

# HMA

**HIDDEN MARKETING ASSETS**

# University

INTERVIEW SERIES

## Interview With Internet Marketing Pioneer And Legend

*Michael Senoff Interviews Mark Joiner*

Dear Student,

I'm Michael Senoff, founder and CEO of [HardToFindSeminars.com](http://HardToFindSeminars.com).

For the last five years, I've interviewed the world's best business and marketing minds.

And along the way, I've created a successful home-based publishing business all from my two-car garage.

When my first child was born, he was very sick, and it was then that I knew I had to have a business that I could operate from home.

Now, my challenge is to build the world's largest free resource for online, downloadable audio business interviews.

I knew that I needed a site that contained strategies, solutions, and inside information to help you operate more efficiently

I've learned a lot in the last five years, and today I'm going to show you the skills that you need to survive.

It is my mission, to assist those that are very busy with their careers

And to really make my site different from every other audio content site on the web, I have decided to give you access to this information in a downloadable format.

Now, let's get going.

Michael Senoff

*Michael Senoff*

Founder & CEO: [www.hardtfindseminars.com](http://www.hardtfindseminars.com)

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## Mark Joiner Internet Marketing Pioneer And Legend Interviewed By Michael Senoff

Hi, it's Michael Senoff with Michael Senoff's [www.hardtfindseminars.com](http://www.hardtfindseminars.com). I'm pleased to bring you an exclusive interview with Mark Joiner. Mark Joiner's clients pay him thousands of dollars an hour for his time and expertise, and now is your chance to hear answers to questions from my subscribers.

Mark Joiner is a number one, best selling author of over a dozen books, translated in almost as many languages, including *The Irresistible Offer* and *The Second Glass*. He is widely recognized as one of the early pioneers of e-commerce, responsible for inventing, pioneering, and popularizing many of the technologies we take for granted today, including remotely hosted and tracking electronic books and more. One of his books, *Mind Control Marketing*, shot to number one within 36 hours of its release. One of his websites became the 37<sup>th</sup> most visited website on the planet within six weeks of its release. His pioneering book, *Search Engine Tactics*, was downloaded over a million times years before e-books were even common. He's turned a one-man operation into a multi-million dollar international corporation with customers in every Internet connected country on the planet in two years time.

In this exclusive interview, you'll hear Mark answer questions from my [www.hardtfindseminars.com](http://www.hardtfindseminars.com) listeners on subjects like marketing, publishing, search engine strategies, traffic secrets, and Internet marketing. Mark currently lives with his fiancée in Auckland, New Zealand and it is my pleasure to introduce to you over an hour and a half of answers from this amazing man. Get ready, hand on tight, and let's get going.

Michael: How did you fall into this whole Internet marketing thing and how long ago was it? How long have you been in this game?

Mark: I would say that my proper start was around 1994 and that was when e-commerce was just really taken off its shirt and getting ready to fight. Back then it was what we called the wild, wild, web days.

Michael: Where were you at the time?

Mark: I was serving in Korea while I was in military intelligence. That was in 1994. I did a bit of online marketing then. And as you know, back then there wasn't really any online marketing theory. So, what I did was I just started formulating my own theory out of what I knew about military strategy and psychology. I remember there was a martial arts instructor of mine many, many years ago that said, "You can apply anything you learn from the martial arts metaphorically to anything else in life." I thought that that was just really profound and I found that to be true and I thought well here's this new Internet marketing thing. Really, we weren't even calling it Internet marketing back then. It was just sort of like hey we're on the Internet and people are farting around selling stuff. Very few people were. And there wasn't really any theory. You couldn't buy a book on how to market on the Internet, how to do business on the Internet back then. They simply didn't exist. But I thought, well why don't I do that. Why don't I apply what I know about military strategy, specifically aiding military strategy and human psychology doing business on the Internet? Now, keep in mind at the time, I really didn't know much about doing business at all. I had always been very entrepreneurial since I was really, really young. But I didn't have any formal marketing training. I didn't have any formal business training at all. I just sort of went out there and starting experimenting with stuff and figuring things out on my own.

I did that for a while. In 1995, I went to officer candidate school, became a field artillery officer. By the way, most people back then didn't know I was in the Army. I kept that fact a secret. I didn't want people to know that I was kind of living a double life there.

Michael: How old are you now?

Mark: Right now I'm 37. In '95, after I got out of officer candidate school and started working with the field artillery there, I started looking at a few real marketers. So, I guess it probably wasn't until about '96 or '97 when I did that. I was playing around a lot on my own and had some very good successes. Now, I had some websites out there that were extremely high traffic. I had what was the most popular personal development or self-improvement type website in existence back then. It was called Hot Rod Your Head. Looking back on it now, it was absolutely a terribly designed website, but lots of really interesting information and I had just a great time marketing it. I started to develop a reputation as an authority in building web traffic from building traffic to that website.

Michael: Let's talk about...was Hot Rod Your Head your first somewhat success, your first attempt at making money on the Internet?

Mark: That was my first real success and, frankly, the money I made from that wasn't really anything too significant compared to what I had done after that.

Michael: How did you know what to do to even get it started? What was your idea? Hot Rod Your Head, what was it?

Mark: Back then it was just basically me wanting to talk about some ideas that were really important to me. But the topics were helping people discover what their real potential was and not in just some superficial way like you hear about in a lot of these self-improvement products...discover your full potential. A lot of it was just so much like garbage and snake oil. I was asking what can you really do, what are the limits of human potential physically, what can a person do. And these were the things we were exploring. And the website was all about exploring that in a lot of different ways. And it was constantly morphing itself and changing.

We had a lot of really interesting people come and show up there. For example, this guy isn't a marketer in the traditional sense. He's marketed himself really well in the underground world. He's one of the people who has influenced my life the most. He was actually a columnist for the website. His name is Robert Anton Wilson. He wrote a series of books called, *The Illuminatus Trilogy*, which was a huge cult following book in the 60s and 70s. This guy talks about ideas that will literally blow your mind and change the way you perceive reality. And you were talking about things, general semantics for example, that was one of the major influencers of neuro-linguistic programming long before these ideas became very popular. A lot of people don't know that NLP was greatly influenced by Ericksonian hypnotherapy and by general semantics and a few other topics. I would say maybe the vast majority of the ideas there are not to pooh-pooh NLP at all. They've got some great ideas and they popularized a lot of great ideas, which were, of course, then popularized more by Tony Robins than by NLP. But Robert Anton Wilson is really probably the first guy to popularize these type of topics and a lot of the concepts that people are capitalizing on today would not have been here if he hadn't spearheaded that.

Michael: How do you make money with this? Were you selling information products? Did you do any audio on the site at that time or what was the model on that?

Mark: There was a little bit of audio on the website. The model was basically...I was selling a companion book, which was a course on how to increase your intelligence called, *Hot Rod Your Head*. And then we developed a shopping mall for sort of alternative personal development type products

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called, *The Ten Tools*. Eventually, I sold both of those websites off to Learning Strategies, Corporation. Those are the guys who...the photo reading course and they're doing completely different things with the domains now. I think they're just placeholders more or less. So, really, they're completely defunct. But somewhere along the way there, I started writing about Internet marketing sort of on the side. I wrote an electronic book called, *Search Engine Tactics*, which a lot of people recognize as the first book about search engine marketing and maybe even the first e-book. I don't know if that's true. I get credited with that a lot. Again, there may have been e-books before that. I will take credit for popularizing the union. I don't think there was any movement to popularize e-books before that at all. And that book certainly was one of...probably the driving force buying, getting e-books out there.

