

How To Get At Least One-Million Visitors A Year To Your Website!

Welcome!

[Louis Allport](#) here ... and thank you very much for downloading this interview. :-)

In this eBook you'll find the complete transcript of the interview I had recently with Neil Shearing specifically on just one subject:

How To Get At Least A Million Visitors A Year To Your Website!

Actually, that's a very conservative figure. As I write this Neil's site is getting well over two million visitors a year! And even more importantly he converts those visitors into subscribers to his newsletter, and customers of his products.

Here's a little background on Neil ...



Neil started on the internet selling a little report called "How To Make Money On The Internet" (which he now thinks is a really cheesy title!) ... and that was just to make a bit of extra money while studying at university.

Five years later, Neil's online business has grown so much that he now has 4,000 affiliates ... 2,500 customers, and over 32,000 people subscribed to his newsletter. What's most amazing is that it all started from a business running off free web space!

You can visit Neil's site here:

www.ScamFreeZone.com

You can also listen to the audio for this 20 minute interview...

The audio is in MP3 format and you can therefore listen to it on pretty much any player including [Real Player](#) and [Windows Media Player](#).

For quicker download I zipped up the file. You can easily open it with either of these two free programs: [WinZip](#) (PC) or [Aladdin Expander](#) (Mac).

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Louis Allport

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Hi Neil ... I remember you saying that you get at least a million visitors a year to your web site ... I wanted to ask you exactly how that happens and how other people can copy that success. So what would be your first steps, what would you recommend?

Well it's not any one thing, it's obviously a combination of lots of different things that pull in traffic. I don't do much advertising myself so I couldn't say one way or another whether that brings in a lot of useful traffic.

The two main things I rely on are the [associate program](#) that I've had since about 1998. I've got about 4,000 affiliates now so they send me a lot of traffic. So starting an affiliate program actually works very well.

And search engine strategies -- I get a lot of traffic from being listed in Yahoo and listed in Google and they send me a lot of traffic so between the two of those and recurring traffic from when I mention something in my newsletter I use a link to the [Scam Free Zone](#) even if it just redirects somewhere else, and links to customers when I email my customers I put links in there that go through the Scam Free Zone.

So I would say those three main things: the associate program, search engine traffic, and residual traffic from just emailing my lists.

Okay. It's interesting you say you don't actually do any advertising. When you were starting out a few years ago did you do some advertising then?

No, I was just too tight to spend any money on advertising so I really didn't, I just optimized a few pages for the search engines and then it snowballed from there.

I didn't do too much search engine optimization, I'm not completely skilled at that, I just optimized a few pages and that brought in traffic and then gradually built on it by launching new products which always generated more traffic because the affiliates would then put up more links and things like that. It just snowballed really.

I do actually do a little bit of advertising though, I shouldn't say I don't do any because someone will probably say "Hey, I know you advertise".

I have a sponsored listing on Yahoo, and that's probably responsible for quite a bit of traffic but I don't actually track that, I couldn't say how much I make from that whether it's profitable or not because they only send traffic to the root domain name, so I haven't actually analyzed that traffic.

Could you explain what exactly is a sponsored ad in Yahoo and how do you use that?

Well first of all you have to be listed in Yahoo so you have to pay their listing fee just to get into the directory.

That's about \$200, is that right?

It's \$299 for them to review your site. You don't pay to get listed, you pay for the review because that allows them to say "No" if they want to. And I think it's now \$299 per year so I only paid \$299 once -- it was just a flat fee ... now it's \$299 per year.

Then once you're in their directory you can pay to "sponsor" that section of the directory. And depending on how much traffic that section gets they will charge you pro-rata so if it's a very, very highly trafficked area of the directory you'll pay more to sponsor it than a back-water area of the directory.

I think I pay \$100 a month to sponsor the Business Opportunities directories web site. Then you get an enhanced listing at the top of that part of the directory.

So -- are you sponsoring keywords or is it just sections of the directory?

