



STSE Podcast Episode #004

SEO Insight & Running a Side Business Like a Full-Time Company with Ryan Coté

GERALD: Welcome to the Self Employment Podcast with Gerald Vinci, Episode 4.

ANNOUNCER: Welcome to stepstoselfemployment.com your online business resource helping future business owners and entrepreneurs build a solid foundation towards financial success and independence. Now your host, owner of a successful marketing and web design firm, writer, blogger, and entrepreneur, Gerald D. Vinci.

GERALD: Hey everyone, welcome back to another episode of the Self-Employment Podcast. Thanks again for joining us. If you have not checked out any of our other podcast episodes I encourage you to do so. So far I have been posting these in chronological order. So starting at the beginning we will let you start this journey right along with me.

As those of you know, who have tuned in before, steps to self-employment, is a new venture for me. I am launching both a website, stepstoselfemployment.com, as well as this podcast in tandem. I want to be able to track and report my progress to all of you.

While the purpose of the website and the podcast is to help others on their self-employment journey, I wanted to share as much of the process of getting STSE up and running as well as the self-employment podcast out in front of the listeners too. I am recording this episode on January 26th, 2014, a Sunday morning. It has been about a week since the last podcast interview with Debbie Rustin, which went great.

So I am really looking forward to diving in to yet another podcast. I know in episode 1, I had talked about doing a monthly or bi-weekly podcast and I really want to deliver on that promise. I think it is such a great communication tool. It really lets all of you get inside the mind of a successful small business owner or entrepreneur when I do these interviews.

I mentioned in the last episode, my wife and I are getting ready to move our kids across country to Monterey, California. We have roughly four weeks until we leave and every week it gets closer to the move our lives get a little crazier than the week before. Anyone who has moved across the United States knows just what I am talking about. Throw the fact we are a military family, into the mix, who must coordinate the move, based on how they do things and it complicates things one step further.

Our realm committed to having six interviews completed before we make the trip, so the added



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pressure is definitely piling things up a bit, but it is all for the greater good.

As soon as we get to Monterrey, which will be the first week in March, I plan to focus a great chunk of my time to finalizing steps to self-employment and launching the site. So by the end of March this site will be live and you will be listening to the podcast. The unfortunate thing about these first few podcasts is I am recording them prior to launching the site. So I know they are dated but, regardless, I want to be able to track my progress with the site and for posterity sake. It is only fair that all you get to experience things from the beginning as well.

For those familiar with STSE you know that I have a panel of contributing writers who are all publishing articles monthly on the website. Without all of them I would not be anywhere close to as far along as I am. So I just want to stop and take a moment and say, "Thank you," to all of you who have contributed their time and are producing awesome content for all of our followers to soak in.

That is also why I have dedicated the first twelve interview slots to the writers for STSE. They deserve the spotlight and first dibs. If you have not done so, check out the website stepstoselfemployment.com and visit the "Our Writers" section. Every contributing writer has their own bio page that lets you learn more about them, their business, and their professional background.

It also shows you a list of all the articles they have written for the site right along with their bio. I feel like we have such a diverse group of writers from so many fields that all of you can find someone who you relate best. I encourage you to reach out to them. All of us believe in this project because we were right where you are. We know that every little connection you make helps and having someone who has been through what you are now experiencing can be one of the greatest assets you can find early on in your journey.

I would go so far as to say finding other like-minded individuals you connect with, is the key to success, no matter what stage you are in. Even in my experience having over a decade of business ownership under my belt, I still connect with others daily for advice, guidance, and a general sense of commendatory and friendship. It is so important to establish those connections and cultivate them just like you would any friendship. So don't ever feel like this is a journey you need to make all alone. There are plenty of people out there willing to help and all you have to do is ask. Seriously, it's that simple.



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So please, here is me asking you to head over to stepstoselfemployment.com and you will find an ever expanding library of informative articles written for you by our contributing authors. It is all geared toward helping you on your own self-employment journey. In addition to our panel of writers I provide you with a bunch of resources to help you run or grow your business. A weekly newsletter full of actionable advice and info about the upcoming week's show and website updates. The best part, of course, is it is all free. So what do you have to lose?

We also will offer other premium products such as one on one coaching, webinars, e-books, and video tutorials further down the road. We are in the fledgling stages to making stepstoselfemployment.com a powerful resource for you. I ask all of you to come help us build it together into an online business community that will truly help you and others like you on your path to success.

So enough about me and the podcast, I really want to get into today's show and I have such an awesome guest with us today. Ryan Coté of WP Amplify. He is owner of a search operation optimization company specializing in SEO and web support services for word press website owners. I say awesome because Ryan is directly responsible for helping me grow my own business, Vinci Designs, into a major player in online marketing and design through his killer SEO. I say awesome because Ryan is my business partner and provides SEO service to my customers who need our help. I say awesome because I have, literally, known Ryan since my parents moved us to Ken log, New Jersey in the third grade.

Ryan and I are lifelong friends. We are in our mid 30's now and he is, literally, the only person I have known for this length of time, other than family, that I speak to with any sort of regularity. He and I speak as often as three to five days a week since we share numerous customers. We also bounce ideas and plans for our businesses back and forth regularly as well. I, kind of, have a pipe dream that maybe someday we merge the two companies but who knows what the future holds just yet.

Ryan was a big help in advising me how best to put together STSE and he has always been a strong shoulder to lean on whenever I am doubtful about my ideas or figuring out what might be the best move for my customers. Our partnership has worked so well for both of us primarily because it is built on honesty, trust, and keeping our customers best interest in mind when we come up with a plan. Since we share ownership over most of our mutual customers there is a



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financial incentive for both of us to put forth our best effort as well.

The bottom line is, I know, regardless of what is going on in his life, Ryan is going to give me great advice and not lead me astray. He also knows that it is a two way street and I will do the same for him any day of the week. I am almost worried that Ryan and I are so familiar with each other that asking questions and staying on task for this interview might be difficult. So I will do my best to squeeze as much feedback out of Ryan as I can for all of you because I know he has such great info for all of you.

Ryan founded WP Amplify in 2013 but he has had other SEO businesses in the past and has been involved with online marketing and sales for the past decade, if not longer. He has wrote all that knowledge and experience into a well-structured, affordable SEO package that can help any business model generate better traffic results and rankings for their online presence. You can learn more about his company by visiting wpamplify.com.

Ryan also runs and publishes content for a blog that chronicles all of his internet business projects. It is also a great place to go for advice and wisdom from a solid group of online marketers and internet entrepreneurs. He is all about transparency and truly lays it out, on the line, for people to see and read.

So make sure to check out internetbusinesspassion.com as well. Well, I think, I have set the stage for what is in store today and I am really looking forward to getting into the meet of the interview. So without further ado I give you Ryan Coté of WP Amplify.

RYAN: Start now?

GERALD: Yep.

RYAN: Alright, right one, two, three.

GERALD: Well, welcome to the show Ryan.

RYAN: Yeah, before we get started I just want to mention two things. I have got two young kids and I am downstairs recording this on a Sunday in my basement like my "man cave." But I can hear my two young kids is running around like crazy upstairs. So I am hoping they do not bust down the basement. I do not have a lock on the door, so it is quite possible. I just want to mention



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that. Oh, and also, I have got a small of a cold that I have been fighting for about ten days now. So I am a little congested and that is why, so I just wanted to get those two things out of the way.

GERALD: Oh, no, that is cool, yeah. Both my boys are downstairs too so that is a, on a Sunday, when you work from home it is, kind of, expected you have to do the family thing, too.

RYAN: Yep.

GERALD: So I am really looking forward to this interview and I want to say just thanks for taking the time out of your week and weekend to do this for me. You heard my intro for you. Would you say I have described you, and your career, and our working relationship pretty spot on?

RYAN: Yeah, yeah, that was good.

GERALD: Good.

RYAN: It was very good.

GERALD: Okay, well, I have got a lot of questions for you. As you know, we, usually, end up talking about a whole bunch of stuff whenever I ask just a simple question. So, I figure we would just get right into it and see where it takes us. So the first question I have for you is do you define yourself as a business owner, an entrepreneur, or both. In your opinion, what is the difference?

