

# Building Your Wealth Through Affiliate Marketing

Transcript and 10 Point  
Checklist

**Kris Jones**

Want to gain as much knowledge as possible out of Marketing Speak? Read on below for a full transcript of this episode, as well as a **10 point checklist** that gives the next, real steps you can take to take your marketing to the next level.

**MARKETING SPEAK** 

HOSTED BY **STEPHAN SPENCER**



**"I believe you really need to think through how to best position yourself or your business for success. Always be aware of how you and how your business make people feel."**

**KRIS JONES**

# 10 STEPS YOU CAN TAKE TODAY

**Want to step up your marketing game? Here are 10 steps that can move you closer to your goals – today.**

- Check out the different affiliate websites and decide what the best options are for your goals- whether that's hard cold cash or some form of points/rewards system.
- Never stop learning about your field-pick up a book or sign up for a conference like Pubcon.
- Grow your website's traffic. Adding paid advertising to your organic traffic is a good tool because you will make more as you gain more visitors.
- Choose affiliates that are in the same general category as your own. For instance, cookware pairs well with a gourmet food company.
- Be confident and meet people in your industry! If you would love to work with someone, don't be afraid to strike up a conversation with them.
- If you aren't feeling 100% confident yet, continue to learn-pick up leading books in your industry and study them.
- Build your brand by how you want people to feel about you and what you do-what do you want people to say about you and your brand?
- If you aren't making a lot of income from affiliate marketing, spread your wings and partner with more networks.
- If your business works, replicate it. Kris sold his business and has now founded several companies.
- Sign up for Passions into Profits to continue learning from Kris and Stephan, and attend the free live bonus event.

# Transcript

S: Before we get started with this episode with Kris Jones on affiliate marketing and online marketing, I want to preface it with a quick announcement. I'm excited to say that Kris and I have formed a company and just this week we are launching our very first product, called Passions into Profits. It's an 8 week online course where we'll be sharing our decades of experience founding, growing, and selling companies. On top of that, we are producing a 3 day live event, an intensive seminar where we will work with you hands-on to develop a roadmap

**“we will work with you  
hands-on to develop a  
roadmap to turn your dream  
into reality.”**

to turn your dream into reality. It's May 13th, 14th, and 15th in Costa Mesa, California. If you care about high performance, about productivity, about turning your mission, passion, or purpose into a viable business-one that's not only wildly profitable but also world-changing, then this course is a must! If you can't make the live event, no problem, we'll send you the recording. And remember, the live event is a free bonus, you just can't go



wrong. To learn more about this advanced training, and to watch our free 4 video beginner's course, please visit [Training.PassionsintoProfits.com](http://Training.PassionsintoProfits.com). Now, without any further ado, here is the episode with Kris Jones.

S: Hey everyone welcome to another episode of Marketing Speak, I'm Stephan Spencer your host and today's guest is Kris Jones. He's a good friend of mine and an awesome internet marketer, he is an expert on affiliate marketing, SEO, Facebook advertising and we're just going to dabble on a few areas, we'll cross multiple disciplines during this interview. Kris is the founder of Pepperjam which no longer exists because it was acquired by eBay Enterprise in 2009. He, during his tenure at Pepperjam, he grew that company to be on the INC 500 List 3 years in a row, which is really impressive. Currently he is running an investment fund called KBJ Capital, he founded an app company called French Girls, it's doing really well. Also a local SEO company, LSEO and he's on the board of multiple companies and different non-profits and so forth, doing amazing stuff, traveling the world, and keeping it real so welcome Kris, thanks for joining us today.

K: Thank you man, I appreciate all the..I appreciate our relationship. We've been friends for at least, I don't know, it feels like a decade or more and you know our paths have crossed not only in the digital marketing space but also in the personal and professional development space, being that both of us have attending so many Tony Robbins events.

S: You know we're both big fans of Tonys', actually for those listeners that are interested in taking their lives to the next level and so forth, this is not going to be the topic of this podcast, this is all about marketing so we're going to be focusing on marketing stuff but as an aside, if you are interested as a listener to attend an event that is going to be just mind blowing, Kris and I are going to be doing an event together, a 3 day seminar in October. So it's October, oh I should know the dates, 8th, 9th or 10th is it? Or 9th, 10th or 11th. That's Friday, Saturday, Sunday and it's going to be awesome. So we're going to cover all sorts of really cool stuff around mindset and growing your business and getting investors and getting acquired and giving back contributing to the world and making a big difference. So it's going to be awesome, make sure to check that out and it'll be in Southern California and Irvine and yeah, so that's just as an aside.

