launched [DavidRisley.com](http://DavidRisley.com). He uses that website as a platform to teach people how to earn more money from their own blogs.

## WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

- How to Get Started
- Using Auto-Responders
- The Best Opt-In Areas
- Managing a Healthy List
- How to Write Simple, Effective Emails
- The Relationship Between His Blog and List
- Making Sales with Email
- Future Trends in Email Marketing

# GETTING STARTED IN EMAIL MARKETING

## Start Building a List

Sign up with some kind of an email service and put a signup form on your site. Try to put some text there that will hopefully entice people to sign up.

I use [AWeber](#) and I'm personally a fan of AWeber. I know a lot of people like [MailChimp](#) as well, but I think Aweber is the best game in town.

Even if you don't have anything to give away yet, something up there is better than nothing. A lot of people end up waiting until they have something to give away and in the mean time they're letting months go by without building a list.

## Give Something Away

It's best to have something to give away that will make people want to be on your list.

You basically look at it as if it's your first sale. Obviously, there's no money changing hands. But it's still a bit of a transaction: they're giving you an email address, so you need to give them something cool to want to be on there.

What that should be depends on what market you're in. Ideally, you try to find some kind of a hot button that your market is interested in and create something that provides them with a solution to that.

It doesn't have to be a hundred pages. It doesn't even have to be a PDF. It could be a video or something like that. The measurement of how big it needs to be is just that they get some value out of it and you're helping them with some type of a solution. Then give it away for free if they opt-in to your email list.

## Email Your List

Don't drop the ball once they're on the list. You must continue to email them. Don't inundate them, but just keep the flow going.

A lot of people lose track right there. They're so concentrated on getting people to subscribe, that they forget that they have to maintain the list once they have it. If you don't do that, people forget why they're there in the first place.

Since you haven't built a relationship with them, when you do email them, they're more likely to unsubscribe or say that you're a spammer or something like that. They don't remember who the heck you are and they don't really care.

So it's just a matter of emailing them on a routine basis. It could simply be emailing them with a link to your latest blog post. It could be a product promotion, if you want to go that route. I am a believer in promoting things early on, just to get people used to the fact that you are going to do that.

## **EMAIL MARKETING STRATEGY**

### **The Role of Email Marketing**

In my business, it's huge.

Email marketing is not only my way of driving my readers back to my blog when I post something new, it's also where most of my income is coming from. The blog generates income on its own, but its biggest role is to foster the relationships of people who are already on my list or to get people onto my list to begin with.

A lot of the money comes from the list directly. It would be incredibly difficult to make a living if I were not using email.

### **The Power of Email**

Email is your way of mobilizing the crowd.

It's your way of drawing their attention to something any time that you want. Without that, you're basically just sitting there and waiting for them to feel like coming back. Your website isn't really an asset unless you have a way to mobilize their attention.

### **Using Auto-Responders**

I think they're really useful.

I haven't been using auto-responders a whole lot, except for with some of my product sites, but I'm about to change that. I'm actually in the process of putting together an auto-responder sequence and using that more than the one-off emails.

I think that when you do it that way, you can do things a lot more strategically than if you were just asking yourself on any given day, “Okay, what am I going to send my list today?”

## **BUILDING A LIST**

### **On-Site Strategies**

#### ***Make Your Homepage into a Squeeze Page***

I have a larger opt-in on my [homepage](#) than a lot of people do. If you look just above the fold, it’s basically a squeeze page with a menu.

A squeeze page very simply is a page that only has a single purpose: to get somebody to opt-in to an email list. So there’s nothing else for them to do. They read some copy, maybe a headline, maybe there’s a video, and they have one decision to make: whether to opt-in or not.

Most blogs have an opt-in form in the sidebar and that’s it. But it’s really hard to attract their attention with that. So I think having a really nice, squeeze-pagey opt-in really helps on the homepage.

The homepage is not the most busy page of the website. Most visitors go directly into one of your posts via search or social media or something like that. On those pages, obviously the content is the most important thing. That’s why they’re there. But when they’re on a homepage, it’s more of an initial relationship-builder.

With that being said, I think the most important thing you can do with your homepage is to get them on your list.

#### ***More Opt-In Areas***

The sidebar is obviously one good place to put an opt-in form. It’s the most common.

Put it at the top of the sidebar, or at least as close to top. If you’re running banner ads, then you might have a monetary reason for having the ad at the top, but you typically want that opt-in to be up there. You want it to be above the fold. You don’t want somebody to have to scroll to even see that you have an opt-in form.

Some people also put them in the header. Maybe it works. I haven’t done that, so I don’t know.

Some people put opt-ins in the footer, which is usually a pretty good place to put one. You're not going to get a super-high opt-in rate, but it catches people who have scrolled through all of your content and all your comments. You give them something to do, which is opt-in.

You can also put an opt-in right underneath your articles. Again, the idea is that they've read it and if they liked it, they can get on the list.

Just think about the typical stop points where one's eyeballs might come to rest on your page and you can think about putting an opt-in form there.

### ***Opt-In Giveaway***

It just needs to have some type of solution to a problem that they're looking for.

My market is bloggers and I know that they're typically dealing with traffic issues and how to make money with it. So I give away something up that will help with that.

If you're in the photography market, then your giveaway would be completely different. Maybe there's some complicated camera problem that people can't figure out and you help them figure it out.

So it's all a matter of what solution your audience is looking for.

### ***What to Ask For***

I just ask for email and name.

Actually, some of my forms ask for name. Some of them ask for just email. I can't say that that's super-strategic on my part.

Typically, it comes down to testing. In most cases, entering a first name is not a big deal for people. In some cases, if you remove the name, you'll get a little higher uptick.

But there are some benefits to being able to address people by name. So, in general, I would say probably try to keep it.

The only situation where you might want to ask for other stuff is if it's more of a lead generation form. If you're really trying to qualify leads and they're signing up for specific stuff, then maybe you can ask them for more information. But if it's just a general list, just keep it simple.

## Off-Site Strategies

There are also things outside of traditional blogging that can build lists quite well.

Webinars can build a list really well. You can have it set so that every person who RSVPs for that webinar is set onto your list. Also, you have no better way to build a relationship with people than to have them sit there and listen to you for an hour. You can sell things to them during that time, as well.

Another way to build a list is through social media marketing. Build up a Facebook page and have an opt-in over on Facebook.

## MANAGING YOUR LIST

### Pruning Your List

Soon, I'm probably going to begin a campaign to actually weed out the people who are not opening emails. It's something that I haven't done in a while and it starts to show in my open rates.

With AWeber, you're paying for the number of emails that you have in your account. If you have a lot of people sitting on your list and they're not ever opening your emails, what's the point of paying for it?

Plus, it artificially makes your open rates look lower, since you have inactive people on your list. If they have not been opening my emails in six months, it's probably a pretty good indicator that they're not that interested.

That's a big thing in maintaining the list: go for quality, not so much quantity.

### *How to Eliminate Low-Quality Subscribers*

What you first need to do is start emailing the people who are not opening. With AWeber, you can run a search of people who have not opened an email from you in whatever time frame you want. You can segment them out and then just email that segment.

Just let them know what you're doing and that you would like to get them to stay on the list, if they're interested. You can even give them a free gift if you want to really keep that relationship alive. Basically, just get them to click. They don't even need to resubscribe. AWeber is going to count that as an open and then they're off that

segment and they're not going to be removed at any point. It's just a matter of getting that interaction going.

When all is said and done, let's say after massaging this process for thirty days or so, you can start to see whoever's left -- the people who are not opening the emails and probably not seeing them. You just tell AWeber to delete that segment.

## **EMAIL STRATEGY**

### **Frequency**

I typically email my list two to three times a week. I don't really have a golden number.

Especially in my market, I know a lot of people get an awful lot of email and I don't want them to forget about me. But at the same time I don't want to overrun them either because they're probably just going to delete me.

One of the things that I've been thinking about doing is testing that and actually increasing it a little bit and decreasing it a little bit and seeing what happens.

### **Content**

Usually it's either something on my blog that I've posted or it's a promotion of some kind.

Sometimes I just email out and say, "Hey I just posted this." And I get them over to my latest post.

Promoting things is a great way to let people know about something really cool and there's also a monetary aspect there for me.

## **HOW TO WRITE EMAILS**

### **Don't Overthink It**

Literally, I just sit down and write the email.

I don't really think about the fact that a lot of people are going to be reading it. I'm used to that, so it doesn't bother me.



## Keep it Informal

The emails are basically written like I talk. I'm not formal like I would be with a college paper, because I think that would be kind of boring.

If you're constantly being your own grammar teacher as you're writing, then you're going to get in your own way.

## Write to an Avatar

The biggest thing that I would recommend is to develop an avatar for your audience.

In marketing circles, people talk about this: the idea of creating a singular person who represents your audience. It helps you feel like you're writing just to them and not everybody at the same time.

### *Picking an Avatar*

There's a process that can go into creating this avatar.

I just surveyed a lot of my customers. It was a really in-depth survey that got into some emotional things. I was really trying to figure out what makes them tick and what motivates them. Then I took all that information and actually started compiling the commonalities that I see. I will start to put that together into a person.

I'm not done with this process yet, but the end result is going to be a very thorough description of one particular person and their traits. I'll even have a picture of them. Obviously, it won't be real, it will just be a picture off of the internet or something like that. But the basic idea is that I will imagine that that's the person that I'm writing to.

### *The Benefit*

It helps with marketing. You know what motivates your audience and what they're looking for, what they're thinking, what kind of things that are going to come to their mind when you ask for money, so that you can overcome that.

## Connecting with Your List

It comes down to the fact that we as human beings connect with other human beings. We can connect with a brand, but it's a little bit more anonymous.

When you have a connection with another human being, I think you can get everything. They feel like they're getting an email from a friend, if you do it right. It's

not like getting an email from Walmart, where you're like, "Okay, it's just a big corporate promo."

### ***How to Foster a Personal Connection***

I keep it real. I write like I would naturally write. There's nothing fake about it.

I also introduce some personal aspects. Sometimes I'll mention something I'm doing with my kids. It's a mix of myself and whatever business reason I have for sending the email.

I'm not doing that all the time. It's not like I have my obligatory child notification at the top of the email. But when it seems natural or when it's something I want to say, then I'll include it.

Last week, I had to go to my child's day care for a little birthday party they were doing over there for her. I had to cancel something that I was doing for one of my membership programs, because I realized that they conflicted. I just told them why and I received all kinds of emails coming back saying how awesome it was that I was putting Daddy stuff first. So, people are cool about it.

## **Writing Readable Emails**

Most of my emails are not very long. I keep the lines short, probably around the 80 to 90 character count. I will line-wrap it so it doesn't get too long.

It just makes it easier to read and makes it fit onto mobile devices pretty well.

If it's a longer email, then I would break it up kind of like I would a typical blog post with sub headers and stuff like that.

### ***Including Links***

Whatever link I want them to click on, I'll usually include in there at least a couple of times: one toward the top somewhere and one toward the end. If you want to do a third time, you could put it in a PS.

### ***Emails with Graphic Templates***

I tend to keep it more text-based.

I've experimented with some html ones. I did one that was a little bit fancy. Then I did one that was just an image header with everything south of that was just text. I found

that it really didn't have a heck of a lot of effect one way or the other, so I tend to just keep it text.

For one, text is easier to do. You're also going to have less compatibility issues with email clients. If you put images in there, you have to worry about some web-based email systems blocking images by default.

The other thing: if you get an email from a friend, it usually doesn't have a bunch of fancy stuff in it. It's just a text email, so let's have yours look the same way.

## **BLOGGING AND EMAIL MARKETING**

At least in my case, they go hand in hand.

The list drives traffic to the blog because, a lot of the times, I'll send blog posts to my list. Actually, I don't send the whole post, but I'll send them a teaser and then they'll have to click to go with it.

In return, the blog is building the list for you, so it's like a circle.

### **Why Email Your Blog Posts**

It's traffic for me, which is awesome and it might get them to click on some things.

But another thing it does – and I hate to use this word because it sounds almost insulting – is train the list to click on things. This is important, because then when you send them something else, they're used to actually acting on your emails.

If they're used to just consuming your emails and moving on, then when you send them a promotion or webinar later, they might not click on it because they're used to just having the one-way flow.

For me, it's almost about just completing a cycle. I say something and then I want them to say something. Their saying something is going to come in the form of clicking and hopefully commenting on the blog. I don't want it to be just a one-way lecture.

### **Automatic Broadcast**

With one site, I have an alerts list which is completely automatic. It's using AWeber. It just sends them links to the post. I think I've got it set so that once three new posts have been entered into the database, it will trigger another email. That one's called PC Mech Alert. There's no human component to it.

With DavidRisley.com, it's all written by hand. There's no automatic broadcast. If people know it's written by a computer, I don't think they'll look at it as much. Plus, you can get them to click through and actually read the post if you actually have a teaser in the email rather than just a regurgitation of the post.

## **SELLING WITH EMAIL MARKETING**

Sometimes it's as simple as sending them an email with a link to a sales letter. But I've found that – especially if they don't have any prior knowledge of the product – if I just send them blindly to this thing, it's not going to convert very well. There needs to be some set up.

More often, I'm not simply sending them to a sales letter. I'm sending them through some form of content into the sales piece. The reason is to get them interested and pre-qualified to a certain degree.

Sometimes I'll include a link to the product in the email, but then I'll also provide a link to an article on my blog where I also promote it. So it will be like a double-whammy.

### **Always Selling**

Generally, if I have any interaction with my list at all, somewhere in that sequence there is going to be something that is monetized. If there's not an affiliate link in the post or in the email, then at the bare minimum there's going to be a call to action at the end of the blog post that gets them into something.

It's not like it's going to convert a heck of a lot, but at least there's something there. I don't want to have an interaction where there's not at least some form of continuing action that a person can take if they want.

It's business. That's how I make my living.

### **Identifying Affiliate Links**

Sometimes I'll mention that a link is an affiliate link.

I have a disclosure policy on my blog and so I figure that they know what business I'm in. I disclose it.

I also make it very clear that I'm never going to do anything that I don't think is good for them. It's not just about the money. I don't want to abuse their subscription.

## Cliffhangers

You can build cliffhangers into emails that are going to get them to look forward to the next one. It's one of those things I have to perfect over time, but if you write the emails with cliffhangers, you can get them to anticipate the next one. Then your open rate is going to be really good.

## LOOKING FORWARD

I don't think email marketing is going anywhere.

They say blogging is dead sometimes and they're always wrong. I've heard people say that email is dead. They're always wrong too.

We all are in our email boxes more than we are anywhere else on the Internet. We're probably in there more than we are on Facebook and Facebook gets a lot of our time. So I think it's obviously here to stay.

## Rising Trends

### *Social Networks*

A lot of people are going to be using social media to build their list.

Take Facebook, for example. People will build their custom Facebook page to build up a list. Instead of having the relationship stay on Facebook, they're going to make that relationship so much stronger by following up with them via email.

Combining all of these things is already a big thing. I think it's just going to become more of a big thing.

### *Mobile*

You also need to consider that more and more people are going to be reading your email on little screens. The nice smart phones are pretty good at scaling the email up and down, so it will still look pretty good. But not everybody's walking around with an iPhone, so you have to just keep things as simple as you can.

## Last Words

Don't be scared of it and just do it.

One of the biggest mistakes I ever made with my business was that I went for several years at the beginning without having a list for my tech site. I kind of want to beat myself over the head with a hammer for that one.

The email list is one of the biggest assets you can build with your business. The blog itself is kind of small potatoes if you don't have a way to drive people's attention to things. And the blog is reactionary. Your list is proactive. So it's a humongous asset that everybody needs to be developing.

## **ACTIONABLE TAKEAWAYS**

### **1. Put up an opt-in.**

Start by signing up for an email service like AWeber or MailChimp. Even if you don't have a lead magnet, put an opt-in form on your site. Good places for opt-in boxes are above the fold, the top of the sidebar, the bottom of the content area, in the footer, and anywhere else where people's eyes stop.

### **2. Create your lead magnet.**

Think of your asking for their email as the first transaction. You need to sell them on why they should give you their email. The best way to do that is to give them something valuable for free. It could be an eBook, an audio, a video, or even an auto-responder series of emails. Whatever it is, you need to solve a pressing problem for the person you want to reach.

### **3. Nurture your list.**

Once people are on your list, you need to keep in constant contact with them, otherwise, they'll forget who you are. You can do that by regularly sending them emails with valuable information.

### **4. Write informal emails.**

Create an avatar for your audience. When you sit down and start writing an email, write it to that person, not to everyone. Also, sprinkle in personal details about your life to build a personal connection with your list.

### **5. Make money from your list.**

If you communicate from the outset that this is how you make a living, they'll expect to receive offers and information about different products. Just keep in mind that you're not doing this to make money, you're doing it to help an audience that asked for your best advice.

# Webinar Domination

with Stephen Beck

**S**tephen Beck owned a remodeling company for 20 years in College Station, Texas. When he went to seminary in Idaho, he stopped working for the company – but he realized that he still had kids in college and a family to feed.



Beck saw the Internet as an opportunity to earn revenue while away.

After achieving moderate success with a website and ebook, Beck put on a webinar for the first time. That week, he earned \$50,000 of revenue.

## Stephen Beck Today

Beck continued to use webinars during his time at seminary and grew the business into a bread-winner. Now back home, Beck teaches people how to follow in his footsteps through his [Wildly Wealthy Webinars](#).

## WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

- How to Get Started with Webinars
- Attracting an Audience
- Webinar Strategies
- The Power of Interactivity
- How to Deliver a Perfect Webinar Pitch
- The Future of Webinars

# WEBINAR OVERVIEW

## Starting Out

The first step is having a product.

The second step is having an audience – and the easiest way to get an audience is to find somebody who already markets to your target market.

For instance, if I were going to try to teach people how to make money with WordPress, then I would reach out to somebody like Michael Dunlop, who already has an audience that's very in tune with WordPress. I would just say, "Hey Michael, let's do a webinar together."

Obviously, I would share a big portion of my sales with him. In information marketing, it's customarily 50%. So, it's a win-win situation. You get a premade audience that you don't have to generate from scratch and the person you're doing the webinar with gets a percentage of every sale that you make.

## How to Set Up a Webinar

I use a platform called [GoToWebinar](#).

It's very simple. Sign up for an account and then make a PowerPoint presentation. I recommend a 60 minute webinar (probably 50 minutes of content, 10 minutes of promoting your product). Make sure that you give them very good content.

Come the day of the webinar, fire up your GoToWebinar account and get your host on as a panelist. That way, only you two should be heard. You don't want all the audience to be heard, so mute them out.

The technology allows you to do a webinar for up to 1000 people at one time. Imagine the power of getting hundreds of people on a webinar, all seeing your screen and listening to your message.

## The Day of the Webinar

I wouldn't wake up at two o'clock in the morning and then do a webinar that night. It's nice to be coherent and well-rested.

Leave yourself plenty of time before the webinar, because a lot of things happen. Sometimes the recording doesn't boot up like it's supposed to. Sometimes Windows



wants update and it shuts your computer down, right before the webinar. So, it's always nice to start at least 30 minutes before, get it up, get it running, and do a couple of tests. Then, you can relax for the next 15 minutes.

One time, I was eating dinner with my family and our daughter said, "Dad, don't you have a webinar tonight?" I had completely forgotten and it was 10 minutes away. So I finished my mashed potatoes and then I went in and fired up the webinar. I don't recommend that you do that when you're just starting out.

## THE INTERACTIVITY OF WEBINARS

People are trying to sell their products on a static web page. But one thing I love about webinars is that there's so much interaction.

### Event Atmosphere

Think about the psychology of a live webinar: you're actually getting people to come to an event. Since it's an event, people actually stop what they're doing and pay attention to you.

That's why I think that live webinars outsell videos. There's something special about having a live event where you're teaching them.

### Polling

A lot of people don't use the poll function in a webinar, but it's an excellent way to take the pulse of your audience. As people vote, you can actually show them the results live.

The first question I ask is always a real icebreaker, like, "Do you think that webinars can help you in your online business?" Everybody's going to answer, "Yes."

But the second question might be, "What obstacles do you see for using webinars in your business? Is it (A) the technology, (B) Filling your webinar, (C) Not knowing how to run a webinar, (D) Something else?"

For one, a question like that gets people to admit that they don't know everything that they need to know about webinars. It's also social proof. They're seeing that other people agree with them.

### Exit Surveys

I ask them, "Did you enjoy the webinar?" Yes or no.

Then, “What was your biggest takeaway from the webinar?”

Well, now they’re telling me that they learned a lot.

And then my third question is the deal-sealer: “From what you’ve seen tonight, would you recommend this product to your friends?”

Psychologically, this question does two things. One, your mind does not want to go against what you just wrote. So, if they write something glowing about it, they’ll want to buy the product. And two, you can use that as a testimonial for your other webinars.

## Question and Answer

Live Q&A is really good for sales if you do it in the right way.

The main thing is to answer objections. I want to answer questions that would impede them from buying my product.

I answer a lot of objective-based questions like, “How can I get your product.” That’s an excellent question. Or, “How can I use webinars if I’m a dentist?” I love that question. Another great question would be, “So what else comes with your product?”

But if they’re asking a lot of minute details, I don’t want to get involved in too many details in a Q&A so I probably won’t answer.

If nobody asks a question, you can even seed your own questions in reserve.

# WEBINAR STRATEGIES

## When Should You Schedule a Webinar?

Mondays are awful, because it’s right after the weekend. I never do anything on Mondays, Fridays, or Saturdays. Every now and then I do something on a Sunday, but you’re running a risk there.

So, that leaves Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Now, in the States, Wednesday is still a church night for some people. So, that kind of leaves Tuesdays and Thursdays. I like Tuesdays.

In the United States, 9 o’clock Eastern is a very good time. That’s 8 o’clock Central, 7 o’clock Mountain, and Six o’clock Pacific. On the West coast, you’re catching everybody right after work. On the East coast, you’re catching them before you go to bed.

But 9 o'clock Eastern is too late for my UK friends. So, if you have a lot of UK friends, but you're in the States, then consider doing two separate webinars (one in the afternoon, one in the evening).

## **Webinar Length**

Your webinar should be between 60 and 70 minutes, but I like to keep them on the 60-minute side.

## **Repackaging Webinars as Products**

I think that the way most people create products is very flawed. They say, "I know a whole bunch about X and I think other people want to know a whole bunch about X, so I'll make a product." So they disappear into their cave for about three months of their life and they come out with a product that it turns out nobody wants, because it hadn't been tested.

