



Bonus Episode 765: How My Mom Started Earning an Online Income as an Affiliate Marketer

Guest: Andrew Hansen

WOODS: All right, do I detect an Australian accent in there?

HANSEN: Australian accent, yes, now mixed with numerous other influences, of which I have lost track.

WOODS: Okay, so you have lived all over the place, or more or less. At least you've traveled quite a bit, from what I understand.

HANSEN: That's right. I'm an Australian by birth and citizenship, but I haven't lived there for, I think it's eight or nine years this year. I've lived in the meantime all over the place, but for the majority in the UK. That's where I am now, in London.

WOODS: Okay, have I ever spoken to you on Skype when you were in Australia, though?

HANSEN: Yeah, you did actually, that last time we had that quick chat I was down there.

WOODS: That's what I thought. Okay, you do still travel quite a bit. A lot more than I do. All right, so you've been online for quite some time doing business of various types, and you've earned – I'm not asking for figures, but I know for a fact you've earned a bucket load of money. And you're one of a vanishingly small group of people who teaches other people how to do this and who also has an excellent reputation. If you look online for a lot of these other people, you can find complaint after complaint. The guy's a shyster; he charged me two grand for knowledge I could have spent three minutes on the Internet searching for, all that sort of thing. And the Warrior Forum, which is an Internet marketing forum that I read sometimes, is brutal and merciless on people. And yet they love you. So I'm going to just pitch this softball right over the plate: what's the difference? What is it about Andrew Hansen that makes people say you can trust this guy?

HANSEN: Well, I should say first, if you haven't found any nasty comments about me it's probably that you haven't read far enough –

WOODS: I haven't looked hard enough? (laughing) Yeah.

HANSEN: They're definitely in there. It's one of those industries – well, Internet marketing is the kind of industry where so many people have had terrible experiences. They're very jaded, and so understandably they become sensitive, so sometimes if somebody buys something from me and they send an email that goes to a spam folder and I miss it, they think that I too am a scam artist and they post nasty things in the Warrior Forum.

So anyway, that aside, the difference is – and this is tough in a sense, because I have to choose how critical I want to be of other people who do similar –

WOODS: Exactly. No, I put you in an awkward position, but I think it needs to be asked, because I personally know the names of people I would never in a million years do business with in this arena.

HANSEN: Yeah. If we're talking about the worst of the worst, there's a lot of people who teach strategies in this arena who don't have much of a concern for the outcomes of the people who take their programs, for whatever reason. So they've put a course together, they've realized that they can charge a certain amount of money for a certain thing, and that's where their thinking on the matter ends. If we can make money selling this thing, put it out there. Let's do a course; let's do an offering; let's get people to promote it, whatever. And then when people have joined the program, once they're in it doesn't matter very much. They factor in getting a certain refund rate regardless, so they don't pay particular attention to how the customers fare, how they do through the program, how many of them actually act on the material and achieve a certain result. Once they're in, it doesn't matter. And that's unfortunately a lot of this industry.

WOODS: Do you think some of these people fake their testimonials? I'm sorry to get so – this is probably not where you expected this to go, but I've wondered that.

HANSEN: Definitely. Yeah, that happens in the worst scenarios, and probably even in a lot of scenarios. There's faked ones, and there's also just misleading ones, you know, where the ease with which the strategy can be implemented is exaggerated in some extreme way, and so the results might be real, but there's key parts of the story missing. And so the bottom line in all of this is that it makes it very, very difficult for people who are earnestly trying to start this kind of business to make sense of it all, to figure out who they can trust, and to find a program that will actually lead them through the steps necessary to achieving some kind of result with it.

WOODS: How did you get started? Were you working – I never asked you this. Were you working in some other field and you got tired of it? That's the usual story. "I was tired of my 9-to-5 job, and I wanted the flexibility of working online." What was your story, and how did you get started?

HANSEN: Yeah, my story is a little unique in that sense, because I started at such a young age that I had no prior profession. And I'm in a group of people who are the first in history to be saying this, because I was literally 19 years old when I got started. So I finished high school, and then I worked and just messed around for a couple years, and I got started very soon afterwards. But I didn't come from any other job. I've sometimes said that I've never had a real job in my life, which is almost literally true. I

did work at a factory for six months once, and I worked at Domino's Pizza, but in terms of a proper job that people have, I've never had that. And I was 19 years old when I started my first kind of business online, and it's kind of grown and developed since there.

