

Jerod Morris

Building an Audience

With Digital Marketing, Email, And Online Courses



TheRemarkablePodcast.com
Remarkable
with Dave Mooring

The following is the full transcript of Remarkable Episode 2: [Jerod Morris on Building an Audience with Digital Marketing, Email, and Online Courses](#).

Begin Transcript

In this week's episode, I get to have a conversation with another podcaster I met in person at the [Podcast Movement](#) conference in 2015.

He's full of great information on podcasting and we cover everything from how to move people to your podcast to your email list, the importance of networking, which type of show is the most difficult to get off the ground, and even one big reason why you should start a podcast if you haven't already.

He's one of a handful of people I've been wanting to connect with for a while, and he's someone I have a lot of respect for.

He's spent nearly a decade working in online media strategy, production and marketing, he's been a featured speaker at conferences across the country on leadership, content strategy and podcasting, he's the host or co-host for a total of five different podcasts, two sports podcasts, a marketing podcast, a personal development podcast, and a podcast about podcasting.

And last, but not least, he currently serves as the VP of marketing for [Rainmaker.fm](#). Here's Jarod Morris.

Dave: Hey Jared!

Jarod: Hey, how are you, Dave?

Dave: I'm good, how are you doing today?

Jarod: I'm doing very well, it's good to talk to you.

Dave: Yeah, you too. Thanks again for your time, I appreciate it.

Jarod: Oh for sure, for sure, I'm excited about this. Sorry I had to reschedule.

Dave: Oh, no worries, no worries. Out of curiosity, do you do a lot of interviews? Do you have a lot of people contacting you, other than your internal [Copyblogger](#) folk?

Jarod: Yeah, you know it's picked up more, I think certainly since we started Rainmaker.fm, and then especially since we started doing the [Showrunner](#), and just going out and speaking about it. And especially after events like Podcast Movement, there typically tend to be kind of a rush of them.

Dave: Yeah.

Jarod: Yeah, and I mean I love doing them. It's always really fun just being able to talk to the people and get their perspectives, too. Just hear what they're working on, so I really like it.

Dave: Yeah, well good. Well, cool - I'm glad we had a chance to meet. One of my short list of, you know, there's always multiple reasons why you go to something like that - but for me, one of them was to get to meet some of you guys from, [Rainmaker Digital](#) (affiliate) now, formerly Copyblogger Media.

Jarod: Yeah, that's our company, Rainmaker Digital. And it's always a thrill for us to be able to meet people who have read the content, or bought the products, and just in general. I mean, I agree with you, going to a place like podcast movement - that for me is one of the thrills. Not only getting to meet people who listen to your show, that you've emailed with, but also people whose shows that you listen to. I mean, that's what makes those events so great, you know, because it makes people real, as opposed to just voices or their words and an avatar - a screen.

Dave: Yeah, and sometimes, if you go too long without meeting people you start to put them on a pedestal, or you think they're better, you know.

Jarod: Right.

Dave: They become unrelatable, so it's good just to know that everybody - we're all people, and we're all just trying to do our thing.

Jarod: Right, exactly. And we all have different areas of expertise that we can help each other with, and different ways we overlap and we can work together, so, yeah. It's great. By the way, I wanted to mention, I love your tagline for yourself, under 'Who is Dave?' where you say 'I teach marketing to people who are great at something other than marketing.' That's fantastic!

Dave: Thanks.

Jarod: I really like that.

Dave: I appreciate it. It took a long time to land on that, so.

Jarod: Oh, I'm sure. Yeah. But that's just a perfect, punchy, short, succinct powerful line. I like it.

Dave: Thank you. That means a lot coming from you as a copywriter yourself.

Jarod: And as someone who loves writing taglines - I mean that would be a dream, because that's really good,

Dave: Well that's a good segue. Tell me a little bit about your background, how did you get into marketing in the first place?

Jarod: Well, that's a great question. I kind of got into it by happenstance, frankly. I grew up with a sports background, so I kind of always figured I'd end up doing something in sports, and then I got derailed a little bit in college thinking I would start - that I would go to Hollywood and be a screenwriter. So I kind of went through all that and did a whole bunch of different things.

Then when I got out of college I ended up teaching for a little while and then did a little bit of sales, did a little bit of management - didn't know exactly what I wanted to do, and eventually settled on 'well, I'll go to law school, and I'll do that, that will give me some kind of anchor and that will propel me forward.'