Michael: Was that the one that was downloaded like a million times?

Mark: It was downloaded over a million times by 1998 and then we stopped counting at that point. It did very, very well. It's the only e-book ever to be given five stars by ZDNet. It was one of the top 100 downloads in 1999 on [www.download.com](http://www.download.com). That capture, we stopped counting it, so it had a lot of life for a while there. I don't think it even matters anymore now because the ideas are extremely out of date.

But, I really didn't get into real marketing until I met Joe Vitale and Joe was the first real marketer that I met. He was the first real guy who had direct marketing experience.

Michael: How did you meet him?

Mark: Joe was actually introduced to me by a mutual friend of ours called Win Wenger. Win is a guy who wrote a book called, *The Einstein Factor*. He co-authored it with a gentleman named Richard Poe. And Win is very well known for being rather eccentric with ideas on how to increase human intelligence. He's a visionary. He's got some great ideas. It just so happens that Joe and Win were friends and then Win and I were talking about marketing and he said, well you really need to talk to Joe Vitale. Now, I had purchased some of Joe's stuff and I hadn't been exposed to any real marketing information before that. Joe is a guy who learned from the classical direct marketers.

Pretty soon thereafter, I started pushing Joe to publish his stuff electronically. I said let me take this old, out of print manuscript you have called, *Hypnotic Writing* and turn it into an electronic book. It took me about two years to convince him to do it because he thought who's going to buy an e-book, right. This is what everybody thought back then.

Eventually we published that and we ended up still publishing a few of his videotapes. I think we may have been one of the first companies to electronically push and sell video and audio material, as well.

Michael: Let me ask you this. A lot of these Internet marketers are one-man shows. Did you have partners? What did your business look like at that time?

Mark: Well, the business was constantly morphing. For a while there, it was me as a one-man show. Depending on the different initiative that we had, they were different iterations of it. At some point, I created a few search engines. One of them we even sold off to a public company and that was created with a partner of mine who lived in Australia. At the time I was living in Oklahoma. Eventually, Aesop did morph into a formalized company and in our peak we have 45 employees and overhead of a quarter of a million dollars a month. So, when I say we, I just kind of use that in a broad sense. I'm not an egotistical guy.

Michael: Yes, I understand. The early days, was it you in your basement doing this? What did it look like?

Mark: It was me in my living room in Oklahoma. That was when I was really doing a lot of the work. A lot of people didn't realize that. I looked like a much bigger operation way back then.

Michael: The early days, were they painful? What kind of screw-ups did you make? What were some of the learning curves? I'm sure you paid your dues like anyone else, right, late nights, early mornings.

Mark: Oh sure. I made screw-ups yesterday. I certainly made a lot way back then, as well. That's something that people need to realize. Probably the biggest and ugliest mistake I made was some trust I put into a public company. I won't say who or even hint at what it was. Back before the dot com bubble burst a lot of us were saying and I was really trying to get this idea out there that the dot com world as it was believed in the stock market at the time was a world of smoke and mirrors. And people were thinking back then well hey all we've got to do is put up a flaming logo and a website and people will come and it was like a field of dreams theory; build it and they will come and all the venture capital you need will be there. It was kind of like that to a certain extent because people were ignorant. And towards the end of that, I had some interaction with a public company and my instincts were that I shouldn't trust these guys. And it turned out that they were really complete con artists. I put my trust in them. I wanted them to float a business idea and they ended up basically stealing all of our intellectual property. I hadn't really thought everything through, as I should have. I trusted the contracts too much. I didn't trust my instincts enough. I really just learned to keep business as simple as

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possible. If I sense that things are getting too complicated or that negotiations are getting paranoid or that I don't feel 100% comfortable about something, I'll just say do you know what, life's too short, lets just move on to the next deal. But I think that in a global sense, that's something that we all have to do to protect ourselves. Whenever business gets complicated, that's when you start losing money.

Michael: Have you had any success in regular direct marketing or is all of your success been in the Internet marketing world?

Mark: Almost all of it has been in the Internet marketing world to be honest. I've done a bit it testing with direct marketing stuff and I've certainly consulted for a lot of people with their direct marketing campaigns and helped them boost their profitability, but I haven't been at the helm of any of that. I haven't been the CEO of a company that was based on direct marketing. Thank goodness. It's a lot lower risk on the Internet.

Mike, as you know, my God, what the old guy's in direct marketing had to go through. You had to be really, really smart to get by in direct marketing and have a huge tolerance for risk. And that's why you'll notice that the old classic direct marketing experts tend to be a bit tougher and a bit sharper than your average Internet marketing expert simply because you had to be better to be successful.

Michael: Here's a question from Chris, "With regards to the quote, one of Marks websites became the 37<sup>th</sup> most visited website on the plant within six weeks of its release. I have the following questions. Was that a fluke or was it in intended? Did Mark actually intend to get in the top 50 or was it an unintended result? The other question is if it was planned, what concepts would Mark advise others to adapt in their web promotion in order to have sure and similar results?"

Mark: That is a very, very good question at the end. I'll tell you what my thinking was, what was good about that, and what the flaw was.

Michael: What project was this that he's speaking of?

Mark: This was called StartBlaze.com, which is now totally defunct. In fact, if you go to the domain, it'll just go to my new blog.

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It's really funny, though, because we get traffic from people thinking it's StartBlaze still to this day; a fairly decent amount of it. But that project was what a lot of people credited being the first traffic exchange type website. Again, I don't know if that was really the first. I think that there were probably a bunch of us around that time that were starting to do that; the concept of exchanging traffic in that way. It was a new thing back then. And it was probably the most dramatically successful, that's for sure.

But what prompted me to start that and prompted me to actually plan to be one of the top 100 websites, to answer that question, yes I did definitely have that at the time. Two things happened for that. First I went and I studied what some of the top 100 websites in the world were at the time. And I found that there were a couple out there that were advertising brokers. And I thought, of course, that's so brilliant because these guys got their ads on all of these websites. That gets them that extra traffic and, therefore, that vote of confidence. So, I looked at that and I thought, God, I mean that's just so easy to have a high traffic website that way. But that's got to be meaningful. You have to take advantage of that high position for it to be meaningful because you can be number five in the world and if nobody knows it, well there's no advantage to really being number five except for the fact that you're getting all this traffic. And the ad brokers in a sense, it's a \_\_\_\_\_ because their ads are showing up on other peoples' website. That may or may not be a profitable endeavor for them.

Now, the other thing that I used to kind of put this together was we did a survey of our customers and we had a massive customer base at the time because we had run several search engines and just did a number of things to get...I mean at that point, we had millions of subscribers. We did a survey and one of the questions we asked, and then we asked this in many different ways, was what is your base problem. If we could wave a magic wand, what would be a problem we could solve for you right now? And over and over and over again the word that kept coming up was traffic, traffic, visitors, traffic. I said, okay. We haven't really done a product targeted for that specific problem. So, I put those ideas together. I thought about what the best way to do it would be and I came up with the idea of this start page exchange. And what it was is all you had to do is make StartBlaze your start page and other StartBlaze members' ad would be shown on your site. So, every time that you opened up your start page, you'd be earning ad credits and then on top of that if you told other people...this is where the viral marketing aspect came in...if you told other people about it, then a fraction of the credits that they generate would be yours, as well.