**“affiliate marketing is performance marketing, You actually get paid on the performance of what happens to that traffic. I had a gourmet food website, I thought that a logical extension was cookware so we started to promote cookware. And what I realized was that if I refer the traffic to [cooking.com](http://cooking.com) and someone bought the cookware, I would make a percentage of any of the sales I generated.”**

K: That was not premeditated, that just happened but I'm glad you mentioned it. I'm really excited about being your partner in that event and making sure that those who attend are getting a lot out of that experience.

S: It's going to be very high value. So let's just delve into some of these topic areas around online marketing which you're such an expert on. Let's start with affiliate marketing 'cus not only was Pepperjam a search agency, just internet marketing, but also an SEO firm. You guys were also an affiliate network, which is an interesting combination. So I had a search agency called Netconcepts for many many years but it never dawned on me to start an affiliate network. Tell us more about what it means to be an affiliate network and kind of just give us some of the fundamentals around affiliate marketing and then maybe some advanced concepts.

K: Sure, I mean, so one of the ways I got so actively involved in affiliate marketing was because



I started out as an affiliate. You know, when I think about digital marketing and affiliate marketing in particular I really break it down to traffic generation and traffic monetization. So the more traffic we could drive we could drive into our web or mobile property, and then the more effective or the degree to which which we're effective in monetizing that really determines that arbitrage, which really determines how successful you'll be. So I as I said, I got my start in affiliate marketing, and how that happened was I had launched a gourmet food business with my brother and my role in the company was to take it online and quite honestly try to figure out how to make it all work, and really all elements of it. There were no prior business existing selling this gourmet product, there was just something my grandmother made for us when we were kids. I went online in the late 90s and self educated around traffic generation, in particular. I was looking at, I leveraged Microsoft front page at the time to build the original [Pepperjam.com](http://Pepperjam.com) website, but once I got it up there and I started to obsess about-you know, how to make this work, this idea of traffic generation, more traffic that I could get into the website, the more of the product I'm likely to sell. And what I stumbled upon was that, for every x number of visitors, let's just say I was able to generate ten thousand visitors that came to the site, only a small portion of them would buy the product. Even though that was deemed successful, you start to sell a product no one has heard of and it was great but I felt like wow, 98, 99 percent of the traffic that's coming into this site is, how do I monetize it? How



do I make money from it? And so when you go through that, when you think through that process and you look at the different ways you can make money online, really to monetize web traffic, affiliate marketing was something that really stood out to me. This is 1998, '99 when I first got my exposure to affiliate marketing and really at the most basic level. Let me just say this, affiliate marketing exists because of affiliate network success. The affiliate network is the technology solutions provider. So they provide the reporting, the tracking, typically the payment solution that enable website owners or mobile app owners to partner up with businesses who are willing to pay them on performance bases to refer in typically sales or leads. Just a note that affiliate marketing is performance marketing, meaning that, you just don't get paid typically or traditionally to send the traffic in. You actually get paid on the performance of what happens to that traffic. So if you, in my case, I had a website called [Pepperjam.com](http://Pepperjam.com), we were a gourmet food website, I thought that a logical extension of gourmet food was actually cookware so we started to promote cookware on the site through [cooking.com](http://cooking.com). And what I realized was that, not that I realized this but the structure of the relationship was that if I refer the traffic to [cooking.com](http://cooking.com) and someone bought the cookware, I would make a percentage of any of the sales I generated.

**“So, I’ve had a really kind of unique opportunity to really see behind the scenes of a lot of different information marketing models from some of the top people in the industry, learn how they are doing automation, help them improve their different processes, and funnels, and systems, and really get a good sense of how this space works and how you can really automate it.”**

The first month I did this, I made a resounding, I think it was 37 or 38 dollars. To set the stage, this is 1999, I’m in graduate school studying Psychology at Villanova. I had just gained acceptance into law school and I was just about to start Law school in May I believe of 2000. And what I realized in the affiliate marketing space was that, cookware was just one area to make money and at the time I realized there was about 2000 quote-on-quote affiliate programs. So in other words, businesses that launched affiliate programs on major affiliate networks like Commission Junction or LinkShare. And so my goal, Stephan, was as I was graduating from grad school and was going

to Law school was to build a business around this, build an affiliate business around working with as many of those 2,000 programs that I could do. And my goal was to generate at least 50 dollars profit per program. And I set off on this voyage to build a model around that, we can get into some parts of that but



ultimately that was my exposure to affiliate but really affiliate for me was just a way of monetizing my traffic. I spent a lot of my time learning and self educating about Search Engine Optimization, the early days of per-click marketing. For some of your listeners you might remember the pioneer of that space called [go-to.com](http://go-to.com). So I was buying paid traffic, I was interviewing celebrity chefs to get those chef interviews ranked highly, it wasn’t Google at the time it was more likely AltaVista and Lycos and others and then generate the traffic in. Affiliate just allowed me to make some sense, truly make some sense in my case dollars and hundred dollar bills on monetizing that traffic.