And so, in the process of doing some work for a lawyer, I had moved to Dallas, I was doing some work for a lawyer in the interim while I was studying for the LSAT, and I went to take

some files to him one day at a coffee shop and he was there talking with a friend and, you know, so I started talking with the friend as well.

The friend told me about how he had just started basically a digital consulting agency for small businesses here in Dallas and needed someone to do some part time work writing press releases and just creating content, and I like to write, so I figured I'd help you out on a part time basis.

That guy was Derick Shaffer, and we ended up becoming business partners. That was really my foray into online - and really into marketing,- because I had never really studied it formally before that, done anything, and that's where I got introduced to WordPress and social media and SEO, and all of that and basically learned it as I was doing - as I was working with our agency clients.

We eventually developed a hosting platform that became synthesis, and that's how we came over and became part of Copyblogger. And, you know, you and I were just talking about how long you've been reading Copyblogger, and how much it helps you with some of these projects you're working on, and I wish I had found Copyblogger before I actually became a part of Copyblogger.

Because back when I first started working with Derrick, I basically asked him 'hey, you know, I need like a sandbox to get my hands dirty in. You know, to learn this stuff. I'm not really good at just reading and understanding - I need to actually go do it. And so I was like 'can I just start a site, and let me kind of do it off on the side to practice this stuff on my own?' He was like 'yeah, sure.'

And so I ended up launching a site. That site was [Midwest Sports Fans](#), and it ended up doing really well to the point where it was getting millions and millions of hits a month, and kind of became it's own mini profit center, because we were selling, you know- we were putting display ads on it.

You know, that site was getting so much traffic that that's why we ended up developing the hosting platform, because Derrick figured he had a way to do it better. And he did have a way to do it better - we realized a lot of other people could use it , and that's how it all came about.

But what I always look back on, and what I'm very frustrated by, is how much traffic that site got, but how little an audience was built. because it was just like the hamster wheel -- I was really good at getting up and getting the viral traffic.

I had all the contacts to send viral stories out to, and hey, here's this video, let me write up a quick little blurb about it and get it out - you know, get it on Digg, and get it on Reddit, and all those little things, but didn't know about building an email list, didn't know about really building an audience that would sustain it all.

I looked at it was from the traffic perspective, not, you know, build something slow, steady that's going to last, develop a relationship, you know, it was all about 'get the page views because that's how we're making the money.'

If I knew then what I know now, what I have learned just by being a part of Copyblogger, and you know the project I've worked on at Copyblogger, and the great people at Rainmaker Digital - the great people that I get to work with, you know I could have done so much more with that site and with that traffic.

So, you know so that was really kind of my foray into it, and I learned a lot of lessons and in hindsight, I've learned a lot more by analyzing what I did wrong back then, you know within the context now of having a much better idea of what the right things are to do.

Dave: Yeah, and how long ago was that, when you were generating the traffic, but weren't aware of building the audience at that time?

Jarod: I launched Midwest Sports Fans in August of 2008, I believe.

Dave: Okay.

Jarod: And ran it for about a good two and a half, three years - and then probably there was about a year and a half there, once it really got going and I was really putting a lot of time into it, there was a good year and a half where that thing was just churning out tons and tons of traffic, and making really good revenue. I mean, for display ads, you know it was making really good revenue. But man, it could have done so much more.

Dave: Yeah.

Jarod: So much more.

Dave: Hindsight. I was telling somebody not too long ago that I quit blogging around the time that [Pat Flynn](#) started blogging, because I thought that I was too late to the game.

Jarod: Oh man!

Dave: I should have stuck with it, I think. So who have you looked up to, or who did you learn from? You said you kind of dove headfirst back in the, you know, around 2007, 2008, 2009, somewhere in there. Where were you going to learn about marketing. You're self taught, correct?

Jarod: Oh, yeah. Yeah, I mean, you know a lot of it was just googling as questions would come up - googling, reading, you know I, at that time, I viewed a lot of it through a sports context, because that's the project that I was working on, and so, you know, I learned a lot from a lot of the big sports bloggers that were out there at that time.

Like I said, I wish I had kind of had better direction for, you know, for where to go, who to learn from. You know, I did - it's funny because I did, I remember going to [ProBlogger](#), for whatever reason, I never ended up on Copyblogger.

