

SPI Podcast Session #23 - Transcript

More Traffic, More Engagement and More Action with Corbett Barr from ThinkTraffic.net

show notes at: <http://www.smartpassiveincome.com/session23>

Pat: Hey everybody what's up and welcome to the 23rd session of the smart passive income podcast!

I hope you are doing well today. I'm doing okay. I have a quick announcement that you might be interested in. If you have an iPhone; maybe some of you are listening to me right now on your iPhone you can now read and listen to the smart passive income blog and podcast directly and conveniently from your iPhone with the smart passive income blog iPhone application. It's free.

It's very high quality. You can read the blog on it, see what I'm up to on twitter and you can even reply or retweet me from inside the application itself. You can listen to the podcast and even in the background you can listen to the podcast so you can be playing angry birds at the same time if that's what you're into.

There's even a special page inside the application just for you folks who are on the iPhone. Please check that out. Again it's totally free and you can go directly to the by going to <http://www.smartpassiveincome.com/app>.

So far the response has been out of this world. It climbed to number 51 in the business section of the app store the other day. Today it's the number one featured new and noteworthy iPhone application and it already has 18 five star ratings. If you were one of those people who left a rating or review thank you so much. I don't have an official android version yet but for those of you who are on the android operating system, one of my fans actually created an unofficial android smart passive income blog application. If you're on the android market and just look up smart passive income you'll see that there and you can download it and listen to the content the same way. It's pretty awesome.

Moving on, today we're bringing back a special guest again. Someone who I highly respect and admire not only because he is very successful online but he's down to earth and his approach to online business and blogging is very, very similar to my own.

You may remember him from session number 8, which was one of the most listened to podcast sessions I've ever had so far and definitely the most commented on podcast session on the blog because it was probably a topic that we're all very interested and concerned about, which is traffic generation.

Today I'm very, very happy to have back with us Corbett Barr from thinktraffic.net who has been doing some amazing, amazing things lately. His blog is blowing up. I just want to bring Corbett back on the show to continue the wonderful conversation on traffic generation we had going in session number 8.

We'll be talking about some techniques that aren't really touched on much by many other bloggers so pay close attention and take notes if you want to. He'll also be telling us a little bit about his Traffic School project (<http://www.smartpassiveincome.com/trafficschool>) at the end of the episode so look out for that.

Let's just welcome back Corbett. Corbett, dude welcome back buddy. We're very happy to have you back.

Corbett: Yes, I'm happy to be back and I was just trying to think when was that? When did we do the last one? It's actually been quite a while.

Pat: It has been a long time. I only have 22 other episodes right now. It might seem kind of crazy that I'm bringing someone else back already with so little number of episodes but there was actually such a high demand to have you back. Again I'm very happy to have you here. You are taking off like crazy since the last time we spoke here on the podcast. Your site has grown so much. You are getting such an engaging community on thinktraffic.net and you also have your site at corbettbarr.com which had been redesigned or switched over from another site was that free pursuits?

Corbett: Yes.

Pat: Now you have thinktraffic.net which is blowing up. You have CorbettBarr.com which is more of a personal development type site which is taking off as well. you have your affiliate marketer for beginners course which a lot of my readers went to and have thanked me for referring that to them. It has such a good response so I want to thank you for that and also you had traffic school the first time around that a lot of the readers went to who are seeing amazing results from that as well and you have something called the hustle project which you've been working on with Adam baker to really people to take action and hold them accountable.

First of all it's amazing work. It's actually really inspiring to see how much you're doing because I'm sitting here at home and I have a lot of time. I try to spend as much time with my family as possible but I still feel strapped for time sometimes especially when I have all these wonderful and crazy and amazing ideas I want to pursue in my head. I mean how do you get everything done?

Corbett: I don't know. I wrote a post about that recently actually. I used to ask almost every entrepreneur that I knew who was really successful how they found the time and eventually I

stopped asking because I realized the answer was always the same. It's like if you want something enough you'll find the time to make that thing happen and so I guess in my life right now those things are just high priority. I have the opportunity and it's sort of the time to make all of that happen because the demand is there and you want to take advantage of that demand while it's there. Also I'm just having so much fun with it.

Pat: Yes, those are definitely key points, prioritizing and having fun with it, really that's what's been the most helpful for me. even when I think back to sites that I've created in the past it's those sites that I had the most fun with, greenexamacademy.com, smartpassiveincome.com that have really taken off and I have tried to start sites before based on things that I really didn't have much interest in and they just died. Prioritizing and having fun with what you're doing is really, really important but today we're going to talk about some awesome things that are going to help some of the listeners out there. The last time you were on we talked basically pretty much just about traffic. that's really just one piece of the puzzle when it comes to really, really crushing it online and seeing results because you can get traffic to your site but unless the stuff on your site does what it's supposed to do it doesn't really matter how much traffic you have. you can have a billion people come to your site but if your site doesn't do what it's supposed to do and the two key things that we're going to talk about that happen on your site which are engagement and conversion, if those things don't happen you're not going to see any results but on the flipside if you have the best converting website in the world, I mean the conversion rate of zero traffic is zero.

