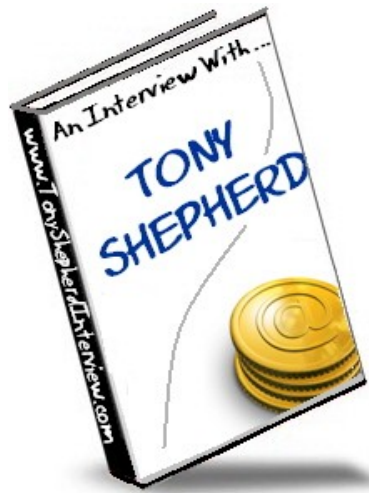


An Interview With...

TONY SHEPHERD



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INTRODUCTION

When I first became interested in internet marketing, the first thing I wanted to do was find out all about *other* internet marketers. I wanted to know how their businesses worked, what they spent their days doing, where they got their traffic, how they first got into internet marketing... etc. Basically I wanted to 'see' inside their businesses to look at how they operated (and I still do today.)

In my opinion there is no better way to learn how to make money online than to look at how *other people* are doing it – and since I started my newsletter (<http://www.DanielFlowerNewsletter.com>) I've had lots of emails from people who seem to feel the same way... which is why I decided to interview top internet marketer Tony Shepherd.

Tony runs Laycock Publishing with well-known guru Sara Brown. Both Sara and Tony make money online every single day of the week, and as soon as you talk to either of them it becomes immediately obvious how passionate and enthusiastic they are about internet marketing – mostly because it allows them to live life on their *own* terms.

I hope you gain some useful information from this book because I truly believe this is a great insight into how a successful marketer runs his business. I've tried to make this a 'real life' interview because that's the way I like to do things, and if you enjoy what you read here you can subscribe to my free monthly newsletter at <http://www.DanielFlowerNewsletter.com> where you'll be able to access more content like this. I don't think you'll find a more honest newsletter anywhere online, and I like to share with you everything that happens in my business (warts and all) as I strive towards building my online empire 😊

Enjoy the book – and as always please let me know your opinion. I love hearing from people, so feel free to drop me an email on: daniel AT daniel-flower.com

AN INTERVIEW WITH TONY SHEPHERD

Daniel Flower: *First of all, thank you for agreeing to do the interview Tony - Let's get straight into it if I may...*

In my opinion, conducting JV's (Joint Ventures) with other marketers is a great way to build a business, however many 'newbies' might be afraid of approaching a big name marketer such as yourself. Is there anything specific you look for before you consider agreeing to do a JV or interview with someone?

Tony Shepherd: I'll say right away that one of the main aims for our business was always to get away from JV's. They're a pain in the arse 😊. We wanted self-sufficiency as soon as possible.

JV's are a great way to build a business, you're right, but they're not always accessible to newbies. We get at least one JV offer every single day, and most of them are worthy and would probably make a profit but you've got to see things from your subscriber's point of view. You can't just send out an email to your list with an offer just because you're doing a JV with someone.

If you do this it becomes pretty obvious that all you're doing is trying to make money.

Now there's nothing wrong with making money from your list but you've got to do it with respect. If I send out an offer to my list it's because I genuinely think it'll benefit my subscriber's business and it has to be relevant to the free content and newsletters we send out on a weekly or monthly basis otherwise you just end up taking the piss, trying to make a quick profit and everyone ends up feeling annoyed.

If you've ever sent a JV request to either myself or Sara Brown I can almost guarantee you've got a reply. It's probably been a 'no' because as I said we don't do many JV's but at least we'll explain why.

What usually happens when you send a JV request to most marketers is that you don't get an answer and spend the next month wondering why. The truth is that it's very rare for internet marketers to do JV's from a single email. They don't know who you are, don't have the time or can't be bothered to read the book you've sent to them and won't bother replying because there's no benefit for them to do so.

If you want to get a JV with a marketer then do EVERYTHING you possibly can to make it easy for them. Wipe their backside if necessary. If you can present them with a plug and play JV, even to the point where you write the broadcast email for them to send to their list then do it - because you've got much more chance of getting a yes.