### ***Testing Products through Webinars***

Let's say I'm thinking about making a product about generating traffic through Facebook. I would put on a free webinar and tell them some really cool Facebook tips. Then I would sell a live webinar course on the free webinar. If people actually buy it, then I'm getting paid to create this course.

But it also works as a litmus test. If ten people on my webinar are willing to pay me to be on the live webinar, then I'll go ahead with the product. I know that there's demand out there. But if nobody buys on my free webinar, then I just saved myself a ton of time.

### ***Making the Product***

So, during the free webinar I'll say, "If you really enjoyed this information, then my resource is next Tuesday with a webinar. It's the same thing that you're on right now, so it's not scary. And it only costs \$497 for a four-part webinar series."

I will record that four-part series and sell it as a product.

### ***Ordering Your Product***

[Kunaki](#) is a service that will burn your files to a CD with a label and then put it in a DVD case with a marketing insert, shrink-wrapped, all for a \$1.79 per CD. They'll ship it in a four-block case for a three dollar upcharge. Add the shipping and I think it amounts to \$15 bucks. If you're charging \$497 for that multimedia course shipped to their home and you still can't make money, then you probably need to get out of business.

All you have to do is forward the addresses to Kunaki and they drop-ship your product straight to the customer. It's about as easy as it gets.

### ***Digital Product vs. Physical Product***

One of the reasons I sell a physical product is because it lowers my refund rates. With a physical product, they have to actually return it to get a refund. That really helps. Anyway, people like to get something in the mail.

But it's best to have both a physical and an online component. That way, they get it immediately. It also lets you update things. You can't update files on a CD after they're purchased. But you can update the online version and that's a great selling point: "Look – you've got unlimited updates to this product." People like that because you and I both know that things change pretty quickly on the Internet.

## **THE VISUAL COMPONENT**

### **Create the Slides**

I use PowerPoint. I go into the animation function and each bullet point comes up when I click my mouse. You don't want to do a lot of fancy graphics. You just want it to appear, because webinar technology is not full-stream video.

But I always like to commission a nice, professional background. I have a title slide done and a content slide. What I want is a nice background with a white center so I can put my content in there. You don't want to do use a color background with black letters. It's just way too hard to read.

I usually brand the PowerPoint to the product and I use a guy named Sam Kern in the UK with [ecoverbox.com](http://ecoverbox.com). He is a master at making things pop and he's mainly geared at information marketers. Tell him I sent you.

### **Picture Perfect**

It's very important to have your picture on your presentation because, otherwise in half the webinar they're thinking, "I wonder what this guy looks like? Is he short? Fat, bald? What is he?" Plus, a picture says, "I'm a real human just like you. I'm trustworthy." So, always have your picture up in the top left.

Now, if you're doing it with a host, I would put the host in the top left and me in the top right. That way they're seeing the faces of the two voices they're hearing.

The only time I wouldn't use a picture is if I was using the same PowerPoint presentation on the stage, that wouldn't make any sense for me to be standing up there with my picture up there.

## Clip Art

I use [clipart.com](http://clipart.com). If you just right-click and copy off the Internet, you run the risk of stealing other people's graphics. Clipart.com has some good royalty-free images. They also have things like photo objects, which are basically people or objects with a white background. If you can have a picture of a woman jumping for joy on a white background, then it really pops.

I know from testing and I know from other marketers that a woman will out-pull a man ten to one – even for a woman audience. If you're going to use a picture of a person, make it a smiling woman.

## THE PITCH

We've already established that there's a problem and that you can't solve the problem yourself or you wouldn't be on this webinar. Then I just show you how my resource provides a solution to the problem.

## Asking Questions

I like to start by asking, "How would you like to get 1000's of new visitors to your site? What would it mean to your bottom line if you had another 2000 people a month clicking?"

## Showing Benefits

Benefits are different from features, as every internet marketer should know. But too many times, internet marketers say, "My product is five videos long. There's over 15 hours of video. It's this many pages. It does this, this, this..." Those are features!

The benefit is what it does for your customer. How will your product help them make money, save money, save time, save frustration? What's in it for them?

You need to be hitting those points.

## Adding Value

Then you start stacking the value: “You get this, this, this, and we’re going to throw in this!”

Show dollar values of each component as you go until you finally culminate to your last bonus. And *then* you tell them the price.

## Creating Scarcity

There always has to be scarcity. There has to be a reason to buy now.

Now, a big part of scarcity is a fast-mover bonus: “The first five people who take action get this super extra bonus.” In my case, I would say that I will personally run a webinar for the first five people who buy this webinar course. That gets five people right off the bat to do your product.

### *Scarcity of Time*

Then I say, “Now remember, those five may be taken up already, but the deadline for this special webinar price goes up after Thursday at 11 o’clock.” With a live webinar, you can have an enforceable deadline.

### *Scarcity of Amount*

If you’re filling up your webinar, you can say, “I only want to work with 20 people on my live webinar.” That can really move sales.

## Prepare People for the Pitch

### *The Joe Polish Method*

This works from the stage better, where you can get a show of hands:

“How many people want to make more money with a webinar?” and they raise their hand.

“How many people think I’ve got something to sell at the end of my talk?” and they raise their hand.

And then I say, “Well, I won’t disappoint you.”

That’s a fun way of saying there will be a pitch.

## ***Another Method***

“Look, we’re just starting out here. Let me just tell you right from the onset, I’m going to cram as much information into a 60-minute webinar as I possibly can. But you and I both know that I can’t tell you everything I know in 60 minutes. I can’t tell you all the nuances, so we will offer a resource at the end. Be on the lookout for that.”

That gets people to lower their guard and say, “Oh, okay, well he told me he’s going to have a resource.”

It makes you honest – and actually it makes them look forward to the resource.

## ***Using Email***

Sometimes I do this even in the emails that I send beforehand: “Well you want to be there live because Steve will have a special offer that he only offers on webinars.” So, they know going in that there’s going to be an offer, but it’s a special one that you can only get by attending live.

## **Linking to a Sales Page**

It’s really important to have a link to your website on your PowerPoint.

Don’t forget, if you’re putting on a webinar with a host, then you would want to provide an affiliate link that is tied to the host. That way, when an audience member clicks on the link, the host would get the credit.

## **More on the Fast Mover Bonus**

One time, I put on a webinar for a United Kingdom audience and nobody took me up on my fast mover bonus. I asked somebody about it and they said, “Well, people from the U.K. are really polite. They’re not going to leave your webinar in the middle.”

So now I say, “Here’s my fast-mover bonus and I know that it will probably be gone by the end of the webinar because there’s only five, so I will not consider it rude if you leave right now and take advantage of the offer. Don’t be worried about missing this webinar because I will send you a high resolution version of the replay.”

So that gives people an excuse to leave. When you do the pitch in the middle and you have that fast mover bonus, then you want them to leave your webinar and go take advantage of it right away.

At the end of the webinar, when I do my light recap, I like to say, “I don’t know that any of the fast mover bonuses are left, because I’ve been pretty busy here presenting

information. I haven't checked my shopping cart. There may or may not be any left, but I suggest that you get on it right now, there may be a few left of the fast mover bonus. But remember: the price goes up on the Thursday deadline."

## **Email Strategy**

Let's say the webinar started at 9:00 pm Eastern. At 10:15 pm Eastern, I'll broadcast an email with a recap of the offer and it says something like, "I am working on the replay right now, I'll have it up tomorrow. In the meantime, here's that offer I gave you on the webinar." Then there will be a link that goes to my shopping cart.

So I'm not being subtle. I'm taking every obstacle out of their way to click on my link and buy my product.

### ***Follow Through with a Second Email***

The following morning, I have an excuse to send them another email, because I have the replay. So I send that to everybody, of course, with a link to the replay and a link to the offer. Then they get another email on Thursday, as a reminder of the deadline. So that's a nice, one-two-three punch.

### ***After the Deadline***

We'll send a card out, saying something like, "Hey, you missed the deadline, I can offer a "shipping and handling offer." You pay shipping and handling, I'll give you the product. At the end of 30 days, if you haven't returned it, I'll charge you card for the full amount."

That's a little different offer and you'll scoop up another 5-10% of the people who didn't buy on the webinar offer.

If you want to get even bolder, the following week you may offer something else.

### ***A Last Chance Offer***

And the next week after that, you can offer a last chance offer. "Buy it for \$97 and we'll finance it for you and charge you over the next five months," or something like that.

Of course, you shouldn't be sending those messages to the people that have already bought. That's a bad thing. If they bought on your webinar and now they get this lowball offer, they're thinking, "Hey, why didn't I get the low ball offer?"



## **Snail Mail**

We sometimes send out cards with offer in the mail. I used to print my sales letter in the send out cards. I didn't get very much response at all.

When I put a picture of a coupon on a card and said, "This is your virtual coupon," it worked really well. It was all kind of tongue-in-cheek. I gave them a picture of a little pair of scissors.

But it's a different modality. That's the key. The first one is webinar, the second one is email driven, the third one is like a physical card. If you keep pounding the same offer down their throats, they're not going to respond, but if you change it and tweak it a little bit... they will.

## **FILLING A WEBINAR**

Let's say I am going to do a webinar with somebody who has a list of 10,000 or 30,000 people. I would give that person three emails to send to their list.

We send the first email out on a Thursday, telling them about the Tuesday webinar. We send another email on Monday, reminding them again. Then I send one on Tuesday, the day of the webinar.

## **Building a List**

Obviously the best solution is to have your own list.

Here's the dirty little secret: if you and I do a webinar and you've got a list of 30,000 people and I have a list of none, then everyone that signs up for our webinar becomes a part of my email list.

The whole idea is that they click one button and they're registered for both GoToWebinar and your Auto-responder at the same time. That's the cleanest way to do it.

So, let's say that you do a webinar with a big fish that has 30,000 emails and he manages to get a 1,000 people to register for your webinar. Well, you just added a 1,000 people to your email list. Those people now are on your list and you can market to them forever.

So, webinars aren't just a great way to sell products. They're a great way to build your list as well. That's why I would do a webinar with a different partner every month or so, to build the list.

## Using Your Own List

You want to get to where you have your own list of 20 or 30 thousand people. Then, you can just do webinars for your own list.

## Using Social Media to Fill a Webinar

Another way to fill webinars is Facebook, Twitter, and all the social media.

A lot of people get this wrong. They try to sell something directly to social media people. That's not why they're on social media. They don't call it sales media. It's *social* media. So you get very little response to sales offers.

But what could be more social than a webinar? So I'll invite people to a webinar on social media and when they come to my webinar, that's when they buy. So, if you have a big Twitter list, a big Facebook list, invite them to a webinar and then sell them on the webinar. Don't try to sell them on Facebook, LinkedIn, or Twitter.

## ATTRACTING AFFILIATE HOSTS

Go to live events. People have a hard time saying no to you face to face.

Actually, get to know them. There's nothing worse than people coming up to me and saying, "You don't know me from Adam, but let's do a webinar together." Well, you're right. I don't know. That's tough.

So even if you don't drink, go to the bar after the meetings. That's where you'll find all of the internet marketers. Just hang out with them. That's a great way to get on their radar and start working with them.

## The Power of a Good Product

It helps if you have a successful track record. If I do something with Michael Dunlop and we have 200 people on the call and 100 people bought, then you can say, "Look, I did this with Michael Dunlop and 50% of the people bought. Imagine what we could do with your list and at this price point."

All of a sudden the dollars are swimming in their eyes and they're thinking, "Yeah, I want to do that." So the track record is very helpful.

If you don't have a track record, then get to know somebody, have something unique and say, "Hey, let's do this for your list." If you have a really unique product, that makes it a lot easier.

## Free Labor

I would do something for free if the affiliate host were big enough. I could say, "Look, I want to do a free webinar for your list and just give solid content." I won't even pitch a thing. A lot of them will say, "Yeah, that would be great."

A lot of people have some kind of membership program and they're always trying to give monthly content for their monthly membership. Obviously this helps in building your own list.

I've done this several times where I'm talking to a big fish and I say, "Look, I know how to do a webinar. You don't. Let's do a webinar for your list and promote one of your products." And then they're like, "Well yeah, why would I say no to that?"

After the free webinar, he kind of owes me something. So I can go back and be like, "Well, that was really cool. Hey, how about we promote one of my products to your list and I'll run the webinar."

## The Affiliate Key

The key with JVs is doing everything for them. Make it as simple as possible.

"The only thing you need to do is send out these three emails and show up five minutes before the webinar and I will do everything else."

## Get to Know Them

People always want you to promote their stuff and let's say, you know, you're not one of their affiliates. You've never bought any of my products. You've never mentioned me on your website. Why do I want to work with you?

So, if you want a JV to work with you, then buy their product. Know something about them. Do a little research.

I'm much more open to doing something with somebody who's bought my product and especially open to working with somebody who's in one of my mastermind groups. I feel like I owe them something because they're paying me monthly.

## LOOKING FORWARD

### Starting Out

We started doing webinars three years or four years ago, when they first started coming out. My very first webinar was for a product called "8 Weeks to Profits". We had already sold it a few times, but then my very first webinar I think we made \$32,000. We made \$16,000 on the webinar itself and another \$16,000 with some follow up emails and cards and stuff.

"Wow," I thought, "I have found my niche!"

I learned that the keys were just to put together a good PowerPoint, practice it (but practice the pitch more than you practice the content), and then just be really respectful of people's time.

### What's Next with Webinars

People want to learn.

The internet marketing space has gotten really crowded lately. It's gotten very loud. Everybody promises stuff.

If someone would take webinars into these other things, like dentists, and chiropractors and weight loss and all these other, you know, off-shoot type niches, I think a person could make a killing doing them.

I won't say that Internet marketing's totally saturated. But mostly people in internet marketing have seen a lot of webinars.

However, when you go into these other niches that haven't seen so many webinars, it's like a gold rush. It's easier to find gold when it hasn't been picked over so much.

## What's Changed

There are more of those recurring webinars. People have gotten burned by them because they get in on webinar, they see the countdown clock, and then they realize, “Oh, this is just a video.”

I still like the live webinars. I'm partial to them. I don't mind recurring webinars, after my live webinar.

But I like the live webinars – and I think they've gotten easier. There are the tools to help you put up the replays and do the registration page. The technology's better. It used to be we got bumped off a lot of webinars.

Nowadays, rarely do you ever get bumped off a webinar.

With that said, I tell people to close their browsers. If they have ten browsers open, that's going to eat up a lot of bandwidth and they're going to get bumped off the webinar. So that's one thing you can say at the outset: “Look, turn up your speakers, and close all your other browsers, because you'll get bumped off.”

The added advantage is that they're only focusing on you and they're not trying to do ten things at once.

## LAST WORDS

You're going to make some mistakes, so follow a recipe.

Don't try to learn all of this on your own. Go out and get a webinar course. We have one and other people have one.

Doing it all on your own would be like me going to an auto parts store and buying a bunch of singular parts and trying to build an automobile. That would be ridiculously crazy. No, it's already there: just go out and get an automobile.

Don't spend the next three months of your life trying to piece and hash this together. Follow a proven formula. Follow in the footsteps of someone who's done thousands of webinars and take their advice. Follow it to a T. Then you can start tweaking it to kind of make it your own.

# ACTIONABLE TAKEAWAYS

- 1. Use GoToWebinar and PowerPoint.**

That software combination has become the industry standard for hosting webinars because it has all of the functionality and flexibility that you'll need.
- 2. Schedule webinars at 9pm EST on Tuesdays and Thursdays.**

Tuesdays and Thursdays are the nights that most people have free. If they're mostly US-based, that time works well for all time zones.
- 3. Attract JVs to partner on webinars.**

Start by building relationships with other internet marketers. When it comes time to ask, they'll already be your friend. Make scheduling and managing the webinar as simple as possible for them. Then give them 50% of the sales.
- 4. Sell through and after webinar.**

50 minutes of great content, 10 minutes of pitching, final tip, and then Q&A. Immediately afterwards, follow up with an email with a link to purchase the offer. If they don't bite, send them a physical card with a coupon.
- 5. Create products from webinars.**

If you host a webinar and it garners a lot of interest, sell the recording to people who want that information later. Use Kunaki to create and fulfill physical products.

# Part 5:

# Earning Money Online

## WEBSITE MONETIZATION



*"I think that's the lesson to be learned: make something people are asking for."*

**Michael Dunlop, [IncomeDiary.com](http://IncomeDiary.com)**

## SELLING DIGITAL PRODUCTS

*"It just made sense to keep things digital because people can log in and have access to it anywhere in the world."*

**Lewis Howes, [LewisHowes.com](http://LewisHowes.com)**



## SOFTWARE CREATION & LAUNCH



*"Software is kind of magical because if you think it, you can make it. There's only so much you can do with a book or a video. But software can actually guide you through a process while you're on screen and make it interactive."*

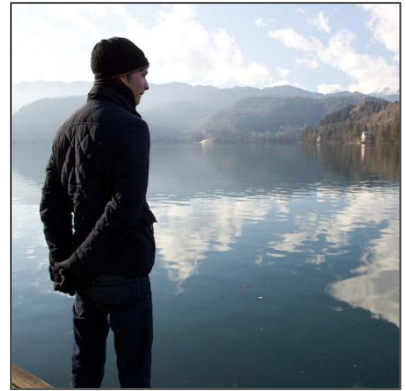
**Josh Bartlett, [EasyVideoSuite.com](http://EasyVideoSuite.com)**

# Website Monetization

with Michael Dunlop

**M**ichael Dunlop is only 23 years old, but he's already been building websites for nine years.

At 17, after attending Yanik Silver's Underground conference, Michael Dunlop got the idea to create a blog about making money online. He started [RetireAt21.com](http://RetireAt21.com) in 2006 and was soon attracting thousands of subscribers and earning a healthy profit.



## Michael Dunlop Today

Today, at the age of 23, Michael has become one of the world's foremost experts on website monetization. One of his blogs, [Income Diary](#), had about 130,000 visitors last month. One of his products, the \$47 [PopUp Domination](#), has sold over 10,000 copies since 2010.

## WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

- The Easiest Way to Make Your First Dollar
- Michael's Three Monetization Methods
- How More Content Means More Money
- How to Come Up with Your Next Product Idea
- Why Michael Doesn't Offer a Service
- Michael's Affiliate Advertising Strategy
- Landing – and Keeping – Advertisers
- The Future of Website Monetization



# GETTING STARTED

## Use Google AdSense

We recently launched quite a few new sites. [ExpertPhotography.com](http://ExpertPhotography.com) is one example, which is about how to be better at photography.

The first thing that we did was use [Google AdSense](https://www.google.com/adsense). We started with AdSense because we knew that it could make money very quickly. You can start right away with AdSense because you get paid per click.

On the other hand, if you're selling ads directly, you need traffic first. Someone's not going to come to your site and give you money for an ad before you have traffic and a track record. The same goes for selling a product: there's no point in creating your own product if you don't have an audience for it yet.

So, using AdSense is the very first thing that I recommend most people do to monetize their website. Although I got banned from it, it still works today.

### *When to Avoid AdSense*

If you're in a niche an online business niche, I don't recommend AdSense. It's kind of pointless, because everyone knows what AdSense is, so they're not going to click.

If you've ever clicked on AdSense ads on a 'make money online' site, you know it takes you to sites that you don't really want to go to.

## Affiliate Marketing

You could also make money through affiliate marketing, which is something that we're doing on another new site. I think that works pretty well for new sites as well and it's a proven method.

So, if you're starting your own website and you're doing an article on how to get six-pack abs, at the bottom of the post, you could say, "Enjoy this post? Check out this ebook on how to get great abs." If they buy that ebook, you'll get a commission.

[ClickBank](https://www.clickbank.com/) is a marketplace with loads and loads of affiliate products in almost all niches. Whatever your website is, whether it's about gaming or fitness or meeting women, you'll be able to find a product that you can promote on your site. If someone buys it, you'll make money.

# MICHAEL'S MONETIZATION METHODS

## Advertising

I'm not a big guy in selling ads, because I sort of think it clutters and even cheapens your site to have all of these ads everywhere.

So instead, I sell one ad. I'm moving to selling two. They're larger ads and I ask for a lot of money for them.

### *Maximize Benefit for Your Advertisers*

A lot of monetization is working together to make sure that you both will benefit as greatly as possible.

Last week, I had someone contact me for banner advertising. I told them, "This has to work for both of us. I'm not going to take your money and just hope that you're going to stay every month." If that happens in reality, they're not going to stay.

So, I said, "You can give me two banner ads and we can rotate them. That way, even if someone is not interested in one of your products, they may be interested in another of your products. That way you're much, much more likely to sell a product."

I'm giving the advertiser so much more value for the same amount of money. If he's making more money, then hopefully he's going to stay for a long, long time.

### *Limitations*

Obviously, there's only so much you can do by selling ads. If you're going to sell two ads and you're going to charge \$1000 for each ad, then you're stuck at \$2000 per month. As your traffic grows, you can ask for more money, but you're not going to be able to sell more ads, because there's no more room.

## Affiliate Marketing

I promote a bunch of different products for different reasons. For example, it could be a software program that I use, such as [Optimize Press](#). If somebody buys that from me, I make a commission.

### *Email Marketing: Don't Overdo It*

People sign up for your list and you can promote them as often as you like until they unsubscribe. But the problem with constantly emailing them and saying, "Go buy this product," is that they didn't sign up for that, so they're not going to appreciate it.

There really aren't enough products out there that you can put your name behind and be happy with. So, I stopped promoting products through email because, ethically, it wasn't the way I wanted to do things.

That's sort of why I created my own product. That way, I could really put my name behind it, put it everywhere, and be proud of it. So, that's what I'm doing now.

## **Selling Products**

The third monetization method I use is selling my products. I use my site to promote myself and my products.

I'm working on this educational product. I'm working on a new software product for conversions, doing split-testing on your website. I've got [PopUp Domination](#) and [Site Profit Domination](#).

### ***Affiliates Promote Your Products***

The plan is to incorporate all of these products into one marketplace. Perhaps that will be Income Diary. I haven't decided yet.

But the idea is that affiliates could promote my products while sending traffic to Income Diary. So, if they had an affiliate link that sent people to the homepage and then from the homepage, the visitor went to a blog post, then from that blog post, they went to a related post, and then from that post, they see a link to one of my products and they buy it... that affiliate is going to make money.

