

Andrew: This session is about how to use content to market your business; it's led by Neil Patel. He is the co-founder of multiple companies including Crazy Egg, which creates stunning heat maps that help you increase your conversion, and KISSmetrics, which gives you web analytics and customer intelligence that you can understand. Neil blogs and teaches all aspects of growing online businesses including how to get traffic and conversions on quicksprout.com.

I'll be helping to facilitate. My name is Andrew Warner; I'm the founder of Mixergy where proven founders like my friend, Neil, teach.

Neil, it's good to have you here.

Neil: Thank you for having me.

Andrew: Usually, I start off with a story from the guest, but I have to tell a quick story here, myself, of you. When I started Mixergy, you were so bothered by how much work I was putting into the site, and how I wasn't getting traffic, and how I wasn't doing the right things that you said, "Andrew, give me your user name and password and I'll just do it for you."

I couldn't believe it. I've known you for a while, and I trusted you so, I couldn't believe it but I gave you my username and password and the changes that you made are still on the site today. Which means two things: first of all, thank you for helping me get some traffic and number two, I am due for a refresh. One of the reasons why invited you here is so that I, along with the audience, can learn from you and improve and get even better.

So first, thank you and thanks for teaching.

Neil: No problem, any time.

Andrew: I always think of you as the guy who had it together since forever. That, why would you need content marketing and then I found this old photo. This screen shot. What is this site?

Neil: This site is Advantage Consulting Services. It's my first real business. Also known as ACS. What we pretty much provided was internet marketing services like SEO, pay-per-click services, all that kind of stuff. I don't even think social media marketing was popular at the time. The site was really ghetto, right? As you can see there, it even had music so when you'd go to the site, you would hear this grocery store music. I don't know why we picked grocery store music but, nonetheless, that's what was there.

We had that site, we tried to get it rankings on Google, and we were eventually able to figure out how to use [??] to get rankings. We never really got a ton of leads from that site. That business did fine, but it took us a while really to kick it off and start generating revenue.

Andrew: Okay. Today, as a result of what you are about to talk to us about, you've been able to help multiple companies to increase their traffic including, what's this

company here? Or what did you do for TechCrunch, I should say.

Neil: TechCrunch we ended up changing the on-page code and the on-page code ended up giving him a 30% lift in traffic in 60 days. They already had the links, they already had the social media shares, but what they didn't have was clean code for the search engines.

Andrew: Okay. There are multiple things that you do to help companies; Search engine optimization, ad buying, actually, is ad buying one of the tools that you use? It is.

Neil: Ad buying, conversion optimization, the list goes on. Pretty much whatever it ends up taking that's marketing related.

Andrew: My concern is that, if we talk about everything that will achieve nothing. We'll all walk away feeling, "Boy this guy, Neil, is brilliant, but we're so overwhelmed that we don't even know where to get started."

So we worked with you here, the Mixergy team did, to come up with a few tactics that we can focus on in this conversation. They're all centered around creating content and using it to drive traffic and to market our businesses. Not necessarily buying ads, not necessarily doing high SEO. Just thinking about content in a smart way.

One of the first steps that you've told us to think about is, it's right there up on the big board, it's to figure out what our ideal customer wants to learn. Here's one way that you did that. I always like specifics, let me see if I can bring this up on the screen here. It's a pretty big screen shot. Do you recognize this?

Neil: This right here was my old click [??] traffic system. I was selling it for, I think, \$97 bucks. One time or three payments of \$67 or something like that. I was doing a 30-minute phone call and, actually, I sold so many of those I was on the phone forever. Never again will I start selling 30-minute phone calls.

Andrew: I remember you actually telling me that was one of the things that you did, and I thought, "Boy, Neil must be so hard up for money that he's willing to trade his time for money."

That's not the direction successful entrepreneurs go in, right? You start out by trading your time for money and then you eventually create products that people buy that aren't dependent on your time. I thought, maybe he's running into some trouble.

What I didn't understand was, the logic that went on behind the scenes that connects with this point that we're talking about here, figuring out which the ideal customer wants to learn but in talking to them what did you find out about your customers.

Neil: So that was actually the main reason for the call, and when I set up the traffic system the call was actually included for free. You'll be shocked. Not everyone took

the call, and I don't know why. I wasn't trying to sell it. There was no upsell. I was just offering it for free. If someone is willing to pay for a product, I actually want to find out their problems and help them due to the fact that it would help me figure out what to offer next. I could have a better product. I could have better service maybe.

So what I ended up learning was my consumers or my readers had problems in three main areas, right? Number one was SEO. Number two was content marketing. Number three was social media marketing. And they broke down their specific problems. I ended up learning that most of my readers and people who bought stuff from me were actually not big corporations.

I assumed they were because I had a lot of corporate readers, but they were actually small mom and pop businesses that typically were the only person there in the company or they had no more three to five employees.