But I really got started working for somebody else, which was really crucial to me and I think helpful for people to understand generally, because working for someone else I kind of – and somebody who was doing this kind of business, I meant to say, somebody who was doing, for example, search engine optimization, who was making websites and running advertisements on them and using this model to make money. So by working for this person I saw the business really intimately, and I sort of had a mentor in that, somebody who I could very closely with, ask a lot of questions to, learn the business in a very – I'm not sure of the right word, but let's say an intimate way. It wasn't by reading an ebook; it was by watching the business operate in a really close way. And that gave me insights into how the business worked that I couldn't have gotten otherwise, and that was really helpful for me getting started.

And that's one of the reasons why I gravitated later in my own "career" doing this, to coaching and mentoring other people, because I realized that there was only so far that I could get by reading an ebook or by watching a video online. There's something about the relationship or having that kind of relationship with somebody who's doing really well with the business model you're trying to implement that makes it much more easy for you to implement.

WOODS: So what exactly have you focused on? I mean, I know you're an expert when it comes to SEO, and one way I know that is from my own mother, who's been in your program for some time. And she is teaching me SEO stuff. She's saying, oh, I can do this for you; you should be doing X or Y. I don't know what on God's green earth she's talking about, but I look into it and I say, wow, how the heck do you know all this.

And of course with her affiliate site that you guys helped her set up, she's hitting page one or two of Google already on a bunch of keywords, and some keywords I wouldn't have thought you'd have a prayer of getting page one or two of Google. And by the way, if people, just to make sure you're understanding what we're saying, if you're looking to sell something online that people might be doing searches for and your site comes up on page eight of Google, good luck getting any sales. No one's ever going to see you. So the key in this crowded day and age is to get on page one or two, which is really hard to do, especially without using any black hat methods, methods that if you get caught you're going to really, really regret it.

So how did you get into that? Is that primarily what you focused on, is the SEO angle, or do you also do affiliate marketing? How does Andrew Hansen make his living?

HANSEN: Yeah, so SEO and affiliate marketing are the two things that I've done right from the beginning, and with the different businesses that I've had online there's been other folk's email marketing, for example, building up lists, advertising on Facebook, and other things. But the core of what I do has been the same right from the very beginning, which has been an advantage, and that has been SEO and affiliate marketing. So it's important to understand that those are two different kinds of things. SEO is a method of generating traffic, but once you have the traffic you need

something to do with it that can turn into revenue, and affiliate marketing is the revenue model that I've focused most on over time. So you mentioned there selling products of your own. Well, I haven't done as much as that via search engine optimization; my SEO has always been towards affiliate marketing, selling products to other people and earning a commission.

WOODS: All right, now I had Sara Young on the show maybe six months ago or a little longer, and she's this – you know her because you've been working very closely with her recently, and she's a mom of seven who went into affiliate marketing in a way just out of sheer necessity. She needed an income and she has kids and she doesn't really want to have to leave home. Her original intent was to leave home and go to work; then she had her first child, took one look at the child and said I'm not going anywhere; I want to stay home with the child. But what am I going to do?

So she started selling baby strollers, like things that she knew intimately from her own personal experience as a mother. Baby strollers is an obvious example. She could do an affiliate site; she could answer people's questions about strollers, and then when they clicked through they're ordering from Amazon and she's getting a commission. And she got really good at this, to the point where she tells the story of ten moms coming to her door demanding that she teach this to them. And you know, she's got to care for seven kids; she has all this stuff going on. But eventually she did start teaching it.

But one thing I asked her is, at that time, back in, let's say it was the early 2000s that she really, really got into this, it was a lot different. The Internet was not as crowded as it is and you could put up a simple affiliate site and generate traffic almost just organically without having to know anything about search engine optimization or anything else. But today it's quite different, isn't it? And so I wanted to ask her where – and this might go to the training that you do these days – where does a beginner get started? Like my own mother, for example. She could not have just put up a few products, linked to Amazon, and sat back and watch the money roll in. She had to go through a much more elaborate process, simply because the Internet's so much more crowded today.

HANSEN: Yeah, that's exactly right. So the place that it starts is by identifying a market that you might enter, and there's a couple of ways that you can do that. Sara's a good example of this, because she's got a lot of knowledge and expertise on strollers, and people buy strollers a lot. Strollers are a product; it's not a hobby or – strollers are a thing that people buy. That's all they are. So if you have an interest that lines up really well with something that people buy and sell, it's an interesting area to explore, because it's possible that you can, if you want to set up this kind of business, establish yourself as an expert in that market and have your website be the place that people go if they're looking to make decisions about that thing, about what stroller they should buy.

