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Dynamic Software Creation

How To Create Software
Even If You're Not A Programmer



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Love What You Do And You'll Never Work Another Day In Your Life

Terry Telford



I'm an international business consultant with experience both online and offline. I specialize in developing results oriented marketing strategies for small and medium sized business owners. My clients own businesses in several industries including internet marketing, education, publishing, and property management.

I own 73 active websites in 19 markets. I'm a professional copywriter and avid internet marketer.

My recently published book, Guerrilla Marketing Breakthrough Strategies, is a joint venture project with Jay Conrad Levinson and focuses on...joint ventures. The book is a step-by-step plan for business owners to triple their sales and quadruple their business in 90 days. The book is currently available in larger bookstores, on my website or at Amazon.com

I wish you all the success you deserve now and in the future.

Terry Telford ☺

<http://www.TerryTelford.com>

PS. I also offer several free business and marketing resources on my website

Terry:

Hi there. You're listening to Terry Telford from TheBusinessProfessional.com. We're very lucky to have James Jackson here with us today. James is from FindHotNiches.com, which is only one of the many sites that he has. James has a very interesting history. He became intrigued by the possibilities of making money online in about 1995. He went through the typical trials and tribulations that many of us go through on our quest to turn the Internet into our cash cow that we're all looking for. James came at it from a different angle than most of us do. He decided that he was going to specialize in software even though he has no programming experience himself.

Today, James runs a very successful online business. He has agreed to share his business model with us and take us on a journey from the past to the present while showing us how we can follow in his footsteps and turn the Internet into the cash cow that we all know it can be. So, I'd like to begin by saying thank you for taking the time to be with us today, James.

James:

Thanks for having me, Terry.

Terry:

It's our pleasure. Maybe we can start out with your history. Can you tell us where you came from and how you got to where you are today?

James:

Alright. I'm originally from St. Louis, Missouri. In 1995 I was 17 years old, and I got a four-year scholarship to play basketball at Southern Illinois University of Carbondale. When I got there, I discovered the Internet. When I saw it, I thought to myself that it was cool and it really interested me. It seemed to be television, newspapers, and the radio all rolled up into one, and then some. So, I thought to myself that there had to be a way to turn this thing into a business while there's still time. There was a lot of stuff that was free online and it seemed that I could get started at a very low cost. So, I started dabbling in Internet marketing and I found Terry Dean's Breakthrough Site, and I took off from there.

Terry:

Excellent. Where did you go? You started off with Terry Dean's site, but what was the next step?

James:

I learned about copywriting first. I think it's important to learn about copywriting and learn about how the human mind works when it comes to buying things and selling things online. So, once I discovered how to write good copy, how to create attention to a product, and make them desire it and want to buy it, then I figured out that there was a lot of competition. I was trying to sell resale rights packs, or an eBook that a thousand other people were selling, and it just wasn't working out.

I then decided that I had to find a way to inject some uniqueness into what I was doing. I found that uniqueness was the missing ingredient to what I was doing. It's like... how much is a diamond worth if everyone has one? It's not really worth anything. If you're the only one with this precious gem, which doesn't even have to be a gem, which I'll get into later, people see it as being rare. If you can make one unique thing about a product, then you can sell a lot more of it.

Terry:

You can take a product and add some bit of scarcity to it by doing what?

James:

What I started doing was recreating some of the products that I saw and adding in some things. I added in some things that they were missing. Or, I recreated some things and didn't add anything at all, but I just added my name and graphics to it. In college I was a graphic design major, so I learned how to do that. I would try my best to make the package look good and look professional. People seemed to like that. Even though the product that I was selling wasn't totally unique, it had a different look or feel to it.

Terry:

So you take a resale rights product that 1,000 other people have and your angle was to create a different site for that resale rights product. Instead of taking that resale rights product site that comes with the package, you recreate the graphics and copywriting for that site. Is that right?

James:

Yes. The product too. At the time, it was a piece of software. I had a program write a whole new piece of code and compile it into software for me so that I could own that and do whatever I wanted with that. I think it's important to have ownership. People like Donald Trump and

these real estate guys say that wealth comes from ownership. It's not from borrowing it from someone else; you have to be the sole owner. I have this thing about control; I like being in control. If I wanted to take the software and sell the resale rights to it, I could. If I wanted to sell the code to it, I could sell it because I owned it. With a resale rights product you can't do that because you're not the owner or creator of the product.

Terry:

Right. So, take me on a step-by-step process. Today, I'm going to buy product X, which is a piece of software, but it's a resale rights product that thousands of other people have. Once I have that sitting on my hard drive, how do I get it to be a unique product? What are my next steps?

James:

There are a lot of things you can do. You can add a supplemental manual or report to the software. A lot of people make cool products, even if it's an eBook or some software, but they may be missing something from it. You can use Camtasia, which is on the expensive side, or you can use a screen cam generator, or another one that is floating around right not that's a resale rights product that's a screen capture software. I can't think of the name right now, but I'll get it to you when I can think of it. I think that one is like \$20. You take a video of how to use this software, or take the steps of the eBook and outline it in a video so it's easier for people to see it. Then, you have some uniqueness that you've injected into that product. You have a unique selling point then. I think that's important.

Terry:

Excellent. So, do you redo the graphics and everything? Or, just add the video so you have a completely different USP and you've taken it and increased the value of the product by adding your two cents?

James:

You can do the graphics if you want to. If you don't know how and you don't have the money to pay for someone to do it, I would do a small report or a video. You can play up the video or report before you even introduce the product in your sales process. If I'm sending an e-mail out to my list, I'll say, "Hey. Check out this cool video. It's about this, this, and this." I don't even have to mention the resale rights product yet.

But, when they go and see the video, the sales letter is crafted from the sales letter that I got in the resale rights pack. I just add in some blurbs about how the video makes it better. People seem to like that because they might not know the steps that are in the eBook, or some might be a little tedious to do, but if you make a video, then people can just see them. Or, if you make an extra report, people can read it and pick up more ideas that you had while you were reading it. I think that everybody has ideas that they can put into something that is helpful. Really, what I'm trying to do is help people, so that's what I aim to do.

Terry:

If you take that from where you're going right now... you have that piece of resale software, you do a video on how to use the piece of software. Then, is the focus in your sales letter that video? Do you almost sell the video and say, "Here is a video to show you how to build a list," for example?

