

## ***Dear Maverick Business Insider,***

Just back from a whirlwind adventure with Sir Richard Branson in Las Vegas and then Toronto.

It started with the RichmondUnite.com charity gala in Richmond, VA put on by Maverick1000 member, Pat Hull. Pat had brought in some of the most innovative minds and business leaders to Richmond for a charity event, including Sir Richard Branson.

I was actually the catalyst for Pat meeting Richard at one of our Necker events and he graciously invited me to come down for the event.

I wasn't sure if I'd go because I literally had to drive down and then drive back home that night to catch a super early flight for Vegas. But in the end I decided it was worth it and I could catch up on sleep on the plane.

During Richmond Unite there was a Q&A with Richard all about Virgin Galactic. Pat Kelly, and I all came out in our "astronaut" jumpsuits. (What you don't see in the pic is how super cool I look because I was totally unaware we'd be wearing these. So I've got on some fancy dress shoes. Note to self: do not wear these when you go up into Space.)



From there I heading off to Vegas for my Master-Mind group meeting and a private Astonishment Architecture™ workshop I led on the first day.

**make more money**

The Astonishment Architecture™ concept is all about this somewhat simple concept in theory but difficult in practice:

***“For any product category or service there is an expected level of satisfaction and value by the end user - our job is to astonish them at each point of contact or interaction - PLUS provide surprise and delight beyond their expectations.”***

We stayed at the Cosmopolitan hotel, the newest hotel on the strip. It's a great property and where we did a little behind-the-scenes field trip of how they astonish their guests.

One of the things I really liked is when I showed up they had actually researched me via social media and found out I was into adventure so I had a little welcome envelope with indoor skydiving and info about the sky jump printed out for me. Smart.

The group got to tour some of the most expensive penthouses and bungalows the Cosmo offers up, and here's the group cuddling up on the couch.



I really like surprises and part of our tour gave us an interesting insider viewpoint on their operations.

One of the most interesting surprises they added to the Cosmopolitan is a “hidden pizza” joint. There are no signs or mention around the other restaurants. It’s literally like you stumbled into an excellent NYC pizza spot.

Sometimes the front desk staff will hint that you should “follow your nose” near the restaurants for something good.

Our guide was Radley Medina, director of Performance Effectiveness, and he told us a couple interesting stories including how for the opening certain guests were surprised with free VIP Jay Z tickets. Now’s that pretty buzz worthy!

For service they are always telling stories to each other on creating incredible guest interactions with the theme of MORE:

- M – Magical
- O – Original
- R - Relevant
- E – Entertaining

One story Radley told us was about a maid who spotted a guest who looked a bit down. When she inquired what was the matter he said his phone was dead and he forgot his charger.

She seized this opportunity to go find a charger for his phone and actually plug it in the wall. That small gesture of actually plugging in his phone for him got a lot of mentions on blogs and social media.

Another thing that really struck me from the field trip was how Radley mentioned every “co-star” (that’s what they call their employees) carries at least one card that can be activated to compensate a guest.

That means anybody has the authority to make a situation right. Obviously there are some checks and balances like he mentioned a \$7500 card that was activated –but upon further investigation it was for a high roller who had lost \$1M the night before.

I think this is really interesting that everybody has the authority to make things right – not just managers or supervisors.

It seemed like there was a really friendly vibe to the hotel, and they’re very big into creating a community. They don’t want you to even feel like a guest in their house but rather part of the Cosmopolitan community.

I think I’ll be staying there again, and I’d suggest you check it out next time you’re in Vegas.

The next day our MasterMind meeting ended early so we could take everyone to Zappos for a little tour and field trip.

Zappos really excels at astonishing their customers so I thought it would be a good spot to take the group.

Here’s part of the group hamming it up with some of the props there –



I had a little surprise for everyone that night too. It was almost spoiled because we saw Tony Hsieh in one of the board rooms at work there. I hadn’t told

anyone but we were meeting Tony out at his place in downtown Vegas off Freemont St.

Now if you can't read, it here's what it says:

After dinner we hustled over to Tony's apartment to meet him. The funny thing is the whole floor of his building had those dry-erase boards like they have in college. He told me the entire floor was of Zappos employees, he essentially built a college dorm!

We headed out to his favorite spot, the Downtown Cocktail Room (shhhh...don't share this). And Tony proceeded to feed me a couple potent herbal shots. I had no idea what was in them but they hit me pretty hard later on – especially after I had a bit of absinthe to follow that up.

We took a little tour of the area with Tony showing me all the projects they were working on to revitalize the area.

His theme is "From Sin City to Sim City". Pretty wild and they have some big plans now that Zappos will be moving their HQ to downtown.

**\* WARRANTY \***

**As time rolls a ceaseless course,  
only the genuine guarantees remain.  
The mountains will persist, the oceans  
are bound to endure and Red Oxx  
will continue to be rugged, reliable  
and tough.**

**To the depths of the Amazon basin to the  
peaks of the Himalayas, Red Oxx  
Manufacturing is infallible.**

**This product is guaranteed forever, be  
sure to include it in your will.**



The last part about including it in your will is awesome! It really hits home with the personality here of how rugged and tough the bags are.

They could have easily written a lifetime guarantee, but it doesn't have the same punch.

## Personality Touch Points

I'm always a big fan of companies showcasing their personality across all different spots.