That's right, it's just sections of the directory, so wherever you're listed, say they put you under business opportunities you can apply to be a sponsored listing within that part of the directory and they'll tell you how much it is and if you're happy you can say "I want to sponsor that part".

Okay. And you pay -- is it on click-throughs? Or views?...

It's a flat-fee per month so they put your link and the description in a little box above all the other listings in addition to your regular listing half way down the page or wherever it is. So you pay a monthly fee and you sponsor that section of the directory. And obviously get a bit more traffic.

I remember reading actually -- I think, correct me if I'm wrong Yahoo recently changed their backend search engine from Inktomi to Google?

Yeah, they've been with Google for a while now.

Oh okay, that's old news then. I was just wondering -- obviously you appear quite highly in the Google listings, is there an advantage also in adding a Yahoo listing instead of letting your Google search placings appear within Yahoo?

Yeah, because Yahoo first of all display their own directory listings so if you're in Yahoo you come up first ... that only makes sense, and then they display the Google web page matches and it also helps your Google ranking because Google takes notes of whether you're listed in Yahoo or not and gives your site a boost if you are, so you get listed in Yahoo ... you get traffic from Yahoo and you get additional traffic from Google.

So you don't really get involved with Pay-Per-Click search engines?

No, I found that to be a lot of hassle for very little return.

Obviously as you started a few years ago as there were many less web sites and also I think search engines were a lot easier to work with shall we say, I guess you had high listings a few years ago in whatever engines were around a few years ago like Altavista and the others...

Infoseek. That dates me just saying Infoseek.

You've obviously maintained a high placing, and without actually hiring a search engine expert, just doing it yourself ... how have you managed to do that?

Basically I don't do any work on the [Scam Free Zone](#) now, it just maintains it's own high ranking which is very nice ... I think the reason it does that is because it's an extensive site so it's seen as a valuable property so the search engines like listing original content quite high in their rankings.

It's also a very old site so you can't fake how old your site is. They can look up through the whois directories how old your site is and my domain name was taken in 1997 so they know it's been around for a while -- it's been in their directories for a while so they like that fact that I'm not some new person that's trying to spam their listings or whatever so: it's the age of the site, it's the fact that there's extensive content on the site, the fact that there's probably a couple of thousand links into the site, which is also hard to fake, and when you put all that together, I usually rank quite highly near the top of the terms that I'm interested in.

Does most of your search engine traffic come from Google and Yahoo?

Yeah. I know it's Google at the top I think then it's Yahoo...

It's seems to be that the other search engines are becoming slightly irrelevant.

Yeah they are actually. They seem to be fading into the background. I think they've all experienced this major problem with funding after the dot-com collapse and so they've all started plastering their sites with advertising and the one that didn't was Google so everyone has just migrated to Google and all the others I think are suffering.

And Google are actually making a profit.

Are they?

They're making quite serious money.

I think with the number of searches they get per-day it would be hard not to. Because they have the Google Ad-Words Select don't they so I was just looking at that today just dipping my toe in that water to see if it makes money.

And just to talk about [your affiliate program](#)... as you say you have about 4,000 affiliates now and obviously that's a lot of links to your site which helps your link-popularity and obviously you started your affiliate program at some point -- what would you recommend to someone who wants to develop such a successful affiliate program and bring a lot of traffic to their site? How could they build it up? What's important?

Well first of all it's important to pay your affiliates well and pay them on time because affiliates are obviously in it to make some money and if you pay them 10% on something that sells for \$10 they're just not going to be interested ... so you need to get the calculator out and work out how much you can pay them and make sure it's competitive with what the rest of the market's paying, because I made a decision right at the start that I would pay the person who referred the sale 50% and I do that now for all 5 products but that was a decision I made right at the beginning to stick with that.

Actually ... can we list your products just for reference?

Okay -- there's the [Internet Success Blueprint](#).

That was your very first one wasn't it?

That's right. That's the 279 pages, 3 quick time movies, bonus ebooks.