James:

Yes.

Terry:

And in the video, you show people how to build a list using that piece of software, then you say, "By the way, this piece of software is also included in this package."

James:

Yes, exactly. It sucks people right in because they believe you now. They see it, and they believe you. People will see it and say, "That's it? That seems pretty easy. I can do that." But, when you write somebody and say, "You can build a list of 15,000 people," people say, "I can't do that," because it seems out of their reach. But, when you make a video, and you show them how you do it, and you say, "This part took five minutes. This part took ten. This last part took two. That's 17 minutes, and now I have this set up." People will look at it and say, "I can do that." They can decide for themselves. You're basically helping prove it to themselves with a video.

Terry:

That is an absolutely great new angle that has to do with resale rights products. That's fantastic. Something else that you mentioned that maybe we can cover is the copywriting aspect. Do you have a formula that you go through to write your sales letter when you sit down to actually put that together?

James:

No, I don't. The first thing that I try to always start off with is to figure out what the biggest value is that I'm giving. What's the biggest benefit that this customer is going to get out of this product? If I have a product that helps you write copy, my headline is going to always be the biggest benefit that I can come up with, the biggest promise, or/and the biggest value I can offer. Then, immediately, as soon as I can in the sales letter, I try to add some credibility to that.

So, if I say, "I can help you build a list of 15,000 people in under 30 days, guaranteed," as soon as that sales letter starts, I want to prove that to you. I may use some testimonials, a screen shot, or a video. On my site keyword station, which is a software with about 7.7 million keyword phrases in it, upfront I say that. "Grab this free piece of software with 7.7 million keywords in it."

I put in the time to write a full-page sales letter for that, even though it was free, because I wanted to get across that that thing had major value in it. It's not just a simple squeeze page; it's also a full-blown sales letter. I think that the sales page opt-in conversion rate is at about 70%.

Terry:

Wow.

James:

But there is also a video on it. I show you that video, and it then redirects back to the sales letter. People opt-in like crazy at that site.

Terry:

Do you feel it's the video that's creating such a high conversion rate for that site?

James:

I think it's the video plus the value of the product. There are a lot of products that are similar to mine that cost \$200 or \$300. I decided that by making it free, I can win people over and make people like me. I can get them on my list that one time, and as many of us have seen or heard of in the past few years, have a one-time offer. Many people e-mail me and tell me that they bought the one time offer because I gave them such a good value upfront for free. So, it works out well.

Terry:

That's great. So, let's look at Keyword Station then. Is that something that you created on your own? Or, how did that come about?

James:

Yea. It's a piece of software that I created on my own with the help of a programmer.

Terry:

Can we go way, way back to the very beginning when you first came up with the idea of Keyword Station? How did you come up with the idea?

James:

I had come up with the idea of a membership site called Find Hot Niches. When I was doing keyword research, and having these lists of markets where people were spending money... I had a weight loss market, paintball market, home décor market, and I would research all of these keywords and put them into a CSV or a text file.

So, basically people wouldn't have to go out and brainstorm if they wanted to get into new niches to create new sources of revenue. You have to have a place to target. If you don't have a target, you can't really do anything. People came to that site and they liked it so I thought that I should make a piece of software that I could put all of my information into, and that I could sell it.

As time went on, I was reading information by the late, great, Corey Rudel, and he said, "If you want to build a list fast, create a product that has extreme value, and just give it away. People will find you. People will start posting about it and start linking to it if it has an extreme amount of value." That's what people are doing now for Keyword Station; I see posts in blogs and in websites that say, "Check out this website. It's great. You can search it. It's easy to use. It has seven and a half keywords in it. You can take them out and do all this stuff." I think that's built my list by about 8,000 people in the past month.

Terry:

Wow. How long does that take to get to that point where you can get 8,000 people in a month?

James:

You mean how long did it take me to put together the whole site and everything like that?

Terry:

Yea. How long have you been giving away Keyword Station?

James:

Since December 14th.

Terry:

So you're looking at about two months and you're already creating 8,000 people a month.

James:

Yea.

Terry:

Wow. So, let's go back to keyword station. You got the idea from FindHotNiches.com... you have all these keywords that you're already researching... how did you search seven and a half million keywords?

James:

I can't tell you how because then I would have a lot of competition. But, it wasn't as hard as you think. It was done with software. I just told my programmer what I wanted it to do and he did it for me. He gave it back to me and I think that piece of software is the most that I've spent on a software project.

Terry:

How much was that.

James:

To me it was relatively low. It was \$1,000. \$1,000 for 8,000 subscribers and \$20,000 in income from the backend or the one-time offer... it's a no brainer.

Terry:

Exactly. You're saying that Keyword Station cost \$1,000.

James:

Yes. For me to get that developed into the software that it is, it was about \$1,000.

Terry:

So you have Find Hot Niches, and this other secret piece of software that pulls out seven and a half million keywords. Once you pull out seven and a half million keywords, do you just give that to the programmer and tell him that you want the software to do something? Or... what's the next step after you got the seven and a half million keywords?

James:

When you develop software, it's kind of like a map. If you want the software to do something, you should know exactly what that is and simply state that. Say I say, "Hey. I want this software to list all the topics..." every file name that I have would expand into a list of 300 or 400 keywords based on the topic. So, I said, "The first thing we need is a list of all of the topics. Then, when somebody clicks on that topic, it will open a new window and it will have all the keywords listed there." So, it's kind of like a map.

If you want to create some software and you're just starting out, my advice would be to create something that's very, very simple. I would even say to find something that is already made and spend \$20 getting it remade at ScriptLance or Rent A Coder, where you can hire programmers from all around the world and they will bid on your project, and just go through the process. Even after you do that, you still have something that you own. You can know how the programmers think, how to deal with some of the bumps that you come across, and you can make it very simple by stating that you just want one piece of software that will record audio from my website or something like that.

If you have something that you own or bought before and you see that someone has already made it, you can look at it and step through it and see how it works. You can see if you press the file button, a new menu opens that says, "Save," and "Save as," and all of these things. You can mind-map it out. One thing that I suggest is, when you're trying to figure out how you want your graphic interface organized, draw it out. Grab a piece of paper and a ruler, draw a big box, start drawing other buttons, boxes, and windows; make it a diagram. It's kind of like everything we learned in grade school or high school with all of the charts and diagrams and outlines. If you can do that well, then you can create a piece of software. It's really that simple.