RYAN: So, I definitely consider myself an entrepreneur because I remember at a young age trying to sell things. I have always had this drive in me to do my own thing or I, usually, build my own thing. I think that is definitely one of the definitions of an entrepreneur. I guess it is like a by-product. I am a business owner because I run WP Amplify now. I own that business. I am a business owner. So I think being a business owner is a bi-product of entrepreneurship.

I think you could be a business owner though without being an entrepreneur. Let's say you inherit a business that you really do not want. Technically, you are a business owner. You do not have that entrepreneurial spirit. Have that drive to grow it and build it, what have you. I consider myself, first and foremost, entrepreneur but as a by-product of that a business owner too. Does that make sense?



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GERALD: Yeah, yeah, I do not think you can really keep both on at the same time. It is almost like you are either one or the other. For me, anyways, I feel like I am flipping a switch. I would go into entrepreneur mode and that is when I am thinking of ideas and, kind of, like, expanding what I have going on. Then when it comes down to the nitty gritty of the business, I am just focused on getting stuff done, paying bills, assigning tasks, dealing with customer requests, and stuff like that. I do not really see myself as an entrepreneur during those times.

RYAN: Yeah, I agree with that.

GERALD: When you first start out I feel like you have that entrepreneur mentality. Then as you get into the business it is almost like the business ownership side takes over. I think, you though, you are way more of an entrepreneur than I am. I tend to start one thing and kind of hold on to it and you're more of a, I don't want to say you're a starter, not a finisher, but you get great ideas and then you keep building and building and take that idea to the next level everytime. Which is really cool.

RYAN: I try too I, definitely, have a history of bouncing around a little bit. I get sidetracked by all these shiny ideas that I have. But I will say that all the major successes that I have had with my various internet businesses, usually, is where I focus on it and just kept on working at it until it became successful. Or, in some cases, it just does not work out, I move on. The major successes I have had up to this time is where I really focus on it and kept on working through it even when things were not looking that great and just figure out a way to make it work.

Pivot a couple times and then my SEO business, WP Amplify, which used to be website booster shot, I pivoted a couple times of that. I am very happy with where I am now. So the path from A to B, from start to whatever your definition of success is, it is, usually, not a straight line. It, usually...

GERALD: No, definitely not.

RYAN:Yeah, so once you get lucky, which kind of happens, I guess.

GERALD: So the business WP Amplify, can you tell us a little bit more about that and why you chose this idea?

RYAN: Well, so it started out as website booster shot, back in 2010. My original idea was to do like these one-time booster shots for sites. Pick the key words for them and then optimize



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your site. Then build a bunch of links and drip them out over three months, or whatever. Then collect a one-time payment. I did not realize how awful it is to have to keep on hunting for new clients and the fact that SEO is not a onetime thing. I was trying to be different.

I thought this might be one way to set myself apart from the other SEO companies. It is, kind of, doing the client a service. SEO, you can get some results with a onetime optimization but it is not going to, you are not going to maximize your results. I have had some clients where they have been with me for over a year and the first six months were descent and the last six months we are awesome. So SEO has a build effect. So I quickly changed that to a monthly plan. Then I morphed that into, pretty recently, into WP Amplify. I like WordPress. So WP Amplify works on only WordPress work websites. I do have non WordPress sites because I can work on them. It is just the way I am positioning WP Amplify is for WordPress. I like it. I like the platform, the plug-ins you can use, the way you can configure things. It makes SEO a little bit more, I want to say easier but you just have more tools at your disposable. So I, kind of, just, I don't know, I liked the idea of having an SEO service just for small businesses using WordPress. It is a very popular platform. I use it myself. That is, kind of, where it morphed into, or how it morphed into that.

GERALD: What are some of the differences within WordPress that make it unique compared to some other services you might offer to non-WordPress customers?

RYAN: Well, there is the plug-ins, like you have your smart phone. Like an iPhone has different apps you can install. Well WordPress has different plug-ins you can install. You can have SEO plug-ins you have got thousands and thousands of different options. You can, kind of, tweak a site to, kind of, help certain on-page SEO factors. Also with WordPress when you create new posts, it pings the search engines. So they quickly learn about your new content. I guess, overall, it is a great publishing content platform. It feeds well into SEO because of all the plug-ins that you can install. Static sites are fine too but it just a little bit more manual, the process with static sites.

GERALD: Yeah, that was, actually, going to be my next question. Is WordPress, inherently, a more effective SEO tool or does it present more challenges for good results than a static site or traditional HTML website.

RYAN: As long as you are configuring WordPress. WordPress does have some challenges with duplicate content and what have you. As long as you know how to tweak the site, I think, it is the ultimate SEO and content publishing platform. I really do. They are constantly improving it,



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too. They are constantly releasing new updates. I like it, I like it a lot.

GERALD: Yeah, I just happened to find an article today from Marco Sark. He talks about Matt Cutts praising WordPress as the number one tool for bloggers who are interested in having an SEO friendly website.

RYAN: Yeah, well, Google is all about content. WordPress is first and foremost a content blogging platform. So I am not surprised that he is saying that.

GERALD: So, in the intro, I also mentioned, internetbusinesspassion.com. That is, kind of, like your side passion project. Can you just talk real briefly about how that came about and where you see that going?

RYAN: That is a tough one. I started that blog because I have always wanted to have a blog that, kind of, outlines what I am doing and try to be as transparent as possible without putting my projects at jeopardy, I have seen cases with Pat Flynn and Spencer Huss where they publish their websites they are doing. Then they get negative SEO at them and they get attacked. I just do not want to deal with that. The projects that I am running, the ones that are making me money, those are important to me and my family. It is not like just a side thing I am just playing around with.

GERALD: Fun money or something?

RYAN: Yeah, yeah, fun money exactly. So I try to be as transparent as possible without being reckless. I don't really know where I am going to go next to be honest with you. I am using it as a way just to have a blog and build a name for myself. I am using it to network with other people. I have interviewed Joby Dumas, and Jim Wang. Some of these guys I have stayed in touch with it is just an email relationship. It is not like I am best friends with him now but it is just a networking tool. I am trying to build my name, trying to network with other people, have an outlet for my projects and just, honestly, I do not know where I am going to go with it.

I have got some affiliate links on there but it is not making me any money right now. I am not ready to focus on using it for that. I have no idea where it is going to take me. I am just going to keep on trying to network with people and just put out content, when I can, and see where it goes. It is just like, really, WP Amplify is my main focus. That is just a side project that I am going to keep going, and use as a networking tool, and see where it takes me.



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GERALD: Yeah, a lot of the big bloggers will tell you, too, they spent years developing their brand and their blog until it really started reaping the benefits for them. So I am interested to see where it goes. I really like the content that you have on it and, I think, that any time you can interview these really successful entrepreneurs and get them to give a little bit of insight. You are just giving everybody else a place to go. Tap into their mind a little bit more and it is really cool.

RYAN: Yeah, I wish I was just a better - I consider myself a descent writer but actually, writing the content. I still have a hard time with, actually, just sitting down and writing the content. It just takes me forever. For you, you can write like a million words in a second. For me, it just like, for some reason I always have writers block, I think, they call it. I am hoping the more I do it, the more it will flow out. Like the article I did for you for STSE, it didn't take me all too long. It, kind of, flowed out somewhat nicely. So I am hoping I am developing some sort of creativity with my writing now.

GERALD: Yeah, you just have to stick with it. The more you do it, the easier it gets. It is the same with podcasting too. It is like, I know this in only episode four, but compared to where I was in episode one - I just feel so much more comfortable talking on the mic. I scripted every single word in episode one. Now I might script the intro but everything else is pretty much is just off the cuff, which is nice.

So how did you get started in the industry itself?

RYAN: If I think back to, I graduated college in 2001. I started, about a year after that, I remember putting up my first eBook, a fitness eBook. Try to sell it at quick bank. Then I had some other sites. I was trying to build traffic to it and I just, kind of, fell into SEO. I was doing pay-per-click for a while too when I was in my affiliate marketing stage like 2007-2008. I was always like was just teaching myself SEO, trying to build traffic, how to build links. It is so different now with SEO. It is like a much different landscape than it was back then. I always would have to have interest in SEO.