Michael: Had you already had your search engine company already? Had you had traffic already?

Mark: By the time that was going, I had actually run several search engines. But that was one nice thing that we had a nice warm crowd that was interested in getting traffic and our data proved it. So, putting all those things together, what our customers wants, what the top 100 websites were at the time, what our base was, applying what I knew about viral marketing and viral system design, which is still a burgeoning industry really. People are just kind of waking up about that now. Putting that all together, we created that and then it just took off like gangbusters. And combined with that, we went out and we did an orchestrated project launch, which is something a lot of people are talking about on the Internet now. The concept is really, really simple. You just go out and you contact the right people who have got access to the right audience, motivate them to spread the word about what it is that you have, and they're going to go out and work like crazy for you because it's in their best interest to do so. In a general sense, that's really all you need to do to get good viral marketing started and to get a good product launch going out. I've modified my thinking on that, but from a tactical sense. That's really all you need. Philosophically, I think there's a lot more you need and that's what the last two books I wrote were all about.

Michael: Can you take me back...because this is really important...how do I get more traffic and it seems like you came up with a solution and that was create and control your own search engine. That's certainly a pretty good way to get traffic. How did that all start and what was your strategy in starting your own search engines? Was that the ultimate goal?

Mark: Well, first of all, I wouldn't go out and suggest that to everyone.

Michael: Well, where you were at that time in your mind?

Mark: Well, where I was at that time was, hey something I realized. I was looking back at the early gold rush days and I wrote an article about this way back in 1995 and I made an observation saying that back in the gold rush days, the gold miners were rarely the ones who built lasting wealth. It was the people who were selling pick axes and shovels to the miners that really made all the money. And since then, I think that was a metaphor that got picked up and used quite a bit about the Internet and I think it was quite apt. And so, I thought, well why don't I become a purveyor of pick axes and shovels. And by that time, I was selling electronic books and services and whatnot for Internet marketers. And what better way to get a warm market of Internet marketers than to be the one place where they absolutely have to be, which was in the search engines.

Right now I would say, looking at...even though I'm the guy who wrote a book that a lot of people credit as the first book about search engine marketing, I don't even do much search engine marketing myself anymore. It's funny, the last few weeks I was looking at some SEO stuff. I kind of had to re-educate myself about what was going on because I just haven't stayed up on it. Now, I'm at a point where I can capitalize on it without having to do any extra work...very much against people going out and manipulating the search engines and doing a lot of faky, shaky tactics to get the traffic that they want. But now, I've got some organic things going on that can take advantage of that.

But anyway, that was the thinking at the time. Now, what I like to tell people is...I talk about it in my new book, *The Great Formula*...I've got four strategies, four overall strategies you can use to capture thirsty crowds. And really, I think any way that you can think of to bring traffic, which is another way of saying thirsty crowd, will fall into these four categories and if you grasp this, this will give you an overall way of looking at the world, so you can see opportunities for doing this everywhere. And the four methods are (1) paper access to a crowd, (2) you can speculate for access to a crowd, (3) you can manifest a crowd from thin air, which is what we did with Search Engine, by the way, and (4) you can find lost crowds. And if you start to look at the world in that way, then, wow, there's potential for traffic and for advertising eyeballs basically everywhere you turn.

Michael: Do you know of some good sources that one could buy decent traffic or are you talking in reference to joint ventures or are there sources? You hear about these lead exchanges, but I don't have a very good opinion of them just from what I hear, but maybe I'm wrong. Do you know of any reputable sources that Internet marketers can buy, genuinely that are double opt-in that have a good potential of building a list or selling...?

Mark: Frankly my experience with that kind of thing isn't too good either. I haven't been able to generate an ROI from purchased leads like that for the most part. A couple of exceptions, but frankly there's maybe one or two out there that I would use, but I would never say who they were. Why, because then everyone's going to go out and use that source and it's not going to be valuable anymore. So, I would just tell people, look, it doesn't have to be that way. You can purchase traffic; you can generate traffic and generate your own leads. In fact, those leads are probably going to be a lot better. Why, because you have control over the frame through which they initially opt-in to your list. What does that mean? Well, when you go through a co reg, you've got somebody whose gone through a very detailed marketing process. They're thinking about one thing and then all

you are is this extra checkbox on that website and they're not going to remember you. They're going to remember that experience and that experience is going to prep them for something that may or may not be conducive of them buying your products. So, if you set up a landing page...a lot of people are trying to squeeze pages now...or an opt-in page that is specifically targeted towards the person who would be interested in product and then you drive the appropriate traffic to that page. Who is going to be on your list? Well, if you phrase the copy on that page properly, the only people who are going to be on your list are people who are going to be interested in the other things that you have. Now, that's a big mistake a lot of people make. They create these landing pages and the copy on there is solely designed to get people to opt-in, but not to get them to opt-in in the right frame of mind, which is a total waste of time.

Michael: Give me an example of a wrong way and a right way. Can you?

Mark: Well, I'll give you two really, really extreme examples just to drive the point home. Let's just pick a product out of thin air, Mike.

Michael: Trampolines.

Mark: Trampolines, okay. You had some ad copy that said Pamela Anderson bouncing naked on a trampoline...opt-in to our list for a picture. And then you had another one that said get our free report that shows you the five major health benefits of using the trampoline for exercise. Which opt-in is going to be more likely to buy your product?

Michael: Of course, the second one.

Mark: Obviously, the second. You're going to get tons more with the first one, but the conversion is going to be so low from them that it won't even matter. In fact, it's going to be a waste of your time because then when you send them your marketing material, they're going to complain about you because you kind of broken their trust. You promised one thing and you delivered something else.

Michael: So, we're talking about qualifying your leads. Get good qualified leads that fit what you're selling.

Mark: In a sense, that's the way of looking at it. There are so many levels and ways to qualify people. On the Internet, if we're talking about building that list, you want to qualify them for being an opt-in member of your list and not just cram as many names on there as you can.

- Michael: Good. Here's a question on e-books from Lorna in Canada, "Mark are e-books really dead or are they just taking a nap?"
- Mark: Well, I don't know if they're even really taking a nap. I would love to talk to Lorna and she where she's getting that information from. Have you seen some stats to show that e-books sales are going down?
- Michael: No, I haven't.
- Mark: I haven't either. It's funny. People get perceptions from the strangest things. It's like they log into one of these bulletin boards and some crank who doesn't know a dang thing and doesn't have a lick of sense and says e-books are dead. E-books sales have been down for the last two years. Everybody reads that and they go oh wow that's true. It's not. So, you've got to be really careful about where you get your information from.
- Another thing is, no offense to Lorna...she just got bad information from somewhere...she could be making this assumption from her own sales. It could be that her own sales have gone down. We can't be making what they call the *post hoc ergo, propter hoc* error in logic. That's just a fancy way in Latin of saying after this, therefore, because of this. And it talks about the difference between causality and correlation. Just because there's a correlation between two events doesn't mean there's a causal link between the two. For example, it could that in last year your sales for e-books have gone down. You might assume then that because sales are going down everywhere, that in this last year sales have gone down, that is the cause of it. But there's really no real reason to believe that because you don't have enough evidence. And this is a problem in science, in general. It's very, very difficult to show a causal link between things.
- Another thing is what I like to call the myth of everyone. And I'll ask you this, Mike. You're an American guy, you've been in America most of your life, is that right? Have you traveled much outside of the United States?
- Michael: A little bit, but not too much. I've been here most of my life.
- Mark: Do you know who Robbie Williams is? Not Robin Williams the actor, but Robbie Williams the singer.
- Michael: Robbie Williams?
- Mark: Never heard of him, right?
- Michael: I don't think so.