When you run into a bump, don't get worried. If you don't know exactly how to do something, tell your programmer. Say, "I want this

to happen but I don't know exactly how to do it. Can you do that?" A lot of them are amazing at creating programs and can do just about anything. I've said to a couple of programmers, "I don't know if this is possible, but I want this to happen," and they say, "Sure, okay. We'll have it done in two weeks." So, it's not as difficult as people think.

Terry:

What exactly do you give your programmer? You can draw up as many pictures as you can think of and say, "I want this tab here and this button there," and then you give it to them. How detailed to you get? Do you say, "I want to press this button and I want a new window to open..." we'll take Keyword Station so we have a concrete example. When you're developing Keyword Station, do you have a very, very detailed outline that you give to the programmer with your pictures? How do you get the exact product that you want?

James:

Yes, I do. I can dig it up and give it to you or anybody on this call. I would block out a few things, but it will basically be an outline of how I did it. You can look at it and see it. I actually took it to Photoshop and did a graphic interface of my own and used arrows and pointed to these things. If you can't use Photoshop, like I said, you can draw. It doesn't have to be great; you just need to get your point across of what you want to happen. Even if it doesn't happen then, the only thing that is standing between you and getting your project finished is time. You and your programmer both need to understand what you want so he can do it the right way.

Terry:

Okay. That's great. If you can send us the outline, I can post it on the site as well so people can see what you actually started out with for Keyword Station. Do you have a three or five point formula that you use? Do you have something that says, "This is what I wanted for the introduction... point one, point two?"

James:

Yea, I do. The very first thing that I do is I write a purpose. If I can explain the purpose of the software first before I outline it, the programmer will have a great understanding of why I need it. That's what the purpose is: it's the "why" I need this? What do I need this for? What does it do? How do I need it to be done? That's in the outline: how I need it to be done. But, the purpose statement would be, "I have this database of 7.7 million keywords. There are a lot of people online who are interested in keywords..." I tell them this. I

don't worry about them stealing my idea or copying me, because 99.999% of programmers don't know anything about marketing. They will have no idea how to market the product.

I don't want to be cocky, but I could give it to them and tell them to do whatever they want with it, and they still wouldn't be able to do anything because they don't understand the process of marketing.

Terry:

So whenever you're at the beginning, you don't really worry about nondisclosure agreements or anything then?

James:

Not normally. On Rent A Coder, I think they already have that built in. I just started using Rent A Coder and it's great. One of the stipulations is that the coder must give you the full rights to the software when it's completed. You have the full rights to do anything with it. On ScriptLance, you have to negotiate with the programmer for that. Rent A Coder is strictly for software, and it's already built-in. I suggest that anybody who is interested in creating software to jump over there and read what Rent A Coder has up there because it's really designed to benefit the person who is getting a piece of software created, from what I can see.

Terry:

Okay. Sorry I interrupted you there. You were creating an outline for your program there. You were creating the purpose. What's after the purpose?

James:

After the purpose we dive straight into the outline. I usually start off with a bullet point or a number one and say, "First, I need you to be able to import all of this stuff into a software that will be..." you have to decide if it's going to be a desktop software or a web-based software. A web-based software is written in PHP and all different language. Don't worry about the different languages; just make sure it's in PHP or one of the languages that are all over the place. Most website servers run PHP. In your purpose statement, you're going to say something like, "I want to distribute this to a lot of people, so make it compatible with most web servers." Most of them will come back and say, "I am going to write this in PHP." It's the most widely used one.

For desktop it's a little bit different; there are different languages that are used, but they all work the same. That's all built into ScriptLance and Rent A Coder. You decide if it's desktop or web-based, and how you want it to behave and such. The purpose statement will really help the programmer get an idea of what you need. It's basically like copywriting; you need to get across your point with words. You need to make him understand what you need and why you need it. Once that happens, the programmer will respond. When they do start to respond, a lot of people just respond with, "I can do this project." You don't want that.

I always put, what I like to call, "Are you paying attention," type things. I will put in my project... "If you read this project description, don't reply with a one liner like, "I can do this." Tell me exactly how you are going to do this. So, then I know, once I start reading, if people actually read my project or not. You don't want to get stuck with somebody who can't do the project. You're wasting time and your money gets tied up in escrow because all of these sites use escrow. I would choose Rent A Coder over ScriptLance because Rent A Coder has a way to get your money back out of escrow. If something didn't work out in ScriptLance, it's a little bit harder to get the money out of escrow. The money doesn't go anywhere, you just can't use it... it's still at ScriptLance.

So, you don't want to get your money tied up that way. You want to make sure the programmer took the time to read your project and isn't just mass bidding on thousands of projects until they get one and they read it and then try to hack some piece of crappy software together. I use an, "Are you paying attention," type clause in my projects for that reason.

Terry:

Excellent. So, after the purpose, you said you go into the bullet points.

James:

Yea. I dive right into an outline. It's kind of hard to give a general idea of what an outline would be because each software project is so different.

Terry:

Let's use Keyword Station because I think that's a perfect example since it's something that you've already done. I'm just thinking that we could actually go through a few of the points here before we even

go to the outline... you've done the purpose already. What's the next bullet point?

James:

The next bullet point would be that it needs to run on the desktop because I want to distribute it to people on their desktops. It needs to run as fast as possible. When you have a database that you want to turn into a piece of software, there are a lot of ways to make software. One of them is to take a bunch of information and make it organized. Keyword Station is an organized piece of software. When you organize it, you want it to not bog down or lock peoples' computers. That's a lot of information. I think the program ended up being 200 megabytes.

Terry:

Wow.

James:

And that was down from what it was before which was 1,000 megabytes, which just wasn't going to cut it. I know people have broadband, but 1,000 megabytes is a lot. It would take you like two hours to download it. If you're on dial-up, then you'll never get it. If you're on dial-up then you'll never get it, but I'm trying to work around that with a CD shipment type thing for like a dollar or whatever. I wanted to let him know that it needs to work fast and do what I said it's going to do.

