

A Third Tribe Case Study: 0 To 10,000 Page Views In Seven Months

Sonia Simone interviews

Shane Ketterman

Sonia Simone: Welcome everybody to Inside the Third Tribe. I am very excited today because we are doing a bonus seminar. We have intended to do this for a while now and our friend Shane Ketterman from the forums popped up and said, "Hey, I bet you guys could use a really awesome Third Tribe case study and I happen to have one."

So we were very pleased because this is an opportunity for you guys to really see how to take some of these ideas and how one person translated them into business reality. Not so you can copy what he did keystroke for keystroke, but so you can add on it and build on it and interpret it for your own business. So Shane, thank you so much for joining us today.

Shane Ketterman: Thank you very much. Glad to be here.

Grabbing an Opportunity

Sonia: First thing I want to just jump in and get a quick overview of where you were when you started off. So kind of where your site started out, what kind of site it is. Let people know what the topic is. What caused you to create that site in the first place? And then where it is today. Now you started this site about seven months ago is that correct?

Shane: Correct. It was about seven months ago. I always tell people it was a tweet that kind of started the whole thing. I had been in the Third Tribe obviously and contributing, but not really knowing really what I was doing. I had also been reading a lot about this thing called affiliate marketing. I wasn't quite too sure about affiliate marketing how it felt.

So then I saw a tweet one day and somebody was selling a domain name. It was about the iPad which had just been released about two months before that. I had one. I said, "Wait a minute. Couldn't I build a site around this?" Sure I can. So without hesitation I bought the domain name. It was cheap and I bought it. I looked at it and said, "Okay, now what?" That's kind of how that started.

Sonia: Yeah. That's interesting you just kind of chased an opportunity there because it's not like you had a strategy and said, "Okay, I see that the iPad is a popular new device. This market is going to have this market need." **You just saw something exciting and saw a trend and then figured out, "Okay, now how can we translate this trend into a business?"**

Shane: My gut reaction was at first when I saw it, I mean, I did have a small process. The neurons did kind of click real quick and say, "Yes, this is probably going to be popular." Apple is probably going to do a really good job at this. It would behoove me to try and jump on this opportunity, but at the same time my first thought was,

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"But I don't want to do affiliate marketing because it just didn't feel right at the time."

So what I did when I sat down for a moment is I said, "How can I take what I have learned from some of these people that I have been associating with in the Third Tribe? **How can I take that and apply it to this and build a community instead of just writing five articles and waiting for traffic to come and click things?**"

Branded Affiliate Blog

Sonia: Now you said in the forums that you took the traditional affiliate site and turned it upside down. So is that what you mean?

Shane: Yes. I created what Rae Hoffman, Sugarrae, calls **a branded affiliate blog**. **So I set out to create an actual brand**. I wanted people to find me by name. I wanted it to be a place where people can come and read helpful, useful stuff every day. I quickly differentiated. I sat down and said, "What is my differentiation going to be?" With Apple, as you know, there is a ton of sites. They all do one thing. They report the news all day.

I knew that I could, if I wanted too, but I didn't want to do it. I said, "**My point of differentiation is going to be I'm not going to do the news. I'm going to do all the other stuff that they're not doing, which is helping people understand this thing.**" The thing being the iPad. So that was my point of differentiation. That's kind of where I started to lead away from the traditional, what I would call affiliate site like a little, small product site into a much bigger, broader scale.

Sonia: It's interesting because for the first time, I was very excited, I spoke on a panel at South by Southwest this year. It was hilarious because none of the other panelists had any idea what I do. I mean, it was so awesome.

Shane: They didn't know what you do?

Content Marketing

Sonia: It was like they didn't really know what Copyblogger was. They really didn't know what content marketing was. They sort of just put me in there because they heard content was important. They were all hardware and software guys. So it was cool, it was awesome because it wasn't like talking to the same people I talk to all the time. It was talking to new people. It was really exciting.

But one of my cornerstones of my piece of that was **content is education plus personality**. It's not just about news as you say. It's not just about this product was released on this date and it has this feature set and these are possible bugs. That's news. It's information. It's education. It may be very useful, but not very interesting, not very compelling.

Shane: Absolutely. It's funny you mention that, Sonia, because I'm like the reverse where I'll tell people that are in this kind of Apple niche, if you will, about Copyblogger and about what I'm learning on content marketing and the response is, "What?" They don't connect. What I tell them is, "You are content marketing."

Sonia: Right. **And content without any personality it can work, but boy it's difficult to make it work.** The other thing is, and you've used the word a couple of times, differentiate. That's key for any business, any, any, any business.

Shane: Absolutely.

Sonia: If you're a dry cleaner you could probably get away with just, "Well, you're on the right block." You're differentiating point is you're on the right block and there are people who have jobs near your business. **But if you're not a dry cleaner or a gas station, you've got to find some point, some reason for your customer to do business with you.** Of course in the blogging world customers just sometimes means reader. But why read you and not read the other 1,400 Apple news blogs? I mean, you know?

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Shane: Exactly.