And you're almost giving it away...

Yup, we're almost giving that one away. Not quite... There's Blueprint which was the first product, and then almost the same time I launched Diamonds and Spider.

[Diamonds](#) is a collection of basically top tips from other internet marketers so we got people like Corey Rudl and Ken Evoy, Marlon Sanders, and Declan Dunn. I knew these people so I thought I'd be able to get the best top-ten people to contribute rather than some people who might have one friend who's a big name and then pad it out with nine others that no one's ever heard of. I thought "I know these people ... I can get some secrets out of them and put it together" ... so... that was Diamonds.

[Success Spider](#) is my software that hunts super-affiliates. That's been really successful. That worked really well.

Obviously you use it yourself ... that helps you find super affiliates for more links to your sites so as well as selling it to others it's really useful for your own affiliate program as well.

That's right. I initially did it because it was a tool that I couldn't find online and I wanted, so I said to a programmer "Can you put this together for me?" and he said "I think we can".

Initially it was going to be something that I could keep to myself like my super-tactic, but then I just figured other people would probably be happy to pay for this and they have been. So that's worked out quite well.

I recently launched [Internet Success Interviews](#) which was professional interviews that Peter Twist did and we packaged that up and sold it and the other one's [Yahoo Exposed](#).

And you sell that with reprint rights ... is that right?

Yes, you can buy it with or without reprint rights. It's \$19 ... it's just a little ebook, and \$69 if you want to take the ebook, rebrand it and sell it yourself.

Yeah, I think I've been offered that by several different people.

It's good for getting my name out and also people like to be able to just take a quality little ebook and see if they can sell things at their site. That's a great way to test what they're doing. Or even they can add it as a bonus if their product isn't selling and needs a little extra. They can put it in as a bonus and that helps shift their products.

So going back to building an affiliate program... you say offer them generous commissions on all five of the products...

That's right, offer them generous commissions. Keep in contact regularly -- it's important to have some way to keep your affiliates enthusiastic. I try to email mine about twice a month at the beginning of the month, at the middle of the month, and then also when I find something unique or original or interesting I'll drop them a note so that's kind of the mentoring approach to helping them and keeping them happy and keeping them enthusiastic.

I guess offering a second tier helps to bring in affiliates because people like Allan Gardyne has AssociatePrograms.com and he will list the links to my product, he'll also say "You can join Neil's program here" and then lots and lots of people join under him in effect, and if any of them make a sale the person that makes a sale makes 50% and Allan gets 10% of the sale as well, and that's the second tier and that helps to spread your name out further on the internet.

And I'm pretty sure Allan has some very serious affiliates reading his newsletter.

That's right, all the top people read his newsletter and the same goes for people like Neil Durrant over here in England -- he has an extensive newsletter of affiliate program experts and affiliate program managers and people like that so it's useful to be able to say to them -- "Look, you can refer people to my site and take a share of the sales".

Okay, so offering generous commissions, lots of products, and also a product which is worth a higher price so they get a good commission as well.

And lots of ad copy. Some people like putting up banners, some people don't. Some people like putting ezine adverts, some people don't. So you supply them with all the different possible advertising methods and say "Just put your number here".

And then they can just copy and paste and off they go. So that's important to have 5 different advertising mechanisms for 5 products so I've probably got 30 different links for possibilities. "For banners for Blueprint click here ... For ezine ads for Spider click here"...

And I see your affiliate program, it's listed on most pages of your web site so I guess as your web site traffic has grown your affiliate program has grown naturally as well and also as they refer other affiliates...

That's right. It spirals once it's going ... it can obviously be slow to get going -- I knew several of the names on the internet, the big names so I said to them "Look, let's put mentions out" and it got going quite quickly. But even if it starts slowly it can still spiral and still snowball.

Okay, so just a couple of closing questions, they're really sort of rolled into one... for someone who's interested in developing that kind of level of traffic, but more importantly I guess they've got to decide how they want to use the traffic and what it's for ... so what would you recommend? What advice can you offer?