I really like that whole idea of making it so profitable for my affiliates and profitable for me. To that end, if the same visitor comes back a month later to check out a new post, because they're subscribed to my list now, and they buy another product, they're going to make a commission again.

The more attractive I make it to affiliate, the more people they're going to send to my site. That becomes a whole new traffic source.

### ***Diversifying Your Traffic Sources***

I think it goes back to the beginning, when AdSense banned me and I started making zero money.

The same risk applies to traffic sources. I rely heavily on Google. I love Google. But the problem is, one day, Google may turn to me and say, "We don't love you anymore and you're banned." Then all of my traffic goes.

So, if I can make a huge new traffic source from other people promoting my blog (which then promotes my products) then I have a whole load more traffic and it's better diversified.

## **BLOGGING**

### **More Content, More Money**

If you've monetized your blog and you want to make more money, the simplest way to do that is to post more content. More content means more traffic.

So, that's something that I'm focusing on much more. I was doing one post every two weeks, maybe one post every month. I went from that to posting daily by hiring writers and getting guest posts. Then I get to post more content, more people come to my site, they come to my Facebook, and I get to email them. If they come back to my site, there's a much higher opportunity that they're going to click the ads or buy my product.

#### ***Paying for Content***

I read on [14clicks.com](http://14clicks.com) that every new post was worth an extra 1,000 visitors from Google every year (or something like that). That's true.

To make the math real simple, let's say that each new post you bought cost \$100. Then let's say, at the very least, it's going to bring you an additional 1000 visitors from Google in the first year. That's ten cents a click.

Why the hell would I want to buy advertising that's going to sell traffic at 50 cents a click or a dollar a click? It makes no sense to me to do it that way. Instead, I buy content and I focus on the long term.

#### ***Investing in the Future***

I don't focus on making money today. I focus on making a whole crazy amount of money down the line. The more traffic I get, the more money I make down the road. Eventually, I'll be able to sell my site for a whole load more money as well.

Not only that, but every month I can invest more and more money into guest posters. I just hired a new writer yesterday. I'm just going to be able to keep going up and up and up, as long as I keep doing what I'm doing.

I've been doing this since I was 17: every time I make a dollar, I invest that dollar back into my business. That way I can grow much quicker. In the long run, it's worth a lot more money to you.

I invest money in my business because I know that means that by next month's time, it's going to make me more money. Then when I make more money, I can invest more, build, build, and make more and more money.

## Selling Your Blog

I want to sell my business at some point.

I wanted to sell it a year ago, but it makes so much more sense to hold on to it longer, increase the earnings by another 20%, so that then your business is worth another 20% more.

### *Allowing the Blog to Thrive without You*

I thought to myself, "I need to take my name away from this, so that when I do sell, people aren't going to be scared that it won't do well without me."

That realization has actually opened me up to be much more successful. I no longer had to be writing all of the time. I could hire five writers to write once a week each. My brother could handle all of the scheduling and posting. Now I've got all of this time that can be spent building the site to be bigger and better and make more and more money.

## SELLING PRODUCTS

### Choosing which Product to Develop

With PopUp Domination, it seemed like a natural thing to do.

We had actually built a version of it for ourselves. It obviously didn't have the backend for users to customize their own, but we had built the popup for Income Diary. When we saw the results, we said, "Everyone needs this. We can make this into software for them."

People were asking me, "Have you made it? Are you considering making it?"

I think that's the lesson to be learned: *make something people are asking for.*

So often, I see people creating things because they think people *will* want it or because it's their passion. I'm all for passion, but at the same time, there's no point in doing something to make money and when there's no audience.

So, look at your support emails. Run a blog post poll. Ask, "What do you guys want to know more about?" After you've talked to your community and you know what they need, then you can develop a product.

### **Example**

Personally, my next software product came out of a need.

I wanted to split-test a banner on my site to know which one was going to convert higher.

It worked so well, I thought, "Heck – one split-test could make my money back. That's the selling point. If I develop the software and I sell it, then I could say to everyone buying it, 'Run one split-test, make your money back.'"

## **Product Development**

I try to be as hands-off as possible. I do the bigger picture stuff.

If I'm developing a product, I can't put my time to creating relationships that are going to enable me to sell the product. I can't think of the whole system I'm going to use to sell the product, like upsells and the sales page.

So, I didn't actually do much development for products such as PopUp Domination. I didn't take a big role. I basically sat down with them at the beginning, online, and told them, "This is what I want. Go build it." I had a business partner and he managed the whole thing.

Once it was built, I helped test it. I said, "This needs to be more user-friendly." I helped make sure the product was bullet-proof, so that people weren't going to have a load of problems with it. Fewer problems means more profit because there will be fewer refunds.

## **Making the Sale on Your Blog**

It depends on so many things. Income Diary has two products. One is software and one is education.

## ***Software: Use What You Sell***

For the software one, I'm actually using the software on Income Diary. So I can say, "Here are some screenshots. Here's a video. Here are the results. If you like these results, then go and buy it."

That works really well because people are seeing you use your product. People want to know that it works. They want to see that you're involved with it, that you use it, and that you're not doing this solely for the money. Your product should be an asset to your life and your business.

## ***Education Products: Show Your Results***

In some ways, it's much harder to sell these on your blog. You can't show yourself using your own education product.

But you can show your results. Let's say that you have an educational product on bodybuilding. You could have 'before and after' pictures of you in the sidebar. Then you say, "I got these results using this technique. Click here to find out more."

## **Offer a Free Guide**

I think the most powerful thing I've ever done for monetization on the blog is offering people a free guide.

The most powerful thing about it is that when people come to my site, they don't see me saying, "Go buy this product."

Instead, they see me saying, "Hey there, nice person! Would you like this free ebook on how I did something that's greatly benefited me?" They say, "Yes, Michael. I would love it." They download it, they follow the instructions, and then they get some sort of benefit. The great thing in monetization is delivering it and being able to make myself a lot of money.

For example, with Income Diary the free part about how to set up your first profitable website. They go and they set up their first profitable website. In doing that, they're required to buy a domain. I show them how to do that and then I make a commission on the sale.

## **SELLING SERVICES**

I have a love-hate relationship with selling services.

## The Challenges of Offering a Service

Customers are hard work.

You have to put in a lot of energy and it can be quite stressful. You have to email them. It's hard getting money out of them if they miss an appointment, so you have to give them another time to do the appointment. Then, if they don't like what they get, they get annoyed and they want more from you.

So if you're going to do a service, charge a lot of money. Charge your customers three or four times what your normal rates would be.

I don't offer a service because I don't like that stress. I don't like somebody relying on me delivering something. I've got to make sure it's delivered. I've got to make sure it's on time. I have to make sure it's at its best. If it's not at its best, then I have to give them money back. I just find it to be such a headache.

## The Advantages of Offering a Service

The good thing about services is you don't have to put a huge amount of time in before building something.

With a product, you have to put in loads of time at the beginning. But afterwards, you're getting paid and you don't have to do anything. So, there are benefits and drawbacks. I highly recommend the product. But it's quite likely you're going to have to do both at some point in your online career.

# AFFILIATE MARKETING

## Michael's Philosophy

Basically, I try and help people make money.

I say, "This is what I'm doing. Do you want to do it? Okay. Here's how. Buy this product because you're going to need it."

For example, if I'm building a website and I use some software called Optimize Press to build that website, then people who want to follow in my footsteps are going to need that software as well. So they're going to have to buy it.



## ***Money isn't First***

The problem with affiliate monetization and blogging is that people get too focused on making money.

Your main goal shouldn't be to make money from a post. It should be to help and educate people. I think that's why some people don't get the results they want.

Education and helping people have to come first. Making money is just a byproduct of that.

If your article is like, "Click this, buy this product," then it just comes across as a promotion. With affiliate marketing, you've got to show yourself using it. Online, you've got to show that you can be trusted. If people don't trust you, they're not going to buy it.

## ***Be Patient***

I'll be honest, it can take a long time at the beginning to make money from the site.

That's not because your site's not ready to make money. It's because you don't fully understand what's going on.

I'm not being harsh on you or anything. I was at the same stage when I started. I didn't understand what I should be focusing on.

## ***The Value of Experience***

Here's a prime example of how much knowledge and experience help:

My brother Josh started blogging nine months ago and his site is already making nearly \$1,000 a month. That's with him working about one day per week. (He works for me four days a week, so he can't be working very much on his site.)

Do you know why he's doing so well?

I'm not trying to be big-headed, but the reason is that Josh had me there to tell him, "This is what you have to do."

## ***The Advice Michael Gave Josh***

"Let's put out Google AdSense, in the right spot in the site so that we get the maximum amount of clicks. Let's sell some advertising. This is how you do it. Let's promote some affiliate products and let's start with the camera that you're using."

I recommended Josh write a post of the top twenty [gifts for photographers](#) for Christmas. Then we linked them all to be purchased on Amazon. Using Amazon associates affiliate program, we were able to promote all of the gifts for a commission.

## Trust is Essential

If I'm saying, "Go get this diet pill because it will make you lose weight," and I'm a fat guy, they're not going to take my word for it.

It's really important to build trust. If you're selling an affiliate product and they don't trust you, they're not going to buy it. People want to see you actually successfully using your own product.

## Generic Products

Some products have massive launches. When I say massive launches, I mean that everyone's promoting it at the beginning of its launch, when it's just gone live.

That means that everyone's going to know about it. If they bought it already and then you're promoting it, don't expect to sell a whole load down the line. It is already being promoted the hell out of.

### *Education vs. Software*

That really applies to education products. Education becomes irrelevant much quicker than a software product, because a software product can be adapted constantly.

That's something we've found with our own product. We're adapting it constantly, adding new features, fixing things, in order to follow the market where it wants to go.

## ADVERTISING

### AdSense

Without affiliate marketing, our monetization and our earnings come from advertising and AdSense. All that requires is traffic. It doesn't require you to have a good brand. Actually, it doesn't even require you to have that much traffic.

For, consulting or having your own product, you would need to put in some energy to that.

But AdSense doesn't require as much back story. You just throw it on your site and you start making money straight away. You don't have to be loved by your audience. They may click it, perhaps just out of curiosity.

All you need is traffic. All you need to get traffic is content.

### ***Where to Put AdSense***

We put the AdSense links under the main navigation bar.

So it goes across underneath the main navigation. That way, it kind of looks like a second navigation bar.

It says "Google AdSense," so it's clear to people that it's not actually a second navigation bar. But since their eyeballs go to the navigation, they spot it as well. If it's relevant, then they're going to click it.

### ***Test It***

The biggest thing is testing.

If you're not making money with your ads, change them. I used to change Web Design Dev every day. If traffic isn't the problem, then it has to be the location. The only way to fix that is to move it and find out where it works for you.

## **Banner Advertising**

Top place is top-right corner. Have your ad there. That has been the place with the highest click-through rate for us.

### ***Selling Ads through an Agency***

With Expert Photography, we use a company called [BuySellAds.com](http://BuySellAds.com). They'll find you advertisers to go on your site.

While doing this, you can still put 'advertise here' banners on your site. When people click that, they'll be directed to BuySellAds.com. Then they can decide if they want to buy your advertising space.

### ***Going Solo***

I've had lots of different experiences.

I've tried putting an 'advertise here' link at the top.

I just don't find that works that well. The problem is that you constantly get people who want to do it their way. Of course, their way is the way that benefits them greatly and not you. They'll take advantage of the situation. I never reply to those types of people.

If I'm looking for advertisers, I'll look for them. I don't wait for them to come to me.

What works for me is to find someone who has a product, a good back end, and who is making lots of money. They're already advertising on other sites. Those are the people I contact.

### ***What to Say***

"Hey, I've got advertising space. This is how much I want for it. This is how much traffic I expect to send to you. How much money do you make per click?"

They'll be able to find out if it's worth a test. If it's worth a test then let them test it. Make it a good deal for them to try and test it out. If it converts, they're going to stay.

## **Keeping Advertisers Happy**

The biggest thing with selling ads is not actually selling the ads. It's making sure that you keep your advertisers happy.

There's a huge percent of advertisers that just come and go constantly. They stay for only two months, because they're okay with the ad, but they're not overly happy. You don't want that. Then you have to go find another advertiser. Then in another two months you're going to have to do the whole thing again.

Look for two people and make sure they're really happy. If they're really happy and they're getting results, you won't have to sell more advertising. You won't have to look for more advertisers. You'll have a much more stress-free experience monetizing your site.

### ***Example***

I've got two advertisers and they're paying \$1500 each. That's \$3000 a month that's going to be there every single month.

One of them started with me ten months ago. We haven't even spoken about it for six months.

For all I know he's not getting results anymore. But given the amount that he's spending, I'm pretty sure that's not the case. The reason he's not contacting me anymore is that he's getting his results.

I've actually improved the offer for him since we made the deal. I've put it in the top-right corner when it had been down a little. I've just made sure that it's perfect.

I must stress, the most important thing is keeping the advertiser happy and that's so simple. All you have to do is make sure they're getting the results they need.

## LOOKING FORWARD

### The Future of Monetization

I feel like monetization is really heading in the right direction now. People aren't as focused on making a quick buck.

They're also using fewer adverts. Instead of four adverts, they have one advert that's as big as four used to be. Then they're charging 400-600% more money for that advert. Not only is it more profitable, it's also more reliable.

### Michael's New Affiliate Model

Like I said, you have all of your products on one site. Then you have affiliates driving traffic to your blog (not directly to sales pages). The people they send to your blog will, at some point, buy one of your products, at which point the affiliate makes a commission.

I feel that's the way a lot of sites will be going, because there are a lot more people creating products. There are a lot more blogs becoming quite big, because they're working harder and investing more.

### Michael's Goal

I want to do this on my terms. I want to know that I can completely walk away from my business. It's not that I don't want to have anything to do with my business. I just love the fact that I don't have to if I don't want to.

I like knowing that if I want to go on holiday for the next six months, I could. I could jump on cruise ship and go on one of those six month cruises. If the Internet didn't work on the cruise ship, I would still become wealthier every day I'm on that ship.

## Last Words

People buy because of what you have to write. People visit your site for the exact same reason.

### *Focus on Content*

Great content will bring people to your site. If the content is geared towards some sort of affiliate product, they're going to end up buying it.

I think content is the way to go and that's why I pay people to write. I don't accept free posts very often because there's a massive difference in quality between free posts and paid posts. If you want to make more money, offer higher quality.

### *Diversify*

Don't rely on one thing. You can only make so much money from an advertisement. You can only fit so many ads on your site. Therefore you know you're only worth this much.

However, if you have your own product on top, you can make more. If you promote affiliate products in your blog posts, then you can make more. It just makes sense.

## ACTIONABLE TAKEAWAYS

### 1. **Experiment with Google AdSense.**

The nice thing about AdSense is that you can get started with it right away. You don't need to have a big audience like you would for most other monetization strategies.

### 2. **Begin blogging.**

If you want to make money online, you need to start attracting an audience. The best, and cheapest, way to do that is with content. Choose an audience and start writing blog posts that help that audience.

### 3. **Start with affiliate marketing.**

Once your blog starts to get traffic, it becomes like a retail store. Pick and choose which products you'd like to sell, and then occasionally reference those products at the end of blog posts. If people click and buy, you'll get a commission. If the product helps them, they'll buy the next thing you recommend. If it doesn't, they'll leave forever.

### 4. **Develop and sell a product.**

Michael's biggest lesson is to make something that people are asking for. He

sells educational products and software. Everything he sells was originally created because, either, he needed it or people were asking for it.

5. **Sell private ad space.**

Michael only has two ads on Income Diary. Both are in the top-right corner. Instead of going through a service like BuySellAds.com, he sells directly to the website owners. Find companies that are already advertising on sites like yours and make them an offer. Then, just make sure they're happy at the end of every month and they'll stay.

# Selling Digital Products

with Lewis Howes

**B**ack in 2007, Lewis Howes was playing linebacker and wide receiver for the Tennessee Valley Vipers Arena League football team. But two games into his rookie season, Howes broke his wrist while stretching out to make a catch. In a moment, his career as a professional athlete was over.



With his arm in a cast and without a college degree, Howes had difficulty finding a traditional job. He turned online business and quickly became an expert on the business networking site, LinkedIn. He wrote a paperback book on LinkedIn and launched it as his first online product, turning a small profit. Howes kept at it and eventually became one of the world's foremost experts on LinkedIn.

## Lewis Howes Today

He creates educational learning courses for small business owners on how to get more leads, traffic, and sales online. It's a multimillion dollar business that he operates out of New York City (when he's not traveling the world). Howes' websites include [LinkedInfluence.com](http://LinkedInfluence.com), [FBinfluence.com](http://FBinfluence.com), and [VideoTrafficAcademy.com](http://VideoTrafficAcademy.com).

## WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

- How to Pick a Product Idea
- Tools for Selling Online
- Pricing Strategy
- The Sales Process and Conversion Tricks
- The Launch Process
- The Power of Video Sales Letters
- How to Build a List with LinkedIn



# GETTING STARTED

## Research

The first thing I would do is research if people are actually interested in the topic that I want to create a product around.

If there was some other products already out there, that would be a good indication that I could probably create a product around it.

If there weren't any products out there, I would wonder why. Is it because nobody really knows about the topic? Or is it because nobody is really interested in the information?

## Product Development and Testing

Then I would create the product.

I would probably do a test run webinar for my audience and see if I could sell it there. Then, I would go from there.

## Launching

I would either launch the product through an affiliate contest or I would just launch it to my own list first. That would help me know if I could increase the price or if I need to decrease it. Or, if it's a failure, then I don't have to do a complete affiliate launch.

## TOOLS

I try to keep it as simple as possible.

## Shopping Cart Software

For a lot of the products before, I was using either [1ShoppingCart](#) or [Infusionsoft](#).

I'm starting to create more low-end products, around the \$100 mark. For that, I really love [ClickBank](#). We're using ClickBank almost exclusively now.

## Membership Content

I'm using [WishList Member](#) to host all of my content inside of private members areas. I love the guys at WishList.

## Email Software

I'm using [iContact](#) and [AWeber](#) to send emails out.

## Website

Just hire a designer to create the page. It's pretty simple.

We like to have a video sales letter that kind of educates the audience, what they're going to get, and why they need the information. I like to create those to make it more entertaining as opposed to having to read some long sales copy that people don't even read anymore.

## Split-Testing

I believe we use [Google Website Optimizer](#).

I actually don't do any of it myself. My business partner does that with his web guy.

# SELLING PRODUCTS

## Pricing Strategy

I think Yanik Silver said this at some point: create a product that has 10 to 100 times the value of the price.

There are a lot of products out there that are \$2,000-\$10,000. It's really hard to make it 10 to 100 times the value when it's that high of a price already and it's all digital content.

### *A Lower Price Point*

We're changing the way we're creating products by making them affordable for everyone. That way, people don't feel like, "Oh, I'm going to go into credit card debt this month."

We're charging \$100 right now for our products. It's enough to for us to make a living and support our affiliates, but also it's not going to break the bank for everyone who buys it.

My goal is to create these lower price point products with high value. We could easily sell these products for \$2,000 or \$3,000. But by charging less, we are able to corner the market in a certain way that people appreciate. Then they buy more.

## Physical or Digital?

The first product I ever created was a paperback book about LinkedIn. After that, I started doing digital stuff.

People like physical products. They like getting stuff in the mail. Refund rates might go down with physical products, because more people would just want to keep them as opposed to sending them back.

It just made sense to keep things digital because people can log in and have access to it anywhere in the world. They don't have to carry around a DVD or book.

Less is more, in my opinion.

## How Lewis Prepares a Product

We have a full-time web designer guy who creates the skin, throws up the logo, and takes care of the branding.

Other than that, we're just creating the videos for the modules for our course. I use Screenflow to record my screen as I go through slides on PowerPoint. I'll also go behind the scenes online as I go over the slides.

So that's how I record those videos. Then I throw them up on [eZs3](#) and the back end of the member's area on Wishlist.

We give them video, audio, and the complete transcript PDF. Plus, we create cliff notes. So, if they just want to download the cliff notes and go over bullet point strategies, they can do that. We try to give different learning styles the right information they need, while not going overboard on information. Just go right to the point and give good stuff.

## SALES PROCESS

### First Contact

When people visit my site for the first time, they're probably coming for an article. So, I would like them to sign up for my newsletter right away after reading it.

I don't do as good of a job as I probably should be doing on capturing as many leads as possible. I should have a capture form on every possible page, but I don't yet.

## Early Sale

After they've opted-in to my auto-responder series, I would like for them to buy one of my products or my books and get a sale from them, because right then I would know how qualified that lead is after I get that sale.

## Weekly Emails

If they don't buy right away, that's fine. I just want them to open my emails every single week.

### *Lewis' Personal Newsletter*

I send a newsletter every week with some different tips, what's happening, and where I'm traveling – just to kind of give them an insider look at what I'm doing and give them some strategies at the same time.

I don't actually send them to my sales pages that often, with that newsletter. I send them an offer maybe once a month. I'm really just trying to build a relationship with them so that, whenever I have a product launch, I can email them and say, "Hey check it out. I just came out with this."

I'll see a big jump in sales just from that one email.

### *Lewis' Affiliate Newsletter*

I have another list where people come on through webinars or affiliates, things like that.

I've built up that list in the last few years using mostly LinkedIn groups. It's grown through doing over 500 webinars with affiliates over the last two years.

We market more directly to that list, sending them straight to webinars, educating them on a weekly basis, and selling a product at the end.

## Picking a Price Point

To start, I just throw a number out there.

I'll ask questions like:

"What would I pay for this? What do I think my audience can afford to pay for this? Do I want to charge them the highest premium and just get the best buyers, or do I want to see if I can get the highest number of buyers possible?"

Half of it is gut feeling.

### ***Market Research***

Look at what other people are doing.

There are lots of digital products out there, so just ask yourself, “What is this similar to and what are they charging? Are they getting a lot of sales at this price point?”

If they’re not, maybe you need to make it a little less expensive.

Other than that, it’s really just testing.

### ***An Ethical Price***

Ultimately, I want to be able to sleep well at night.

I don’t want to charge \$10,000 and feel like, “Man, is this really ethical to charge this much?”

Sure, they’ll get results if they take action. But am I going to sleep well at night knowing that somebody’s in \$10,000 of credit card debt and they may not even open up the product?

I want to create something that I feel so confident and proud of that when I put a price point on it, I feel like I’m undercharging. I’m okay with that.