Sonia: Why read you? The answer to that and the cool thing is this can be replicated an infinite number of times. The answer to that is you have a certain personality. You have a certain flavor. You have a certain angle that just comes from who you are as a person. You know Sugarrae is a great example, and I will give folks a link to her site. Sugarrae writes about SEO. Now there ain't no two Sugarrae's in this world.

Shane: I can guarantee you there are not.

Sonia: Sugarrae has a very strong personality. She is a tough talking broad. She has in her life she has faced some of the toughest things a human being can ever face in this world. She has risen to the occasion. She is strong. She is opinionated. She offends the hell out of plenty of people. She curses like – I don't think sailors curse like that any more.

Shane: I don't even think – Yeah.

Sonia: She curses like a sailor from like the 1930's. She is intense. She is herself and she is real. **She chases away more people than she attracts, but the people she attracts will take the bullet for her.** That's the other side. She's not just entertaining. She's got the education. She knows her stuff. She will give you rock solid information and she won't steer you wrong. It's that blend.

Of course, the Third Tribers have heard this before, but in my business I can stand to hear it from time to time too. Don't forget to be educational and informative and useful. Don't forget to be interesting. **Don't be afraid if a couple of people unsubscribe or even a bunch of people unsubscribe. It's okay because you are pulling the right people closer to you. You just have to really be sure you understand who those right people are and make a connection.**

Headlines Matter

Shane: Absolutely. I think if you find these people, and you can even find this in Third Tribe as well, and you can even find it on Copyblogger. If you look beyond just the simple posts that come. Brian is teaching. Rae is teaching, but you got to look a little deeper at what they're talking about and not stay up on that surface. By doing what I do like I went through Copyblogger and I was learning about headline writing. **I look at a lot of the sites that are kind of in my area and the headlines quite frankly suck.**

Sonia: Right. Right.

Shane: They don't draw me in. So I started creating headlines that I feel were a little bit more compelling. I wanted people to see those. So what? A lot of people say, "Well, that doesn't really matter." It does matter. **I really matters because I'm content marketing is what I'm really doing.** Even though a lot of people find these sites by – Most of my traffic is from organic search. It doesn't matter. It's going to come right up there in the SERPS and people are going to click or not.

Sonia: Well, yeah. I want to dive into that. I want to touch on that point and then I want to get into your stats because I think these are not chump change numbers. You have some serious numbers. There are two points I want to make on that.

Getting Traffic

First if nobody ever looks at your content no one will ever link to your content. If nobody ever links to your content you won't do anything in SEO unless you are trying for a keyword phrase that nobody else cares about. You can do it. There are topics you can do it for, but boy.

If you want to rank and you've got a little competition, and of course, competition is the sign that there might be a viable business in there, you're

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going to have to get people to actually read your stuff. A good headline really, really works to get people to read your stuff. If people read to it they start to share it in social media which is an indicator for the search engines that this content is good. They link to it.

The other thing that I want to make sure people understand is let's say you're on Google and maybe you're position seven or position eight. **You fought your way to the front page, but you're not on the top yet. If your headline rocks and then your meta description so that the little snippet underneath the headline rocks you might get that click above the number one position, the number two position,** the number three position because that searcher's eye is going to be drawn to that headline and say, "Okay, boring, boring, boring. Oh, hmm, that looks kind of interesting." You're going to earn the click.

Shane: Absolutely. And that's happened. I've seen it happen. I've actually seen that occur.

Sonia: I mean, you'll know it's happening because if you're getting searches on a particular phrase and you know you're six, seven, eight, nine on that page for that phrase then you know you're earning the click above the results above you.

So let's talk some stats. Do you want to just run down your numbers? A lot of the Third Tribers don't know this. I am now senior editor, whatever you want to call it, executive editor of Copyblogger.

The truth is I let Brian do all the work on that, right? Brian built the blog. I came in, oh gosh, maybe three and a half years after the blog was started, was founded. But people don't realize I know what it's like to build my own blog because I did it. I built it on TypePad, heaven help me and then switched over to self-hosted Wordpress. So I blew all those links including the one from Seth Godin. Yes, you may shoot me in the head. That's fine.

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Shane: He's still on TypePad, by the way.

Sonia: I know. We're working on it. We're trying. We've talked to him. So I know what it's like. I know what numbers are. I know what it's like to fight your way to the first 1,000 blog subscribers. Then, ha ha, go off of TypePad and have to build them again. I know that it's not easy.

So I look at these numbers and I'm impressed. I'm impressed because there are a lot of people who would kill for these numbers. We're going to talk about where they come from in a little bit. Also we're going to talk about why you don't need these numbers to be a success, but let's talk about your visits, your page views, how much your traffic comes from search and that kind of thing.

Shane: Well, I think the visits right now hover between 9,000 to 11,000 a day.

Sonia: That's uniques, right?

Shane: That's uniques.

Sonia: That's individual people not one person reading the site 22 times.

Shane: I hope not.

Sonia: You never know.

Shane: Yeah, I should be writing books.