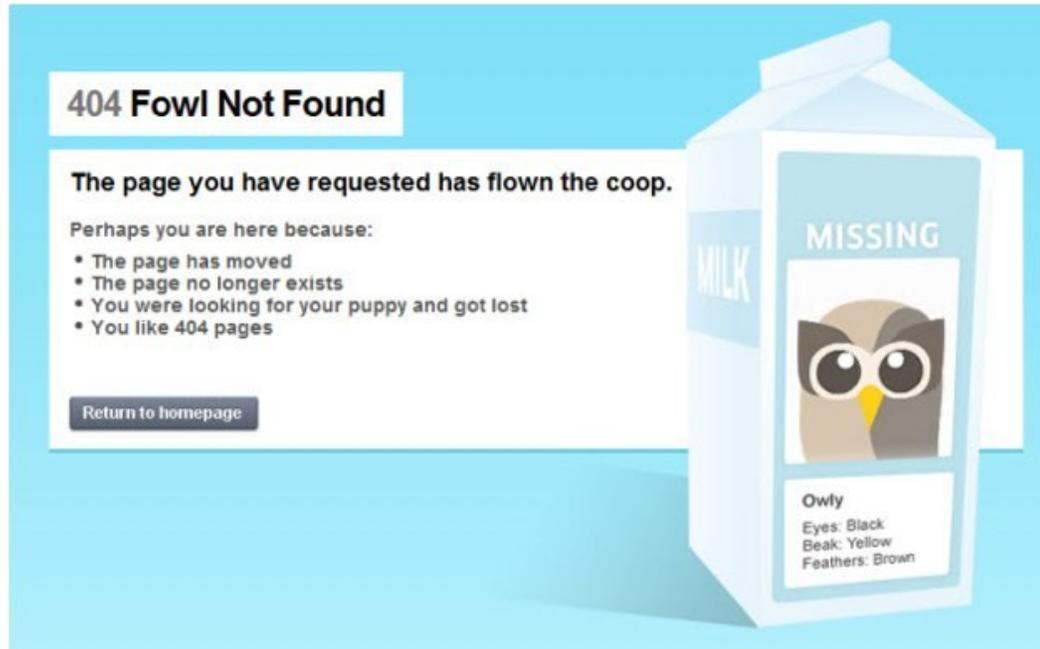
Here's an interesting guarantee from a company that makes travel bags and accessories that doesn't take the familiar "100% guaranteed" or even "100% satisfaction guaranteed" route –

How about a little fun with the packaging of the product itself? These are earBudeez and a pretty darn cute pair of ear buds that any teen would want to get.



Or what about on your 404 page when web visitors type in a wrong URL? A perfect spot to show off your site's personality:

## HootSuite:



## Pay What You Can Model



There's an interesting update to a business model of allowing customers to pay what they can.

There was a restaurant in UT called "One World Everybody Eats" which got a lot of press by essentially allowing customers to pay what they wanted.

It seems that model didn't work, and now you come in and tell the wait staff how much you can pay and an appropriate portion is provided for you. There have been other "pay as you wish" type models, but they never really stuck – though there might be one now.

Panera Bread Foundation opened its first Panera Cares Café about a year ago. In most respects it looks the same as the around 1400 other locations, except that they list donation amounts instead of actual retail prices.

According to Panera, approximately 60% donate the suggested amount, 20% donate more and 20% donate less. The cafe performs at around 80% of retail and generates roughly \$100,000 every month, netting \$3,000 to \$4,000 above costs.

Pretty interesting.

They look at it as a way to train at-risk youth with retail skills and a way of serving the community. The

location is at an interesting mix of affluent and low-income residences. So some people can pay and the others who cannot pay the full price, don't.

So far this experiment is working and cash positive, so they are looking to expand.

Read more here:

[http://www.usatoday.com/money/industries/food/2010-06-27-panera-pay-what-you-wish\\_N.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/money/industries/food/2010-06-27-panera-pay-what-you-wish_N.htm)

Personally, I've used a "pay what you want" approach every once in awhile but tied it into information I've shared and asked for donations for a particular charity.

See ya next month,



Yanik Silver



## Maverick Business INSIDER RECAP

You get privileged access to a network small, distinct group of self-made millionaires who make up **Maverick1000®**.

Quite simply you're looking at true 'Who's Who' of successful entrepreneurs, CEOs and business owners.

More importantly, each member shares a common 'DNA' of wanting to life to the fullest, creating business breakthroughs and giving back through charity and education to empower future Maverick entrepreneurs!

You'll hear their success journey and exact techniques of how they've done it.

But you won't just hear their best moneymaking advice but you'll get their philosophy on creating MORE in your life... **Maverick style.**

You'll find out how to make more money, have more fun in your life and ultimately give back more!

### Maverick 2020 Mission:

- 'Maverick-tize' 1,000,000 entrepreneurs
- Impact 1,000,000 young entrepreneurs
- Have 1,000,000 Cumulative Items Checked Off Members Big Life List

Quite frankly, we're out to change the game of how business is played to help shift the focus beyond just the bottom line and have entrepreneurs create their own fun-filled experiences and maximize what the impact they have in their communities.



## “Revealing the Mysteries of Google - Maverick Style” With Shelby Larson

*September 2011*

**Yanik Silver:** Hey everyone. This is Yanik Silver. I'm really excited to have with us another one of our Maverick1000 members. We're going to be talking about some really up-to-the minute things that you can use in your business right now to go make some more money and of course touching on all of the 3 pillars.

So with me I have Shelby Larsen from Content Divas. I met Shelby, oh gosh I don't know, you and your business partner Heather, we've met for several years now just on and off maybe from the different Internet events and things going on, and I've always heard great things about Content Divas and people that have worked with them on outsourcing a lot of either the SEO things or linking campaigns or article writing and content writing, obviously it's Content Divas.

Shelby, how long have we known each other for?

**Shelby Larson:** I don't even know. So I have to go back two Undergrounds ago. It's got to be two Undergrounds ago, I'd say.

**Yanik:** Ok. So, yeah, I thought it was maybe a little further, maybe not. What I love about Shelby, and then I'll let you give your sort of formal bio.

**Shelby:** Uh oh.

**Yanik:** Here's what sticks out for me. So Shelby as one of the Maverick members you have to share a certain DNA, but she does it in a great way. You're not a drinker.

**Shelby:** No, I don't drink.

**Yanik:** But we have Chris Zavadowski – he's one of the guys who help me here with Maverick Business Insider and helped create it. He organizes at the Underground every year – this has become his little thing, which is the Charity Power Hour, where we decide to drink shots of beer for charity. And everyone puts in \$100 or something to get into the game. Then we continue drinking from there.

So Shelby is all in. She's putting contestant stickers on people, and this year there was like a Peeps... I don't know like these fluffy foam hats that you were giving to people. Weren't you like refereeing part of it?

**Shelby:** I was refereeing. I go around and make everybody feel bad if they don't put in more money. I wait until they get drunk, and then they give more money for charity. I actually bounced a guy this year who got out of control.

**Yanik:** Nice, yeah, so what I just love about it is regardless of whether you are participating in the drinking, which you don't have to and I'm totally cool with that, and we have a bunch of Maverick members that don't do that.

But you are part of the action, and I think that's a key component. We'll talk about that when we get to the 'have more fun' aspect. So give me a little background for the listeners here.

**Shelby:**

Sure. So I've been on the Internet marketing scene for about five years now. I originally started because I was a stay-at-home mom. I have five children, and last year was the first year that we actually put them in public school, so I was home running and business and homeschooling five children for the better part of eight years.