I did pay-per-click because I was just looking for that immediate traffic but in the background I was always trying to learn how to optimize the site and get it free traffic. Well, it is not really free because it is your time. There is no money being made. So, just self-taught really. I have taken some courses. I am taking another course coming up here starting in the middle or beginning of February in SEO, an eight week boot camp.



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So, I am always taking different courses but I also just self-taught by trial and error. When you have an interest in something you do a lot of reading about it, you try it for yourself, and learn from your mistakes. So I would say just about a slow evolution for the last 10+ years of accommodation of self, being self-taught, and just taking courses from people I trust.

GERALD: What type of training do you recommend for anybody who is interested? Are there courses, certificates, degrees that can, kind of, elevate your knowledge and skill set or do you think, since it changes so often, is there really value in that?

RYAN: Well, yeah, I think there is value in taking, I would say committed to one course a year might be worth it. It does change. SEO, a year ago, is different that it is now. It was just the way it is. You know a search engine college. I took a couple courses from there. I am taking some private courses coming up soon here from experts that I know and trust. I do not want to say part of my inner circle. It is just people I have just come to know just from being in the SEO game.

Really, honestly, the best training you can get is on the job training. Start a website for yourself, just try to get it to rank. Read stuff, read mos.com. They are pretty good. Just read things and try it for yourself. That is where you are going to learn the most. On the job training, you can read all the books in the world, which will give you a good foundation to get started. But until you actually try to implement them for yourself, implement what you are learning, it's just words on a page.

GERALD: Right, right, what attracted you to SEO in particular?

RYAN: I don't know, I guess, the idea of getting free traffic. I just try to get that free traffic, try to optimize a senior site. Start to rank for key words. It is, kind of, cool. It has got like a rush a little bit, still is.

Gerald: You were pretty big with AdWords for a while too. So did that, kind of like, turn you off to paid search and push you towards SEO or were you already, kind of, involved?

RYAN: Well, I think, one of my mistakes back when I was doing affiliate marketing, 2007-2008, I was doing very well with my online businesses. I was spending a lot of money on pay-per-click, a lot for me. I was, probably, spending a few grand a month on pay-per-click, which, I think, is a lot. For some people that is like chump change. Pay per click is great. It is very controllable, it is very immediate. You do not have to have to deal with all the ups and downs with Google but it



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can be very expensive and you stop paying and the traffic stops.

I definitely do not want to bash paid search. It is very scalable but I like the idea of getting that free traffic trying to optimize your site and it attracted me. I think in the best of both worlds though is you are doing both, if you have the budget for both. That is when you can start to really scale up your traffic levels. Did I answer your question there? I feel like I did not answer your question.

GERALD: No, yeah, that answers my question. I just did not know if there was a particular incident that, kind of, brought you into SEO or it was just like a gradual progression?

RYAN: I know what I was saying, that is why I feel like I didn't answer your question. I said in affiliate marketing back in, like, 2007-2008, I was creating as many sites and driving traffic to them with pay-per-click. The fact that you can do that now, you really can't. If I had the insight to, actually, optimize those sites in addition to setting pay-per-click. When the pay-per-click, kind of, blew up my face, maybe those sites would have just lived a little bit longer with the SEO, but I didn't do that. It didn't work for me.

GERALD: Right. Can you give us any, kind of, a dollar amount that you are personally making from the business or monthly revenue. If you do not want to share it, that is fine too.

RYAN: So like, right now, my revenue from WP Amplify is \$4,000 - 4500.00 per month. That is revenue. That is not profit. Then I have got some other side projects for affiliate marketing that I do not spend a whole lot of money on. They make me anywhere from three to four hundred bucks a month. I am trying to scale that up a little more just to funnel that money into advertising with WP Amplify, which is what I am doing right now. I would like to get down to 1000.00 a month. That is my goal. Of course, once I get to that I will be like, 'oh, actually, my goal is the 2000.00 a month,' but I would like to get up to 1000.00 a month. That is about where I am at right now.

GERALD: Yeah, our goals are so short lived. We talk about that all the time too. It is like the second we accomplish something we are already looking to the next hill to climb. It is just the way our minds think.

RYAN: I remember back when I was doing the affiliate marketing and my goal was always like 500.00 a month. When I got to 500.00 a month it just did not feel good enough. It was 1000.00



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a month. That never felt good enough. It is like a mind game. You have to really just get your mind right. Be happy with where you are out. You have goals but do not get so fixated on the money, money, money, I do not know. I am not sure what the answer is.

GERALD: Yeah, hold on one second, I have to respond to my wife here about sweet potatoes in the oven.

RYAN: This being recorded right now?

GERALD: Yep.

RYAN: Hey, it is a real podcast. You have got to make it real.

GERALD: Yep, it is real. Yep, no editing, no stopping. It is like a militant podcast. How did you finance your business when you first started out?

RYAN: I think booster app in the entire to be honest with you. I definitely invest money. I optimize the site, of course. I spend money on, I do blogging. I have a writer that blogs for me. I am throwing a little bit of money at Facebook ads. I am trying to play around with the paid search to see if I can find that sweet spot where I will get customers without spending a whole lot of money. Trying some leads on ads with Craig's list.

A lot of this stuff is really just strategic partnerships, like what I have got with you is key. I have got that with some other people too. Strategic partnerships that has been, kind of, key for me. Some cold emailing, I try not to do that as much, as it is not effective. I have a team that does some social media for me too. If you look on my social media accounts for WP Amplify you will notice that we post almost daily, like five days a week. I have got a small team that does that for me.

So I am pretty much strapped but I try to spend a little bit of money on stuff, on a little bit of everything, and just get myself out there, at least every channel, social media. I see who has needs on Craig's list. I try to identify new strategic partnerships. I do some blogging, try a little bit of paid search. I do a little bit of SEO. So it is a little bit of everything. My affiliate marketing, like I said before, my affiliate marketing projects where I am making a few hundred bucks a month, passively. I try to roll as much of that into the business too.

GERALD: Right, I like our business models too. Having the virtual model you can almost



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keep costs as low as you need to. I know you have some people involved with your optimization services but, technically, you could do that stuff yourself if you really had to tighten your belt for some reason.

RYAN: I could, it would be very painful. I like to outsource stuff that I just would be, tortuous to me but yeah, I could if I had to.

GERALD: Yeah, you just cannot do everything yourself. When you run a business it is like the more into the business you get the more you realize that you need other people to offset that stuff. If you are wrapped up in the daily mundane tasks and key word research and everything else that you have to do for your customers. It is like you do not get the time to actually spend on your business and growing it. You just end up managing what you have but it never gets any bigger than what it was.

RYAN: Yeah, I think, it is definitely key, delegate what you can. Yes, I can make more money if I did everything myself, all the link building, and all the research, all that stuff, the content writing, the blogging. Honestly, I, probably, I would not be in business if I had to do it all myself because I do not think I could sustain it.

GERALD: Well, you also, you would make more money but you would be able to service less clients. So it is almost like you have to look at that. I was in the same situation with my design firm where I was trying to do everything myself. There was only so many customers I could help at a time. Getting other people involved now, it is like, it has exponentially grown the business because I am just focused on sales and marketing, which is great.

RYAN: Yep.

GERALD: Times are a little different now, too, than they were when we both got into online marketing. So are there any new costs that an up and comer should anticipate having to budget for?

RYAN: Well, link building has become so much more challenging and so much more expensive. It has been, probably, the biggest challenge of my business is try to figure what people want and to try to fit it into the budgets that I am working with while I am still getting results. If I do not get results, obviously, I am not going to keep the customer. I might only work with a certain



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budget. So it has become very, very, challenging. I have put together a two person team for it.

I trust them a lot. It has been a lot of just trying to find the right people, and having them doing the right stuff, and without giving away my secrets too much. It has just been, definitely, a big challenge. I would say if anyone is trying to get into the SEO business before you start taking on your clients really figure out how you are going to approach the Link building dilemma with Google. Who is how you are going to do it, what team are you going to use, are you going to do it yourself, how are you going to do it?

