'Stuff' I've Learned About How to Create A Six-Figure Online Business…

…That I Wish Someone Had Told Me When I First Started Out!

By Tony Shepherd
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Tony Shepherd here…

Here's some stuff that I wish someone had shared with me when I first started to build a online business…

It's not so much how to set up a sales funnel or how to build a list because I've covered that in my other products, and you probably know much of that already anyway

It's more like how to think in the correct way to be a successful marketer, how to remove obstacles and dump the baggage that's been holding you back so far, even if you didn't know you even *had* baggage

This is what I'd tell my kids if they were starting out with their first online business, although I'd probably use less fruity language :)

Yorkshire, UK

There's only ONE success - and that's your own.

When I realized that I could earn money online, I started setting myself income targets…

I started with $1,000 a month, then went up to $3,000 months, then $5,000 then $10,000 as I broke through each barrier

Getting past $3k a month was actually the hardest one for me and took quite a while - seems I hit a plateau.

The first time I hit a $10k month I stopped worrying about barriers or even thinking about earning more (although it happened anyway)

I was full-time online and had a millionaire lifestyle even though I wasn't anywhere near.

How so?

Well I could spend time with my family, working on projects that interested me, try out other business models, dig the garden, drink the wine and the whole hippy marketer thing that you'll have read about if you read my blog.

But my key moment came some years back when I first hit the relatively low $6k a month level. *I breathed out long and hard, slowed down and started to enjoy life thanks to the freedom accorded by my internet marketing business*

That 6k represented MY level of success - and weirdly, when I relaxed and worked less, I found that I made significantly more money because I could think, focus, and concentrate on the stuff that makes the buck.

I've since made considerably more but THAT was the point where the dream became lucid - where I took control and started to ENJOY my life.

I know marketers who really buzz by increasing their income every month and work hard (60 hours a week) but play hard too, and enjoy every second of it.

But do you stop when you're earning $50,000 a month?

Or do you want $120,000 a month?

You might think more money is better. That's cool.

You might, like me, think that more time is cool. That too is fine.

You might think you can decide this once you're earning enough money, but it's far easier if you know what you're working towards from the outset.

I'm not talking about goal-setting or business forecasts or any of that. I'm simply talking about sitting down, alone and somewhere quiet for an hour and giving some serious thought to what you want from your life.

Yes LIFE not business…

Because *your business is a means to an end* - **it's not a <u>reason</u> to live in itself**, not in my opinion anyway.

Work to live, not live to work…as they say.

> **<u>What I learned</u>: You need to know what sort of lifestyle you want to lead before you can seriously start work on achieving it.**
>
> **It can be changeable of course, but until you know what you want, you won't know how to go for it, or when to stop and enjoy the fruits of your labor.**

Most successful people I've worked with have what my gran would have called 'character'

I see the same thing with the successful clients I've coached.

It's tricky to define character but for me it shows up as self-reliance, the ability to take responsibility, not blaming other people for their situation (biggie that one) and having confidence in your own belief.

Think about the hero in books and movies.

The upstanding, confident, moral and self-reliant hero saves the day.

But they're missing something…

As well as all the above traits, the successful people that I know personally and that I've worked with all have two other characteristics that I would say are vital to their success:

Humor and a slightly maverick spirit.

They often see the funny side of things going wrong.

They also have the ability to give you a cheeky sideways grin and say *'Oh bugger it – let's try it and see what happens :)'*

They seem to know what things to worry about and what's not important…

…and it's often exactly the opposite to what most people would think.

Possibly the most interesting thing about success traits is that they never seem to come as a complete package when you're born.

<u>There's usually something missing.</u>

I've seen people work to actively build the one or two traits that were missing to make the whole 'success' package and go on to be really successful in their niche. Weirdly though it's usually something that they work out for themselves.

If there's a bit of the puzzle missing they often develop it – almost by saying *'what attribute would make this situation work?'*

If *humor* would get them past a certain hurdle then they'll add that to their arsenal – if *confidence* would, then they'll work to develop that.

It's fascinating to watch when you're working with a client like this…

> <u>**What I learned**</u>**: Work hard to acquire any character traits that you need for success but are missing from your personality.**
>
> **If it's self-confidence you lack, work on acquiring that. If it's perseverance, work on acquiring that.**
>
> **You need to see yourself as part of your business. If your business needs traffic you work to get it, right?**
>
> **So, if YOU need self-confidence work to get THAT too…**

…and even more fascinating to try to put it into action for yourself.

The first rule of internet marketing is that there ARE NO RULES!

It's easy to imagine when you're reading through forum posts and contributing to them yourself that you're in a community that has rules and regulations and that certain vague 'authority figures' might frown on you if you do something they don't like.

If you're a newcomer to online marketing you might even have a sense that you could get 'banned' from Internet Marketing for not following the somewhat unwritten rules and codes that seem to float about in our business.

Yeah well you couldn't be any more wrong if you had a degree in wrongness from the University of Southern Wrongville.

There is no internet marketing police, save for self-appointed ones with no power, and you really have to question *anyone* who wants that role anyway!

The ONLY rule you need to follow is to *do things your own way and don't get sucked into what you're 'supposed' to do*.

In internet marketing the most successful people are *rule breakers, individuals, free thinkers and chancers.*

The most successful people sometimes rub others up the wrong way and basically make a bloody nuisance of themselves because they follow their own path.

It's not that they don't care what other people think, it's that they realize that doing things their *own way* is much more important.

That's exactly why they're successful - NOT because they share certain 'success traits' as we're told from day one in internet marketing…

…in fact **the only real trait they share is success**.

If you look carefully you'll successful internet marketers actually have more DIFFERENCES that similarities.

They're pretty unique thinkers, have different styles and ways of communicating with their followers…BUT:

Some have suits, some have shorts.

Some work hard, others find shortcuts.

Some are young, others not so young.

Some are great writers, others great speakers.

Some are techies others not so.

There are a LOT of differences.

