

Corbett: Hi everybody this is Corbett Barr from Think Traffic and I'm talking today with Naomi Dunford of IttyBiz and hi Naomi.

Naomi: Hi.

Corbett: How are you?

Naomi: I'm awesome, how are you?

Corbett: Great, where am I calling by the way, you're outside of Toronto, right?

Naomi: Yes.

Corbett: Is it cold up there.

Naomi: It has been in the 80s for about a week and then today it's like, I always have to do the conversions to Fahrenheit, it's like 45.

Corbett: Ah 45 as in Fahrenheit?

Naomi: Yeah.

Corbett: That's awful.

Naomi: Yes, I can put away the sandals we just bought

Corbett: Not so fast.

Naomi: Yeah.

Corbett: So for people that aren't familiar maybe with IttyBiz, I'm guessing that a fair number of people are because it seems like I see your name just about everywhere but can you explain a little bit about the idea behind IttyBiz. It's all about small business marketing, right?

Naomi: Absolutely. What we did is we decided that for the vast majority of people the dictionary definition or more to the point Small Business Association of the United States' definition of small business is total crap for the vast majority of people.

Their definition is a business that takes in less than 10 million dollars in revenue or has 5 hundred or fewer employees.

Corbett: Right.

Naomi: My big thing that I say is I don't know 500 people. Like, I don't. That's insane. I'm definitely saying that's huge to me.

Corbett: Yeah, let alone have that many people in your business, right?

Naomi: Exactly, that's mayhem. So in tandem with the statistics that there are 20 million people as of the last U.S. Census, not the one we just took but the one before that. There are 20 million registered one person businesses. These are people that actually registered their business and went down and paid 150 bucks or whatever and got a little number, 20 million of them.

It made me go, where is the marketing and business advice for that guy, 1 of the 20 million people which truthfully is closer to 40 or 50 million when you consider that a lot of people are just...they make stuff and they sell it sometimes.

Corbett: Exactly and a lot of people have a side hustle as well, right?

Naomi: Exactly. You've also got people with more than one business and with all of that, there're just so many businesses out there that there's just no help, you know. They do their best to read Seth Godin and they try to translate advice that was meant for Coke, IBM and Apple and translate it to their little widget store and they do their best but there's only so much you can do and we have like this huge basic hole in the market for business advice for the very, very small.

Corbett: That's awesome and I love the name by the way. It really conveys exactly what you just said in 7 letters.

Naomi: That's pretty cool because I hated that name for a long time. I finally got use to it but I got the name because we had 4 days to launch a blog and it was available. That was my kick start.

Corbett: It's amazing, I mean looking back on it, like now it seems like so iconic.

Naomi: Yeah, I suppose, I've been on my site fifteen years now, I look back and like, dah...people are using it as a noun with capitalization. It's a perfectly reasonable thing to say in conversation.

Corbett: Like I run an IttyBiz

Naomi: --something I came up with one day.

Corbett: That's awesome. How old is the site by the way?

Naomi: Started it in 2007, so that'd be 3-1/2 years--

Corbett: Yup.

Naomi --2-1/2 years.

Corbett: And did you have prior experience with blogging or online business with that really?

Naomi: Yup.

Corbett: That's pretty amazing and when you started the blog, I guess, did you have any sort of expectations for its growth?

Naomi: Expectations no, I'm a champagne taste kind of girl so I had hopes but no, I didn't have a lot in real expectations. I had one goal, I remember, I wanted to hit a thousand subscribers by a certain time and I know I didn't meet it.

Corbett: Did you...I think I read somewhere that you sort of cleverly launched it in conjunction with some other blog like you did a series of guest plugs or something, how did you launch the...how did you launch IttyBiz?

Naomi: I sponsored a contest that put on by ProBlogger. Dan Rausch was having his 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday, 3<sup>rd</sup> ProBlogger birthday bash and so I sponsored that contest, I gave a 2 thousand dollar monthly package. And then I created a parallel contest on my own site with what we called the Jump Start Package at the time and that was a 500...yeah that was a 500 dollar one.

So we kind of tried to capitalize on all the traffic that we got and he didn't just send traffic. Like we went out and begged for it. Like everybody who commented on the contest post. We went to other sponsors, it was like hey everybody come to the blog there's a contest, it's fantastic. And so basically we tried to capitalize on the people who came through ProBlogger and kind of go from there.