But there's a lot of people who don't have any – they don't have an interest or a passion or a hobby that lines up with something in that same way, and that's a different challenge to overcome there. It's not necessarily more difficult; you just take a different approach. So this is what I would call your mom's approach, where she started with a series of research techniques that helps her to locate a niche market,

some small area of the Internet where there's products that are being sold that are expensive to a certain extent, that with enough research and information gathering of her own she can kind of become an expert in, and then she can start a website of her own where she provides the information that she's gathered and uses it to help people make decisions on whether or not they will buy certain products.

WOODS: And she has been – well, I guess you know her personality now. She's very enthusiastic and encouraging, and she likes answering people's questions, and she asks a lot of questions. And she's been burned in this area before. Believe me. She's been burned by people who, as you say, by the time they make the sale, they're off in Monaco and you're sitting there wondering what the heck to do. But she said, geez, they've got so much material; they're there all the time; they're in the group; they're cheering us on. I actually had one of the teachers who taught at the school my kids attended when we used to live in Kansas was actually in the program you're doing now. He was the first person – I guess I should only mention his first name. His name is Trent, so maybe you'll know him. It's an unusual first name. He was the first person to earn \$1,000 in the program. Now, I was secretly hoping it would be my mother, but that's okay; she's doing pretty well now. She emailed me, or we talked some time ago, and she said, yeah, I sold 20 things today. Now, given the kind of things she sells – now of course on Amazon you get credit for the whole purchase the guy makes. He could buy a TV that earns you a decent amount, and then if he buys a book or a hat or whatever you also get the credit for that, as long as it's done in the same Amazon trip. And she was quite pleased. There's no way – well, I suppose it's conceivable she could have done this on her own, but the research that would have been involved would have taken her ten years, and I wouldn't have wished that – I would have told her to give up. It would have been stupid to do it.

HANSEN: Yeah, that's exactly right. Yeah, it sounds simple enough to describe the process of what you do, but there's a lot of little pieces. There's a lot of little pieces that you only get by having tried a lot of things that didn't work, and that's a value that I like to think people like Sara and I bring to a coaching scenario, is that we've done so much of it ourselves, we've tried so many things that didn't work, we can help people shortcut through a lot of the mistakes that they might have made trying to work out each step on their own.

WOODS: Yeah, actually, that reminds me of a question. Tell me about something that you did wrong along the way, or something that you expected to work and didn't really work. What's a failure in business that taught you something?

HANSEN: (laughing) Where do I begin? I can talk about the very first thing that I ever tried to do to make money online. It's a good example of how to screw up nicely.

WOODS: Yeah, let's hear it.

HANSEN: So I thought I had a good idea. At this time I was trying to create products of my own, trying to create an ebook of my own. I'd learned this method where you can hire a writer to outsource an ebook to, so if you identify the right market that you think will be really good for an ebook, you can have somebody create this ebook that helps people with some problem that they have or some thing that they want to do, and you can sell it online. It was like the click-back method; I guess you know about

this. So I thought I had a really great market, and it was origami. I thought if I could — there seems to be a lot of people searching for how to do origami; I think an ebook will be really effective. This was before YouTube, of course, and free tutorials and everything like that. It seemed to me a good idea.

It was a terrible idea in the end. People — it turns out nobody wants to buy an ebook on origami, because it's very hard to understand from tiny pictures how to do origami. Not only that, there's so much free information online that — I was charging \$19 for this ebook at the time. Nobody wants to pay \$19 for an ebook that has stuff that you can find for free if you dig far enough. So my first lesson about market research and how to identify things that people really want and need online and how to create something, how to have a unique kind of value that people can't get anywhere else except your website.

WOODS: Does your business model rely on having a robust email list?

HANSEN: The affiliate marketing business does not, no. The other side of my business is the coaching and the training, of course, and for that I have an email list that I have to build and maintain and everything else, but the affiliate marketing side doesn't. It doesn't rely, but it's a very helpful option to have for certain people in certain niches, and we can talk about —

WOODS: Oh, yeah, hold on. I want to know about that. How are you doing affiliate marketing without an email list? Everybody tells you you get an email list; then you make affiliate pitches to the list.