It's a fine balance so we're going to hit all three things today. We're going to cover traffic, getting new visitors in the door, getting them to come to your website and the different tactics to use. We'll get into some beginner stuff and also advance stuff that Corbett's been doing lately. That's really exciting that we're excited to share with you. After traffic we want to talk about engagement which is actually creating those deep relationships and creating trust with your visitors, becoming an authority, having them trust you with their recommendations, with the products that you have to offer them. That's super important as well because that is what it takes in order to get conversions, to get those people to take action, getting those people to turn into sales while maintaining that trust and engagement. We're going to hit all three of those things.

Let's just start back at really what you talked about here on the first time and that's traffic. That's something that you're obviously an expert in at thinktraffic.net. How old is your site now?

Corbett: It's about 15 months old.

Pat: How many subscribers do you have?

Corbett: I have about 25,000 monthly unique visitors and about 6,600 subscribers.

Pat: I think when my site was at 15 months I wasn't even close to that. Things have obviously

picked up since then but to see that much traction this early in these stages of your site is very encouraging. You obviously know what you're talking about. Let's talk about the fundamentals really quickly. When people want to get more traffic what is it really that they need to do would you say? I know that is a loaded question but...

Corbett: It is a loaded question but I really, really like to focus on a fundamentals based approach because when people think about traffic they usually jump straight to the tactics like how do I get good at SEO or how do I dominate social media or something like that. Tactics are sexy and tactics are fun but the fact is there has to be something behind that in order for those tactics to work and I think too many people skip over the fundamentals. For me the foundation of building traffic really gets down to first of all what are you doing that is different from other people out there and why should people visit your website versus every other millions of websites out there. You really have to answer that question and be able to answer it in a way that isn't just oh well my site is better. You have to answer the question in a really unique way.

For example, smart passive income, the thing that you do I'd say the differentiating factor for you Pat, is first of all you're just one hell of a nice approachable guy but also you're so transparent about everything you do and the industry that you're in is full of all these people who have these sort of half believable stories about what they're doing and they like to hide what they're doing and they don't like to reveal it. That transparency aspect for you has been your differentiator and I know that contributes a lot to your success. That's one piece of the foundation.

Pat: Absolutely, I said this time and time again. That was a move on my part that was done on purpose. It wasn't an accident that I was just like oh I'm going to accidentally reveal everything and hold nothing back. I knew that this was going to be huge because no one else was doing it. I filled that gap really tore the walls down that many internet marketers and people who talk about making money online put up especially when you talk about my income reports. No one was doing that before. I think maybe one or two people were but they weren't nearly as detailed as I was with it. That was a purposeful tactic that I put up there and it's great because it serves a number of different purposes. it helps me stay accountable for keeping those number up there, it helps teach people exactly what is going on but the biggest thing like you said is it just differentiates myself from everyone else in the field.

Corbett, you're talking about being different but what kind of other things that people do to really catch people's attention?

Corbett: The next piece in sort of this I have this three pillar framework that I teach. I call it the thriving audience framework. the thing that people think about when they talk about traffic usually is the third pillar in that which is promotion which is getting the word out but before you do that you need a solid foundation which as we talked about is branding and differentiation and also your design ties into that foundational pillar as well. You've talked about this a lot. you've spent a lot of time optimizing your design and making sure that it appeals to people because when someone comes to your site you have just a split second to capture their attention and they can

make a decision whether or not they're going to stick around just by looking at your design even before they read your content and so your design needs to hook them enough so that they'll start reading your content and your content needs to be really great to sort of build on that relationship that you're creating.

Pat: You have to kind of step back from your own site and come into it as if you're a totally brand new visitor because I know it's hard when we get so involved in our own projects. It's kind of Chip and Dan Heath call it the curse of knowledge. You don't really understand what a total beginner or someone brand new to your site actually is seeing. Stepping back, coming back into your site into the shoes of someone who is brand new and trying to understand really what is it that your site is conveying the moment they get there. I think the average that a person spends on a website is only six to seven seconds. You have that much time to really tell them based on your design like we were saying or based on the title of your page or the tagline and even your domain name, that has a lot to do with it too to a point.

Corbett: Yes. I consider the domain name really to be part of your branding and I encourage people when it comes to differentiation to make sure that you're actually deliberate about it and make sure that people are aware. Say it in plain words why you're different. I like to constantly remind people for instance that think traffic my differentiator is that I really focused on a fundamentals and a content based approach to driving traffic which I think is more sustainable in the long term versus becoming just an expert at SEO or just an expert in social media and so I like to remind people on a regular basis when they come to my site why it's different?

I tell them within the about page. I repeat it within posts and you have to remember that you have new visitors coming to your site and you have existing visitors and you have constantly have to tell the new visitors why you're different. I know you do this pat with your monthly income reports. At the beginning of them you always say if you're new to this site here's what's going on.

Pat: I do that for that reason to drive it into their heads why I'm different and also because my monthly income reports are one of the most highly trafficked pages and I get a lot of new visitors who visit those page too. It kind of serves double purpose but I want to point out three letters that I know what we're talking about right here. Three letters, U S P. that's exactly what you're talking about the Unique Selling Proposition of your site. If you don't understand that, if you ask yourself this question why is your site unique like why is your site unique? Why does it stand out from the crowd and you can't answer that in five seconds, there's an issue going on there. You need to figure that out.