Well, if you build an affiliate program you can link directly to your products which is what most people do but you should also, or if you can try and build in the possibility of linking to something like a newsletter or a forum or something like that so it's kind of a soft-sell approach.

I've had custom scripts written so they take care of sending the right traffic to the right place and dropping an affiliate cookie and all of those things, and you can use an affiliate link to any place on my web site so if you wanted to you could link to the [Scam Free Zone](#) front page, you could link to the sales copy for Blueprint or Spider or Diamonds or whatever.

You can also link to [the forum](#) or you can link to my newsletter back-issues and still drop... I've kind of tagged the visitor as yours and if they come back any time in the future and buy from me then you get 50% of the sale.

So some people link to the forum with an affiliate link and say "Look, this is a really top internet marketing forum, go over, have a look, see what people are saying ... it's really useful".

That's what I found quite amazing actually. I didn't really push it ... I just added a link in one of my sites saying "This is a good forum, you can get your questions answered, just visit" and that was making sales.

Great. I think people like Phil Wiley have done that and said "Yeah, it's a really clever idea" ... it's kind of a soft sell ... you're not saying to people "Go buy this product it's the latest most fantastic thing that's ever been released ever and it will make you money without doing a single thing while you're on the beach drinking tequila ..." or whatever.

So it's just like you can say to people "Here's a really useful forum, go over if you've got any questions, post a question, if you're just there to kind of lurk and read what people are asking about and read the replies then that's fine too" ... but you've sent that person through an affiliate link even though they might not know about it and you've dropped a 100 year cookie on them. So that time frame is enough for most people.

So it's not likely they'll outlive it...

Exactly!

"I spent 101 years, came back, I didn't get credit for the sale!"

Yeah, a lot of people like that and as I said they can link to the free ebook I just released is at [ScamFreeZone.com/101](#) where you can create an affiliate link to that and people have downloaded a free ebook and got some valuable content and information but you've dropped that cookie on them so if they come back and buy any of my products you still get the sale. So that's a bit different ... most people just link to the product page and try to get the sale "At all costs I've got to get the sale". It just doesn't work that way most of the time.

And of course with [the forum](#) people are more likely to keep coming back rather than visit sales page, decide yes or no, and that's it.

That's right, the forum gets them coming back.

Just out of interest: what software do you use. Was it custom software for your affiliate program?

Yeah, I originally bought an off-the-shelf kind of software solution and I was using that for a year or two and then I just needed more flexibility basically, I already had a programmer working for me that built the [Success Spider](#) and I said "Can we create some Perl scripts to do all the manipulation of all the affiliate links and things like that, and be able to mail them?" ... and all this different technical wizardry.

And so he said "Yeah, we can do that". And it's quite cheap actually. It's quite cheap to go somewhere like [Elance.com](#) and say "I've got a project" -- you post it for free, and then all these programmers say "I can do that for \$x" and you just pick one and they go away, they create it and come back and show you it and if you're happy you pay them for it. It's a lot better for me to use this custom solution than to use the off-the-shelf solution I was using.

And what sort of turnaround was that? How long does it take someone to put that together for you?

I think they don't tell you this, but I think usually most of the big programmers out there, the ones that know what they're doing will have probably done it before in the past so they'll have made it for someone and it might have taken them six weeks, and then they'll just tweak it to your preferences and then turn it around in a week or two.

And you say that's quite a reasonable price?

It cost me around \$600 or something so when you consider an off the shelf solution is about \$1,000 and then they charge you \$50 a month ...

That's incredible.

And when you own the scripts outright, you're not paying anyone per month just for the pleasure of using their software solution.

That's amazing. I would have thought it would be in the thousands.

I would have thought it was thousands as well so I said "I can post it for free as a project and see how much it comes out as". And that one I didn't actually post, I asked my programmer how much would it be ... and so it's as easy as that. If you don't ask you don't find out.