

John McIntyre:

It's John McIntyre here, the Autoresponder Guy . I'm here with John Sonmez. He's got a great name but what we're talking about today is marketing, as usual. And in this case, it's actually how to market yourself as a developer for all the developers listening to this podcast which I don't think there's gonna be too many, to be honest. So where this gets interesting is that, you know, I've done a lot of freelance copywriting in the past and I've been doing a lot of that these days as well with a team. And what John does is he does similar stuff in the sense that he's teaching developers how to market themselves as a developer, how to get clients as a developer. And so it's not how to be a developer, now how to learn how to write code or what coding languages you should learn. For example, you mentioned something when we're just chatting of that Judge Judy, a normal judge. Judge Judy apparently earns, you know, something like \$47 million a year. And the normal judge probably earns, you know, he's lucky to earn a couple hundred grand. So we've got a huge disparity there. The question is, why? So the episode today is we're gonna chat about what he does to teach these developers because I think it's really applicable to, number one, any copywriter or, you know, it could be a newbie copywriter or someone who's been in the game longer. This can be really, really useful to you if you're trying to get more clients because you're gonna get an idea of what you can do to position yourself and market yourself. And also, too, if you already have an established business and you're not really a freelancer but you're a, you know, you think to yourself you're an entrepreneur. You're a business owner. I really think John's gonna have some great stuff to share on how to position yourself as, once again, as the Judge Judy of your industry. So and you can make a lot more money doing it that way. So we'll get into that in just a minute.

John, how you doing, man?

John Sonmez:

I'm doing good. How are you?

John McIntyre:

Good, man. Good to have you on the show and good name, by the way.

John Sonmez:

Oh, thank you. I'll take credit for it. **[Crosstalk 00:01:39]**. That's right.

John McIntyre:

[Crosstalk 00:01:39], that way, yeah. For sure. For sure. So before we get into this developer marketing stuff, can you give the listener a background, a bit more of a background on who you are, what you do, what your background is and what you're all about.

John Sonmez:

Sure. So I've been a software developer probably for about, I don't know, like 15 years before I even got into any of this. So I've worked in all kinds of different kinds of programming languages, you know, developing IOS apps, Android apps, **[inaudible 00:02:04]** all the kind of stuff. And I was just the kind of a regular career developer until I discovered, I created a blog and I discovered that I was

suddenly getting all these crazy opportunities just because people started to know who I was. And so I ended up getting a lot of opportunities to be able to go out and do training for developers and earn royalties from doing video training. And as I was doing that I started to realize that there's all these software developers that had no idea how to market themselves. They had no idea about what marketing was and I saw how valuable it was for my career. It took my income up to five X what I was making as a, you know, as a senior software engineer. And I said, well, you know, I could probably help a lot of other developers and I could kinda shortcut them as to be able to do what I'm doing. So what I ended up doing was, you know, through my blog, through simpleprogrammer.com, I now teach developers, among other things, what we probably call soft skills. So you could think of me as sort of like the Tony Robins for software developers.

John McIntyre: Yeah.

John Sonmez: Or, you know, life coach for software developers. And one of the main things I teach them is how to get out there and market themselves so that they can build a name for themselves, a reputation, some kind of authority in the area of software development or in some area there, some specialty because of how valuable that is.

John McIntyre: I like it. I like it. Very good summary there.

John Sonmez: Thank you.

John McIntyre: I like your Tony Robins thing, man. I'm a big Tony Robins fan so I'm curious if you do a lot of the mind set stuff where you're pumping people up and motivating them and all that stuff?

John Sonmez: I do. I try to, you know. It's kinda funny. When I go to, like, a code camp, a developer conference and, you know, when I give a talk, I'll be the guy that's like, I'll take the mic. I always ask like, can I walk with this microphone? You know, whenever I do a conference, because I'll be out there in the audience, you know, just the loudest guy there because I get so much energy. I like to pump people up and make them excited because it gets kinda boring sitting there looking at code and all those stuff. And so I kinda bring some energy to it.

John McIntyre: Yeah, I'm curious if they would get a little bit scared sometimes in the sense that the developers sitting inside like, you know, I guess the stereotype, which isn't necessarily true but sitting in like a dark little room, you know, with three cans of Redbull next to you and, you know, just coding away with some trans music going. And, you know, then you go to a talk where a guy like you is like, "Come on, guys. Get up on your chair. Let's dance. We're gonna do like ten squats and

then wave your arms in the air. I'm gonna throw a chocolate to the best answer."

John Sonmez: Yeah, you know, I think there's definitely, you know, a little bit of a shock factor there. I mean, honestly, some people do walk out, right? That's how I know I'm doing a good job when some people are like, whoa.