It was quite the overload, and I was like a lot of moms. I just wanted to figure out how to make some money from home because being home with my children was so important to me.

I started freelance writing and a lot of people were asking me to write on Internet marketing related topics. I had no idea what Internet marketing was, so I went to a conference. It was my very first; it's what started it all. It was a Dr. Mike Woo-Ming/Howie Schwartz conference.

My eyes were opened to the world of Internet marketing, and I thought – you know... I'm going to start this company outsourcing moms as writers because I know so many moms who really want to make money from home.

So here it is five years later and 300 people in my company later, and we're a full-scale marketing company and doing consulting and backlinking campaigns. Our strength is really in organic and local search and just really working with entrepreneurs to help them monetize their own businesses. I'm really proud of it.

Even when over the last five years coming into this or we've had maybe the business wasn't doing as well as we wanted it to, we were still putting paychecks into 200-300 homes, which I just felt really good about that. That's always been part of my vision for my company was to be able to provide that.

**Yanik:**

That's pretty huge. I mean 300 outsourcers that you guys contract to, right?

**Shelby:**

Yeah, mostly stateside, right. So we have a team in Sri Lanka and a team in the Philippines that do some of the non-English related things. But 90% of our staff are stateside, and I would say 50% of that stateside staff are stay-at-home moms.

**Yanik:**

Ok. Well, let's dig in since we have a limited amount of time together. Let's talk about one of the topics that you said you've been talking about a lot lately and has been pretty hot. What has changed for 2011 to get some good organic rankings?

**Shelby:**

2011 is a different beast for SEO, and I don't think the changes are done. In fact, I think they are just starting. One of the things that everybody talks about the Panda update. I love the Panda update. That's my favorite thing that happened.

A lot of people don't feel very friendly toward the Panda update, but I do because when Google makes these changes, they're making an effort to provide a better experience for the users, for the searchers. The users and searchers are your market base for your website, and so the Panda update is eliminating competition that isn't real

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competition, right?

So, the really true key to SEO in 2011 is content – good content. Article marketing, for instance, those articles aren't going to get on page 1 of Google anymore. It used to be a beautiful thing. Not only were you providing a backlink to your website, but you could also rank on page 1 for a keyword term that maybe you couldn't rank your website for yet.

But because Google likes diversity, you could get an article on page 1. That part is pretty much eliminated. You're not going to steal any page 1 spots with an article anymore, but the backlinks still count. But now it's easier for your actual site to rank, right?

There is always amazing things happening that people need to take advantage of. One of the things I am just now getting my hands in is the Google authorship. When people hear this interview or read this newsletter, they should definitely Google, "Google authorship" because if you are writing content for your website or having it ghostwritten for you under your name or under your brand, you're definitely going to want to learn about the Google authorship mark up.

What it does is it's an ability, it's a little code you put in your website, and then everything that you publish under that penname gets backlinked back to your author profile page on your website, which is really hot.

Then when you do a search in the search engines, it's going to show your author page with your picture and everything right there on the sidebar and pull up all the associated content that you've also written under that authorship.

So that is a huge, amazing new thing in SEO that a little bit – I feel like it balances the table a little bit and brings some leverage back to true entrepreneurs who really have a presence and a branding and are publishing high quality content on their site or even through other channels.

It brings a way for it to rank on the first page through that, while driving those valuable backlinks to your author profile page on your website. So that is probably the newest thing I'm most excited about is that Google authorship. People should definitely check that out.

**Yanik:** So does that need to be unique content that you put on there? Cause you have your old blog post articles or whatever.

**Shelby:** So that's a good question. As far as going back in and putting it in, I haven't thought that far yet. But the really cool thing that it does is that everybody knows that duplicated content is both a possibility online, sometimes a problem, also a benefit.

When you publish an article or something on your blog, people if they like it will duplicate that and put that in different places. There are oftentimes questions about where that content originated.

But when you get to flag it with your authorship mark up, that eliminates that whole question. Now Google knows who the original source is on that, and you're going to get credit for that when it's re-posted.

So it's a really smart, smart thing that's going to eliminate a lot of the duplicate content issues and where it comes from and who gets credit. That's really a nice new

benefit.

**Yanik:** What else can people apply, I guess tomorrow, that's not going to be a quicksand or shifting sand sort of idea that as soon as we talk about it, you know, one month, two months, three months from now -

**Shelby:** it changes?

**Yanik:** Yeah. That was the only thing. I've never done that much SEO stuff, and maybe I'll talk to you about it at some point. That was my concern with it always is - alright. we're going to do a bunch of work, and then the algorithm is going to change, and then I'll see you later.

**Shelby:** Yeah, right. And a lot of people have that concern. The important thing is when you're doing SEO is to be thinking about long-term traffic and long-term ranking. SEO really and truly hasn't changed all that much from 2009 to 2010 to 2011. It's just shifted - the high quality SEO.

Any of those - hey we discovered this. You can do 1,000 backlinks through this tool. That kind of stuff is going to come and go, work for a while. Google is going to see it, and they're going to put the smack down on it.

When you're doing true SEO and you're actually putting content out there, backlinking it, and social bookmarking it and doing all the proper stuff that you're supposed to do, that never stops working. It's only gotten more effective.

Now with the Panda update, it changed some of your ability to rank independent content off your site, but it didn't change the power of the backlinks to get your site ranked. And what it did is eliminate a whole bunch of competition.

I feel like now more than ever you have an advantage to move in with SEO because a lot of those spammy results with people who knew how to get quick-ranked with black hat methods before that could take up those ranking spots have been pulled out. So it's less room for you with your high quality SEO work to move in. Social signals - Google is really counting social signals now. When someone...

**Yanik:** What does that mean?

**Shelby:** So a social signal is when someone re-tweets something, a link about you, on Twitter or on a fan page, they make a comment about your website or about your blog post. Or someone goes to your blog post, and you have that little "like" button on the post, they can like it or re-tweet it.

Google is counting that. They're including those social signals into their ranking algorithm decisions. So that's huge. One of the best things you can do is go onto your blog and put on those little applications that have the "like" and the "re-tweet this" buttons.

On your site, you can put the little Facebook box that shows different people who have

***"...you're definitely going to want to learn about the Google authorship mark up."***

liked your website and they can easily like it right there. There are some really intelligent things that you can do.

I really predict, if you want my prediction for SEO, I see SEO completely changing to be all about the social game with the ability to have, for instance, things like authorship mark ups that allow you to absolutely claim your original content.