The reason (in my humble opinion) that most successful internet marketers end up that way is because they're unique, NOT because they share characteristics like the following ones that are often churned out as truth:

'All successful people set goals' *(no they don't)*

'All successful people are creative' *(nope)*

'All successful people live in the moment while planning for the future' *(pleeeease)*

'All successful people are world class problem solvers' *(Yeah right - I once watched a multi millionaire struggle to find his way out of a lift)*

This is just my opinion, and I'm fully prepared to get shouted at because of it…

But I don't think you can 'bottle' success.

I think these 'success habits' have been artificially manufactured so that people can sell you products about goal setting, or motivational strategies.

Here's my take on why some people are successful and some people just aren't:

Some people just aren't up to it mentally. If you've ever seen X factor or 'Britain's got talent' you'll realize that a significant number of people who want to become successful have <u>very real mental issues</u>.

And likewise **some people just don't have the required grasp of reality** to become successful internet marketers.

I've spoken to people at IM seminars who are just bloody scary. Trying to enjoy a beer while some space invader stares into your eyes from a distance of three inches asking for a JV and showing you iPhone pictures of the 'hamster hotel' he built for his pets is not my idea of a good night.

Nope - it's not following the rules that brings success in my opinion.

If I want to paint my arse green and red and make a Camtasia video of it cashing a Clickbank check as proof of my earnings then I'll do it, regardless of what anyone else in IM thinks or says.

Probably won't make much money mind you but it WILL probably get quite a bit of YouTube views.

Not that my mother would like though.

Do it your OWN way and don't look up to see what other people think.

I made over a hundred grand launching a continuity site with delivery system based on using follow-up messages in my autoresponder rather than creating a 'full featured' membership area that would have set me back weeks if not months.

Sure, I introduced a drip-fed membership area after about a year, and it was a hell of a lot easier to fund with $10,000 a month in continuity I was earning from it by that point.

But if I'd had to work on a member's area there's a real chance I might NEVER have gotten it off the ground.

Stick with your own gut feeling.

And that's the point…

The Internet, despite many attempts to govern, regulate and even censor content is still (just about) the final frontier in terms of freedom today.

If you want to try something new in your business chances are you'll be told it either won't work or that it will piss people off.

So what?

It costs very little to fail on the net, but the rewards for success are huge so WHY NOT try things out for a while until you find what you like?

Go try stuff – silly stuff, stuff you've always wanted to try – try making money in the wildest most preposterous ways imaginable.

Follow your dreams

Follow your passions

Just TRY STUFF

And when some self-appointed referee quietly PM's you and tells you that you're going about things in the wrong way and you won't make much in terms of friends or money, think deeply about his advice, search your soul for the answer…..

Then tell him to bugger off and go do it your way.

> **<u>What I learned</u>: Dump any perception you may have of there being any form of rule book when it comes to internet marketing and start trusting your own instincts.**

Don't give yourself a hard time because there are plenty of people out there who will do it for you

Not that I'm obsessed with being in my 40's of course – no mid-life crisis here, or at least not yet.

The good thing about getting a bit older is that you're a lot easier on yourself as you get older.

I always think there are a lot of people out there who are all too eager to give you a hard time so why do it to yourself too?

I'm rather lenient with myself – *more like a friendly, encouraging schoolteacher than a drill instructor.*

I sometimes buy myself beer too - I'm *that* nice to myself.

But it took me a while to work the following out, and even longer to apply it to my business:

From birth we're getting certain messages from all sorts of places, and by the Gods they don't half stick with us through the rest of our lives.

I once remember reading something by someone that resonated with me…

He said that *you don't realize how much 'baggage' you carry round with you until someone lifts it off you.*

I went for an Indian head massage a bit back.

The clinic was on a busy road, and I'd parked my car just round the corner on a side street – maybe 50 yards away.

After the massage I came out into the sunlight and the weirdest thing happened.

I burst out laughing – SERIOUSLY cracked up, tears rolling down my face almost wetting myself hysterical laughter.

I could hardly get to my car and as (bad) luck would have it there was a huge line of cars all waiting for the lights to change, ALL staring at me.

I must have looked insane.

When I finally got home I phoned the clinic and they told me it was a common response to massage, reflexology etc.

Some people laugh, cry or even file for divorce.

It's due to release of stress I'm told.

It was a wonderful feeling

This 'baggage' or whatever you want to call it can affect every aspect of your life, but in terms of internet marketing it can cause serious obstacles and limit your thinking, and **I seriously believe it is why some creative, intelligent**

people fail online when it seems to everyone that they should be wildly successful.

I get emails from people who want hand holding every step of the way and their most frequent question is 'is this right?' or they tell me they didn't ever launch that website they were telling me about because they were scared of 'getting it wrong'.

But what if it DOES go wrong now and again?

Let's put this into perspective – **if a bomb disposal expert 'gets it wrong' then he's in deep poop.**

Whereas if you don't quite get the font on your new website correct – *you get a second, third, ninth chance.*

Put it into perspective…

It takes a while to trust yourself and not listen to the people who decide they want to give you a hard time.

A few years back I created a plugin that basically 'cookie-stuffed'.

If anyone visited a page with the plugin on it laid cookies with various affiliate links, and if the visitor then bought a product that was anything to do with the stuffed cookies, the site owner got the sale.

I launched this plugin (it was free) on the Warrior Forum.

Some bloke obviously had a bug up his ass about cookie stuffing and commented on the thread saying something like *'Don't let me catch you offering this software again'*

He was quite vicious and pretty threatening.

I still have no idea who he is but I presume he's *still* a knob.

The whole project went well (regardless on your view of cookie stuffing) and I placed several thousand new subscribers onto my list and made several thousand dollars in upsell profits and commissions.

But you know what I remember most about that small but successful launch?

Yep – Mr. Knobby.

Despite ourselves we can't help but to listen to other people's opinions when it's about us or our products.

And some people are deeply unhappy or nasty for whatever reason and given half a chance they'll try to get their pound of flesh from you.

One of the ways I got into online marketing was selling CD's full of ebooks that I'd picked up resell and PLR rights to.

I bought some in bulk and didn't check all the licenses.

It sold for about $7

Well one bloke must have gone through every single license and sure enough he found one that I shouldn't have been reselling. It didn't come with reseller rights.

Well he contacted me and I checked and he was right.

I apologized and offered to refund him and told him I'd be taking the offending ebook out of the package.