The question you must ask yourself of course, is do you really want to JV with someone like that?

There's a much smarter way to do it.

I'm going to namedrop a little here (sorry)

About a year ago I met Rob Benwell a couple of times. The guy who did Blogging To The Bank, BTTB2, IM annihilation etc and a lot of other products that you've probably heard of. He's a very nice bloke too.

As far as I'm aware Rob's made in excess of a million Dollars from his products. He has a lot of affiliates and JV partners but his main 5 or 6 JV partners are well known and established IMers in their own right and they take turns in promoting each other's products to their lists. It works really well, and this, in my humble opinion, is the way to go with JV's.

If I was a newcomer to IM and wanted to get great JV partners this is what I'd do...

Instead of depressing yourself trying to get a JV with some big marketer, set up your own JV group with marketers who are at the same level as you - similar products, same size list, same experience etc and start cross promoting each other's products as you go.

As your respective reputations grow, so will your lists and your 'clout' within the industry. Look after each other, brainstorm, meet up (if possible) and establish a level of trust that you can rely on.

I'm speaking from personal experience here so if you can possibly find a band of 'brothers' (or sisters) and grow with them as your business grows, you'll end up with a group of people that could easily be sitting across from each other in a few years time, ALL millionaires.

We don't do many JV's because we don't have to.

Our business is set up so that we're completely self-sufficient and don't have to rely on any other internet marketers for our income.

This is especially good for me because it means I can say what I like and don't have to worry about upsetting any other marketers.

It also means that when we DO ask for a JV people know it's going to be well worth getting involved. For example we did a launch a few months back and got just 2 JV partners involved. Our profits would have been \$8,000 on our own but with the JV partners we brought in \$30,000

Of course the partners were very happy with their percentage. The \$30,000 by the way was AFTER we'd paid JV partners. The reason we asked these two JV partners was that the product was ideal for their lists - and while profit was of course the major concern (let's be honest), it was getting it right for our subscribers that came a VERY close second.

The end profit, TINY refund rate and glowing testimonials showed that we all got it right.

My advice for what it's worth to newcomers would be don't worry about JV's until you're more established. JV's ARE a quick way of making money and gaining credibility but for every JV that gets accepted (going off our own emails) I'd say that 50 are rejected.

Concentrate on building your list and your relationship with your list above all else.

Daniel Flower: *How did you first become interested in internet marketing?*

Tony Shepherd: When I realised that the internet gave you an opportunity that can't really be found anywhere else - and that is you can try out your weirdest and wackiest business ideas without any real risk. All you've got to lose is time and maybe \$50 hosting and domain registration fee.

We live in an age where everything, technologically speaking, has come together in just the right way. It's a fabulous time and everyone who's even remotely interested in internet marketing should give themselves a big pat on the back for realising this.

Personally it was a continuation of what I was doing offline. I just started marketing physical products - printed - that I was selling offline by using newspaper and magazine advertising and using online methods and downloads instead.

Daniel Flower: *For me, the first time I ever made money online was an experience I'll never forget. Could you tell us about your own experience of this? What did you do to make your first money online?*

Tony Shepherd: There are a couple of stories I've written about before and the versions are all different because I can't actually remember the first time but what we did was to move physical products from offline to online situations. A long time ago we sold a non-status credit directory, which was about where to get loans and mortgages etc if you had bad credit. We just started selling this online and never looked back. By the time this particular product got to the end of it's natural life we knew we'd never do anything else.

A lot of experts say it was easier at the start of the net to make money than it is now. I can't make my mind up about that but

looking back at the early websites I honestly think we made money because we didn't know what we know now - we didn't know what you should and shouldn't do (which is all a load of crap anyway) and it all seemed to work.

The sales page didn't have to look a certain way and there was no big red headline or bullet points. And yet people still bought. Makes you think.

Worse of all, we didn't even collect the email addresses of over 1000 customers who bought. I cringe now when I think of that.