In my bullet points, I wrote out what it needs to do for the programmer, but at the same time, I'm writing out bullet points that can go on my website. I want to be able to extract a set of data by searching, so I have a browse tab and a search tab. The browse tab, you can see all of the topics, you can click on a topic, and it will open up and you can see all of the keywords on that topic. Or, you can go in the search and you can type in any keyword that you want and more than likely it's in that database somewhere. It will just yank out everything that contains that word or that phrase.

So, that was my first bullet point: I need it to work as fast as possible, it needs to work on a desktop, it can't bog down anybody's computer, and I need it to be browse-able and searchable. Then, I kind of threw things in there as I went along because some things I didn't have outlined that I didn't really think of that I thought of later.

Programmers know what they're doing. If they have already written the basics of the software, and you tell them, "I want to add this so

that something new happens. I want to add a 'jump to' field." Be creative. If you want to name a field something, or you want to name a feature something, and you don't know what to call it, just call it what it is.

That's what I did: I added a "jump to" field in the browse section because I wanted it to jump to any keyword in the topic list because there are 42,000 topics that expand to over seven million keywords. If you have to scroll to it to find what you want, you might not be that happy. So, I told them to put a blank space in there, which is called a field, and call it "jump to," so when I type something in there, it will jump to a topic. Get the creative juices flowing.

If you need some help, ask somebody. E-mail me... you can e-mail me if you want at Admin@FindHotNiches.com, and say, "James. I'm making this software. I don't know exactly what to call this or how to do this." I can give you some pointers on what to tell the programmer to do. Once you learn how to write an outline, from that point on, you're going to create software anytime that you want.

Terry:

I think that's where we're going to hugely benefit by seeing the actual outline that you did for Keyword Station. We can use that as a template and use it to help with making our own software. Something else that I think is quite remarkable is that you have a formula to get programmers to work for free for you. Can you expand on that?

James:

It differs for a lot of programmers. First, you want to do a joint venture between, say, you and I. I've seen you around for a while and you've seen me around for a while. Then, we start. I e-mail you, you e-mail me, and now we're on the phone doing this interview. We have some kind of relationship now. The same thing goes for anybody. When you want a programmer, you don't want to go, "Hey. Can you make this for free?" They're going to go, "No, I won't do it for free. You need to pay me." You want to start a relationship with them.

If you have a list, tell them, "Here's what we can do. If you can create this software, I have this list that is known for buying software that is targeted towards this area. If you can make something that fits in, or if you have something already, I can set it up and sell it to my list," so you know I have an outlet for revenue that you can make. If you don't have a list, there are a lot of people who do. You can become the JV broker between the programmer and other people who have a

list. Like I said, you can pay him \$15 or \$20 for a program that you have already written out.

I make it a point when I'm chatting with him to say, "When can you get this done? I have about 20,000 customers who are waiting for this to be done." He might think to himself, "Wow. 20,000 customers." But, you leave it at that. You don't press the issue at that point. You wait a little while and maybe when the project is almost completed, you say, "Hey. Do you have any other things already done that I can possibly sell and we can do a partnership?" If they're interested, they'll ask, "Well, what's a partnership? What do you mean?" And you kind of suck him in. You become his friend. It's like any other kind of relationship and I need to feel that I can trust you.

I have this one programmer now that I use all the time. We trust each other now. I've given him money up front before he even got started. But, that's after a year of working together. A month later he comes back and he's done. Or, he'll start on it and then finish it without getting paid yet, and then he'll ask for a payment. That's the kind of relationship we have now. I never stiff him and he never stiff me. When you find somebody like that and that you can trust like that, then keep him. I'm not saying that you have to do the same things that I do; that's just the kind of guy I am. If I trust you, and you get the jobs done consistently, then I have no reason not to trust you.

That's how it is. It's really about building a relationship. If you can JV with him... if you see a programmer out there, check out his profile. A lot of these guys on these freelance sites have their profiles listed. They have a list of stuff that they've already done. Browse through that list. If you see anything that peaks your interest, and they already have the software done, then say, "Can I create a sales package for this product and try to sell it?" I doubt that any of them will say no.

Terry:

You actually can go out to Rent A Coder for example, go through peoples' pages, and find a product. They might have a product that is worth thousands of dollars, but since these guys are not marketers, they don't know what to do with it. It may be their little pet project that they might be really proud of. If you come along as a marketer and you say, "Let's get together. Let's see what we can do. If I can sell it, then we can split the profits," then it's a win, win situation. You're not paying for the software and they're not paying for the

marketing. You just basically bring your strengths together and you can really have an explosive event.

James:

It's a win, win situation. Another thing you can do is, a lot of these programmers that are interested in marketing hang out in the forums that you hang out in. Make a post. In the Warrior Forum I know there is a place that you can post for JVs. So, make a JV post in there. If you have a list, say, "I have a list of 15,000 people. If you're a programmer, I want to JV with you." I bet you'll get some replies. If you don't have a list, go out and establish a relationship with someone who does and tell them, "I can get a programmer to create products for us." Even if you don't have one yet, it might take you some time, but if it follows through, you still won't lose anything.

You need to have a small plan and a lot of confidence. Not the other way around. Don't have a big plan and a huge team of people working for you. You should have a small plan and the confidence to follow it. Take the steps to build a relationship and do the marketing for it. A lot of us in this call know a lot more than we give ourselves credit for when it comes to writing copy and doing marketing. If you don't, you can learn all of that stuff.

Terry:

To go back to the JV brokering idea... you know somebody who has a list. Let's use us for an example. I know you have a list of over 20,000 people. I have a programmer that I know of who can create this awesome piece of software. How am I getting paid in the middle?

James:

There are a lot of ways to get paid in the middle. One way is by incorporating things in this application that will build your list for you. This can be in advertising or in a pop-up. If you get the software created, let the programmer know that you want to build a list. They might not agree with that; they might want money up front, which is fine because you have ClickBank who splits checks and everything.

The main thing that I want everybody to understand that I forgot to cover before is: the product is never the asset. The asset is the customer database or the list that you can build through the product. That is why I gave Keyword Station away for free. The product itself is not the asset. It's not my baby. It's a good piece of software, but it's not the last piece of software that I'm going to create.

Terry:

It's a means to an end.