John McIntyre: You've made it when your men didn't walk out.

John Sonmez: Exactly. Yup.

John McIntyre: I like it. Alright, so well that kinda paints a good picture. So let's get into this, how to be a, well, not how to be a developer but how to market yourself as a developer. What's the, I guess, to kick it off, what would be, you know, how would you like to frame the discussion? What's sort of the most important thing? How would you sum it all up in terms of how to position yourself, how to market yourself as a developer and that also transfers to other skills like copywriting?

John Sonmez: Right, okay. So I would say, first of all, that, you know, everything that I do and help developers with, I choose developers because that's my niche, right? That's who I know but it applies to anyone, right? If you're a doctor, if you're a copywriter, whatever it is, this idea of marketing yourself, I think the same exact concept, the same soft skill concepts are gonna apply. So we can pretty much just talk about that in general, like what is the value of marketing yourself and how can you do this?

John McIntyre: What am I gonna get out or what's the least they're gonna get out of it if they learn to do this properly?

John Sonmez: So the big thing is just like you said in the intro about, you know, we talked about the Judge Judy thing where Judge Judy makes \$47 million a year and a Supreme Court Justice makes 225,000, right? And you look at, like, Bill Clinton gets paid \$200,000 to speak at an event, right? But your average, you know, speaker might get paid five or \$10,000 and that's considered good. So you have it in a lot of different industries, right? So rock stars, right? The top rock stars, they get paid ridiculous amounts of money to play a gig whereas someone who's just as good but unknown doesn't get paid very much. Celebrity chefs, oh yeah. DJs, right? If you have a name, celebrity chefs, Gordon Ramsay, right? These celebrity chefs, I don't know a lot of celebrity chefs. But anyway, they get paid a lot more money. But the thing is, you know, you get to this point where you say, okay. Well, is it because they're so much more skilled than the ones who get paid less? You know, is Bill Clinton so much of a better speaker than your average speaker at a conference? No. The answer is that he has a name,

right? If you build a name for yourself, that's where the whole 'marketing yourself' come from. It's a sort of equation which goes 'skills times marketing equals money', right?

John McIntyre:

Right.

John Sonmez:

And so, you know, you have to have skills, right? If you're a copywriter and you can't write copy, if you just sit there and you have no skills at it, then it doesn't matter if you market yourself, right, because then you're gonna be a fraud. So you don't wanna be a fraud. But if you have skill and it's a decent amount of skill, it's probably better to invest your time marketing, learning how to market that skill so that you build a name for yourself than it is to increase that skill by an incremental level. You get into that 80% bracket of skill level, what gets you that five times, 10X pay, a hundred X pay is not getting more skill. What it is is getting a name, you know. In the copywriting industry, right, you know, people like Bob Bly, I mean, a lot of the guest that you have on this show, right, they have a name. And that's really what ends up causing their bill rate to be so high.

John McIntyre:

So I mean, one objection though that I'm gonna voice, because I mentioned that, like if I was listening to this, I'd be thinking, well, that's great for Bill Clinton or Judge Judy or the rock stars out there. The problem is, you know, I'm not the President of the United States and I'm not some TV superstar. And that's gonna take years and decades and all that. I just want to make a little bit of money now so I can quit my job.

John Sonmez:

Right, so here's the thing with that, right? So you don't have to have a lot of fame, right? You don't have to be an ultimate super rock star that's in a big area, right. So you can be the big fish in the small pond and then you get the same effect. So for example, I mean, you've niched yourself pretty well being the Autoresponder guy, right. And so, I mean, when I think about email, you know maybe I'm listening to your podcast so much. But I think that you're penetrating multiple circles because I hear about you from other people, right. I've heard you from multiple channels that I follow in the copywriting and the marketing space so I know I've associated your name with being the Autoresponder email guy. And that's a huge value in my book because now, you know, other people are thinking that same way. That's gonna allow you to charge a higher premium than someone who is just a generic copywriter and they're gonna have a hard time. I mean, if you wanna be known for being a copywriter, there's a lot of giants already in the industry that you're gonna have. But if you carve out a little niche here, if you're the landing page creator guy, right, if you're the, you know, the email marketing guy like, the Autoresponder guy or if you're, you know, whatever it is, I'm the customer testimonial guy. I can help you put the best

customer testimonials. I can help you craft those. You know, whatever niche that you carve out, I think you can build a name for yourself in that niche.