Plus the addition of people liking your content, re-tweeting your content, the +1 (the Google +1 thing) now you'll notice in your search engines. You can give it a little plus saying that you like it and that you think it's a great result for what you were looking for.

Google is really taking into account now what other people think about your website and also to the opposite. So what you'll notice when you do a search online now, under the results, you can have the +1 to say – yes, when I searched for car insurance, this site was really relevant to what I was looking for.

But you can also say – hide this result, meaning when I hit car insurance I don't ever want this result to come up in front of me because it's a crappy website that has nothing to do with what I'm looking for. And that's telling Google – hey this site sucks. It's not about car insurance.

That's going to start affecting ... people now are going to be able to let Google know, yes this site's great or no this site's not. And that's going to affect your place in the rankings, and I think that's very interesting. It's a very interesting shift.

**Yanik:** Have you... well, I don't know if this would be gray or not, but have you seen people doing any sort of incentives around +1 us on Google, and we'll give you this report or... the way like with Facebook fan pages and different things, if you like us – like Baskin Robbins, if you like us we'll give you a free scoop of ice cream. A lot of people do reports and different information as an incentive.

**Shelby:** What I have seen is there's a Contest Burner. I don't know if you've heard of that. Bill McIntosh owns that, and it's a really smart strategy.

What they do is people run a contest for instance if they have a launch or if they have a new website, they'll put it up on Contest Burner, and they'll say ok for however many people you get to click through this link you get so many points and however many people you get to like the campaign, you get so many points.

However many people you get to +1 or whatever, you can make up whatever your requirements are, and then people win prizes based on how many of those things they were able to get accomplished for the website. So I have seen it through things like that.

**Yanik:** Do you recommend that? I mean, do you recommend like sort of manipulating it, I mean quote, unquote?

**Shelby:** Well, I'm not against a little friendly manipulation. I'm definitely on the white hat spectrum. I definitely believe in long-term high quality, but the thing that I liked about Contest Burner is it's all different people coming.

You're not paying a whole bunch of people with IPs in a foreign country, and you're not having the same exact people do everything all the time. It's true decision and choice and people are clicking those links and doing those things.

I don't think that incentivizing things in an intelligent way is necessarily wrong, especially when you're getting things started. But you're going to want to look for long-term strategies that will affect your site positively for a long time. Running a contest and getting thousands of clicks or likes to your website, I don't see how that can negatively impact you.

***“I see SEO completely changing to be all about the social game...”***

**Yanik:** Yeah, people have used contests forever.

**Shelby:** Yeah.

**Yanik:** Ok, anything else we should cover on SEO, or should we move on? You've got so many topics we can talk about.

**Shelby:** I know. So I guess the nuts and bolts of SEO, again, loving social bookmarking. That's never gone away. If you want to know my favorite tool for that is Social Adr – SocialAdr, and that's phenomenal. You should definitely check that out.

**Yanik:** That's SocialAdr, like the cool web 8.0 spelling?

**Shelby:** Yeah, exactly. That's owned by Ben Roy and Ken Miller, who also I'm very close with. That's a phenomenal, phenomenal testing tool. Always high quality content, which you can get a lot of places, preferably from me, but you can get it a lot of places. And healthy backlinking.

The biggest thing I'm also excited about in SEO is local search. So if you have any sort of local business or even if your business isn't local, but you have really competitive high-cost keywords, you should really consider going after those with a local modification.

So meaning, if you're going after car insurance, try car insurance, San Diego and car insurance, Chicago, even if you're a worldwide company because a) you're going to get that market much more quickly.

You'll see if you do the research that there's tons of people that search for things localized, and the way Google works, that rook keyword is getting benefits even though you're adding a geo modifier on it. So you're helping your goal in the long run, while maybe getting some results in ROI on the front end by adding a geographical modifier. So I'm a big fan of local search.

**Yanik:** Yeah, that's a great idea. I love that idea taking it even if you have a national company or an international company but then localizing all that is very smart. Great, any other tools that you guys use or recommend that you think are worth checking out right now or have been especially impactful?

**Shelby:** Let's see... I'm loving SocialAdr. So we've used so much manually actually with our company. We write it all, and we post it all. I don't mind Link Boss if you're doing some little more gray, especially catheter sites. I don't know if I would necessarily link it to your main site, but I'm really liking Link Boss for ranking my subsites and my feeder sites.

Obviously Dori Friend, SEO Nitro, she has a phenomenal domain network that I think is really great for SEO, getting backlinks for relevant websites. And I'm also a huge fan of, for high quality posting, you can do guest content authority.

Almost all of these authority sites accept guest content. If you can get a guest piece put on an authority or celebrity blog or website in your market, that's like server crashing targeted people coming right to your site. That's definitely a great strategy.

**Yanik:** Ok, great. Do you want to talk about... do we talk about linking, or do we talk about outsourcing?

**Shelby:** Let's talk about outsourcing. That's something that I think people are really interested in.

**Yanik:** Yeah, I mean you've got 300 team members that you're keeping track of there. I've talked to a lot of people about outsourcing, and I've done a fair amount of it with mixed success. For me, it's always come down to... I feel like I'm babysitting, or I feel like I don't know exactly what to ask for.

Like, if it's something that's out of my knowledge range, like I was going to get somebody to build me – let's just pick something out of the hat – like an iPhone app or something like that, which I don't know what I want done exactly. But I know kind of, sort of how I want it to look.

So how do I figure out who's got the goods versus who is sort of just going to put some crap together for me? So I've definitely had some mixed bag results, especially the tech-related stuff.

So give us, I guess, some guidelines there for outsourcing and then we'll get into some maybe the nitty gritty or project management stuff or different things.

**Shelby:** Sure, so when it comes to attracting and finding talent, I think that that's always something that people struggle with, especially I think it's more complicated when you're on the coding side of things as opposed to if you're looking for writers or backlinking type of things. I think it's more ... people seem to have a more common problem on the tech side.

**Yanik:** So you guys really just outsource mostly around the writing content pieces, not any of the tech stuff right now?

**Shelby:** Right, so my company runs around organic marketing and writing, etc, but I've had a fair amount of experience outsourcing the tech side for my own company.

I have a company with Ben Roy called Your Local Edge, where all we do is promote local businesses for local consultants. So we have thousands of domains, and that take a lot of coding and upkeep.

We've had to really go through coder after coder to find that out. At one point we had a full team at Content Divas that did website design, and I just decided to take that out of my business because it really is so complicated.