That wasn't what he wanted.

He wanted to make me suffer.

He told me he wouldn't accept the refund, and that he felt I should be made an example of and would be taking me to court (he was from the UK like me so this was a possibility).

I apologized again and told him it was a mistake and was there any way I could make amends?

I was new to internet marketing and I'll admit I was a little scared.

He said no - it HAD to be court because I needed teaching a lesson and I would probably lose my house and a great deal of money.

He was just a nasty, horrible person.

We swapped a handful of emails and every time I offered to try to make things right he started on the scaremongering.

He quoted sections of legal documents, various acts, laws and penalties.

It was horrible.

One night I came home after being at the pub with some mates. The house was still and my wife (then girlfriend) was sleeping peacefully.

I suddenly got really angry with this bloke for threatening my little family (even though I didn't have kids yet) and emailed him with a one-liner.

*"See you in court dickhead- now f*ck off!"*

I never heard from him again. Should have done it WEEKS before.

Now I DO have children I'm absolutely ruthless with anyone who threatens our little bubble just because they feel they have the right to.

So don't give yourself a hard time - **you** need to look after **you** because there are plenty of people out there who WILL get bugged with you when you start to have some success…and they don't.

Don't let anyone tell you what you *should* do

You *don't* have to 'learn the ropes' or serve any sort of apprenticeship. No one can tell you when you're qualified except YOU.

You ARE allowed to do what you want and feel happy about it

There's nothing to stop someone who's only been involved with online marketing for a month having some software created and selling it.

(You don't need a reputation, proof of earnings or any of that fluff if you choose something like software to sell)

You don't have to edge into internet marketing nervously, looking around and doffing your cap to anyone who seems to have more experience.

You *can* shimmy in wearing disco trousers and a flashing hat and **you don't have to ask permission from anybody to get started.**

You'll get up some people's noses because they'll be afraid or jealous but that's THEIR problem - you're doing nothing wrong except having some confidence and that doesn't hurt anyone.

Be nice to your subscribers and other marketers and you'll be fine.

There will be some who don't like you - there bloody are with me LOL.

But give yourself a big pat on the back for coming this far, forget about anyone who gives you a hard time and move on.

These people aren't going to pay your mortgage or rent with their opinions.

They're not going to feed your family with their snide comments.

You'll also find that almost ALL the people who give you a hard time are broke, bitter and haven't found any kind of success or happiness.

Let them go or they'll drain you.

I still get nasty emails.

But I use the delete button. Both mentally and physically :)

> **What I learned:** If anyone decides to give you a hard time, dump them HARD and FAST. There's nothing to be gained by arguing, reasoning or even responding to these people.
>
> **Leave them to their lives and move on**

Embrace your inner moron

I've tried complex and complicated business models and systems.

They just confuse the Hell out of me.

I learned this lesson quite a few years back when I had a passionate 6 month 'fling' in which I was obsessed with buying turnkey sites and trying to monetize them.

That was probably the hardest work I've ever done in my internet marketing career.

If you're not sure what a turnkey site is (and I'm not too sure still) it's a ready made website – a business in a box – that you just need to promote to make money with.

Some are good, some are worse than awful.

Guess which ones I chose?

If you've started off with turnkey sites and have made a profit with them then I'm now bowing and taking off my hat to you because you're a better marketer than I am.

I even invested in some of the better ones and couldn't make anywhere near the kind of profit that made it worth my time.

More likely if you've started off with turnkey sites is that you've had a few weeks of frustration, are now in debt and at some point you've thrown your computer across the room and embedded it a couple of inches into the wall.

I speak from experience.

But it's not turnkey sites that I have a problem with - the problem is that they weren't right for me because I can't 'do' complicated.

I say too often that something is 'one of my greatest internet marketing discoveries' but possibly in the *genuine* top three is the one I'm about to share with you – **I'm not sure that I'm very intelligent.**

Oh I've been to University and won a few bottles of Vodka in pub quizzes but when it comes to internet marketing I find it's really easy for me to lose money unless I keep a tight rein on myself.

REALLY easy - especially if I get carried away with something.

Which is now why my whole business is based around ONE MAIN RULE:

KEEP IT SIMPLE!

If I struggle to understand a concept, offer or sales pitch, so will my customers!

The very first week I worked this out I made more money than I'd earned in the WHOLE of the previous YEAR.

Fair enough I hadn't made much the previous year but I'm not joking – we're talking blinding flash of light, rapturous music and me floating six inches off the floor in stunning realization that I was never going to work for anyone else again.

(Incidentally it involved a printed course, a national newspaper ad, a couple of very surprised marketers, a comb-binding machine and 48 hours without sleep fulfilling orders)

One of the turnkey sites I built had dozens of pages, dozens of product links and pictures and all the complicated bells and whistles you could think of.

The offer was complicated.

The delivery was complicated.

And I'm still not 100% sure of what the bloody product was!

It WAS far **too** complicated.

It actually makes my butt clench with anxiety thinking about the damn thing even now, not to mention the money I lost on buying the thing AND advertising.

It took me longer to upload than it did to grow facial hair when I was 12, and once it *was* up and running it brought me nothing but….. actually just *nothing.*

The guy who sold the sites made a lot of money though.

Which is why today I'm master of keeping it simple.

Why over-complicate things when they don't need to be?

So I kept my offer simple - the reason for my big success was that *I told my customers what I was selling, what was in it for them, explained why I was making this offer and explained what support and help they'd get from me.*

I made ten grand in 3-4 months by simplifying the whole thing and KEEPING it simple.

(As I said, it was a short, printed and mailed course sold by newspaper advertising if you're wondering).

Then I found myself apologizing because some silly sod on a marketing forum thought it was too simple when I explained my selling method!!!

I'd earned 10k and was apologizing because someone else thought it was too simple. Aaaaaarghhh! I must have been crazy to even respond!!!

This is why I mentioned earlier it's vital NOT to listen to anyone who isn't qualified to comment on what you're doing.

Honestly what do people want?

If somebody offered you a diamond, and you could either receive it in a padded paper envelope one wet afternoon in the pub…

…**or** you had to follow clues halfway across Afghanistan, dodging bullets, bandits, wild animals and disease to collect it from the bottom of a 60 foot well full of camel dung, which would you choose?