Corbett: I think what a lot of people look at, sites that are popular now, they may have this vision in their head that either you were really well connected like you were buddies with Darren or they think sort of the opposite that you just launched your site and had a few posts up there and people started to take notice and magically through word of mouth it blew up over night. Can you tell me about--you know are either of those scenarios often true or do most people who do well do you think have some other sort of launch plan or engineering like you did?

Naomi: I think I... I can't think of anybody who's done well who has happened that way with - unless they're re-launching something. Like, unless I was to quit IttyBiz and start an unschooling blog that would probably launch well because I'd call in all the favors. But generally speaking especially the first time on line, it involved a strategy and a whole lot of sucking up.

Corbett: Um hmm, yeah and I think the sucking up part is what people have a hard time envisioning themselves doing.

Naomi: Yeah it's interesting; I got into a big conversation with my husband about Johnny Truant. And he had just written a post about somebody had left a comment and that's pretty reasonable, he gets this a lot. Gosh it's so lucky that you knew Naomi and I'm all drunk and razzing and screaming and the idea that Johnny was lucky blows my mind because I treated Johnny like shit.

I ignored him just like I ignored everybody, like I was going through a huge period of growth in my blog and my business. And I had a 2 year old and I was like moving to a new continent and if you wanted to e-mail me, well, tough shit at the time. And he just kept showing up. And we had time zone problems and I ignored emails even after I'd accepted his column. I was writing columns without even reading them. He's like, "So, remember I talked about this the other day, I'm like no, I have no recollection of that because--you know I didn't read it.

Corbett: Yeah.

Naomi: He had to go through fire and people just think oh gosh, that's so lucky. I'm like no, I wouldn't call it that.

Corbett: And but he's done pretty well with all that groveling that he put in, right. He was just like...actually I ran a post earlier this week called 10 Blogs With Explosive Growth to Learn From and Johnny was on there because he's been around--

Naomi: I think he's the first one or something, isn't he, I thought--

Corbett: Yeah, exactly, he's been around for a year and he says himself that he's probably a little over exposed and I would say that's true in certain circles. I mean you see Johnny on just about every blog there is, every big blog anyways and it's only been a year and he knew no one to start with.

Naomi: Yeah.

Corbett: Pretty impressive.

Naomi: His Mom bought him a copy of *Online Business School* for Christmas--

Corbett: That's awesome.

Naomi: --that was how the whole thing started; his Mom was actually a follower of IttyBiz.

Corbett: Good Mom.

Naomi: Yeah pretty cool, huh.

Corbett: So Think Traffic is--you know the title is all about traffic and I think that a lot of people think that traffic equals promotion for the most part. They think when you talk about building an audience or attracting visitors that it all comes down to promotional tactics. But, they may even have an idea that first you have to have good content but I think even before that, before you get into content or promotion there's a lot of things that have to go into sort of building the essence of what you are.

And I read a lot about the unique selling proposition on your site, on IttyBiz and can we talk a little bit about that and how really before you get into content and promotion there are these sort of foundational components, even before design, before you think about what your site looks like. You have to think about what it's all about and why someone should care about your site versus some else's, right?

Naomi: Oh absolutely, I hear all this stuff about how niches are so over saturated. I'm like, I don't know, maybe cell phone ring tones.

Corbett: Um hmm.

Naomi: But like I can't think of an over saturated niche. I can think of some very saturated ones but they're saturated by garbage, so like you show up, and have a personality bring something to the table that the other losers aren't. I can't think other than the really, really sleepy ones have a niche that can't be broken into and well.

Like you hear in a lot of the internet marketing guys talk about, you know, you want to talk about weight loss or internet marketing or something like that you'll have a really hard time. I call bullshit. Like if you want to do it in a completely kind vacuous service way without doing any work, yeah you're gonna have a hard time just doing Ad Sense, you know, how to lose weight.

But if you actually show up I can't think of a niche that if you show up and say, this is what I am about. I'm going to put myself into this and it isn't just about spewing information. We're going to create an experience for the viewer. I can't think of anything that couldn't work.

Corbett: And how much of that point of difference do you think, like let's say you're getting into weight loss. If you wanted to break into that, how much do you think personality, just being yourself could play into being enough of a difference to actually make it versus maybe like segmenting weight loss and doing it for...for geeks or something?