Sonia: Right.

Shane: It's uniques. **They come from all over the place, I mean, all over the world, which is something interesting because when I write I have to remember that. I have to use language that doesn't confuse people.** It's interesting during the night I get people from the other side and a lot from Australia too that are on a different

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time schedule. But that's 11,000 uniques a day. It depends. Sunday's tend to be heavier traffic days. I think people just might be sitting there surfing.

But 79% of that is from organic search. I think that ties back to what you said about the SEO. **They wouldn't be clicking if they weren't interested and it wasn't something they wanted.**

Then the subscribers have jumped up to 1,400. I'm not pushing subscribers as much as some sites because I'm not using my email list to promote a product. I do have a separate email list that is growing. **I ranked for iPad speakers. I don't even know how it did it. I saw it one day in my keyword research and I said, "Well, this is interesting. If people are looking for it I can probably have an Amazon affiliate link and they can go over."** It actually was the truth. I had a conversation with Derek Halpern who is another great informant. He says it like it is.

Sonia: He does.

Shane: I'll never forget that. He said, "Shane, what are you doing? You're number one on Google for this term and these are people –" So I took his advice and I started writing more about that topic. Yeah, it worked. So I have a separate email list where I send out a newsletter once a month all about just iPad speakers.

Listen to Experts

Sonia: Wow. Cool. Very cool. And Derek for those – Not every Triber spends a lot of time in the forums. Derek is not a forum rat like we are. Shane and I are forum rats. We're there all the time, but Derek does come in and he's a very, very, which is quite funny, because he's quite a young guy, but he's a very experienced marketer. He's built a couple of businesses online, very profitable businesses online.

When I met Derek he was working full time I think mostly to make his mom happy. You know like his mom was worried that he didn't have a job so he took a 9:00 to

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5:00 just so she didn't freak out. But he was making really an extremely nice professional salary online plus he had this job.

Shane: You know what's so funny, Sonia? You mention that job and I see this so many times. People say, "Oh, I might have to get a real job." I think, "**Well, wait a minute. I work really hard. This is a real job.**"

Sonia: Yes. It is a real job. Everybody who does what we do has that same experience. I remember talking to my sister once. I said, "Well, I have to go now. I have to get some work done." She said, "Did you get a job?" It's like, "What do you think I do? I don't have a trust fund." So anyway, yeah, Derek is somebody who does come around the forums and his role is like the stern, good angel on our shoulder who's always saying like, "**Are you getting to work? Are you executing or are you just kind of hanging out and socializing? Are you building a business?**"

Shane: He's like the voice of reality.

Sonia: Yeah, he is.

Shane: **You don't have to take everyone's advice, but when people are experienced and they're willing to spend their time helping you out in my opinion it just behooves you to listen to what they've got to say and give it a shot.** Never burn a bridge.

Event Writing

I wanted to mention on the stats one thing is that another couple of things that have helped those stats get to where they are is – The page views are good too. I think that was up to 306,000 page views in a month. **I think when I last looked the other day I had 576 articles.**

Sonia: That's a lot for a seven month old site, guys.

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Shane: Yeah. I've written most all of those. There are a couple that have been written by some guest posters. It's hard to find guest posters when you're picky like me because I say SEO and they kind of look at me cross eyed like, "What?"

So I will say that a lot of those articles are more than 500 words and they're useful articles, not just news. **I think those page views are coming from the fact that people tend to, what I've noticed is that they'll read one and then they'll skip over and read another and another which I like. I want them to do that.**

Also another thing that's helped that is something I call **event writing**. I don't know if people are familiar with Glen Alsop, but he's another one of the online marketers, very young, very successful. He wrote about this. I kind of listened to what he said. I actually attempted that.

I know that people are familiar with the latest iPad 2 that came out. Well, what I did was two weeks before that **I wrote six articles, really long articles. I wrote those around questions that people would have like, "How do I use it? How do I choose one? Where do I buy one? How do I choose a data plan for one?"** I broke those out and I made those separate articles and I literally wrote them as if the device existed, based on all the rumors that were surrounding what we knew.

Then on the day of the announcement I did a little live blog where I was live blogging it. It wasn't necessarily for traffic. It was so that I can ingrain into that page that I was writing about this topic. Then after the end of the announcement I immediately published those articles. I kind of doctored them up a little bit and I immediately published them. That day I saw over 14,000 people.

The down side to that was they were all starting to leave comments and ask questions. I almost turned into like iPad technical support. I went on Twitter and almost said, "iPad technical support, how can I help you today?" It really was overwhelming to me.

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What it showed me though, is that **when you look at events that are happening you can kind of anticipate and when I anticipate I anticipate what people might be wanting to know.**

The Seth Godin Purple Cow Customer Experience

Then once they get there they see what's going on at the site and what I noticed is my subscribers really climbed about for a week. I started getting emails from people saying, "Geez, I'm really glad I found this site." A couple of times I did what I call Seth Godin's, *Purple Cow* customer experience. I had a couple people that if they take the time to tweet me and say, "Shane, I found your site. I really like it." I reply with, "Hey, thank you. How about TC Geeks will buy you an app?"