James:

Yes. So look at it as a means to an end, not that I have to sell 30,000 copies of this thing so I can get rich tomorrow. What you can do is create a cool piece of software and give it away to a list of 30,000 people in six months. Guess what? Now you can say, "I need X program made." When you sell it, now you know you have a guaranteed market to sell it to. That is a guaranteed avenue to push the product through. So, it's not the asset. I got off track. What were we talking about?

Terry:

No, actually, that was a beautiful way to go. You're focusing on the software, but don't totally focus on it. It's more about what it's doing for me.

James:

That's the value of it. The value for the people who get it is that it performs the task that you promised it would do. The value for you is that you can incorporate all of these cool, little things into the software. The Internet is built on technology. I believe in Keyword Station there is an alert system. When somebody is using the software, if I want to send out an alert, just like Microsoft and that little box that pops up, I can send an alert that says, "Cool new resale rights product. Click here." When you open up that software, down on the right hand corner of your screen, you'll see a little box light up that says, "Note from James. Cool new piece of software to enhance Keyword Station. Click here."

I got 10,000 people to download the thing. I don't know how many people use it, but I can see how many times the alert box gets triggered. It's over 5,000 times. Right now, all I have in there is, "Welcome to Keyword Station Version 1.0." I haven't even used it yet, but it's always there. You can build a lot of different mechanisms in it to build your list and have people come back to your site or whatever you want them to do. Like I said before, the Internet is radio, TV, and newspapers all rolled up into one. When you make these pieces of software, you can incorporate little pieces of that into them.

Terry:

Excellent. I'm thinking back now to doing the joint venture deal. You have the list. I have the programmer to do the software. If that

programmer will take and incorporate viral marketing pieces into his software, then I'm going to go back to you and say, "James, here's the sales page." I'm going to create the sales page for the software, right? That's part of my added value.

James:

Yea. That's part of your added value.

Terry:

So, I have the sales page and I put up the website. My programmer gives me the software, and then I go to you and say, "James. You can now send this message out to your list." So, in effect I become...

James:

The go between.

Terry:

Right. But almost a little bit more because I'm kind of the product owner.

James:

Almost. You are the man sitting next to the man. It's cool because the programmer doesn't have the knowledge or the time to learn how to market. Us marketers are the exact opposite. We don't know how to program and we don't want to take the time to learn how to program. Everyone can't do everything. Then, you have a guy over here with a list... there are thousands of people with lists. If somebody shoots you down and doesn't want to do it, keep asking. That's one thing about joint ventures; if you can provide some value in a joint venture, keep asking.

Provide some value. Don't just say, "Can you sell this and I'll give you 50%?" Say, "I have this software that has a cool viral mechanism built into it. Can we build your site into the viral mechanism also? We'll get you some more traffic by just giving this thing away. Any other opt-ins that come in, I have a backend offer. I'll give you some of the profits." Even if you give them 100% of the profits... if it's a digital product, you won't lose anything, and you gain a customer. You have to make it so that people will have to have their eyes closed and ears covered in order not to JV with you.

So, do all you can, provide the most value you can, become a friend and a partner. Don't do what I call "pimp my list." Don't just go to anybody. Go to someone who has the same market. I think you just

have to check out the people first, figure out what their list is all about, and then have your programmer create something that's in line with what they're already doing.

Make a bonus product for him. There's a guy with a weight loss website. It's exploding with traffic. I'm going to have my programmer make a bonus product for his website because I bought the eBook. I read through the thing and thought that it would benefit greatly from having software to help people organize the stuff that he is telling people to do, like make a calendar and whatever.

What do you think he would say if I said, "I just spent about a month outlining this software program that will do everything it says in your eBook to do. Do you want me to make it so you can offer it as a bonus for the product so it will enhance the value and maybe you can even charge more for it?" He'd say, "Sure." You've shown that you're interested in what he's doing, you're in line with what he's doing, and this will only help.

Terry:

Another win, win situation.

James:

Another win, win. Create bonuses guys... create a bonus software. Read an eBook that someone is selling. The eBook is exploding with customers. Create a bonus. Help your programmer help you and you help this guy. Everybody wins. Now you and your programmer have this list that you guys are building with customers in this particular niche. It doesn't have to be Internet marketing. Tap into what somebody else is already doing.

Terry:

That's phenomenal. The bonus is going to have a viral element to it that is going to build your list as well.

James:

Right. Exactly.

Terry:

Now you've created a way that you're going to have a phenomenal amount of traffic visiting your website or whatever you're promoting with the software.

James:

Not just visitors, but people who have bought something and that are interested in that particular niche. Even if you have to go find somebody who is selling like crazy on eBay, you can say, "Hey. Any eBay auction you get, just tack on this bonus here." They will go, "Wow. Cool, thanks." Now you're building his list.

Terry:

And you've instantly got phenomenal targeted traffic without having to worry about pay per click and ezine advertising and the typical roots of advertising.

James:

Exactly, because you created something that you have ownership of. You couldn't do that with a resale rights product because that's all over the place.

Terry:

Right.

James:

You can't give it away if you don't have the rights to do that. A lot of resale rights products you can't just give away.

Terry:

Exactly.

James:

You can't offer it as a bonus. If it's between you and the programmer, if you buy the rights to it, you can do whatever you want. If you're JVing with somebody, you can say, "This is what we should do with it," and establish it before hand. Let the programmer know when you have an idea. Let him know. Don't be scared; this project is not a baby. If it dies, it's not going to be completely sad; it's not the end of the world. There are a lot of other opportunities out there. Like you said, you can bypass all of that search engine and pay per click junk. I don't even deal with that. I can't stand it. I don't have the patience for it.

Terry:

So what marketing do you do? You're doing joint ventures obviously.

James:

Straight joint ventures.

Terry:

That's it? You create software, put a viral element into it, and get it out there with joint ventures?

James:

That's it, yup.

Terry:

How long have you been doing that?

James:

Since I started, because I had no money. I learned that joint ventures were the fastest, easiest, cost-free way to generate traffic. Like I said, I started out with the basic, "Hey. I have this product. Can you sell it for me?" type of joint venture. I learned by picking up everything I could about joint ventures. I can't even remember what some of the stuff was. But, whenever I saw an article on joint ventures, I would take time to read it. If there was an eBook on it, I'd buy it. I figured out that the point that you have to make is a win, win, win, win between all parties: me, the customer, the list owner, and the programmer. You can't really go wrong with that.