Naomi: I think personality has to be there, whereas the 'for geeks' doesn't. The 'for geeks' will help but they're showing up and being human is I think where the difference comes in. Unless you're looking at building a business, business, like a company with a shipping department and a customer service department, okay. Maybe that's a little different but nobody I know actually wants to do that. Not that it's a bad thing to do but that doesn't seem to be the Goal.

It also doesn't have...it doesn't have the prestige that I think a lot of people are looking for. A lot of people want name recognition and they want to meet people at conferences and shake their hand. Whether they're like blogging conferences or weight loss conferences or geek conferences or whatever's their thing. And that happens by having a persona and bringing a bit of yourself to the equation. Because I think what gets us forgotten is we ask so much of our readers, our visitors.

We ask them to give up time and space and energy and emotions sometimes. We ask them to put effort in, we put up audios and ask them to listen to them for a half an hour, like we also have shit and very few bloggers actually give anything back. Like they create these top 10 tips posts that is just that rehash of everything else and they wonder why it doesn't work, like we're asking our readers to do all the work for us. Like no wonder nobody's reading.

Corbett: Yeah, that's a good point and it obviously that's why...that's why I think--you know IttyBiz is not just about being for--you know tiny, tiny business but also I think you've shown that having a personality and maybe swearing once in awhile like a normal person can be a really powerful marketing tool.

Naomi: Well I think that's it, like you hear about people...one of the biggest arguments that people have against my kind of branding is that they somehow think that I think branding is swearing.

They think that being personal means doing something inappropriately wrong, you know? I'm like no but I mean you read Seth Godin's stuff and every now and again, it's very infrequent has happened with his wife or kids--

Corbett: Um hmm.

Naomi: --and it's amazing, it makes him so human and he probably doesn't want even a hundred posts but it allows the other 99 posts to not contain it--

Corbett: And what--

Naomi: --and it's a huge benefit. If you just comes out and make yourself human. Frank Kern will occasionally mention his wife. Everything that Frank Kern ever does is extremely strategic. So he does what he does for a reason. He talks about his surf board addiction, he doesn't have to up and say fuck everywhere but it's just a little thing that makes him real.

You know, I only drink one brand of champagne and people know what brand it is. And it's a thing, it's a personal...it adds a human element. So it doesn't have to be crazy off the wall. It just has to be 3 dimensional.

Corbett: That's interesting. I think a lot of people feel like there sort of afraid to share themselves online. They want to create a business as sort of its own entity, separate from themselves that stands alone and I mean I find a lot of businesses who have an about page and it doesn't even really even tell you who's behind the business.

Naomi: Yeah.

Corbett: Is there a way for those people to succeed if they aren't willing to share any of themselves.

Naomi: Absolutely. Stop reading blogs like IttyBiz and CopyBlogger and go to your small business association and figure out how to launch a business, like old school, like as if you would with

bricks and mortar. Nothing wrong with it, plenty of people sell widgets. I was reading an article in Maclean's, which is like a Canadian kind of like Newsweek, and was talking about the top 30 companies in Canada based on their environmental policies.

And looking and what's blown my mind is that there's been the banks and the huge insurance companies and whatever, but I'd say that half of them are in industries that I didn't even stop to think were industries, like cement companies. These are companies that make cement but somebody woke up one morning and said I should start a company that sells cement.

We don't know what that guy's kids are like. I mean, I think it will benefit if he actually goes to his cement buyers as human but I think he can do it. In order to do that he probably can't boot strap it and most people want that. Why they're looking online is that they want to do it for 500 bucks or less. Well if you're going to skimp out on money you're going to have to un-skimp out on personality and you have to show up.

Corbett: Got it, I like that and what about...I think...I was working with a client recently, a fairly successful blogger and I think he's getting about 35 thousand visitors a month which is something a lot of people would be jealous of. But he feels like he's hit a traffic plateau and we were talking a little bit about the...his point of difference. And he hasn't injected any personality into the blog.

There's not really anything about who he is. And also he hasn't really narrowly sort of defined why he's different from a couple of big name competitors. When we started talking about it, it was clear that he was afraid of alienating certain potential readers by choosing a side, by having sort of an opinion on various topics.

How is that? There's sort of a paradox though that happens, right? When you decide to pick sides and maybe name a common enemy or something where your audience can actually grow faster than if you're trying to appeal to everyone?