S: Right so one of the most famous affiliate programs of all time is Amazon Associates. Per hour you make like, what is it like 6 percent or something as you refer traffic to Amazon and then people purchase the books and other items. In fact it doesn't have to be that one item you referred to them like-hey, go buy my book. You're the other, I should have mentioned that during your bio intro, that you're a two time author. One is SEO Visual Blueprint and the other book is a local search book local search engine optimization. So if on your website you were driving people to make a purchase, it was an affiliate link through Amazon associates that you get 6 percent or something..

K: Yeah from what I recall, it was up to 8 percent and they liked you to link to a specific product so if they link you to a specific book and that book sold, you'd make higher percentage than if you just linked to the general Amazon page and I think that they were..Amazon to me always seemed like they were ahead of the curve, like they were super sophisticated, made it so plug-n-play. You didn't have to be a full time entrepreneur, you could just be requiring very little technical skill to be able to get set up on Amazon. So yeah Amazon's a good representation. eBay had built something called the eBay Partner Network, which was specific to eBay. Meaning if you wanted to promote eBay auctions and eBay Buy it now, they would give you a percentage of that. And then later as the years went on, I built my affiliate business out. I really built that during my law school years and it wasn't until I graduated law school in 2003 that I actually accumulated, you know, a significant amount of personal wealth from affiliate marketing that I said "Great, to make the kind of money I'm making I'd really love to build a business and help others make money from affiliate marketing and leverage SEO to drive more sales and leads." And that's when I created Pepperjam internet marketing agency, and as you mentioned we were a full service marketing agency but we built an affiliate network that is now eBay Enterprises affiliate network. Just last year they did about a billion dollars in revenue for the advertisers they had on that platform. I had overall about 10 years less of experience, I guess it's more than that 10 to 15 years of experience in the affiliate space. The other thing about it is, it has this reputation that, I don't know if it's good or bad but it's tough to shrug, that affiliates are somehow these men or women in their pajamas working in their basement and by the way, you can do that. You can do that with any marketing business. But for some reason that stereotype has really really been attributed to affiliates. Here's the irony-this small little company called Ebates-it's an affiliate company. They started out, they built a piece of technology that brought cash back. So you sign up on Ebates for free then, I think they'll even pay you to sign up. I think they'll pay you 5 bucks to sign up and then if you shop through any of Ebates' 2 or 3 thousand partners, you get cash back on all those purchases. Again, it's exclusively an affiliate marketing model. Ebates signed up to eBay Enterprise affiliate network, Commission Junction, and LinkShare. Reason that I'm sharing this is that little old company, you know, that certainly does not fill that stereotype of working in your pajamas just sold. It was earlier this year, or late last year that it sold for over 1 billion dollars.

The acquisition was made and you know affiliate marketing is not just something that's to make supplemental income. Like if you look at what I did with it, you know I built it to a core part of Pepperjam and sold it to a trading company. You know, someone like Ebates builds an incredible business and ends up selling it for over a billion dollars. A company called RetailMeNot, which almost everyone has heard of because they rank organically on Google has pretty much anything with the word coupon in it. They were acquired as part of a roll-up and then they went public, literally they're traded on the NASDAQ and last time I checked, their market cap was between a billion and billion and half dollars. I'm sharing that

**“If you're an ecommerce company what percentage of your sales should be coming from affiliate marketing? Usually between ten and fifteen percent”**

because, for your listeners that are like-oh affiliate, you build our websites, microsites, arbitrage web traffic. By the way, I made a couple million dollars doing that which was what I used to fund my digital marketing agency. But there are folks out there that are building these incredible companies, so it's a super viable model if you