John McIntyre: It's funny because it was three years ago, these were the thoughts that were going through my head. It was some marketing training that I've been going through. It was like, alright so step one, when you work with any business is you gotta help them create a USP because if they don't have a USP, then they're probably gonna be differentiating on price which means that the buyer goes to the cheapest price. It's the fastest way to the bottom. It's, you know, there's no profit in it. So I'm sitting there thinking, well, there's this thousands, it must be tens of thousands of copywriters out there. And it's just getting more and more competitive these days. So you could be as good as John Carlton or as good as Gary Howard or as good as, you know, even your developers. As good as whoever the best developers in the world are. But because the fields' been around for a certain amount of time, any field that's profitable is gonna gradually get more and more competitive. And once John Carlton is John Carlton, no one else can be John Carlton.

John Sonmez: Right.

John McIntyre: And so you've got five or ten of the best copywriters in the world. If copywriting was like a new industry and there wasn't none of the best, if they weren't alive or that hadn't happened yet, then it probably wouldn't be too difficult for someone to come in, provided they have the skills to become the next John Carlton. But because of the Internet, because anyone can become a copywriter, there's a very small barrier to entry, you can't just be a copywriter.

John Sonmez: Exactly, yup, yeah. You know, and it's always best to be the big fish in the small pond, right? Like I tell developers when they say, "Oh, I don't wanna pigeonhole myself". I say, no, no, no, no. Be the big fish in the small pond right now. When you're the big fish, when the pond is too small, then you can expand to another pond. You know, you can go lateral, like a lateral movement on your ladder. And you're at a higher rung in the ladder. And eventually, I mean, if you conquer enough markets, if you can build up a name, a generic name, then you can become a great copywriter, a great developer without a specialty attached to you. But you gotta start by conquering them. I mean, Amazon did this, right? You know, I always tell developers, think of yourself as a business. So a lot of things that, to market yourself personally is the same things that a business would do. And so, you know, Amazon, they started off being the best bookseller, right. They were the online bookseller and they conquered that market. Then they moved laterally into CDs and DVDs which was, you know, a very similar market. And then they moved, you know, and they kept on

expanding until now they sell everything. But if they started out trying to sell everything, they would have just, you know, just flopped out.

John McIntyre: It's funny, too, like PayPal. Some of these are like household names these days. Paypal, if you read Zero to One, a book by Peter Thiel, he talks about how when Paypal started, they weren't getting it. They really struggled to get traction. They almost went bankrupt actually. And what they found there, they were trying different methods and different ways of marketing and positioning themselves. And what ended up working was they positioned themselves as a, basically a payment provider for people on eBay. And that's it.

John Sonmez: Exactly.

John McIntyre: They didn't worry anything. And it wasn't just eBay people. It was like power cells on eBay. So people doing volume on eBay, there's a couple thousand of them. And they probably didn't know it at the time. It's always easy to connect the dots looking backwards. But how it played out is because they got the eBay power cells on board. Then they had the volume to keep the business going. And then it expanded from there. It was like, once with the eBay guys then it's probably like, alright, what other sites are similar to eBay that have a whole bunch of cells that are struggling to process bank payments? You know, and then we come in there and then you gradually, as the brand grows, it starts to take on a life of its own. And people just talk about it. Like it kinda gets to that, like a breaking point or a threshold, an inflection point. I don't know. There's a word for it, tipping point is what.

John Sonmez: Right.

John McIntyre: And then once it hits that critical mass, the whole thing just explodes on its own.

John Sonmez: Right, exactly, yeah. And I think that, I mean, that's the thing that someone should be aiming for. I mean, just cornering a niche by itself is extremely profitable and there's so much depth to it. I mean, if you can become the person, the name for some niche in a decent-sized industry, you're gonna make a lot of money. But then from there, that gives you the opportunity. It opens up the gates to be able to move over to another one or to a bigger circle and then, you know. Or to go mainstream like a lot of people who became really famous in general started off that way, right. They started off with something that they were, you know, famous for in a very specific area. And then they expanded out.

John McIntyre: One thing here that I'm thinking is like, you know, it's funny. I mean, in the last few years, I've had a lot of people who kind of seen what I've done with the podcast and the emails and things like that. And, you know, they've heard about me say like **[inaudible 00:13:48]** from other people. And they're kinda like, well,

I'm gonna go be an email copywriter. And it's like, once someone's already done it, it's very hard to do it again.

John Sonmez: Right.

John McIntyre: Like they already own that. I don't own the spot. You know, it's a big market. But it's that you really need to come up with your own thing. And some people think that like a common question I get is, do you just come up with it on the spot? Or do you just let it evolve? And I don't think there's a right answer, actually. I think, you know, for me I was learning to write copy and someone gave me a couple different jobs and eventually wound up. But most of the jobs I was getting were email jobs. So when I came to that question of what's my USP, it was like very common sense. It was very, you know, straightforward, to be like, well, I've been doing lots of email stuff. Why don't I just start calling myself the email guy? And, you know, happy days. They're already declined **[inaudible 00:14:27]**. Now I'll just get more of them again and it makes it easy and blah, blah, blah. So where some people are like, before they even get started, they might wanna position themselves.