Sonia: Wow. Nice.

Shane: I got the most heartfelt email from somebody I did that to a couple weeks ago. She said, "I'm a teacher. We're on a budget. You have no idea how much this means to me." I was like, "Wow."

Sonia: What was your total investment for that relationship?

Shane: \$4.99.

Sonia: \$4.00. Five bucks.

Shane: It was five bucks. I have to say that these people see this and **they're even surprised when I comment back to them on a post that's six months old.**

Sonia: Right. It's fascinating how those kind of things start to show up. For example, on Copyblogger some of the links we get, SEO's want to like hang out in a dark alleys and hit us on the head to get these links because we get links from .edu sites which are very, very authoritative.

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Why do we do it? **We have thousands of pages of solid, extremely informative and yet highly digestible educational content about things people want to know about.**

Yeah. Sometimes an investment of spending an hour to write an article or an investment of \$5.00 to brighten somebody's day on Twitter, sometimes it will come back in a lateral way. You don't realize that that teacher might go on to – Well, did you say she went on to share your page with like a teacher's list?

Shane: Yeah. She thanked me and all. Then she said at the end, "Also what I want to do is put your site in my newsletter that goes out to 7,000 teachers." I said, "Well, thank you." So **reciprocity works as we know**, but it was not the only time I have done that. I ran a contest. I run contests often where I'll email app developers and what not and I'll say, "Hey, I like your product, but I'd like to run a contest with it and offer it to a reader." I'll do that.

Well, I had a gentleman come back in a reply and he said, "I really hope I win this. I just got back from Iraq." I was like, "Wow, this young guy just spent his –" I thought and I just emailed him back and said, "Look, here have a copy of it. You probably had an interesting time." He was overjoyed.

I don't do that often because you can't really get into becoming, I don't know, giving everything away. You can't become that person, but **I call this customer experience. I call it the *Purple Cow* where I like to wow people once in a while.**

Sonia: Yeah. And I think you're right. When it's not an expected, you know, **when it becomes the expected thing then it's not exciting any more. Then it's just a big entitlement game which is no fun.** But when it's occasional and unexpected that makes it exciting. That really does give people a jolt and a little thrill.

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Shane: Yeah, it does. Somebody commented. They said, "I really feel like you're building a small community here." I said, "Well, that's what the intent is, definitely." So that worked.

Go Outside of Your Box

I think too one thing about this traffic and stats there is another thing that helped was learning outside the typical affiliate niche. I think I mentioned that, but it's really true. I've gotten to do some articles on Copyblogger which really have helped me because it's totally outside of my realm. Yet **when I sit down and have to write those I really have to think outside the box. I like that.**

Chris Garrett has this course, *Authority Blogger*. I did that because I met him at Blog World. I really liked what he was talking about. Honestly, that course really helped me apply those techniques he was teaching to my own site. **As I started doing that I noticed things starting to happen on my site.**

Same thing with some of the others I've done. Darren has some great things that I've done that he's offered on his ProBlogger.

Sonia: Yeah. I love Darren's, *30 Days to a Better Blog*.

Shane: That's the one.

Sonia: I'll give all you guy's links to this. They won't be affiliate links, but these are really good resources. I agree. I mean, I have them. I use them. I just think they're really kind of cornerstone.

***30 Days to a Better Blog* is such a great idea because it's manageable, but it's kind of like a focused sprint,** "Okay, I'm going to sprint through and see a big improvement and then I'm going to take a breather." So it's kind of got a beginning, a middle and an end.

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Shane: I think these things are typical of this – I think this is the biggest message here. You can look outside your niche or your area and you can take – I think actually Brian described it perfectly over in *Teaching Sells*. **He gave that example of Copyblogger of being taking age old copy writing and applying it to internet marketing.**

Sonia: Right. And social media.

Shane: And social media.

Sonia: Blogging, social networking. There was no such thing as Twitter when Copyblogger was launched. I think it pre-dates Facebook, although I can never remember the dawn of time when Facebook was originally born and it was just college students. There was no such thing as LinkedIn.

So these are all brand new platforms and those old days, five years ago, it was Digg and bookmarking was the big thing. Those things change, but that social media community and just the blogging community. **Nobody ever combined awesome headlines with virtual community before. That was just a totally new combination. It really works.**

Shane: It really does. I have seen a massive increase from just applying those techniques that I'm learning outside of my realm. But it doesn't mean I have to copy. It doesn't mean I have to go and say, "Well, I'm going to copy exactly what Copyblogger does." **I'm not copying. I'm taking what they're doing and applying it to my situation.**

Sonia: Right. You're recreating it. **One of the best things you can do is keep your eye out for things that are working.** I'm a catalogue junky. I mean, I just love catalogues. I love them. It's terrible. It's so embarrassing. But you can take direct mail catalogues and other pieces of direct mail that you get, like maybe you get a

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really interesting direct mail piece for a dentist. You are a creative writing coach. **Look at this piece for a dentist and see what it is about it that kind of hooks you, that kind of appeals to you and then reproduce that on your blog.**

Shane: Absolutely.