I went to ProBlogger several times, especially, not on purpose, just by googling and finding ProBlogger, especially when it came to ads. But it wasn't really until I got to Copyblogger that I really found a place, obviously, to get a much more structured education, and really found mentors in the marketing space, and especially the online marketing space, who totally opened up my eyes to what I was doing wrong, you know, what really works, and not just what works, but what are the time tested principles that work. not just the latest flash in the pan.

Dave: Yeah, that's a great point, and one that I specifically want to ask you about, as I've noticed over the years, just kind of watching from this side of the internet, as far as Rainmaker Digital and your long play. You're not the only company doing this, so I'm kind of keeping up with both sides, but where, or why have you taken the stance to avoid some of the things that seem to be working even in the short term?

I would use the example of, like the popup windows for collecting email addresses and things like that. Has the decision been made, even though some of the studies seem to point to those as successful at getting higher email signuptates and things like that.

Clearly, you all decide to avoid those types of things, at least in the short term.

Jarod: Yeah, boy that's an interesting example, too, because we've had a lot of internal debates about that one specifically recently - because you're right, Copyblogger has never used those, and I don't know that it will always be that way. I can certainly see a time in perhaps not even too distant future where we do use them - and I've used them on some of my side project sites and found them to be pretty successful.

I think in general, you know, for everything, obviously we take our cue from Brian in so many ways in terms the direction the company goes - the direction the content is going, and he just tends to be such a thoughtful and meticulous and methodical thinker, and, you know, so everything is thought out, you know, many many steps ahead, and I think when you do that, you can't really afford to get caught up in darting this way and that and trying all of these new fangled techniques that are coming up.

Now certainly you have to be ahead of the curve, and I think you have to recognize what is something new that is built on solid principles that are proven in the past - but it's a better more efficient way to do it. Now maybe that's something to do.

But something that's just brand new that everybody's rushing to. It's like Periscope - you know, Periscope is like that right now, where everybody is rushing to it. There are certainly people who are being successful at it, but it's because they're building. It's an extension of what they were already doing that's working.

You know, for someone like [Lewis Howes](#), Periscope is perfect, because it's an extension of what he's already doing, so it's helping them take that to the next level because he's using it in a smart way. You know, some people might be abandoning something that's working because this is the shiny, flashing new thing, but it's not really an extension of what they're doing, it's taking them off on a divergent path that isn't really in the direction they should be going.

And so I think - at least, in my history in the time I've been with CopyBlogger, I think that's helped us is not getting caught up in a lot of that. maybe you miss something new here or there, but just staying on a path, a very fundamentally sound path, with what has worked in the past, what you know will work in the future, and just be careful about running and jumping on the next big thing just because other people are doing it.

Dave: Sure. And to kind of follow up with that question, I know for a while there you've been doing a push for the [Showrunner Course](#). What are some of the behind the scenes discussions that you've all had about conversions and about getting people from the audio,

from podcasting to actually get to a site and sign up? What was your strategy for doing that and what are some things that you maybe considered that you didn't do?

Jarod: Yeah. Oh, we had tons of conversations about that. You know, that was a really interesting experience for me because it was my first time, you know, being in charge of a course. Obviously John Lee and I ran that together, you know, so it was my first time seeing a course through from the beginning, you know developing.

Being in charge of the marketing of it, and it was as you can imagine I'm sure, it was an incredible resource to have people like Bryan, people like Robert Bruce, and Sonia Simone, and Chris Garrett, especially, to be able to bounce ideas off of. People who have been there and done that. And who can really help with - okay, here's what works - yeah, that's a good idea but here's what will probably happen with it.

One example of that is, you know, for the course and for all of our products, you know we have a 30 day money back guarantee policy on that course, so people can sign up, if they don't like it, at the end of 30 days or any time in that first 30 days, they can cancel. Well, obviously it's a digital course, that means people can go in, they can download every video and they can cancel immediately, if they wanted to be a jackwagon.

Dave: Right.

Jarod: Well, I kind of thought - is that okay? And I guess I was kind of thinking negatively, like all these people were going to do that and it was nice to have someone like Chris who's done launches so many times before to basically say 'look. There probably will be a few people who do that, and that stinks, but let's focus more on the good customers.

You know, focus more on the people who are going to act within the spirit of what's right - you know? They're going to get in there, they're going to try it out, maybe they realize it's not for them - they cancel.