## **Upselling**

We usually do a couple of upsells, but two is the maximum.

When I get sold five times after I buy something, it just kind of rubs me the wrong way. But I’m cool with doing one or two upsells.

I’m not the greatest expert on this, but we get probably 15%-20% conversion rate on our upsells and we’ll triple the price on the first upsell for what the price of the product is usually. So, if the product is \$97, we’ll bump it up to \$297 for the first upsell.

Either that or we’ll do a downsell for a \$1 trial of our continuity program, or something like that.

### ***The Upsell Process***

They click ‘Add to Cart’ to check out. Then on the next page, there’s a video that says, “Thanks for signing up for this product. If you’ve got a few minutes, I want to share

with you another cool product. If you're not interested in this, it's no big deal. Click the 'No Thanks' link below and it will take you right to the checkout page, where you can download the product."

They'll check out and then it will add the additional product to the cart, after they put the credit card information or PayPal details.

## Repeat Customers

My goal is to become their educational leader. I want to give them great free information and great content. The more of a resource I become for my buyers, the more they're going to buy.

So, I try to schedule one to two webinars a month where I bring in a top expert in the world on a new topic. I just let the expert share a great message and great presentation. All of my webinars are always free and I try to make sure that I give at least 60 minutes of free content.

Sometimes I offer a product. Sometimes I don't offer anything. But if I do offer a product, then I want to make sure that they could have paid money to get that kind of content for free. I want to blow them away with the content they get on the webinar.

That way, they'll say, "Hey I could have paid \$100 bucks for this and I would have been happy – but I got it for free? Wow! I wonder what's in this product."

## CONVERSION

My conversion strategy is to make it as simple as possible.

I just keep it as simple and as clean as possible, getting right to the point. Then I offer a great product at the end.

That's really all you can do.

## Apply Tested Strategies

I try to learn from the experts and what they're doing.

I wouldn't say that I'm that intelligent, but I'm really good at finding people who are – and then applying the same strategies with my own twist.

For sales pages, I've learned from [Jon Benson](#), who's one of the top video sales letter creators in the fitness world. I learned from him that creating a really compelling video sales letter converts much better than a normal text sales letter.

So I started doing those with my own twist. I follow the system that he and others have laid out, tweaking it for my own use and personality.

## Colors

I have a challenge with this sometimes.

I use red text sometimes because when we split-test, it converts better.

But I don't like the way it looks, personally. It's not aesthetically pleasing to me and I want to have a certain design with my brand and my products. So, I try to get it look the way that I like it, first. Something that looks clean, respectable, and newsworthy.

Then we split-test the different colors to see which one converts better and we use the best one at the end.

## Sales Letter Strategies

We have a 60-day money back guarantee and testimonials. Those are two of the main things.

All the social proof you can add will always help.

### *Add to Cart Buttons*

We put up a handful of add to cart buttons, probably three to five. We put up a bunch of links where they can buy as well.

But I think the easier it is for people to add to cart and buy the product the better, as opposed to having them search to find one add to cart button.

## Launch Strategy

### *Pre-Launch*

We do a different type of launch than most.

Prelaunch for us is just doing a webinar or sending some emails to our list. We just have them check it out, kind of like a soft pitch.

## ***Affiliate Contest Launch***

Then, once we've done that and tested that for like a week or two, we'll go ahead and do an affiliate contest launch.

We incentivize them with a few products or gifts for the first couple of weeks. Whoever gets the most sales, gets the coolest prizes.

## ***No Sales Rush***

Our products are evergreen, so we don't say, "The doors are open for three weeks, and then we're shutting it down for life. You're never going to get access to this again!"

We don't create that false sense of scarcity for people because it's all a lie.

# **VIDEO SALES LETTERS**

Reading is work. People want to watch video.

## **The Entertainment Factor**

We have lots of moving graphics every three seconds to keep people entertained. It's like watching a movie or watching a TV show.

We try to apply those strategies to entertain and educate people with a video sales letter, so they can just sit back, relax, and watch. People are reading online all day long. They would rather watch videos.

That's why YouTube is one of the top three sites in the world right now, because people just want to watch videos.

## **Video Creation Process**

We write the script first, like we would write a sales letter.

We'll edit that down and then do the audio version. I'll just read the script aloud and try to get the best recording we can. We'll edit some more if some stuff doesn't make sense.

Then, I'll memorize the intro first couple sentences, along with a part in the middle and at the end. We'll go and record video somewhere with me talking on camera. I'm only memorizing a few parts and the rest is just the audio I already recorded, just slicing it in with graphics and animation.



That way, it goes back and forth between me on camera and the graphics. Pretty much, we're just trying to make it as entertaining as possible.

## Hiring a Great Video Producer

I've found a really good video guy. I think we found him on [Elance](#). We got kind of lucky with him and he makes all our videos for us.

You can find these video production individuals anywhere, but some of them cost a lot. Every minute could be \$1,000-\$2,000. So you've got to make sure you can find somebody who you can afford.

## Doing it Yourself

There are a lot of courses out there on how to create your own video sales letters.

You could buy a course for \$500 and spend a week creating it yourself, to save money. It just won't look as animated.

## Video Hosting

I think right now we're just using [Amazon S3](#) and we're using [eZs3](#) to host it.

We're just uploading the video onto a hosting site and then it's really as simple as just embedding the video. They give you a code, you throw it up, center it, and you're good to go.

## Don't Let Viewers Skip Forward

There's a story we're telling and if you fast-forward and say, "Let me just see what the end of this is," then it won't make sense.

So we don't let people skip ahead in order to kind of force them to watch the entire thing. That way, they understand the whole package.

If they wanted to pause it, then they could read the rest of the text below. So they could kind of fast-forward in that way, by reading it.

## Ideal Length

15-25 minutes, anywhere in that time frame. But it depends on the market, it depends on your audience, it depends on a lot of things. So, you've got to test it.

The longer the video, the more engaged the person's going to get. You'll have more drop-off, but the people who stick around longest are going to buy more.

## Balancing Educating and Selling

I don't know that I've figured it out fully, I just know that I want to create some education throughout.

So we may give them three quick tips on what they need to know on the topic, but also leave them hanging, because they need to get the rest of the 15 tips to complete the process.

We show them why they need it and then at the end, we just sell the product.

## Script Outline

In the intro, it's kind of like, "Hey, this is who I am and here's what you're going to learn in this video."

After we build up the credibility of the person speaking, we go right into the content. So here's the big idea. Here's what you need to know. Here's why you need to know it.

Then we go into the process for a while. We share with you some stories. We usually have two or three case studies, like how somebody applied this strategy on Facebook and how they got more business, traffic, leads, or sales.

Then we let them know that there's more advanced training available to them. We introduce the product and talk about the benefits. Again, we share success stories of people who've used the products. Then we talk about the price, go into the guarantee, and then kind of reiterate the product at the end.

## LINKEDIN

Create your own LinkedIn group.

When you have a group on LinkedIn, you're the owner of it. You can send a weekly email out to all those members. I've got one group that's got like 60,000 members. I can send a message once a week for free, 100% deliverability, and it gets a lot of traffic to wherever I'm sending it.

I usually send it to a webinar registration page and get people to opt-in there. You can send it back to your website or a sales page, as well. It doesn't matter.

## The Thousand-Member Threshold

You want to get it to around a 1,000 members first and then it will start growing organically.

People are searching on LinkedIn for different groups and they're looking for topics like that. When you title the group, it's very important that you title the group in a way that will be found on Google. So do your research first.

LinkedIn has high Google juice, value, so you're going to get organic search from the title of the group. But you also want to post it on Twitter or Facebook and maybe do a blog post about it. You can also send it out to your email newsletter, say, "Hey guys, go join this group and tell your friends."

Once you get that 1,000 people in there, it will start to grow and spread throughout the network of a 135 million people on LinkedIn. So, you want to get it started any way you can. Put it in your email signature. Do whatever it takes to kind of get it out there initially.

## More Group-Building Strategies

The best thing you can do is to join a lot of groups as well.

If you want to drive a lot of traffic to your site, join groups where your audience is. Then start posting content from your site to those groups. You can send your links to all those different groups, up to fifty different groups.

You can send a message to all the groups at one time. So for two minutes a day, you can post a link back to your site on all these different groups. Potentially, 100,000's of people will see them and they're all targeted audience members. That will drive that traffic back to your site. You just have to know how to do it the right way.

## LOOKING FORWARD

Ryan Lee has been making predictions on his blog and I agree with a lot of them.

### Lower Price Points

He's saying that over-priced products will be going away. Nobody's going to be able to afford \$2000 products. The lower price point products are going to be what's selling more, in my opinion.

## The Rise of Software and Plugins

More software and plugins are going to be created – more things that will make it so simple for people to do things and make it so they don't have to work as much. Software and plugins that make it simple to increase sales, increase leads, and help out websites will find success.

## Video

I see more people creating video content. I think in order to stand out from the crowd, you need to be attractive to an audience on video. You don't have to be an attractive person (although that doesn't hurt) but you need to stand out from the crowd.

## Personal Connections

Building a relationship with your audience and really showing that you care is another thing that's going to be happening.

## Last Words

One thing I recommend is that you do webinars. Whenever you're launching your product, make sure you're doing a webinar to your list to announce the product.

That way, you build trust with your customer list better. When you're on a live webinar, you're talking to them and engaging them. When you talk to them for 60 minutes, as opposed to a 2 minute video, which version do you think they will be more connected to? In which case do you think they're going to be more willing to buy?

A video sales letter converts better than our normal sales letters convert, but our webinars convert around 25 to 35 percent. So, I try to get them on a webinar as much as I can because I know I'm going to be able to educate them more, entertain them more, and make more sales.

## ACTIONABLE TAKEAWAYS

- 1. Research competitors.**

Start by finding out if your idea is something that people actually want. If you find competitors, that's a good sign. Or ask your existing audience what they want.

- 2. Create the digital product.**

Make videos with [Screenflow](#) or [Camtasia](#) and PowerPoint. Pull out the audio.

Transcribe and edit to create cliff notes. Save as PDF. Let them choose how they want to consume the information.

3. **Develop a platform to sell it.**

If ebook, create sales page and sell through ClickBank. If membership site, use WishList and ClickBank or Infusionsoft. Capture emails with iContact or AWeber. Split-test with Google Website Optimizer.

4. **Design your sales page.**

Video sales letters convert much higher than long sales pages. Include a video, headline, sales copy, testimonials, 60-day money back guarantee, price, and a smattering of add to cart buttons.

5. **Produce an entertaining sales video.**

For a standard digital product, your sales video should be 15-25 minutes. Start by writing the script. Introduce yourself, add credibility, teach them something, reveal case studies, show product, reveal price, talk about guarantee, and reiterate the product. Cut between video of yourself and animated graphics to make it entertaining.

6. **Launch your product by directing traffic to your sales page.**

Start with a soft-launch by hosting a small webinar with your audience. Test the sales page, get feedback on your product, and make adjustments. Then attract affiliates with a launch contest. Give prizes to the top-performing affiliates to encourage everyone to promote your product at the exact same time.

# Software Creation & Launch

with Josh Bartlett

**J**osh Bartlett was working as a manager in a bank in the UK when he first discovered selling on eBay.

During his lunch break, Bartlett would buy products from local stores and flip them online for a profit. It started as a hobby, but Josh soon became one of the country's first "Platinum Power Sellers" on Ebay.



Bartlett decided to write an ebook on how to make money selling on Ebay. He priced it online at about \$40 and was soon making a consistent income. Just like that, Bartlett was hooked on the idea of selling his own products online – ones that would never run out of stock.

## Josh Bartlett Today

Bartlett has since moved from selling ebooks to software. His product, [Easy Video Player](#) provides a platform to help people build their email list and make sales through interactive video. The highly successful product has gone through several iterations in the last few years and Bartlett is currently developing [Easy Video Suite](#), which will offer the ability to record and edit video as well.

Bartlett is also in the process of launching a website called [BeyondtheHype.com](#), which will offer marketing and business related products at discounts.

## WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

- Refining an Idea for Software
- Why Software Sells
- Where to Find Coders
- How to Manage a Team
- The Two Lists You Need

- How to Deliver Your Software Product
- The Importance of Customer Support
- The Future of Software Creation

## GETTING STARTED

### Identify a Problem to Solve

The very first thing that we ask, “What are the common problems out there right now?”

A lot of people like to think that their problems are unique to them and so they’ll sit there and think, “I wish that I knew how to do this like everybody else does.” But problems are not unique. And that means that if you can solve your own problems, then you’re going to find a marketplace of customers who want to buy that solution.

Since we know nobody as much as we know ourselves, we always start with us. We look at our own problems and ask, “In a perfect world, what do I wish somebody would come along and give to me as a solution that problem?”

#### *The Power of Offering a Solution*

The two most powerful ways to sell something to somebody is to either solve their problem or prevent a problem, in that order.

If you can solve somebody’s problem, they’re going to be very, very thankful. They’re also definitely going to buy. If you can prevent it, they’re also going to be very interested in that.

### Market Analysis

Then we’re going to look at the market. We’re going to look at social media, forums, and our customer base. People will tell you what they want if you listen to them and if you give it to them, they will buy it. People often don’t look at their most valuable asset (which is their customers) and listen to the feedback.

It’s literally that simple. By looking online, we can find out if the problem is one that a lot of people are struggling with, a few people are struggling with, or everybody is struggling with. Based on that, we can decide how important the product is.

Find out what people want and then give it to them. You don't have to convince people to buy stuff that they don't already want. You'll find that you really don't have to do a huge amount of marketing because they will come to you.

## Keep it Simple

No idea is too small. It's not about the number of buttons you have or the amount of features. Users are paying for the benefit and the solution of a problem. Sometimes the simplest product is the best product that you can make.

Think of your product like an elevator pitch. Can you describe it in a short elevator ride? What is this product? Why does it benefit me and why should I buy it? If you can't explain it simply, then it probably already is too complex.

Sometimes the more we put in it, the more bloated the product becomes.

# BENEFITS TO SOFTWARE AS A PRODUCT

## High Value

We all know at this point that it has a much higher perceived value than ebooks and video products. There are just not as many software products around, especially good ones.

One reason why software has such a high perceived value is that we're conditioned to spend more on software. Look at Adobe Photoshop, which can cost thousands of dollars to buy, versus the most expensive book you've ever bought. Therefore we're more likely to spend more for software.

Secondly, not everybody can make software. Although it's not that difficult, it's definitely a lot easier to type on a keyboard and write an ebook. Because software has a higher barrier to entry, it is perceived as being of higher value.

## Safeguarded

It's also harder to copy. With text, you can obviously copy and paste something and then you can put it elsewhere. Unfortunately, that does happen. With software, you can basically build in very simple safeguards to stop people from easily being able to just take it and put it elsewhere without paying for it. So that really attracted me from day one.



## Effective

Software can really solve people's problems probably better than anything else. Software is kind of magical because if you think it, you can make it. There's only so much you can do with a book or a video. But software can actually guide you through a process while you're on screen and make it interactive.

## Less Competition

With software, it takes longer to make the product (compared to ebooks or video), so you'll find that it is harder for the competition to catch up. You'll have more longevity with a software product.

EasyVideoPlayer has been around for a couple of years and it's still selling very strong today.

## User Feedback

With software, you can really track what people are doing. I know what tabs people are clicking on, what buttons people are clicking on, and what pages they're in. In new versions, we've got things built in, if people click for support on a specific page, it will tell me exactly what they were doing at that point.

Obviously, this is all without sharing any personal information. It just allows you get intelligent information which helps you make better products in the future.

## Market Differentiated

Anything can be software.

You can take an information product and turn it into software by making it a web app. If you do that, then immediately you are unique in your market place. You're not just another ebook. You are probably one of the only software solutions.

# FINDING AND WORKING WITH SOFTWARE DEVELOPERS

## Quality First

I find that a lot of people are trying to save money, so they ask, "Where's the cheapest place I can outsource to?" That's not the question you need to be asking. At the end of

the day, you need to be looking at who's going to be giving you the best quality product.

I've seen so many people make the mistake of trying to save money up front just to lose 50% of the sales they could have had in the back end. They end up saving a couple of hundred dollars to lose thousands and thousands of dollars later on down the road.

I've had success in using [Elance](#). You won't find the cheapest people on Elance. There are other forums and outsource areas that are cheaper. But I do find that you get better quality.

But my biggest trick and tip for finding really good, motivated people to work for you is to go to coding forums where the coders hang out. A lot of coders code because they love it; it's a pastime for them. Therefore, whereas a music enthusiast might be in a music forum, a coding enthusiast might be in a coding forum talking about the new changes to a coding language.

So if you go directly into that forum and just spend a couple of days keeping an eye on the posts and the threads, you'll start to see the thought leaders.

There might be five or so on each forum. Approach those people directly and explain to them that you have a vision for something really exciting, a great project. You've noticed that they've stood out to you and you think that they could do a great job of helping them with this project.

You've appealed to their ego and you have given them a money-making opportunity (a lot of these people code for free). After a very short space of time, you'll probably find somebody that will be interested. For them, it becomes a very exciting project that they're going to work on. You're not just another number and so they're going to probably do the best work that they can do for you.

## **It's Not Automatic**

People have this mentality of, "Ok, let's just outsource."

Outsourcing is great and of course you do need to do that, but people think that the word 'outsource' and 'automated' go hand in hand. The truth is that when you're working with somebody to create your dream, you can't expect somebody else to do a good job of realizing your vision for the product if you try to automate the entire process.

You can't just send them one email and say, "Get back to me when it's made." You have to get your hands dirty and roll up your sleeves and get involved.

## Getting Involved

You don't have to learn how to code. But you do have to be there with them every step of the way and make sure you give them feedback. A lot of people may not agree, but a coder is a person too. And they're stuck there trying to make the product.

So answer their questions immediately. Really work with them and keep them motivated. Make sure they understand your dream and your goal and your vision. Make sure they're excited about it.

You may think, "This is just a coder on Elance. He doesn't need to know my grand vision." But of course he does, because people save their best work for the stuff they're really passionate about. You can help people be passionate by just working a little bit closer with them.

## Feedback System

You can't just give a list of to-do to somebody and then expect to receive the finished product a month later. You have to get involved in that process, get down in the trench with them, and talk to them about why these changes should be made.

Ask them to send you previews very, very regularly. I get previews weekly, as a minimum. A lot of times, I'm seeing stuff every single day and I'm giving feedback right down to the placement of a button. Although there's a little bit more work involved in doing it that way compared to being hands-off, you end up with a product that is that much better and that is therefore that much more profitable to you.

# MANAGING THE PROJECT

## Create Milestones

What's the best way to eat an elephant?

One slice at a time.

That quite honest saying means that you have to break big things up into bite-sized pieces, otherwise it gets overwhelming. You need to do that with your project.

People often get bogged down because they're trying to look at the whole picture without breaking it down. So, sit down with whoever's developing this with you and break it into smaller milestones that you can track.

### ***Milestones as Management***

Make your team accountable at each milestone. This milestone needs to be completed by the end of the week. Then once that milestone's completed, this milestone needs to be completed by the end of the next week. This way, you can find out when you're a day behind on a particular milestone and you don't have to be managing the whole project.

### ***Payment by Milestone***

You can pay per milestone, rather than paying them up front. You don't have to split it up equally either. You can say, "This is a very complex milestone that's going to take a bit longer and this is very integral to the project, so a little bit more money into that one." This keeps the person engaged and motivated to reach the next milestone and get that extra little bit of money.

### ***Bonuses***

I also personally have small bonuses for people hitting milestones early and doing a great job. You don't necessarily want to rush things, but if they're doing very well and kicking ass, then I'll give them a small bonus. It's all worth it to me in the long run, because if we get something done really well quickly, then I'm going to launch sooner and make more money.

## **Must-Have List / Wish List**

Always attribute the features and the ideas that you come up with either to your must-have list or your wish list. That way, it doesn't affect the time scale for the overall project.

It doesn't matter how great your product is: if it's not launched, it's not going to make you any money. So, you need to make sure that you're very strict about keeping your initial vision very simple. The features and improvements on your wish list can always be added in after it's been launched.

## **Project Budget**

I never, ever, ever pay per hour. Hourly pay makes it in everybody's interest to take longer, rather than finish more quickly. Also, it's extremely difficult to track the actual

hours that people are working when they're not right next to you. On top of that, it creates a distrusting environment.

Instead, do a project budget. If you just go to somebody and say, "How much will it cost to develop this?" Well, they don't necessarily know if you're a Fortune 500 company or whether you're just some guy sat in his back room. So they could quote you anything and you'll see massive ranges of pricing from a couple hundred bucks to tens of thousands of dollars for the same project, depending on what they think they can get for it.

So, you need to set the expectations early. At the end of the day, your budget is your budget. That's what you have to spend on this. So, work out what your budget is and let people know. In life, as with everything, it pays dividends to be transparent and honest with people.

## Clear Thinking Leads to Clear Communication

What you need to do is be very clear about what you want developed *before* you go to a developer. If you just have an idea and then ten minutes later you're trying to find somebody to build the idea for you, then you don't have your idea perfectly formed yet. The problem will be that you get into discussing with somebody and they'll start asking you all these questions that you didn't expect. You just get overwhelmed.

So what you need to do is just have a sit-down. Think to yourself, "Here's my idea. It's great. Let's just think about it for a little while and throw it around." Once you've got that perfectly formed picture, then when you go to somebody they will be able to see what you see. That means there's no confusion and they can do their best work for you.

## Testing

Testing is the thing that I think a lot of people brush over and miss. They launch the product thinking, "Oh it doesn't matter if there's a problem because my customers can just tell me."

But you never want people to pay for something and then be your tester. It needs to be working before they get it, because this is their first experience with dealing with you and if they buy something and it just doesn't work then it's going to be a bad experience for them from day one. You're probably going to have to fight very hard to get that customer back. Actually, you're probably just going to lose them.

So before you get launch this thing, test it and make sure that it's ready. It's very, very simple.

All you need to do is use the product in every way possible. Try to break it. Literally sit down and just try to break it. Then once you've done that, get your developer to do the same thing. But don't just rely on them, because your developer is not a user or a customer. They think in code and they don't necessarily use it in the same way because they made the thing. So get somebody to test it who could be your customer as well.

Once you've done that, I think it's really important to have a beta process. That can just be opening up to some of your friends and people that you know, either in the industry or just in real life, and get them to use it as well and give you feedback and listen.