Content is easy. I blog for most of my clients too, but I have got a content source that I use that is really good. They make it easy for me, then I post the actual content. So that is, the content is not that hard. It is the Link building. So that is what I would give anyone trying to get into SEO. If we are talking business in general, new prices, new costs would be, you know, social media is big now. So you want to have a plan for social media. You might want to outsource that. So you do not have to deal with it yourself every day. So that would be, I guess, a new cost that you would have to consider.

GERALD: Do you want to recommend any products or services related to SEO that help you manage the business or create better results, or is that, kind of, part of your secret sauce that you do not want to give away?

RYAN: I guess that would be part of my secret sauce. I guess I will give you the content source I use because I won't tell you about the link building. Well, they are freelancers anyway so it is not like you can find them online. Well, actually, they are on my website. So, there you go. The content source I use is called the content authority.

I do not have any affiliate relationship with them, that is just who I use. I use other sources that are good too. I just like the way their dashboard works. They are quick. I like the content that they give me back. My clients never have any issues with it. So that is who I use but there is other. There is iWriter, there is mywriters.com. Or my writer, is it my writer or my writers.com. Yeah, there is whole ton of different, wordsforless.com.

GERALD: Okay, that is good. I will throw all those up in the show notes so people can check those out. SEO is different than some of my creative services. For example, it is more analytical and methodical in nature. Can you give any advice on how to price your services or what people



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should charge?

RYAN: Okay, so, with pricing, I don't price in hours. I have had some clients that, or some perspective clients say, 'Well, you are going to charge me five hundred bucks a month, how many hours is that going to get me?'

I don't price on hours. First of all, there is the time that I spend on the site. Then I have also got my team that spends many hours on building links and content, and all that stuff. So it is hard to put an hour on it. I try not to price per hour. I try to price on value.

I look for customers where they are not selling a five dollar widget, they are selling legal services, or they are selling a 500.00 dollar product, or whatever. Where the ROI, to prove the ROI on SEO is much easier. If a client is spending five hundred bucks per month with me, and they are going to commit in their head, I don't do contracts, but they are going to say, 'Hey, I am going to give this a year.' I am going to really let this work. See if I can make my money back. I am to spend six grand in the entire year.

My goal is to make them more than six grand in a calendar year. The type of clients that I work with, it is very easy to do so, because they are selling the high value or high ticket product. So I try to price on value. Okay, you are going to spend six grand a year with me. I am going to make you back more than six grand.

GERALD: Yeah, exactly! We work together. You do SEO for my company. It's like if I get one new customer a month that comes through Google that is, essentially, anywhere between three to five grand per project, usually, that we are making. So it is definitely the ROI on that is huge.

RYAN: Oh, yeah, yeah, for that, that is a no brainer. You have to invest in your marketing and as a business owner, of course, you can afford to.

GERALD: Even when you cannot though, I think, it is something you need to dig in your couch cushions and then put together a budget. The second you stop marketing is the second people stop being able to find you.

RYAN: Oh yeah, it is really key, especially, now because everyone has a website. Everyone is trying to get traffic to it, everyone is looking for the best looking website, and the most effective website. You have all your competition and what your competition is doing, so, if you are not



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marketing yourself, unless you have got this amazing referral source, you are going to get left in the dust.

For me, even I am like a one, it might be WP Amplify. It is a small little business that I run on the side because I have a full-time job. I still spend a descent amount every month and I have got my different affiliate sites that I try to create just to funnel some of that money into marketing. I take some of my profit and put into this site to try to get more business because I know if I do not there is other SEO companies there to get the business that I should be getting.

GERALD: What would you say are your top three skills needed to be successful with self-employment?

RYAN: Top three skills would be, definitely, passion, perseverance, and people skills. So I say passion because if you hate what you are doing, if you absolutely hate what you are doing, I do not know how you possibly are going to be successful whatever your definition is success is. It is just, I do not know how that would work, unless you just were so, that is like paying your bills is driving you to keep on going. That is, kind of, a horrible way to live, right?

GERALD: Or you fell into something like you inherited a business that you hate but you are just going to keep it going.

RYAN: Yeah, it is, kind of, terrible but, I guess, that can happen, that can happen. So passion would be definitely one. Perseverance because it is not easy, I know, for me, it is like a daily grind. Some days I just do not feel like working the business. I, honestly, just do not and then but it is perseverance. Next day, I am fine, back in the saddle, and I am working on the business, working on client's sites, trying to get new business.

So perseverance because there is a lot of ups and downs with self-employment. It is just the way it is. You have to accept it. That is just the way it is. Some days, I know, I feel like I am top of my game. I have got almost like a get high from it and other days I am like, 'oh, what am I doing?' That is just the way it is but you have got to persevere those moments.

GERALD: Anyone who has been self-employed for any period of time knows that perseverance, it just comes with the territory. It is never easy. Business ownership, there is going to be things that just screw you up. Things you did not think we are going to happen or you have a



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great month and then the next month totally tanks. So it is just getting through those hurdles and just keeping your eyes on the prize the whole time.

RYAN: Yeah, I agree. It is really important. Then the third skill is people skills because you are going to, no matter what business you are in, you are going to have to sell people. I do not want to say sell, I do not want to use it as a bad word, but you are going to have to, if they are looking for web design, or if they are looking for SEO, or if they are looking for maybe our copywriter. They have other choices.

It is not like you are the only web designer and I am the only SEO person in the world. So you, obviously, have to have a good product and good service but you have to have people skills. They have to trust you, they have to like you. If you are some weirdo on the phone or some shady character it is really hard to get business.

GERLAD: Right, yeah, people skills, unless you are offering a product where people, literally, go to website point click and purchase. You are going to have to learn how to talk to people and deal with personalities. So I definitely agree with you there. Online businesses, too, we require a ton of networking, often to build up client base and reach out to other like-minded people in your industry. Even to help build up authority in our different niches. How have you best utilized your people skills to add to your success?

RYAN: I would like to think that I am an honest person and that I convey trust. I try to, like, when a person is considering, for me, I see how it always involves a phone call. It is never a face-to-face meeting in my case because it is a side hustle for me. It is always a phone call. They do not just say like, 'hey, I am going to pay this guy five hundred bucks a month and I have never even, actually, spoken to him before.' It just does not work that way. So there is always a phone call. So I just try to convey trust and honesty.

I do not take on projects that, I think, I absolutely cannot succeed at, like, if it is a complete, just there is no hope, I will not take it. I will just myself into a situation that is going to end up bad. I just try to be honest, and try to convey trust and expertise, too.

I want them to know that I consider myself an expert at SEO. I am also honest, and I am also trustworthy. So they should consider spending their hard earned dollars with me. I am going to try help them a lot. Get them more business.



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So they are spending with me and keeping them for a customer for a long time. So that is how I try to use my people skills to do that. I do not consider myself a very outgoing person but when you have passion for something, when you have a certain skill set, and a confidence in something, you just convey that.

So I do not think you have to be like a super outgoing, like, I shy away from networking events. Not that I cannot do it but it is not my number one activity that I like to do. So I do not think I could be like a super outgoing person, where you are like a chatty Kathy with everyone. Just know your product and have confidence in yourself.

GERALD: Yeah, you came back to passion again. I wanted to ask to, what exactly are you passionate about with your business. Everybody is passionate for a different reason. Are you passionate about SEO? Are you passionate helping customers, money, or just the conceptual idea of just owning a business?

RYAN: So I definitely do not think I am driven by money. I think money is important and you have to be paid for the time you are putting in, obviously, pay your bills and all that. I do not think I am driven by money. I think I am driven with a passion. It is like having a business that I created myself. I am passionate of SEO. I like it. I enjoy what I do, I like helping people, I like getting emails from people saying that they are really happy, that they have been getting new leads, or new calls.

I like getting that kind of communication from clients. I also, like, I think, for me, it is, probably, just building something from the ground. I am thinking back to when I started website booster shot back in 2010 when I had no clients. Then WP Amplify and where I am at now where I have got about a dozen clients.