That's what the 30 day money back guarantee is for. Not just for someone to come in and take advantage. And if you spend more time focusing on your best customers instead of worrying so much about your worst ones, you're going to build a better relationship, and that's going to be someone who will be a customer for your fourth, fifth, sixth product down the road. this other person - they were never going to be your long time customer anyway.'

Dave: Sure.

Jared: And then, you know, something you can do is add a little something to encourage people to stay after 30 days. And so for people who joined the pilot program, we actually do a podcast review for those folks. And the podcast review only became available on the 31st day.

So for people who actually stayed through, decided it was for them - now you get this extra thing. So there's kind of an incentive there to help - you know, to encourage people, maybe if they're teetering on whether to keep it or not, to encourage them to stay.

So just being able to have someone like that again, who's been there done that, the value of that experience was huge. There were tons of conversations like that. Some ideas I had, were just like 'no, we tried that it doesn't work.' another idea deserved 'yeah, that's a good idea! go for it, you know.'

Dave: Yeah, and that's a great tip to make sure you have an ongoing value that kind of ups the ante, so people know that if they stick around there's an extra value if they stick around if they're on the fence.

Jarod: Exactly.

Dave: How did you get people to go from listening to you - I know you have a lot of listeners, and I'm sure you and John Lee started off with probably quite a bit of an audience just from your other activities and other podcasts. How did you get those people to get over to the Showrunner, and was that successful, in what you were doing?

Jarod: That's a good question. I think, you know Jonny with what he has built at [Hack the Entrepreneur](#), probably had a more built in audience for a podcast about podcasting, than I did with some of my projects, and I think that helped.

Obviously having the built in audience of Copyblogger and the RainMaker.fm network was huge. That was, you know, that helped us go out the door with a much bigger audience than if he and I had just started it on our own. And I think the smartest thing that we did from the beginning - because Rainmaker.fm, when we started the Showrunner, there was one email list for the entire network.

And I think one of the smartest things that we did was to say 'hey, we want an email list just for the Showrunner. Let us build our own email list.' So from the beginning we built our own email lists, and very quickly we realized that we were going to tie that into the course.

And so, one of the ways that we built the email list was to say 'hey, when the pilot launch for the course goes out, it is only going out to the people on the email list. We aren't putting it out publicly, we're not tweeting the link, it's not going up on Copyblogger, it's only the people on the email list. So sign up if you want to get details.'

And that really helped us kind of see that list early on with people who were interested. Now obviously, only a small percentage of those people ended up actually becoming customers; although it was a bigger percentage than I was expecting which was really nice, but not everybody joined, but it got them connected.

And a lot of those people who were enticed because they were curious about the course, but who ever ended up joining the course, they're still on the list and they get our weekly updates.

They've become people who've become really good audience members even if they're not customers, which is totally fine! And they could become customers in the future, and they've become great advocate so I think building that email as from the beginning, and always having an extra incentive to get people on there. You know I think you've got to do more especially for a podcast then just say get on the email us for updates.

Dave: Yeah, yeah.

Jarod: Because most people with podcasts, they're not looking for their email for update, they're looking to their podcast player for it to come up in the feed. So if you want people to get in the email lists, you've got to give them more than updates.

I think that's one thing we've done well with the Showrunner, is that at first, it was obviously the exclusive access to the pilot launch of the course, and then it was starting the Essential Elements of a Remarkable Podcast Content series that people will get now, upon signing up. So there's something extra, but then they're on the email list and that helps you maintain that long term relationship with them.

Dave: Yeah, and the case in point there is that I'm on your list, and I noticed before the Podcast Movement Conference that you and John Lee sent out an email that said if you're going to be at the conference, track us down. So I responded and we were able to catch up that way.

Jarod: Yeah, yeah that's great!

Dave: Yeah, it was the perfect little scenario. So yeah, driving people to the email list for additional value is a great tip. Let me back up just a little bit because I'm not sure that everyone listening will know some of the background as far as what your involvement is in podcasting. So if I can just kind of jump back in time a little bit - how did you get into the podcasting world? Because you're officially the Vice President of Marketing for the Rainmaker.fm, which is podcasting for Rainmaker Digital, correct?

Jarod: Yes.

Dave: How did you move from general marketing/copywriting into the podcasting world?

Jarod: Well, you know I've always been interested in audio. It's so funny, I remember someone asked me this on an interview once, and I had never thought of it in this context, but this memory was triggered.