It's interesting. I've found some things that can help minimize your risk of failure and help you get what you're trying to get out of the project, some tips that can really help with that.

When it comes to attracting talent, this is probably going to surprise a lot of people that I'm saying this, but I have found and actually picked this up from Vishen Lakhiani, and I took it to heart and really tested it out and definitely found it to be true.

When I'm looking for talent, my ads whether it's in Odesk or Elance or Craigslist, wherever I'm going to post what I'm looking for, I focus more on what I'm looking for in the person than I do in their tech skills because everybody who applies to make an iPhone app, let's say, is going to have some sort of skill in making iPhone apps.

***“When I’m looking for talent, ..., I focus more on what I’m looking for in the person than I do in their tech skills...”***

So you obviously have to stress that through the interviewing portion, but I've really gone to this is the kind of company, this is the kind of personality we're looking for, this is the environment that we want to work in, these are the hours that we put in, and sort of put out that higher level environment and personality request because what that tends to do is scare off people who maybe aren't at that level.

**Yanik:** Shelby, this is even for short-term kind of projects, like project-by-project basis?

**Shelby:** Absolutely. Yep, project-by-project basis.

**Yanik:** Ok, interesting.

**Shelby:** Yep, absolutely. We were kind of skeptical when we tried it too.

**Yanik:** I like that.

**Shelby:** But it definitely, definitely upped the type of people that we were interviewing because what it did is it scared off the people that weren't at that level and then the people that were at the high level and were sick of doing things that weren't as exciting really stepped up and wanted to apply for those jobs.

We ended up with a little bit of a refiner's fire. So obviously in the interviewing process we still had to see where their level was at technically speaking, etc, but I won't ever advertise for outsourcers any other way in the future. It's definitely changed the type of people for the pool that I get to choose from.

**Yanik:** Do you have an ad handy that you could pull up as we're talking so we can have you read part of it?

**Shelby:** No, I don't, but you know what? That's something I could get to you. This is going to be written, right?

**Yanik:** Yeah, we'll have a transcript, so that would be great.

**Shelby:** And you know it's kind of interesting when I hired my executive assistant – the same thing. I didn't really put much about the job description at all.

One of my things was I want someone who rocks, someone who can consistently work inconsistent hours, where you know we just talked a lot about my vision and what my company stood for.

People that I got to interview were just phenomenal people. Then once I got those people in front of me, I was able to assess what their actual skill level was. My executive assistant is just my best hire I've ever made. It's just a really neat way to do things.

**Yanik:** Do they work in house or is that a virtual thing too?

**Shelby:** My entire company works from home. So I would say my executive assistant is more in house. She doesn't work for anybody else because we keep her so busy, but the entire rest of my staff, a lot of them work only for us because they choose to, but they don't have to.

They outsource and have their own other clients. So a lot of people end up not taking other clients anymore because they really enjoy the work that they get and that they do for our company and things like that.

**Yanik:** What's the culture that you put out there in your ads and so forth? What kind of stuff is really big that would really resonate with people? I mean, obviously it's different for every company, right? They have to figure out what their culture is individually.

**Shelby:** Absolutely. So for me, I like high energy. I like motivated people. I like people who love what they do. We talk a lot about we have a team – we attract the highest and best talent. They are the best at what they do. They love what they do.

We like to build our team from people who love what they're doing. They can own it. We talk a lot about how we work collectively like that. That tends to attract people who are more independent thinkers and want to be part of a team that's more high energy and goal oriented and motivated, instead of just I want to get this job done and move on to the next paycheck.

They might have the same skillset as the person with the mindset that this is a job and I want to get on to the next paycheck, but they're going to be more personally invested in it. They enjoy what they're doing. They feel like they're part of a bigger puzzle, and we've gotten better results that way. The mindset makes a difference.

**Yanik:** Cool. So let's take our scenario of maybe... I don't know... let's forget the iPhone app thing, but let's say we're hiring for an SEO consultant. Of course I would recommend that people check out ContentDivas.com first.

**Shelby:** Thank you.

**Yanik:** Let's say that they're ... maybe they want somebody that is going to work for them...

**Shelby:** They want somebody in house.

**Yanik:** Yeah, right. I mean there's probably a million reasons. What do we do? Do we post stuff up on Odesk or Elance or somewhere like that?

**Shelby:** So I always start off... my suggestion is always start off with your immediate sphere of individuals. So before I would ever go to Odesk, I would ask people that have businesses and business models that I respect who they use because oftentimes they'll

have very good suggestions.

Sometimes what's just as valuable is them saying don't use x, y or z or don't use so and so. The negative referrals can be just as time and money saving as the positive referrals. So I always start with my immediate sphere of influence.

Then if I'm not drawing from that and I am actually going the ad route, one of the most important things... the biggest thing when hiring outsourcers is people have in their mind they know what they want or maybe they don't.

Maybe, for instance, using the example of SEO... understanding SEO isn't the highest and best use of their time, so they want somebody that that is the highest and best use of their time. They will use SEO, but they don't necessarily know how SEO is supposed to work, so you can't trust yourself to quality control it, right?

**Yanik:** Right.

**Shelby:** So that's a little bit scary. You can't quality control. I can't quality control a website or a software being coded out for me because I don't understand the language that they're coding in, right? So I can't quality control that, so it's a little bit more of a scary element.

The things that I like to do is getting what's in your head onto your outsourcer's plate accurately is very challenging because you may not even know how to present what exactly you're wanting. Especially working with tech people – they think completely differently than you do.

What I am a huge proponent of is creating customer stories so the end user – what sort of thing is this supposed to be? What's the end user supposed to be? What's the behind the scenes staff experience supposed to be? Creating those customer stories really helps.

**Yanik:** Is that a written thing that goes to the outsourcer?

**Shelby:** I think they're called user experiences technically. So it's where for instance if I were having software built, I would say when someone new comes to the site who is not a member – what's their experience supposed to be?

If someone is a member at level A, what's their experience supposed to be? Member B or my staff and support on the backend – what's their experience supposed to be? So this helps the coder understand – ok these are all the different components that have to be built into this piece of software, right?

Same with the SEO world... you want to understand what are you trying to accomplish with your website? Start with the end in mind. What are your goals because if you're branding your website, you have a brand new website and ranking isn't as im-

***“I won't ever advertise for outsourcers any other way in the future. It's definitely changed the type of people for the pool that I get to choose from.”***

portant as branding right now. The type of SEO you do might be different than if you're an already established company and you just really need to dominate over an aggressive competitor, right?