Corbett: Yes, absolutely and I think a lot of people don't think about that. You mentioned earlier that competition isn't necessarily a bad thing and I completely agree. if you're planning to go into something and you don't see any competition that should be more of a red flag because they you have to wonder is there really a market here or am I trying to create something that is so different that nobody will actually have a need for it but if there's a lot of competition in your area I

think a lot of people just jump in and think hey if I just put my fishing pole in the water I'm going to catch something but your bait has to look different from all the other bait that is in the water already.

Pat: We talked about my bait and for the people who aren't familiar with think traffic what's your bait?

Corbett: My bait again is a very fundamental and content based approach. Instead of just focusing on the traffic piece, on the search engine optimization, on the becoming good at twitter. I think there are a lot of social media experts out there who say you just need to become an expert on twitter and then boom overnight you're going to have massive success. If you've been online for any period of time or you've tried that you know it's not just not true. What I like to teach is an epic content approach. If you go to my site you'll see there are a number of articles written about epic content. I actually like to call it epic shiz as you put it once pat.

Pat: It's a family show.

Corbett: Exactly but I think you and I are very much aligned on this because I know that you put out really, really deep content. I try to give away essentially everything that I know. I don't hold back. I don't worry about if I give everything away I'm not going to have anything to sell because I know if I give away everything I know that just reinforces my value and some people are going to want the extra handholding. They're going to want the extra attention. they're going to want the customization of that knowledge for their own benefit and that is where you can create products and services around something that you've essentially given away all of but you're just customizing it and taking it to that next level.

Pat: Yes absolutely and that's what I love about your site and what you do. It very much aligns with what I do, that content based traffic. When you hear about traffic experts, usually we hear people that, they're all about SEO. They're all about search engine optimization or they're all about social media. this really kind of almost gamey trying to play Google's game kind of tactic, strategic types of things but really what I love about your site, it's really about the content and that's what's most important really because that's what people are going to read when people get to your site. The content part of it is huge because content is your traffic generator. It's also what is engaging and it's also what gets people to understand who you are as a person.

You can be ranking number one in Google because you have the best SEO optimized website but if your content isn't up to par it's not going to matter at all and I love what you said about giving away everything for free and not worrying about it because that is exactly what has worked for me time and time again. That's my business model going back to when I first started. I had greenexamacademy.com. I was giving away all this information for free because I still had my job and I wasn't monetizing it. When I decided to write an eBook or actually when someone recommended that I write an eBook I was a little bit worried. I wasn't experienced in this realm so I was worried because I had already given away all the content that I was going to put in that

eBook but because I created an eBook that was organized and it displayed the information in a way that even more consumable than just going on a website where that same information was free.

That eBook took off. I sold over 10,000 copies not one person has complained that they could have gotten that information for free and because I helped them out they're happy to pay me back with the purchase and forward my name to all their co-workers and friends. Going back to smartpassiveincome.com a lot of you know I did a series called the niche site duel where I was challenged to build a niche site from scratch. We revealed everything from the domain name to the keyword selection process to how I build backlinks and everything. People can just go in there and copy that process themselves. It's there for free and people are doing that but I was still able to create a course out of that particular, the niche site part of making money online.

We had over two rounds. We've had 50 people each pay \$799. I mean you could do the math there. Those are people like you said who really wanted that handholding, who wanted that one or one or group setting to really understand what was going on. There are people who would want that and who are happy to pay for that because they need that. Not everyone but it's a win win for everybody in that regard.

Corbett: Yes, absolutely. We talked about creating epic content and definitely one of the ways to do that is just to fill as much value as you possibly can within a post but there are also some other aspects of epic content that I think are sort of technical like for example headlines. People talk about the importance of headlines especially in a world where most often when you're online you just see a little snippet on Facebook or on twitter or something and you have to decide whether or not you're going to click on something based on one sentence and that is usually the headline. Headlines are important and sort of the format and the structure of the content. If you just sort of spit out all of your text kind of in one big blob. It's not necessarily going to get the traction and attention that it needs because you have to break things down and make it digestible for people.

One of the things that works best for me for creating epic content, instead of sitting down and just trying to create it out of thin air is actually to go and examine other blogs and look. Go to the [smartpassiveincome](http://smartpassiveincome.com) and look and see which of your posts have done the best. Go and look at man versus debt, a friend of ours, Adam baker, his site. See what he's done best. time and time again I have been able to look at posts and sort of examine the structure of them, the headline, the way it's laid out, the content, the sentiment, all this sort of stuff and then modify that for my own needs. I'm not talking about copying content here, absolutely none of the content is copied but the format and the way the post was put together I borrowed that.

Just for example Adam baker had a post about I think it was 30 things that you can do to change your financial life forever and that post did really well. I looked at that and said wow that is a real interesting format. I borrowed that and I created a post on my site which you actually shared. 21 actions you can do today to set your blog up for massive success.

Pat: I love that post. I swear. That's why I featured it in one blog post and linked to it. I love that post. That is really cool because you actually borrowed that format from Adam.