Way back in high school, and my silly high school friends and I would, like we would type up these ridiculous scripts of all us - but we still have the CD of all these "adventures", right? And we always joke about them, and they're all just filled with all this ridiculous inside jokes. But I realized that was kind of my first foray into a podcast, right? And I just did it when I was young and loved doing it.

I didn't get back into creating audio again until I was running Midwest Sports Fans, and Derek, the guy I was working with, he's kind of an audiophile, and so we had an extra room in our office, and he kind of made a sound studio out of it. Because he's a musician, and he just kind of wanted to do it.

I was like 'hey, could I use that stuff? I've been seeing people do podcast, and I'd kind of like to do some NFL picks and Fantasy Football picks, would that be okay?' And so I just kind of threw some mud up against the wall, to see what would stick, and did some interviews, and of course, none of them were very good and it didn't really catch on and I wasn't consistent with it. But that's kind of how it started, and I really enjoyed it even though I wasn't good at it and it never went anywhere.

And so when I came over to Copyblogger, the internet marketing for smart people podcast had become the lead. It had kind of been dormant, and neither Robert nor Bryan was really that excited about kind of taking it and helming it. And so I took it over, and pretty soon thereafter Damion joined me, and so I think that showed, you know, Bryan and Robert and everybody else that I had some ability in this, and was at least enthusiastic about it.

So, once the conversation came up about podcasting and starting our own network, I was one of the people who had experience in it, and had shown enthusiasm about it, so I was fortunate to be in on those conversations very early on, and it's just kind of gone from there, and I've naturally gravitated to it.

I now run five shows, two on Rainmaker.fm, three on the side, because I just love doing it. It's just one of those things I've found - the more I do it, the more I love it, and so it just kind of all happened very naturally. It's one of the nice things about working at Copyblogger, is, you know you show some enthusiasm and some aptitude for something and, eventually you'll be pushed into taking on more and more responsibility in that thing. And so I've been very fortunate to be able to do that for something about I really really enjoy.

Dave: Great - so is that, the majority of your time every week is spent on those shows, then? OR is it a small fraction compared to some of the other activities and responsibilities you have?

Jarod: Yeah, I mean certainly, like, the overall fraction of my life- yeah, because, you know a lot of my downtime is spent doing these side projects, as well, you know, my fiancée, she's like 'you're always recording something!'

Dave: Right.

Jarod: Yeah, you know, and certainly when we were launching the Showrunner course, that ended up being a big part of what I was doing, and so now, you know, it still is but we have some new projects that we're working on that hopefully the people will start to hear about and will start to show people that I'm really excited about. So, you know, that's another great thing about working for Copyblogger, is there's always a new horizon - a new kind of big project that we're working on. And so I've been fortunate to be involved in that as well. And certainly there's audio involved there, too, so I'm getting to expand my horizons a little bit and keep doing what I love. So, yeah, so it's evolving, as always.

Dave: Yeah, no that's great. To keep you interested. Learning keeps us engaged as well. So, with the Showrunner, and I do recommend that people check that out, I've listened to quite a few of the episodes, and you do a little bit of an introduction in the first few episodes, but tell us a little bit more about the concept for the Showrunner and how did you - I guess - maybe some of the behind the scenes how did you decide that that was the project that you were going to do. How did you land on that?

Jarod: Well, when we started talking about Rainmaker.fm, and we started talking about show ideas, I immediately said that I wanted to do a podcast about podcasting. because you know, by that point, obviously I'd been running the lead for a while. I'd had a couple of shows that I was running on the side, and I thought I had a lot to say.

Because one thing that I had noticed about people I had been talking to who were thinking about starting a podcast is, there was a lot of trepidation about starting and there were a lot of people who would get into it and couldn't get over any number of humps.

I felt like I had gone through all of that, you know, through all the shows I had started and stopped, through show that I never started simply because I couldn't get over that trepidation and I thought I had a lot to add to the conversation outside of the technical stuff. Because I am not an audiophile. I don't know the technical stuff that well. The nice thing is there are a lot of great podcasts about podcasting that cover that.

What I didn't feel like there was out there, at least not that I had found, and not to my satisfaction I guess, was a podcast about podcasting that talked about the mentality. And that, as much as it educated people about the components of an interview, and obviously there's certainly a science to it, and there are steps and there are things that you need to do - how to launch, how to do all of that stuff.

The bigger picture, about how to think, how to see yourself, how to view yourself in relation to your audience, how to create something bigger. How to look at it as more than just a series of audio episodes and think of it as a show. You know, an experience that you're creating.