Just tweaking it can be the difference between a product that just kills it when it comes out and a product that people kind of miss when they hear the idea.

At that point, if you've got a customer base already, then roll it out to those people next, before you do a big launch. Then after that you can gear up and get ready for launch.

## **SELLING SOFTWARE**

### **Do Something Good in a Great Way**

There are a lot of products out there that everybody hates because they're complicated to use, but they still use them because they do really powerful things.

But there aren't a lot of products out there that do good things and do them in a great way. If you can get that, then you've got a hit on your hands immediately, because people use it and they go, "Wow – that was enjoyable to use and it was easy to use." That's key.

### **Marketing**

With software, you can make the product the star. What I mean by that is that when you're trying to sell something abstract like a mastermind membership group, you have to put a story in your sales pitch.

You don't really need to do that with software. If your product solves a problem, then simply show them that product easily solving the problem. Just make the product the

star. Keep things very simple: this is what it does and this is why it benefits you. If you can explain that to people, then they're going to want to buy it.

## Selling More with Affiliates

We wouldn't have been able to get as many customers without our affiliates. Affiliates have been very, very successful for us. You're never going to be able to reach as many people as a network of affiliates will.

One of the best affiliate networks for me is ClickBank. You can sign up very simply and very easily. It's also very simple for an affiliate to start selling your product. You don't have to do anything.

## DELIVERING SOFTWARE

### Platform

I use [WishList Member](#), which is a great membership site platform, to create a members area. ([Optimize Press](#) is another great product where you can do the same thing). They both can integrate with [ClickBank](#) as well.

### Helping People Use the Product

Some people just take a product, put it in there, and forget about everything else. But it's extremely important that a user has a good experience with the product the first time that they use it. Otherwise they may think about refunding. Ultimately, we want them to keep the product. If they're using it, they're going to talk about it and that's going to lead to more sales.

Our goal is to get them thinking, "Wow – the transaction I just made to buy this product was well worth it and what a great product it is!"

### Videos

Make sure that you surround your software with as support as possible. You can make "how-to" videos just by recording your screen and using different parts of your software. Keep them quite short and to the point: a minute or two minutes at most. People don't want to sit through a half-hour training marathon. They're going to not have time to do it.

Never underestimate how people might still need to understand how to use it, even if it is quite simple. We're all at different levels of knowledge and ability when it comes to using a computer.

### **Checklists**

People love checklists and they don't want to leave them half-finished. So, if they do step one, two, and three out of five steps, psychologically they're going to want to go back and finish step 4 and step 5.

Whereas if you just say, "Watch this video and then download the software and here is some other stuff you can do..." they may not come back to it.

## **CUSTOMER SUPPORT**

Categorically, the most money you make will come from after the transaction and how you treat those customers. Ultimately, you want them to be customers for life and to buy your next product. You want people to be talking about your product. The best kind of marketing is a good product and great customer service.

Customers that are happy, who are surprised by how well you treat them, will go out and talk about it on social media and you'll find that they'll bring in customers.

### **Start Off Simple**

You don't want to start off trying to have everything in place. You're going to start off simple and grow as your customers grow. As your customers grow, so does the money you're making. That means you can invest in other solutions and you can make things a bit more streamlined.

### **Systemize Support**

We now use a product called [Zendesk](#), which I absolutely love. It's not necessarily the cheapest service out there, but it integrates really well with pretty much everything and it's very easy to manage. You can have all your staff working in it at different levels of administration. It gives you great reports and has the ability to let customers give you satisfaction ratings and all that kind of thing.

When you're just starting out, email is enough. Just having a support email is enough that they can email. What I would recommend doing is having a separate email. You can go into Gmail and create filters as well, but the simplest thing is probably to have



an email specifically for the support of this product. Just checking that is enough to begin with.

## **Be a Hero**

Do anything you can to help your customer. Be your customer's hero.

For example, we have the video player. If they try to incorporate that into Wordpress and they have a theme that isn't compatible and creates a problem, rather than saying, "Well, we don't make that theme. We advise you don't use it or go speak to the guy that makes the theme," we'll get in there if we have to and work with them on it.

Whatever you can do in your power, do it to help the customer – even if you have to go in and talk with them about it on Skype. The time and effort you put into that initially will pay dividends in sales and reputation in the future.

## **LOOKING FORWARD**

### **The Rise of Software**

I think the software part of the industry is going to go from strength to strength. There's going to be more and more software being made.

Years ago, there was an evolutionary process from ebook to video. That shift created a lot of revenue for a lot of people and it actually helped the way that people learn because videos can be much more effective in teaching people.

Today, I see another shift where a lot of people are willing to take the information that they've got and turn it into web apps. You can take pretty much any course and turn it into a software solution, where the content is delivered modularly and it's interactive. There's a really big chance for a lot of people right now. It's wide open.

### **Better Software**

I really hope that people focus on making good, polished products that solve problems. I think we're going to see a lot more smart, interesting software solutions.

I've seen a lot of people create a software product quickly, try to make some money out of it, but then they don't stick by it. Software does not need to be like that. I stand by my product. We keep working on it and we keep developing it.

A product can be an entire business. It can fuel your entire business and it can do great things for you. So, stick with a product.

## Last Words

When you really look at the huge successes that are happening right now around the world, you see things like Draw Something being sold for millions of dollars. You see things like the rise of Facebook, which is a software platform.

We don't need to be Instagram, which was bought for a billion. But we can take lessons from the amazing staggering successes we're seeing from companies and say, "Okay, software is something that I need to be involved in. It's already growing. It's hot. This is an area that's very, very interesting and very attractive. There's a massive amount of potential and opportunity there and we only need tiny percentage of that kind of success to do really, really well."

## ACTIONABLE TAKEAWAYS

### 1. **Choose a problem that software can solve.**

Look at the problems that you face online. Other people have those problems as well. No problem is too small. You just need to develop a good solution for it based on customer requests and feedback.

### 2. **Find a talented coder.**

E lance is good. Also go to coding forums, work through the threads, and find the thought leaders. Send them an email saying that you'd like to pay them to work on a great project of yours. Convince them of your vision, tell them your budget, and get them excited to be involved.

### 3. **Take an active role in the project.**

Sit down with your coder to create a project brief with milestones based on your must-have list and wish list. Tell them how much they'll get paid at each milestone and offer bonuses if they finish early. Stay in constant communication until the project is ready to test and beta test it by trying to break it.

### 4. **Set up a system to sell the software.**

To sell the software, set up a website or landing page. Drive traffic to it from your existing audience or through affiliates. Once they get there, simply and straight-forwardly communicate how your software solves their problem. If

they buy, let them download the software or give them access to use it from your website.

5. **Treat your customers like damsels in distress.**

Be a hero to your customers. Start with a simple support email address and eventually upgrade to Zendesk to manage your customer support. When they have a problem, help them as best you can. People talk about wonderful customer service which results in more sales down the road.

# Part 6:

# Building a Successful Company Online

## CONTINUITY IS KING



*“For the questions you’re asking me, I would charge \$1,000 an hour. So you better be charging a lot for whatever product this is.”*

**Ryan Lee, [RyanLee.com](http://RyanLee.com)**

## AFFILIATE MARKETING MASTERY

*“If they’re spending \$1000 a month for me, then they’re going to open the email. I can pretty much guarantee it.”*

**James Schramko, [InternetMarketingSpeed.com](http://InternetMarketingSpeed.com)**



## DIGITAL NOMADING



*“I’m living in a place where, if I can bring in a couple thousand bucks a month, I’m sorted. You live like a king.”*

**Cody McKibben, [ThrillingHeroics.com](http://ThrillingHeroics.com)**

## INTERNET ENTREPRENEUR

*“I personally will lose my money, to keep my customers safe. As foolish as that may sound, that’s how much I care about my customers.”*

**Neil Patel, [KISSmetrics.com](http://KISSmetrics.com)**



# Continuity is King

with Ryan Lee

**R**yan Lee was a gym teacher. Passionate about helping people become fit, he started a personal training service. He made a simple website for the business and began writing articles about athletic training.



His readers began asking Ryan for customized workout programs and when he started providing them, he found his first source of online income. Selling training equipment provided a second stream.

In 2001, Lee decided to try his hand at a membership website. He took all of the content that used to be free and made it password protected. In his first month using this strategy, he made over \$5,000.

## Ryan Today

In the last ten years, Ryan has developed many more websites and continuity programs. He's branched out from fitness and now spends most of his time teaching people [how to follow in his footsteps and become successful online marketers](#).

How successful? All together, his businesses pull in seven figures each month.

## WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

- 4 Steps to Starting a Successful Continuity Program
- The Software You'll Need
- The Best Type of Content
- What Makes a Good Sales Page
- The Two Most Powerful Words in Continuity Retention
- Future Trends in Continuity

# THE CONTINUITY ADVANTAGE

## Continuity is...

Basically, it's something that pays you over and over again. It could be information. It could be software. It could be athletic supplements. It could be anything, but it has to be something that people want to stay in over and over again.

It doesn't have to necessarily be monthly billing. It could be quarterly, bimonthly, or yearly billing. But there's a continuous relationship that they're going to stay in until they say, "Ok, I'm done. I've had enough, let me cancel." Until then, they're going to keep getting bills.

## The Power of Continuity

In the typical information product business, you sell your product one time and then you're back at zero the next month.

Let's say you've got a \$20 product and you sell 100 this month. That's going to give you \$2,000 this month. Next month, you're back at zero.

So, you have to repeat the marketing effort to sell the same hundred products and make another \$2,000. After a year, you're still just earning \$2,000 a month.

Turn that now into a \$20 monthly subscription. It could be for monthly interviews, coaching, live training, software... anything. You put in the same effort to get those hundred people to buy and, month one, you're at 2 grand. Let's say there's no drop off: at the end of month two, you're now earning \$4,000.

By month twelve, you're earning \$24,000 a month. That's for the same amount of effort as when you were still just making \$2,000 a month with a traditional product. Now, instead of always having to get new customers, your job becomes taking care of the customers that you already have.

## Ease of Operation

There are the typical benefits of running an Internet business. All you need is Internet access.

The potential to earn more income is virtually infinite because the business model is scalable. I do the same amount of work on a webinar that I do for 20 people as I do for 10,000 people.

There's low overhead and low startup costs. What other business gives you this recurring income with virtually no overhead, no staff, work from anywhere, work for yourself, and you can make money while you sleep?

There is no better business model. I will put my business model against anyone.

## **STARTING A CONTINUITY PROGRAM – STEP BY STEP**

### **1. Choose a Role**

The first thing that you have to figure out is what role you want to play.

You're going to be one of two things. You could be the expert, the person who's out front. Maybe you're the expert on continuity or parenting or fitness.

Role number two is for people who aren't an expert in anything. Then you're going to be more of what I call the host, where you interview people and bring resources together. That's more like a Barbara Walters or Oprah Winfrey.

You could do a combination. You could be an expert and you can also be the host.

### **2. Pick a Niche**

The next step is to figure out who the heck you are selling to. Let's say you're going to be a host in the fitness market. Who's your niche market? Especially with continuity, the more niched down you are, the more specific, the better your chances for success.

A specific niche is really important.

When I started doing coaching for fitness professionals, 90% of them would say, "Ryan, I've got the best product." So I would ask who they were going to sell their product to and they said, "Everybody! It doesn't matter if you're an 8-year-old kid or an 80-year-old grandmother. You're going to buy my product!"

But in that case, an 8-year-old's going to say, "This isn't for me." An 80-year-old's going to say, "This isn't for me."

### **3. Narrow it Down Twice**

I recommend that you narrow your target market down twice.

Let's say you have a fence company and you want to target home owners. How do you narrow that down twice?

You can narrow it down first by age: "This is going to be for homeowners who are 50 or older."

You can narrow it down by sex: "This is for the male homeowners."

You can narrow it down by profession: "This is for accountants who own their own home."

The more specific your niche, the easier it is to become number one in that market. You can come in and say, "I'm the world's leading expert."

## 4. Choose a Model

What type of continuity program are you going to create? There are dozens and dozens. I created a video a couple of years ago called, "31 Continuity Income Models."

So, we think, "What kind of model are we going to create?"

The first model is what most people think of a continuity program: a membership site or an inner circle.

Let's say you've got a blog post called, "How I got \$3,852 in 5 Minutes for Free."

Your reader sees it and says, "Oh my God. That sounds really good."

They go to click on it and it says, "Sorry, this is for inner circle members only." If they want to become a member, it's a dollar trial or \$50 a month.

You're protecting certain content – and that's probably the easiest way to get started, especially if you've chosen a really specific niche.

### *The Print Model*

You could make print newsletters with audio CDs where you interview other experts.

So maybe now your website reads, "I'm going to show you how to build your own business and every month we're going to do a new interview with another young entrepreneur who started from scratch and is making at least \$10 grand a month." Every month, you'll send the people in the program an audio CD and a print newsletter with it.



I love print continuity programs. I just think they're so powerful.

### **Nano Continuity**

I've come up with this term, [Nano Continuity](#), which is really small, low-priced continuity programs that are \$5 a month and under. These are great because there's really low resistance, really long term stick rates, and there's not so much pressure on you to deliver.

You still want to provide a lot of value. You want to provide ten times the value you charge. So, people that are paying \$5 bucks a month, should be getting at least \$50 bucks a month of value.

### **Software**

Software programs are really, really, really sticky. The more of a pain it is for them to disconnect, the more they're going to stay. Think of shopping carts and auto-responder services. It's very hard for you to leave those services.

Software is probably the most profitable model. But you have to be careful because you need to have the support in the back end ready for that. All it really takes is one screw up in code and it could be a disaster.

So you have to be really prepared, but when you have a good software program, you make money forever.

## **TOOLS OF THE TRADE**

I'm not a tech person. I literally know two programs: Microsoft Word and PowerPoint.

That's all I need. I can outsource everything else.

If you're a tech geek, what ends up happening is that you spend all of your time doing the technical stuff when you should be spending it on marketing.

### **Website**

Now, if you're doing something like software, you obviously need a programmer. You're going to have to have a programmer do all the techy crap that programmers do.

I'm a big fan of setting up a blog and I use WordPress. I think that everyone should use WordPress.

If you want to turn that into a continuity program, there are a bunch of different plugins, like [WishList Member](#) and [Digital Access Pass](#). There are a bunch of them out there, but I use WishList Member for most of my membership sites.

If you don't want to use a blog format, my good friend Tim Gerber has a great format called [MemberGate](#), which we still run a lot of our programs on.

## Physical Products

I used to fulfill product orders myself. I'd literally print it up and burn the CDs and ship them in the mail.

If you're going to outsource that, there are companies like [Disk.com](#) and [Kunaki](#). They can ship CDs and DVDs every month. There are a lot of options out there and they're not expensive at all.

## Payment Collection

Obviously, you need some way to accept credit cards.

One option is to get your own merchant account with a shopping cart. You're going to have to pay money for your merchant account and for your shopping cart. I've tried them all: [InfusionSoft](#), [1ShoppingCart](#), and [Office AutoPilot](#).

The other option is to use a third party, like [PayPal](#) or [ClickBank](#).

I personally love ClickBank. They process all the credit card payments and then they pay you every two weeks, minus their commission. They take a high percentage: a merchant account might take 2.5%, while Clickbank takes 7.5 %. But they take care of everything: refunds, chargebacks, and even paying your affiliates. So you don't have to manage any of that.

Plus, ClickBank is so large that they have literally tens of thousands of affiliates that are looking for programs to promote. So you automatically have affiliates coming to you.

For me, I would rather give up the three or four points on the credit card processing and have it completely automate my business and make things really easy. I love using ClickBank for the automated membership sites.

# CREATING CONTINUITY CONTENT

It's got to be good content. It can't be promo after promo after promo after promo, because you'll burn out your list and people will start to really not like you very much.

## Hiring Content Creators

With some of our sites, Strength Coach, I have someone who runs the site. That person creates the content. He brings on other experts who do other articles and videos.

## Inner Circle Content

With my [Inner Circle](#), the weekly content is a live training session. It's either me or a guest expert talking about what's happening now in online marketing. They can access it live and then they also get access to the recording. That's literally it for content creation for the membership site.

## Content Frequency

When I first started, the trend was about volume. Three or four updates a week, with videos and audio files – that's what worked back then.

But now I think that time is a premium for everyone. No one has all this time to sit there for hours and hours and watch your website. So, I'm finding out that less is more. For my site, the frequency is about once a week.

Whatever continuity program you do, you're going to have to try it out to see what works for your site. Your members might like new content once every other week, once a month, or maybe twice a week.

## Simple is Good

The way I create content is through putting on a live webinar and then recording it so we can make it available online any time.

I'm all about simplicity. It's got to be simple, because, for me being an online marketer is about lifestyle.

I'm married. I've got four young children, all under the age of eight. So, I want to have a life. I don't want to have to work all day. I want to come home every day by five o'clock so I can have dinner, coach soccer, and all the other fun stuff that I want to do.

## Multimedia Content

Some people like to read. Some people who like to watch videos. And then some people love audio. My audience, it's like 33% each. Everyone is different.

If you do a webinar, you can put it in all three models. You have the video done. You take that audio from the video and put it up as an mp3, which is what I do for my Inner Circle. And you can also make transcripts.

Now you've got something for all three: the people who love to read, the people who love the audio, and the people who love the video. You're taking care of everybody, all the different types of learners and the different learning styles.

## The Difference between Blog Content and Exclusive Content

Blog content tends to be a little bit more general, a little bit more motivational. You want to give them good content. If your blog content is crap, they're going to assume your Inner Circle stuff is crap.

But the membership stuff has got to be the real juicy stuff, like big secrets. Live interaction is important too. People will pay more for that.

Maybe the free content for your blog would be, "Top 10 Businesses to Start." The hidden content would dive into how to start one of those businesses, with much more detail.

## Using Email

Email marketing strategy is big. It's how I make most of my money. I build my list and then contact them with content anywhere from four to six times a week.

My emails are usually broken down into a couple parts. With the beginning, I always do some kind of personal story, a personal intro. Then I go and say, "Here's today's free content." That link goes to a blog post.

Then I'll say, "Here are all the things that are going on in the Inner Circle now, so if you're a member, click here to login and get the latest training. If you're not, you're out of your friggin' mind: click here to join."

That's pretty much my email, very simple. I send it out and we have people going to the site and when they go to the site. Let's say they don't click on the link, "Hey, go here to the Inner Circle member."

If they click on the blog, at the end of it will be a message reading, "P.S. If you want to learn more about this, click here to join the Inner Circle." So, everywhere they go they're going to see advertisements for my Inner Circle.

## **Sell with Integrity**

A word of warning: never endorse a product that you haven't reviewed or something that you wouldn't use yourself.

Some affiliate marketers play a game of, "You reciprocate to me, I'll reciprocate to you. You email for me, I'll email for you." But when you start mailing for crappy products and you send your customers to a product that doesn't work, it's going to reflect badly on you.

You might sacrifice some short term profits, but think of this as a long-term game. I've been in this business for over a decade and the reason it still grows is because I'm thinking long-term. I've never promoted a product that I didn't see and endorse myself.

## **The Value of Free Advice**

In general, the worst advice you can give is free advice. No one really listens to that.

When people say, "Oh Ryan, can I take you to lunch to pick your brain for free?"

I'm like, "Well no, because you're not going to do anything. But if you take me to lunch and pay me \$1,000 for that hour, you're going to write down every damn word I say."

There's just something about paying for information that motivates people to actually use it: "Man, I paid \$1,000 bucks. I better take action."

For the questions you're asking me, I would charge \$1,000 an hour. So you better be charging a lot for whatever product this is.

# PROMOTING AND SELLING CONTINUITY PROGRAMS

## How Ryan Promotes

I host experts, use our Facebook fan page, do some targeted advertising, and make webinars.

Joint ventures still work too. I find partners with related projects and have them promote my program to their list for ongoing commission. It's simple, but it works.

## Make Connections

If you have a continuity program, but you haven't made a name for yourself, the first thing I would do is connect with people. The best way to do that is just to interview them.

Ask yourself, "Who are the top people in my niche who could be potential joint venture partners?"

### *Keep it Short to Start*

Find one of them on Facebook, Twitter, or LinkedIn and say, "Hey, I have this blog. It's just starting, but it's starting to gain some traction. I love your stuff and I love talking about you. If you just have five minutes for a quick interview, I could put it on my blog."

That's the key: five minutes. If I didn't know you and you sent me that email, I would have agreed to it because it would take so little of my time.

### *Develop the Relationship*

Once we make that connection, once we talk on the phone or over Skype, we create a bond.

Then you say, "Hey Ryan, what can I do to help you? Tell me what products you have. I would love to promote it. I would love to get behind you."

Then you go on your Facebook page and you say, "Hey, I just talked to Ryan Lee. It was great. I just did a review of his book. Here's a picture of it. I loved it." Kind of the old school days of brown-nosing a bit, but it's got to be authentic.

Now, if you did an interview with me, a Facebook post about me, a review of my book, and you started talking about me on your blog... how do I not feel like I kind of owe you

something? Now, if you're going to email me, how do I not open your email? It's going to be very hard for me to just ignore you.

So actually build a relationship with people. Don't say, "Hey Ryan, I've got a great ebook, will you promote it?" Say, "Hey Ryan, I love your stuff. How can I help *you*?"

## The Sales Page

### **Trust**

Your first priority is establishing trust. People don't know who to trust anymore.

Any type of proof elements play a big role here: testimonials, case studies, and screenshots. Lately, I've been testing screenshots of people on Facebook commenting that they like my stuff. Another way to build trust is through videos where you say, "Hey, I'm a real person. I'm authentic. I'm transparent. This is what's going to happen."

### **Trials Help**

If you don't have any kind of name in the industry, maybe you should do a trial. "Try this program free for the first month." That will help to get them in, testing the waters.

### **Don't Lie to People**

Being honest helps.

You have to be very transparent. Let them know that there is going to be recurring billing. Don't try to sneak it in.

If you do that, then you're done. They're going to tell everyone they know, "This guy sucks. He's going to scam you."

### **Bonuses**

Don't always talk about your continuity program. Say, "Here's this important event we did. You can get all these videos for free just by joining this program. This is what you're going to get as a charter member."

Sometimes it's a good idea to flip it and make it more about a bonus product, as opposed to your membership.

### **Guarantees**

With ClickBank, you have to offer a 60-day guarantee. You should always have a guarantee and if people want their money back, give them their damn money back.