I also learned that a lot of customers were in Australia. I also learned that a lot of the customers or visitors who bought the system whether they were in Australia, Canada, or the U.S., the biggest problem they had was, "Hey, I'm a solo entrepreneur. I don't have that much time to spend on marketing. What should I focus on most to get the biggest bang for the. . .

Andrew: Let's see if the video will catch up with us. Sorry, so you were saying . . . The connection just broke off for a moment. You were saying they were saying, "What can I do to get the most bang for my buck?"

Neil: That's correct. So they were saying, "What can I do to get the most bang for the buck, right?"

Andrew: Yep.

Neil: From a time perspective, what's the last amount of work we can do on marketing, not because we don't want to do marketing, but it's because we're already spending time running the business. We don't have enough money to spend hiring people, so what can we do to give the most amount of sales with spending the least amount of time. And a lot of that ended up being content marketing because it produces the highest ROI for the long run, right? In the short run it's a slow run, but in the long run it's a very profitable marketing channel.

Andrew: I see. So what you're advising us to do is bigger picture, figure out what my ideal customer wants, not necessarily use this specific tactic of having customers call us, right?

Neil: That's correct.

Andrew: But if you are having customers call us . . . I like to steal your ideas, and so if I were to say, "All my customers should call me" how do I understand what they're looking for and not just have a chat with them. I'm assuming if they call me or they call our viewers today that the customer is going to have a real problem that needs to be solved maybe in the next half hour, and that seems like a high burden for an entrepreneur to get on the phone with every customer and to potentially

solve their problems within a 30 or so minute phone call.

Neil: It is. And I don't recommend it for most people what I end up doing because I really want to know my readers. That quick and simple way to do it is actually service through Qualaroo, right? You can actually ask questions within your site within your users, and you can figure out what issues they are running into, and you can help them solve it.

Andrew: Okay. So phone calls one way, Qualaroo a company that you co- founded also and since sold.

Neil: I'm sorry. I don't own it any more though.

Andrew: You sold it?

Neil: I use Survey Monkey which is another good tool right now. You probably know about it. You have a big list. Just email them.

Andrew: Big list, you email them? What's one other way to understand what your ideal customer wants to learn?

Neil: So another way is actually analytics. So if you work with Qualaroo which is free but qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative is feedback like Survey Monkey and Qualaroo. Quantitative is the numbers in your Google Analytics. So if you notice that all of your people on your site . . .

Let's say I'm selling services, social media SEO content marketing. If I'm making visitors go to the content marketing page and spend the most time on there, and that's where most of my leads are coming for, right?

Whether they say they're interested in content marketing or not, the quantitative data is showing that visitors are most interested in that subject.

Andrew: How about one other idea that the ideal customers want before we have enough users and customers to be able to survey them or to call them up? If we're earlier stage, what's one thing to do to figure out what our ideal customer wants to learn?

Neil: So we went through that within our startups. What we ended up doing was we just went out to Crunch Base[SP], Craigslist. We would actually try to talk to as many people as possible and never offer them anything for free because it's a bit biased, but try to reach out to as many people and see if you can take ten, 15, 20 minutes of their time. Don't do 30 minutes. Thirty minute chunks seem like very tangible [??] on a 30 minute call.

But if you actually ask someone for a five, ten minutes you can actually get a ton of calls and people will be giving you feedback on whatever you're trying to create. They can tell you what they're looking for, problems their trying to solve, and you can sit there as a [??]

Andrew: So phone calls to non-customers but to people who potentially will be our customers, that's another way to do it. All right, on to the big board then.

The next big tactic that we are going to be talking about is using keywords that you're already ranking for. We pulled up this screen shot. You gave it to us actually before we started, how are you doing it here? What's going on in this screenshot, about how to become rich?

Neil: What we were finding out was, when you create content you'll start ranking. So this article was originally titled, "Four Ways to Become Rich". What we ended up finding out, when you're looking at analytics, and I know people say google does not provide it. If you connect it with your web master tools account, and it's really simple it can be run through your Google AdWords, there will be easy steps to doing it.

It'll show you what keywords you're ranking for or which ones are driving traffic. We go and we say, oh we're ranking for "How to Become Rich" although the title of the post is "Four Ways to Become Rich". So we adjust the title of the post to "How to Become Rich". It popped up our rankings, and we started getting more traffic.

Andrew: Do you have a sense of how much more traffic you'd get from a change like that?

Neil: That change, in particular, I don't have the numbers off the top of my head. I believe it was more than a thousand extra visitors a day, so you're looking at about 30 plus thousand a month.

Andrew: Just for going back to that specific post.

Neil: That's correct.

Andrew: You're checking to see what keywords you're ranking for, for the overall site. Then you find a blog post that relates to that, that you could make fit within the keywords that you are ranking for already.