Sonia: Or do a series of articles in a writing magazine or do a series of editorials in a writing magazine that use those. So it's always translation. **I find the further afield from your topic you go very often the better results you get because your own field if everybody has seen that technique already it's not as effective as if you take something from way outside.** Or you can take the same topic, but a really different market.

I'm the first to tell people this. **I take lots of topic ideas from Dan Kennedy. So we have the same market, but we have very different customers.** There is a tiny, tiny little intersection between me and Dan Kennedy of people who check both of us out. But I speak to a different market.

Shane: Malcolm Gladwell does the same thing.

Sonia: Yeah.

Shane: I mean, **a lot of his books are based on studies that were done decades ago, but he's repurposed them.** It's the same concept. It happened with Henry Ford didn't come up with the assembly line. He didn't wake up one night. He actually visited a meat packing industry in Chicago and said, "This is working. Now I'm going to apply it to my own situation." That actually does work.

Sonia: It really does. Very often businesses get stuck and business people get stuck. That is just a tremendous way to get unstuck.

Lucky Break?

I want to jump back to one thing because we touched on it for just a second, but I think that a lot of people are going to listen to this seminar and they're going to say, **"Well, yeah, Shane's successful. He's writing about the iPad. I mean, I'm writing about naked mole rats.** I'm not going to find any success." I want to talk about that. Naked mole rats is my phrase.

Shane: Sonia, I have to tell you I was in San Diego when they first brought the naked mole rats. I'm not joking. I was the first one ever to get the naked mole rat t-shirt.

Sonia: That makes me feel so good. If you ever hear me say naked mole rats they're these weird insect-like rodents. They're very interesting animals. They were featured in a great Errol Morris film called "Fast, Cheap and Out of Control". **The reason I use naked mole rats is because as far as I can see I don't think there is a way to monetize naked mole rat content.** They're fascinating. They're extremely interesting. People who are interested in them are fascinated by them, but by and large they're not a market. Apart from the t-shirt, t-shirts are a good way to go with non-monetizable topics

But if you want to make money please don't write about naked mole rats because it's not a money topic. So there are topics out there and how do you know what they are? Here is one hint. It's what you get spam for.

So, weight loss, sex, you know, sex, connection, romance. I mean, it's a pretty strong biological driver there. It's result parenting.

Shane: Fitness.

Sonia: Fitness. Fitness kind of goes between sort of weight loss and sex appeal, right? We want to look good. I know I want to feel good. To some degree longevity.

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People want to live longer. They want to feel better. They just want to have a better life. Money and marketing which is a subset of money.

These are the topics that – Technology is a big one. Gadgets and toys is a huge, huge topic these days. Fashion, and again that kind of goes back a little bit to sex appeal and looking good and feeling confident. These are topics that have a ton of competition because they have a ton of readers and buyers.

So you found a trend. But again, as you say, Apple says, "Okay, we are going to recreate a market for the tablet computer." There was an interesting article. I don't remember where I saw it. The tablet computer has been around in some form for a good 20 years. Longer than that if you're going to be a jerk about it and go back to the difference engine, but I don't think you can call the difference engine a tablet computer because it's the size of a room.

But you know that idea of a tablet computer and in a sense a tablet computer is a laptop that doesn't fold. It's been around. People tried it. They came to the conclusion there was no market for this device. Then Apple came along put the Apple goodness on it and made a market. So you saw, "**Okay, this company has a history of launching winners is going to launch a tablet. I'm not sure yet how I'm going to monetize that, but I know I'm going to be able to find traffic.**"

That's not just Shane's a lucky idiot and this topic fell on him and he won the lottery.

You saw a trend. You acted on the opportunity quickly and then you applied business knowledge to the topic. You applied what you learned. You applied what you learned in Third Tribe. You applied what you learned from free sources like Glen's blog, Sugarrae's blog, Copyblogger. You applied the advice you got from mentors that you met in the forums in the Third Tribe.

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You applied all that and **you made I bet a bunch of mistakes and you had some blind alleys, but you kept going forward.** I just want to make sure that people don't gloss over it and say, "Well, I write about something nobody cares about so I can't make money."

Two points on that.

One, yeah. If you're writing about something that's not something people will pay money for, that's not a business. That might be a very passionate hobby and there is nothing wrong with a very passionate hobby. If you want to run a business you've got to find a topic people will pay for. They will pay for something. They will pay for a product or they'll pay for education or whatever it might be or a t-shirt.

Shane: Yeah. Or a t-shirt. That doesn't mean that I'm selling iPads, because I'm certainly not. If I can sit and sell them all day, great. That would be wonderful, but it doesn't mean that that's what I'm doing. Although I am monetizing.

Sonia: Why don't we talk about that? We haven't covered that. Where does your revenue come from on the site?