- Mark: That's okay. What about David Beckham? Do you know who he is?
- Michael: David Beckham, yes I know who he is.
- Mark: Do you watch World Cup?
- Michael: I don't, but I know he's the soccer player who dates posh.
- Mark: Yes, from the stylish clothes. Now, you had to think a little bit about it. He's not exactly on the top of your mind, is he?
- Michael: No, not normally.
- Mark: If I ask you who Shaq is, do you know who he is?
- Michael: Yes.
- Mark: You didn't even hesitate for that.
- Michael: Right.
- Mark: Well, here's the thing. David Beckham is the most widely known sports figure in the world. I'm surprised you even knew who he was. Most people in the United States don't even have the first clue who he is. Robbie Williams just so happens to be the best selling artist world for music. In the United States, we don't have the first clue who he is. Now, I did this little demonstration at a seminar I was doing with Gary Halpert in Miami. I said raise your hand if you know who the guys are and only a couple of people raised their hand. I said if you've got your hands raised, keep them up and I said stand up if you're not from the United States. Everybody who had their hands raised stood up. And those guys were looking around totally stunned because to them not knowing who Robbie Williams or David Beckham are, that's like saying do you know who George Bush is and people shaking their heads going George who.
- Michael: Right.
- Mark: So, it's really interesting. I call this the myth of everyone because people say well everyone knows that this is the case, or everyone is experienced or everyone has seen. I've got to tell you, the world is way, way bigger than any of us have a first clue of. In the Internet marketing circle, I would say that most of the people in Internet marketing world know my name. But if I were to walk down the street to some average Joe and say I'm Mark Joiner, he's going to look at me and say Mark who.

Michael: That's right and he'd say so what.

Mark: So, what, yes. I'm Dave Sassafra. Kiss my butt. So, he's operating in a totally different world and that's what we all have to realize is that our worlds are unique and sometimes we operate under the assumption that everyone knows our world and we don't realize that the market is just way, way bigger than we know. Some people would say man that market is saturated and I would have to say that the term marketing saturation is a total myth. Unless you're dealing with the product that has a clearly definable, quantifiable, finite user base, you could never say the market is saturated. Really that's just an excuse for saying I've run out of marketing ideas.

Michael: Well, I'm sure you've heard this all the time...selling to people who want to learn Internet marketing...I've heard it all the time that it's a small niche market.

Mark: It is actually. This particular group, there's like a direct marketing oriented group of Internet marketers. There's like a web-based group of Internet marketers that doesn't even hang out with those other guys. Why, because they think that those guys at the direct marketing seminars...and I don't want to mention names...they think that they're scummy used car salesmen. They don't associate themselves with them. So, you've got more of like the buttoned down corporate guys and then you've got sort of like the geeky web marketing guys who are more focused on web design and technology and that kind of stuff. And rarely do those group meet. But I would venture to say maybe there are groups of people out there who want learn about Internet marketing that I haven't even thought of that are bigger than that. So, we have to define which one we're talking about, but that direct marketing focused Internet marketing group is relatively small and I would have to say that the number of people who want to learn about marketing is a way bigger number than that small group of people.

Michael: Can you think of a couple of stories of some mega-successes with e-books, of people who have created e-books and just sold tons of them? Just wild success story, any one or two that stick out in your mind?

Mark: Well, one from just last night. My friend, Joe Vitale, who is actually a dear friend of mine...back then we barely new each other and again I had to twist Joe's arm to do e-books at all. By the way, he was making a very intelligent choice because he was sticking with what he knew worked. He didn't want to waste his time with something new just because it's some new fangled thing. That's something that makes a lot people fail or when they try every new deal. So, it was a very intelligent move on his part not



to mess with e-books until he could see something demonstrated. But the reason I bring this up, it's interesting, because just today I get an email from Joe talking about this new e-book that he create. It took him a day to create it. Sold it for \$19 a pop and then made \$3,000...it isn't a huge amount of money...but they put about maybe two, three hours of work into this whole thing. Made about \$3,000 in the first few hours of sending out an email about it. Now, that's not a huge success in terms of money, but it demonstrates the massive potential of e-book marketing and how easy it is once you really get the ropes down and once you have a market defined to make money with it.

Michael: I interviewed Joe a couple of years ago and I remember in the interview him telling the same story about you because you reminded me of it. I wouldn't have been able to remember it if you didn't bring it up. But I think he talks about this same story in the interview on my site.

Back then, how did you structure that deal? Why even approach him if you had the ability to create your own information products? What was the strategy behind that?

Mark: Well, that's a really good question and I don't think anyone has asked me that yet and I'll tell you some things that are a little more subtle than I think most guys would get. I like to structure my deals very generously. I wanted to structure it in such a way that he was making a greater percentage than he would from a print book. That was one of the main hooks that I went to these guys with. I said look, you don't have to do any work. You don't have to believe it. Just know that for every unit that we sell...and we're not sending this out to distributors, we're the point of sale and the publisher and the manufacturer, we're everything. One-stop-shopping. We will give you a percentage of every unit sold that is much greater than you're getting from your print publisher.

Michael: Did these have to be books that he was self-publishing because I know he was under contract with a publisher or could he take the books that he had contracted with his publisher and digitize those and do something with you?

Mark: Well, it's funny that you ask that because back then the concept of electronic rights didn't even exist. I work with John Wiley & Sons now for my books. They're one of the big three New York publishing houses and just a wonderful company and I love those guys. But now the contracts that they have got a little section in there, of course, I can't talk about the specifics, but they say electronic rights, who's got the electronic rights and how does that work? Back then because it was a gray area, I knew that I wanted to pick something that wouldn't be an issue. You have like a

couple of copies of this old hypnotic writing manuscript lying around and I paid him money for one and I said look this is out of print, you were self-publishing it, let me convert this into something electronic because I knew there wouldn't be an issue. And then we moved on to other things. They were a little more complicated. I didn't want to ask him to do this for the book done by a print publisher at the time because, again, if these things hadn't been defined, then I didn't want to put anybody in real hot water.

So, basically what I did is I was just looking for opportunities. I was saying here's a proven asset. This is something that I think is really good product myself. I really, really like this myself. I wanted to leverage this. One of the real benefits of doing this...the way you asked it...a deeper answer...you said why do this when you can do your own stuff. And one of the real benefits, besides the fact that it's leveraging time...I didn't have to do much to actually get it out there considering the fact that the work had already been written -- that was one important thing...but there was actually a subtler and more important benefit and that was that I was able to raise the level of my own brand by associating myself with guys who were revered in different circles. Further, I was able to cross over between two totally different worlds and tap several different markets at once. Relative to the online marketing people having no clue who Joe Vitale was or, for example, Ted Nicholas or Joe Sugarman, some of the guys that I was working with later. But when they found out who these guys were and thought wow these are guys doing the direct marketing world were so successful, who have done things like produce infomercials. For those of us on the Internet and talking about infomercial, wow, you guys really have a lot of money to produce an infomercial. And it was very, very impressive. So, I found guys like that to raise my perception with the Internet marketing world. And then also because there were people who were familiar with the Joe Sugarman's, the Ted Nicholas's and the Gary Halpert's and all those guys, they would be searching for that and I could bring them into my world. So, I was bringing customer bases that have existed before into my customer base now. And I was also simultaneously raising the level of my brand. And as you see, there are a number of huge benefits that came as a result of that.