Neil: What I'm doing is, I'm looking at my current content, I'm seeing which ones are most relevant to my [??] user base or ideal customers, seeing what they're ranking for, and then I'm adjusting the titles to increase the rankings for those keywords.

Andrew: How often do you do that on your site?

Neil: Not as often anymore, but when I used to do it probably I would spend three hours a week doing it.

Andrew: Three hours a week, looking at the keywords and then adjusting the titles of past posts so that they speak in a language that people are searching.

Neil: That's correct. That's how we've got some of our B2B blogs from a few hundred thousand Google visitors a month to 4 or 5 hundred thousand Google visitors a month through that one tactic.

Andrew: Onto the big board for the next idea, which is to promote your content to the right audiences. Let's bring up this example, then. What's going on in there?

This is an infographic that you guys created about how to, by the way I say, 'what's going on there?', and then I realize it's slow for you and there's some people who prefer to not watch and to listen and so, I think I should just give people a description of the image itself on the screen. What it says there is, "How do colors affect purchases", and this is an infographic that you guys created. You emailed it out?

Neil: Yes. What we wound up learning from this is, infographics do very well. It has one of the highest forms of ROI with content marketing because it generates a lot more natural back links, a ton of traffic and if the topic of the info graphic is relevant to your core audience you can actually get conversions.

What we found out with KISSmetrics is, a lot of people were signing up or trying to [??] their conversion rates. We started talking about colors because colors actually affect emotions, purchases, right? They have different meanings, they can affect if you are going to click a button, if you're going to buy or not buy. We started creating content that was relevant to our core product. That really did help us drive more traffic and back links and get covered in places like Forbes and Huffington Post, but it also helped us generate sales. The trick with this is, you have to create relevant info graphics that benefit your audience and is related to your product.

I see dentists out there that are creating info graphics on computer hardware and servers. That's not related to anything in the dental industry. If you're a dentist, create info graphics on, how to whiten your teeth at home, right? Or how to whiten your teeth without spending a dollar. Or how to whiten your teeth without even going to the dentist.

Then you can give more of these remedies. You're going to create back links which is going to help you rank for more dental terms, which also then helps you generate more sales.

Andrew: I'm amazed at how well info graphics still do. Here it is on your site. Let me zoom in so people can see it a little bit better. 6+ thousand tweets, 8+ thousand likes on Facebook, 600+ Google Plus, and Buffer at about 300. That's the kind of reaction that you get. How did you know what topics to go with so that it would both fit your audience and also be shareable?

Neil: The cool part about infographics is, you're taking data and making it into visual form. Most people have blog posts that are data rich or there are blog posts. All you have to do is search industry blogs to read them. What you'll find out is, there's some that are really popular. The ones that are really popular take the blog post and turn it into infographics and site the blog post as your source.

That's the simplest way to generate info graphics that are popular. Because you already know that the content version was popular, so if you take the date, make it visual, people are like, "Oh, it's easier to understand. It's pretty. Let me share it."

Andrew: All right, cool. Onto the big board. The next big idea is to use popular content to write similar posts. You did that using a tool that you created, and we're going to talk more and more about it here in this session. What's going on on this table from the quick-spout tool and how did you use that to write content that's already popular?

Neil: Yeah, so what I would do is I would look at my content that I currently wrote on my blog, and I would see what gets the most Facebook shares, Twitter shares, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Google+, et cetera. And that would tell me what my readers want to read more of, and what they want to read less of, right? Because the ones that don't have too many shares and are at the very bottom of the list aren't the popular ones. The topics that are at the top should be ones that are more focused on writing. I also did this by putting in competitor URLs and seeing what's the most popular on their site.

And the same thing: it told me, because we have similar readers. It told me what my [composure] writing that my leaders love. So doing for my own site and for my competitor sites, it then ended up giving me a list of ideas and topics that they already wrote on that did extremely well, and then I created my own flavor of it, right? So I know if Pinterest did well, I started creating other similar posts relating towards Pinterest that cover different topics. So my most popular Pinterest one was, "The Marketers Guide to Pinterest". I can also do one on "How Marketers Can Monetize their Pinterest Traffic" because it's still relevant but yet it's different.

Andrew: Is that one that you actually have done that was especially popular for you, or what's a topic that you--

Neil: I [didn't] do it with Pinterest, I did it with Twitter. So if you look at the Twitter one, I started putting a lot more [content], like how to get more likes, how to become a Twitter power user. So I noticed that people liked Twitter and how to grow their Twitter engagement and presence, so I started creating a ton more infographics and continuity around Twitter traffic and engagement.

Andrew: Gotcha. All right, so if you were to do the same thing for Mixer G. I think it's going to be a little bit hard for me because there's just so much data. But I plug Mixer G into the quick-spout tool, and I see that an info-graphic on webcam settings was extremely popular across all social networks, what would you do based on that?