Terry:

Excellent. That's a fantastic business model. If we go back to the software for a minute, how long of a time period are we looking at from the time of the idea to the time the programmer actually has the piece done?

James:

It depends on who your programmer is. On Rent A Coder, I think there is a timeline. You have to be finished with the program at a certain time. I think you can adjust it but I'm not sure. Right now, I'm doing my first project as we speak on Rent A Coder. On ScriptLance, if I didn't like the bids or I didn't like the way it was going, I still kept with it. Your money is going to be tied up in escrow for however long it takes. That's the answer: for however long it takes. If you have \$30 you can spare, not \$300, then use the \$30 for a project that you can do. I'm always thinking of projects ahead. I'm thinking that if I can do this, here's another piece of software I'd like to create. And, if I can do that, here's something else I want to do.

It's kind of like the snowball effect. Once you do it once, you can do it twice, three times, four times, and so on and so forth. For me, it has

gotten bigger and bigger each time, until I got to where I am now. Like I said, it's building my list for me. I didn't do any joint ventures or anything last week and I think I got about 300 subscribers to my list. I didn't do anything at all. Everyday or every other day I see a backend offer come through without me doing anything. If I kicked it into gear, it goes nuts.

Terry:

Excellent. Once you have the piece of software, how do you decide on a price that you should be charging your customer or that you value the software at?

James:

I think that pricing is one of my most challenging marketing aspects. I think that if I start lower, and I move up higher, then that's not a problem. But, if you start higher and then move lower, people are going to get mad if they find out. I'm not saying you can't do that because it's your product and you can do whatever you want. But, some people are going to be rubbed the wrong way. I always say to start out on the lower end of whatever your product is.

Find some competition and see what they're charging. Charge a little bit less at a little bit more value to do a launch, unless you have a marketing process that works for you. This is just the way I do it. I want to initially make some sales. It's digital so it's going to get downloaded so I don't have to ship anything, so I can't lose anyway. So, I charge a little and I make something. The first \$30 from sales, you make the money you spent on the project back. Anything else is profit. If you have a backend built it, it's even better.

Terry:

What do you mean by a backend?

James:

A totally different offer. It's an upsell. If I sell this project, in the software itself you can have an ad that says, "Grab the resale rights to this product for \$90." If 100 people buy it, and five people buy the resale rights at \$90 bucks, that's almost \$500. It's easy. It's an upsell. You have that backend; you make the money on the backside. It's cool to make the money on the front end, but it doesn't always work out like that. But if you make it on the backend, that's even better.

Terry:

So with Keyword Station for an example, how are you going about turning that into a profit machine? Keyword Station is free, which is phenomenal; you value that software at \$200, which I think is low. Now that I've tried the software, I think it's amazing.

James:

You tried it?

Terry:

I did. I downloaded it when you sent me the link and I thought it was phenomenal. It's a very good value for the money at \$200.

James:

Right. Like I said, I picked it up from Corey Rudel. His teaching led me to do that.

Terry:

And that's totally fantastic. The software is more than it says it is. So, it's a \$200 value that you're giving away for free. So, you're not making any money on the software. You do have a one-time offer that people can click to. How does that convert? What percentage are you looking at there?

James:

There are about 370 sales at \$37.

Terry:

370 sales out of how many people? Is that out of 8,000 people?

James:

Yea.

Terry:

Okay. That's great though.

James:

Yea it's something like 2% or 3%. When I first started it was like 5%, but I allowed people to sign up as many times as they want. I think a lot of people have resigned up because they missed the download. So, it kind of skewed my percentage. It's selling at a great conversion rate.

Terry:

Yea. It's 4.6%.

James:

Yea.

Terry:

So you have the one-time offer that's making you some money there, and now you've developed a phenomenal list of people who know that you can create a useful, great piece of software. How do you figure out what you're going to offer that list?

James:

You can ask them. You can do a survey and say, "Hey guys. What are you interested in the most?" I haven't done that yet though. I try to present the value. That's another ball of wax: writing e-mails to your list. I try to tie it in with what they've already gotten from me. I say, "Hey. If you already have Keyword Station, and you found this niche, how are you getting traffic?" Then I can introduce my traffic getting product. If you try to do a joint venture you can say, "You have your niche and now you want a JV? What's the best way to do that?" And then I can offer my JV product to my list. You can massage them into it; you can work them into it.

If it doesn't make sense, then people won't be so apt to be interested in it. So, just make it make sense. Tell them why they need to do that, buy this, read that, get this free book, or whatever. I still offer a lot of free stuff to my list. Two or three times a week I try to offer something for free, even if it's just a little report or whatever. I haven't written an article in a long time, but I have all of these eBooks sitting on my computer, so I go through them, pick out the good ones, and say, "Read this." Or, I do a joint venture. "Terry has a great free eBook... go read it." I send opt-ins to my partner's page, and they send opt-ins back to me at Keyword Station from their list, and I turn that into revenue.

Terry:

Do you take... let's say Keyword Station, and try to figure out how many people download it. What interests do these people have? They probably have a website, right?

James:

Right. There are people who are interested in niche marketing. These people have obviously learned about niche marketing and know the

importance of using keyword research. Anybody who is at that level of knowing that keyword research is important, they probably know a lot of other things too, and want to know a lot of other things.

Terry:

So they probably have a website, they're probably interested in niches, and you can just take those two top level interests and expand on those into eBooks, free software, products, etc....

James:

Like I said, you own the list now. If it bombs, you didn't lose anything. You maybe lost an hour to put the offer together. Everything doesn't sell a lot; we all don't make a million dollars in three days. You can do 3,000 in three days. And you can do that every month, and you're getting a \$10,000 a month income there.

Terry:

And you don't have to do a whole lot of work to do that.

James:

Exactly.

Terry:

That's the nice thing.

James:

A lot of the time I spend on the Internet is spent not really working. I kind of goof off. I'm not really always actually working. I would say that the work is actually two or three hours a week.

Terry:

Can I ask you what kind of an income you're actually making on two to three hours of work a week?

James:

About \$10,000 a month.

Terry:

Wow. And that's using this business model that we're talking about?