HANSEN: The way that you do it without an email list is to focus on groups of people, markets, niches of people that are about to make a purchase. They're considering making a purchase already. So they don't need to get onto an email list and hear seven messages in your auto-responder to know the information that they require to be able to make the purchase that they're considering. They know a little bit already; they're trying to clarify some important details about a product that they want to buy, and if those details can be clarified they're ready to buy it immediately. If you focus on people at that point of the buying cycle, there's no strong need for an email list.

WOODS: All right. How do you do that? How do you find people who are at that point of the buying cycle?

HANSEN: So this comes down to — and when you're using organic search, like search engine optimization, trying to target people who are searching in Google.

WOODS: Oh, wait a minute, hold on. Is this a question of you're going to search for particular keywords that indicate that they're on the verge of buying — you're going to target those keywords?

HANSEN: That's exactly it, yeah. So a good example is I bought this new microphone recently, and I hadn't bought a decent quality microphone before, and I wasn't sure how one microphone compared to another microphone at a similar price. So I ran a search that was like "Rode microphone versus blue microphone"; you know, those two.

And I wanted to see somebody compare the two, see what the differences were and which one was better value for money. An affiliate site or a content-driven site like we make is perfectly positioned to be able to answer those kinds of questions for somebody.

The thing is the merchant of either of those products is not always very well equipped to answer those questions, because one, they don't want to be talking about competitors' microphones on their websites all the time – maybe they will, but maybe they won't – and they don't want to be going into – they don't want to be doing the research and creating the depth of the kind of content that you would need to answer that question really well for somebody. So these third party, kind of reviewer websites can serve some important value there for people, and in doing so, and if they do it well, they can be there at the point where that person is ready to – where they know what the difference between the two microphones is, they know which one is better for them, and they're ready to make the purchase. And that's where the affiliate earns their commission.

WOODS: All right, that's smart. That's really interesting, because that is – it makes sense, and yet it's not the universal recommendation of everybody, which is, go and laboriously put together an email list. I still like the email list route, and I'm not good at what you do, so I couldn't do what you do. But that is smart, and that is interesting.

Let's talk about – I mean, my mother just loves you guys. All I can is I'm talking to her all the time, and she's constantly raving, absolutely raving about you guys. So I don't just tell my mother, oh, go work with any old person. I mean, it's my mother, right? I want to take care of her. I want to make sure she's being cared for by people who are invested in her success, and I feel like that's been the case. And also I've had a lot of listeners of mine who have decided to go ahead and they want to work with you guys. We had one of them; I'll just say her name's Chrissy; she's in my private bloggers' Facebook group, so people may know who I'm talking about. And she actually quit her job because of you guys. She stopped – she's going to do this full time, so that's great.

I haven't had a single complaint. I've had complaints about other things that I've had on the show, and think –whatever. It's bound to happen, right? Nobody's perfect. Not one. Not one. Everybody absolutely swears by you guys, and that makes me feel good, because I want to do right by people who listen in. So we're arranging a little demonstration, a little bird's eye overview of what your strategy is and how it works, and we're doing it, I think we've scheduled it for November 3rd at 2pm Eastern Time, and that's in 2016. I want to get people signed up for that baby. The link is going to be TomWoods.com/Andrew. But give us just like a 30-second sense of what you're going to talk about and what people are going to be able to walk away with that.

HANSEN: Yeah, so what we'll be going through on that webinar is the business model, the entire thing broken down in as much detail as we can in the hour or so that it's running. So we'll go from the beginning where we do kind of like we talked about today. You start by identifying an interesting market area, something that either you're interested in already or just that you can find with your own research where there are products that are expensive, like strollers, that people are interested in.

And from there we'll move on to showing you how to create this kind of a website. It's a really simple kind of website. Most people who came to the program that your mom was in, they hadn't made websites before when they started. It's not a technical endeavor that we're walking people through; it's just something very simple using blogging software if anybody's familiar. So we show you how to set up a website around this group of people, this market area. And then finally how to promote that website to get it the attention of the people who are looking to buy those products. If you can do those three things together people make money with this. You've seen it now; so many of your members have had it happen. It's perfectly achievable for anybody, I think.