want to make money. It's a core marketing channel for any ecommerce company technically when you think about what percentage, if you're an ecommerce company you're listening, what percentage of your sales should be coming from affiliate marketing? The right answer to that is usually between ten and fifteen percent of your overall sales. Back in my Pepperjam days when we had the affiliate network, I saw it as high as 20 percent or more but you know, 10 to 15 percent is a safe bet, and it's a totally viable marketing channel, not only viable but when you think about what marketing strategies you're employing. Actually one thing I wanted to share before I forget, I answer these monthly Q and As for an organization I'm part of called the Young Entrepreneur Council. And the question that was posed for this month, one of the questions, with new platforms like Instagram ads and Pinterest Ads, what is the hot marketing platform of 2015. And I read that question, having been in marketing for 17 years, I thought myself, stupid question or bad question and here's why: Because here's what we're teaching young entrepreneurs and business people who are starting business now or who have just gotten into business that you start with paid media, and you don't, you need to start with earned media. You know you've got to build out, and you know this-I won't go off into a tangent here but the reality is that there's a lot of these new shiny platforms and these platforms are awesome, but it's not where you start. Where you start is on basic education, basic strategy around core areas of marketing. Search engine optimization, affiliate marketing, you know, those type of things...referral marketing. Right so partnership marketing, content marketing, things that you could do and really you should be executing on before you start allocating on all your resources to paid media strategy. Now, I'm a huge fan of paid media but getting back to affiliate marketing. Anything else that'll pop into your mind that you'd love to pick my brain on?

**“we're teaching young entrepreneurs that you start with paid media, and you don't, you need to start with earned media. You've got to build out”**



S: Well so just to recap, there are two sides to affiliate marketing, one is as the merchant if you want revenues coming in from publishers out on the web, bloggers and so forth, driving potential buyers to your site and then getting paid on performance, that's one side to the coin and the other side, if you are a publisher or blogger or general website owner and you want to make additional passive income or monetize your labor of love, your website, this is a great monetization strategy to drive people, drive visitors off of your site into an affiliate relationship where Amazon, or eBay, or some specialty website or whatever that more fits the interest of your audience, they can make purchases and then you can make credit for that, could be in the form of direct deposit into your bank account or gift cards or what have you

**“In the case of eBay if they get 10 percent from Saks 5th Avenue, the refer business, they'll back 5 or 8 percent to one of their members so this business model was brilliant.”**

so it just depends on the affiliate program but if you do it well you can make a lot of money. There are super affiliates out there that make a ton of money and there's that long tale of many many people making almost nothing like how you started with the 37 dollars in your first month. There are plenty of people out there that are making less than that each month off of their affiliate links. What separates the super affiliates from this massively long tale of practically non-income earners?

K: There's one thing that comes to mind, is just business model. So in the case of eBay, their whole premise was, they'll give back a percentage of the commission that they're entitled to for making a referral to another you know, business. In the case of eBay if they get 10 percent from Saks 5th Avenue, the refer business, they'll back 5 or 8 percent to one of their members so this business model was brilliant. And eBay was the only cash back website that has done incredibly well. There are websites like [Fatwallet.com](http://Fatwallet.com), [Upromise.com](http://Upromise.com), and in some cases they've just tweaked their business a little bit. In the case of Upromise, you're actually not earning cash back to pay monthly bills, you're getting cash back to save, it's almost like a tuitions saving program for your kids to go to school, to go to college. And so, I think some part of it is business model and the long tale affiliates, as you have been calling them, may have a blog that gets a modest amount of traffic and an affiliate is one way for them monetize that traffic. But to take it to the next level would be to say this, Okay I have this blog, let's just say it's a blog about healthy living and let's say I get about 5,000 visitors a month which resides into a 37 dollar affiliate check. Well I'm going to put together a business strategy here to drive over time you know 10,000, 25,000, 100,000, a million a month in terms of visitors and your paycheck is going to grow accordingly. Me, my model was, I mean it was referred to as search arbitrage, what that defined is I would use both organic and paid strategies to drive traffic onto my website and that blended traffic volume, if you will, translated into a certain amount of money that I made on however you want to look at it, let's just say a monthly basis.

So I knew, and here was my business model, I knew that if I spent \$5,000 to make \$10,000, well heck if I could come up with \$20,000 you know I could make \$40,000, and if I could make \$40,000 I could come up with X and you know the model I used to speak of this at affiliate conferences back in 2000s, it's a three step model, and really I came through it through affiliate marketing. Number