So when I'm looking at SEO for a site, I'm looking at what are their end goals? What's the most important thing short-term? And then what's the ultimate long-term goal? What's the budget, and then maybe that will determine what steps we take as far as SEO because you can accomplish different things.

So I'm really big on communicating what the end goal is and also creating milestones along the way. The worst thing that can happen is for you to realize that your out-sourcers are not on the same page with you at the end of the project.

**Yanik:** I agree.

**Shelby:** You've already gotten a month into it. You've already got a full budget into it and no time to course correct, right? So creating milestones along the way and check-in points, not only does it safeguard you, but it provides an opportunity for your out-sourcers to feel good and celebrate along the way as they accomplish these chunks instead of these big overwhelming projects. Breaking it down into milestones, I feel, is super important.

**Yanik:** Who creates those milestones? You or the outsourcer?

**Shelby:** I would say that you create the milestones. Unless, the exception would be if I was walking into a software, which I've recently gotten into the world of building software, then that might be something where I would work with the outsourcer because they're going to know the coding steps that I don't.

That's why sometimes you're going to have to be able to collaborate with them and work with them to create those. Sometimes if you know a little bit of the project, you can create it a little bit in advance, but I would definitely never outsource again without having milestones set up to safeguard myself, to increase the success of the out-sourcer and just make it a better project overall.

**Yanik:** What do you recommend for, like, a project management software or just keeping milestones or anything like that?

**Shelby:** So I really love Basecamp. There is a ton, a ton, of different project management platforms out there now. I've been using Basecamp now for, I don't know, four or five years. They have a brilliant marketing strategy because at this point even if I found a platform that was better, I've got so many thousands of documents uploaded in Basecamp that I'll be paying them a monthly fee for the rest of my life because it would be so much work to pull all of that documentation down and transfer it. So they have a brilliant model.

But there's a lot of different ones. There's one called Teamwork that we've been trying out right now in a different company project that we're doing, but I've been using Basecamp for years.

Also, frankly Google docs is pretty phenomenal. I've kind of created my own internal system using Google docs that I work with my internal staff on, from everything from time keeping to tracking content management to updating where our projects are at. I'm really a huge fan of Google docs.

**Yanik:** So how does that work in tandem with Basecamp?

**Shelby:** So with Basecamp – what I like about Basecamp is when our clients come on they can have their own tickets. Anything associated with their project that they have running through our company including all the hands that ever touch it, whether it's the backlinking team or a video team or writers and editors and virtual assistants. They can all communicate in one place, upload every document in one place.

The other thing I like about the communication chain is if you post a message, it routes to the email of everyone that's on that message, and you can just respond to that email and then it goes to email, but then it also posts in Basecamp.

So you never have to do that thing where you're digging through your inbox trying to find that one email that had those instructions and that document attached to it. You know what I mean? You never have to play that game because it's always on the ticket in one place, which if you're doing complicated organic marketing campaign over several months, there can be a lot of moving pieces in that. And so I really am a fan of Basecamp.

**Yanik:** But you can keep documents inside Basecamp, and maybe I'm getting too technical on here, but we also started with this. We have Basecamp and we're looking at some other project management stuff, and we also try and use Google docs, but I don't think we're optimizing either one of them. Since documents can live inside Basecamp, why would you also have Google docs, or how would you balance the two?

**Shelby:** That's a good question because we've used Basecamp for years and years and years. We've moved to using Google docs for some projects because it makes sense.

The thing I liked about Google docs is I could give all 200 writers access to a spreadsheet. I can put a project on there. They could just put their name on them, grab them, and then upload the Google doc and put the link on the spreadsheet.

And so then on one spreadsheet, I could have 200 links that open live to live documents. I like that aspect. I like the convenience. I don't have to download in between.

**Yanik:** Got it.

**Shelby:** So we still have the main base of operation out of Basecamp, but there are some conveniences with Google docs. That being said, I guess if you're thinking security-minded, probably things are less secure on Google docs than they would be inside Basecamp.

**Yanik:** Ok. Got it. So as we're outsourcing, do you think we need some sort of project management software or tool? Is that helpful?

***“So I’m really big on communicating what the end goal is and also creating milestones along the way.”***

**Shelby:** So any outsourcing, no matter how big or how small, needs to be project managed. I think one of the biggest mistakes that people make, and this is something I've been saying for years, people think of outsourcing as the silver bullet that's going to skyrocket their success to the moon, and it will.

Successfully outsourcing completely changes your scalability, I mean, 100%. But when you first start outsourcing, it is an expense. It's an expense of your time, and it's an expense of your money. It's your job as a business owner to turn that expense into a long-term asset. It doesn't happen overnight, and it doesn't happen instantly.

I hate to be the bearer of bad news with people who are like, "I'm going to go on Odesk. I'm going to get a great person. I'm going to give them my project specs, and then I'm going to have million dollar software running with clients walking through."

I wish that were the case, but the truth is, you're going to go on Odesk; you're probably going to go through a couple of people before you find the one that really works. And you have to put the time into teaching them how to work for you, how to work for your project.

You have to be able to manage that, and then what you're doing, if you're doing it properly, is you're creating a resource that you can return to long-term that knows how you operate, that knows the type of work you're looking for.

You're familiar with them, and once that long-term relationship is established, then that turns into an asset for you because then you can turn on projects, bring that person in. It gets them fairly on autopilot and things get moving and you create a system. But that's the whole point – you have to create that.

Whether you need a software like Basecamp depends on how many moving pieces you have to track. There's always a piece of project management that has to be in place, whether it's through Google docs and email or through something like Basecamp.

That's really where the golden ... that's the golden arrow. When you can successfully turn the expense of outsourcing into a long-term asset for yourself, that's when you're in the sweet spot that people dream about being for their business.

**Yanik:** Yeah, that's great. What things do you think people should look at for outsourcing first or second or third, just proactively what you think they should be considering?

**Shelby:** Yeah, so the first thing I tell people to do is to make a list of the things that they need done, just period what they need done. And then they need to look at what their budget is, right?

Ok so some people don't think about making a business plan, but I really suggest people make a business plan. There's a reason why financial institutions in a traditional brick and mortar business require you to have a business plan. People with business plans tend to fail less, right?

So I'm not saying you have to have a professional business plan, but you should have an idea of something. If you're going to outsource pieces, you need to have a budget for that. You need to know how much you're going to spend, how much time you're willing to put into it.