Corbett: I borrowed the format and you don't have to be that inventive. a lot of times you have to take what's already been done, modify and use it for your own purposes and that post that I wrote was retweeted I think like 570 times and it was liked on Facebook 400 times. It all started with identifying something that had already worked instead of trying to reinvent the wheel.

Pat: Did his post include the kind of how much time it would take to do each of those things?

Corbett: Yes he included...

Pat: That's the part I love about yours.

Corbett: Exactly and so I mentioned Baker in that post. I gave him credit and I actually even wrote him before I used it. I said hey man I'm thinking about ripping off your idea. I hope you don't mind. He was absolutely fine with it and I ran with it. Of course you don't necessarily need permission if you're just going to borrow something but I just like to give credit because I think people appreciate that.

Pat: Yes absolutely. For me what works best as far as epic stuff and really the content that gets shared over and over again on Facebook and twitter is and it's going to be different for everybody in every niche. You're going to want to experiment. that's the beauty of this is if you don't get it right the first time you can try, keep experimenting, keep learning from other blogs and using other people's examples but for me what works best is really getting detailed into the technical aspects of things that should be easy but are not. For example, backlinking. I mean my backlinking post it's called the back linking strategy that works. I actually want to credit again Joseph Archibald for outlining this strategy but he was kind enough to let me feature it on my site and share it with everybody and I try to give him as much credit as possible because again credit should be given where it's due but that post was commented on, I think it's up to 735 comments.

That post has a lot of infographics which not a lot of people do so that was another way for me to stand out. It has three videos which outlined specific parts of the specific strategy which no one gets detailed in. that post actually took me 12 hours to create and it was totally worth it because as many of you know I have affiliate links for some of the certain products that I use in there. I don't force anything on them. I just show them the ones that I've been using and that helps with my income report every month of course so I'm very thankful for that. I mean it does take a lot of work and one thing I want to mention is that it doesn't necessarily mean epic content and sharing really sharable stuff, doesn't necessarily mean that you have to write for 12 hours. It doesn't necessarily mean you have to write posts that are 2500 words in length.

Corbett: Absolutely. Epicness isn't in length. It's about the value that you deliver. If that value takes 400 words to deliver that's great. If it happens to take 4000 words to deliver which it often does then that is great as well. I do notice a correlation between often the amount of time that I put into a post and the level of epicness. The things that you sit down and get into and realize that it's going to take 12 hours or sometimes even two days to create one single post, that almost always pays off. I don't think I've ever written a post that took me two days that didn't really bring new visitors or drive a deeper level of engagement with my audience.

Pat: Here's a question. Let's say you have a blog. It's fairly new. You don't really have that many twitter followers or not that many subscribers and you spend eight hours writing what you feel is a really, really good post. How do you get that out there?

Corbett: It's a great question. Pat, if you post a really epic post and published it on your blog and someone with a brand new blog wrote the exact same epic post, the fact is that you're just going to get more traction than that other person would.

Pat: Yes, I have a headstart.

Corbett: You have a headstart but at the same time epic content does get noticed and just from one single tweet if it's important enough and delivers enough value then. It will actually get picked up. I've seen new bloggers they write content that is of great enough value and has a really good headline. I've actually seen relatively new bloggers just have a post that really blows up and gets spread all over the place but to jump start things what I encourage people to do is to start forming a network or other bloggers that either writing on the same topic or maybe in slightly different spaces but sort of at the same place in their blogging and really, really encourage people to reach out and start building this network either through email or by trying to talk to people on Skype by mentioning people within your post, by commenting other people's posts and just making sure that people are aware of who you are because once you create friendships with people, I consider you a friend pat. I have many dozens of friends in the blogosphere and I want all of you to succeed so badly. If you think about what a true friend is, a true friend wants you to succeed. The more friends that you can create within the blogosphere the more people you're going to have that are rooting for you. When you write something, when you write your best content those friends that you have, that you've spent time making will actually help you spread the word.

It not about going out and say hey I'd love you to tweet this. In fact most of the people I know don't actually do that. They just make friends genuinely. Try to find things that you have common ground on, beliefs that you have that are the same, form friendships and then that promotion just happens naturally because of those friendships.

Pat: It's really about just first getting on those people's radars and there's a number of different ways to do that. I think I've talked to several of them before. It's not necessarily something that's forced but it's just something that happens naturally. Commenting on another person's blog,

leaving some high value comments. there's a lot of people in my blog who I became friends with just because I noticed them leaving really, really good comments on my site. I featured a couple of them to land a guest posting spot on the smart passive income blog. That remind me of another technique. I mean guest posting is getting mixed reviews now. it used to be super awesome and now not as effective some might say but I think if you have epic content if you're a brand new blogger, if you share it with someone who might have an audience already and they love it that's a great way to share that information to an audience that you might not have already which can then jump start your own blog.

Corbett: Yes, absolutely and the people who approach me or write a guest post for think traffic definitely the ones you can tell just pull out all the stops and they write that sort of epic level of content. They're not just trying to check off the box so I've got to guest post it on so and so's blog. they know that to really have the benefit that they want, they have to write something epic so that it draws a ton of attention and people start writing oh who is this person who wrote this post that got so many retweets and clickthrough. That's how you make guest posting effective and I think the reason that it hasn't been effective for so many people is that they're just sort of trying to do as little work as possible but still get their name out there on some other bigger blog.