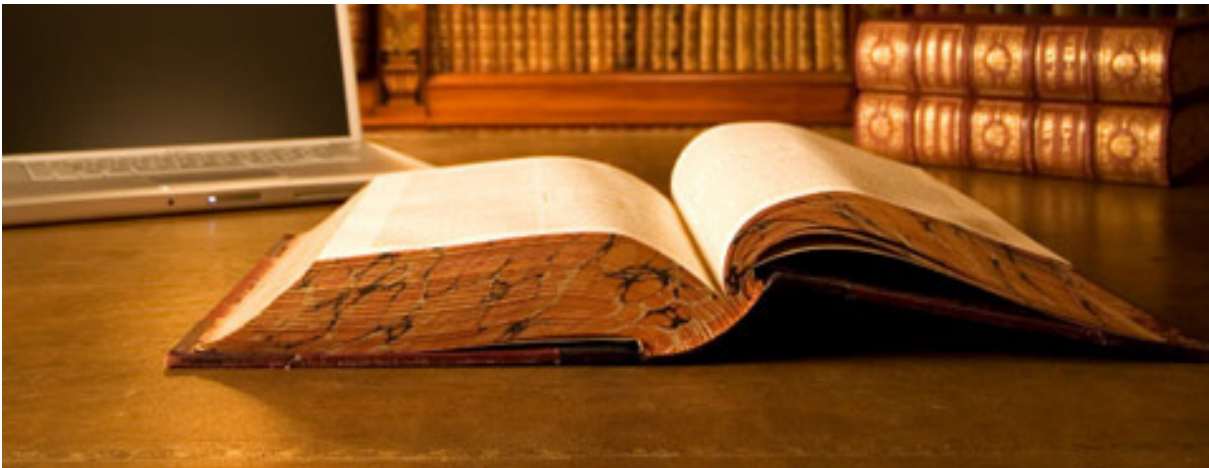
one, find something that works, two, replicate, three, scale it. So from a find that something works, maybe its example I gave where I had a gourmet food site and you're looking for logical extensions of that. So I knew that if I could spend 25 dollars a month and make 37 dollars on food, but if I had cookware and spent a little more on food, with a little more money I could make more profit so I knew it worked. I knew that the idea of buying paid traffic and supplementing that with organic traffic would result in profit and so I said that okay, that works, so I replicated it, so I moved out of it went into cookware, and eventually, where did I move after that, you know, I forget the logical progression of it all but what I realized was that what I was doing could apply to almost any industry, any business. So I replicated what I was doing to other industries to in fact demonstrate the type of proof, to go beyond the proof of concept and go beyond the proof of model and then at that point it was all a matter of quite honestly how much money could I come up with here to grow this business. I'd leverage credit cards, I'd max out credit cards I'd do everything that I had to do to grow that business, so a business model is really what I think the answer to your question, not to just put an affiliate banner up or affiliate link or an affiliate widget and then conclude oh yeah, oh boy I only made 15 dollars this month. It's really blending the whole idea of traffic generation and traffic monetization and putting a business model around that that really makes it lead to the biggest success stories in the affiliate space.

S: Yeah it really is like the principle, the 80/20 rule.

Affiliate marketing is going to be hugely successful to that few, that 20 percent that figured out how to cure business model or unique angle that allows them to just turn on the cash machine, like another super affiliate I know, Greg Davis, he's using Facebook as a primary vehicle, he's buying traffic, tons of traffic from Facebook and driving it to making 10,000, 15,000 dollars a day in affiliate revenue. Impressive.

K: Yeah that's unbelievable, and that is not, it's usually the exception and not the rule. My advice would be to truly go beyond what you're aware of the different marketing strategies that generate traffic. Become an expert, you know, that should really become your outcome. If you become an expert on Facebook Ads as an example, or SEO, you're going to be able to figure out how to scale your affiliate business or whatever other business you have. You know I looked back on that education I gained from that gourmet food business and you know what, I could have been a psychologist, I could've been an attorney, a politician, who knows? Because I went online, obsessed about self-education I felt that it empowered me to become a successful internet marketer, and that's just how it happened. And I imagine that's why people are listening to your podcasts, it's because they're in that process right now of self education, but you know, don't stop, continue to learn, continue to build yourself around models, how to monetize traffic and generally get more traffic.

S: So you're saying, learn from where? Where are your go to sources? Are they books, study courses, seminars, online magazines, blogs, what sort of resources are your go to?



K: For me it's always been, from the search engine standpoint, the Search Engine Watches, Search Engine Lands, Search Engine Journals of the world, I pretty much consumed much of the conference they put out for a long time, but you know attending conferences for me was always really a great investment, thrusting myself into conversation as a thought leader you know was critical to me for self education.