Monetizing

Shane: Well, I have four sources. **I use AdSense. One thing I want to say about AdSense is when I started this that was another point of differentiation.** I did not want this to be cluttered and littered with ads because I didn't want people to arrive and leave so quickly disgraced by all the ads.

So what I did was **I spent a lot of time watching.** Google has this thing in Analytics called Page Analytics. What it does is it shows you little bubbles of percentage points of where people have clicked on your site.

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Well, I didn't use it for that. I used it for something else. **I used it to see where people were clicking the most because that was where their attention was.** So when I switched over to using the Genesis theme I had the person, Nick was his name, that helped developed it for me. **I had him place those in very specific spots. I experimented for about two weeks.**

Sonia: Oh, that's smart.

Shane: Yeah. **I used those in-page analytics showing me where people were clicking and I literally put the ads right there.**

Sonia: Yeah. Very good.

Shane: I can tell you, Sonia, **it tripled the AdSense income.**

Sonia: Right.

Shane: But they're not annoying. Luckily, Google only lets you have three on a page. So you can't get away with having 10. So that's one little area.

The other one is **I do the Amazon affiliate.** Amazon has this neat thing that you can use where you can type in a keyword, like I type in iPad cases. It will randomize and show different products. I place that in specific locations.

Well, with Amazon I learned, and this was the most fascinating eye opener I have ever had, was I didn't realize that **Amazon puts a cookie on their computer. So when they go shopping I benefit.** During December I went on there and I have to tell you I laughed because I saw 15 Hello Kitty toasters.

Sonia: That's pretty amazing.

Shane: I scratched my head. I know. I sat there and I thought, "Now wait a minute. Should I go on Third Tribe and ask this?" Which I did. "Or what is going on? How

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to people go from reading about an app to buying a Hello Kitty toaster." So somebody finally explained to me like what was going on. I kind of felt that I should have known this, but you just don't know everything. I said, "Oh, that's what's happening." So that's why I'm selling over vacuums.

Sonia: Right. **Anything that people buy in that session when they open and you start the session you get a commission on.** So Darren Rowse has sometimes quite eye opening. If you follow Darren on Twitter, which everybody should because he's lovely, sometimes he'll say, "Oh my dear." Darren of course is a former minister. He's a very stand up fellow. Some of the things people will buy from one of his links is pretty funny. Some of the other items who are interested in photography can be a little bit of ahem moment.

Shane: Yeah. His December one was quite fascinating. This happened to me the other day. I went on and somebody had bought a Philips defibrillator machine.

Sonia: Wow.

Shane: I thought, "Okay, no pun intended, but are my posts that shocking?" This is a purchase that's really not one you just make on a whim.

Sonia: Right. I think I'll get a defibrillator while I'm here.

Shane: While I'm reading this article on the iPad I think I'll... So the Amazon has been very interesting for me I have to say. There are many ways you can use it. Amazon, for all that it's worth, you can click through and you can see people's reviews. It's a pretty decent – I mean, it's used a lot.

So I use AdSense and Amazon, but I also use Kontera. It's just in-text links. So it goes through and it finds the content of the page and it underlines and you can click. It's not annoying. So I try to do things that aren't annoying.

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Then also when I talk about apps I use Link Share and that's an affiliate. So basically I work for Google.

Sonia: I want to piggy back on what you said about the placement of your AdSense links. As your site evolves there might be something, for example, on Commission Junction. Commission Junction is another great site to find affiliate products. The cool thing about Commission Junction is they have real-world products. So sometimes you can get – Maybe next week there will arise some really awesome laptop case company and they have a program like Commission Junction. You can use those AdSense spots.

You can identify the high performing position and at any time in your business you can swap out a higher profit advertisement as they become available. It's a little hard at this point to know, "Well, what information product? What course about the iPad would I ever sell?" But if there was such a thing as a high dollar or low dollar \$47.00 course about the iPad you always have that ad space there that you know is a high performing spot that you can put your own ad in.

Copyblogger took ads for a long time. **Then over time the sites evolved and now we use that advertising for our products. You don't have to start that way.** There is no either or. You don't have to, but I love the way that you were analytical and focused and in just a couple of weeks you identified your high performing spots for your ads. That is going to vary a little bit from site design to site design and market and topic. So you didn't just take received wisdom just put it in the upper right hand side. **You actually did some testing to find specifically just the perfect position. So that's really cool.**

Analytics

Shane: Yeah. That really did help. It made a difference. I was quite shocked that just watching where people go – You can use Heat Maps and there are all kinds of

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things. I choose Analytics. It was right there and I thought, "This is an interesting way to use it. A little different."

Sonia: Yeah. There is one called Crazy Egg which is interesting. I like Analytics because you're really measuring what people click on. If you use AdSense you're specifically looking at where do people click on an ad. So for me I'm a simple soul. I like the direct approach.

Shane: Yeah. Well then the other one that I use is Webmaster Tools. I use that because it tells me if there are crawl errors. I'm very almost OCD to the point of if I have crawl errors and Google is telling me that, I'm going to correct those right now because I don't want to put myself in a position of waking up one day and I'm wiped off the map.

