

Basic Proofing sample.mp3

Hello.

Hi.

Hi, good morning. Okay, let's start. Today is July 19, 9:30 am and I am with Alex Smith. Welcome back, Alex. This is the second part of our interview, and I want to get through these as quickly as possible because I know you have somewhere to be.

Thank you. It's my pleasure.

It says on the website you worked doing graphic design for a local branding agency before branching out and starting your own business.

Yes.

Was that a conscious choice?

Yes.

Sorry, one sec. We can hear the noise. I'll close the door. Okay. Was starting your own company intentional, or did you just sort of fall into it?

Actually, sort of both. I started out doing it as a favor for a friend. I didn't really know what I was doing at the time, but at some point I found out I was having some success with that, and so I started doing it for local businesses and restaurants.

Then it kind of took off from there, and then I figured, well, if I'm going to be taking on all these new clients I might as well get a website going and make something out of this, you know?

Sure. What kind of challenges did you experience when you were starting out, that you weren't expecting?

Hmm, challenges I wasn't expecting.

[Laughter] I keep putting you on the spot. I don't think I put that one in the questions either. We're just ad-libbing here.

No, it's fine. So, challenges...

Yes. It could be funding or anything. I forgot to ask you earlier, did you bootstrap?

Oh, yes. Oh, yes. I had literally, like, \$200 in the bank when I started out. And that's Canadian dollars, so that's like, what, two cents US? [Laughter] Nah, just kidding. Pretty sad though.

Oh, really?

Yes. Well, and an AdWords credit, maybe \$50 or \$100 or something like that, but I had no idea what I was doing at the time.

Right. How did you get the word out about your business and what you were doing?

Uh ... phew. Well, besides the referrals I was getting, I enlisted my first few clients by this post on Facebook and asking my friend ... My one friend, he's got, like, 8,000 Facebook friends and I have, like, two, and one of them's my mom.

[Laughter]

No, serious, Jennifer. So, I asked this buddy to help me out and put this thing up for me, and he has a lot of friends who do that kind of thing, so I got a few leads out of the deal that I still do work for sometimes, and one of them is my biggest client, so yes.

Nice.

Yes. Then the other thing I did was local outreach with local magazines and newspapers and whatnot, and I got a couple of mentions that way that led to my first "real" clients. Not that they weren't real before, but sometimes when they're your friends it kind of feels like they're doing a favor, you know?

I did have some luck also with networking and meetup groups and stuff like that – you know, local – but I'm a bit of an introvert, so it took me a while to get around to it. [Laughter]

No way. I don't believe it. Do you have a Twitter?

Yes, I have a Twitter. [Laughter] "A Twitter." But I don't think I've ever posted a tweet. I can't even remember my password. I'm too old for that stuff, Jennifer.

[Laughter]

Well, Jennifer, you know what they say. Nothing.

Okay, let's cut this short. Thanks Alex.

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