Reading books I remember in the early days, didn't even know they're books but just consuming content from by like Bruce Clay, and who else, Danny Sullivan when he used to run Search Engine Watch. So those sort of things have always been my sort of go to for staying current and podcasts actually and different type of audio and video I will also leverage, I've always loved like Search Engine Journal had each year's Pubcon, of course you know Stephan, but Pubcon is one of the leading digital marketing conferences and each year one of the major online publishers in the digital marketing space called Search Engine Journal and goes to this event to interviews probably 15 to 25 leading thought leaders across marketing channels and I find those interviews, they're usually 3 to ten minute interviews and I've done several myself, you've probably done some yourself. I've always found those to be those little nuggets, you know, when they put us on a stand and within, John Rampton is one of the interviewers as well, you kind of got to get right to the point. What are you using right now to get the most traffic, well I'm using Facebook audience and you know what Facebook audience is so yeah, anything and everything but some of the resources I mentioned are some of the ones I've depended on for years.

S: So if you had to point to a current book, what would be a good starting point for a beginner in a space of search, Facebook, affiliate, what would be that one book or several?

K: I mean on the search side, maybe two of the best books out there is my book, Your Visual Blueprint for Effective Internet Marketing, SEO by Wiley, and the book you put together with Rand and some other guys, what do you call it?

S: Yes, The Art of SEO, it's coming out in it's third edition.

K: The Art of SEO. And those are staples in my collection and what I recommend, I think that Bruce Clay's Dummy book is not the typical dummy book, it's the advanced Dummy book on SEO, I mean it's a huge 500, 600 page book. But yeah, I have copies of that for my team at LSEO and so there are some books on search, you know the affiliate marketing space, they're really unfortunately hasn't been a ton and some of the books I've seen are somewhat gimmicky. You know, they're, I just haven't responded very well to them so I can't name any specific books, but there is a book called, I think Affiliate Management Days or something like that that's put out by a really trusted affiliate marketer who's been doing it for a long time. He runs, coincidentally a conference now called Affiliate Marketing Days, but some of the names in that space that I admire are people like Sean Collins who founded the Affiliate Summit, people like Brooke Schaaf who founded an affiliate company like Schaaf-PartnerCentric and another one is Linda Woods, you can Google these people and there's some good content out there, but yeah my same recipe applies so if you really want to be successful,

you've got to throw yourself into the ring with the goal of eventually becoming a thought leader and trying to learn as much as you can, and networking and building up your skill set so that this stuff becomes automatic.

S: So how does someone start with the process of becoming a thought leader if they're not already a columnist for Forbes, or they don't already have a book under their belt. How do they get to that point? Because you write for Forbes, you write for Fast company, you have 2 books. That's impressive..you know

**“I recall wanting to become one of the people I was looking at up on stage. I've got 3 or 4 years of experience as an affiliate marketer, I know SEO, so in the back of my mind I had that as one of my outcomes. I didn't come right out and say can I speak at one of your conferences but I impressed him enough with my story”**

I have 3 books and I..for somebody that doesn't have that yet, okay well that's you, what about me? How do I get there?

K: Yeah , no I get it. Actually i've become, I feel like I've been talking a lot about myself but I hope not, but I've become a lot better over the years of talking about the tools and strategies that I've used to get to where I've gotten instead of really talking about myself, I'll give you a tool or strategy that I've used. I put myself in the environment where other speakers were. When I think back to one of my first public speaking opportunities, I was at a networking event

in NYC I believe in the early 2000s at a Search Engine Strategy conference and a gentleman by the name of Chris Sherman, who was the Co-Founder of Search Engine Strategies and then went on with Danny Sullivan to co-found Search Engine Land, in the SMX conferences Chris was at a bar, and believe it or not there was only about 30 of us and let's just say the happy hour went from 5-7. I showed up quarter of 5 and there was Chris, and there was just a few of us getting our first drink and you know he asked me about myself, I had no prior relationship with him, he asked me about myself and I told him about Pepperjam and my background in affiliate marketing. And you know, I'll be honest, I recall wanting to eventually become one of the people I was looking at up on stage. I felt like man, I've got 3 or 4 years of experience at this point as an affiliate marketer, I know SEO, I know these things, so in the back of my mind I had that as one of my outcomes, and no, I didn't come right out and say can I speak at one of your conferences but I guess I impressed him enough with my story and you know, all of my self education and he said to me he's like-“Have you ever thought about speaking at a Search Engines Strategies?” I said, “Well you know, I'd be really honored to do that, you know Chris I've never done it” and he said, and I swear to god this is a true story, I think it was 2 weeks later, maybe it was 3, he said,



**“networking, putting myself in the right environment, introducing myself and asking intelligent questions, that would be my recommendation to anyone”**