## **Refunds**

There are a handful of people who will try to scam you and a handful who are just insane.

It's not worth fighting them. Even if the customer is dead wrong, honor it. You get them off your list, you get them out of your life, and you move on.

What are you going to do? That's the price of doing business online and you have to know that going in. I'm at peace with it.

# **CONTINUITY RETENTION**

## **Dangle a Carrot**

The big thing is making everything a cliffhanger. You're dangling the carrot.

The two most powerful words in continuity retention: "coming soon."

"Hey, I hope you enjoyed this week's update. Coming next week, I'm going to show the one strategy that brought an extra \$18,252 with one email. You're going to get that exact email. That's coming soon."

Now, if you're a member and you were thinking of canceling next week, are you going to cancel? Absolutely not. You're going to say, "I'm going to stick around for another week to check out this strategy."

## **Show People that You Care**

It sounds so generic, but just show people that you care. That means answering questions on your blog and on your Facebook discussion forums. Don't drop the ball.

A lot of people who are marketing products will do a big launch, they'll sell something, and then they just disappear. You never hear from them again.

Being prolific, on the other hand, shows people that you actually care about them. They're more likely to stick around and they're going to feel like they actually owe you some loyalty.

So always be in front of them, visible, and providing a ton of value. That's how you keep them.



# CHALLENGES OF CONTINUITY

If I had a content-based continuity program, then the biggest challenge would be coming up with new content. But since I do webinars, creating content is not so much of a challenge.

## Staying Disciplined

One challenge is sticking to the calendar. You have to say, “Okay, I’m going to update it this day, on this week.” Mark it ahead of time. If you don’t have a calendar, you can lose track.

## A Tough Sell

The reality is it’s always more challenging to get somebody into a continuity program, versus just a one-time product. Not everybody wants to go into a continuity program. We like it as a product-producer, but the end user doesn’t always know how to do it.

So you have to really entice them, with a great value and a great front-end product or a bonus.

## Keeping Users

Most people drop the ball. They get people to sign up and then they just kind of lay back. But it’s almost like you’ve always got to keep re-selling them on why they’re there. “Hey, as an Inner Circle member, don’t forget that you’re going to get this, this, and this next month.

Offer bonuses, like, “Hey I just wrote a new book, since you’re an inner circle member, send me your address and I’ll ship it to you for free.”

So there are some challenges, but like I said before, continuity is the best business model in the world, hands down.

## Ryan’s Big Challenge

I’m a competitive guy. I feel like when I left the fitness market, in fitness marketing, I was like the number one guy. I left on top.

With internet marketing, I don’t think I’m the number one yet. So, that’s my challenge. That’s my next goal: to be number one.

So, I still have more challenges. It's not about the money. It's about the challenge and the journey. I'm still on that journey.

## LOOKING FORWARD

There are a lot more options for people to choose from in joining different programs.

When I had Strength Coach, all those years ago, there were only a couple other membership sites for that market. Now there are probably two hundred, partly because I created the competition.

So, I would say it's more competitive now and more challenging to get the customers. That's why it's getting more important to be niched down and niched down and niched down.

## Future Trends

### *Less is More*

The big trend I see is that less is more.

That means getting away from information marketing and towards advice marketing. Take part in more interaction, as opposed to just throwing out content.

### *Now it's Personal*

Do more personal branding as opposed to big, faceless membership sites.

Get a website like RyanLee.com. Market your program as one where you get personal interaction with an expert.

### *Nano Continuity*

There are going to be more of these low-priced continuity products.

### *Mobile*

It's going to be interesting to see what happens over the next year or two in terms of mobile memberships. Mobile markets, with the iPads and the iPods, are really new in terms of monthly billing.

I'm going to keep my eye on that, see how that shakes out.

## Last Words

If you want to learn more about me, you can always go to [RyanLee.com](https://ryanlee.com) and sign up for my newsletter. I've got new articles coming out almost every day. I've got a free report on how to double your income, quickly.

If you want to do a continuity program, really go for it. Don't get unfocused and think, "I'm going to have seven ideas for continuity programs." Create one first. Have a goal in mind. Say, "I'm going to create one and I'm not even going to think of anything else until I get \$300,000 a month in revenue or 500 members."

Whatever your goal is, don't stop until you reach it. Too many people will buy a site, get three or four members, and then they quit after two weeks. Then they go on to something else. Instead, go after it hard and don't even think of anything else until you hit that goal.

## ACTIONABLE TAKEAWAYS

### 1. Use WishList Member and ClickBank.

[WishList Member](#) is a WordPress plugin that allows you to easily set up a membership website. Ryan prefers using [ClickBank](#) to handle all of the transactions because they automate every step from collecting payment, to paying affiliates, to handling refunds.

### 2. Sell your advice with integrity.

People appreciate your advice more if they bought it. When they appreciate it, they're more likely to implement it. When they implement it, they'll benefit from it and appreciate you even more. But always sell for the long-run.

### 3. Provide high-quality content once per week.

Ryan has tried providing content several times per week but he found the golden frequency is once per week. For most of his continuity programs, he offers weekly webinars with industry experts.

### 4. Offer multimedia content.

For each area in your membership site, give them an option of watching a video, listening to audio, or reading a transcript.

### 5. Retain your members.

The two most important words for retaining members are, "coming soon." End each webinar, podcast, article with, "Next week we have Blankity Blank on the line and they're going to show you how they blankity blanked."

# Affiliate Marketing Mastery

with James Schramko

**J**ames Schramko used to be in charge of a \$100 million car dealership, but he left to pursue Internet marketing.



It was a good decision.

Based out of Sydney, Australia, Schramko began building a list and developed several successful products, including [TrafficGrab](#). He once sold over \$140,000 of a product in one week.

## James Schramko Today

James has his own affiliate marketing network with many premium domains and team of employees. They sell many of their own products, along with a pair of masterminds hosted by James.

Schramko also has a pair of thriving SEO businesses, [SEO Partner](#) and [LinkJuice](#).

## WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

- 4 Steps to Affiliate Marketing Success
- The Tools of the Trade
- How to Build – and Manage – a Profitable List
- What Makes a Product or Service Successful
- Internet Marketing Karma

# OVERVIEW

If possible, it's better to start with the audience than the topic.

That's something that people do wrong: they start with an idea and then they try to back-fill it with an audience. But it's always easier to try to find a buying audience and *then* create something for them that solves one of their problems.

## Step 1: Research

Research more about your audience, so that you really understand their problems and how they talk about it.

The next thing you research is the existing solutions in your market that you'll have to match up with.

In that process you'll have a look at competitors as well, see how they're succeeding in the marketplace. Try to see if there's an angle where you can break in and repeat their success.

## Step 2: Create Content

Get the materials ready that you're going to then put on your website. Specifically, you're going to start preparing content that helps translate your website into a problem-solving device.

That could be articles, audio players, pictures, or PDFs – depending on what you're selling. It might be a free report.

The content will be helping you promote the content that you want to promote. So that will be pre-sales copy, selling articles, because you're going to need it for both your own website and traffic to bring people to the website.

## Step 3: Attract and Convert Leads

Drive traffic to your site and see if you can convert it into sales. Hopefully, you've targeted the right phrases and you've been able to explain to your target prospect how you solve their problem better than other people and why they should buy from you.

## Step 4: Expand

The next logical evolution is mine out that market a little bit better.

Put out some more content and get more traffic. Generally, I'll create information products in that market to offer as a bonus, so that I am really enhancing my conversions.

Now, that means that you're pretty much into developing your own product phase, which is where the real money is. At this point, you may want to begin developing more websites.

## AFFILIATE MARKETING TOOLS

### Insights and Analytics

I would have [SEMRush](#) in my tool kit. I really like that tool because I can plug in all of my competitor's websites and see what phrases they're ranking for. It also gives me an idea of the cost-per-click value of those phrases. The higher the cost-per-click, the more likely it is to add value to somebody. So that's a great tool.

### Website Platform

I'm using WordPress.

### Email Marketing

You want to turn your site into a lead generator, not just a page that makes sales. The easiest way to do that is to offer a free bonus. I'm using [AWeber](#).

### Customer Support

One of my favorite tools is [Zendesk](#), where you can have the central help desk for all of your websites in one place. There, you can create a category called "bonus claims." That way you can use the same support team for all of your websites.

### Ecommerce

As an affiliate, you don't need to collect money. Affiliate is just another word for sales agent. All somebody has to do is use your link to buy something and that merchant will send you the money.

So you don't actually need a cart. You don't need to go through the whole product development phase. But I really do recommend people do, because that's when I started making a lot more money: when I added a cart and I created a product.

## ***Tools are Overrated***

I really don't use a lot of tools. People like to hide behind tools and get busy with stuff, but that's not where the money is.

The money is earned when you just roll up your sleeves and create content that gets traffic to your website.

# **PROMOTING OTHER PEOPLE'S PRODUCTS**

## **Affiliate Marketing Platforms**

I've promoted products on [Infusionsoft](#), [Nanacast](#), [E-Junkie](#), [PayDotCom.com](#), and on private systems.

I promote some [Commission Junction](#) offers, but a lot of the CJ stuff is from the bigger brands. That's fine for some of my affiliate stuff, but I've found it much easier and more lucrative to promote a different type of product than the one you're finding on CJ.

I rarely promote [ClickBank](#) products. I would rather they have their own shopping cart and, in many markets, the products are a bit shady.

Secondly, there's a lot of affiliate theft, so people will replace your link for theirs. As soon as they find out it's from ClickBank, they'll go and reorder with their own ID and chop you out of the loop.

## **How to Become a Super Affiliate**

Just sell a lot of stuff.

That's when the tide turns a bit. Instead of you competing with thousands of others, you start to get access to exclusive offers, higher payouts, and custom landing pages. They'll start putting tracking codes on things for you and make packages and bundles that are just for your customers.

A super affiliate is like a marketing machine that they are paying on a pay-per-performance basis. So it's pretty attractive for them to have somebody who knows what they're doing promoting their product.

It also helps as they get a feel for your ethics, how many refunds you get, and what your conversion rate is like.

# LIST BUILDING

Rather than pushing squeeze pages all the time, quite often I'll have a reverse squeeze page. You can do that with free things. A podcast channel is a great way to build up a subscription list of quality people who are very loyal.

## Focus on Buyers

But generally, I won't even have a squeeze page; I'll just collect the details of buyers. You can do that through low-priced products. Whenever somebody buys something, I make sure that they get added to a customer list for that product.

I started out just building a list of buyers. That was my primary focus and it still is. I want the name and email address of someone who's purchased something, rather than just prospects.

### *How it Works*

It's through AWeber, but I integrate it through Nanacast. When somebody purchases something, it will automatically notify AWeber and send them out a confirmation requirement. So that it's double opt-in.

It just happens automatically, but they have to confirm the email. Have it say, "Step Two of Three Completed," and that will get their attention. Then write something like, "In order to receive updates to the product that you just purchased, please confirm below so that you can receive that and our newsletter."

## Add Value

It's even more valuable when you actually send some valuable updates. You get extremely high open rates for those emails. You know they've already purchased, so it's very segmented and so it's pretty easy to guess what else they might be interested in.

## Subtle Tactics

I had a live event. Since not all of my customers are going to live in the same country or be prepared to travel, I had a pretty light campaign promoting the event.

I recorded the event and I had a post-event webinar. The post-event webinar was for people who attended the event and wanted to recapture its value. But it also served to promote two things: a purchase of the recordings and the option to join a business mastermind.



So I took the recording from the webinar and sent it as a bonus to people who had purchased some of my related products.

For example, for one product that I've sold 2,500 copies of, I loaded the webinar recording onto their membership as a free bonus. Then I just send them an email letting them know that I've recorded this webinar for them as an extra value bonus.

The webinar educates, but it also teases them into the idea that the videos will be good to have. They've already purchased one product from me, so it's a logical step for them to consider buying another one.

So I'll make a lot of sales from the process without ever having to send them an email saying, "Urgent: Buy this today. It's going off the market tomorrow!" and all the hoopla that we see from amateurs.

## **LIST MANAGEMENT**

Email is the most effective tool for an internet marketer. It's immediate.

But it's only one way. I have a lot of ways. I put out a whole product out on twenty something different ways that I drive traffic to my sites.

### **High Open Rates**

Think of an email list as a promise. The promise depends on how they get onto that list, but it's your job to keep that promise.

That email opt-in for my free blog has a promise. I've framed that offer with the promise of sending them a report, which I do. In fact, I send them bonus materials. There's an hour long video that I send them, as a bonus.

And then I send them an email when I do a podcast. The podcasts could be six weeks apart or, in some cases, two days apart. I'm very random with my content. And that was the promise when they entered that list. So that email list will have a pretty high open.

A lot of my lists have 85-90% open rates. That's because they're super-targeted.

## Provide Value with Each Email

I have a golden rule about this: the reader must be better off after opening that email than before they opened it. If I can achieve that, then I'm not going to have massive unsubscribes.

It's about continuing the relationship. I have a lifetime customer philosophy. If people leave my list, I really take it as a harsh insult. I think that I've done something to break the trust or to not deliver on what was promised.

So your goal should always be to help people be better off. If you can do that, then the rest is easy.

### *Email Case Study #1*

I sent an email today for [Freedom Ocean](#), one of my podcasts. It said that there's a new episode and that you can also download the transcript. We send an email like that probably once every ten days or so for that list. That's got an 86% open rate – and that's a free list.

When we offer something for sale, which is rare, those people buy like crazy. They buy because we've built up so much goodwill by providing genuine value to those people.

They look forward to the email to the point where they'll go onto our Facebook wall and say, "I'm really looking for my fix of Freedom Ocean. When's episode 28 coming? I can't wait."

We do something else that's rare with that list: on the bottom of the email it says, "Hey, if you want to ask us something, just hit 'reply'. We actually read every single email." We'll get a ton of replies back from the emails.

People send us stories, like "I implemented that tip you suggested in episode 7 and I've added 20% to my bottom line profit. I just wanted to say thank you, it means a lot." So that's really inspiring – and you can only do that if you are doing something good for the customer.

### *Email Case Study #2*

I wrote an email about reopening my mastermind. I sent one to a small list of my previous customers. Actually, I had a list of 65 people and I deleted 25 people who I didn't want to send the email to. So I ended up sending it to 35 people.

The email said, “We’re reopening the mastermind if you’re interested,” and from that I had about ten people rejoin.

Then, I sent an email to the waiting list, saying, “We’re opening. If you’d like to join, then this is what it’s about. Just hit ‘reply’ and tell me that you’re ready to do this.” From that email, I got 20 to join.

So I had maybe 32 people paying round about \$1000 a month for business coaching – and that was off just one email to previous customers and one email to new prospects. That’s a really good example of segmenting your lists into current customers and current prospects.

Of course, when they signed up they got moved into a brand new list, which is my new current customers list. That’s the freshest, most powerful list that I have. I’ll get over 100% open rate for that, because people will open it up several times and it will just show as over 100%. If they’re spending \$1000 a month for me, then they’re going to open the email. I can pretty much guarantee it.

## **Email Writing Process**

I open up AWeber and I type the message straight out of my head. Then I save it, send a test email, check the links, and then I hit publish.

It takes me ten minutes. It’s genuine. It’s just a conversation that I’m having and it literally would be the words that I would say if I were going to say the words out loud.

Rather than send people to a payment button, generally I ask people to email me and tell me that they’re interested. That’s more powerful than driving traffic to a sales page.

### ***Email Length***

Typically it will be one paragraph and a bold, clickable link, and a signature. They would be a similar length to a Seth Godin email, or shorter.

Sometimes I’ll tell a little bit more of a story in the email and give specific instructions.

If it’s a sales-related email, which is very rare for me, then it might be a bit longer. But that’s only so that I can really filter for the right person that I want and so that I can give them enough information to be able to move forward.

## ***What Percentage of Emails Promote Products?***

It would be very low, maybe five or ten percent or something.

I don't send a lot of emails, but I have one of the best email lists in the business.

## **Autoresponders**

I think autoresponders are a great tool and, if used well, they can be very, very profitable. I got good at doing that with my free training sort of emails.

At one time, I had a lot of autoresponders built up. But I went in one day and deleted them all. I'm leaning on the side of fresh.

Today, I don't have autoresponders loaded up for the majority of my lists. So, if you get an email from me, generally it will be one I've just typed. It's fresh.

## ***When to Use Autoresponders***

I would still use autoresponders in a niche blog, if it's one set up in a market that you aren't that passionate about or that you don't visit very often. You might be sending them training or reports through a series of emails. Then, use the autoresponder.

That's a perfectly fine, legitimate model. I've just found a more lucrative model for me.

## **Email Frequency**

Sometimes I don't send an email for six months, but then when I do, I generate as many sales as I need. In that case, I can let that tree grow its fruit and go back and harvest it again when I'm ready. I don't wear them out.

On the other hand, with my paid community there's a weekly newsletter. But it's in no way, shape, or form a sales letter. It's just a recap of what's going on in the community.

## ***Newsletter Strategy***

It breaks the rule of "one message per email" because it has links to a dozen different threads within our community. It sort of gives a teaser of what's happening. Then they go and click on that section to dive straight into an area that might help them.

We do that because it helps to inform and educate them, but also encourages consumption of the product that we're delivering. They keep coming back each week because they feel the value in their subscription and they also get a chance to learn more stuff.

## Using Social Networks

Facebook's actually pretty good these days. It's just as instant as email and it's pretty targeted, so I make sure that I offer my Facebook page as a link at the exit of each one of my purchases.

That way, I'm making connections on multiple mediums. So they're now on my email list, but they're also on my fan page.

## GETTING IT ALL DONE

It's a lot of habit.

I have good habits because I used to have a more pressured job than most. I used to run large dealerships. One of them was a \$100 million dollar business with 100 staff. The other one was about \$50 million a year with 70 staff. So, I was used to having people attack me all the time, wanting my time.

I don't really get overwhelmed. I've got systems to deal with it. I use a few tools very well, like [Evernote](#). For my team, we use [Basecamp](#). It's good when the thing can run without you most of the time. The job becomes managing by wandering around rather than being the technician or the doer.

There are a lot of things that I don't do. I'm definitely in charge of marketing and strategy and the premium emails, but my team is really capable now of going in and setting up a draft email for me to go check and then publish. I don't do that with my primary blog, but for most of my other sites, the team is capable of setting that up.

## DEVELOPING YOUR OWN PRODUCT

### Process

People keep asking me for something to the point where I think I should probably create it.

Most often, I develop something for me that helps me with my business. Then I process it to the point where someone else will see it and then they'll pester me for it.

Then I'll say, "Okay, well I'll make this something that somebody else could use."

## Schramko's Products

I have example after example of this. The first one that I did was called the XSP Cheat Sheet. That was my shortcuts on turning an XSitePro website into a really powerful SEO website and then promoting it.

The more recent information product I put out was [TrafficGrab](#). After six-and-a-half years, I had a process for getting traffic to my sites that my team used. I thought that people would be interested in that and I was right. I sold several thousand copies of that.

At the moment, I'm developing a dashboard called [SpeedDash.com](#), because it really helps me be organized. I've used it for myself for a few years. I created one and had it hand-coded. Lately, I've had a more scalable version created and it's working. I've got people beta testing that.

Again, the reason it exists as a product is because everyone who saw it said, "I need that. I want that. Can I have it?"

And that's the surest sign that something's ready.

## STARTING A SERVICE

I started doing SEO for my own clients about five years ago. I realized that it's not scalable, because there's only one of me.

So, I started using a whole bunch of teams. I had good results with one or two of them. I entered into an agreement with one of them to supply me with SEO services at real wholesale prices.

Then I built an affiliate army to go promote that stuff and I was sitting in the middle.

## Developing Further

So I had other people selling it and other people providing it. I got that up to about \$50,000 a month before I decided to bring on my own team. I switched off the contractor and started selling it directly. It's called [SEO Partner](#).

Now resellers buy it – a lot of it – and my own team supplies it.

It's scaling very quickly. It's actually increased 300% in the last 30 days. So, I've really hit the sweet spot of having the ultimate service to people at a very fair rate. The service is really good quality.

I think the success is partially off the back of that first information product, where I taught people my process. A lot of the people who bought that product have decided that it's much easier to have it done for them.

They know the process is good because they've seen what I do. Then, when the results come through within a week, they're blown away. If you do all that right, you don't have to worry about promoting your products.

## Keeping Up with Demand

Right now, the game for me is figuring out how to scale to keep up with demand.

We are right at capacity with our team and we've been adding people each week. It will continue to grow. I imagine it will get quite big.

## Have a *Black Box*

I've really hit some sweet spots with products, where we actually come to the market with something that everybody wants and hardly anyone can supply.

A *black box* is something that you've got that no one else can replicate. It's a defensible position in the marketplace. It's a barrier of entry to others. Once you've got that, then people almost *have to* buy from you. But they love doing it anyway.

## How to Duplicate Success

I've taken some of the resources we have and started a new team, in a separate part of my business, to provide a slightly different service. It's called [Linkjuice](#) and it's using the same process that we've learned with SEO Partner.

So that's the next stage, duplicating your successful business units into the next version of it. Aim at a slightly different market, perhaps. So, that will be the next one to take off. I'm pretty sure that's going to be very popular, because the first test results we've got are literally stunning.

# WHAT TO SELL

## Business Coaching

Coaching is the step after internet marketing.

There are a lot of things in normal business that are just not picked up by your average internet marketer. But I came from the business arena, working for big brands like Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Vodafone, and General Motors Finance GMAC.

### *Coaching Communities*

So I've taken a lot of the things that I've learned about hiring and training, decision-making, and negotiation, and I've created a community called [SilverCircle](#) where I help them grow their business.

The goal of that community is to help them make more profit.

Another community I have is called [FastWebFormula](#). That's internet marketing coaching, so we teach affiliate marketing, blogging, creating your own product, and local business marketing.

## Services

We have our services, like the SEO Partner. We also have websites, logos, and videos that we've created as services.

## Products

Develop a solution for the problems that your market is having.

I have a few that are in development now. There are other ones that are out there. Sometimes they're spin-offs from webinars that we've run. Other times, they're a dedicated product, like TrafficGrab.

### *Which Type of Product?*

It doesn't matter what format. It could be an ebook, a forum, or a podcast – it doesn't matter. Choose the medium that you're most comfortable with.

I like podcasts because I don't mind doing the voice thing.

It's a lot more fussing around to make video podcasts, because then you're talking about lighting and editing. It's easy to make an ebook, but you need more than an ebook.