Pat: Yes, I agree. The owner's of blogs that people want to guest post on; we know when we see great content. At least for me I'm pretty sure as for you. When I see that I'd be happy to share that with people because it's not just about leaving a link back to their site but it's helping the people out who read my blog.

Corbett: Yes, I mean your number one goal is to deliver value to your readers and the only way you're going to run a guest post from someone is if it delivers that level of value that you're used to delivering.

Pat: Yes, absolutely. I think we touched on a lot of great kind of traffic generation ideas, different than what you would normally hear and again this is why I love talking to you Corbett. Now let's jump over from traffic to engagement. Let's not even say traffic anymore. It's not traffic but its people. This is really about the people that come to your site. I say that because now we're talking about engagement, actually connecting with that people. They're not just number or I got a thousand visitors today. These are people who are taking the time to visit our site. How can we connect with them, how do we do that?

Corbett: The typical ways that you would measure engagement on a site would be the amount of time that someone spends on your site. Pat, you have one of the highest average times spent on site that I've ever heard of. I think people spend more than seven minutes on your site which is amazing. you can als measure it by the number of comments that people leave, the number of times they share your content with other people, the amount of email that you get from your readers who are reaching out to say thank you or to ask for help with something. All of those are different levels or engagement or different measurements of engagement.

I think that the classic measure of engagement is probably comments if we're talking about a blog and so many people I think in the beginning write posts and it seems like they're just writing for no one. They might see some traffic coming to their site but they just get very few comments. The way that I like to drive engagement is to be very pointed about asking for comments about things. I think this is a simple tactic that a lot of people overlook. You can't just write a post that defines everything and lays it on the table and expect people to comment because maybe you've covered all there was to cover or maybe your opinion seems so definitive that people are afraid to respond to it. I like to leave a little bit of wiggle room in my posts, ask people for their opinions, ask people to share examples of things, ask people to contribute in some way to create more value than the post itself. Sometimes the value in a post is actually in the comments. If you go and read some of the comments.

I just like to be very specific and actually ask people to do things at the end of every post. I think you do the same thing.

Pat: I totally do that, try to engage my community as much as possible. I even write posts specifically asking for people's opinions and comments and a lot of people actually have different opinions about comments. Some people might think that they're not important. Let's take my site for example. I get 6000 unique visitors a day for example. On a post I'll get maybe 50 to 100 comments. Now percentage wise it's not very many people especially because that's not just 50 comments in a day, that's 50 comments over a span of a week for example and only 50 comments from 6,000 visitors a day for a week isn't that much. Some people think it might not be that important but I feel it's hugely important even just to get a little bit of engagement from the people who are more outspoken. There will always be people who read and never engage or comment. That's fine. Some of those are the silent readers who easily click the retweet button or click like or something or buy something in the future.

As far as comments are concerned even a little bit of interaction is important which is why I think every post should be ended in a way that kind of draws people's attention into the comment field because of the social proof aspect. The thing is like if you see a post and there are zero comments immediately that big fat zero there just shows people maybe it's not something interesting and if there's even one or two comments on it. Do you get what I'm trying to say?

Corbett: Absolutely, especially with blogging because I think comments are so integral to blogs. There's some people who turn comments off and you are kind enough to participate in a debate about that maybe six months ago which was awesome.

Pat: That was a lot of fun.

Corbett: That was another one of my most popular posts but if you think about how integral comments are to blogs people use that as a way to judge blogs. When they come to your site they are looking for evidence that there are a crowd of people who are doing that because everybody feels more comfortable going to a crowd. They assume that the crowd knows

something about the value of the place that they are. It's just a like a restaurant. If you go to a restaurant and no one's there you're not likely to stick around but if there's a line out the door then you must think the food is great.

The same thing with blogs and that is why engagement is so important because it's not just about engaging people so that eventually they'll do something for you. It's engaging people so that the other folks that come by will see evidence that there's something worth sticking around for.

Pat: Yes, thank you for wording that in the exact same way that I wanted to. That's exactly what I want to say. On top of just getting comments while you're doing that you can actually build a community on your site and actually have as they say in this world a tribe which is huge. I have people when I write a post they just immediately tweet it out. They immediately like it. They immediately comment and add to that social proof aspect that we were just talking about. They're quick to respond to other people's comments for me. I think I have one of the best communities, best and most engaging community. it's just amazing, I really feel like my readers are my friends and family even just because I feel like I've gotten to know them because they keep commenting, they keep coming back, I get to know their personality, I go on over to their blogs and see what they're up to and sometimes if I find an interesting post I put it in a round up post that I put up linking to other sites.

It's just a really kind of organic kind of world that should be built upon relationships and creating communities.