Michael: Who were some of the other people you were working with? You had Joe Vitale. Did you approach Ted Nicholas? Did you digitize some of his hardcopy stuff?

Mark: I did approach Ted Nicholas, as well. Ted had a book that I just absolutely loved called, *Magic Words That Bring You Riches*. You probably know it.

Michael: Yes.

Mark: It's really an interesting book. It wasn't complicated, buy every little chapter was a pure gold nugget of wisdom and it was marketed so brilliantly well. And I knew that he had a great sales letter that he used to promote that book, so I specifically approached Ted about that particular book. I said, Ted, it's such a great book and I know you wrote that letter for it, here's the deal and I gave him the normal spiel, which was you're going to get a cut that's greater than what you would have made even if you had published it yourself because you can charge more for an electronic book and the margins are so much better. It was all totally hands-off for him. He, of course, accepted it instantly. Ted Nicholas is just an amazing guy. He's a wonderful human being. Almost all these direct marketing guys I worked with are just absolutely wonderful.

Now, Ted also came out with a product that we digitized for him, as well. It was, *How I Sold \$400 Million Worth of Products and Services*. He admitted to me privately that it would actually probably be more like a billion dollars, but that would seem like such a huge number that we didn't want to use it. And what it was, it was a compilation of all of his ads and he would rank them all with stars. He gave them between one and five stars based on their response. If it was a five star ad, it was one that had an absolutely stellar response rate. I thought what an amazing resource. And we took that...here he is one of the best copywriters in the history of the world...and he has basically broken out almost every one of his ads and ranked it by how well it performed. I don't think you can think of a better tool to learn direct marketing from. That's just an absolute gold mine. We took that and we digitized that, as well, and that was a great success.

Michael: So, when you approach them, do you ask for an exclusive on the digital rights to these products that you're going to promote?

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Mark: I did try that actually in most cases and usually guys would do it. Now that the landscape has changed quite a bit, I don't know how many people would give exclusives. But back then because it was a pioneering effort that we were involved in, I said look give us the exclusive because one really important thing to them is that we were creating their presence on the Internet. Most of these guys weren't known on the Internet at all and we were creating that presence for them out of thin air. I mean you can talk to a lot of these old guys and they'll come back and say it was the experience we had with Aesop that put us on the map, on the Internet. And that was we'd ask for exclusives on those products because we thought,

look, we're putting a tremendous amount of effort in branding you and building up a base for you. We think that's a good way of getting paid back. And most of the guys would see that and then they would accept it.

Michael: Did you try and negotiate any backend or it was just you made the money from promoting the book and that was it? Any backend stuff was theirs to keep or did you divvy up the names?

Mark: We get the names and they wouldn't. Backend they would get is if someone was reading the book and then going to visit them from the back of the book. That was all theirs. We let them keep that because we thought it was fair that if we're the point of sale, we'll keep the name. For example, if you sell your print book in a shop, the author doesn't get the name of everybody who purchased that book. It's just not fair to do that because these are the guys who busted their tails to make the sale. But inside the book, the author gets to usually promote a little bit of his own stuff. If he's smart, that's all his. So, that's kind of the way we broke that same deal out and the majority of the backend for us is we were doing some really innovative stuff that a lot of people are now catching onto; a thank you page of an e-book for a service that we were offering; give them a free month. A lot of people are using that now calling them one-time offers. It was amazingly effective.

When I first figured out that we could do that...I was actually reading something Joe Sugerman wrote or it was a conversation with Joe, I can't remember what it was...and I just remembered Joe talking about how he was using up sells and cross sells with their call center and it just clicked with me. I thought, wow, God why are we doing this online and immediately we set up this test and we got this thank you page up to a point where just about 50% of the people who were buying electronic books from us were taking a free month of this service that we were offering.

And then the real thing clicked in my head. It was probably one of the major catalysts for really taking our company to the next level. And it was the beginning of a new marketing phrase that I created called integration marketing. And it's all about integrating your offer into the existing sales process of someone else and we can even talk about how Microsoft was really ultimately leveraged by using integration marketing. But anyway, the point is when I realized that we could do that on the backend of our own sales, I said, wow, what if we go talk to the people who are also now selling electronic books on the Internet or selling Internet marketing related products and we do the same thing on their thank you page. I'll just give them a little demonstration on used real estate. I've got this tested process here. Here's how I can pull out between \$10,000 and \$100,000 of

new profit for you annually just by slapping this code on your thank you page. And when I had this thought, I literally could not sleep that entire night. I was so excited about it and I went in the next day and just started bulldozing and getting this to work.

There was a tremendous amount of resistance we had to overcome to get it to work, but when we did, I got to tell you, that was one of the most significant events that happened in our company because from that point forward, we literally tapped into warm markets all over the place without having to pay for the normal front end acquisition cost of getting these people. And by the way, our acquisition costs for the most part weren't dollars because almost everything we did was zero dollar advertising. Our acquisitions costs were technological. It was time and energy that we were investing. But with this tactic, we didn't have to invest that same kind of time and energy. We had a wonderful new stream of customers coming in all the time that weren't as difficult to close. It was just huge for us.

Michael: Just so I'm clear, I want to digress a little bit. So, back then, you're strategy was bringing offline to online. You'd approach marketers like Joe Vitale, Ted Nicholas. They had intellectual property, which was proven in the offline world, and that was a great leverage for you. You had names probably from your search engine. You had names to get an offer out to, so it was a perfect match. And you would promote these proven offline systems to your names and profit from that, right.

Mark: That was one of our newer strategies. We were a rather complicated company to have a lot going on. But, yes, that was one of our core strategies for sure.

Michael: When you realized that you could generate more revenue just through this up sell or cross sell strategy on the thank you page, were you approaching other companies who were selling digital products and what were you selling them; the code or the system that would allow them to do what you had done?

Mark: Yes, it's a great question. We were approaching other companies, but instead of selling them the code, what we would do is we would tell them, look, you can be an affiliate for what we're selling on the backend here and every sale that we generate, you're going to be generating revenue. Now, it was a monthly subscription service and these guys would get monthly revenue as a result of the new people that they were bringing into that. And at the time, people weren't really big on signed subscriptions to services like that. It just hadn't been done. So, the allure of it was absolutely massive. It was oh, wow. Hey, all I've got to do is get 1,000 of these guys and I could basically retire. That was the way people were

thinking about it. Of course, it doesn't quite work like that. It is erroneous to make those kinds of assumptions. But that was sort of the allure.

Michael: Can you give me like a specific example of how that worked? Give me an example...maybe someone you approach and what the deal was, basically so I can understand it.

Mark: Let's say the service was \$17 a month, which that particular service was.

Michael: Is this a service you're selling?

Mark: The service we were selling.

Michael: What's the service you're selling?