John Sonmez: Right, exactly. Yeah, and I think, I mean, it's better to pick something, right, and then you can always change it later if it doesn't work out. But being a generalist almost never works for you because it's so hard. You're fighting against everyone.

John McIntyre: Especially in the early stage.

John Sonmez: Oh, yeah, yeah.

John McIntyre: If you're a brand, like if you're Nike or, I was talking to someone yesterday at the Starbucks marketing. And so Starbucks marketing, it's branding, it works. There's a reason these companies do it. They invest millions in it. But, like, a small business who's just getting started can't get the same success, the same result with it because they don't have the same brand firepower to put behind it.

John Sonmez: Exactly, yeah, yeah. And as far as, like, getting your name out there, right, this is where, I think, it can access. I think most people would agree from listening to us, yeah, it's good to have a name and a niche. But how do you do that, right? And so the way that you do that is partially by that specialization gives you those opportunities. So, like, in the software development world, I say, okay, you know, instead of being an iOS developer, you develop iOS apps, be the iOS developer that specializes in one control, you know, or one specific aspect of it. Let's say that you know everything about iOS buttons and how to customize them and, you know, all the ways that you could interact with buttons. I mean,

it seems like a ridiculous example. But I'll tell you what, if you go that deep in that niche down, then when you try to pitch a magazine, like a developer magazine for an article and you say, I'm the expert in buttons like, I can give you. They want that. They want that kind of depth stuff. You try to speak at a conference, right. Even without a name, because you're so specialized, they're gonna wanna hear this expert in this one very small area. It gives you all these advantages whereas if you try to pitch, you know, to speak at a conference and you say, I'm a really good software developer, and you have no name, or I'm a really good copywriter or whatever it is and you have no name, it's much more difficult. But if you can say, I solved this one very, very specific problem, it's so much easier to get people to invite you on their podcast, to get in a magazine, conference, right, even a publisher to publish a book because you can declare yourself the expert in that very specific area. So it really lends itself to building the name because you gotta have these platforms, right. In order to build the name, people have to hear about you multiple times, you know, in building a brand. And so how do you do that? You know, you do that partially through that specialization.

John McIntyre:

And one thing, just to give you an example of how powerful this is is that, like in the last few years, I don't tell many people this. But I've had, you know, a lot of people come to me and, you know, email guy, you're amazing. You've done this, this, this, this. I'm like, I'm just a dude from Australia who's kinda figured some stuff out. And, like, it's almost like my reputation, because you kinda got like your own, I guess your prestige which is the external stuff. And then your internal thing which might be your self-image. And what's happened with me, and I think this probably happens to a lot of people in situations like this is sometimes the prestige can get ahead of your actual self-image to the point where everyone out there thinks you're absolutely, like thinks you're amazing and you've done all these great stuff. And inside you still feel like, you know, in my case, now, I've dealt with a lot of this now. But there have been times in the past when people were coming to me thinking I'm this guru. And I'm like, I'm not a guru. I'm just like, you know, at the time when you were 23 years old or 24 years old, I'm living in Asia and I write some emails and stuff. Like I wasn't thinking I'm this big expert.

John Sonmez:

Right exactly.

John McIntyre:

To be honest, you know, I've spoken a little about this is it's really determined by the markets. If the market thinks you're an expert, you pretty much are. The market's pretty good in finding who's an expert and who's not.

John Sonmez:

Oh, yeah.

John McIntyre: Eventually, it catches up to yourself. But that's how powerful it is.

John Sonmez: Oh, yeah. I mean, this little imposter syndrome, right.

John McIntyre: Exactly.

John Sonmez: You feel that way. But it's kinda cool because it means that the market is actually pricing you higher than you value yourself. And, you know, one good example of this is, like, I do some consulting now. I try to avoid it because I mostly do product stuff. I sell products and sell it through email marketing. But when I do consult, my hourly rate is \$300 an hour. And it's a non-negotiable rate. And whenever someone says, "Hey, I wanna hire you to do this", I usually say, "You really don't wanna hire me". You could hire someone off at oDesk for \$25, \$150 an hour to write code. And sometimes they will say, no, no. I want you, John, to do. And it's because of reputation, right, because I'm like, I honestly could not write a lot better code than someone for, you know, you're better off hiring me at a higher level to coach your developers and business. And they say, no, no, no. We want you to do it and so, you know. But that's just like you're saying. It's the power of it. It's like that reputation, someone has fixed on your name. You're gonna pay you astronomical fees just because of that even though you may not even feel that you're worth it at that point. But there's a huge, huge value. People, you know, name recognition is a huge, huge thing. So if you can get that, that just adds a tremendous value to your brand.