## ***Multimedia is Ideal***

TrafficGrab, for example, contains a lot of videos – along with mp3s and PDFs.

## ***How to Make a Multimedia Product***

Open a PowerPoint or Keynote and create modules. Then record yourself talking and going through them with Camtasia or ScreenFlow. Load the videos into a membership area.

Make sure that you pull out the mp3 version of it as well because people love to listen to the training videos as podcasts. Let them download the video as well.

Then attach a copy of the slides that people can download and read. Older consumers really like to print out stuff for some reason.

The final result would be really nice product that you could sell, up to \$300-400. That's how most of my products are created now. It allows you to create the sales video and it also allows you to run a webinar promotion with partners if you want to.

## **Membership Tools**

I use [Nanacast](#) – that's where the site lives.

I load the content to [Amazon S3](#) and I use [Wistia](#) for the video player. It gives me a really good multi-player. More than a dozen modules can all be in one convenient player and they're using this quick player for each one in a row. You just embed that player straight into Nanacast.

## ***Nanacast and WordPress***

You don't have to integrate Nanacast with WordPress. You don't even need a WordPress site. If you were just to use Nanacast, that would be enough to load a product, put your PayPal button, and to have affiliates. You don't even need a domain name. You could point them directly to your product page, on Nanacast.

But I tend to set up my own domain name and front-end WordPress site using [Optimize Press](#). After purchase, they get taken to Nanacast and that's where they live.

My two communities are still running through Nanacast, but they integrate through [vBulletin](#). You can create an API that talks to vBulletin. I do that because I want the community aspect. I want the chatting. You can still embed videos inside the community using eZs3 and Wistia.

# PROMOTING THE PRODUCTS OF OTHERS

You start with the list. What problems do they have?

In my case, they've mostly got the same problems I used to have before I found the products that solved them.

So therefore, most of the things that I promote are products that I use, that I'm excited about, and that are easy for me to recommend to others.

## Quality Control

In our Zendesk, we've got a JV proposal tab. That's where we put all the products that people have sent us to review or to promote. I have a person on my team who tests it. They'll log in and check the product. I'll have a look at the product as well.

If it's a software thing, then we'll actually see if we can use it. There was a product released very recently that we got access to and we could not install. It was buggy and it would not install and we were therefore not able to say that we used it or that we liked it. So obviously we just didn't promote it.

If they were to buy it and it didn't work, that would reflect on us and that doesn't build a lifetime customer. We don't ever want to think that somebody would be better off not opening our email.

If people continually get a good experience with our affiliate recommendations, then they're going to trust us and what we recommend in the future.

## Relationships

We can have the greatest relationship in the world, but if your product isn't the right product for my customers, I'm not promoting it. It's that simple.

I will always put the customer before a quick income fix, because my business is not geared around a quick income fix.

## Don't Compromise

There's this horrible compromise in Internet marketing. People will promote someone else's products because they owe them a favor or because they're a buddy. It doesn't matter if they haven't even used the product.

For me, that's cause to hit unsubscribe. Who would continue to follow someone with that sort of ethics?

## **Be a Good Guy**

In order not to have compromise, you have to not be desperate. A lot of people out there are very desperate, looking to stick a product in there for a quick commission. That's probably the wrong approach for a long-term business and I've seen a lot of these Internet marketers come and go in the last seven years.

There are very few that are around that I still respect. They're the good guys. They're the ones that have always been in it for the right reasons.

## **INTERNET MARKETING KARMA**

Mark my words, the actions that you're doing today will effect over how many customers you have access to two or three years from now.

I'll have new customers, plus the same ones I have now for the most part. So my business will continue to grow each year, as it has done every single year for the last six years.

A lot of people will be out of business and then on to the next thing, whatever that turns out to be.

## **The Problem with the Big Gurus**

When you send customers to a product from one of the big gurus, you know they're going to email your customer their next ten products. That customer will get an email for every one of their products until they leave that list.

I think that's really, really, bad for the customer. They don't need all those things and that's not why I would send someone to buy the product. I just think that's the wrong part of the industry.

## **Don't Mess with the A-List**

If you're not in the A-list, you'll never be in there. You will not have your product promoted.

But you don't even want to be in the A-list. They have come afoul of a lot of people in the internet marketplace. They've probably been a little bit greedy at times. Not all of them, but some of them.

I think they've lost touch with the whole purpose of having a business. So therefore, I wouldn't introduce one of my customers to that market. I think that would be a mistake for me to do that.

## **The Bottom Dwellers**

On the opposite side, you've got all of these very cheeky sites that clog up the search results. They're promoting products that are obviously not good for people.

There were a lot of bad products on ClickBank that make wild promises and claims IMHO.

## **Don't Be Greedy**

I'm not greedy to the point where I want somebody to buy something just so that I can make money.

This is what so few people have figured out: if you look after people, they come back because you're the only one that's doing it.

There are not very many good guys in this market. If you happen to be one of them, then you have customers who really, really appreciate it. They send lovely emails. They tell you that they've achieved success, they're helping their family, and they're going about marketing the right way.

Give people good information and good tools.

## **LOOKING FORWARD**

Five years ago around here, they would talk about their property portfolio. I think in the future, they'll be talking about their Internet portfolio.

## **The Future of Internet Marketing**

It's just growing up.

Bigger companies and businesses have figured out that they need to be online, so there will be more commercial stuff happening. There'll be a lot more people moving into the space.

The weak will disappear because they're not going to fit in anymore.

## Only the Strong Survive

You have to go a level more professional and upright like a real business.

No one was paying attention to it five years ago, but now they are. Regulators will come in and start paying more attention to it.

I know in the United States they've started paying attention to those boiler room scams. But certainly taxation law and industry regulators will be cracking down a bit harder on some of the sloppy things that are going on.

It's just going to get a little bit tighter and only the stronger people will survive that next phase, which is a good thing for the industry.

## It's like Snooker

If you focus on getting a proper business and you set it up for the longer haul, you don't have to take cheap shots. That will put you in a good shape for the long term.

Being less opportunistic and a little bit more strategic will save you from some of the silly things that people do.

It's like a game of snooker or pool: it helps to think a few shots ahead.

## ACTIONABLE TAKEAWAYS

### 1. Do your research.

Choose an audience, not a topic. Then research your competitors to see what they're doing and use [SEMRush](#) to find out which keywords they're ranking for.

### 2. Start creating content.

Roll up your sleeves and create content that people can't wait to consume. Encourage them to sign up for your email list by giving them something for free.

### 3. Provide value with each email.

James's golden email rule is that they must be better off for opening and reading the email. If not, he doesn't send it.

### 4. Create products that you need.

Most of the products James sells are resources and software that he created for himself and his team. Then people came to him saying, "I need that. Can I have it?" Your goal is to create a *black box*, something they can only get from you.

5. **Recommend perfect products.**

Like the golden email rule, only promote products that your audience will be better off for buying. Don't be greedy and your audience will keep coming back to you.

# Digital Nomading

## with Cody McKibben

**I**n 2006, Cody McKibben was working full-time at a business school. While looking into MBA programs, he started up a blog and began to learn HTML, CSS, and PHP.



Through his blog, Cody connected with a serial entrepreneur from Silicon Valley named Rajesh Setty. When Setty asked Cody if he knew anybody who could build him a WordPress website, Cody couldn't think of anyone – so he spent the next two days building the site for free.

Setty was so impressed that he started referring more clients Cody's way. By September 2007, McKibben's business had grown to the point where he was able to quit his day-job and become a full-time entrepreneur. That's when he bought a one-way ticket to Bangkok, Thailand.

### Cody McKibben Today

McKibben has come to embody the role of the digital nomad. He has spent the last three years working from his laptop in Thailand and going on frequent adventures to neighboring countries.

In February 2011, McKibben launched the [Digital Nomad Academy](#) – an online program designed to help people create successful, location-independent businesses. His website, [ThrillingHeroics.com](#), challenges people to start living life on their own terms.

## WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

- Advice on Living Abroad
- How to Get out of the Rat Race
- The Perks of Being a Nomad
- Overcoming Travel Challenges
- How Cody Makes Money

# OVERVIEW

My path has been a meandering, winding one.

I think most of them are. With everyone who I've met, that's been consistent: no one had a perfect plan. So, I tend to stray from a "Step by Step" success formula.

You've got to find your own path.

It's going to depend on where you are, what you are, who you know, and what you're interested in. There are a million different variables.

## Cody's Path

If you were to follow my footsteps, you would make a lot of mistakes.

I left the States with a one-way ticket and probably less than two grand of spending money in my bank account. But I had clients. I had a bit of business. I knew that I had to build it up a lot, but I was confident that I could bring in income.

You can be successful if you're willing to put in the time, effort, and the blood, sweat, and tears.

There are a lot of things that I would have done differently and a lot of resources available to us now that I wish I had access to back then.

These days, I have a bunch of students who I'm taking by the hand and helping them build their own small businesses online.

## Your Peers Matter

The number one thing is to build a community of the right people around you.

You might have to fire some of your friends. I know that's a little bit harsh, but if you want to build a business that's successful and you want to live this life, then you've got to be willing to make the sacrifices for it. You don't have to completely excommunicate anyone.

In order to be successful, you really need to hang out with the right crowd of people. Surround yourself with the right crowd of people – both in friendship and in business.

People say that you are the average of your five closest friends.



So take a look at that and who are you spending your time with. The more time you spend with a crowd of fat, lazy people who don't do anything to improve themselves or their lives, the more you become like that.

Vice versa, the more time you spend with a crowd of millionaires, the more you will become like them over time.

## Seek out Communities

Look for communities of motivated, like-minded people. That's probably the most powerful thing.

You can start a mastermind group with some other friends or colleagues of yours that have a similar interest and want to achieve similar goals. Get on the phone once a week and catch up with one another. Hold each other accountable for your goals.

We built the Digital Nomad Academy, which is a place for people who want to build an online business and eventually be location independent. There are a lot of different communities like that.

## Network

Everyone who becomes really successful relies on a circle of friends and colleagues.

I think some people sitting at home and reading blogs are missing out on that. They're reading, but they often times are not connecting with others on a personal level.

A lot of my success is due to the networking I've done over the last five or six years and the people who I have built friendships with. You never know: the person you meet tonight could become your business partner three or four years down the road.

Just building relationships with people is probably the most high-leverage activity that you can do.

## Resources

### *Lifestyle Business Podcast*

For living abroad and traveling, one specific resource I'll point people to is the [Lifestyle Business Podcast](#).

That is my favorite podcast. I used to listen to it every morning on my commute when I was living in Bangkok, whenever I had to jump on the train. It's by my two friends Dan

and Ian, who now run a million dollar business. They started their business in San Diego, but they've got manufacturing operations in China.

Dan lived out in the Philippines for a couple years and they've got an office with a few employees there. Now they're in Bali. They just rent out this big house with a pool and they bring out interns every once and a while.

They're basically doing a very similar thing to me, living in a tropical paradise and building an amazing business at the same time. Those guys have an amazing amount of knowledge. I can't recommend their podcast enough.

### ***The Personal MBA***

One of my favorite books is [\*The Personal MBA\*](#) by Josh Kaufman.

If you haven't gone to business school, but you know you want to start your own business, then I do really recommend *The Personal MBA*. Josh Kaufman spent a long time working for Procter & Gamble and, in his spare time, he basically synthesized the knowledge from hundreds and hundreds of great business books and put it all into a condensed program that he calls The Personal MBA.

I can speak to the quality of both the book and the program. They're really fantastic.

## **THE PROBLEM WITH THE RAT RACE**

I've spent a lot of time thinking about the idea of becoming an entrepreneur and living that lifestyle. In my opinion, it's the best way to take responsibility for yourself, your life, your income, your family, and the conditions in which you live.

### **Changing Employment Options**

I know plenty of people who are employed and they're perfectly happy with that. They've become successful that way, so more power to them. Building businesses is not for everyone and living my lifestyle is not for everyone.

But I do feel that it's becoming really difficult to find a job that you're going to keep for life, like your grandparents did. That job security just doesn't exist so much anymore.

The world we live in is transforming very quickly and everyone is looking out for their own best interests, especially corporations and governments. We, as individuals, need to look out for our own best interests as well.

## The Risks of Being an Employee

Unless you have a backup plan for all the things that can go wrong, I think that working for someone else is probably one of the riskiest things you can do.

Getting a monthly paycheck feels reliable and safe, but – as many people have learned in the last few years – that carpet can be ripped out from under your feet at any moment.

You don't have any say in that decision.

## Businesses Build Assets

With a career, you're providing value to a business and you're building *their* assets. You're a part of that chain.

So why build the bottom line of someone else's company when you could be building your own bottom line instead? To me, building something of your own is a much smarter gamble than building something for someone else.

# THE DIGITAL NOMAD LIFESTYLE

## The Joy of Travel

I think travel has a huge appeal to people, seeing the world, seeing different cultures and societies. That was what attracted me.

I started traveling abroad when I was 17. I saw much of Europe and then basically North America. But I hadn't seen Asia. At that time, Asia was so different and foreign to me. There was a mystique.

Some societies are so vastly different that you can chip away at it and learn a little bit, but there will always be a culture divide. It's really interesting to meet people who grew up in a completely different way.

## Low Cost of Living

Another reason I chose to move abroad while I built my business is because I was bootstrapping. I didn't have funding from anyone. It was my own small business.

I saw Thailand and South East Asia especially as an area where the cost of living is very low and the quality of life you have for that is incredibly high.

So that was also a major factor in deciding to live in Thailand while I built my business. If I were to live this lifestyle out in California, it would cost me at least between three or five thousand dollars per month. Out here, oftentimes I can get like this same level of enjoyment and luxury and travel for between one and two thousand dollars per month.

Tim Ferris talks about the idea of geo-arbitrage in [The 4-Hour Work Week](#). If you've got a business that you can operate online with clients anywhere, then you can bring in your income in a stronger currency (US dollars, Euros, pounds) and stretch it a lot further in a number of places around the world, if you're living somewhere with a very low cost of living.

## Lifestyle

Another major reason for a lot of people is just that they want to have a great lifestyle. Maybe they want to live near the beach. I've got one student who is moving to a small village in France to write his book.

## Travel Plans

I love coming back to the United States. I try to come back once a year, because obviously I miss my family and I miss a lot of my really close friends. That's one of the really difficult parts of this lifestyle.

I'll probably be back maybe in April for a month or so to visit, go to some conferences, and catch the Coachella music festival. But I don't plan on returning home to settle down any time soon.

For now, I'm really enjoying being abroad and experiencing different cultures. I think in the next three months my girlfriend and I will probably be making a move to a new country. We're still trying to pick the next place.

Next year, I would really like to do some slow travels through Central and South America.

## CHALLENGES OF BEING A DIGITAL NOMAD

The lifestyle definitely has its challenges.

## Getting Distracted

I struggle at time even just sitting down and getting the work done. Surrounded by beauty, some days I like going to the beach. We've got a lot of friends who come through to visit, so we'll end up going out, showing people around, and doing the tourist thing. It is hard at times to get work done.

### *Passion Overcomes Distraction*

It comes back to building a business that you enjoy. Do what you love. Find a problem that you enjoy solving and that's the way to avoid the tendency to never want to work.

A lot of people hate their jobs but that's because they've ended up doing something that they don't enjoy. They don't find it interesting.

So if you're going to build your own business, the first step is to really do some self-examination and figure out what you're interested in, good at, and that people also value.

## Impermanence

When you're living a mobile lifestyle, you come to realize how transient life can be. If you're constantly changing location, it can be difficult to maintain your relationships. You've got to put in a little bit of work to stay in touch with family or friends back home.

When you settle down somewhere for a few months, you get into the local swing of things and it's really incredibly easy to make friends with locals and expats. But you'll find that they're not always going to be there. They move on or you move on, so you end up saying a lot of goodbyes.

So it is a bit less rooted than the life that most people are used to. It's a more impermanent, transient lifestyle.

### *Staying Connected*

Over time, you build a global network of friends, so hopefully you see those people again.

That's the beauty of the Internet today. We can easily stay in touch with people on Facebook, Twitter, and email and have friends around the world. It's just different than living the very rooted lifestyle that we've been accustomed to for a long time.

## Logistical Challenges

You have to learn how to stay in a country legally, how to run your business there, and do taxes.

Those are unique things depending on where your business is based and where you want to travel. So, that's another thing that you need to invest time in. It can be a lot of work, but you kind of need to do your own research for your specific circumstances.

That's the other challenge: just abiding by the rules and jumping through the hoops that you need to jump through in order to be where you want to be.

### *Learning the Ropes*

Initially, I had done the preliminary research online.

There's the [CIA World Fact Book](#) website which has basic information on every country in the world. It's a public website, a database of demographics and legal information.

For my particular instance, with Thailand, there was a great online forum. It had a huge amount of expats and locals just talking about the logistics of staying long-term in Thailand. So I found a lot of information there about Visas.

I learned a lot through personal contacts, as well.

## MAKING A LIVING

I got my start in 2006 providing web design and WordPress services. That has been my bread and butter for almost six years. From that first project, my business has just spread by word of mouth.

### Online Marketing

I've grown into marketing territory. I tailor marketing strategies for a few different clients. It's not something that I spend a tremendous amount of time on yet.

I took the knowledge that I got through marketing all kinds small projects and started applying it to help a few major clients. I put together an online marketing strategy, connect them with the right people, and figure out how to build an audience around what they have to offer.

## Running an Online Academy

Since November of last year, we started to develop the Digital Nomad Academy. I launched it in early, early February, as an experiment.

We're really trying to build the academy into the go-to place for people who want to build a business that they can run from anywhere.

A lot of the students are connected with each other. They'll hold meet-ups and help each other. The whole community works together to hold everyone accountable.

### *Teaching*

So I've found myself now in the role of the teacher. I'm on the phone every week with students and different guests. It's a blast and a lot of students have already had success with it, so it's really fun.

### *Recruiting Instructors*

I've been able to rope in a number of friends and colleagues who are running all different kinds of businesses and who are able to have the lifestyle that they want.

The students get direct access, on the phone, every week, to speak to these successful digital nomads.

### *Challenges*

It's a tremendous amount of work, because there are a million different businesses that the students are running. But it all centers around the same stuff, like the logistics of how you operate the company and how to build a website that can reach potential customers globally.

### *Enrollment*

I have just over 100 students inside, but enrollment for new students is currently closed right now. I like to open it up once every few months, so that a new cohort of students can come in simultaneously and get fully integrated into the existing community. We'll probably be re-opening it early 2012. So go check it out and you'll be the first to know when the door opens.

## Goals

The difference between a lifestyle business and a traditional business is that, at the end of the day, the goal is sufficiency. My goal is simply to make enough money to live the lifestyle that I want and do the things that I want.

In most of the businesses I'm involved in, I'm the sole owner and operator.

## **Business Development**

As the years progress, I'm trying to build one business on top of the next. We've got some big projects that we would love to do a few years down the road.

I don't have a lofty goal to make millions and millions of dollars, because I know that that's not necessary. I just need to make a sufficient amount of income to cover my costs, live a great lifestyle, and then reinvest most of it back into the business.

## **Millionaire Lifestyle**

People want to live like millionaires, but if you're creative it doesn't have to cost you millions of dollars.

That's what I've found living abroad: you can have a fantastic experience and feel like a millionaire, but it's surprisingly affordable. I'm living in a place where, if I can bring in a couple thousand bucks a month, I'm sorted. You live like a king.

You don't need millions. If you get there, that's fantastic. But my goal is just to do work that I enjoy, help people out, make a bit of cash, and have fun with it.

## **Spend Deliberately**

Everything boils down to living your life consciously and deliberately – not left to chance. Part of that means that you're spending your money consciously and deliberately.

A lot of people blow money on all kinds of stuff. It's fine to spend tons of money on the things that really make you happy, but stop wasting it on other things just because. Use your resources wisely.

# **PARTING ADVICE**

## **Look Forward**

Even if you have a great thing going on now, nothing lasts forever. In entrepreneurship, you want to stay on the lookout for future opportunities. So always be building multiple business ideas and seeing what works.



## Reinvest

Reinvest in yourself and in your business. That's something that I wish I had done sooner. Don't be a penny pincher.

Early on, you might consider selling your television and dropping your \$130 a month phone plan. Stop going out on weekend benders and spending \$200 on beer and instead think about the smartest, best place that you could put that money.

You could outsource some of the work or buy a resource to build your business. Don't be afraid to reinvest. It's the smartest way you can use your cash.

## Do What You Love

Focus on the things that you really enjoy.

If you're in a position to bring in other people to cover the stuff that you don't enjoy and focus on what you do, that makes everything so much easier.

## Help People

Remember, at the end of the day, you're in business to help people. Focus on the people that you're serving and establishing a connection with your customers. That will make all the difference.

In business and life, it's all about the people. I'm 100% focused on people. I love to go to places because I know there's someone living there who I want to go visit. I love sharing unique experiences with other people.

## ACTIONABLE TAKEAWAYS

1. **Figure out what you love.**

When living abroad, life outside of work is especially alluring. In order to run a business in that environment, you need to enjoy it just as much as you enjoy sitting on the beach.

2. **Secure foundational clients through networking.**

When Cody left for Thailand, he had \$2,000 to his name. But he was confident he could bring in business because he had a small group of recurring clients that he built up through networking.

3. **Learn the rules of living abroad.**

Before you can move to a new country, you need to learn about the logistics of

staying there long-term. Use the [CIA World Fact Book](#) to start learning about the legal and tax guidelines.

4. **Seek the entrepreneurial lifestyle.**

It's nearly impossible to live the nomadic lifestyle without the freedom of having your own business. Find a way to make your business globally accessible.

5. **Live like a millionaire abroad.**

Since the cost of living is so much lower in developing parts of the world like Asia and South America, you can make the same amount of money but live like a king.

# Internet Entrepreneur

with Neil Patel

**W**hen Neil Patel was 16 years old, he was looking for a job on *Monster.com*. He noticed how successful the site had become and decided he wanted in on the action. So Neil founded *AdviceMonkey.com*, a replica of *Monster*.



But the site didn't have any job listings and it didn't have any people looking for jobs. That made Advice Monkey a bust, but it taught him the importance of driving traffic to your website.

Still in high school, Patel started mastering techniques to optimize websites for search engines and he decided to use SEO as his subject for a speech class assignment. One of his fellow students was impressed enough with Patel's knowledge that he connected Neil with a job as an SEO consultant.