Mark: That service back then was a company called ROIbot, which was the first ad tracking company on the Internet. Back then, there weren't any companies offering services to track your advertising. We were the first to do it. And when we came out with it, it was great because people thought finally I can start to actually see how effective my ads are, which was great. When we came up with that strategy, we had affiliates who were promoting this for us already, but we would say you get the same affiliate deal. Every month you'll get \$4 for every subscriber you bring in. And now, what we do is we put this up sell where the purchaser of the product gets the first month of ROIbot for free and then if they continue on, we bill their credit card. So, it was really wonderful because guys would look at that and they'd say I'm not doing anything with my thank you page here. I should be marketing something, but I'm not. And we would just do a little bit of math together and said let's assume conservatively that only 20% of the guys actually take you up on the offer and then continue on with the service. How many sales are you getting a day? And, of course, they're going to trump up the number of sales that they tell you, but you use that as your math, calculate it out and say okay, well by your math, let's cut that in half. Let's just use some fudge factor and cut that in half. By your math and cutting it totally in half, it's looking like you're going to get many more dollars a month revenue. And I would say, by the end of the year that will be this much. And then, of course, we'd talk about how that would grow as they brought more and more people in.

Michael: Let's move on to another question from Eduardo Duran, "Mark, what type of information at this moment of time do people find valuable in today's society?" In a note, I had multiple people ask me this same question in one form or another.

Mark: That's a great, great question. I would say that that's something that's fluid and changing at all times. If I give you an answer for that right now, like what's happening in this moment, it's not going to be meaningful even a few months from now. Look for trends. Go out there and go to Word Tracker and buy their report of the most searched for keywords. Look at Google site that tracks most searched words. There are a lot of ways out there to keep track of what people are looking for, what people are interested in. Look in the news. Find out what are people talking about in the news right now. For example, as this interview is being recorded, one of the big concerns is bird flu. Hey, people are concerned about that. What if you wrote a report about the reality of that? Is there anything that your family has to worry about? How could you protect yourself? As long as it's done properly and it's not some kind of slimy profiteering over fear, which I think is something that is really despicable...unfortunately you've got marketers that do that kind of thing...but as long as it's not something like that, as long as it's real, valuable content, and as long as it is respectful and accurate and good, well then really the world's your oyster. There are so many opportunities out there.

Michael: Here's a question from Ian Gills from the United Kingdom, "Mark, how do you deal with e-book piracy and are there any ways to turn it to your advantage?"

Mark: That's a great, great question. I love the second part of it. Well, first of all, I'd just say stop worrying about e-book piracy. It's not going to negatively affect your sales as much as you think mainly because most people are too afraid to ask someone for a copy of something. They don't want to look like a scumbag, especially if you're selling in the business-to-business world. Piracy isn't nearly as big of a problem as you'd imagine. Most people are going to see that for it and they're going to buy it. They're not going to go to their friend and say can you give me this. Why, because they're going to look like a thief.

Now, if you're selling something like video games, then yes I might be a little more concerned about it. But electronic books are sold to more serious markets. Don't take it too seriously. If you are concerned about it, there are programs out there that will allow you to lock down a PDF file. But do try to find a medium that's going to allow you to operate across platform. Ninety percent of your market out there is going to be Windows based, but don't stab yourself in the foot and prevent that other market from getting your stuff that's using Linux and Mac when you can just as easily offer a lockable, protected version of your product that will function on multiple platforms.

Now, a way to take advantage of it is make sure that your electronic book is also a business card for your up sell for whatever it is your offering on that backend. And you can do that in several ways. First and foremost by being absolutely excellent. And if there's one piece of business and marketing advice I can give you, it is that. The book I wrote, *The Irresistible Offer*, very recently...which is doing really, really well is making a lot of inroads even in the traditional brick and mortar and Madison Avenue marketing worlds now...talks about how to create your message and how to stand out from the crowd. But it pays tribute to the fact that that message has got to be honest and it's got to be about something that is great. So, at the core of it, you have to have what I call high ROI offer, and I'm using ROI in a different sense here. I'm not talking about the return on your advertising investment. I'm talking about the return on the investment of the customer in you because he needs to get a return on that investment, as well. And if you don't start out at the core of it by giving him a high return on that investment, you're never going to get that second glass offering, which is something we talk about in great detail in the follow up to that book called, *The Great Formula*. But the point is, the ultimate way to be buzz worthy is also gets the second glass sale, is to be absolutely excellent at what you do and that is the single most important thing I can tell you about your business. Again, a lot of people will say, yes, but it's so easy to use smoke and mirrors. The product doesn't really matter so much. And I would tell you, they're right to a certain extent, but they're very, very short sighted because the long-term, great business successes have all started out by focusing on great products, on being excellent. Hands down, period, end of story. I don't think anybody out there who really has got serious experience in building big massive business would argue with that fact. It's absolutely essential. That's the first thing.

The second thing is tie in your up sell to the end of the book or in various places throughout the book. Don't make it a big long advertisement because that's going away from being excellent again. But in the appropriate places, give them a logical reason to take a sip from that second glass from you.

Michael: Here's a question from Michael Morales, "When offering the irresistible offer to a thirsty crowd, how soon do I offer them the second glass? Is it concurrently with the first glass and can it be both an up sell and a cross sell. I wouldn't want to overwhelm them with too many choices or have them think it's merely a sales job."

Mark: That's a brilliant question and it's exactly the right type of question we need to be asking. And I would say that's going to vary tremendously depending on the dynamics of the sale in each case. And what I would say



is, never turn away an immediate opportunity for an up sell or a cross sell. Now, in terms of him asking could it be both, I would say yes, but rarely at the same time because what I don't want to do is I don't want to confuse people. I'm a really big fan of giving people linear processes to follow through. What I would say is always make it really, really clear what it is you want from people and also follow the TIO methodology at each step of the way because remember even when you're giving them an up sell and a cross sell, that is an offer that you have to make to them and it still will follow by the same rules. The most important time to do it is immediately because you've got such great opportunity there.

I'm always stunned when I walk in a retail store and I buy something from them and the person working the counter there isn't working some kind of an intelligent up sell or cross sell. It's just absolutely stunning because there's so much money that these guys are leaving on the table. A lot of these companies shutdown and they say we just weren't able to make it. If they had just given their employees a five word phrase...can we also interest you in one of these today...they probably would have survived. That's how big of a difference it can be for your business. And online, offline, everywhere there should be that immediate opportunity. There also should be that follow up, as well. But it needs to be meaningful. Another thing about that company that sent me out that direct marketing piece, they're sending me out something like every couple of days and it's to the point where it's just almost laughable. It's annoying. In fact, I've grown such distaste for these guys that I probably will refrain from responding to other offers from them in the future because I just feel like they've been such an annoyance.

A lot of people will say well it doesn't matter. It's a numbers game. Pummel people with as much stuff as you have. In an ethical sense, do you really want to do that first of all? Second of all, are you really going to build a long-term relationship with these guys? You might be able to "stick" them again and again, maybe one or two more times, but are they going to be saying good things about you, first of all. Second of all, are you really going to have a lifetime relationship with that customer? And I would say no. And the real benefit is going to come from you like I mean really when your business starts to take off is when you've really dialed in the word of mouth mechanism. And what that means is you've got to be treating that customer extremely well by giving him a great product and respecting them every step of the way. When you get all that right, they'll be singing your praise and there's nothing more powerful than good word of mouth.