Naomi: Absolutely because then people start connecting with you on another level and then the more of you become very much more intense. What you're dealing with there is the sum of the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. So the people who read IttyBiz, for example, who just read it to see if I'll actually take my top off or something, those people are semi-loyal. They read it. You know, they're cool, they show up.

Then you have the people who also have kids and are also unschooling. Like those people would lay down on the tracks for you. And so what you end up with is the people who become very loyal, they take their friends out for lunch and spend half the time talking about how awesome your blog is. That's never going to happen if you only connect one level.

So whatever your guy's thing is, whether you're talking about hamster training, if you're only connecting on hamster training, there's only so loyal people who will ever be to you. If you connect on hamster training and one other thing, they will feel much more connected; three other things, it's hugely more connected because then it's, oh my God, this hamster training guy is a dream come true for me.

Corbett: Um hmm. And what about sort of absolute traffic versus that loyal traffic that you were talking about? I think this guy I was working with had an idea of doing sort of the old school route and building a really huge publication that he could attract advertisers to. And so he was really after the absolute traffic. Like he needed giant traffic numbers versus someone who wants to start a small business just to support them selves. They don't really need giant traffic numbers to do that, right?

Naomi: No, I know somebody who makes six figures and she has fewer than 200 subscribers.

Corbett: Wow.

Naomi: But everything she does, they'll buy. It kind of depends on what your thing is and I think we...its very easy especially if you've been in this crowd for any kind of length of time. You've read all the articles. And you've heard the A list opinions on everything. It's easy to stop listening to yourself and go what exactly am I trying to accomplish here? I think especially when you're at that beginning place; desperation, which I think is a necessary place to be for at least a while.

It's very difficult to figure out what you're trying to do because you don't care. You just want the money. And I think that's a necessary place because it breaks up our kind of apathy. But yeah, figure out what you're trying to do because if you really are trying to get to the 6 figures thing, yeah, finding 200 people who think you rock beyond rock is a whole lot easier than creating a 100 thousand hit a month business, that's just crazy.

Corbett: Yeah and the ironic thing is if you find 200 people who, you know, worship you basically then probably you'll end up with a whole lot more customers anyways, right?

Naomi: Right because those 100 thousand visitors, do not tell their friends. They do not go out on Twitter. They do not tell six of their friends, "Oh my god you have to buy this. They don't buy 2 copies of your products so they can give one away. They don't save up for your stuff, that's only the stuff that comes from loyalty.

Corbett: And you think that sort of loyalty and personality based business works on a larger scale?

Naomi: I think it works on a larger scale as long as you're aware that there will be pitfalls. And you won't know what they are when you start. It's only now, after having been inundated by e-mail for about 2 full years that I kind of figured out a happy medium of what to do and how to deal with it.

What happens when you go out and be really personal with people, I take it a lot farther than it has to be taken. That's just what I do. I like it. It's my brand. But even when you just start getting personal if you go out and you first start talking about your kids for example, one of my sons has eczema. It used to be very traumatic for him. So every now and again, I will talk about that. And I get email from people giving me suggestions on what to do about my kid's eczema, right?

That falls under the heading of business email and it needs to be addressed. Like company doesn't come to you and say, oh my God that's horrible, just seeing where my nephew had it and blah, blah, blah, You don't put that in the, you know, 'Thank you for contacting IttyBiz and we'll get back to you within 48 hours.

Corbett: Yeah.

Naomi: So there is going to be a learning curve. And it is steep and it is hard and you will suck it up. But at the same time you will also create this kind of cult like loyalty as you go forward and people will really, really dig you. I mean and I can hear Seth Godin when I went to his blog today and said, "Guys, I'm having a problem. My son sprained his wrist and we're looking a holistic remedy, what do you guys think?" Like people will go crazy trying to help him, does he has a cult.

Corbett: Yeah and those...the limits of that are really being tested by people like Seth and Gary Vaynerchuk, right?

Naomi: Yeah.

Corbett: It's amazing, I remarked a couple of times that the people who you know have to be the absolute busiest people in the world, like Seth Godin, are often the fastest to get back to you if you do know them.

Naomi: Yeah.

Corbett: Makes you wonder.