Daniel Flower: *You've been a full-time internet marketer for quite a few years now. Could you tell us a little about what you were doing before you started online, and also if there was anything specific that happened which made you decide to quit your job?*

Tony Shepherd: Nope - feels too much like filling in a CV or resume - which I'm never going to do again, but my various careers have ranged from professional musician to freelance journalist, and almost ended abruptly when I was once mistaken by armed upper class idiots for a hunt saboteur.

Daniel Flower: *A lot of people are interested to know what other internet marketers spend their days doing. Could you go through with us what you've done in the past 24 hours?*

Tony Shepherd: It's 7.30pm and a lovely summer evening here in the UK. I'm sitting outside the house watching my laptop battery run down and listening to doves cooing and the wind gently rustling through the trees. I have a gin and tonic safely to hand and through the open doors you can hear the child monitor clearly enough to know my three year old daughter is falling gently asleep in bed. I'll hear a bang very shortly as the book she was reading falls onto the floor.

My wife is putting our son to bed - he's just 18 months and takes a little longer to settle. When she comes down we'll eat dinner and chill out for a bit.

This morning my little girl woke me at 4.50am when she padded out of her room and got into the bed in my office. I was sleeping there because last night I had a Skype call with an American marketer about a project we're working on that lasted until the small hours and I didn't want to wake my wife getting into bed because she had an early phone call to take this morning too. It's a rare wife that understands that I work funny hours and I'm lucky.

So an average day goes like this:

Get up whenever one or other of the kids decides they want to get up and all four of us stagger to the kitchen. Coffee for me and lots of it. Breakfast. Chat. Play.

This lasts until about 9.30 am which is when I either go upstairs to my workroom or drive to the office depending on where I want to work. More often than not it's at home.

I work three days a week 10am till 4pm. Sometimes later or earlier if I need to speak to people in other countries. I try to keep things sensible though.

I've read Tim Ferriss' book but don't have the discipline to leave checking my email until lunchtime so I get stuck into Gmail and see what's happened overnight. This means answering any emails (we still do this personally) and checking on both Laycock Publishing matters and my own stuff. It also includes the delightful job of going through the 'notification of payment received' emails and Clickbank receipts.

I flag the emails that I need to answer. I'll do these later.

After that it's on to whatever's on my to-do list for the day.

At the moment I'm just putting the finishing touches to the next MonthlyPLR.com ebook and sales page. I spend a few hours on this then leave it while I'm still enjoying it, to finish tomorrow. We like these tasks.

I check on an outsourcing job that I've posted on getafreelancer.com and extend the project by three days

because there hasn't been a bid that feels right yet. I'm asking for some SEO on a niche project I'm working on.

There are always projects on the go. Always. I try to work things so that nothing is pressingly urgent because I don't like deadlines. I AM aware that my newsletter is overdue and although I know exactly what I'm writing about I haven't yet put finger to keyboard. The whole point of working for myself is that I can work to my strengths (writing, minilaunches and ideas) and either ignore or outsource my weaknesses (deadlines, SEO, technical stuff).

I chat to various people throughout the day on Skype instant messaging, and post a few messages on a private invitation-only marketers forum of which I'm a member (and you thought there was no inner circle eh?). All are excuses not to do any real work and involve gossip, piss taking and a few nuggets of solid gold info.

There are two important things here:

Firstly none of this feels like work. In fact it isn't - it's something that I love doing and is now second nature. When you get your business to a certain point it achieves 'critical mass' and to be honest if you've enough products out there, brings in money day after day with no real effort. It's fun, it's exciting and it feels like freedom.

The second thing is that all this involves things that every single person reading this can do. I'm slightly embarrassed typing this because nothing I do is unachievable. If some of you reading this come in from work, excited about checking your email, seeing if you've made any sales, then sit down and start doing a little more work on your website, writing a blog post or doing a few more pages on your latest ebook, then please realise that this is EXACTLY what I do. The difference is that I have more products out there than you, and perhaps a bigger mailing list. That's all.

Daniel Flower: *If you were locked in a room with just a PC and an internet connection, there was a gun held to your head,*

and you were told that you'd got just 7 days to make \$1000 online, otherwise you'd be shot, what would you do?