## Neil Patel Today

Patel is focused on his company, [KISSmetrics](#) – a tool that helps companies make more money from their websites.

KISSmetrics provides software that tracks a website's most relevant data, like its true conversion rate and the funnels where people are dropping off. Clients include Viacom, Amazon, AOL, and AirBnB.

Patel has another successful startup, [Crazy Egg](#), and a blog on business and marketing, [QuickSprout](#). At 26 years old, Neil is a Top 100 Technorati blogger and Wall Street Journal labeled him as a top influencer on the web.

## WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

- How to Build an Awesome Business
- How His Blogs Make Money
- Creating an Online Brand
- Company Culture and Bringing on a Team
- Landing Big Customers and Negotiating with Companies

## HOW DO YOU CREATE AN AWESOME INTERNET COMPANY?

### Launch as Quickly as Possible

Don't try to plan everything out to the very last detail.

I'm a big believer in just getting it out there: create a minimal viable product or website, launch it, and get feedback. From there, keep iterating and improving.

### Get Customer Feedback

Let's say your website is not doing as well as you want. If you've got a few customers coming in, start surveying them. You can use [SurveyMonkey](#) or [KISSinsights](#) (which is one of my other products).

When your visitors get to the checkout page, you can ask them, "What else could we do to make this offer better? Do you understand what we're offering? What else would you like to see on this page?"

Get feedback – and then adjust from there.

### Invest in Your Success

I think I've already dumped probably \$40,000 bucks into [Quick Sprout Pro](#) – all costs inclusive. I'll probably put in another \$40,000 into the program before I'm done.

It took three months to create the sales letter for Quick Sprout Pro. I didn't write the sales copy. My first one was written by Brian Clark of [CopyBlogger](#) and then this one was written by Michael Williams ([Momentum](#)) and Matt Converse. Both of those guys are great copywriters.

# HOW TO MAKE MONEY FROM BLOGGING (WITHOUT TRYING TO)

I started Quick Sprout to give free advice and to share.

I don't care to make money from it. But, funny enough, the side effect is that I actually make quite a bit of money.

The blog actually produces over a million dollars in income a year.

Here's how: I give away so much free content on my blog that big companies find me and pick me up.

Without my blog, Intuit wouldn't have known I existed. Instead, I have almost a half-a-million dollar contract with them. I have a well over six-figure contract with AirBnB because of my blog.

A lot of my best customers come from my blog.

## Why Big Companies Hire Him

Big companies that have money don't actually care to do the work themselves.

They're reading a blog post, like: this guy seems smart, let's hire him.

This is because, if you have a billion bucks like Intuit does, it doesn't make sense to try to learn and do it themselves. They have so much cash on hand and the time and resources it would take internally to learn is much more than just writing a check.

## THE ROLE OF BLOGS FOR BUSINESSES

There's nothing wrong with being a professional blogger. They're probably making well into five figures every month – with practically no overhead.

But at the end of the day, that's probably still under a million bucks a year from the blog.

**NOTE:** A blog's overhead is just domain name costs, hosting, and a few other things. Worst case scenario, you're looking at \$1000 a month.

## **Company's Earn More Money than Blogs**

At KISSmetrics, we're trying to become \$100 million revenue a year business. Will we hit it? Who knows. But blogging alone isn't enough.

That's because blogging is just trying to write some information that you can monetize off.

To create a \$100M company, you need to solve a huge problem.

## **The Huge Problem that KISSmetrics Solves**

Companies have focused too much attention on increasing their traffic, when they should have focused on increasing their revenue.

It's nice when you log into Google Analytics and see those green arrows saying, "Traffic's up 30%!"

But does that mean your revenue's up 30%?

Chances are, it's not.

KISSmetrics offers a way to track the metrics that really matter: the ones that increase revenue.

## **Big Problems Require Many Solvers**

You need a big team.

KISSmetrics has probably 20 people from sales, marketing, and engineering.

By the end of next year, we'll be over 50. The reason we're growing at a rapid pace is because there's no way to make a 100 million dollar a year revenue company alone.

## **Successful Blogs Increase Company Sales**

Build up your blog traffic. Once it gets large enough, create a drip system by offering them something for free.

We offer a 30 day free trial of KISSmetrics – which gets people into our drip system.

As part of that drip system, we'll explain the whole KISSmetrics process and how it can help their business grow.

They will go through your trial and your salespeople will call them and walk them through customer success managers. If they don't have any issues, they try to close them on a bigger contract. If they do have issues, they forward them to customer success manager, which helps them to get more value out of the product and then the sales rep comes back in after that and tries to close them on a bigger deal.

It's a highly profitable way to market your product or company.

## Every Trial is Valuable

A lot of the people who sign up for our offer won't be relevant and they won't become a customer. Only a small percentage of those – maybe five or ten out of a hundred – are potential customers.

But you're not only doing this to get customers. You're also doing it to learn more about the market for your product by asking them for feedback

## More on the KISSmetrics Blog

The KISSmetrics blog isn't fine-tuned yet, but it gets 100,000's of visitors every month.

A blog isn't cheap. Because we're tracking so much data, we actually spend \$20,000 a month on it.

## One Cool Tip for Your Drip System

Everybody uses [AWeber](#) to try to collect emails. It's nothing new.

But when you collect emails, people have to fill in their name and email.

On the KISSmetrics blog, we recently tested out a checkbox option.

I believe it's a month old or two months old and it's integrated through Facebook. If you're visiting our site and you're logged into Facebook, it doesn't show you a form to fill in your email. It shows your Facebook image, automatically fills in your name and email, and says, "Click here to subscribe."

It makes signing up so much easier because no one even has to type in their name and email. So this feature has actually doubled our email opt-in rate.

# How to Go from being a Blogger to Owning an Internet Company

## ***1. Get and Audience***

It's possible to create a successful software company without having a website. But you'll have to spend as much money on marketing it as you would if you had a blog with a big audience.

Copyblogger, Quick Sprout, SEOmoz... we all had big audiences.

## ***2. Survey Your Audience***

Find out what their problems are.

Ask them, "What else are you looking for?" and they'll tell you, "Hey if you did X, Y, and Z it would be really helpful."

Once you have a fine-tuned list of feedback, you can also ask them, "How much would you be willing to pay a consultant's fee?"

## ***3. Create a Product that Solves a Problem for Your Audience***

If it works, then you can slowly start transitioning from being a blog to a software company.

But you don't want to do it too quickly. First, fine-tune all your metrics – from your funnels to your drip system to your upsells, whatever it may be. You have to really get to understand your visitors first and make your whole solution a well-oiled machine.

# BRANDING

## **The Power of Branding**

If you want to make \$100,000 a year, you don't need to focus on branding. You only need to focus on branding if you want to make millions of dollars.

Think about the most successful online travel companies, like Expedia, Priceline, and Kayak. You don't Google them. Their brand is so strong that you just go to the site.

For KISSmetrics, our number one traffic source is a Google search with a keyword and our company name.



# How to Build a Strong Brand

## *Give Something Away*

The most important thing to branding is offering something that's unique for free, whether it's content or a good product. Whatever it may be, just get something out there that people can try.

Once they see how generous you've been, they're going to fall in love with the company.

## *Treat Your Customers Right*

At Crazy Egg, our overall goal is to provide the best customer experience. If somebody complains, we refund their money.

We do this even if the customer is wrong, because we don't want anybody to have anything bad to say about the way we do business.

## *Give Them More than They Expect*

Let's say you have an informational product. If somebody signs up for the product and they benefit from it, they'll be happy.

But if you throw in four or five more bonuses, that you never told them about before, they're going to be stoked! As you deliver the bonuses throughout the next 30 or 60 days, your customer will fall more in love with your brand. They'll be saying, "Wow. You did all of this?"

## *Personally Care*

I care more about my customers than I care about myself.

I personally will lose my money, to keep my customers safe. As foolish as that may sound, that's how much I care about my customers.

If you care that much, they're always going to be loyal and come back.

I think the main thing that you have to focus on is just treat the customer right.

## Brand Logos and Colors

The way you treat your customers is much more important than your company colors and stuff like that.

Still, make sure your logo's unique, your company name is easy to remember, and stuff like that.

Once you have a good customer base, a loyal audience, and you've been treating them right, then you can start spending weeks on your gradients, color scheme, and logo.

## HOW TO LAND BIG TIME CLIENTS

### Neil's First Big Contract

It was a cold call. I was in high school and my site was ranking really high for valuable SEO keywords. So I cold-called a company that was paying high for PPC leads.

#### *Getting the Lead*

I used Overture Website Analytics to find the lead. It would show you who's bidding on paid ads, pay-per-click, and how much they are paying per click. The newer version of that is [Google Traffic Estimator](#).

#### *The Cold Call*

I just told them, "Based off of these keywords and your position, I can see you're spending \$15 grand a month. As you know, organic non-paid, traffic usually converts better." So, I would just say, "Look, here's how many free clicks I'm getting a day and here's how many leads."

I offered to let them "rent" my website for \$5 grand a month. They would pay a lease to have the all the leads go to them instead of me.

#### *Making the Sale*

My pitch was based purely on logic, so the guy I was talking to forwarded me over to the CEO.

The CEO asked me, "Who the hell are you? Are you a kid?"

I said, "Yeah, I'm 16. So what?"

After I made my pitch, the CEO said, "Could you do this type of stuff for our website? We'll pay you. How much do you want?" And I just threw out a random number like \$15 grand a month. No problem. He signed a contract with me within 48 hours and I got the deal.

## ***Using Simple Logic to Make Sales***

At that point, I realized I'm really good at dealing with businesses and convincing them to pay me.

Companies are logical. So all you have to say is, "Hey, I'll do x, y, and z for you and it will save you x dollars and it will make you x more. Here's how much money I want for it." It's simple logic.

When you're selling to consumers, there's a lot more emotion involved and I suck at that. I stick to selling to companies because that's what I'm good at. So figure out what you're good at and then focus your sales and time and energy on that.

## **Making Money as a Consultant**

My expertise is getting more traffic and leads from search engines, so that's all I would pitch. I would offer my services as an SEO consultant.

### ***The Role of the Consultant***

I would provide the exact changes they should make to their site, but their people would have to update it. As a consultant, you don't have to do too much of the labor work. You have to do a lot more strategy.

As a consultant, you're supposed to do the hard stuff for them and give them advice on the easy stuff. Because when you're charging them per hour on a flat fee or retainer, you're making enough money that it would be unethical to bill them for the easy stuff. It would be cheaper for them to do it in-house, so you let them know it. That way, they know that you're honest and not a snake oil salesman.

### ***Make Money Monthly***

A flat-fee retainer means that you're charging that much every month. My mom was always a business person. She taught me that the best money is always money that's recurring.

When I started off, I was charging as little as a few hundred bucks a month. In my first year, I moved from a few thousand, to trying to charge \$10,000+ a month. It took me a few years before I really got good at selling and then I started doing minimum retainers of \$20,000 a month, on a year contract (\$240,000/year).

Eventually, I worked my way up to a \$100,000 a month retainer, or \$1.2M a year. Labor was usually no more than \$10 grand a month and everything else was usually no more than \$5 grand a month. So I was looking at \$15 grand in cost, \$85 grand in pocket.

### ***Justifying a Big Monthly Fee***

Credibility is key. I would never have been able to get to \$100,000 a month if I didn't have a strong brand.

People may say, "Wow, this guy is screwing people over, making \$85 grand in profit."

But you have to understand that if I'm helping a company earn an extra \$500 grand a month, it doesn't really matter. They would have never had that money without me anyways.

## **How Your Blog can Attract Big Companies**

Blogging is the easiest way to get big companies.

I didn't have to pitch to Airbnb. They *wanted* to work with me because of the brand I had built. Thanks to Quick Sprout, people know me as a marketing expert.

### ***Provide Advanced Material***

If all you have to offer are the basics, you're going to teach them some stuff but they're not going to hire you.

If you educate them on advanced topics and they're like, "Wait, I'm still confused but I know this is really good stuff." They'll usually just say, "Hey, can I hire you to do this stuff?"

When you provide advanced material for free, you're building your brand as an expert. That's how you get big companies to call you up and pay you.

### ***Emphasize Niches with High ROI***

Right now, I would say only one fourth of my Quick Sprout content is about marketing. But marketing content has a more direct ROI (return on investment) than the business-related content.

So my goal for Quick Sprout in the next 90 days is to blog more on marketing related content. I still will do the business content, but I'll try to do more like 50/50.

## **BRINGING ON A TEAM**

You can't expect your company to just run on autopilot. You constantly have to be making improvements.

I'm a big believer in hiring a bigger staff who are always working to innovate and improve your company. If you don't, you're going to be wiped out. It's just a question of when.

## **When to Make Your First Hire**

You don't want to spread yourself too thin and grow too quickly. Hire when it's really needed.

Let's say it's just you and a co-founder. You first figure out where you guys are wasting most of your time. Then you can calculate roughly how much more profit you could make by hiring somebody to do that for you (while you go focus on aspects of the business with higher ROI).

Keep on doing until you get to four or five people. Once you have about five people, then you start thinking, "Who do I need to hire to really take this business to the next level?" That's when you start thinking about higher end people, like a VP of sales or product manager or whatever it may be.

### ***Think Before You Hire***

Make sure you know what the job is that you need. For instance, if you want to increase your sales, you can't just go in and say, "I'm going to go out and hire 10 sales people."

Instead, pick up the phone yourself and try selling your own product or service. Figure out the issues that you're experiencing. Then when you're hiring sales people, you can actually question them, "What would you do in these scenarios?"

You can't just hire somebody and expect them to solve all of your problems. You've got to actually work with them to get them up to speed.

## **A Good Team Member is...**

Someone who's smarter than you. It's as simple as that. When you're building a team, hire people who have specific skill sets and they actually are the best in that area. If you're hiring somebody for a specific subject, they better know that subject better than you.

They should also be team players.

### ***How to Find People who are Smarter than You***

I've found that most job recruiters suck.

Instead, reach out to your network. Put up a blog post about the position, tweet it, and put it on Facebook.

The best way I've found people has actually been through asking other entrepreneurs who they recommend. If they're a successful entrepreneur and they recommend someone, chances are they're going to do better than the Average Joe on the street. They may also give you advice on how to negotiate with them or if there are any pitfalls.

You can also just search on Craigslist and job boards.

## **Motivating Team Members**

### ***Pay Well***

I'm a big believer in paying high wages.

When you pay a team member well, they stay with you forever and they'll work hard for you.

### ***Create the Right Environment***

It's all about just making sure they're happy with their job. I literally ask certain people, "Hey, how's it going? Are you happy?" And sometimes they're like, "No, this week was really stressful." "How can I help solve it?" I actually ask people, "What can I do to help you like your job even more?"

We don't micromanage people, so all that helps them enjoy working at the company. Of course, if they're not producing results, that's when we start getting in there and micromanaging things, figuring out what's wrong. If they're not a right fit, we fire them.

### ***Offer Stock***

When you're first starting out, you can't pay as much as a Google or Facebook can. But you can offer stock options.

Not every employee has to get stock options. Sometimes I'll say, "If you work well within the company, I'll give you stock options."

If somebody is clearly very talented from day one, you can say, "I'll give you one percent of the company right now."

It's often a good idea to vest the stock offer. That way, if it doesn't work out, they don't get stock options. So, if you give them one percent over four years, from month zero to month 12 they get nothing, but at the end of month 12, they get .25%. Then, after that, every month they get 1/12 of .25 percent. So, each year, they're getting .25 percent more. If you offered them a full one percent, then they would have to stay with you for four years to get the full one percent.

## Hiring People without Money

If you don't have any cash, sometimes you can give them a bigger share of the company, like 5%, 10% or even 20%.

You can also barter services. If somebody does a lot of pre-design work for me, in exchange I'll give them free marketing advice. That's a great way to get what you need done without spending money.

### *How to Pay Co-Founders*

If you're a co-founder, that doesn't mean that you always have to get 50% right away. You can say, "You get your 50% over a four year period."

I've been with KISSmetrics for almost four years now, so I think now that I own all of my shares. Even though it's my company and I cofounded it, all my shares had to vest over time.

## COMPANY CULTURE

Culture is the center stone of your company (other than solving a big problem). Bad culture can cause a company to go right down the drain.

No one wants to work at a place they think is boring, but with an awesome culture you can actually attract good employees.

We have had existing team members interview potential hires to make sure that they fit within our company culture. I've even declined hiring a great sales rep (who probably would have made us a ton of money) simply because they didn't fit into our company culture.

## KISSmetrics Culture

Everyone hustles really hard and they live, breathe, and sleep KISSmetrics. They love it and they see it as a really important aspect of their life.

It's chill. We all have fun together. We mess around, but at the same time, we put the work first.

Nobody manages each other, so it's really relaxed in that aspect. But that's only possible because everyone holds themselves accountable for their own work. If you don't produce, we expect you to say to yourself, "I didn't produce. Here's why and here's what I'm going to change to be better."

We just did employee evaluations, but it's not a one-way street. It doesn't matter that I'm a co-founder. People have the right to give me feedback and criticize me and help me improve. I don't see that as being negative, I see that as being positive. Let me know how I can be better as the manager.

## How to Foster Company Culture

Hire the right people from day one. Don't hire people who aren't with it.

Make sure you actually get along with your hires. You're not just looking for people who you could see working with for a year or two. Find people who you want to work with for five or ten years. It's like getting into a marriage. You better know people before you start hiring them.

Make sure you bond after work. Have drinks with people, go to happy hour. Or take them out to lunches every once in awhile. Go snowboarding with some colleagues. Stuff like that really helps build that connection with those people and that culture.

## INVESTING IN OTHER COMPANIES

I'm more of an advisor than an investor. But I have invested in something like 20 Internet companies.

### How Neil Invests

There are a lot of problems out there.

Sometimes there's an entrepreneur who's solving a problem and getting a lot of traction, but with an extra million dollars they could be 10 or 20 times larger. In that case, it's worth it to go in there, invest, and use our skill set to make them more money.



## It's About the Money

Investing is about making money off of people and helping them make money at the same time.

I don't invest because I'm passionate about an idea or a company. I invest in companies because I want to make money.

## Helping Out

A lot of people helped me when I started out and I wasn't making a lot of money. They didn't ask for anything in exchange. So I do like helping people too.

# LOOKING FORWARD

## The Day of Neil's First Big Sale

I was just ecstatic. I was at a speech class and I gave this speech on how search engines work.

Some guy in there was a sales rep at a company and he came up to me afterwards, saying, "Hey, you should talk to my boss. I know they want to hire some SEO guy."

When I made the sale, they were just like, "Oh, who do we make out the check to?" and I made up a company name. I didn't even know you had to be incorporated. I was like, "Yeah, write me a check to *this* company."

I thought that I was rolling in the dough. For a kid, all my friends were making like \$7 bucks an hour – and I was making \$3,500 bucks a month.

## What's Changed in the Last 10 Years

Everything's changed. SEO is a different game. It's harder to get rankings. There's now social media – the Twitters and the Facebooks of the world.

Brands are really important. You can't do really stupid things and not get in trouble for it as easily.

There are a lot more venture capitalists giving money to people who don't even have a product, they just have ideas.

## ***Leveraging Platforms***

The game's changed. You can build businesses off of other businesses. You can build a whole business around Microsoft or Facebook or Twitter or whatever it may be. HootSuite is supposedly on track for ten million bucks and their business is totally based off of another business.

You need to leverage other platforms. So, we're trying to integrate within [Salesforce](#), because we know it has a lot of users. [MailChimp](#) and a lot of other providers.

If you can integrate with enough of them, not only does it make your product more sticky, but customers are less likely to cancel your product because they're so deeply integrated into their daily operations. They're like, "Well, if we use Salesforce and all of these, we should just use KISSmetrics as well. If we cancel our KISSmetrics, we won't get this data anymore." So they continue to pay you.

## **Future of the Internet**

Mobile has really been kicking butt.

I think it's going to be more tablet and mobile based in the next few years. We're going to start seeing a lot less laptops and computers and more and more mobile phones for everything.

Want to buy something? Cool. Click a button and it's charged to your mobile phone.

The Internet is going to start interacting with more offline companies. You don't have to wait in line at restaurants. If you want a burrito, you can send a text message and they'll deliver it – all done through the phone.

## **THE LAST WORD**

It's all about the hustle. Move as quickly as possible and don't let anything stand in your way.

If you mess up and you fall down, learn from your mistakes and keep on pushing forward.

## **ACTIONABLE TAKEAWAYS**

### **1. Love your customers.**

Neil spends his personal money to make sure his customers are happy.

2. **Help customers determine your brand.**

Your brand is more about what your customers and people think of you than your logo and colors. Once you have a solid customer base, work on fine-tuning your logo and web design.

3. **Blog to get consulting gigs and big contracts.**

Write and give away your best, most complicated advice so companies think, “Man, this is too confusing. Let’s just hire them.”

4. **Vest equity to recruit talent.**

When you’re first starting out and want to recruit talented people, offer stock options to your all-star employees. But vest those options over a four-year period. So each month they earn a little bit more percentage ownership in the company.

5. **Build a fun company culture.**

Only hire people who fit with the other people in your company. Work hard together and have fun together. It helps keep everyone accountable to everyone else.

# Conclusion

## THE LAST WORD

Each of the 20 web masters in this book has a unique message. For each of their 20 areas of expertise, the path for success looks different. But in a way, they all come back to the same thing: finding success online is about providing value to people online.

Now that you know the details – what steps to take, what strategies to implement – you have no excuses. It's up to you to put in the hard work and provide massive value online.

You've read their success stories. Now write your own.

# About the Authors

## NICHOLAS TART

### Interviewer & Project Manager

Nicholas Tart is the founder of three companies, the author of three books, and the creator of an award-winning entrepreneurship program. His passion is teaching young people how to become successful entrepreneurs.

Nicholas is pursuing his life's mission at [14clicks.com](http://14clicks.com). He creates WordPress websites as [Monument Marketing](#).



## NICK SCHEIDIES

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Nick is an American writer, musician, and entrepreneur.

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# About Income Diary

## MICHAEL DUNLOP

### Founder

Michael Dunlop was already a successful online entrepreneur when he started Income Diary back in 2009. The website is dedicated to inspiring, educating, and helping entrepreneurs make more money online.

Today, [Income Diary](#) gets over 100,000 unique visitors each month and helps Michael earn a healthy six-figure income.