It is just really amazes me that I just look back at where I started to where I am at now. I do not know, it is, kind of, cool to think about. I have got about a dozen businesses that are trusting me and spending their marketing dollars with me. I do not know. I just, kind of, get a kick out of it.

GERALD: Yeah, I think, and like down deep you, kind of, have the same drive that I do. It is almost like that problem solving aspect or helping people. That really drives you. It would not even matter if you were doing something else, I think, you would still enjoy it. I listen to podcasts where some of the hosts or even the guest interviews have talked about just being passionate,



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and helping people, or creating something within a void. For some it is that problem solving aspect that drives them and you can, literally, put them into a totally different career field and they would still be able to find that passion and enjoyment in their career.

I was listening to, The Smart Passive Income Podcast, this past week. In episode 73, Pat Foon, was talking about what he would do if he was not running his blog and podcast. He talked about still holding down a job in the architecture industry. Working hard and moving up within the company and would, genuinely, enjoy his career going into the office every day.

Anyone who listens to that show would probably, kind of, be surprised by that becomes he seems to like what he is doing now so much. I think it just says something about passion. It is not necessarily tied to the service you provide but more to the outcome of what it does for other people.

RYAN: Yeah, Pat plays a perfect case of people skills and passion.

GERALD: Yeah, he went from like total introvert to just like one of the most outgoing people in the industry in online business. So it is really cool to see his progression.

RYAN: Yeah, yeah, definitely.

GERALD: What were your biggest fears that held you back from starting your own business?

RYAN: I do not really think I have ever had any fears holding back. I remember back in high school, trying to sell things on E-bay. Then in college sell things on E-bay and try to do the eBook and use all these various sites. So as far back as I can remember I have always been trying to create things and sell things. So I do not really have any fears as to, nothing has really ever really held me back. I am sure if I were doing this full-time it would be a different story.

I am sure new fears would pop up like keeping the business going and just being able to support my family and stuff. As far as starting, I never really had any fear. I have always had this entrepreneurial. I come from an entrepreneurial family. My folks had jobs, I worked with my family. The business started in the '60's by my grandfather's brother. So I come from a family of entrepreneurs. I do not think it is totally different for me to have this drive in me. So, I cannot think of any fears.



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GERALD: Right, yeah, that is, kind of, one of the important reasons I wanted to have you as part of the STSE family. I think a lot of our followers can relate to your struggle of starting a business alongside with the full-time day job. So I have, kind of, got a bunch of questions related to that. How has the full-time job affected your ability to run or grow WP Amplify? Other than the obvious you, obviously, spend eight to ten hours a day focused on your full-time job, so besides that.

RYAN: Yeah, that would be biggest thing. Obviously I'm not doing that full-time, WP Amplify. If I was doing full-time, I would like to think I would have a bigger business. I am also very fortunate. My family business, I have got a secure job that I enjoy. I like working with my family. I am very fortunate in the opportunity I have there. So, yeah, it is a struggle because both are service businesses. So I go to work and I am servicing clients there. The company is a marketing agency, printing an SEO, actually, but for my bigger clients. So it is a service business, I come home and I have got my WP Amplify business which is a service business.

So there is never really any down time. So that is a challenge, but, whatever. I have been able to make it work. I think I am very good at just managing my time and not let myself get super stressed out. I have my moments but, overall, it is just a matter of managing your time so you are not totally stressed out and having time. Today we are doing this recording. Then me and my family we are off to Best Buy to get a new computer for my wife. So that will be a little down time. I will probably fire up my computer later on tonight but we will make dinner beforehand. So it is just a matter of managing your time for myself.

GERALD: Yeah I agree with that. At what point do you decide to let go and focus on WP Amplify or do you just keep the balancing act alive as long as possible?

RYAN: I would say keep the balancing act. For me, I do not really know the exact answer to that question because I do not know what the future holds for me. Right now, I think, I am able to balance them because for like the SEO, for my full-time job, and for WP Amplify we go after two different audiences. So there is no conflict of interest there. I have got a good job working with my family.

I thoroughly enjoy. I guess, if it got to the point where I really hated working at my full-time job and maybe there will be time to consider or the drive to do my own thing and work my own hours, was so strong I could not resist it anymore. I do not really know if either of those two



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scenarios is going to come up. Right now I am able to balance both. I feel fortunate for both opportunities. So it is a tough question to answer.

GERALD: Yeah, and I have got another tough one to that, kind of, piggyback off of that. Don't you think it is somewhat of a fear though, kind of, like, holding onto the daytime career because of the security that it brings. I know I made a stupid leap into self-employment. I had a really good job; I was in corporate America, running a design department. I should have held on to it longer than I did and, kind of, eased my way into self-employment but I just, I had had it and was ready to go out on my own. So the time was right with everything I had going on in my personal life and with my career. What do you think about that for your situation?

RYAN: My situation is a little bit different though because if I had a, my full-time job is work with my family where one day I will hope, in theory, hopefully, own the business or own part of the business with my brother. So it will be self-employment for me. So my situation is a little bit different.

My full-time job, technically, will be self-employment in X amount of years. If you are working a full-time job where there is no hope of self-employment. So if I was working a job and there was no self-employment in the future it would, probably, be much different for myself. I, probably, would, slowly start to transition out, maybe by just trying to get my savings up as much as possible.

Get myself, you here these guys, like, I interviewed this guy, Jim Wang, on internet business passion and he had a website and he had a full-time job. The website was starting to build and build. He thought it had a lot of potential. He had his full-time job. He did not mind it but he wanted to be self-employed.

So he saved, he made sure he had no debt. Then he saved a crap load of money and then he took the plunge. So I think if I was in a position with my full-time job had no future of self-employment. I, probably, would go that route. I, probably, would try to save as much money as possible. So that making the leap into self-employment will be much smarter of a way to do it. Does that make sense?

GERALD: Right, yeah, no, definitely. I, kind of, put you on the spot with that anyways.



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RYAN: Yeah, well, I wanted to make it clear because people need to understand, your audience listening to this, that my full-time job will, eventually, lead to self-employment. So it is a very unique situation.

GERALD: Yeah, I did not think about that whole aspect, too. You do have a very unique situation where most people are just, kind of, biding their time until they can start their own business or go out on their own full-time. What has been your biggest self-employment failure to date?

RYAN: So the one that came to my mind, I have, actually, got two. Back, I mentioned this before, like 2007 ish I was doing affiliate marketing. I was doing very well. I was getting really confident in my ability. I would not say cocky but I was just like really high on this online marketing thing, making money, and stuff like that. I was approached by this eCommerce company and they want to charge me three grand to help me build a website, and market it, and stuff like that. I had not done eCommerce at that point but I was like, 'oh I am kicking butt in affiliate marketing let us just do it.'

So I stuck to three grand and it was a bust. I think the company was a really, I do not even remember the name of the company, to be honest with you, but they were really dicey. It was a really hard sell. Looking back at it I can see how they were spinning me and getting me to sell myself on it.

It ended up being a waste of three thousand dollars. It just really pissed me off. I just feel like they sold me on something that was never going to work in the first place, and, I do not know, maybe I have a mis-queued view of that, but I just felt like they really pushed me into that and I got suckered into their sales pitch.

Then I got, it is, kind of, like, Karma. I think a year later someone found me and he emailed me this, he said, 'oh we are considering this company' and it is the same company that sold me 'and I wanted to get your opinion on them'. I forget how they even found me, I do not know if they used me as a reference, or if I was somehow, I do not know how they knew that I did it. They want to charge us six grand for it.

So, basically, this company finds out what you can afford to spend because they asked me how much of a credit, if I had my credit card, I remember that. At the time I had, it was like it, was only



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like a smaller credit card like three thousand.

So, basically, it maxed me out on my credit card and they, probably, did the same thing to this couple. So I got my revenge. I said, "Stay away please, it is not worth it." So that was, probably, my biggest failure. If I could think of one more thing it was back when I was really kicking butt with affiliate marketing. I should have came out with my own product.