Exactly.

Why complicate matters?

Chances are when you're complicating things you're trying to impress the WRONG people.

The only people you should concentrate on impressing are those who you want to buy from you.

>> What your customers think matters a LOT

>> What other marketers think does NOT matter very much

Keep it simple:

Sales page, payment button, downloadable product – you don't even need a download page if you use a platform like e-junkie, JVZoo or Warrior Plus.

Sell via simple sales pages, small websites, and use simple SIMPLE processes where not much can go wrong and you can build them in an hour.

There are no prizes for making it complicated yet I see SO MANY marketers doing this.

Just because there's a shiny new plugin on the market doesn't mean you should use it or WORSE, try to build your business around it.

I see new marketers on small budgets worrying because they can't afford to hire a social media expert on their first WSO.

F*CK OFF!!!!

Get real!!! And just start SELLING.

Keep it simple to start with.

If this was my first day as an internet marketer I'd spend an hour on the forums checking out what people were whining about, struggling with and asking for answers about.

Then I'd pay a ghostwriter $200 to write me an ebook that gave the solution to a particular problem.

(If I was broke I'd write it myself)

I'd spend FIVE HOURS coming up with a massively sexy headline and sales copy for my new product. I'd build a simple affiliate page too and tell all my *buyers* why they should also promote it as part of my funnel.

I'd build a site, stick a Paypal button on it and advertise it by forum posting, buying solo ads and pay per click if I felt brave.

Install an exit splash which gives away the first 10 pages of your report for free to collect emails of at least *some* of the people who leave without buying.

Make sure the text of the page includes some long tail keywords and wait a while. I'm not a fan of SEO but might as well give yourself all the help you can eh? Stick some basic tracking on there to monitor your results.

Then work your butt off *marketing* the thing in every way you can think of.

I make it a rule *always* to listen when someone explains something and ends with ***'and that's it…'***

because it usually means I've just been given access to a simple, extremely effective method.

And that's it……..:)

> **What I learned**: If I have a hard time understanding something so will my customers. Even the smart ones will get distracted from my message if it's too complex.
>
> Treat your readers, subscribers and buyers like grown-ups but don't make ANYTHING more complicated than it has to be.
>
> …and that includes how your entire business works too…

Please Sir, I want some MORE…income streams

One of the things that is written on the whiteboard in my workroom, and that is uppermost in my mind pretty much every day of my working life is this:

'CREATE ANOTHER INCOME STREAM'

It's possibly one of the main reasons that I'm a full-time marketer when so many other people just can't crack it AND why I've been around for almost a decade in this niche.

It's no secret or anything – I've made sure that **my income comes from more than one source.**

My income comes from software, email marketing, coaching, offline businesses, niche websites, partnerships, plugins, consulting, blogging, writing, selling my own products, and spotting opportunities.

I know what they all are and I pretty much know when any of them increases, decreases or stops generating profits.

That's because, like many successful online marketers, I have a *feel* for my business that goes beyond tracking and testing.

It's no exaggeration that I can look at my Paypal and Clickbank accounts and almost *read* it in the way that geeky bloke in 'The Matrix' reckoned he could see attractive blonde women in those green squiggles on the PC screen.
I can tell when it's a slow week or that one website isn't performing well or is having tech problems, just as I can tell when I get a surge of unexpected traffic and sales increase.

It's not that I'm any smarter than anyone else, it's just that I know my business in the same way you recognize if the car you drive every day has developed a weird rattle or squeaking noise.

For me it's important *mentally* as well as financially to have multiple streams of income.

You can't really do it all at once though - in my opinion you need a core, or 'bread and butter' income that pays your bills, supports your family, keeps your business going and then **gives you time to think and generate other business ideas**

(I can tell you how to do this in three words - BUILD A LIST. You'll never be broke again if you can build a list of 10,000 people and can write a good promo email)

The more income streams you can generate the safer you are.

Once you've set up an income stream (by which I mean it's **bringing money in**, it's not just a pretty website) then build another one.

Rinse and repeat.

Weirdly you don't need to create a new infrastructure with every new income stream you generate.

Whether you're selling ebooks, software or coaching you're going to need a sales page, possibly a squeeze page and affiliate page…

…definitely a payment processor and almost certainly a delivery page.

Once you've built the structure for one offer, doing the rest is simple.

You can even use your first one as a template for the rest - just alter the copy, images and links.

Which brings me onto my next point:

Be a tight-arse with money… make your income streams pay for themselves

I had to be dragged kicking and screaming to buy my new Macbook because it cost me £1500 (around $2500)

It's a necessary tool of my trade I know but it still bugged me because somewhere deep in my heart I know that one of the main reasons that I'm now able to do this full time is because I've always watched what I've spent

Or to put nicely – **I can't see the value in spending money on my business unless it will bring a significant return in some way**

In my opinion the truth is that if you can keep your overheads – your expenses – down, then you're much more likely to succeed.

In the early days I had some launches that would have crashed and bombed if I'd followed the advice laid down by several gurus, but by following my own 'tight-ass ethic' I managed to turn a small profit that got me through the month and enabled me to fight another day as an Internet Marketer.

My launch was coming up.

I didn't pay anyone to do my graphics for me, I didn't hire any ghostwriting or copy-checking people, my hosting was cheap, bog standard and I stayed up for 48 hours doing the support and collecting email addresses manually because I couldn't afford to pay for autoresponders or mailing list admin services.

And I made a profit!

It was only a small one but it allowed me to stay online full-time

If I'd have gone bigger and spent a lot more money on design and everything else I might have made a lot more money.

But if I'd got it wrong and LOST money, I'd have gone under, and there was no coming back from that.

I couldn't risk it.

Many gurus would argue that you need to invest in your business and of course you do…

…but let's get real and look at the amount of people who want to get into internet marketing because they NEED MONEY.

It's easy to look down on that mentality as desperation or not being realistic but that fact remains that sometimes you have to start things on a shoestring.

There's nothing wrong in that. Nothing to be ashamed about.

It's how I started.

Like I just said, you could argue that paying copy writers, designers, an affiliate manager all the rest would have brought me more money in the long run.