John McIntyre: Yeah, I mean, it's amazing. I've had experiences where, you know, like, when I was back in Sydney, I've worked a lot of different, you know, casual jobs and sales job. And I was making, in Australia, the wages are pretty good so I'd be making \$16, \$17 an hour which is, I suppose, decent by worldwide standards. But, you know, the first time I was able to charge more than a hundred dollars an hour than where it is now, which is even more, it's kinda funny. I think, I'm like, I mean, I dropped out of high school. I didn't go to university. I went to college and dropped out of college because I got bored. And then I just partied my ass off for about three years, three of four years and didn't do anything. And now it's like, now that I've kinda, you know, studied copywriting and studied how to market yourself and sell yourself, I can go out there and charge, you know, ten, 20, 30 times what I used to make, like in three years. It's crazy.

John Sonmez: Exactly, yeah. Yeah, it's amazing. And you think about all these people, you know, working their regular nine to five jobs for 30 years. And you're able to make them, their salary in like a couple months or so. And it has all to do with the idea of, if you can market yourself, if you can build a business where there's enough of your name recognition, and it doesn't have to be a lot. It really doesn't, I mean, you don't have to be on primetime television, right. You just

have to have in your circle, in your niche, enough of a name that someone recognizes who you are. And there's usually plenty of business right there.

John McIntyre: Right. And people think that like, someone might be listening. Well, you know, it's easy for your guys. It's alright. You've got a website and a podcast and like, you know, a personal brand. Yeah, like anyone can do that.

John Sonmez: Exactly.

John McIntyre: Put it like this. The podcast that I've done is like I created a property a year ago. No one gave me permission to create the product. It was just like, I know how to write copy and I can probably give some advice that's at least half decent on how to write an email or an autoresponder. And so I made the product and then started doing the podcast. And it was just sorta like, people are waiting for themselves to be, like they're waiting for everyone to say, alright, you're an expert. And then they think that when that happens, then they can go off and be an expert. Instead it's actually the other way around. If you wanna be an expert, you're gonna start just calling yourself and thinking of yourself and acting like an expert now. And then over time people are gonna gradually think of you as an expert.

John Sonmez: Exactly. In fact, I always use that concept. I call it 'acting as if' or the 'fake it 'til you make it', right. This idea that you act as if you already are, act as if you're this person and then you'll become this person. And people will believe it. You have to bring the authenticity, you know. It's the idea of having these strong convictions but helplessly. You believe this thing but you're willing to be challenged. And if you keep that mind set, then you can speak with authority without being, you know, hard-headed. And I think that's, you know, that's one of the key things. And like you said, anyone can do this, right. So, you know, to give some practical advice here, what I would say is someone starting out, if they want to market themselves, to be able to build a name and a brand, the key thing is first of all, to pick a specialty, right. So you gotta pick some kind of a niche. You gotta, you know, don't worry about being pigeonholed. Pick something and then the lowest barrier to entry in my mind is a blog, right. You can just set up a website and start blogging. And if you start blogging every week on the topic, you're gonna start positioning yourself as an authority in that area. But then, you know, there's other things you can do, right. So a brand becomes powerful when people recognize it multiple times. So, you know, for each person I think we could probably go out there and we can look at all the different kinda channels that we consume. So, you know, I watch YouTube videos. I listen to podcasts, right. I read magazines. I read books, right. All these different things, how can you get, you know, I like Pat Flynn's approach. He says, from Smart Passive Income, he says, you know, be everywhere. And that's what

I think. It's like if you want to really build a name for yourself, be everywhere. Show up. You know, when someone does a Facebook search, when they do a search on podcast, when they look on YouTube, when they search on Google, they should find your blog post, your videos, your podcasts or you being interviewed on podcast, you know. That's a surprisingly good way to market yourself and the developer community. I think I've been on just about every developer podcast that there is and I just, you know emailed the podcast and I said, hey, can I come on and talk about this specific thing?

John McIntyre: Now you wanna market on podcast, man. You're getting famous.

John Sonmez: Exactly. But, yeah, I mean it really is something that is very approachable. I think most people don't ever realize that they could build up credibility and reputation. And it's not that hard. Just think about all the different channels that exist out there that you're currently consuming and see how you can get on those channels and put content out on those channels. Another approach that I personally take is I say, I give away 90% of what I do for free and I charge for 10% of it. And by creating a lot of value for people, you know, the whole Zig Ziglar thing about, you know, if you give enough people what they want, you'll get what you want, right? You know, whatever the exact quote is. But that idea I think is very, very powerful and it is very true. If you can affect a million people's lives, you're gonna make a million dollars.