Naomi: I think Gary Vaynerchuk is going through a particularly difficult time because either, and I don't think this is the case but I'll allow for the possibility, either he pulled the worlds greatest con job and making it look like he really didn't want to hear from you when he honest to god didn't. He was just using that as branding tool. Or he just believes that he could get through the crazy fame on the back of his raw enthusiasm.

And I'm sure if it's the latter he probably had a huge group of advisor types going, "You're out of your mind, dude. Like, you're not going to be able to take it." And he kind of went in because he's all of 31 and full of raw energy saying, "I'm used to working all these hours. I'm use to this."

Well, you know, add a life and a kid and a bestselling book and you start dealing with stuff that you never had any idea of. I imagine he probably feels pretty bad. Like, I imagine he's pretty conflicted about the whole thing.

Corbett: Yes, that would be an interesting problem to have.

Naomi: Yeah.

Corbett: So you know once you inject personality and you sort of figure out how you're going to uniquely take on a particular topic, then how does one go about attracting an audience? Is that enough, just having personality? Are people just magically going to start beating down your door or are there certain things that you also need to do on top of that?

Naomi: I still want to say they'll start beating down the door but, no. That would be awful to say. No, the same amount of thought you put into why would people want to stay, you need to put into why would they want to come? And those are kind of different things.

People stay because something's good. They come for kind of a different...it's a different psychology, arrival versus sticking around. And you're also going to need some method, whether you're going through, you have great headlines and you promote them on Twitter or you do consistent guest blogging or you just write really, really good ad words, I mean traffic's traffic, that's what they do, right?

Corbett: Um hmm.

Naomi: And thinking about like what is it that would make people want this and that comes hugely from thinking like really, really stopping; anybody who's ever read my book *Marketing School* will be so sick of me saying this because I hit this point way to hard. But be the person that you're trying to sell to. Like sit there and empathize until you are blue in the face and think what's going on with that person, right?

So if you're...let's say you're doing guest blogging. You think to yourself, why do people read blogs? When do people read blogs? Where do they read blogs, okay? So now you're kind of starting to think we're probably dealing...okay CopyBlogger, probably an office worker; likes the idea of starting a Third Tribe style business, looking for stuff to do to slack off.

At the same time, can't totally slack off. They can't sit around watching YouTube video. So you need to give them something that's compelling enough to click on or subscribe to that is worth the possibility of having their boss walk up behind them and see them surfing the internet. You kind of get to that place where you really, really understand where that person is, it's like radical empathy. And then you think what they want and then you make it for them.

Corbett: It's interesting that you mention that. I was talking with Julie Rhodes, she's a freelance copywriter. And she has a few posts that did well on copy blogger and 2 of them were actually sort of a fusion of business advice mixed with television, like she wrote one about the series *Entourage* and another one about *Sex in the City*. And it's kind of like you just described that sort of empathetic model, you know, that she probably used where she was thinking about those people and how to sort of entertain them while they were still getting her business advice.

Naomi: Oh absolutely and I remember Sonia Simone did one on Remarkable Communication, it was awhile ago but something about 50 Business Lessons I Learned From My Toddler or something. And it being Sonia it's not just a shameless traffic grab. I mean it is a shameless traffic grab but it's not just a shameful traffic grab. I think it was good and it resonates because a lot of her readers are females with young children. And so it made sense. And it could get them on that other level. It could speak in a way that resonated and that made sense and didn't require a huge leap of thought or logic.

So yeah, you really get to that place and you go what are they watching on TV? And that's why when you see on CopyBlogger they'll really have a lot of Pop Culture tie-ins, you know? The DaVinci Code Guys who whatever or the M&M Guy or whatever, because those are the things that capture people's attention. But it doesn't exist in a vacuum, its saying, I get you. I know what you know. I know what you spend your time on. I know the cultural references that you get and it's a real bonding activity.

Corbett: And so people that are just starting out--you know, we've spent over the first half hour of this call talking really about sort of fundamental strategies and what you need to be all about and we haven't really talked about any techniques or tips or specific social networks to use. How much...I think that a lot of people starting out spend a lot of time looking for sort of the golden goose in terms of social media and which one they should spend time on and what techniques they should use. How much of that do you think is important versus the stuff that we've spent the first half hour talking about?