“Well, what are you doing in 2 weeks?” And he said, “I am the head of content for Search Engine Strategies Toronto and we’d love to have you speak.” And so that’s how it happened, it was more of a networking, putting myself in the right environment, introducing myself and asking questions, intelligent questions I think, that would be my recommendation to anyone. Listening and thinking about good questions and when the opportunity comes to introduce yourself to other speakers, connect with them. Now fast forward to 2015, with LinkedIn and other things, just make yourself known and most importantly, yes networking and having some self-confidence,

those things are great but really what’s going to really make the difference is education. Having experience. I remember someone approaching me, it wasn’t my first, but it was one of his first conferences that he went to as an attendee and he came up to me and asked some pretty solid



questions, we exchanged business cards. I believe that person started a blog, he started to share some of his experiences. He had said to me, you know I would love to eventually speak at one of these conferences. And then Mike Greyhand from Search Engine Strategies and said “Hey Kris, do you know anybody that’s a Google Analytics expert?” And I said, “You know Mike I do, let me introduce them”. And I made the introduction and this guy got his first speaking gig. Now it turns out that this guy, this was 3 years ago, 4 years ago, speaks at each and every one of those conferences. He’s the guy that’s invited to come the day before to do the specialized training in analytics and the rest is history.

That person has now, not only made a name for himself but has that platform. That's the answer to your question of how you get there.

S: So start with going to the conferences, building rapport and relationships with people there you want to become or that you look up to and then work your way up to a leadership position and the thought leadership position as a speaker, there are plenty of conferences that put out calls for speakers all the time and this was just an ongoing opportunity so the sooner you take advantage of it, the sooner you're going to become a thought leader yourself. You mentioned the Affiliate Summer Conference, that's a good one for affiliates, SMX now Search Engine Strategies is called ClickZ Conference, there's Pubcon, which I love Pubcon, it's one of my favorites, for ecommerce there's [shop.org](http://shop.org), there's Internet Retailer, also known as IRCE, there's IRCE Focus which used to be called Internet Retailer Web design, there's a number of opportunities out there. And one of my first books, The Art of SEO came out just putting together a remarkable presentation, I spoke at the first SMX Advanced, my session, couldn't give it up, which were all these super awesome secrets, and I crushed it. I gave some killer tips, some things that nobody never knew, in fact I know that for a fact because I got people to raise their hands if they knew these things. I had figured out some real ninja stuff and nobody would raise their hands to say oh yeah I knew that one, which was awesome and then Rand Fishkin, founder of SeoMoz now called [Moz.com](http://Moz.com), he came up to me the next event later which happened to be SES Toronto in the speaker room and just gave me a hug. I didn't know this guy I just knew who he was but he came and hugged me and I thought, wow, that was interesting and he told me dude, you really brought it at that SMX Advanced and the Give it Up session, that was incredible. You brought it and he just started talking and in that conversation, we decided to do a book together and it didn't start as The Art of SEO, it was going to be the SEO Cookbook, there was a cookbook series with O'Reilly and within 2 days we had our publisher, Danny Sullivan who happened to be at Foo Camp at the moment surrounded by all these big wigs from O'Reilly and he said oh yeah, I'll hook you up. It was not even two days later we had our publisher, and so we had SEO Cookbook and we started working on that and then it ended up O'Reilly asked us to combine forces with The Art of SEO which was not making enough progress at the speed they were going so we joined forces and the rest is history. Now it's a 700 page book.

K: Yeah so that's, I think we both hit at really, the way you do it. When you get the opportunity, you need to make the best of it. That's why I think really taking the time to become an expert in one or more areas, in this case, marketing areas will make you very very valuable to these conferences, and it's not just these conferences, I've and I'm sure you have too Stephan, I've spoken at numbers of universities and I've been invited by business groups and others it seems like success begets success when it comes to public speaking, if you go and deliver well, you go in prepared and you improve over time, you get invited back and then you get speaking opportunities all over the place.

I never would have thought that Chris Sherman answer, I mean I've been speaking before that but in a professional setting that was probably my first opportunity and a lot of the speeches I give are, I do for free. I mean I want to be a part of a small group of people who are having this conversation. But I've been paid numerous times, that's another thing if you really hone your craft and be really good at it overtime, you'll have paid speaking gigs that come out of, in my case, really come out of the blue and they've been really meaningful to my career so..publishing a book doesn't hurt as well and anyone can publish a book these days. It's a ton of work but you know you could self publish and Amazon makes it really easy to do that and that's sort of the trend these days. It's not hey can I get a big publisher on board it's nice to do that because they have marketing arms in place, but just being an author is a huge deal to get public speaking gigs.