What if it hadn't???

I can answer that easily by saying that I probably wouldn't be typing this now.

I'd be working for an employer or at the very best struggling in an offline business.

I couldn't take the risk, and I made that decision.

It was a calculated bet that I would at least make some profit by keeping my launch expenses to almost zero.

I would have been forced to take a job. I didn't have children at this point so I was able to live on pretty rough food **but I loved it because it meant I was a full-time marketer.**

Strangely, now I'm comfortable throwing a lot more money into business ideas, and while that's bitten me in the bum several times I'm fine with it because I have the income to weather it.

The internet is unique in several ways but in my opinion the best thing about it from a marketer's point of view is that it costs very little to create and launch a product except in terms of hard work.

And that's why I love it.

It levels the playing field.

Anyone who can afford a PC and internet connection can potentially make a million.

And it doesn't matter if your PC is an old, cranky thing as long as it does the job.

Nor do you need the latest software when free versions are available.

You need to keep your overheads low so that most of the profits that come in *remain* with you – they're not passed on to other people.

Likewise, I will happily pay for any piece of knowledge that will increase my income - full stop.

It's a no-brainer.

If I buy an ebook for $27 that increases my income by $2700 then I don't need a week's meditation to make my mind up.

I realize you must 'speculate to accumulate', but in the early days I'd rather listen to what my Gran used to say:

'In business any expense that guarantees a fiscal return must be, by definition flawed, because the only true guarantee that capital remains in situ is a determined policy of non-expense related marketing'.

(Actually she didn't but 'where there's muck there's brass' doesn't have the same ring to it)

> **What I learned**: What worked for me was as soon as I had set up an income stream and it was paying for itself I put in place as much automation and possible and started another.
>
> I could then cross-promote between streams, use them as upsells in each other's funnel and target my list with each new stream.
>
> In terms of investment and spending on your business, you have to be the decision-maker in this. Personally I've never found it wise to 'risk everything'.
>
> By all means 'risk something' but make sure you've something left if it all goes wrong.

Your customers are at LEAST your equal so treat them as so!

They're not 'punters' or 'muppets'.

They're not faceless credit cards or PayPal accounts.

Your customers / readers / subscribers are REAL people with feelings, dreams, worries, kids, mortgages, bills, relationships and homes.

And they've subscribed to your list or bought your products because they're looking for YOU to help and inform them.

They're placing their trust in you.

Don't crap on them because you'll lose your rep and feel horrible about it all.

Despite what some expert might tell you it's not just a numbers game, *these are people.*

One day I'll be jailed for strangling an internet marketing expert.

I just got an email from some bright spark who tells me that if people don't unsubscribe from my list in droves after every single mailing I do then I'm not 'pushing them hard enough.

I don't know about you but if someone pushes me I'm likely to push back twice as hard and in email terms I'll probably push back by clicking unsubscribe quicker than you can say 'talking out of your crack'.

I'm pretty sure my subscribers buy from me when they like the look of what I'm offering.

That's it.

Sure, I make more money if I mail more, but that doesn't involve 'pushing; anyone.

I haven't *trained* them to buy anything just like I haven't trained my wife to warm my boxer shorts before I get up in the morning or trained my kids to dance for money in the village square…

…because life isn't about *training* people.

It's about mutual respect and harmony (man).

Your list isn't a bunch of people chained in a room with $47 and nothing to spend it on, and if you don't start thinking about them as real people then you're going to be in trouble in the next few years when getting through to anyone by email who doesn't actively want to hear from you is going to be far harder than it is now.

It's time to start building relationships that are mutually beneficial, and not *training* them (that expression really bugs me).

But more than that, **internet marketing IS NOT about selling.**

Wooooo – I can hear the experts reaching for their Joe Karbo books as I type.

But it's not – internet marketing really isn't about training your list and it's especially not about selling to them.

Internet Marketing is about **<u>offering</u> solutions to people who you think could benefit from them, and if you get your offer to match their need you'll make a great deal of money**

But when you're reading posts in forums and someone talks about your list using expressions like 'hitting them hard', 'pushing them', or 'extracting maximum profit' think about something – chances *are that you are one of the people he suggests hitting hard.*

I'm all for *extracting maximum profits.*

I mail my list almost every day, and I make more money than I did when I mailed them twice a week

But that doesn't mean there isn't any respect there.

Telling your list about offers and creating products for them isn't a dirty business if you're honest about what you're doing and you provide them with value.

Also, if you get it right there isn't much selling involved because your list will want to buy everything you produce for them.

If you find yourself creating a product to make money you're starting from the wrong end…

…you need to create products that HELP your people. If you do that you'll never struggle to see anything ever again.

But that's something you won't believe until you find out for yourself.

I didn't.

I had to learn this for myself too :)

But if you're having to convince people to buy from you then you're going at it the hard way. You should at least have your people halfway interested in the subject matter before they even see a sales page.

How do you do that?

Easy - you create products based around what you normally teach - <u>your</u> niche.

Your subscribers came onto your list because they were interested in learning more about your message.

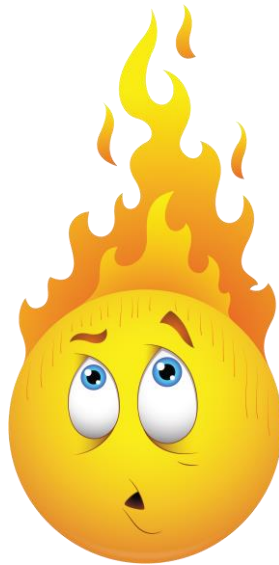So why try and sell them something different?

Expand and adapt on your theme.

Teach them more.

Go deeper - offer them more access to YOU at higher price points.

But KEEP ON MESSAGE or else you're just starting over again.

> <u>**What I learned**</u>: Never, ever forget your message. It's why your subscribers came onto your list in the first place. If you go too far off topic you'll lose them.

You need inspiration or it just becomes a job

A while back we took a working holiday up to Whitby on the North East coast of England.

It's a small fishing town with a history in whaling and seafaring (Captain James Cook of *'Oh look I've found Australia'* fame learned his trade there), and I absolutely love it – especially out of season when it's cold, wet and blustery.