John McIntyre: Okay, okay. I mean, according here, is it like, well, you know, if I do a blog or if I do a podcast or if I do YouTube, like I don't know what to write about. And it's a bit like, the way I think about it is it's really funny because before you've ever done this, before you've had like success in this area building some sort of brand like this, it's really hard to imagine that it's gonna work. It's kinda like, you don't really grasp the gravity of the opportunity. And an example of this is like, I've been reading this book called Bold by Peter Diamandis on a whole bunch of future technology that's coming out like 3D printing and robotics and all that. And he talks about it like exponential, he calls it exponential technology. And what's funny is our brains, I think, our brains have evolved to be very linear, linear thinking. So that's thinking that, you know, if you add, you know, one plus one equals two plus another one is three plus one is four plus one is five and things like that, that's linear thinking. And that's in a straight line if you plot it on a graph. And so that means, it's like, well, if this year I owned \$100,000, next year I can own 110 and the year after I can get 120. But what happens when you go exponential? This is where you go 1 times 2 is 4, times 2 again is 8, times 2 is 16, okay?

John Sonmez: Right.

John McIntyre: Here's the interesting thing, right. This is how bad the brain is at understanding, and I'll link this back to the marketing stuff in a second. How bad the brain is at understanding this exponential stuff is if you take one and times it by two, like double it 30 times, let's say one meter and double it 30 times, how far do you think that's gonna be?

John Sonmez: One meter doubled 30 times, it's somewhere probably in the hundreds of millions, maybe? Like, it seems crazy. I know the 20, right. You bet someone the dollar per hole of golf and you do it 18 times, right, and then it comes to like some kind of million-dollar bet or something. So it's probably really high. I would get somewhere over 10 million?

John McIntyre: It's over a billion meters.

John Sonmez: Oh, my gosh.

John McIntyre: So here's the interesting, this is one meter, doubled 30 times, okay? It's actually, you can go around the earth 80 times with that distance. Or you can to the sun and back three times.

John Sonmez: Wow.

John McIntyre: Well, if you only took a linear steps, you'd go 30 meters. If you took exponential steps, you're going around the earth 80 times.

John Sonmez: Right.

John McIntyre: But our brains, right, I think our brains learned that way. Why? We are unable to grasp the gravity of the opportunity because we haven't seen change happen. We're starting to see it now with computers. But we personally haven't seen change happened that fast. And this is like with the marketing is, if you've never done this and you've never seen this happen to yourself or to a friend, it's very hard to understand the gravity of the opportunity here. But it really is as simple as set up a website and start putting out, like if you wanna be an expert on buttons, for example, you don't even have to be an expert in buttons today. But I know that I could go on and set up a site, add some YouTube videos and blog posts and maybe even start a podcast. And I could go and read. There's probably an Amazon book or two I could read about buttons and a few blog posts I could read about buttons. And I could just literally rewrite that content. I'll put it in my own words. Now I would become the expert in buttons and I know for a fact that it would work and it would probably happen a lot faster. It would happen very, very quickly.

John Sonmez: Exactly, yes, yes. Exactly. And that stuff will live out there, right. To talk more about the exponential thing is, you know, when you work your 9 to 5 job and,

you know, whatever. You do the work and it's done. And you get a pay check, it's done with, right? But when you write a blog post, even though you might not necessarily get paid for it today or you create a Youtube video, you do a podcast episode, it lives out there on the Internet. And it causes exponential growth because, especially if it has any kind of virality at all because people share it, right? And you build this audience. So you build it up your email list, right. Now what happens is, okay, my email list now has, you know, I wish I would have started my email list when I first started this whole thing. But I've got about, like 9,000 people on my email list. Now when I write a blog post and I send it out to those 9,000 people on the email list, suddenly all my blog views go up, right. And then those people share it and then that causes more people to come to my blog which causes more people to go on my email list which starts this cycle. And in all of the content I've ever written over the past five years, that still gets hits on Google, right, and same thing on YouTube. So all these things that you're building this empire, it seems like a linear growth at first. But all of a sudden, you start looking at things and you're like, wow, how did I jump from making a thousand dollars a month to \$10,000 a month? And then pretty soon you're like, well, I could actually see where I could make \$100,000 a month. Like if you asked me, you know, way back when, I would say, no way. But you can almost see it. But when you're first starting out, because even exponential growth, it looks so small, right, when it doubles 1 to 2 to 4 to 8, you know, until it hits like, you know, 15 doubles, you don't realize that this is a rocket ship taking off. And that's how it is with creating, you know, for me, for creating content out there, as you'd grow like that.