I should have networked more with the people that were also successful and maybe spawn that into a business itself but I did not. I, kind of, stayed in the shadows and then the whole affiliate marketing thing blew up my face. I was left with nothing. So those are, probably, my two biggest failures that I look back on.

GERALD: Okay, how about the flip side? What has been your biggest success so far?

RYAN: I have had success with affiliate marketing, I have had success with eCommerce, I built up a site and I have been am selling you for five figures. That was a pretty big rush. I would have to say, probably, WP Amplify is my biggest success. It depends on what you are doing to find success. We are looking at dollars, probably, WP Amplify because I have been working here for three years.

I have been looking back at what I have made the last three years. It has been a nice part-time income and I have helped a lot of businesses. I have worked with a lot of different companies, it has been really fun. So I would have to, probably, say WP Amplify because of what I have been able to do the last few years on a part-time schedule.

GERALD: Do you think marketing within the more targeted niche with WordPress websites is making a difference or does it just come down to focus. I know you have been, kind of, you have had this, "laser focus," with WP Amplify that you were, kind of, lacking in the past?

RYAN: I think identifying an issue is important. It is that you can zero in on. So I know what I am marketing to people. I ran some Facebook ads recently. I was able to identify small businesses owners that like WordPress. So I have to assume that they run a WordPress website. So if I was just marketing to everyone I would be looking at small business owners, this is very broad. So, I think, being niched it enables you too it really drill down on your marketing. Speak to your exact target audience. I think that is really important. I thing going niche is really, really key.



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GERALD: In the beginning, it is difficult to find that market and identify it. It almost shakes itself out over time. If you deal with a broad market you realize the challenges with it. Then you just, kind of, focus on one specific little group then you can see what you can do for them. I have been the same with my marketing firm too. We have focused on certain industries more so than others. It has worked out well for us.

RYAN: Yeah, and sometimes you don't always get it right. Sometimes you have to fine tune. WP Amplify is somebody new. So maybe they will whole WordPress spin more work. Maybe just going after small business owners that have a certain budget is the way to go. I think, I am confident in my decision but sometimes you do not always get it right. You have to pivot.

GERALD: Right, why do customers choose you over their competitors?

RYAN: Two different things, with my strategic partnerships, like, I work with a PR, well she is a, Alesha is a one person company, but she is a PR expert. She refers clients to me. So these clients trust her. So that trust then trickles down to me. Then it goes back to people skill. I get them on the phone and even though they trust her, if I am on the phone and if I do not convey trust and expertise, they are, probably, not going to go with me. So the people skills is still important.

I think there is so many SEO companies out there. I think it really comes back to the people skills, conveying your honesty, your trust, your expertise. You win some, you lose some. I think why people pick me is because that I am going to do a good job for them and they trust that I have their best interest in minds. So I am not in a business where there is only one or two of us. I am in a business where there is thousands of us.

GERALD: Probably, millions now.

RYAN: So, oh yeah, yeah, especially, if you consider overseas and stuff.

GERALD: Right, yeah. The whole strategic partner aspect too, that is huge. People you have got to get on board with this concept. There are so many people that are leery about partnering up but it has made such a difference in both of our businesses.

RYAN: Defintely.



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GERALD: We partnered up, I guess, around five years ago. It has been the best move for my business, I know, by far.

RYAN: Yeah, it has been, key, for me too. It has been, probably, my number one source of new businesses is just teaming up with complimentary but not competing businesses, and working out a referral plan, a commission plan, where X value, you get a certain percentage of your referred business to me and vice versa.

For me, it has been really key, so, yeah, I am giving away some of my profits to my strategic partners but I am also getting business to me, pretty much, on a silver platter. I still have to convince the person that I found the right choice for them. They are being handed to me, you know, like, speak to this person, they are interested.

GERALD: Yeah, it is so much easier to win people over because you already have got that credibility and authority. You have got your strategic partner talking you up and telling the customer that, essentially, for me, you are the only SEO Company that I will use or promote. It means a lot when I tell a customer that this is who I work with, this is who does all of our SEO work, this is the only person I would recommend for your business that holds some weight.

RYAN: Yeah, you are the only web design partner that I work with too. I know that if I refer someone to you, it is not all about the commission I am going to make. It is also that I know you are going to take care of the client, you are going to take care of their needs, and I do not have to worry about you just taking their money and running or giving them a crap website.

So it is just not all about the commission, it is also about that I know that you are going to take care of the client and I don't have to worry about who I am referring them to.

GERALD: Yeah, and I think the simple fact that people want to buy but they do not want to be sold. I think the whole strategic partner aspect allows you to drop the sales pitch, pretty much, all together, most of time, because you are already past that point.

RYAN: I agree.

GERALD: Do you have formal marketing strategies for your business and if so what has been most successful, obviously, besides SEO? We, kind of, talked about them some already.



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RYAN: Yeah, we did, actually, I was thinking about that. SEO on the site, WP might still have various sites. So the SEO is still waiting for that to sink in plus I am competing with other SEO companies. So it is a bit of competitiveness. You have to think about it of competing with its other SEO companies. So, traditionally, I found that for my business like writing website boostershot. It took a while for that SEO to sink in but once it did, I was getting leads. So that is, definitely, one strategy that I am invested heavily in.

Blogging, I blog weekly. I post in social media almost daily, my team. I have someone who blogs for me, I have somebody that does social media for me. I think I mentioned this before but I am playing around with Craig's list. There are people that will post on Craig's list, in the gig section, 'hey I am looking for an SEO company.'

They do not know where to turn. They just post like Craig's list and they let the leads come to them. The companies come to them. My longest running customer, right now, I got off of Craig's list. It is automotive dealership. They posted on Craig's list they are looking for a company to help them. I spoke to the guy. They have been a client now for like two and a half years. You think about it, off of a Craig's list ad. It is really crazy.

GERALD: I get a ton of calls off of Craig's list. I, probably, get more conversions off of Craig's list than off of Google, believe it or not. I do not know what it is about Craig's list that people just love. It has got some, kind of, authority or credibility to it that people just feel more comfortable dealing with people they find on there.

RYAN: It's tough because when you respond to a gig on Craig's list, there are, probably, about 20 or 30 or 40 other people responding. So sometimes it is a bit of a black hole. You just never know where your clients are going to come from. As long as you have a system in place that enables you to use these platforms so that I can get totally sucked into them, it is worth trying.

So a little bit of paid search I am trying and I am making a big push into CRM, Custom Relationship Management, which I use a tool called Ace of sales. So I have got all my leads and all my customers I have loaded into Ace of sales. Once a month I send out a newsletter to them just to stay top of mind with tips and things like that.

Then I will send them greeting cards or post cards through the tool. For Christmas, holidays, whatever, a thank you card, whenever I want. So that has been something I am, kind of, hot and



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heavy right now too. Oh, what is the most effective? Strategic partnerships.

GERALD: Right, do you think that strategic partnerships are a marketing strategy though or is just more a part of your business model? I just ask that because it is so successful, why spend as much time and money in the other areas? Why not just find more strategic partners?

RYAN: Well because I believe in diversification. It is like link building. You have to diversify. You cannot get all your links from one source. You have to diversify. So I believe in diversification too with your strategy. So I do make semi of a constant effort in trying to find strategic partners but I believe in diversifying my effort.

So I know that my customers market may not all find me through strategic partners. They might be exploring, they might be putting it out on Craig's list, they might be on twitter. One of my biggest clients ever, in the beginning, I got from twitter. So you just never know where you are going to find your clients. I believe in trying to be everywhere as long as you do not dilute yourself too much.

GERALD: Yeah. How has being self-employed affected your family life? Well, self-employed is not really the right question. How is running your own business affected your family life?

RYAN: Well, it's, obviously, the income has been, this is a part-time, the side income has been great for obvious reasons. I, probably, spend a lot more time on my laptop than I should. So I always try to balance that. Balance work and family life. My wife is very understanding. She knows that I have this side business that I am trying to grow and that is contributing to our household income.

She is just very understanding. It has been pretty exciting. The site has been great, obviously. Who knows what the future holds. I think balancing the family and the work life too is really important. So you have to really be conscious of that and make time for your family too.