Naomi: I think there are some times when you can get a kind of perfect storm answer. There was a point where you could easily get 5 thousand hits in a day, good ones too, not fantastic but not bad through StumbleUpon. Like one good Stumble and you're off to the races. There was a time when people were even actually subscribing based on StumbleUpon. Back when they were actually really honestly trying to find good shit and not just trying to up their own Stumble ranking. You could get a huge influx but by the time anybody was talking about it, it was done. It was over, StumbleUpon sucked.

Same kind of thing with Digg, right? Normal people use to be able to get traffic through Digg. I don't think they really should to be quite honest with you because, I talked about this in a post how we view social media. Digg was supposed to be about news and you have that like 101 Traffic getting thing or whatever.

Corbett: Yeah.

Naomi: Right. It was good--

Corbett: Yeah--

Naomi: But 2 years ago people would have been trying to get back and get huge traffic on Digg. And I'm like it's good but it's not fucking news.

Corbett: Yeah.

Naomi: So I think there's a lot of gaining that goes on. As soon as I go out and tell however many people are listening to this thing what to do, like they tell 3 friends, all of a sudden the rule's broken, it doesn't work any more. So I think we spend a lot of time chasing that and just in the act of chasing you try to make it disappear and you do kind of kill the golden goose. I mean, having said that, there are certainly trends that are worth paying attention to.

I wish I could get into Facebook because I have some kind of a Facebook presence, I could probably rock in my traffic. I just don't like it. It's just not my thing. I like Twitter.

Corbett: Yeah.

Naomi: And I think a lot of people don't pay attention to that because they get on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn and God knows what else and they wonder why it doesn't work. The reason certain people do so well on Facebook is they commit to it. They show up and they're like I'm going to be a Facebook chick now. So I think that's probably good advice, probably boring advice but it's good. Don't keep chasing the trends, you know pick one and go with it.

I think there are little pieces of advice I can give when it comes to things like social media, numbers matter. Right, if you're Scott Stratten from UnMarketing and you're all about authenticity and connection, Scott said numbers don't matter. Because to the ends he is promoting, numbers don't matter. You want to get a book deal, fuckin-a numbers matter.

So there are little tactics that you can have but yeah, the idea of which particular forum...by the time anybody listens to it, you know, somebody will be going through your site 6 months from now and find this interview and any advice I can give them on specific topics, is going to be hopelessly out of date.

Corbett: Yeah and whereas strategies and focusing on good content and defining what your unique value is are timeless advice.

Naomi: I want to give one point here for example. People who have been around in blogging for awhile if they saw Leo from Zen Habits kind of rise to stardom, one of the things that was really interesting was that his numbers; Brian Clark, same deal. Darren. Their numbers at the time, kind of made it seem like if you didn't have at least 20 thousand, 50 thousand readers like you're not going to go anywhere or do anything. That was also in a time frame though when it was not abnormal for somebody who used RSS to subscribe to blogs to have 2 or 3 hundred feeds in their reader.

Corbett: Yeah.

Naomi: And so getting 50 thousand readers actually...I mean it wasn't easy, I'm not gonna disparage what they did but it was a hell of a lot easier than it is today. So it's easy to look at information from 2 years ago and say okay, I guess I need 50 thousand readers. No you don't because people have got to the point where they're using their readers as much.

They're using Twitter and Facebook to a lot more of their reading. They're not showing up for every post like I think in a lot of cases they used to. And because of that you don't need nearly as high a numbers because those hundred thousand people were not necessarily a hundred thousand loyal people like we were talking about earlier. Nowadays a 10 thousand reader blog is a pretty damn good blog.

Corbett: And I think that a lot of people define sort of their...or they measure success based on purely how many readers they have because they didn't necessarily start out with certain business goals in mind like actually creating a product and selling their kind.

Naomi: Well numbers are good because they're concrete.

Corbett: Yeah.

Naomi: So it's easy to make numbers go up. I want to get my website so I'm getting 35 thousand hits a month, okay. It gives them something to strive for and I think it keeps you focused. But I think where we fall down is when we start thinking that number is inherently relevant.

Corbett: And I guess I wanted to be sensitive to your time, Naomi. I know that you mentioned that you had to run out to some fancy bar or something for a Friday happy hour.

Naomi: I said no such thing!

Corbett: Well--

Naomi: I mean, yes I did. I have a date. I have babysitting until the end of today and I intend to use it. But I'm quite happy to answer any other questions that you have.