Neil: Yeah, so-- it's telling you that people enjoy also reading Mixer G to get tips on how to do video production, and interview because you're really good at it. So you could also do an info-graphic on how to come up with the right interview question. Or how to interview, how to interview someone, right? Or how to interview your X, Y, Z. Whatever it may be. You can end up giving advice on questions to ask, what not to, et cetera. Or you can do an info-graphic or content piece on Video Etiquette 101: What Not to do During an Interview.

Andrew: I see. And so this explains why someone who also does an interview program decided that he was going to do a series on copywriters. Maybe he came

into Quick Sprout and saw that-- where is that? Guess that just popped down a moment ago, it was up there-- the copywriting course did especially well across social media, and so maybe he saw: hey, Andrew's doing well with copywriting, then I should be doing a series on copywriting, a series of interviews, if his copywriting interview did so well. That's the kind of thing that you're talking about us doing. It feels a little bit like I'm spying on my competitors. It feels almost inappropriate.

Neil: [laughs]. It's like you're the CIA. The NSA.

Andrew: Yes! But that's the idea, let's take a look again at this, and so, if you were a competitor Mixergy you might say: oh, Robert Green does especially well, I should see if I could do another interview with Robert Green, or some kind of blog post about him, or his book mastery. That's what we're talking about.

Neil: Yeah. Well, Reynolds also did really well, right. Dave something, I can't read his name.

Andrew: Dave Kerpen writes likable. So here's the thing though: it's hard to tell why they're doing especially well just by looking at this. My sense is that someone on Robert Green's team liked the interview so much that they bought ads on Facebook and that's why there was so many likes. My inside knowledge of this info-graphic was that it wasn't just the info-graphic on its own that did well, it's that we emailed people and we asked them to Tweet it out and as a result it did really well on Twitter as you can see here, and then all the other social networks came along for the ride with it. So, when you're spying on a competitor, and I hope you don't mind me saying that this tool helps us spy on competitors, how do you know what-- how to use what you're seeing there?

Neil: Yeah, you can't just go based off the URLs and the numbers, you actually have to plug them in, go to the site, and actually see what they said, right? Because sometimes in the posts at the bottom they'll say: 'hey, can you please share this or tweet that out?' And you can't always tell if someone did an email blast, but you can see if they did anything unique. For example, if that one on Robert did extremely well from the Twitter perspective, you can try to go back to Robert's Twitter profile and see if he promoted and has a lot of followers. If that's the case, he may be worth interviewing again because he knows that he can drive quite a bit of traction any time he pushes something out.

Andrew: Gotcha. I can see that. All right. I should not be encouraging more people to copy what I'm doing by going to Quick Sprout, but I don't care. Actually, frankly, if it helps, I'm happy that it helps people. Do you find that people then use this to basically spy on Quick Sprout to see what your big blog posts are and then write similar blog posts because if it works for Neil on social media it should work for me.

Neil: My results are cash so it's not going to be an accurate representation of what it is in Quick Sprout. I'm showing you what I want to show you.

Andrew: Oh really? So you're not actually making this available to others.

Neil: I am but not for the Quick Sprout URL.

Andrew: For QuickSprout.com.

Neil: It's not going to work the way it should.

Andrew: I see. So you're thinking it's so powerful why let other people spy on me using it.

Neil: Yeah. I don't want to jack my stuff, jack other people's stuff.

Andrew: All right. Fair enough. Is there another way? I don't want this to come across as a Quick Sprout commercial. Is there another tool out there or other ways to see what's popular on other sites?

Neil: Yes, there actually are. I like using Open Site Explore because Open Site Explore gives me back links similar to [??]. So it can actually show you if you put in a competitor URL it's linking to specific pages. And if you're noticing a lot of people linked to a specific page, that can tell you what to do. SEM Rush and Spy Foo is a good cued data from the standpoint of just a paid organic perspective because people are getting a lot of traffic for a specific word that you can Google it. You can see what the content was, what the article was specifically about, how many social shares it got, et cetera. Those are some tools that are worth checking out as well.

Andrew: So we're looking at SiteExplorer.org, SEMRush.com for ad buys and SpyFoo.com.

Neil: Yep.

Andrew: Cool. All right. On to the big board yet again. Partner with popular blogs. Where is that example that I thought we can talk about here? There it is. You found this out, and then you started to do stuff with Moz. What happened?

Neil: Yeah. So what ended up happening was I ended up finding out by looking at Moz that they created this guide called "The Beginners Guide to SEO" and it's an amazing guide. They actually came over the clouds to do these awesome [??] 20,000. 30,000 work content pieces that teach you a topic from A to Z. They just didn't create a lot of them. They just created one.

So I was like, "You know what? Why don't I create some of these?" I just started cranking them out one a month during my peak. And so I think I did one a month. And I started getting a ton of traction. I made sure I didn't jack other people. So if Moz did SEO I did advanced SEO. And I leaned to them. I talked about how their guide's great. This is covering advanced. If you want to learn about beginner's stuff read theirs, and they shared it throughout their email list. I think the email list is over 100,000 people, right? That drove a ton of traffic.