We stayed on a pretty but remote headland overlooking the bay and spent the days seal-watching and walking on deserted beaches (spookier than you might think) and the evenings drinking wine in front of the fire after the kids were tucked up in bed.

We had a great time.

But what does my personal life have to do with Internet Marketing?

Well it made me realize that IM is by no means the only way of living an alternative lifestyle.

Whitby seems to be a magnet for all kinds of hippy, dropout (I mean that in a positive way), clued up and chilled out people that you could ever hope to meet.

There are SO many people in the world who have decided to do things their own way and live how THEY want to live.

The common factor?

Not ONE of the people I met worked for someone else.

There wasn't a 9-5 in sight.

We met a bloke who was a songwriter, had lived in New York and Italy for a while and now made his living brewing the best espresso coffee I've had for a long while in his little sea front shop.

He didn't seem to make masses of money but that didn't matter as he chatted with us for a long time and made our children 'babycinos' which are like cappuccino coffees but made from frothed milk and choc sprinkles.

Then there was the man who lived in a tiny rented cottage with probably one of the best views across the bay EVER and went out on his little boat three times a week to collect the lobsters he'd caught in his pots, and then sold them to posh restaurants.

The rest of the time he spent with his family.

Again not much money but does it really matter?

Then there was the man who bought a cottage and rents it out in the holiday season for around £600 ($1200) a week while he travels the world with his family, and comes back to spend the winter in the bay because like me, he thinks it's the best time of year.

We met him as he was preparing to set off for Goa in India, knowing that the rental income from his cottage would plop into his bank account each month, after the agent who handled everything took their commission.

In fact when I explained what I did for a living it seemed that I was the one tied to work!

Ten years ago my wife and might have said 'It's not for us – we need security and a house, but the weirdest thing happened when we had kids.

We stopped wanting security and started wanting TIME instead, and so we happily leave home for weeks, months at a time to travel where ever we fancy.

We'll be in France for a month or longer in summer.

As long as I can get to an internet connection then we're fine.

Here's the BIG take away from this section:

There is no security in life

None – Nada – BUGGER ALL, guys.

Lightning, runaway buses, cancer, heart attacks, sharks, large breasts (so I'm told) all finish off a certain number of people every year without fail.

So whatever age you're at I urge you to 'work backwards' now.

Find out what you want from life – what's your ideal lifestyle?

Waking in the morning, having a long coffee while you check your email then doing some writing - emails, maybe a blog post or two - or coming up with ideas for how to expand you little empire?

That's pretty much my ideal work life because I love it.

Combine that with a great view of the sea or of the French (or Yorkshire) countryside and things couldn't be much better for me

Add the wife and kids pottering about the place and I'm in heaven.

This is possible because I'm a full-time internet marketer.

So if your ideal is waking up, doing some gentle gardening, a bit of admin then running a market stall three afternoons a week, work **how** to do it.

It's much easier when you have the goal in mind.

Can you sell up and buy a small plant nursery, even if you have to live in a smaller house or have less money?

Or if you'd rather travel the world, you'd maybe have to do it as an Internet Marketer, travel writer or something similar.

Could you rent your house to fund it?

Even better, **build an online business!**

Get the picture? – outrageous dreams are only outrageous if you don't follow them.

Then they get real.

Once you start looking at the nitty gritty **and get brave enough to give up a little of what you think of as security,** you're onto a winner.

In my view a job isn't security – it's a sentence.

Every time I've lost a job there's been a sense of panic – closely followed by a feeling of utter freedom.

I've wandered off on the hippy trail again – sorry.

But it still holds true – think about what you want first, then work backwards to try to work out how to get it.

The lifestyle that appeals to me won't appeal to everyone, but *vive la difference* eh?

Oh – and what does all this have to do with Internet Marketing?

Everything. I love internet marketing - teaching, helping and writing - but it's a means to an end to me.

I wanted the lifestyle I have now, and IM was my way to achieve it. It's yours too, just waiting for you to take it…

> **What I learned**: I keep looking around for what inspires me.
>
> Certain aspects of other people's lifestyles or businesses inspire me, as does a location or event. So does an adventure or even something as simple as a hobby or pastime.
>
> These are the things that inspire me to keep building my business, enjoying life and trying new things.
>
> I think you need a reason to be an internet marketer other than just money…I certainly do.

Why you need an 'OK' Google presence but not much more than that

If you type 'Tony Shepherd' into Google you'll sometimes find me at the top of the rankings and sometimes some DJ bloke from London with the same name.

(Either him or some Australian politician)

At the moment it's him – I'm fourth.

If however you type 'Tony Shepherd Internet Marketer' not only do I have the top position, but I also have second, third, fourth …. in fact almost every single Google position on the first page is mine or related to me.

But I'm still fourth if you type in *just* my own name on Google dot COM. If you default to the UK version I'm usually top.

Not too bad because my name is *relatively* common, which in IM is not always a positive thing.

If I was called John Smith I'd be happy to get on the third page but if my name was **Byron Rocketboost the Third**, I'd pretty much expect pole position.

My point is that it doesn't really matter as long as you have a certain degree of visibility

When people search for you or your products in an Internet Marketing sense, they're happy to look all the way down the first results page.

And from (a bit of) research I've also found that if they don't find you the first time they'll refine their search by typing in an additional phrase or the name of one of your products or whatever.

If you don't base your business on SEO, and instead see optimization as 'gravy' and appreciate any you get, you don't really need any Google presence except for that which shows you are real to anyone who searches.

(If you're selling SEO services you'd better be VERY near the top however!)

Personally I've found that with basic SEO and regular content posting on my blog, it sits pretty much where I want it to (on the first page of Google for my name) and shows people that I have a reasonable web presence.

And the people who DO search for me will probably have come onto my list through another method rather than finding me in an organic search, such as via a squeeze page and page solo, or Facebook.

I do get organic traffic to my blog but this is usually through posts that rank for very different keywords.

My point?

I believe that unless you sell SEO products and services or are very talented at optimizing sites, you're wasting your time going after organic traffic.

Optimize one basic site (I'd recommend it was your blog or hub websites) and post new content to it regularly.