John McIntyre: Crazy how it works, too. Like it starts off a bit slow at first. And you kinda see. You start to, you know, get an email here, an email there about, you know, can you design someone's buttons? And then six months down the line it kinda picks up a little bit more. And then, you know, it's not sort of like it goes, you know, you go from, you know, a hundred people knowing you to 200 people in a year. You're probably gonna go from a hundred to a thousand. And then in year two, because there are a thousand that was sharing it. You don't go from a thousand to 2,000. You go from a thousand to 10,000, exactly like you said.

John Sonmez: Exactly.

John McIntyre: Then once you got 10,000 then it's the same thing because you've got 5,000 customers now, for example. Now you're even growing even faster. You grow even faster. You grow even faster. And so it's crazy how this stuff works.

John Sonmez: Yeah. And you do the same amount of work, except now you're getting paid a lot more. Especially, I mean, some things don't scale, right. If you're billing yourself out hourly, right, you should eventually build some kind of a product so

that you can scale because if you have a product and you're creating content to market that product, it's the same amount of work, right, for a huge amount of money as your audience grows right. The amount of money you make grows even though the amount of work doesn't because it takes the same amount of work to be able to keep producing the podcast or keep producing the thing. And now you're getting higher sponsors, if you have sponsors for podcasts, right. So I think there's a huge value there where people fail to realize. They say, well, you know, content marketing is just like paying for advertising. And you could equate that to dollars per hour. And it's not the same because at one point you might say, yeah, it's the same. I looked at the time it took me to write this book or to make this course, this digital product I'm selling and I paid myself \$75 an hour. I could have billed, you know, freelancing rate at a higher rate. But what they don't recognize is that you built that asset once and then as your audience grows, all of a sudden, now you're making like a thousand dollars an hour on work you did five years ago.

John McIntyre:

Another interesting thing too is with the content. I was talking to someone recently about how it's like less and less alignment. It's getting harder and harder to basically get, you know, get it out on Facebook or Google Adwords" and send it straight to a sales pitch and get someone to buy something. So what's happening is that the strategy that a lot of people use, and I've used this before, is you advertise a content. So you post, you know, a great blog post. One of these content piece is advertise that and then let that run for a while. And then pull a, what's called a retargeting pixel on that page. And then you follow people around the internet with your ads because once they've seen a piece of your content, they're probably gonna be quite interested in buying something later. And what you could also do is have a retargeting funnel. So first thing you advertise a couple of different things. Then you add, let's say you might have a five-step retargeting funnel where if they haven't seen you before at all, they get one article. Once they've seen that article, they get the second article. And so you gradually expose them to your brand four or five times before you ever try and sell them something. So by the time you get to them and you say here's the pitch, they're gonna be like, I already know this guy. I didn't even need to read the sales letter.

John Sonmez:

Exactly, yeah, yeah. And I mean, that's the key, right, especially, like you said today, is having that, building up that brand and that trust is the thing that's gonna sell. Like, you know, for example my product on how to market yourself as a software developer, one of my first experience was I tried doing AdWords, paid AdWords to send people to the landing page. And the conversion rate was like 0.01%. It was like, ridiculous. Like I think I got one sale. Like my cost per acquisition per customer was like \$300, \$400. It was like ridiculous, right. And

then I started doing an email course, like a three-week email course. And, you know, marketing to my list. But this three-week email course I would take people and they would get on there. And after three weeks of getting valuable information from me through my email course, at the end, you know, there would be a call to action to buy the product. And it gets a 10% conversion rate. So it's like so much more powerful to get that multiple exposure, to build those relationships than just trying to cold sell people. It's just, you know, it doesn't. maybe it worked like that ten years ago but it doesn't work today. You have to build a brand and a reputation and if you can do it, if you can hack it to make it quicker like you said with the retargeting pixels, then that makes sense. And a lot of people aren't savvy, right. They're like, this is weird. I keep on seeing this guy showing up everywhere. He must be a big name.

John McIntyre: Exactly. One way I've thought about using this, I haven't done this yet but one thing I wanted to do was take like, say, you're going to a conference, right. You're going to some, I don't know, it could be like a marketing conference or one of your developer conferences, right. And, you know, you're a speaker or whatever. But instead of just rocking up that conference and doing your talk, what you could do is go and scrape the list of attendees **[inaudible 00:34:07]** list of it. Drop it into a custom audience on Facebook and then run, you know, four weeks out. You run one piece of content. Three weeks out, you run another one. So by the time you get to the conference, these people who were about to hear you say, they're already seen. But this guy John, he's everywhere. Now I get to see him at the conference. He's like Tony Robbins or something.