So we're playing nice with competitors although they're in the same space, but we don't sell products against them. It helped drive quite a bit of traffic, and we still keep doing that, the same tactic we create guides. We go out there. We see who's

in our space. We mention people within the guides that we think are relevant and can benefit the readers.

And we'll find out, "Hey, if I mention Mixergy in the guide and talk about Mixergy's strategy in content marketing and how it's great." I would ask you, "Hey, Andrew, if you really like it I already [??]. Feel free to blast it out to your list or tweet it and share it. And that's helped us generate quite a bit of traffic.

Andrew: Your writers at KISSmetrics do actually mention Mixergy quite a bit which I like. Can I tweet it out? They never ask me to tweet it out. I just get an alert, and I tweet it out.

Neil: On that side we don't ask because we already have enough on our own. I don't actually ask anyone for Quick Sprout either. Then you start getting into a certain number like a half a million plus visitors a month which doesn't matter, right? You're going to get traffic no matter what. Then at that point we don't like bugging people.

Andrew: I see.

Neil: When you're got 20,000 visitors a month every ask really helps.

Andrew: So you intentionally will mention people in your guides, and then you go back to them and you say, "Where you're in here. If you'd like to share this with your users, go for it."

Neil: Exactly.

Andrew: I can't believe that Moz would email out to their audience for free.

Neil: Yeah.

Andrew: That's huge. It's hugely popular.

Neil: Yeah. Very popular. We're one of the most popular sites in the Internet.

Andrew: So one of the things that we found out was through talking to you before this session. Let me see results are 361,494 people read the second guide that you created and 212,000 people read the first guide that you created. Those are huge numbers.

Neil: Yeah.

Andrew: So, I don't want to, I know that the bigger message here is to partner with bigger sites. So the big idea is that you contacted them, that you wrote about them, that you didn't copy them but added to what they were doing. If they were doing the beginner guide, you wrote the advanced guide. I understand that's the big message here, but if we were to zoom in on this one specific tactic, and look at the guides that you create. What does it cost you and how do you create a guide like this?

Neil: Yeah, so the guides, the costs have changed over the years. Right? So when I first started doing it, the guides would cost me around 40, 50 grand max. And now the guides are costing around me around 20 to 30 grand. Right?

Andrew: Twenty to thirty grand?

Neil: Yeah, up to 30 grand. Sometimes I can get it done for like, 15 grand, if it's a small guide. But that's roughly what I'm paying, cause I need help on the writing. I can't write the guides all by myself. And as you can see from each guide, there's also a co-author right there.

Andrew: Yeah I can see here.

Neil: The design is very expensive as well. I could spend 10 grand just on the design. Then [curding] it, is expensive as well. Right? And paying someone to make it HTML and CSS compatible with [??] because it's almost like one huge infographic. Then on top of that, I have to make it pdf compatible, and then make sure the pdf's, are on iPhone, Kindle, Android acceptable compatible as well.

Andrew: So this is a huge expense. And I could see on this one, the advance guide, it's also written by you and [Su Jong Patel]?

Neil: Uh-huh.

Andrew: Is that a relative of yours?

Neil: Yeah. [laughs]

Andrew: It is? So, you and Su Jong Patel wrote this thing and it cost a lot of money to produce. I can see you're making the money back with this Hello Bar add and the very top of the page. Right?

Neil: Yes.

Andrew: So that, that's how you know that it was worth your while to do it. For someone who is just starting out, who is not ready to invest that much how do they have a simpler guide? How do they do it on a budget?

Neil: Well, you don't have to spend that much money to write. You can write the guide yourself. You can have your in-house designer do it. Or you can go to [Gerbal] or 99 Designs, they are the cheaper designers. It still looks good. I just pay for people that I know will produce really good work and I don't spend the time trying to find cheap labor like I used to. But, I've seen other people get whole guides like this done for \$2000.

Andrew: Well, yeah, all your guides do look really beautiful and the design, looks a lot like the design on Quick Spout, on the site itself. All right, cool, that's really helpful. Let's go to the Big Board where the next idea we're going to be talking about is, using free tools to create more traffic than content would. Right. So even

though we're talking about content marketing, you're thinking of tools as content; and actually more powerful than traditional content.

Yep. And now, actually, if I go over to quickspout.com without the about, let's go to the . . . to my web browser. It used to be that if I want to Quick Sprout, I saw your blog, today I see this. This is your tool?

Neil: Yes. That's my tool. What I found out is, tools get people coming back more often, increase usage, increased [??] loyalty, a lot more traffic, much higher ROI from the tool than actually generating contact.

Andrew: This tool allows people to, actually, how would you describe what the tool does?