Once you kind of realize what your outsourcing budget is, then you look at that budget

weighed against your list. And you say – ok what are the things that I'll take on this time because I don't have the money to fund outsourcing 100%.

And then pick the things out of your strengths. If you do not love to write, do not take on writing. If you do not know how to build a website, don't take that piece on.

Embrace your strengths because many of us, and I'm no exception, if I don't love to do it or it's not a strength, chance are I'm going to be worse than any outsourcer I'd ever hire and I'm not going to fire myself.

I could bottleneck my whole project, so look at your own strengths. Take on what you're willing to take on. And then what you do outsource, work within your budget. If you can only afford to do phase 1 and 2 at a smaller scale, do it. And then move on from that with a different budget, but you have to do your list to get all that.

I think a lot of people don't look at their project holistically and look at their resources. Included in their resources would be their personal time or what money they have to put in.

And then the third thing that I would look at if you're really trying to get something out the door, and you don't quite have the budget or the personal time to make it happen like you need to but you know it's going to be a successful project, I say look at bringing on some partners.

You know, look at a partner that you might really trust that you might want to share the project with that has some additional resources in time, talent or budget that could help get that done. So that's sort of my three phase way of looking at it.

**Yanik:** Ok, awesome. Should we move on to the two other pillars here?

**Shelby:** Sure, my favorite part.

**Yanik:** Yeah, so let's talk about a lifestyle – an entrepreneurial lifestyle. You know we talk about it for shorthand more fun, but it doesn't have to be around that part. It can be... I always look at lifestyle from a business standpoint because we are the creators of our own world, and sometimes our life only revolves around the small, minute time that we make available to it when we're not working.

So tell me about... you've got 5 kids. You've got a pretty full life over there. You used to home school the kids while running a fast grown home business. Talk about lifestyle and the ways that you create unique fun or experiences for yourself or people there.

**Shelby:** Yeah so it's interesting because I've had a really... as we've grown in success in this Internet marketing world, I'm probably not your standard. I don't think that most

***“Successfully outsourcing completely changes your scalability, I mean, 100%.”***

people in our market have 5 kids and are home schooling.

I'm a little bit different, and so a lot of times what people paint as the ideal lifestyle wouldn't be my ideal lifestyle. But that's kind of the whole point of being an entrepreneur is being able to live our own version of our ideal lifestyle.

When I first joined the Mavericks, for instance, I was really nervous that ... "oh man these people aren't going to want me around because I maybe can't run off on all the trips because I've got to be here for my kids and they're too young and it's not that time or whatever".

I couldn't have been more wrong. They have completely embraced me. I can't believe the phenomenal people that I'm getting exposed to all the time. For me the freedom and the ideal lifestyle has just enabled me to make decisions based around what I want for myself and my family instead of what has to be done in order to get to the next paycheck or get to the next phase in life, right?

And so for me I really love travelling. We don't have two cars because we don't need two cars, but I want to travel, right? I want to go... I'm going to Malaysia next week. I'm on two week notice. I'm leaving, and I'm going to Malaysia for two weeks. I'm part on a business trip, part on a vacation. That's something that could never have happened if it wasn't for my business.

So my dream has a lot to do with travel. My children... Yanik, it's very disappointing. I am a gypsy, and my ideal world I would not own a house and I would live in a different country every month. My children revolt. They want to be home. They want to have school. I don't know why I don't have gypsy children. It's very disappointing. Logical, logical children.

You change your lifestyle based on what your family wants, but that's just been so great to be able to live a life where I have these experiences that I want but I'm also providing the ideal life my children want and being able to successfully balance that and blend that – it's not easy. It's been a really fun journey learning how to do that.

**Yanik:** What would you tell somebody who feels like things are kind of out of whack, or maybe they feel like they're working too much and not seeing the results that they want? They hear about lifestyle and all the different things that they should be doing or maybe they shouldn't be doing. What would resonate with you if you were going back to talk to yourself before things were figured out?

**Shelby:** The biggest thing that I would do, and this... you know you hear this all the time, and you really can't take it too lightly. The biggest thing I would do is take action.

I feel like people get paralyzed by not being able to move forward because they don't know every little piece, or they don't know how they're going to do this or how they're going to do that.

And you know well I just talked about having a business plan. You absolutely need to know what you want. If it gets to a point where you have to dive in and figure it out on the way down, and that's been my experience – diving in and figuring it out on the way down.

Exposing yourself to the opportunities and the people who are going to be part of your journey and success. If I hadn't just dove in, I wouldn't have met the Mavericks. I wouldn't have met all these phenomenal people that have influenced my decisions

and my business and my life in general.

You have to expose yourself to those things. They don't just generally fall in your lap, but if you put yourself in a position to be exposed to those people and those experiences, then your pool of resources and life expands. And so you have opportunities now that you didn't have before just because you didn't have any access to it, right?

My husband is a big video gamer and he talks about unlocking levels. When you unlock levels then all of a sudden then you are really a geek. But it's true! I feel like every time I'm going to these conferences, or I'm choosing to do a business adventure, success or failure aside, I've now unlocked a new level.

***"I feel like every time I'm going to these conferences, or I'm choosing to do a business adventure, success or failure aside, I've now unlocked a new level."***

I'm smarter and wiser and have access to new people and new, exciting tools and ideas and just expanding that world around me has been the most valuable thing I could tell people to do is jump. Jump in and expose yourself to those things.

**Yanik:** I like that. I like saying yes instead of figuring out reasons why you're going to wait or not do it. Unlocking the levels – I think that's pretty cool. I totally surround myself with entrepreneurs. I love entrepreneurship to its core.

That's why everything I do with Maverick from working with startups to working with growth companies to companies and business owners in their legacy phase, I just love it because it also exposes me like you said.

I mean, I get the benefit of creating me being the connection point, and then that exposes me to even more things where it becomes the norm to go I have friends that go travel off for a couple months at a time or went off for a year around the world, took their kids and homeschooled them.

Those are, like, normal things. It's not like I look at them and go – oh my gosh how the hell did you do that?

**Shelby:** Right. (laughs)

**Yanik:** It's like you said. It unlocks those levels, so the more people that can expose themselves to that, that's great.

Alright, let's talk about impact, the last pillar, and the ways that we can either create impact within our business, within our community, within the world at large. What's your take on that? What's your philosophy?

**Shelby:** Right so, again, I think that most good people have visions of how they can give back to the world or improve their world. Most people that I encounter, and I'm no exception, they have these big, huge things in mind, these things that would make such a big difference.