Corbett: Engagement doesn't happen just on the blog or just on your website. You and I were talking actually just before we started recording this call about a post you wrote recently about all the email that you get and then I get and so on. There's a correlation, if you look out there at the people who are really successful like the Seth Godens of the world and the Chris Guillebeau of the world. There's a correlation between them and the people who respond the fastest to the most people. for example Chris Guillebeau was in town here in San Francisco and he asked me to say a couple of words to his audience for his book signing tour that he was on and there were a hundred something people there and I asked the crowd. I said how many of you received a personal direct response from Chris either over email or on twitter or somewhere where he actually wrote to you directly and 90 plus percent of people in the audience raised their hand.

Why do you think those people came out? Chris was able to go to all 50 states and all of 13 territories in Canada on his book tour and draw crowds of between 20 and 200 people in all of these cities around the country and why is that? Why was he able to do that? It's because he took the time to engage with his audience on a really deep level even though it took a ton of time but now he's sitting on this massively successful site and people love what he does and they're willing to do all kinds of things for him because of his engagement.

Pat: All that time spent is an investment really and another prime example I can think of is Gary

Vaynerchuk. I've talked to him and he goes out there. He actually looks for people to talk to because he knows how important that is. He goes into Amazon, looks at people who rated one or two out of five stars on his books. He contacts them, asks them to get on the phone with him. I mean who does that? When I saw that it made me really love him. That's why I do these types of things where I will respond to every email or try to and I feel bad if I don't. We were just talking about this before and a lot of people after I wrote that post about how many emails I get among other things, a lot of people were suggesting get a VA to read those for you first or get rid of your contact form, get rid of contacting you altogether it's not worth it, one on one engagement is stupid and I'm sorry I have to disagree.

I know it sounds weird coming from someone who is all about passive income because passive income is being smart about utilizing your time and using things such as VAs and the different services to maximize your efforts with little amounts of time but this one thing as far as engagement on my blog and again I have all these other passive income businesses that don't involve any engagement at all just because they're niche sites or because they're put on autopilot but for my brand specifically for smart passive income blog I feel the need to engage with people even one on one. I feel that that is very important. Some of my most bestest fans who go out there and actually market for me and spread the word about me and what I do which leads to more visitors, more sales, more conversions are from the people who I have spoken to one on one on email.

Corbett: Yes and we were talking earlier about making friends and how important that is. If you're just starting out the first email you get from someone you should look at that as a golden opportunity and a milestone in your business and you should be as genuine and clear about your purpose with that person as possible and convert that email, whoever emailed you into a lifelong fan if you can just deliver all the value possible and think about it this way right now maybe you're getting one email a week from people. Spend a lot of time on that individual person now while you have a lot of time to spend because eventually when you get to be like Pat you'll have maybe 30 seconds to spend on each email and you start to feel like you said sort of badly about that.

Pat: Absolutely. Moving on to our final part, final pillar of really crushing online. We've got the traffic; we've got the engagement, now it's about conversion. We have a community or you have people coming on to your site who really trust you and understand you. We want them to take action. How do we do that? Do we just say hey buy my product or click on this link? What's the best way to really get conversions go in?

Corbett: Conversion to me is just like you said, is getting people to take action. It's not necessarily getting people to buy your product. There are all kinds of actions that you might want people to take. You might want them to for example like your Facebook page.

Pat: Subscribe.

Corbett: Or leave a comment or you're right subscribe or whatever it is and the best way actually, when you get to the point of wanting to sell a product or service there's a whole lot of mechanics that go into that, learning how to market something well and most of it is based around being honest and really having your visitors values in mind and making sure that you're trying to deliver as much value as possible but there are also some sort of technical mechanics in terms of like your call to action, how do you ask someone to do something and get them to respond. The best practice is to start focusing on smaller actions that you want to take.

in the beginning before you have a product or service to sell I like to encourage people to try to get people to take action on other smaller things like liking your Facebook page or leaving a comment and just getting used to that sort of explaining why this might be beneficial to someone, explaining why you would like them to take that action and then asking them to do so. In some cases if you've really engaged with people and you've really delivered a lot of value then sometimes they want to give back just because of all that you've done and so merely asking for something can be a big help but on the other hand you always want to have something, some reason for people to do something.

For example let's say you have a Facebook fanpage which you have pat and you have a whole lot of people already there and I'm building one as well. you want people to like that page and you want to ask them to do that from within a blog post which is probably a good idea but you need to give them a reason to do that not just hey if you like this go click on that button over there but why should they do it. What's in it for your reader and with a Facebook fanpage a lot of times what you can do is give people an alternative way to reach you. you can provide alternative content, quicker content maybe that you provide on a more regular basis, things that they can't necessarily get from the blog but the point is you're focusing on your visitors point of view, what's in it for them and why would they want to take that action.

Pat: That's the big question, really what's in it for them. Another thing that I want to point out just to make sure that we don't skip over is just simply asking people to take action. A lot of people put up a subscriber are on their blog or they have an RSS feed button and they don't tell people what to do. It's very, very important to just simply ask people or point people in the right direction as far as what you want them to do. You've engaged them, they're going to listen to you so don't be afraid to ask. I mean there's different levels of asking to a point where you could be a jerk about it which is what you don't want to do. There's so much power so it's very important and I really like what you said about taking small actions, a number of small actions first. it kind of reminds me of a launch sequence to a product, getting people to first spend time with you watching videos or reading your emails to eventually get to a point where they can then convert them and then take a big action at the end of all that because you've kind of, I don't want to say trained them but it sort of is like that.