Sonia: Right.

Shane: Not that that would cause that but ...

Sonia: Why don't you explain to people what a crawl error is just for those who are not as savvy as you are?

Shane: In Webmaster Tools it has a section where you register your site. Then you go on. **The crawl errors are pages that when Google bot crawls your site, pages that it couldn't find, things that have moved.** I deleted a post before and Google bot has crawled my site and because that post was linked to other places it can't find it anymore and it tells me that.

Also it looks for problems in your site map. So if you have a site map and the Google bot knows about it because you've told it in Webmaster Tools you have a site map. If it's crawling through there and it can't find something that it's looking for based on what you had before it will tell you that there is a crawl error.

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Basically, those are just technical errors. I don't think there is any hard, fast data to say, "You're not going to do well if you have these." Certainly I have had a few on there and it hasn't really affected me, but if you weigh everything out I spend a lot of time over on SEOmoz, and I read a lot of their content and this is where I've learned a lot on my SEO.

Sonia: Yeah. They're a great site.

Shane: They're an excellent site, excellent resource. In fact, Rand Fishkin just released a book last year on learning SEO. It is a great, great resource. If you look at in the context of all SEO I just tend to think, "Well, the least crawl errors I can have is probably the better."

Sonia: It's probably better. One nifty thing that you can do and some of the premium Wordpress themes, Genesis is one of them, it's really sweet. There is just a little field in there. So if you have a page maybe it's not relevant anymore you can redirect that page. You just type in the field. So maybe I've got some links to this page already redirect them to another page that's going to be relevant.

Don't do something dopey like put it on your sales page. Put it on something relevant that people are going to be happy to see. That's a nice little way, if you do publish a post that for whatever reason you'd like to not have anymore, you can just send that traffic to something else that's going to be useful.

Shane: Yeah. That's a good point, Sonia, because I was using another tool prior to Genesis to do those redirects. Then when I switched over it was built in and it was great. **That's what I do with those crawl errors. I go and I find where they were trying to go and I redirect them to something. But you're right it has to be something relevant.** So if I change the name of something I redirect it to what it's supposed to be or sometimes just to my home page.

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Sonia: Yeah. Sure. No harm in that.

Shane: Webmaster Tools, for those that don't know is different than Analytics. **It will show you what people searched for to get to your site. Whereas Analytics shows you once they're gotten to your site.** So I use Webmaster Tools. Every Sunday I sit down and I go through and I look at the percentages of rising key phrases that people have searched for to get to me.

It Takes Work

I look at those and I say, "Okay, there is intent behind this. What is that intent?" That's how I determine what I'm going to write about next. I know I would love to be, and I should probably get to this point someday, like Chris Brogan can write like 10 posts and have them ready to go.

With my site I post three times a day. I'm more under the gun always. I'm not suggesting that's a good thing to do, but for my niche it's more of how I work I guess.

Sonia: Yeah. Also, I think that's a factor in the kind of topic that you're covering. So you're covering emerging technology. There is a lot of news that's got to be addressed.

For somebody who is in back pain or creative writing or gardening **there is no need to post three times a day because your topic doesn't change the same way.** So you might have a marathon session where you say, "Okay, for two weeks I'm going to write three posts a day just to really get some awesome content out there." But that's not going to be your norm. So every topic has got its own. **If you want your 186,000 visits guys you're going to have to put some work in it.**

Shane: Yeah. It is. I know some people would say, "Gosh, that's just a lot of posting." Well, it is, but there is a lot to cover. For a site like this I think for what

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I'm doing right now, I know on a few other big, huge branded affiliate sites they post like once a day, but I'll get there. Right now this is how it's working, but it is a lot of work.

Sonia: It's a lot of work. I don't want anybody in this to come away thinking the way that some unnamed good teachers in the affiliate marketing space, but none the less people who are selling courses and they want to make it seem easy. **They kind of gloss over the fact that this kind of business, any kind of business, is work.**

If it was paint by numbers then we would all be outsourcing it to orphans in Haiti to do the content and we would just be rolling around in money all day long. If it was easy we could just outsource it to, I don't know, unemployed steel workers.

Why on Earth would we even be having this conversation? We would just be having so much money we'd be trying to figure out how to spend it all. **Business is work. Business is about work. It's not about being a slave.** It's not about being a slave to your company and the old bricks and mortar thing where you were putting in 60, 70, 80 hours a week. It doesn't have to be about that. But it's also not about Chris Garrett's wonderful. He loves this expression, "You push the button on the internet cash machine and the cash just starts flowing out."

Shane: Yeah. I think Darren said that before too in some context about the internet can be an ATM. Well, it's true and I like what you said. It is work, but I also want to say that all you have to do is focus and look at this as a business.

People, Not Traffic

Literally, this is interesting, but when I look at my site I see a store front. I do. I see a brick and mortar store front and I go, "**People are walking in my door. A lot of them per day are walking in that door.**" **It's not just traffic. These are actual**

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customers. So what can I do for them? So I actually visualize it as being that. I think of it as a real, little, mini business.