GERALD: For the sake of our, yeah, no, I definitely know that. I get asked that question to a lot. Is just how my home life is affected since I have been working from home for over ten years now? You just get used to get used to it after a while, I guess.

Everybody, kind of, adjusts. It has worked out well for us. My wife being active duty military, I can, essentially, running a virtual agency, I can take my business anywhere I need to in the country and



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still run it effectively from my desktop or laptop, or Starbucks, if I have to. So it has just been really convenient having this whole home based business concept.

RYAN: Yea.

GERALD: For the sake of the listeners, what are some challenges someone can expect to face who has a similar situation to you where they have a full-time day job, essentially, a full blown side business as well, I do not like the word side business because it sounds weak to me. I feel like you are running a genuinely full blow legitimate business. It is not just, you are not selling hot dogs on a cart on the weekends or something.

RYAN: Yeah it is a LLC. I have insurance.

GERALD: I mean you are actively involved with it daily. It is not just something you just, kind of, tinker around with in the garage on the weekends or something.

RYAN: Yeah. What are some of the challenges? Is that what you asked?

GERALD: Yeah. What are some of the challenges somebody can expect to face if they already have that full-time day job and they want to have a legitimate business like yours on the side?

RYAN: Really, it is the biggest thing is definitely, depends on if they have a family or not, but if they have a family, it is the balance. Like I said, the balance of family and work because you are at work, then you come home and you are at work. So it is like work, work, work, work.

Time management is huge. Then, if you are thinking about going from your full-time to your side, making your side business your full-time business. Which many people that is something that is many people think about. Then there is the whole challenge of when is the time right, when do I make the plunge, can I make the plunge?

There are a lot of variables that come to play there. Do you have a family, do you have debt, do you have mortgages. How much do you have in your savings? I think that is, if you are thinking about turning your side business into a full-time business that is, definitely, some challenges that you will face. When is the time right?

You know that because you said you plunged, you plunged from your full-time into your side



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business. It has worked out for you, but for some people it does not work out.

Some people you have to really plan. Make sure you have enough in your savings because it is not always up, up, up. There is ups and downs. So you have to have enough in your savings account to be able to sustain those ups and downs.

GERALD: Yeah, I was lucky. Lucky that I chose a career field that did not require a lot of up front capital to make it happen, just the timing was right for me. I had a couple of customers lined up that could, kind of, hold me over until I got things up and running, which was good.

RYAN: I think also, we have talked about this a little before, but your audience has to realize that the ups and downs are going to be there. It is a mental thing as well as things that are just happening in your business.

So you have to just go into that knowing that there is going to be ups and downs but that you believe in your business. You believe in the direction you are heading. That you are making daily progress and that ups and downs are just the way it is. You have to just persevere through those and that you will be okay.

GERALD: Yeah, yeah, definitely. Do you believe there is a formula for success?

RYAN: Formula for success, I think, would have to be finding something that you are good at, okay. So, for me, it is SEO. For you it is marketing and web design. Create a business around it, obviously, to make sure that it is possible that you could make a business around it. Most skill sets you can create a business out of almost anything. I think back to some of my clients and it makes you realize, that there is a business for almost everything.

In some cases there are not. So you have to do your research. Then just work hard on your business daily. So, I think, it is a matter of finding what you are good at, building a business around that skill set, then working your butt off every day or almost every day. Then, like I said, be prepared for those ups and downs. Pivot if you have to and keep on working.

GERLAD: Yeah, a lot of times too, somebody might not be sure what they are good at. So they can identify a pain. Then try to solve it for people. Noah Kagan from Absoon, more recently, did an interview. He was talking about how to come up with ideas of a successful business. He talked about, kind of, working backwards, essentially, identifying problems by Googling the word hate



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with any product or service and seeing what problems people are having.

So he used the example of quicken. He entered quicken sucks, quicken hate, or quicken die. As a search to see what problems people were having with Quicken software. It just gave him a whole bunch of ideas that he, actually, used when he was working for the company, Mint. I love this method. You can do a negative search like this on just about product or service and find a huge market full of problems.

RYAN: That is a good idea. He is a smart guy. He has on a lot of podcast. He did one with, Tim Farris. That was pretty interesting. So he sees a character, he is really smart, obviously, successful. So he is a good person to take advice from.

GERALD: Yeah, I thought that was a really cool concept. That is the problem a lot of people have is where to start or the types of businesses that might, actually, be marketable. So starting with the negative almost and then, kind of, working backwards is a good option for people.

RYAN: Yep, yep, I agree.

GERALD: What do think the biggest challenge you will face will be with the future of, I guess, with SEO in general.

RYAN: Yeah, it is like SEO, I feel like, I am saying this because it is my business, but if you look at it like insurance. There is so much uncertainty in insurance. Every business has its Achilles heel. For me, it is Google, which is ironic, because Google is the biggest search engine. So they drive a lot of the results or they also in terms of SEO they pose the biggest issues.

They are just making so many changes and it is making SEO for small businesses, where you are working with a smaller budget, like 500.00 per month, which might sound like a lot to some people.

When you know SEO, when you know what goes into with link building and content. It is not a whole lot of money and there are some companies that will spend hundreds or thousands of dollars every month in SEO. Yes, they are the big corporate companies.

I think, for me, the biggest challenge is Google. All the challenges they are making and how to keep it going at the budget's I am working with and still getting the results for them. I think that is



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going to be the biggest challenge. Like I said, every business has their challenges.

So it is a matter of, with all these changes that Google has made, some SEO companies have closed down their doors. I have persevered and I have pivoted a bunch of times and, actually, my business is bigger than it was two years ago, when all this stuff started happening with Google.

So it is just a matter of whatever business you are in and the challenges you are facing, it is a matter of just having perseverance and figure out a way to make it work. That is what I have been able to do.

GERLAD: Yeah, I know, we talked about that a while ago. You were, kind of, on the fence about keeping it going because you saw all these changes happening. You were just worried that it was just going to go away all together.

RYAN: Yeah, I was.

GERALD: I am glad you stuck with it.

RYAN: Yeah, I was seriously considering, I remember having a couple of moments where I was like, 'shoot, this might not continue much longer.'

GERLAD: Well, everybody in the world saw their rankings tank when the first couple Google updates happen. Everybody was, kind of, just scared of what was to come. It's good. You figured out a formula, I think, that holds true.

RYAN: Yeah and just generating leads and helping my clients make more than they are spending when, actually, that is what it comes down to. They do not care where they are ranking or how strapped they are getting. The, ultimate, concern, there is this, 'am I making more money than I am spending.' I am constantly fine tuning my strategy. I am never fully happy. I think that is a good thing. I am always like, 'uh, is that the best way to this?'

So I am always thinking about am I doing the best that I possibly can? I think that is, to me that is, a good thing. People become complacent. Sometimes that can come to bite you in the butt, especially, if you are not doing the best thing for your clients.

GERALD: Do you ever see it going away. I mean, SEO, in general, or do you think it will always



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be around on some form?

RYAN: I think it is always going to be around on some form. It is just going to keep on morphing into something different. So, Google started their business based on organic results, before even pay per click was around, so that organic section of their website, that is how they started. Don't forget Yahoo or Bing. They still deliver some results. I do not think SEO is ever going to go away. I do not know how it could, because if you have a website you have to market it.

I look at SEO as marketing. Linked is marketing, content is marketing, blogging is marketing. It is just marketing. There is page search, there is SEO, it is just all marketing. If you start a website people are not going to just find you. You have to market it. So you have to SEO it, you have to maybe invest in some paid search. You have to do things to help people find it. So I do not see how it would ever go away. It is going to just keep on morphing into something different.

GERALD: Yeah, it is definitely marketing. I saw some statistics, I think, from back in 2012 or something like that, that showed companies were spending more in search engines optimization than any other marketing, any other form of marketing. That was just expected to increase at one time.

RYAN: Yeah, yeah, that's right.

