

**No Better Time To Outsource  
Niche Content Millionaire  
[www.NicheContentMillionaire.com](http://www.NicheContentMillionaire.com)  
13 July 2009  
Copyright © Fiona Boyd and David Eedle**

Hi everybody, this is David Eedle from nichecontentmillionaire.com. Thought I'd venture out into our garden. It's still winter here in Melbourne, so it's just starting to chill off, it's late afternoon but there's still a bit of sunshine around and I thought I'd give it a go coming out here and try a video post. Hopefully the birds and the cars and the background noise don't get in the way.

I've been writing a little bit on the nichecontentmillionaire.com blog recently about the coffee shop we own. I put a post up the other day and in fact I was putting another post together this morning which I'll put up on the site in a couple of days time. And it was just reminding me about a couple of things that we've learned from owning the coffee shop. A lot of people look at us slightly weirdly when we say, oh, yes, well, we do business on the internet but we own a coffee shop and they sit there and they go, well, gee, that's two very different businesses to be involved with. But then we explain to them why, and it doesn't take them very long to understand the reasons. We've spent ten years or more earning our living pretty much primarily from the internet, maybe about 95%. But there came a time early last year when we were just thinking about some of the things we might want to get involved with, and one of them was a way in which we could spend a bit more time face to face with people, with customers and with people in the community.

It was borne out of the fact that like most internet entrepreneurs we spend an awful lot of time sitting at our computers, huddled in a corner in the study or in our workroom, talking to people all over the world but not actually talking to real people sitting next to us.

And so last year we renovated a little space and opened a coffee shop. It's in St Kilda, which is an inner-city suburb here in Melbourne, a lot of backpackers, a lot of businesses, a lot of apartments. We rely very heavily on our regulars, so we have probably 150 to 200 people in the local area who come in, if not every day but certainly every couple of days, and we definitely have some people who come in every morning, they order the same cup of coffee, and then maybe on the weekend they'll come in and have a bite to eat, have some lunch. And the fact that it's winter here in Melbourne also reminds us of the first lesson that we have learnt, and that is just how cyclical and seasonal the café business is. Anybody who has been involved with hospitality probably is sitting there going, well, gee, I could have told you that, but it was interesting to maybe relearn that lesson, and that is that businesses aren't constant, they're subject to all of the forces and the influences around them. The weather is an easy example – it's cold, it's wet at the moment, and as a consequence trade in the café is down, we're not able to really use our outdoor area, we can't put tables and chairs out on the footpath, it's just too wet and cold, which means for a start we lose about a third of our seating, and people just don't seem to be motivated so much to go out for lunch and so on, they're clearly choosing to stay at home in the warmth instead.

Contrast that with earlier this year, in summer, when we'd have weekends when we were just completely packed, and people spilling out onto the footpath, glasses of wine, lunch, hanging out for two or three hours, and enjoying the sunshine. So one of the big lessons we've learned is that we have to learn to take the rough with the smooth, it's very seasonal, we're in the really dark, cold patch at the moment, but it will build again as spring arrives, and the weather cheers up.

Another reason, as I said at the beginning, was we wanted to make sure we spent time with some real people. As I started to like to say, I like the idea of real people walking in a real front door, buying a real product for real money instead of this whole sort of virtual world that we spend so much time in. And it's been really interesting. People think I'm mad but I actually enjoy going into the shop and spending a day, half a day working there once every so often. Pulling coffees, talking to customers, serving food, clearing the tables, and yes, I do do the cleaning and I'll more than happily mop up and wipe up. I really enjoy it, I get to spend time with lots of different people, I get to hear lots of different views and opinions, get to hear what's going on out there, how people are feeling. It's been really interesting this year, particularly, so, the last six, seven months as the global recession has started to bite and people are finding it harder and harder to get through, to find enough money. And as a consequence that impacts us in the business, but we get to hear about it straight away, we get the feedback, we get the comments straight away. Not dissimilar to running a blog.

So for example you put a blog post up and maybe within an hour, a few minutes even, you've already got comments coming in, you're getting feedback about what you've written and the views that you've put. Running the shop is exactly the same. We get people come in and they'll order lunch, and they'll tell us that they didn't like it – although that's not too often – and then we get people who sit down, eat lunch and say, wow, that was just delicious, and thank you, we enjoyed that, and they leave a nice big tip for the staff. So that one-on-one interaction with people, with our customers, we're finding really useful, and just being able to stay in touch with what's going on.

And it's not a bad little investment either. Obviously we have good weeks and we have bad weeks, as I say it's pretty seasonal, but over time there's no question that our investment in this is building up and creating an asset for us, and a revenue stream as well.

Maybe just giving a couple more examples of how learning what our customers want, in fact to a point where we actually know more than the customers do about what they want – I was in the shop this morning, and I tend to sit in there, it's my de facto office if I'm not working here at home, and I hang out, work on my computer, chat to people. It's also my meeting place, so if I'm getting together with some people for a meeting, I usually try and nominate the coffee shop - for a start the coffee and food's free, so it has some side benefits. Anyway, I'm sitting there this morning, a guy comes in from an office just across the road with an order for a bunch of the staff there, he wants takeaway coffees, and he was starting to run through the order with Sean, our barista, and he was starting to – wasn't quite sure how many sugars, for example, in a couple of the coffees, and Sean, immediately, who knows exactly what everybody has, and has an encyclopaedic knowledge of people's coffee habits, immediately picked up and said, oh, well, that guy has two sugars and this girl has no sugars, and that guy has one and a half sugars, and he was able to make up the order, cos Sean's been working for us for about eight months and he's just totally across what the customers want, he listens to them, he remembers what they like, and he makes sure that he delivers it to them every single time without fail.

So some good lessons there about how we deal with our customers, how we make sure we look after them, how we make sure that the information we're delivering to them, or the product or the coffee or the food or the blog post, doesn't matter what it is, is what they wanted, it's how they want it and it's delivered when they want. Hopefully you get to the point where, in fact, you know your customers as well as they do and you're able to start to anticipate their needs and the things that they want. So, lots of lessons from the coffee shop, I'll write a couple more posts about it and some of the lessons we've learned and the ways it's helped us in our internet business, and look forward to hearing your feedback and ideas as well.

**Buy The Book!**

**[www.NicheContentMillionaire.com](http://www.NicheContentMillionaire.com)**



Niche Content Millionaire is a downloadable eBook that tells you how we made millions from online subscription content.

It's a cool experience when you're sitting in a lawyer's office high up in a down town office block and someone casually hands you a check for a couple of million dollars. It's even more cool strolling into the nearest bank branch and depositing the check – then rushing out to the ATM to check your account balance.

We've been involved with niche online content as a business since 2000. In that time we've launched commercially successful web sites in Australia, the USA and the UK. Our sites have attracted tens of thousands of subscribers, and many times that number of casual visitors. In late 2006 we sold the largest of our businesses for more than \$US1 million.

Our book is not designed to be a text book, nor a biography, rather it's a distillation of our story, married with advice and ideas that we believe assisted us along our journey to success. We learnt our lessons the hard way. We hope that you will read the book, learn and then be in a position to apply those lessons to your own online, or offline, business venture.

Fiona Boyd

David Eedle