And what I realized along the way is that Rome wasn't built over night and neither was improving your world. So for me, trading a company that offered stay-at-home moms income from home made a big impact.

I get letters from people who say, my husband lost his job. We would have lost our house. I don't know what we would have done if I didn't have this job. I need to be home with my kids.

Or heaven forbid - we had one woman who worked for us whose husband passed away from cancer. And, you know, she was able to go through that better because she had an income that she could do at home while she was taking care of her husband and going through that hardship.

And so for me, just looking right from the beginning, and I really believe that this is part of the reason why my business has been blessed. I've had right from the beginning ways to make life better in mind as part of my vision.

It's never been only about financial gain. It's never been only about what opportunities would open up in my life or my children's lives. I try to think what can we do that will make other people's lives better too, right? So that's for me.

I would tell people start small. Look for that small impact because they lead to big things. If you can build your success on things that make a difference, then when your success is higher your ability to make a difference is going to be higher, right?

So you can grow together, and you don't have to wait until you're in that position to do that big donation to that hospital or that big donation to Branson's child charity in Africa. You can build your contribution along the way as you build your business, which I think is a good way to do it.

**Yanik:** That's great. Yeah, I love that. I think looking for small ways within your business that can make that impact. Do you have a quick example of how you've done that with the moms, or is it simply just giving them that opportunity to create that work at home income, or is it more than that?

**Shelby:** Absolutely. So a large portion, obviously, has been giving them a way to create work at home income, and that's affected their children because it's enabled them to have their moms home with them.

But the other thing that's been a really big impact through working with moms has been watching entrepreneurship spread down to the youth. So my husband is a scout leader. He works with the boy scouts. In fact he just got back from a big 50 mile tramp up in the peninsula for a week.

They have an entrepreneurship badge. I volunteered to teach the entrepreneurship badge so that these scouts who are motivated individuals can start thinking outside of the box. They're our future right there. They're moving into the future for us. They're our youth.

I know Mavericks are too and you're personally very passionate about young entrepreneurship. I've really seen that by educating parents that can spread down to the youth.

So many people go into high school or graduate from high school brilliant - they're not inside the box thinkers, and they suffer because of that. They don't even know that

there's another piece to their world because they've never been exposed to that, right? It goes back to that exposure.

So I've really enjoyed watching that trickle down to the younger generation who can move forward with that.

**Yanik:** That's perfect. I love that. You kind of never know. I mean that's one of our core DNAs is that ripple effect. You never know what's going to happen. I was actually talking to – do you know Robert Hirsch?

**Shelby:** I don't know if I know Robert Hirsch.

**Yanik:** Robert's one of our members out of Colorado. He works a lot with Mike Dillard and Tim Schmidt.

**Shelby:** Oh, ok.

**Yanik:** So Robert met... so he's in Colorado and one of our other members, Cynthia and Frank Goldsmith, they found us through actually young entrepreneurship – an event that we did in Aspen where their son was like a superstar. He was 13 at the time, or maybe even 12. Talk about ripple effect.

What happened was the boy, Garrett, then got a scholarship to come to Underground, and he was with us I think the last year, if not two years. Then Robert took him on as a mentorship role, and it's just been incredible with that ripple effect that I would have never predicted or could even imagine how it would happen.

Hey, the ripple effect that Cynthia and Frank became part of the group and what happened to their business and then from their son becoming mentored by someone who is a very successful business owner and sold several companies - just really, really high caliber.

They wouldn't have met without having this little platform. It's just cool to see that kind of stuff. The same way that you're saying giving the kids of the moms that work for you that glimpse into unlocking the level again, right?

**Shelby:** Exactly. It's all about, for me, the entire ripple effect when it comes to all three pillars – being successful, having fun, and giving back. It all has to do with your level of exposure.

It's scary and vulnerable to put yourself out there. It's nerve wracking, especially if you think you don't know as much as you need to know. But in all aspects once you expose yourself, you don't know that sushi exists, how are you going to taste it and experience it? And then your world is different now, right?

So it's the same thing in all three of those aspects. Once you expose yourself to those different things, you see opportunities not only for yourself to be successful but also

***“You can build your contribution along the way as you build your business, which I think is a good way to do it.”***

where you can maybe make a difference. And you become passionate about certain things.

I've known people who have used their business to sell products to just take the proceeds of that and donate to a family that's having a hard time. I mean you see needs that you can fill and becoming the type of person where you not only recognize needs, but you search for a way to fulfill that is an amazing growth experience too.

Just being able to not only recognize it but be able to do something about that or orchestrate something that can be done about that is just a really neat experience.

**Yanik:** Awesome. Yeah, no that's great. Alright, Shelby, so people can check you out and your services at ContentDivas.com. Any other place that you want to send them or tell them a little bit more about the scope of what you guys do?

**Shelby:** ContentDivas.com, definitely, drop us a line. We do organic marketing campaigns. We get your website ranked. We also do – I do a fair amount of consulting, business consulting, so if they need someone to just kind of come in, look at their marketing strategies, help them make a new marketing strategy, we do a lot of that. That's usually one-on-one with me.

And then for local people - you're local edge is where it's at. That's my current project of passion. I am so in love with the idea of people starting their own businesses and entrepreneurship, and I think that the average brick and mortar business needs to know how to monetize their online arm even to survive.

It's been a project of passion for me to really work with local businesses and keeping them competitive online, so that they can keep their business in the family that they've been doing. That's where I'm just really loving working right now.

**Yanik:** And you've been helping other people help local businesses, right?

**Shelby:** Yeah, so people who are SEO consultants, we have fulfillment for them so that they can get the clients. And then we do the work to rank those businesses and work with their Google places pages and all of that.

Everything that's associated with local business has my current favorite thing to do. You know it means a lot to that salon owner, that pizza place, or that insurance. It means a lot to them to even get one lead through their website that turns into a paying customer. It's so fulfilling, and they're so excited.

Online we're like oh we only got five sales today, right? But to the pizza guy down the street who has 5 new customers that come to his store, he's ecstatic. It's really exciting for him.

That's been fun to be part of that excitement that comes with real world business that happens to also have an online presence as opposed to a business that's only an online presence has been... I really, really like that. So yeah, Content Divas, you can find us. If you're localized you can find us.

**Yanik:** Ok, perfect. Well, Shelby, thank you so much. I really appreciate it. Some great info, and I hope people got a tremendous amount out of it. I really liked it. I love the unlocking new levels kind of thing. That's a great analogy for us. Perfect. I will talk to you soon.