Corbett: And the other thing is when we talk about conversions I always like to bring up the concept of trust as well because if you're going to be trying to build a business around your online presence, really the only thing that you have with your reader's is your reputation. Your

reputation is built over time by delivering value to those people and you can easily destroy that reputation by getting greedy or money hungry and just asking people to do things just because you want to make a buck. If you want to maintain that trust and really that's the key to building a long term sustainable business then you just like we said earlier you have to keep your visitors value in mind. you've got to make sure that if you're asking them to do something it's because that you legitimately think that if they do that thing they're going to receive more value than they spend on that thing to do so.

Pat: For sure, absolutely. I mean what's in it for them? Make sure they're getting exactly what they pay for and more. You've got to make sure you overdeliver on everything. another thing that I want to go into, is you talked about trust and how important that is but also when it comes to conversions especially with products and especially even more with affiliate sales if you're trying to convert people into an affiliate product or going through one of your affiliate links for example to order a product that you get a commission on is security. What I mean by that is really making people comfortable with the action that they're about to take. A lot of people don't just give out their email address. this goes back to engagement a little bit with just simply trusting you first but also when it comes to a product for example my best affiliate products are the products that I show people exactly what it looks like inside.

For example market samurai. I have this keyword research webinar and I keep bringing this up again. I brought it in the last episode with Chris at keywordresearchwebinar.com. it's this webinar where I go over keyword research and I show people exactly what this product called market samurai looks like inside and the thing is people aren't going to invest and this isn't a cheap product either. It's \$97 if you get the free trial and \$97 the first five days or something. That's not a small amount of money that people aren't just going to waste. They want to know what that money is spent on and they want to make sure that what they're buying is worth it. The best thing you could do is show them exactly what they're going to get.

I talked about this in the last session with Chris, becoming a sales representative for that particular product. if it's your own obviously that is your product but if it's for an affiliate product really try to become a sales rep, someone who knows exactly everything about that product so if anyone comes to you and has any questions you're quick to answer just shows how much more you believe in that product and also that there's someone to go to in case they have an issue with it that they trust already.

Corbett: That's one of the things that I've learned from you pat is that if you provide your honest account, your story about the interaction with something I constantly watch you learn how to do something, use a product or a service that helps you do that thing that you want to accomplish and then just tell people about your experience with it. If they connect with that experience they see that you legitimately use that product and that it really helped you and that you liked it. They're likely to use the same thing just like a friend recommending something that they've tried.

Pat: Yes, exactly and even talking about the niche site coaching course that I did. I showed

people exactly the process that I did. I offered the course to handhold them through that process as well and conversion rates were through the roof. we were only taking 30 students this last time because obviously it's a little more one on one so I can't just open it up to everybody but we had over, I think it was over 150 people apply for a \$799 product for information that they could get for free. I mean it's just providing value and being there as a resource and being a trusted advisor because of that engagement and that's how really you get people to convert and take action.

Corbett: It's also about selling things based on the value not on the time that you put into it or something like that. For example this course that you mentioned it's \$799 but the end goal is to create a niche site or a series of niche site. For example your niche site, the security guard training site, it made over a thousand dollars last month right?

Pat: Yes. It's up to over a thousand dollars this month as well.

Corbett: \$799 could earn you the ability to create these sites that earn passively a thousand dollars a month and you could build many of those. It's about selling things based on value and you know that the people who actually take action within that course are going to achieve those results. It's really up to them to take that action and put the effort in.

Pat: It is and that's exactly what's happening, that people who are taking action are seeing the results. We actually have someone who is no longer working a dayjob because of what we've taught them. It's amazing.

Corbett: And how good does that feel?

Pat: We're changing lives. It's amazing and hopefully that is sort of what we're doing here today by being on the podcast and sharing everything as well. It feels amazing. I mean the course was probably one of the most fulfilling things that I've ever done and obviously it's not passive but I'm happy to trade that time to help people out in that way and it's so nice to see me teach something, have, people actually do it and then send me email later saying this is the best thing that's ever happened. It's just amazing and I feel very fortunate to be in a place where I can do that.

In this course we say hey spread the knowledge. Teach other people too. We're really trying to help people and that's really what's the most important. The whole value thing, really making sure that people get what they pay for and more and being confident behind your sales price and everything and all that stuff, it all plays a role in there. we've touched on a lot of things today, traffic, some very unique traffic strategies that shouldn't be unique really because the whole content driven aspect of has been really what's the most successful for me and for you as well, engagement, building a community, getting your readers to stick around and how to do that, conversions, getting people to take action based on that trust that they have with you, turning visitors into sales. It's just amazing. I just want to end here by mentioning a course that you have

coming up. We've actually talked about it on the blog before. You limited it to a certain number of people. Now you're opening it up again because it did so well the first time around like you just, I know the listeners wouldn't mind just three or four minutes really quick about what this is about. This course is called traffic school which I think is the perfect name. I mean I love that. This is the traffic school that you want to go to.