James:

Yea. And that's starting from December. Before that, it wasn't that much, but since I introduced Keyword Station, it's been about \$10,000 a month. Before that it was like \$5,000 a month. So, it pretty much

doubled. And my list was smaller. In November, I think my list was about 12,000. Now, it's February of 2007 and it's like 20,000 plus.

Terry:

You actually touched on another point about writing the e-mails to your list. Do you have a formula about writing subject lines that will make people open the e-mail, on through how to draw people into the e-mail? Do you have a formula that you follow?

James:

It's kind of just the same as writing a headline. The biggest benefit goes into the subject line. The most attention-grabbing thing goes into the headline. I believe I sent an ad out for Larry Dotson. He had a free copywriting product that he was giving away. It was floating around for a long time. I think it was, 10,000 Words And Phrases That Sell. He wrote me and said, "Let's do this ad swap today." I said, "Okay. I'll send it out to my list." He wanted to give that away. I said, "Man that's been given away so many times. I don't think anybody on my list is going to want it." So, I wrote the subject line. I said... I started to do this first so I think that I can claim something... I put the words "no cost" in the subject line. I started doing that.

Terry:

You're a pioneer.

James:

Yea. Look at me. I see a lot of people doing it because it gets people to open. You can't use the word free because of spam filters. So, I started using "no cost," then I put, "10,000 copywriting tools," because that's what Larry had put in his ad. I thought that was a great attention grabber because there's a number. People are going to think, "10,000 copywriting tools? No way." And you're not lying. Each word is a power word that is a useful tool that you can inject into copy to make it work better. So, that's what I put. People downloaded it like crazy.

So, I e-mailed Larry and I said, "Larry, how is your ad doing?" He said it did great. So, when you're writing a subject line, write to grab attention. Don't lie, though. Tellman Knudsen writes some of the craziest subject lines and e-mails. He will have a riddle as an e-mail. I read it at the end, and think that he's crazy, but he gets the point across in the e-mail at the same time as being himself. So, it's kind of funny, it's out of the norm, it's cool to read, and I'm pretty sure he gets a lot of people to his site.

Terry:

So, you inject a lot of your own personality into the e-mail, then.

James:

My personality is kind of straight forward and practical. If you have a number that you're saying... like, "I can give you X amount of this," then people are going to open it, especially if it's a high number. Psychologically, people want more. The more you give them, the more they want it. Keyword Station has 7.7 million keywords. That's my subject line that I've been doing my joint ventures with. "No cost. Grab 7.7 million keyword software." What's the format of whatever it is that you're giving away? EBook? Software? Put that in there as well.

If it's a software, people are more likely to open it because software has more value. That's why I started creating software. Once it does what it does, it does what it does forever as long as nothing major changes. If it's Internet based, like it does Google research, and Google changes, then you're going to have some problems. But, if it's self-contained, like Microsoft Word, it does what it does and it's been doing that for 25 years. It works. So, once you create a software, that's it, it works, and it's over, unless you feel like updating it.

If it has more perceived value, put that in the subject line as well. Give value. If you have a great value, boil it down to as short as possible and put it in the subject line. Put the date in the subject line. Put "newsletter" in the subject line. I've experienced better things with that. Really, that's it. It comes down to learning how to write a good kick-butt headline. Once you do that, you get good open rates. I think we talked about that a little bit the last time I talked to you. I wanted to have something to measure mine against.

Terry:

What is your open rate now?

James:

My open rate is normally about 10% to 15%. Consistently.

Terry:

And that falls in the norm?

James:

That's what I'm in the process of figuring out. If anyone out there listening to this has some open rate figures, e-mail them to me so I can measure them against mine because I want to know. I don't think that information is very prevalent on the Internet. You have to have a list that you own to get that information, or, several lists to measure against them. I have a few lists and e-mail them at the same time, usually.

Terry:

Right. Let's get back to software. Are you selling everything online or do you do some offline stuff as well?

James:

I sell everything online right now, but I'm looking into getting into offline markets and creating software for brick and mortar business (offline businesses) because they have more things at risk and they're probably willing to spend a lot more money to solve a problem. Marketing for example. I can probably give out this idea because there is so much room for it: autoresponders.

They don't know how to use autoresponders, but they could get so much more business if they could use them. They could put autoresponders in place right in the store. How much is it to grab a laptop... most people already have broadband nowadays because they use credit cards and they use broadband Internet to do that. They can just ask the customers if they want to be on their list.

Give them something to fill out and give them a bunch of coupons. They could drive so much foot traffic back to their stores that way. Then, they could figure out other specials like birthday and anniversary specials. Especially for restaurants, they can have specials like pizza night and family night. You could pack your restaurant on off nights by having an e-mail list. So, I really want to get into that niche with having my program build an autoresponder for local businesses.

Terry:

Wow. That's phenomenal. I think I have to leave now to go talk to some businesses. That's great. That's something that's so obvious and used daily by us online. You can take that concept offline to help them build their business. They'll probably think that you're a god.

James:

They would. Especially, like I said, you have a piece of software that runs on a monthly basis. You can give away a free trial, and once you get them sucked in and you start building their list, they won't want to let that service go.

Terry:

Exactly.

James:

There's so much more you can do with that. That's another whole interview. Businesses you can start that a lot of us are doing online that are crowded. You can turn around and do it offline, and bam; you have thousands of different people who will be your customers. And it's all software based.

Terry:

Wow. That is a powerful idea. That's phenomenal. When you're doing pieces of software like this from scratch like you did with Keyword Station, what kind of problems do you run into? I'm sure things don't run totally smoothly.

James:

There are all types of problems. The first problem that I encountered was that the software was too big. People aren't going to wait to download it and people don't have the capacity to download one gigabyte of information at one sitting. I figured that if I could bring it down to 200 megabytes, people with broadband would only have to wait five minutes. If you're on dialup, you can't download much nowadays anyway, so I figure that most people have broadband.

If you're serious about online business, you have broadband. If you don't, then I think that Keyword Station is a good enough value that you should go to somebody else's computer who does have broadband, download the software, and burn it to a CD. You can either spend \$300 or \$400 getting a similar piece of software, or you can get this one on a friend's computer for free.

That was the first hurdle. The second hurdle was that there were some functionality issues. Like I said, if it's not working the way you want it to work, you have to tell them how you want it to work. A lot of your customer satisfaction comes in usability. If it's not usable, people are not going to be happy. It has to do what you say it does and what you want it to do. In retrospect, if it comes out a little bit

less than what you want it to be, that's okay; just don't say that it can do that. Just state upfront what it can do.