John Sonmez: Yup. That's a great idea. I love that. You just gotta bribe the conference organizer to get that list and then, yeah, that would do it. That would work really good. Your session will be packed. Like all the other sessions are empty and like yours is just busting out the door because people are primed. You primed them for it.

John McIntyre: Like in advertising Autoresponder, is in that you'd be exposing, you know, there'd be a case study in there. There'd be like John Sonmez, the new Tony Robbins? It would be one of the articles for example.

John Sonmez: Right, yeah.

John McIntyre: And you wouldn't even have to advertise your stuff. Like if I was gonna do this, I'd be having other people's slide to the first use. They're not even hearing from me at first. They're hearing from like, something, you know, other guys. Say for example, say, like, you know, say like Jay Abraham interviewed me for example, you know.

John Sonmez: Right.

John McIntyre: You know, a lot of you on the marketing industry know him. What would be cool is like getting an interview on his side that's with me. So he's interviewing and that will be the he first piece of content because then the people's first exposure to me is that, oh, he was getting interviewed by Jay Abraham. Okay, he's a big dog. And then there'll be an interview from someone else. Then there'd be a case study. And then finally there might be an article for me where I'm talking. And so this is like how to build a cult around you, a cult following.

John Sonmez: Right, exactly. Yeah, yeah, but you can see. I mean, obviously, there's a huge amount of power in that, in building that brand whether you can do it through a hack or you can do it organically through over time. Like this is the thing. It's like when you can immediately see the value of doing that. And so many people don't do this. This is what I don't understand. I mean, the software development community, I'll let the software developers get off the hook a little bit because, hey, you know, they're programmers, like you said, sitting in there in an office, creating out code. They don't realize how valuable this is. But in your audience of copywriters, of marketing people, then you gotta be marketing yourself for sure. You gotta be building a brand around yourself. Otherwise, you know, what are you doing?

John McIntyre: Exactly. So well, I think we're sort of, I think it's been a good conversation and really cool stuff. Before we go, can you, you know, if the listener wants to learn more about you, maybe even pick up one of your training products, because it sounds like it's relevant to, even if you're not a developer, it sounds pretty relevant. So where's the best place for them to learn more?

John Sonmez: Okay, so I've got two things for you. So one of them, and I'll just do a slight giveaway, I just published a book called Soft Skills, The Software Developer's Life Manual. And a little secret here, it says The Software Developer's Life Manual but it's not specifically for software developers, right. This advice, I'm picking my niche but I've got a ton of stuff in there. Like I outlined how I retired at 33, the exact steps that I took to be able to financially retire and tons of productivity hacks and just things that will help you in your career. Soft skills, you know, basically. And I'll give away a copy of that book. In fact, a signed copy to someone who comments on this post, this episode. Do they have the ability to comment on your episodes?

John McIntyre: They do. They do. They can get **[inaudible 00:37:24]**. There will be comments.

John Sonmez: They do? There we go. Okay.

John McIntyre: And they can pop something in there. A signed copy, that's pretty cool.

John Sonmez: Yes, a signed copy. But here's the catch. You can't just comment some kind of, you know, you got a comment and I'm a man of action. If you don't take action, nothing's gonna happen. So here's the thing.

John McIntyre: How about this, you gotta post a blog or something?

John Sonmez: Oh, yeah. There we go. Okay, I like that. To post a blog, post one of your blog and that gives you some extra, some self-promotion. And it should motivate you. It's gotta be a new blog that you write, you know, after listening to this episode. And then the other thing I'll do is I have a course called How To Market Yourself As A Software Developer. Again, software developers, my niche, but this is really how to market yourself. It goes over how to build a brand, how to build a name for yourself, how to get your name out there so that people start talking about you and how to use social media to do that. You can find that at devcareerboost.com. And that's D-E-V careerboost.com. And I'll give a hundred dollars off. You just use the code 'Mcmethod' and you'll get \$100 off of that course.

John McIntyre: Nice. Happy days, man. This is good. Thanks for coming on the show.

John Sonmez: Yeah. Yeah, no problem. Great, great. Glad to be here. I have to say, your podcast is one of those podcasts that I listen to every week because there's so much, I don't know. You get such great guests on this show and you have such great conversations. It's really, really valuable podcasts.

John McIntyre: Cool, man. Cool, man. I mean, you're one of those guests now.

John Sonmez: Alright.

John McIntyre: So it's at the mcmethod.com. So if you want the links to the promo, the code is 'mcmethod'. And so just those domains again was at devcareerboost.com for that. And I noticed if you go to simpleprogramming.com, right, if you got a product, there's a link there to the Soft Skills Software Developer's Life Manual on there.

John Sonmez: Yup.

John McIntyre: Cool. Alright, John. Cheers, mate.

John Sonmez: Alright, cheers.