S: It is, and to get on to talk shows and onto radio, I'll beg to differ on the self publishing thing. I think as a first time author personally I would recommend getting a publishing house behind you, getting.. just going through the traditional route because there's more credibility like if I was producing a show like Good Morning America, I don't give as much credence to a self published author versus a traditionally published first time author. Which will vary. One thing I think is another distinction for our listeners is if you become a true expert on this field and put in the 10,000 hours as Malcolm Gladwell says in Outliers to become that true expert, you don't have to trade hours for dollars and just be a consultant or just an expert working in a large monolithic company as one of the cogs in the wheel. You could make a ton of money as an affiliate marketer or Facebook marketer or an SEO or Adwords expert or whatever, with your own stuff. I think some of the best SEO's out there make, they work for themselves, not just as a consultant but they're doing SEO on their own websites and making way more money than they would by being a consultant. I think you did that kind of stuff yourself, you made a lot of affiliate revenue, not by teaching others affiliate marketing, although you did do that later, but you made your first several million dollars being an affiliate marketer instead of teaching others then you use that to fund other initiatives, correct? So any last tips? I don't want to keep this too long as far as our interview, any last tips or advice you would want to share about taking it into that level where you are creating a money making machine instead of doing it for somebody else.

K: That's a great, great, great setup there, generally I'm a big brand guy, personal and professional brand so when you're thinking through how you want to make money or when you're thinking through how to improve your business or really how to even get a paid speaking gig, I believe you really need to think through how to best position yourself or your business for success. So my kind of final takeaway would be, always be aware of how you and how your business make people feel. What would someone say about you if you weren't in the room.

What would you want them to say? How does your product or business make people feel? I remember one of the most amazing things about my former company Pepperjam was that there were instances, I've told this story many a times but it's absolutely true, where we would be at a conference where we would meet someone and they would be just overwhelmed with our energy. Very positive, very high energy, very confident energy and I recall, meeting people at conferences and saying we're going to do business together. And by the way, what do you do? So in other words, they wanted to do business with us, it was about our brand it was the way that we carried ourselves, it was the way that I used the word absolute certainty, that is a big part of my personal brand. Who's Kris Jones, here's a person that isn't out chatting, talking talking talking, he's actually doing. When I approach my life, when I am very clear on who I am and where I'm going, and I take really confident action towards that end result. For you, for the listeners, think through what you want someone to say about you and where you come out on that is really your business. And your business, the best businesses of our time are the ones that have created brands that make you feel a certain way. So that's my takeaway.

S: So it's about mindset as much as anything, that unstoppable confidence, that drive and ambition, belief that you will make it, it's just a matter of how and you're going to figure out the hows as you go along so you're in constant motion. Good stuff. Well this has been a fantastic episode, thank you again Kris for joining me and sharing your brilliance, your wisdom with our listeners. I'm going to have you back for future episode, we'll delve into some topics we didn't cover in this episode like local search, local SEO and content marketing and Facebook advertising and stuff, this will be enough for now and I'm also going to have you on my other podcast show, The Optimized Geek and we will talk about some fun transformational stuff on that one so thanks again and thanks for listening everyone and we'll catch you on the next episode.

I hope you enjoyed that episode with Kris Jones. Again, as a reminder, I want to invite you to sign up for the online video-based training program that Kris and I developed, called Passions into Profits. It's at [training.passionsintoprofits.com](http://training.passionsintoprofits.com). And as a bonus, if you sign up for that online training, you will get a ticket to attend the 3 day live event that we are doing in May, on the 13th, 14th, 15th, in Costa Mesa, California. This is a MUST. I really can't encourage you enough to go ahead and sign up for this program. It will change your life, it will change your business. Again, [training.passionsintoprofits.com](http://training.passionsintoprofits.com). I hope to see you there.

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## STEPHAN SPENCER BIO:

**Stephan Spencer** is an internationally recognized SEO expert and bestselling author. He is the co-author of [The Art of SEO](#) (3rd edition - August 2015), author of [Google Power Search](#) and co-author of [Social eCommerce](#), all published by O'Reilly. Stephan founded Netconcepts, an SEO and interactive agency in the 1990's, and sold it to Covario in 2010. He invented a pay-for-performance SEO technology called GravityStream that was also acquired and is now part of Rio SEO. Stephan's recent SEO clients have included such retail giants as Zappos, Sony Store, Quiksilver, Best Buy Canada, Bed Bath & Beyond, and Chanel. Stephan has spoken at countless hundreds of Internet marketing events, including all the major search & e-commerce conferences (SES, SMX, PubCon, Internet Retailer, Shop.org, eTail, etc.). He's been a contributor to the Huffington Post, Multichannel Merchant, Practical Ecommerce, Search Engine Land, DM News and MarketingProfs, to name a few.

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