GERALD: The purpose of SEO is clear, I think, everybody can, kind of, agree. Most people define it as getting more people on your website. You are generating leads. You and I both know that there is significantly more to it than that. Can you just talk real briefly and tell people exactly what SEO is all about and why it is so important for anyone who is serious about marketing their business online?

RYAN: Well, it is about making your site visible in the search engines. So is someone is googling your product or service you want your website to be more than choices. So that is really what SEO is all about. We are optimizing your site for certain key words or certain topics. People are predicting that key words are going to go away. Targeting specific key words are going to go. You have to target topics. So we will see where that goes.

It is about optimizing your website for certain key words or certain topics and doing so, you make yourself more visible in the search engine. So when someone is typing in plumber in Wang,



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New Jersey, or whatever. Your website is one of those choices. They come to your website then hopefully they raise their hand. They become a lead, then, hopefully, a customer. So that is what it really comes down to. Search engine optimization is just making your website more visible online.

GERLAD: Right, yeah. I also think because the SEO changes, the methods change so often, it is almost viewed as mysterious or fishy to a lot of people. They think there is, I think, that is why a lot of website owners do not hire an SEO professional. They are just not sure what all is involved. And the fact that it could take months to even see the results.

Then, even after the results are coming in, you cannot guarantee anything in terms of placement in the ranking. So how do you deal with those questionable areas? I know, in my business I deal with a lot of customers asking me SEO questions. I, usually, just give them case studies of websites that we have worked on and show them the results that we can get.

RYAN: Well, I think, and people know that Google is huge. People know that a lot of people go to Google to find a product or service. I don't think you have to sell people on the fact that the search engines are huge and people use them as a product or service research tool, but you are right, SEO is, sort of, mysterious.

It is not like pay-per-click where you give Google your credit card or Bing your credit card and you say, 'hey these are the key words I want to bid on. I want to bid this amount', they start and then they start charging your credit card.

You start getting traffic. You take away their credit card and traffic stops. It is very predictable. It is very controllable. SEO on the other hand, yeah, you are right, it is mysterious. Some sites will react a little bit differently versus other sites.

There just so many variables that go into it, ultimately, you do not control Google. You try to influence Google but their algorithm and the hundreds of factors that go into it. There is just so much variance involved that it is a little mysterious, you are right, but the basic idea behind it is making sure your website is optimized to the right key words and the right topics, building links to your site, or try to earn links. Then try to create good, interesting, relevant content. You could do those three things and social media, actually, that is, kind of, the fourth thing, I guess, I would throw in there. You having some search social media presence. You do those four things, unless your site has some glaringly bad road blocks in terms of SEO, which, if you do not know SEO you



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would not know what those are unless your site has those glaringly obvious road blocks. Your site is going to get more traffic if you follow those four steps.

GERALD: Okay, yeah, I can get behind that. That makes sense. What is your favorite success quote?

RYAN: Favorite success quote, I do not know if it is a quote, I think it is more like a mantra that I follow. But it's make daily progress in your business. Even if it is only a half an hour, make daily progress. If you look at, if you think, 'oh, I am only going to spend an hour and a half on my site, what is that going to do?' But if you spend a half an hour on Monday, and an hour on Tuesday, then a couple hours on Wednesday, then a half an hour on Thursday.

If you look at, of course, the entire month that, actually, adds up to a descent chunk of time spent. That momentum that you are creating, while it might not be obvious to you when you are spending that 30 minute chunk of time on your site. When you look at it over the course of a month or three months, the momentum that are building is, actually, pretty tangible. Make daily progress.

GERALD: Yeah and it is nice to just, kind of, stop what you are doing, stop your work, and just focus on your own business for just a little while out of the day. I try to set at least an hour aside on my own business as well. I find that it does add up. By the end of the week I would spend eight hours or ten hours on my own marketing instead of just putting it off further and further like I used to do.

I found a great quote by Thomas Edison that speaks volumes about both of our mindsets, I think. The quote is, "Restlessness is discontent and discontent is the first necessity of progress. Show me a thoroughly satisfied man and I will show you a failure." You and I will, probably both agree that we are never satisfied with our current achievements, like we talked about earlier.

It is like we are always looking ahead to the next goal. I feel like that is so important with progress too, just know like the Rolling Stone never gathers moss, kind of, concept. I think we both subscribe to that big time.

RYAN: Yeah, yeah, I would agree with that. You never really think I am fully a success. If you look back at all the things I have accomplished, to some people they might think they might



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be labeled as successful but I don't really. It does it feel like that is me.

I feel like I just, there is so much more that I have to accomplish and there is so much more that I need to do. That can be good and bad but the good thing is that it keeps me working hard, but you are right, you have to step back and, kind of, appreciate what you have done. I think that is really important.

GERALD: I hope at some point we can do that. I am not ready to yet. I feel like I have got too much to accomplish yet, but I am getting there.

RYAN: Yeah, I feel like I am just getting started, too.

GERALD: Yep, alright, well, the last question I have for you today would be if you could give someone looking to start a business one piece of advice what would it be?

RYAN: Just one?

GERALD: Sure.

RYAN: Okay, just one piece of advice, just to get started, there are a lot of people who over-analyze what they want to do. Obviously, you have to have, this is assuming that you have, a legitimate business idea based on something that you are good at. Just get started. I know someone that, I think, could be very successful with business or online business. He just over-analyzes everything, everything, everything, everything, to the point where it just paralyzes him.

So you have to just get started. The thing is the truth is that the product or the service that you start with, it is never just going to stay that way. I always treat things with WP Amplify and my previous sites in the previous business, you never stay with what you start with. You are always going to tweak things.

So just get started. Throw a website up there and just start marketing it and understand that you are going to tweak things as you go along. It is a constant, fine tuning process, but if you do not get started, you are never going to get to where you want to be. So my one piece of business advice would be just get started.

GERALD: Yeah, I love the whole minimally viable product concept where you, essentially,



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just get the necessities done and then iron out the details later. That would, definitely, be advice I would give people, too, is get it up and out there sooner than later.

I have got several clients in the past few years who have dragged their feet and tried to perfect every little instance but when you deal, especially, if it is an online based business. Get it out in front of people, let them play with it. Let them give you real world feedback. Then, kind of, go back and tweak based on their comments. You never know how something might go over. You might spend a year and 50,000.00 dollars building a product and then realize that people do not really like it.

Then you are just out that money when you could have only spent 10,000.00, got a smaller version of it out there for people to, kind of, play around with and see if they liked it. Then taking their feedback and created something a lot better.

RYAN: Yeah, yeah, and I think going back to the, with being paralyzed from analyzing too much. I feel like when I speak to people that do that they always have excuses, 'well I cannot start now because of this or I cannot start now because of that.'

So they always have all these excuses why don't they just, I think it is a mindset, for those people. They just cannot say, there is a saying, I cannot remember what the heck it is, it was like, was it Fire, Aim, Shoot, or something like that.

Basically just get your business started and then worry about aiming as you go along.

GERALD: Alright, well, that about wraps up the time we have for today. I can't thank you enough for spending the last hour or so with us. You have given us great insight into your business. I know you will inspire a lot of people who are contemplating starting their own business. You have given them a lot of great things to think about. Anyone listening to this is better off for having done so, in my opinion.

RYAN: I hope so, I really hope people that are going to look into this get a lot out of it. I am always available if they have any questions or want to pick my brain about something.

GERALD: Yeah, can you tell us where they can go to find out more about you and WP Amplify?



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RYAN: If they go to wpamplify.com they can just contact me through the website, my social networks are down at the bottom of the site. The Twitter, Facebook, and Google+. If they email me through that site though I will get back with them right away, within 24 hours. So I appreciate being on here, Jerry, this was good. I enjoy doing this so thanks a lot.

GERALD: Yeah, I had a great time. So thanks again, Ryan, for your time and best of luck in everything and I am sure we will talk again soon.

RYAN: Yeah, I will talk to you in about 24 hours, I guess, or whatever.

GERALD: Yeah. Alright, thanks a lot.

Well, there you have it folks, Episode 4 is officially history. I really hope all of you enjoyed this interview with Ryan Coté of WP Amplify. Ryan is such a straight forward personable guy and an awesome business partner.

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