Corbett: Right, exactly. Thanks for mentioning it last time as well. Traffic school is essentially the sum total of everything that I have worked towards over the past four or five years. I did a startup in silicon valley before launching this new blog think traffic and I also have the other blog that you mentioned corbettbarr.com and from everything that I've learned there I created this thing known as the thriving audience framework which is a series of steps that you can follow to build an audience for your website or blog. It's really based around all the fundamentals that you and I talked about already which are the foundation, the content and the promotion and how to build all those things in a way that will lead to a sustainable audience not just something that's a flash in the pan.

In addition instead of just providing my knowledge and my lessons I actually went out, I reached out and used all of my social capital and all of the people that I've met online over the past couple of years and gathered 17 of the brightest minds online as special guest instructors within traffic school. We're talking about people like Leo Baauta, Pat you're in it, Gary Vaynerchuk, Ramit Sathi, Danielle LaPorte, Chris Ducker, who's been on your podcast before and on and on, Adam baker and it goes on and on. There are 17 different lessons taught by these special guest instructors and they teach a different piece of the thriving audience framework each and then those are interspersed with lessons that I've created myself as well.

There are 26 total lessons within the course. It runs for over a period of about four months. I actually lead people through the course in a guided fashion so every week I'll let you know what lessons you're supposed to do, there's homework for people to do and there are a number of places where they can connect with the rest of the students in the course. This is why the course has been limited in terms of the number of people that I can sign up. We actually had a hundred spots the first time around and it sold out within just 36 hours. this time we're going to open it up a little bit more because I've learned how to sort of manage that size but we still want to keep it small enough that I can provide that sort of one on one help within the forums, within the comments, within some live sessions that we're going to do as well and sort of lead people through that process and make sure that they have the opportunity to interact.

We have forums where they can connect. We have something that is known as the alumni network which is a way for all the students in the course to actually promote what they are working on. one of the things that's most difficult is going the word out like you said when you have a new blog how do you get the word out and with traffic school you actually have access to this promotion network where whenever you have something once a week you can put the word out about your latest piece of content or the latest thing you're working on and ask people to retweet it or to like it on Facebook or to shed some light on what they're doing here to provide

comments and that sort of thing.

It's not just education. I know that the real value is connecting with people, doing special projects with people and making sure that you're being held accountable and actually moving through the process.

Pat: For you guys out there, I mean Corbett is one of the most knowledgeable guys I know about this stuff in building online businesses and he's also one of the nicest and most genuine people I know which is why I don't usually promote things, I don't usually have people come on here and pitch things although Chris tucker did quite amusingly when he was on but this is for real here. I encourage you to at least check out traffic school. You can go through my affiliate link just being honest with you upfront that I do get a commission if you do sign up with this course with Corbett which I would be really excited about and if you do there's actually a bonus for you. Corbett will contact you if you go through my link. You'll get a special webinar. this is just for SPI listeners and SPI readers only where Corbett and I will get you on a webinar and we'll have with you some massive Q and A session and we'll cover all the different topics that you want to know about to make sure that you fully understand what you're doing and how to take what you're doing now to the level.

You can go through my link at <http://www.smartpassiveincome.com/trafficschool>, no space or dashes, just <http://www.smartpassiveincome.com/trafficschool>. It's an amazing group of people on there; just some of the names that you mentioned are huge. I mean Babauta probably has the biggest blog in the world.

Corbett: He has probably the biggest single author blog in the worked and I'm lucky to consider him, my friend and he has a tremendous levels in there. I also some of the results we've gotten from the course. I have a few cases studies of people who have gone through the course. some people are attracting 5000 or even 10000 unique visitors, the month after going through this cause which is a pretty tremendous jump start I think and that usually take people a year or more to get to so we really give people a jumpstart and putting them on the right course.

Pat: That's awesome. Again <http://www.smartpassiveincome.com/trafficschool>. Corbett Barr's course is called traffic school. Thank you so for letting us pitch that to you. Again there's a fee bonus, if you end up signing up through my affiliate link and again Corbett, just wonderful content today. I think we've touched on a lot of things that aren't normally so open about when it comes to building traffic and really crushing it with online business. I want to thank you again for your just presence. Being alive, you're contributing so much to the blogosphere in what you do and I just want to thank you for that.

Corbett: Thanks Pat. It's always a pleasure and I swear we could just talk all day and I'd be happy doing that.

Pat: I'm sure we could. Maybe we should. We'll hang out again soon. We'll have you on the

postcard won the future but then again thank you and we'll talk to you soon.

Corbett: Thanks very much.

Pat: Bye.

Another fantastic, fantastic session with Corbett Barr hear on the podcast. Thank you so much for listening in. if you want to learn more from Corbett you can find him at thinktraffic.net. I encourage you very much to go over there and check out his blog. Of course we just talked about it and you're not just seeing the traffic that you want to see. I encourage to go and check that out as well you can grow through my affiliate links at <http://www.smartpassiveincome.com/trafficschool>

And lastly I just want to thank you for taking time out of your day. I know time is valuable, and just really appreciate you taking time out of your day to listen on the show. I really appreciate it.

Thanks a lot and I'll see you in the next episode.

END OF TRANSCRIPT