Neil: It helps you spy on you competitors and it helps you analyze your site and figure out if there's anything that you're doing wrong from the on page [SCL] perspective.

Andrew: I remember when you first created this course that today does so well, this product that you're selling through the Hello Bar at the top. Now it does so well, you can afford to spend 10's of thousands of dollars on a guide because you know that it's going to sell and bring back that money with a little bit of profit and more users will become fans of your work, and so on.

But I remember when you started out. It was much simpler than that. It was a pdf. guide and phones calls and, you know, a lot of attention, but not that involved. The reason I'm asking is I'm wondering was this tool simpler than it is today because today it's a pretty intense product.

Neil: Yeah, so the tool started getting expanded on. At first it was just a one page report. Then we started adding competitor analysis, social media tab, like we discussed earlier so it's used spy on your competitor and figure out which content he's doing really well. When we first started out it was just the web page report. It was our version of a minimal, viable product, it got usage. And then we realized, oh cool, we should add more to it and get more usage.

Andrew: So if we're going to create a tool, is there a way for us to figure out what kind of tool would work?

Neil: Yeah, you just ask your readers. We actually used [Quali-Reader's Survey] to survey our readers, to figure out what tool to create. Everyone said, 'we'd love a free SCL tool that helps us understand what we're doing wrong or right with our site.

Andrew: So you explicitly say, 'what tool should I create?'

Neil: Yeah. I actually ask. Like, 'If I create a free tool, what would you like it to be? Right? So, I first ask the question of, 'would you like me to create a free marketing tool for you?' I will get a yes or no. Yes. What kind of tool would you like me to create? And then they'll tell me and then I'll go and create it.

Andrew: And how much would the first version cost you?

Neil: I don't know the exact amount off the top of my head, but my guess is 50,000.

Andrew: Oh, 50,000.

Neil: Maybe somewhere around that. I think 50. I've spent more than a hundred on the tool so far. Somewhere around that range is my guess.

Andrew: If we were going to start smaller then?

Neil: You could start smaller. I just pay expensive people for the tools.

Andrew: I remember the days when you used to get free interns. Where it was just, I found a guy who knows a guy who's really good; he's doing this for me. Today you're spending top dollar.

Neil: Yeah, because I just went to Digital Telepathy and said, hey Chuck, design this for me.

Andrew: Chuck?

Neil: Yeah, from Digital Telepathy.

Andrew: Yeah, Chuck Longlevecker. Oh, yeah, you're going really top notch.

Neil: Yeah.

Andrew: Okay. So if we were going to start smaller, how do we have the simple tool created that's not going to cost us a lot of money but will start to do some of the things that the Quick Sprout tool does for you?

Neil: You can find developers on Elance. There are some decent developers on there. Of course they're not going to be the best developers that cost three hundred grand, but you're going to get someone that can actually create a product that works. For design you can go to Dribbler Nine-Nine Designs and find somebody that can wire something up, and you can actually create a tool for five, ten grand max. Or what you can also do, that I've tried doing, is there's already tools in almost every space.

So in the marketing space there's a company called the Widexle or Windexle, something like that, and they have a free SEO analyzer and for \$99 you can buy this script and put it on your site and act like you're your own SEO tools. That's great because if you actually get usage then you know that, hey, maybe I should spend money creating a really good tool after that.

Andrew: What was that tool, Windexle?

Neil: It was Windexle or Windaxle something like that. It's a site that offers

marketing tools for free. You can put on your own site and act like it's your own tool. It's like a Windexle analyzer.

Andrew: I think I just saw it. All right, so I'll find it.

Neil: Windexle or Windaxle. I don't know exactly how it's spelled. I used to do that years ago. And I did it with Advanced Consulting Services. I used that tool on their site. That tool actually does generate traffic and it was 99 bucks or something.

Andrew: I don't remember the evolution of the tool on Quick Sprout, this one.

Neil: It just came from one report. There's the web site analyzer, then add the social media report add the competitor analysis.

Andrew: But today it's on the home page, it's replacing what used to be Quick Sprout, essentially. People of course could find it underneath the blog section, but where was it at first before you know it was so powerful it's worth replacing the homepage with it?

Neil: I just put it on the home page right when I release it. I did an AB test.

Andrew: Ah, I see. And then what are you looking for to figure out if it's worth keeping there?

Neil: Worst case I was just going to go back to the blog being the home page if it did not work.

Andrew: So what numbers are you looking for to figure out if your tool works?

Neil: I was looking at unique URLs entered and there was more than a thousand a day and I was like, oh cool. So if more than a thousand people are using it a day then it's doing well.

Andrew: Oh, cool. Stu McLaren, who created Wish list Members, said that he finds the same thing in the content sites that he works with. That if, instead of paying for another report, the entrepreneur would pay for a Wordpress plugin. It would maybe cost a little bit more, but it would add more credibility. It would be used more, valued more. And actually on his membership site the giveaway is not just content, but once a month he gives away a free Wordpress tool.