Tony Shepherd: The million dollar question eh?

First off,:

I'd go to elance.com and post a job. I'd ask for a 20 page report about how to drive traffic to a blog. I'd need the report completing in 4 days.

I'd build a couple of web pages - (details to follow) during the four days while the report was ready.

Once the report was finished I'd do a WSO offering PLR rights to the report I got from elance which I'd call something like 'How to drive unlimited traffic to your blog, time after time'.

I'd sell the rights for \$27.

Once they'd paid for the report I'd redirect the customer to an upsell page where they could buy, for \$17 full PLR rights to a report called 'How I made \$1000 in just 7 days starting from nothing'

And this report would of course outline what I just told you about above.

So for \$27 and an upsell of \$17 the buyer would get PLR rights to two outstanding reports, one about driving traffic to a blog, and one about how to produce \$1000 from nothing in 7 days, which they could resell over and over and profit from. Everyone's happy.

I don't know if I'd bring in \$1000 from this method but I reckon so. There's a huge market for unique PLR.

The only fly in the ointment would be the elance report, which might cost \$75 or so.

Failing that I'd sell a kidney in Bolivia.

Daniel Flower: *That's great, but getting actual traffic to your website is a big thing that most people struggle with. What methods do you use the most to promote your own products and websites?*

Tony Shepherd: Viral marketing, SEO, and affiliates are always great for driving traffic to Clickbank sites and don't forget having a list. If you send an email to 10,000 people quite a few of them will visit the site!

I'm also experimenting with outsourcing. We've built a business on low volume sites, but with highly targeted traffic. I'd rather have that than a lot of untargeted traffic any day.

But mainly Viral Marketing. The ultimate method of driving traffic in my opinion. We have a method (gonna plug it here - www.viralsneakiness.com) that is simplicity itself but allows you to write small 5 or 10 page reports and let them loose on the internet. They'll bring a profit in themselves AND drive traffic to whatever websites you choose. Simple but deadly effective.

Daniel Flower: *So if you had to choose one aspect of your business, such as your mailing list, blog, or JV's, which do you believe is your most important asset?*

Tony Shepherd: Mailing list without a doubt. We try to look after everyone who's on our mailing list. That said, the blogs are pulling in loads of traffic too.

Daniel Flower: *You've created many products over the years. Do you have a personal favourite, and which would you most recommend to a new aspiring internet marketer?*

Tony Shepherd: <http://www.monthlyplr.com> and <http://www.monthlyplrniche.com> - our PLR membership sites are my favourites. We offer top-quality internet marketing PLR ebooks and reports that I honestly believe are the best quality

and best value anywhere on the internet. And we love putting the packages together.

Daniel Flower: *Yourself and your business partner Sara Brown are both famous for answering emails personally. Is this something you enjoy, and do you believe it's a key aspect of your success?*

Tony Shepherd: We enjoy it very much although Sara is nicer than me in her emails. I tend to be quite blunt and to the point although many people seem to appreciate that. I do think that being accessible is important. In a weird way I also think it shows we don't take ourselves too seriously. Some internet marketers have assistants/PAs or minions to answer their emails for them and I can fully understand why, but if you email a marketer and get a personal reply you get an insight into the character of the marketer away from all the sales page hype, and you can connect with them. I've had personal emails from all my favourite marketers and they've got a fan for life in me because of that.

On the other hand some mid-level marketers take themselves so seriously it's funny. I understand all about time management and delegation but I'm sure some marketers decide to stop replying personally to emails because it's a sign of status. You emailed me and Sara a few times recently and in the distant past. You tell me in all honesty - did it make you think we were less professional? Maybe you did :-)

Anyway whatever everyone else does, we like having a hands on approach and will continue to do so, even if it means having to get up a little bit earlier.

Daniel Flower: *Could you tell us a little more about your business relationship with Sara? Do you share an office or do you both work from separate locations? How do you split the workload, and do you like to collaborate on everything or do you have your own separate projects?*

Tony Shepherd: It's a bit Lennon & McCartney to be honest. We both have ideas that we work on together and we have ideas that one of us comes with and pushes and works on more. We run ideas past the other person and that's where the real collaboration is - if something's a horribly crappy idea it doesn't see the light of day. A lot of what we do involves not working together too much but there's always contact. We both have outside projects too of course. We do have an office and work from home too.