Corbett: Okay, maybe just a couple of others if you don't mind. The one thing you mentioned RSS. How valuable are they in sort of in today's environment and do you put much weight into RSS subscribers? Do you think email subscribers are more important?

Naomi: I think email subscribers convert better if you're selling something, email's more valuable. Generally speaking an email subscriber is worth financially 5 to 6 times what an RSS subscriber is worth.

Corbett: Five to six times.

Naomi: Yeah. So I mean if you're looking to make money, like by selling your own stuff or affiliate stuff or whatever, so that's that. I mean obviously not for advertising. Advertising has different goals.

So I think that's important. I think that RSS is a very valuable comfort of metrics, so when people walk in the door and they see that your blog has 37 hundred readers, they heed that and they compare that to what they already know. If all reading right now is CopyBlogger

and Zen Habits, your blog looks really lame because they're used to seeing 100 thousand plus.

But if they're just starting their own blog and they have 4 subscribers, then your 37 hundred or whatever looks totally awesome. So it's valuable as a comparative. And it's also valuable when they're doing anything off line. So if you want to get a book published, yes, your however many thousand readers – that's a relevant number when you're talking about getting a speaking engaged...when you're talking about something off line and into real big kid business mode, then yeah. They're very relevant. As far as inherently? No, RSS feeds are pretty unimportant.

Corbett: Um hmm. And what about for beginners, is search engine optimization or SEOs something that they should focus on?

Naomi: Yes and no. It largely depends on what the grand scale point is and if you're willing to revisit it in six to twelve months. So if you are going to give it...you look at the guys from ShitMyDadSays on Twitter,

Corbett: Yeah.

Naomi: Right? Leave it on your website, search engines traffic is useless don't even bother; just don't waste your time. People are going to come and they're going to go absolutely hysterical or they're find it vulgar and disgusting. But somebody's not searching for funny websites on the internet and if they are, good luck making number one for Google on that, right?

Corbett: Yeah.

Naomi: You're not going to solve any problems, so don't even bother. If you are selling eBooks about how to train your hamster then yeah, absolutely you should be trying to rank for that because it's not as subjective. It's not as competitive and can actually take practical steps to improve your rankings and thereby the traffic.

So the second thing is if you're willing to revisit. It would be unreasonable to assume that people know what it is that they want at the outset. Even when you think you know what you want, 8 months from now, you have it, you will realize that your clients changed her mind and that's totally normal. So if you're willing to revisit, you start by no, real SEO, if you're willing to do the work later or however you're able to do the work to go in and optimize it later, then yeah, you don't have to worry about it so much.

Corbett: Yeah and I've found that if you publish good content on you know whatever topic, core topic you're interested in over time that if you just pay attention to some of the really fundamental SEO techniques like including a description of keywords and so forth in your post then it will eventually come to you without doing a whole lot of active sort of back link development and so forth.

Naomi: Oh yeah and that's it; header text, title text, bold and italics, good anchor text when you're linking to yourself, like just the really basic stuff, the stuff that takes you like two more minutes on your blog posts than it would have otherwise. Like, people will eventually come. And I think the important other thing to realize is if a search engine visitor arrives, will they want what they see? Because I think people get so hyped up on getting search traffic, they don't realize...for me for example, my search engine bounce rate is over ninety percent. People come in through search either on sex terms and they run like hell for good reason or on business terms and they see me talking about sex so they run like hell for good reason.

Corbett: Yes.

Naomi: So I could optimize myself out the wazoo and it doesn't matter because the average Google user does not like IttyBiz.

Corbett: Yeah and it's interesting that sort of the counter point to having a lot of personality is that it may change your traffic strategy, right?

Naomi: Absolutely, absolutely, because if you're just Goggling something, when I was going to move to England, I Googled something like, "How to move to England" and I found this eBook, it's just a straight sales page, just old school, not part of the blog or creative business or a creative site, it was just a sales page for an eBook under how to move to England and I bought it instantly. I didn't tell my friends about it, I didn't say, 'Dude, there was this guy. You should check him out.' Right?

He was selling information. He provided good information. I bought it. So that's what that guy wants, he was probably number four in Google for whatever it was I searched for. He's probably making pretty good money and if he gets up to number one he's going to make crazy good money. But that's his thing, right? I don't remember his name, so you know I'm never gonna meet him in person. I'm never going to attend his event. But he doesn't want that. On the other token, if you're eventually wanting to be the next Tony Robbins, then you're not going get there by search engines.