Neil: Cool.

Andrew: Interesting, I didn't realize the power of it. All right, let's go on to the next one. Put content into a visual format to make it easy for people to understand, you talked to us a moment ago about how you do that. Tell me a little bit more about what kind of content we should be looking for and how it's worked for you.

Neil: Sure. The thing with content and everything that's visual, we've especially done this with Info Graphics, is that we found that not everyone is a text or numbers based learner and showing things in a visual format makes it much easier to

understand for anyone, especially newbies, which are typically the largest audience of any segment, right? You end up getting way more traffic. So we started putting everything that was text based and data based into visual format through InfoGraphics and we started seeing a lot more traffic. There's a whole post I did on Quick Sprout one time called, like, why content marketing is the new SEO and it broke down the ROI file of InfoGraphics.

Andrew: Here it is: Why Content Marketing is the new SEO. Where is that? You said that this also was turned into graphics?

Neil: No, this one wasn't. It was breaking down the kiss metrics on our Infographic costs of ROI on it.

Andrew: Got ya.

Neil: And ROI on it.

Andrew: All right. Let's make sure to include that. I'll grab the URL and we'll include it on the page with this video so people can go and read that article fully. You know what actually? What's a simple way to create an Info-Graphic? I hate that I keep asking you what's the budget option. I think, though, that if we're talking about the high end, anyone knows they could go to Chuck over at DT, Digital Telepathy, and they're going to create great stuff. The challenge is if you're just experimenting with this. If you say, "I saw Neil Patel on Mixergy. He had this idea. I want to try it. I'm not ready to go and spend \$50,000 with Chuck." What's the simpler way to test out an Info-Graphic?

Neil: Ninety-nine designs, you can use the one made for \$250.

Andrew: \$250 they'll create an Info-Graphic? Actually, multiple people will create Infographics, and then we pick the one we want.

Neil: Yes.

Andrew: All right. There you go. Final point here, don't forget to market your content. I always think about just creating these interviews. I don't think about marketing them.

Neil: Yes, and this goes back to sharing your content, right? Everyone writes content and thinks that the content is going to spread and they're going to get a lot of traffic from it. That's not necessarily the case. It doesn't matter if you put out a masterpiece. If no one reads it, it's not a masterpiece. You've actually got to get out there and spread. So by emailing people that you mentioned in a blog post, asking them to "Tweet it out." Share it, right? All these things help with the traffic generation. And that's a big thing. A lot of bloggers don't do Outreach.

Andrew: And so if I mention someone in an interview or mention someone in a blog post or mention someone in an Info-Graphic, do I just email them out and say, "Hey, I mentioned you in here. Tweet it out."

Neil: You can kindly ask them, right? You don't have to enforce it. But you're like, "Hey, Andrew. I mentioned you." So if I were you and let's say you put an interview like [???], right? Let's say it was just a general interview and not a Master Class, but let's say, I have a perfect example. You just did the 1000th interview, right, on Mixergy 1000th interview?

Andrew: Yes.

Neil: So someone on your team emailed and said, "Hey, just want to let you know you were one of the ten people in the 1000th interview in Mixergy 1000th interview." Feel free to share it. Click here if you want to Tweet it out. And I just clicked it and it already gave me the [???]. Click, right? And it Tweeted it. They messed up on it because the first thing they Tweeted said, "At Mixergy" which means it won't get as much traffic.

Andrew: I thought I told her about that. All right. I'll have to talk to her about that. That is a big problem.

Neil: Yes, so I adjusted that part so more people would see that. And then I Tweeted it out.

Andrew: Thank you. And the way that we often do it actually, I copied from you. I think when you first interviewed me for your site, you emailed me afterwards and you said, "Andrew, here it is on the site. If there are any mistakes, let me know."

And I realized that when you say something like that without asking, when you say something just nice and considerate like that the person's so much more receptive to anything else you say afterwards. So I don't know that we, no actually we do. With interviews we do say, "Could you please help Andrew by Tweeting this out?" We are very explicit about it.

Neil: I'm going to help Andrew, click.

Andrew: Yes, it's either Anne Marie, who actually executive produced that one interview that you're talking about. Or Andrea, who is our interviewee liaison. We'll email afterwards and say, "You're up. It's up on the site. Thanks for doing it. By the way, if you'd like to help Andrew out, here's a way to do. Tweet it." And so we found that that works. Is this one way that you've done it? Is this your email? Let me see if I can zoom in properly. There it is. And why don't I read it out a little bit.

Neil: Yes,.

Andrew: Its subject, "You Should Be Blogging About," insert blog post topic. The body is, [Insert their first name], as an avid reader of, [Insert their site name], I would love to read about [Insert blog post topic]. And I think your other readers would as well. Your content on, etc. What's going on with this?

Neil: So I would use this as an email template to get more guest posts.