Daniel Flower: *What do you believe is the single biggest reason why you've become successful?*

Tony Shepherd: Not paying much attention to what we 'should' do or the 'right way' of doing things. And realising that there is no governing body in internet marketing - we can do what we like. Finally, not having to do JV's - we're self sufficient and don't have to worry about what other marketers think. We can say and write what we like, and that's quite rare in IM.

Daniel Flower: *What are you going to be doing over the next 7 days?*

Tony Shepherd: I don't work much more than three days a week at the moment so the next couple of days will be family stuff. I'm meeting up with some mates I haven't seen for over 10 years for a couple of beers too, so I think I'll be doing quite a bit of explaining when we get round to what our jobs are. The first thing I need to do when I get back to the computer is catching up on my blog www.tony-shepherd.com

I also need to have some stitches out on Monday morning (today is Thursday) but it's a long story!

Daniel Flower: *And where do you hope to take your business over the next 12 months?*

Tony Shepherd: I change my mind about this every day. And for those of you reading this and shaking your heads.... it's true - I don't have a fixed business plan, and the sky hasn't collapsed yet.

Daniel Flower: What about 10 years time?

Tony Shepherd: I'm about to buy a farmhouse in France. Not sure whether we'll move over there on a permanent basis or just live in France and the UK yet but my plan is to call in a few promises from IMers I know (and you'd be VERY surprised who I'm talking about) and run a series of free IM seminars in France. And of course keep chickens, grow potatoes and watch the kids grow up speaking two languages. Work life balance has always been the most important thing to me.

Daniel Flower: Finally, is there anything else which springs to mind that you think people who read this might benefit from?

Tony Shepherd: Set your own agenda and do things your own way. If you have doubts unplug yourself TOTALLY from the internet while you finish your project. There are wayyyyyyyy too many experts, opinions and people who want to force their opinions on you in this biz. They're great fun to listen to, chat with, JV with and tease for taking themselves too seriously but when you're working on something important to YOU, it's often necessary to tune them out - they can be at best distracting and at worst depressing and discouraging.

And if I may, here's the last thing I'd like to say to any aspiring marketers reading this. I've done Dan's interview over the space of a few days. As I type this last bit it's just after 10.30pm on a Thursday evening. I'm sitting cross legged on the sitting room floor typing on my laptop. I've got half a glass of wine to finish and I feel pretty relaxed, but to be fair I feel relaxed most of the time. Earlier on as the dusk fell I was watching a bat flit about outside the window and the trees were gently swaying in the wind.

When I was an employee I can't remember ever having time to just stand and stare at things like that. Tomorrow my wife and I are taking the children to feed the ducks in the morning then in the afternoon we'll do whatever we feel like - I have no idea yet - we'll make it up as we go along.

Internet Marketing has, in the truest sense of the word, given me my life back. I'm so used to it now I can't remember unless I try really hard what having a 9-5 felt like. I know I wouldn't go back without a fight.

And the best thing about IM is it's open to everyone. When you get frustrated at not making much money online remember that you ARE one of the chosen few - because you know about IM. Most people would give you a blank stare if you mentioned

affiliates, autoresponders or Clickbank. You are almost at the summit - you just need a tiny little push to get there, or at the very least a good foothold.

Don't lose your grip - it's an awfully long way to fall back, and if you do I doubt you'll ever start climbing again.

Stay with it.

Enough of the mountaineering analogy - I have to go and see how many sales I made since I started writing this.

Daniel Flower: *Thank you for doing the interview – it was an absolute pleasure to learn from such a talented marketer.*

Tony Shepherd: My pleasure Dan.

Best Wishes,

Tony Shepherd

If you enjoyed this book and would like to receive more content like this, you can subscribe to my FREE monthly newsletter at <http://www.DanielFlowerNewsletter.com>

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