WOODS: Well, as I say, I'm really, really pleased with it. I mean, I'm trying to sift through and segregate the good from the bad for when I go and tell people about things, and having seen your stuff and talking to my mother about it – the fact that my mother is giving me advice about my website is really quite amazing. But that's terrific. That's wonderful to me. It just speaks volumes. If I feel comfortable sending my mother to you guys then I would say anybody should go and learn from you. And that webinar we're going to be having on November 3rd will be a great opportunity for people to get a sense of it, figure out what the strategy is, and go from there. So the signup link is TomWoods.com/Andrew. Definitely make sure and do that. Your origami story was really interesting, because I'm glad for my sake, for my mother's sake, for other people's sake, that you didn't give up after that, that you realized, well, back to the drawing board. That's the right approach. Well, thanks so much for your time – are you in the UK as you talk to me now?

HANSEN: Yeah, still in London.

WOODS: Have you actually – before we go, where else have you lived, let's say, in the past five years? Have you lived in places other than the UK in the past five years?

HANSEN: Yeah, so when we first left Australia we moved to Canada; I lived in Montreal and Toronto for a little while. And then we moved to Mexico the following year. We had this idea that we were going to live in a different country every year until we had children. And we moved to London after that, and we kind of got stuck here. We liked it so much, we were having so much fun, and we knew some people here, so we stuck around. But then after that we had a little stint in Thailand, which was nice. We lived in Barcelona for a while. And I think in terms of actually living in places that's about where the list ends.

WOODS: Now, is it that you recently had a child or you're about to have a child?

HANSEN: We had our first baby in 2014, and we've got our second due in a couple of months' time.

WOODS: Oh, it's the second one that's coming. Okay, I didn't realize.

HANSEN: Yeah.

WOODS: So you've settled down. That's just interesting to me. So you were able to live in all these countries. Now, I'm a homebody. I'll never leave the United States. I like to visit, but I'm just – I need familiar surroundings, so that lifestyle is not for me. But you're able to do that because as long as you have Wi-Fi you can live anywhere. That's basically your model.

HANSEN: That's exactly it, yeah. And we've been so lucky, constantly moving around – and it's not even – the travel has been great, but it's also just the flexibility day to day, you know? Like I get to wake up in the morning and ask what's the most important thing for me to do today, and sometimes it's work, but sometimes it's not. Sometimes it's playing with my son; sometimes it's having coffee somewhere with my wife; sometimes it's doing something else, and being able to live like that without your priorities being dictated to you, that's really special, I think.

WOODS: Well, I used to be a college professor, and I'm not going to complain about the professor lifestyle, because really, how many hours are you in the classroom, then you're sitting in your office, and you get paid over the summer when you're not even working, and stuff like that. So I'm not going to complain, but I did have to be at particular places at particular times, and I had to be at interminable faculty meetings and committee meetings, and I was just looking to slit my throat during these things. Just awful. Just get me out of here. I want to be anywhere on earth other than that. There's a part of that life that I miss. I mean, I did enjoy walking in that classroom and interacting with students every day. I did enjoy that.

But for the past at least, let's say, six years – look, there's not much to argue with when you say I really, really prefer a lifestyle where if some morning I frankly don't feel like doing something like that I don't have to. And if I don't want to talk to anybody, I don't have to talk to anybody. And if I'd rather stay in bed I can stay in bed, or if I'd like to work from the beach, just bring my mobile hotspot, I can work from the beach. I've actually done that. I've actually written some of my emails sitting on the beach. Melbourne Beach in Florida. Nobody goes there. I don't understand that. At least in the summertime, nobody's there. I have the whole beach to myself. Well, fine. Great. I've got my own private office. It's called Melbourne Beach.

You just can't put a price tag on that, and I'm really glad – I'm not a millionaire, but I can – and I need a lot of dough to support five kids, especially when we've had some health challenges. It's hard to do that, and yet somehow it's happening. I'm putting out a product that people like. People are helping me out. They're allowing me to put out more product, to do more ebooks, to do all that stuff, because they're supporting me and they're liking it, and it gives me a lifestyle that means that if I have a child who suddenly has some urgent need, it's easy for me to drop everything and cater to that. And it's a tremendous thing, and I don't ever, ever take that for granted. It's a glorious thing.

And that's what my mother is shooting for too. I mean, my mother's quite young, so she's still working. And she has a perfectly good job, but you know, she's kind of tired of the business world and all the politics that goes into it and the rivalries and the pettiness, and she would just as soon get out. And so that's what she's on her way to doing. So I'm glad you're able to help that become a reality for a lot of people. So I

hope people will check us out at TomWoods.com/Andrew. Set that up. And Andrew, thanks for your time this morning.

HANSEN: Thanks for having me, Tom. It's been fun.