Google will usually do the rest and you'll achieve a good enough web presence while you work on getting traffic in other ways.

Even better you're more likely to survive Google updates.

Touch wood - but my blog has survived every single Google update and has remained on page one for my name for most of the 8 years it's been in existence.

I thoroughly believe (and no one knows for sure despite what they might tell you) that this is due to regular posting.

And if it ever DOES drop off I have an easy solution - I'll just change my name to **Rufus Ganglehorn.**

> <u>**What I learned**</u>: **For me, spending any more than the minimum amount of time SEO-ing my sites is a waste.**
>
> **The income from ranked sites is too precarious, as you can lose your ranking (at any time) when Google moves the goalposts.**
>
> **I just need enough of a presence - front page of Google for my name as a search term, and that's enough to reassure newcomers onto my list.**

Everything you've ever bought or created in your business is valuable

This is a biggie…

Repurposing content is one of the biggest and best 'secrets' I can ever give to you…

Remember when you were a kid?

Some of the most fun I'd have with my toys was when I'd rediscover, in my old toy box or at the back of the cupboard, an OLD toy that I hadn't played with for ages.

It was like rediscovering a whole new part of my childhood. I'd play with it for days on end, taking it to bed with me at night, and I couldn't wait to wake up in the morning to start playing with it all over again.

(It was actually much the same when I discovered beer and women).

No – the point I'm making is that this still happens to me in my Internet Marketing business.

Like most of you I have folders scattered all over my hard drive containing STACKS of old ebooks, software, methods, techniques and other such *internetmarkety* stuff that I'd forgotten about.

Now I've made it a rule to go and mosey through these folders every couple of months because I'm coming up with some serious GEMS. And it's a bit better than when I was a child, because by playing with my old IM toys I'm not only having fun, but I'm making money into the bargain.

Even better if you've created any of your own products. They don't have to be complete. I have a lot of half-written reports, ebooks and blog posts that I can go back to and re-read.

Often they seem really good and I'll create something new out of them.

I recently found an old ebook I'd written for a squeeze page in one of the niches I don't much bother with any more.

I'd offered it as a free download in return for email addresses on a page that hadn't really generated many opt-ins

But I read through the book again I realized it was pretty good.

Well written, darkly witty in parts (even if I'm the only one to think so) and containing really good info.

So I ripped it up and used it as the content for a new mini site.

I rejigged the info a bit and put together quite an informative site on this particular niche using nothing but the old ebook (luckily I could still find the old Word doc source file)

Instead of making the minisite remotely 'squeez-ish' I just added a SINGLE affiliate link for a Clickbank product that I found in CB marketplace, in my niche area.

A week's heavy posting in the forums, buying some PPC traffic and diverting a bit of traffic that still trickled into my original squeeze page and BOOM – I started making a few sales.

Nothing major but a little over $400 in around 10 days.

But that was just the start.

Obviously being a big believer in small income streams combining to make big income, this is well worth me spending a little time on.

I'm writing a new free report and I'm going to redo my squeeze page, and best of all I'm going to use this mini site method in my other niches too.

It might not work for all of them but I'm having a lot of fun building them. I've rediscovered a new toy again, and it's great.

Then there's what I'd call TRUE repurposing content.

I've covered this in my other works but basically you can use ONE good solid teaching angle as the result of an ENTIRE sales funnel, including high ticket coaching offers.

You can start with your basic entry-level report then turn the same information into a continuity program (just add email support) and a high ticket personal coaching program (teach the same method but just do it on a 1-2-1 Skype call)

You can even create a 'done for you' version if the product suits that method.

> **What I learned:** Don't discard anything you've bought in the past - revisit from time to time to see if it inspires you or it's worth developing.
>
> And DEFINITELY don't abandon anything unique you've created even if it's half-finished or is just an idea or an outline.
>
> It's where a lot of my ideas come from, and a fair few quid too.

Old stuff is gold dust…

Why the alternative to running your own business should absolutely terrify you

I'm a rabid advocate for online business.

I think it's THE perfect business model - low overheads, low risk (you can start up a new venture with just a few hundred quid) and amazing flexibility.

But I waffle on about it too much sometimes.

Last time we had a family gathering over the Easter holiday I watched people who had just finished work two days before planning their *next* vacation.

They were wishing the next 10 weeks of 9-5 work out of existence so they could get to the next 'good bit'.

In contrast, a couple of friends who run their own successful business were looking forward to going BACK to work when a new ad campaign was due to go live and they expected a rush of sales – they're excited about the planning and tracking of the whole thing to see if it works as well as they hope.

Spot the difference?

And this is why you absolutely need to work for yourself.

Because people who run their own businesses don't throw away big chunks of their lives waiting for the small gaps in their 9-5 job when they can *'be themselves'.*

People who work for themselves know that their businesses are part of their lives – a vibrant, important, vital part of their existence and while they might look forward to a holiday in the sun, they would be horrified to think that the bits in between that are part of their extremely limited time on earth, shouldn't be just as important and exciting.

It's all part of being alive.

Unless you're very lucky, if you have a 9-5 job then chances are you're wishing a big part of your life away by 'passing the time' until the next week off comes around.

This is why I started to work for myself and why I can never work for anyone else again.

Not because I'm any more intelligent, talented or entrepreneurial than you are, but because I've woken up, smelt the coffee and fully realize that it would be like agreeing to throw away a big part of my life, and I enjoy it too much to do that.

Shake off your doubts, fears and anxiety and start work on your business, because otherwise you'll live life in 'chunks of happiness' followed by 'can't wait until this is over' periods.

And that's NO way to live, in my opinion.

No one is going to become successful FOR you

No one.

No matter how long you wait.

No matter how much you want it to happen

It's up to you

And only you.

So that feeling of being scared of putting out a product in case nobody likes it…

That feeling of not knowing what exactly to create or produce…

Those technical issues that are holding back your creativity…

That worry because you don't have enough money to invest your business…

Those issues you have with your partner or family who think you're wasting your time and spending 'dead money' chasing a silly dream…

ALL OF THOSE ISSUES ARE VALID.

Every single one.

But here's the thing:

They are NEVER, EVER going to go away on their own.