Michael: We already discussed this a little bit, but you may want to add to it because it comes in various forms. This is from Andrew Cavanaugh, he's a health copywriter out of Australia, "Mark what do you think are the really hot markets in the next decade for making money for small business people? Is it online, offline, or a combination? If you could go into any field you wanted, what would you recommend?"

Mark: Well, first of all there is no offline or online market per se for the most part unless you're talking about something that inherently must live online. What you've got to understand is that from a marketing perspective, the Internet is just a marketing medium in the same way that television is or radio is or newspaper is or direct mail is. I just want to make sure that he's clear on that. Again, look at it as a medium, but with the exception, of course, that there are certain things that absolutely must live online.

Where are the markets? Well, that's going to change very, very rapidly. We are in world right now where technology is changing at such an incredibly rapid rate that it probably would be difficult to predict what's going to happen even next year. Why, because we're coming across paradigm shifting break-throughs in technology basically every day at this point. And it's just simply becoming a logistical matter of how can we roll this stuff out to the public. So, what's going to be popular, well what's always going to be popular is solving a problem for people. If somebody has a particular problem, there's always going to be a market for that. I really want to give him a good answer. I don't know if I'm answering exactly what he wants.

When he said for small business people, the information product world is just never ever going to die. I don't ever see there being an end to that unless there's some fundamental change in the structure of society that makes it such that information cannot be charged for. But I don't see that happening for a thousand years, to be honest with you. Go to Google and check what the most searched for terms are, look in the news, find out what people read about, what are people concerned about, what are people searching for. And as that changes, stay on top of that. But you remember, what you want to do is you want to mix...if you're being one of these information marketers that markets a whole number of different things, you want to combine your timely and timeless offers. And by that I mean something timely is something that's trendy right now in the moment. You can catch the wave of something and benefit from that while the wave is still rolling. The timeless thing is something that is going to be important for years and years and years to come. If you balance your portfolio with those two different types of things, you're really going to hedge your bets pretty well. It's almost like balancing your portfolio with high and low

risk stocks. The lower risk stocks are going to be your timeless topics because they're always going to slow and steady via a drum of sales coming in for you. But your timely ones, some times they'll hit, sometimes they'll miss, but when they hit they can be a massive hit because there's such a tremendous trend going on in that moment.

Again, I don't want to say any particular topics because I'm imaging people are going to listen to this a few years from now, too, and I want to make this meaningful for them no matter when they listen to it.

Michael: Why don't we talk about what are you doing now and what do you see what's going to be happening for you? What kind of plans do you have for the next five years with your business?

Mark: I don't plan on teaching people about marketing and business so much anymore. I'm kind of moving away from that.

The current project that I'm working on right now that I'm really super excited about is something called Simpleology; simple as in not complex. It's a system that will help people get the things that they want in the fastest way possible and to live their lives in a way that their achieving everything that they want, but they're not living in a high-stress existence. And the course that we put online called Simpleology 101, the simple science of getting what you want, has been growing extremely well, mostly through word of mouth. At the time of this recording, we've got about 75,000 people who have used that course so far and it's been less than a year since it's been out there. We haven't even really done a lot of aggressive marketing.

There's a lot that we're going to be doing with that in the future. That excites me more than anything else for a number of reasons. One, it's something that I really, really love. It's dealing with what human beings can do. What is the potential of human beings? Why are we living in this gulf between our dreams and reality and how can we bridge that gap? And it's solving what I discovered through being a marketing consultant for people was really the bigger problem for them than the marketing questions.

What I came to discover was that most people, if they thought about it a little bit, really had great marketing ideas. I mean you've got resources like your site, Mike. Your two websites are one of the absolute best marketing resources I've ever come across. In fact, if I were to list right now literally maybe the top 10 best marketing resources, I think your two websites together there would hold one of the spots without question. Resources like that are totally available. They're all over the place and

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even in their own minds, they've got great ideas and the problem that most of these people that I have worked with was not that they didn't have the ideas, but it was they were not implementing the ideas. It was that they weren't functioning properly as human beings. They weren't using all of their time, energy, and money in the best possible way to bring about the best result. What are you spending most of your time doing? Are you spending your time surfing throughout the day and calling it research? Are you working on different projects here and there and not really getting anything done? Are you starting joint ventures with people that are a lot of talk and no results? And I would say that most entrepreneurs that I talk to spend about 80% of their time doing those things that I'm talking about right there, those things alone.

And what you have to do is you have to start functioning with the world in a different way. You've got to be clear about what it is you want and start understanding that you've got to take responsibility for your time and take the actions that bring you closer and closer to those things that you want rather than the actions that take you further away from the things that you want. And once you start to look at the world in that way, you start to all of a sudden get a great awareness of what's going on. Oh, damn, I didn't realize that this is what I was doing with my life when I could have been doing this. And if I had only done this for just five days, instead I've been banging my head against the wall about for the last year would have been done.

And literally that's their exaggeration and I've got people who go through Simpleology now. I've got a number of processes that I take them through and it's all taught with speed learning psychology, and there's just lots of fun stuff. We make it exciting with videos and experiments that they get involved. People who go through those processes now are finding themselves getting literally about three times as much done in a normal day. Now they're able to say I can get my normal eight hours of work done or even a lot more than that in about three hours. We help them get setup in such a way that they're so effective that they can bang all of that stuff out super quickly and then have so much more time left over where they can either just bum around for the rest of the day if you want. If you're a musician, go play your guitar for the rest of the day. Go hang out with your kids. Go meet sexy people. Whatever you want. Or spend that time getting that much further ahead in your business. That's the project that I'm really, really excited about now.

I feel that I'm at a point where that's where I can help people better because there are so many people out there teaching marketing right now and doing such a great job of it. And I feel like *The Irresistible Offer* and *The Great Formula* kind of sum up the most important things that I can

say about marketing. It's time for me to move on to that other area, which I feel is a little more universal and just a little closer to my heart.

Michael: Can you tell me a little bit more about this speed learning psychology that was implemented in the Simpleology course and how that will benefit the customer?

Mark: There are just a number of things. It would take a long time to describe every little thing that's gone in there because a lot of thought went in and things are presented in a very specific way that exploit a lot of things that people don't know about learning and all that. But one particular example, I'll give you, which is extremely powerful is that people tend to learn something better if they do two things; (1) if all their senses are engaged, and (2) if they are actively involved in the process. So, we present the information to people through video, through audio, through reading, through quizzes and we get them involved. And also we incorporate all of this in a daily exercise that everyone uses called the daily target practice, which actually implements the ideas that we talked about into their daily lives. So, it's great for people learning stuff like what you're teaching people, Mike, because now they can take what they're learning there and they can plug it into the Simpleology System and actually integrate these ideas into their actual day-to-day life and really start to use them and not just think about them. So, that's one of the core speed learning psychological components. There's a lot more to it, but that's probably the most fundamental thing I could tell you.

Michael: Give me an idea of what your lifestyle is like right now? What's day like for Mark Joiner? I'm sure they vary, but what's a workday for you like? You get up in the morning, are you working from home, are you going into an office? What does it look like?