Corbett: Yeah and that's...I guess that's why people are so enthusiastic about social media these days.

Naomi: Right. Well you get to capitalize on existing tribes and that I mean Chris Brogan and Julian Smith talk about this a little bit in *Trust Agents*. They talk about the large concept, the idea of finding the gate keepers and jumping the gate and getting in with people who are already built a tribe.

Corbett: Exactly, yeah because you can leverage it.

Naomi: Exactly.

Corbett: So what's next for IttyBiz, are you looking to become the next Chris Brogan and have your face on the cover of giant magazines or are you happy with what you're doing now and what products do you have coming out?

Naomi: That's an interesting question, I have no idea. We were very fortunate because we received fairly rapid success and that has good things attached to it, like a name and which I got to clean my own house. So those are some things, but they make it awful easy to stop thinking about what you're actually trying to accomplish because you're already there.

So I don't really know, we are playing with the idea of doing some more off line stuff, have more bricks and mortar business, you know your basic art gallery, coffee shop, graphic design studio that's off line. So we're playing with that idea. We're also playing with the idea of forget it, let it do its thing, make it even more kind of personality driven and sell an eBook twice a year and be done with it. So it's definitely an interesting place to be.

As far as what's coming up, we have a copywriting course that's coming out in June, people have been asking for it for about 2 years now. So we finally said alright, we'll make one. So we have something on how to write your own copy which is; little marketing lesson here. Look at the market and see what's missing, make that product, you'll probably make a lot of money. Most of the copywriting products out there right now are aimed at people who want to become copywriters and my belief, my contention is that most people don't want to become copywriters, they want to not have to pay copywriters.

Corbett: Yeah.

Naomi: And you get people writing their own copy, ninety percent as well as a professional copywriter would, they will still make lots of money and they don't have to pay 10 thousand dollars a sales page.

So we'll see what happens and I'll report back but we have that and we have another product that is unnamed as yet. We're calling it the IttyBiz 1000 profit list. It's going to be specifically aimed at people who are actively trying to either quit a job or they never had a job to begin with but they want to seriously up their game to full time income levels.

So doing those over the summer and into the fall, so, yeah, that's the space. If you're interested you can pop over to IttyBiz and get on one of the free marketing courses list or if you like discounts and don't mind being hammered with emails once every couple of months you can go to [ittybiz.com/getonthelist](http://ittybiz.com/getonthelist) and you can join up and find out when new stuff comes out.

Corbett: Awesome. I have to tell you I purchased your How to Launch the Beep out of your eBook and I'm working on a product myself and so I've got my nose buried in that book just about every day making sure I'm getting everything covered.

Naomi: That's awesome, we've received such... You know what's so ironic is we never launched that book. Consistently the high seller by far and we never launched it. It's funny we kind of finicky talked about it. But talk about viral marketing. That thing just took off. It is everywhere. And we received such great feedback about it and it's sort of funny we never did all the hype.

Like we talk about the hype and we hyper other products and have great launches. But this one we were just so busy doing other stuff that we just kind of told our list, “Hey, we have a thing.” And both Dave and I have very segmented lists so we both have that core group of people who find out that we don’t mind being hammered. And they just told enough people, who told enough people who told enough people we never actually did the official, you know, five emails of doom.

Corbett: That’s awesome. I mean, I think it’s a testament to the content obviously. I mean it’s a really valuable and sort of rich product. There’s a lot of stuff in there and also the branding, I think the name it’s really eye catching and you don’t forget it.

Naomi: Well yeah, we can thank Dave for the bleep. I get the question a lot, “Well, did the ‘bleep’ really stand for…” You know, it’s cool. It gets conversation going, so.

Corbett: Cool.

Naomi: So yeah, well, I’m glad. If you ever have any questions fire ‘em my way.

Corbett: Awesome. Well thanks very much Naomi for chatting with me today and I know we talked earlier about strategies for getting…for making an interview work well on a blog so I’m gonna see if I can do something innovative with this as opposed to just posting some audio on the blog because like you said we don’t want to have to make the readers do the work for us.

Naomi: Absolutely.

Corbett: Awesome, and thanks…thanks very much and good luck with your baby sitting or whatever it is that you’re really going to be doing this afternoon.

Naomi: Thanks so much, have fun.

C. Barr: Okay, thanks.