YOU have to sort it all out if you want to succeed.

You have to find a way around these issues because no one else - NOBODY - cares enough about your business to do it for you.

…and that's the bottom line.

But here's something that might help.

It's my shortcut sheet, as learned over almost a decade of running an online business…

Shortcut Sheet

Autorepsonder - you need one.

If you're broke this can act as your membership site drip-feeding content to your customers.

Unless you're quite techy you really need one to send broadcasts to your list.

Getting Aweber made a huge difference to my income. Stack up the follow-up messages or do broadcasts as you go - it's up to you and what suits your business *but you need* one.

Building your list - you need to do this too.

If you have a decent size list you'll never be short of money again. A 10k list can bring you $5,000 a month in affiliate revenue. Just look for offers related to your niche and tell your list about them.

The more you mail, the more money you'll make. You'll be scared at first of sending a single email a week. Later on you'll be scared of mailing three times a week.

I currently mail six times a week, and now and again I mail twice a day.

I make more money from this than when I mailed three times a week.

Do yourself a favor and shortcut past two years of earning less income by just doing the following: **Put one month aside and then mail five times a week throughout that month. At the end of it look at your income. You'll have more money.**

You'll also get more unsubscribes but you should be building your list anyway, not relying on a stagnant pool of leads so it won't matter.

List building is THE single most important part of your online business. If you're not doing it, you're playing at it. You also need to start mailing your list as soon as your first subscribers come onto it.

If I did nothing else except write one email a day to my list I could live very comfortably on this income alone without anything else.

Continuity?

I'd say 'yes' definitely.

Again, if I did nothing else in my business I could live very comfortably off the income from my continuity programs. I have three of my own and then a couple more that I'm a partner in.

If you know you have $20,000 in rebills coming on the 12th of each month you have some security. You can plan.

You also get to play with pricing options to create higher ticket items by doing absolutely nothing…

Keep your continuity priced low at between $9 and $27 and you'll be able to use it as an upsell throughout all your funnels. Add email support for the same price and it'll sell like crazy.

BUT if you have a $27 a month continuity you can instantly create higher ticket items by offering a yearly fee or lifetime fee at (for example) $297 and $397 respectively. The pricing is up to you.

Track how long the average member remains in your continuity and you can base your pricing around getting the maximum value per customer.

Blog?

I think a blog is the 'hub' of your business. It explains who you are and what you're about.

It gives you a place to link to your products and services from and you can use your best posts to establish a relationship with your new subscribers. I link to some of my best blog posts to explain who I am, what I believe and to get them on board mentally almost immediately.

Facebook?

Not vital but recommended. I get a lot of JV approaches through my Facebook page and new 'friends' find their way to my paid sites through my FB page. I link to my blog in my FB profile.

*Why have a blog **and** a Facebook page?*

The main reason for me is because FB can pull your account without warning but if you host your own blog you can retain your posts.

Facebook is also a good way of setting up a fast and easy membership site.

Just create a Private group.

Affiliates / JV's?

Depending on what your business model is.

If you do launches, you'll need both. I don't use the launch model but I set up an affiliate page for most everything I do and then recruit my customers as affiliates.

I don't do this in a manic or aggressive way, just make sure they know they can make money by promoting.

Like I said, having affiliates isn't a major part of my model but I'd be crazy not to allow anyone who wants to promote my products to do so

Your own products?

Depends on your model but you'll make more money if you create your own products. Do what suits your personality. If you have a funny voice and look like an old potato maybe stick to writing like I do.

If you're good on camera and comfortable with it, create video products.

The biggest thing I learned is that some people like written content and some like video. If you do things in a certain way (or do both) you'll find that the people who like what you do and how you deliver it will resonate with you and keep coming back.

Do what is comfortable for YOU and your perfect audience will find you. Yes they will, despite how hippy this sounds :)

Your own products also give you more leverage. You can sell PLR rights to them, update them, sell licenses, flip sites and so on

Easiest and favorite model?

Create a 12 month training course with the content delivered weekly. Charge $9 - $47 a month and drip-feed it weekly.

Once you've created the last month's content it's 100% stand alone. All you need to do is funnel new customers into the top. The rest is automated with the exception of any support you have in place.

There's nothing else to create.

How to survive financially?

Put a 'core' business in place that covers your salary then quit your job.

The freedom will allow you to work full time on your business and do a lot of creative thinking. You'll have doubled or tripled your income within 12 months because you'll have time to think and be creative

Freelance, write copy, be a coder or whatever else you need to do to stay full time online for that first year. I wrote copy for gurus. It was much better than going back to my 9-5 even though at times things looked a bit iffy.

It's not always easy, and it's often scary but if it was easy everyone would be working from a laptop on the beach, right?

What should I outsource first?

Anything that lets you focus on bringing money in and getting creative. For me that was outsourcing my support. By bringing someone in to do this I freed up no less than four hours a day instantly.

I also had time to work on bringing more money in. I'd more than covered my outsourcing fees within a few months because of this.

What should be my very first step?

Depends on your business model but I'd say develop a SIMPLE system to get new leads onto your list and that pays for any advertising you need to do to get them on.

Start selling to your new list from day one. Include a link in every single email you send out**. Focus on what brings the sales in.**

Do I need a coach?

If you're starting from scratch with no idea of what you want to do, *don't hire a coach.* All you'll get are his/her ideas of what business model you should be using.

Far better to work out what you want to do, and then hire a coach when you've taken it as far as you can. Go for someone who actually operates a business like yours, and doesn't just make a living by coaching

I've been trying to make money online for years without success, what am I doing wrong?

Your best thinking and your best action has got you to where you are right now, so you need to think differently and take action in a different way.

You might need to change both **or** you might only need to change what you're thinking OR what you're doing.

Take a week off. Think about what you're trying to achieve and consider alternative ways of doing it.

Don't make any decisions or do any work on your business.

Go back to basics - think about offering value.

THINK for a week.

You're probably too attached to sites or products you've created or systems that simply aren't working for your model.

Don't be scared of starting again with one simple squeeze page. Strip it all down and make it simple. Go through your funnel as though you're a customer. See what he sees. Would YOU complete the action you want him to take?

and finally…

Best of luck :)