Mark: Great question. I don't work from home anymore because I've got to tell you I'm really tired of that. And I think psychologically it's probably not too healthy to be working out of your home because you feel like your work is never leaving you. So, what I did was I setup an office that is very close, so every morning I go and I work out. I eat some really healthy food after my workout and walk to my work. I walk to the office here. I've got a really nice little boutique office space in this great building, this classic building in downtown Auckland. The people who setup the place for me put in some really nice artwork and some cool art-deco furniture and stuff. It's really kind of fun to be in this space. I just bought some bookshelves. My stuff is actually arriving from the United States. It should have arrived like five months ago. It's kind of funny now that we're going to be leaving in about a year. I probably should have left my stuff in storage, but I took my whole library out. I'm right now looking at these empty bookshelves

where all that's going to live. I've got pretty much like a big massive wall of what will be my full library here shortly.

I get up in the morning and I do first thing every morning what I call my daily target practice and that's one of the exercises that we give people in Simpleology. And that helps me get laser focused about what it is that I'm going to accomplish that day. I turn off all my email. I turn off my phone and I just get totally involved in what I've got to do. And I bang through all those things. And then I decide what I'm going to do with the rest of the day. Usually the rest of the day will start with me going to email at that point, not before that and then I'll figure out what needs to be dealt with in the email...sort through all that in a very easy, effortless way. I've got some great systems that I've set up for that that are all taught with Simpleology. And I might go through the same process again if I feel like I want to accomplish a lot more. I'll do the daily target practice again and hit more targets. It's just sort of a really nice effortless way of getting tons and tons of stuff, but I am extremely productive right now and we're really getting into the work that I'm doing because I absolutely love it. And sometimes I work 8 hours a day and sometimes I work 16 hours a day. I basically just decide to do as much as I want to and that's how it goes.

Michael: This has been an honor. I really appreciate it.

Mark: Awesome. Thanks for that. Likewise.

Michael: Here's another question from him and many other people asked a similar question, "How do you determine the value of your e-book?" How did you do it with your e-books and what kind of pricing did you find was affective? What kind of pricing was ineffective?

Mark: I've got to tell you, it's almost a crapshoot. People will tell you that their way is like...I remember seeing some software out there that would ask people what would you pay and then it would kind of like calculate out what the best possible price would be. I think that that's probably not so valid because what people will say they'll pay and what they actually will pay are two different things.

So, really the only way to find the right price is to test a bunch of different prices. Get statistically valid information on that and make your determination from there because really the only way to know what the marketplace will pay is to actually ask them. And the only proper way to ask them is to offer something to them. Either they respond to the offer or they won't. And the information that you gather, again, it's got to be statistically valid. A lot of people will say just do a test for a day or two and see which one does best, which is really, really just bad advice

because we don't know how many sales you generate in a particular day. There's no concept of statistically significance there. By the way, another real bad way that I hear a lot of people you is on Monday put up version A of your ad, on Tuesday put up version B, and then find out which one did better. That's really terrible marketing testing because you don't know what other factors could have occurred on Monday and Tuesday that could have affected the sale. Good testing has got to be done in real time and it's got to be statistically significant

So, with all that said you've really got to test things out. Some general things are the laws of 7s to 9s...numbers with 7s and 9s do tend to pull better. My experience shows that for sure. I did an interesting test where we compared the price of 99 to 97 to 95, and 95 pulled a little bit better than 99, but 97 pulled five times better than 95 and that was a statistically significant test. When I first heard of that, I thought the same thing I think when I hear most tried and true marketing nuggets is, well nonsense. Let me see for myself. That's one I certainly was able to reproduce in my own testing. These days I don't do nearly as much price testing in that regard because I know that those things tend to be right. If I do price testing, I'll do really bold price testing...compare \$17 to \$97, to \$197 or \$297. Just got to find out how much profit per visitor you're getting.

Michael: When you were selling your e-books, just a general e-book, maybe not a course, what prices were you selling them at...\$47, \$97?

Mark: Mostly \$27 and in retrospect, we should have priced them higher probably. But we did that because mostly we were using them as loss leaders. We were bringing in a lot of front-end traffic so we could get people into our other service-based companies.

Michael: What kind of guarantee did you offer? Did you have a consistent guarantee on your e-book offers and what kind of returns were you getting?

Mark: I would just tell people, as a general rule, use as bold and long of a guarantee as you possibly can and don't be afraid of that. It's really interesting. I'm always stunned to find that people are afraid to give really long guarantees because here's the way the devil's math works. The simple fact is most people, even if they're grossly unsatisfied with a product will not ask for a refund. Period. Bottom line. That's it.

Michael: Why do you think that is?

Mark: Well, I think it's because people are lazy and they're distracted. And I'm not taking advantage of that by putting out crap. Definitely don't do that.

That's the stupidest thing in the world to do. But in terms of logically thinking about your refunds, that's something to keep in mind. It's there to keep you from not having any fear.

The second thing is in most cases you're required by law to have at least a 30 day refund policy. I think there are only rare exceptions to this, but if somebody asks you for a refund and you don't give it, you're going to end up getting charge backs and charge backs are the bane of the Internet marketer these days because the credit card industry has had a total backlash in the last few years against online marketers by making their charge backs acceptable thresholds down to something like 1% or lower. So, if you refuse a refund for someone, in a lot of cases, you're going to get a charge back and that charge back could potentially cut you out of a merchant account.

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I would just say look be aggressive with it. Offer a year. Offer five years. Offer ten years. We had a ten year refund policy on one of our books that we offered and we never had anybody ask for a refund for it past a couple of months.

Michael: Another question from Lorna in Canada, "What's one or two of the most important things that make a good e-book?"

Mark: I don't know if there's any particular anatomy like this is the way it should be structured. I would just say make it full of relevant information that's going to be useful. Generally when people buy e-books, they're not buying fiction as much as they are buying information that's going to be helpful, how to information, information that solves problems. Whatever that offer that you gave that person that purchased that book, make sure that you deliver that in spades and do it as quickly as you can. A lot of people say well I don't have too much to say, so I want to pluck my e-book with a lot of junk. I'll tell you I would pay for a one-page e-book. I'd pay \$1,000 for a one-page e-book if it solved a problem for me that was going to repay me \$5,000.

So, whatever that combination of information and proper presentation is, go for that and be as short as you can be, I would say. I know a lot of people say go for the sub-factor. You can get your sub-factor by including extra things. I don't ever pad the information in the actually book itself. My personal opinion on this is. I purchased a book where I had to really,



really dig for the information. And even though on the surface it may have looked like a lot of information, it didn't give me what I wanted. I had to dig for it and I gave up digging for it. So, what happened was, I didn't ask for a refund, but what I never did was go back to that person and purchase another product from them. And as we all know, and you probably heard this from a million people from all the people you've interviewed Mike, it's ten times easier to sell a product to an existing customer than it is to acquire a new one. This is another one of these marketing truths and it's very, very true. And if you don't pay heed to it, it's going to prevent you from collecting a lot of money that would otherwise have been put on the table. So, deliver whatever it is amazing well, amazingly effectively, get your sub-factor from delivering more unexpected stuff, but make sure that all of that stuff is right to the point, extremely relevant, and extremely useful.

Michael: All right, great, Mark. I'll let you go. You have a great rest of the evening and Happy 4<sup>th</sup> of July over there in New Zealand. We'll talk to you soon. Thank you very much.

Mark: Thanks Mike.

Michael: Bye, bye.

That's the end of my interview with Mark Joiner. I hope this has been helpful. We certainly had a lot more questions that we were unable to get to and I'm going to arrange with Mark to do a part two to finish all the questions from my listeners. So, stay tuned. Get on my list and make sure you look out for the email for Part Two. Enjoy.