Sonia: I think that's what makes the difference. I mean, **you care about things like customer experience. You don't talk about traffic. You talk about people.** That's a very different mindset than the traditional affiliate get some eyeballs and get some clicks and set it and forget it kind of mindset which is very limiting. In the long run, frankly, I don't think that the ROI is there for most people.

Shane: No.

Sonia: Well, this has been really good. I don't want to overwhelm people. I mean, there are so many things that we could throw at them, but gosh, I think they just have a lot that they can already implement. I have been scribbling and scribbling notes about links that I will include in the seminar page to both free content and then back to some of the Third Tribe seminars where we've covered some of these questions in more detail if you need more detailed resources, more detailed information about how to put these things into place. Is there like a last thought that you want to leave us with, a last point that you want to end on to kind of send folks off with a bang?

Shane: With a bang. Yes. Please pursue the naked mole rat. No.

Sonia: Somebody is got to be able to make money with this. Prove me wrong.

Create Your Own Market

Shane: Actually, the one thought that I thought would be useful is about duplication. I do see this a lot. **I see people trying to duplicate the successes of other blogs and sites and topics. The thing is with that is you can't ever duplicate what somebody has done.**

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The one example that I can think of that's just recent is, and I hate to go back to Apple again, but I will, with the iPhone. Everybody saw the success of that and starting to duplicate it. **Well, while they were duplicating Apple went off and created an entirely different product and dominated a new market.** This is also called the blue ocean strategy where you go and create an entirely different market.

But the point is that no one can duplicate what they have done. They can make knock-offs, but they can't duplicate that success. I say that in context of sites where you can take what people are teaching and **take those successes** just like you're example of getting that dental advertisement in the mail. **Then put it on top of what you're doing and try to apply it to what you're doing** so that you're not copying somebody. I know I think we see this in social media. Everybody wants to be a social media consultant. **Why not take that and do something completely different with it? Create your own market, your own world.**

Sonia: Absolutely. That's where we see the most success. I mean, there are quite a few Copyblogger clones, but in particular there are, I don't know. I have to wonder how many ProBlogger clones there are out there. You know sites that are like, "How to make money with blogging." Most of these people have never made any money with blogging which is kind of interesting.

Shane: Exactly. Yeah. They're trying to copy Darren. If I were going to start a blog about blogging **I certainly wouldn't even attempt to try to duplicate that. It's already been done.**

Sonia: I have a close associate who is taking the Third Tribe model, the Copyblogger model and she is taking that – I'm going to make up something because I don't want to blow her strategy. Let's say she's taking it to the unemployed steel worker. She's taking it the unemployed auto worker. **She's taking it to a niche you would never think had anything to do with blogging to a whole new audience of people who are not particularly technical, but they are just on**

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the cusp of that, "Holy crap. I have to get a web presence. I don't know how to do it. I don't even know what Twitter is, but it sounds scary."

She's becoming the liaison between her market that she knows very well because she's been a member of that community for decades, to this new Third Tribe, which is very cutting edge, I mean, it's so funny. We look around and a couple of thousand of us and we think, "Whoa, this is a big tribe." This is a tiny tribe.

This is really the cutting edge. So when you're in Third Tribe think about ways that you can bring this knowledge. We've all heard it enough that we say, "Yeah, yeah, yeah. I know that." But you know what? **There are all kinds of people who don't know it yet. So take this and translate it to a new market, preferably one that makes money.**

There are really exciting opportunities and people always ask if you were going to do it from scratch what would you do? I think that's what I would probably do. If I hadn't made the connection with Brian and become part of the Copyblogger business, which has been such a privilege, I think I would have gone into a niche. **I would have gone into a vertical that's a proven money maker and brought what I've learned from my own study of sites like Copyblogger.** I was a Copyblogger fan girl before I was ever part of the company. I would bring that learning out to new markets because I think it's just wide open.

Shane: It is. It really does work. I would say the same thing. I can't say that I'm not going to be interested in doing other things. I will. I can take all that Third Tribe and Authority Blogger and all of that, and even Teaching Sells to an extent, a massive extent. I can do what I'm doing on this site and I can do something else, but I'm taking all of that, but I'm not going to try and duplicate somebody and duplicate that, but I will definitely apply all of this. Nobody is perfect. We all, like you said, stumble along the way, but that's okay. We're all human.

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Sonia: That's right. Every failure is a data point.

Shane: It is a data point.

Sonia: It's data that didn't work. It's all good. Alright, Shane, I want to respect your time and I also, as you all know, I like to make sure that I stop while we can still think and act before you get overwhelmed by information that we can't move. I want to really thank you for sharing your story with us. It's just so wonderful to see somebody putting theory into practice and making it happen and seeing results. So thank you so much for joining us.

Shane: Thank you. Thank you very much.

Sonia: I've really, really enjoyed it. I always enjoy talking to you.

Shane: Yes.

Sonia: So thank you all Tribers. This is Sonia Simone with Inside the Third Tribe.

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