Andrew: Okay.

Neil: And I use guest posts as a way to promote my content. The reason being is if you, Andrew, have a blog called, "Mixergy" and I and Neil have one called, "Clicks Brow" and we both have entrepreneurs who rebuilt our sites, why not try to encourage you to let me guest post on your site? And then I can link back to my own site which [???] readers.

Andrew: I see.

Neil: And that's like a simple way to actually generate quite a bit more traffic. And if you guest post once or twice a week you'll start noticing that you're getting more reader base from your competitors or the people within the industry.

Andrew: Guest post on other sites - you don't do that anymore?

Neil: I don't, I used to do that a lot. I used to do five guest posts a week.

Andrew: You've outgrown it?

Neil: Yes.

Andrew: You've outgrown the lot, and the way that you did it is by, and I've watched you do all the things that we talked about here. If we were to do it all, let's bring up the big board right now, here are all the different topics that we talked about today. If we were to do one, Neil, which one would you suggest that we start out with? If we were just to say, "Hey, I learned from Neil. I'm amazed by what he does. I just want to dip my toe in the water and see what I can do if I use Neil's ideas. Which of these ideas would you recommend?"

Neil: I would recommend, actually, the last one, which includes guest person. Don't forget to monitor your content, so soon you're already creating content. That's actually the most effective [?]. Even if you don't have time to create content yourself, go create content on other sites, or people within the industry, because it actually makes quite a bit of sense. Don't do it to manipulate Google or try to, like, grow means [unintelligible]; do it to because it will actually guide sales to your business.

Andrew: I see. And, it's not about search engine optimization anymore, or it's not about the anchor text that you get when you do a guest blog post somewhere else, but it is about raising your profile with your audience and getting the traffic. If we were to do it, Neil, how do we know which sites to go guest post on?

Neil: The easiest way to look at it is Open Site Explorer's domain authority. So if you go to Open Site Explorer...

Andrew: Yeah, let's do it right now together. I've got it up from before, now, don't I? Open Site Explorer--there it is. All right, so let's suppose I was Neil Patel today, with Quick Sprout...

Neil: So let's say, if I'm interested in going to other entrepreneur blogs...

Andrew: Yep.

Neil: So the first thing, we would use a Google blog search to type in my "entrepreneur blogs" and we would get a list, right? After you have them, you can end up going to Open Site Explorer and then typing in the URL, like, Mixergy.com.

Andrew: I see, so first you find entrepreneur blogs on Google's search results, and then you type them in here to see which of them has the highest authority, and that who you'd approach first.

Neil: That's correct. Because you can type in "entrepreneur blogs" on Google, or "top 50 entrepreneur blogs" and you can end up creating, getting risk, right? And you'll see a domain authority number--usually the higher the number, the better the site. Also, then I would go to Mixergy to see how many sell-per-shares you're getting per post.

I would also look at how many comments you're getting, because the more comments means the more engaged readers you have. The more engaged readers you have, the more likely they are to click through a link and actually buy something from me, versus readers who don't comment, share, do anything.

So that's why I figure out which sites to go on and guest post. So I'm looking for the sites with the highest domain authority, the sites that get a lot of social shares, and sites that have a lot of comments, cause it shows that they're getting engagement. If I had to throw in a fourth one, it's sites with big email lists, but a lot of sites don't publish their email lists.

Andrew: Okay.

Neil: The number.

Andrew: Well, as always, this was incredibly helpful. It's so great to have you back on here. You were, before I did interviews formally on Mixergy, or even at all on Mixergy, you were one of the people who came out to a Mixergy event, and onstage, you talked about marketing, back when you were at the stage when you had to find [what] you called "the monkeys". You said, "I just need anyone who can do this work", and that's where you worked. Today, you've gone first class. You're hiring the top of the top, and then buying their companies. Hello Bar you bought from Chuck.

Neil: Yeah, I bought from Chuck.

Andrew: Congratulations on all the success. Are you still at conferences?

Neil: I still go to conferences, a lot of them.

Andrew: All right. I would suggest this, first of all: anyone who's listening, as a follow-up of course go check out the tools including and especially the one on Quick Sprout.com, but number two: if you see Neil at a conference, please go over and talk to him and have a conversation with him. I've said this so many times:

people who came and met you at the Mixergy conference were amazed by how approachable you were, by how helpful you were, because you were such a big name who'd done so much, it felt like, "Well, does Neil have enough time to help me?", and they were always shocked that you did. I imagine that today it's scaled back, but that you're still there for people.

Neil: If you ever see me at a conference and you mention Mixergy, let me know and I'll buy you a drink.

Andrew: Oh, do it. Thank you so much, Neil, for doing this. Neil, would you hang on for one second? I want to ask you something related to another Mixergy interview.

Neil: Sure.

Andrew: Cool. Thank you all for being a part of it. Bye, guys!