It doesn't have to be the end all or be all. Just make it do one thing. If you want to start off with software, create products that just do one, simple thing. Say, "Hey. I have a piece of software that creates main squeeze pages, but it puts the person's name into your website." There are squeeze page creators everywhere, but I don't know how many personalized ones there are.

After you do that, you can always upgrade or update the software later with new features. So, usability is the second biggest hurdle; learning how to make a software appear user friendly. All I did was model some of the best-created software out there. I looked at how Microsoft had theirs set up... I wanted it to run on a desktop with Windows, I wanted it to have the typical Windows software interface. File, edit, view, and tools, at the top. Things down the left side. Scroll bars on the right. If people see it that way, they're used to it, and even if they don't know how to use it, they can figure it out in a short amount of time.

You created the software, so you can take the outline and make it into the user manual like I do. I take out the programming stuff and it becomes my user manual. I fill out my outline again to say, "This part does this and this is how to use it." You can also make a video to show how to use it so you don't even need to make a user manual. You can use your own software to make a video.

Terry:

It's the online user manual.

James:

Right.

Terry:

Awesome. If we took somebody who has enough computer knowledge and who could go out and get a programmer and write an outline just like you did... what would be a starting budget that somebody would be looking at?

James:

To be honest, it depends what the programmers bid and how much you're willing to spend. I've spent five bucks on a program before. It's very simple and very basic. I dressed it up with my sales letter,

my copy writing, and my graphics. I think it's Easy Audio Generator, which was a few years ago. It's one of those things that puts audios on your website. It can make any mp3 into an audio on your website. I think that one was five or ten bucks. On the other end, Keyword Station was \$1,000. It took me a year to put that together, but it was worth it. Then, I have things that take five days and it costs \$15.

Whatever your budget is, whatever you want to start at, however comfortable you feel with it, start there. You don't have to go out and spend a huge sum of money getting software created. Just make sure that it does what you want it to do.

Terry:

Excellent. Just before we wrap it up, if we could give somebody the very basic, simple steps to summarize what we talked about, how would we go about 1, 2, 3 going from start to finish?

James:

For the creation aspect, or?

Terry:

Yea. Basically, just to summarize what we talked about; to come from an idea to a piece of software that we're going to be able to do joint ventures with.

James:

Okay. You want to find out where the market is first, before you create anything. See if there is a market for what you're thinking of, and see if anyone else is selling similar types of items. Then, when you do that, maybe you want to buy your competition's software to see where it's lacking. Maybe you can add some elements to that. Even if you make a video of yourself using the competitor's software and tell your programmer, "This is what's missing. Make me something that looks just like this, but add this." That's just the way that business is done. You have competition all over the place. You're taking this idea and making it your own. Don't just copy someone's idea because then you won't have any uniqueness in that.

Take an idea and make it unique. I'm probably creating competition for myself right now. We can go back and forth... if raises the bar as far as that niche is concerned. So, check out some competitors, visit some forums and see what people want, write a purpose statement of why you want this software made and what it's for, then write your outline. If you want to visually get across what your software should

look like, and you can't use Photoshop, draw it out on paper with a ruler. Scan it and send it over to the programmer. If you don't know how to do that, there are a lot of tutorials about how to scan and send an image. If you can't do it, e-mail me at Admin@FindHotNiches.com and I can tell you how to do it.

After you do that, you want to test the software. That's a point that we didn't cover: test the software thoroughly. Have other people test it. There are some problems with software that I created because I didn't test it all out beforehand. You can't make everybody happy all the time; there are going to be some problems. But, as long as you knock out 90% of the bugs and compatibility issues, then you're going to be fine. Everything doesn't always go 100%. After that, start thinking of some viral elements that you can stick into your software. If there is a free report that will go great with your software, you can have your programmer put a button in the software that will show it. Especially, if you're going to start selling resale rights or master resale rights to your software.

That's one thing that I didn't do earlier. If I did it, I probably would have doubled the size of my list by now. I have software that I have out there. I can Google them, and there are 3,000 websites with Easy Audio Generator. I have no viral element in that whatsoever, but you live and you learn. So, incorporate some viral elements into it. Seek out some JV partners while you're creating the software so you can have everything lined up when the software is ready to go. Actually, get your JV partners to test the software. That's a good way to massage somebody into a JV. Say, "Hey. I have this great new piece of software. Can you test it for me?" Go into a forum and say, "I need 100 beta testers for this software." More time than not, if it's a good piece of software, you're going to get people asking you if you have an affiliate program for it. So, do that.

If you're going to give it away for free, study back-end marketing and one-time offers. They work; that's why we see them all the time. Rinse and repeat.

Terry:

Do you have any last words of advice before we wrap it up for tonight?

James:

I think we pretty much covered everything. I'll say, if any of you are out there starting and you don't have much money and you don't think you can do it, you can do it. I started from nothing. When I started

out, I was broke. I was broker than broke. I think I had a job that was paying me about \$12,000 a year. So, it's not a lot of extra money floating around for a guy who is 27 years old. I didn't have a car. I didn't own anything. My family didn't have much money either, so it was hard.

But, just stick with it. Don't listen to people who say that you can't do it. Don't even tell them your ideas. When you get online, don't worry about what they say. If they tell you something, it's contagious if it's negative. You might actually start to believe that you can't do it, and you don't want that to happen. I don't want you to quit. Before we started talking, what was the quote you said?

Terry:

It takes 20 years to become an overnight success.

James:

Exactly. It took me ten years. Sometimes it's that way. Learn from guys who can help you. Seek out people who can help you and your learning curve will dramatically become so much shorter. I wish I had started buying stuff and learning from people who knew what they were doing earlier, because I would have started making money a lot earlier. I would have been making money instead of trying to figure out how to do it.

Terry:

Excellent. That is just beautiful advice. Thanks so much for being with us today, James. You have been an inspiration and an education in a little over an hour. I think this has been a complete education in a box in about an hour and 15 minutes. You have been listening to Terry Telford from TheBusinessProfessional.com, and James Jackson from FindHotNiches.com. Another cool site of his that he didn't actually mention is called ContentAndMore.com. Thanks very much for your time.

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