And so I thought we could really add something to that and it was nice that Brian had struck up a relationship with John Lee, and we decided that we would end up doing a course together, so it made perfect sense for him to come join me on the Showrunner for that to be our show together.

The name Showrunner just seemed to fit. I'd always loved that term, and my first introduction to it had been with Vince Gilligan of breaking bad, you know, as the Showrunner, and I remember listening to his podcast about that show, and he, you know going into the thoughts behind it and everything that went into each episode and what they were trying to create for their audience.

I loved that. And I viewed myself as that, but for a podcast. And I thought that's such a great term, you know, let's take it and apply it here because it totally fits.

It doesn't need to be just for TV. I think, in large part, because we've really tried hard to give people good information - number 1, because that's really what they come for, but also number 2, because I think our enthusiasm for what we do really translates. I think people have really resonated with the show and with that big idea. At least that's a lot of the feedback that we've gotten, so you know it's - what the experience has meant to me in terms of what I've learned just by doing it.

And then you and so many other people who I've been able to share in the experience of them starting a show, or you know getting over a hump, or you know unlocking some new element of their relationship with their audience that they didn't know they could have - it just buoys me all of the time and gets me more and more excited for my own shows doing that. So it's just been wonderful and I've loved doing it.

Dave: And you mentioned being able to team up with John Lee, and that's one question I have for you that we can learn from is how important is the networking aspect and the person to person relationships when it comes to, you know, not just the interview show but any show?

I know it takes a lot of people and you know the networks help. So how much has that been an important part of you, or how important has that been as far as building relationships and networking?

Jarod: It's huge. It's absolutely huge. I mean networking is important, obviously, in anything. So, you know, that's always going to be important. I think certainly for us, with what we do at Rainmaker.fm, you know having the team that we do is really helpful. I mean, Robert Bruce obviously isn't out front hosting shows and doing shows anymore, but he's corralling the entire production process, and organizing it which is a huge job.

You know, it's a job for three people that he's doing. And he's got the help of incredible people like Toby and like Kelton and like Claire and Stephanie and everybody else who helps out. Which is just huge. Those relationships and really the trust among one another when you have a production schedule that's that tight is really important.

But then, you know, when you talk about the show and you know I do The Lead, and obviously the Showrunner I do with John Lee, I do the [Assembly Call](#) where I have three

regular co-hosts, you know podcast on the brink where I have one co host, and then I have my own show where it's just me and I don't have a co-host. You know so I've kind of done all the different kinds of formats that there are.

And you know, you can't overstate the importance of relationships. Because the networking is obviously huge for an interview show. You've got to network them, you've got to know new people, be able to bring people onto your show to continue to create a remarkable experience for your audience.

But then you've got to have really good relationships with the people that you're hosting with regularly, because I think people will really - when it's a show with consistent co-hosts like with John Lee and I on the Showrunner where it's almost always the two of us. People want to feel like they're part of something - they almost want to feel like they're kind of with the in crowd in a sense.

Like they're eavesdropping on two friends talking about this subject where they're experts. I think when you have a relationship, have a rapport with people, it makes it so much easier to take an audio sync on a journey because they're having fun and they're relaxed and they're just kind of in it and they get your inside jokes.

I really think when it comes to long term, that's really really important. And I'm seeing it more and more with these shows as they go on longer, how important that is, your relationship with the people that you're hosting with, because your audience will kind of follow that queue in how they view their relationship with you.

Dave: What do you think is the most difficult style of podcast. You've mentioned you've got several different scenarios. If somebody was just thinking about getting started, out of all the difference scenarios with a co-host or multiple co-host or interview, or monologue or teaching, what do you think is the hardest to get off the ground or get started with?

Jarod: Oh, you know they all have their challenges. Because, you know, when it's just you, obviously you've got to come up with everything. When it's you and a co-host, you've got scheduling issues that you have to go through, and you know you could have, you know, there could be control issues there, there could be lots of things.

I've been fortunate that I haven't had to deal with any of that, but I could certainly see that kind of friction causing problems.

Of course when you've got an interviewing show, you've got to do a lot of scheduling and there's a lot of time that you have to invest just in finding guests. For me, personally, I think an interview show is the hardest just because I do not enjoy the legwork for scheduling interviews.

So, you know, if you have an assistant who can do that. You know like Caroline Early has been doing a lot of that for us with Rainmaker.fm, which is huge.

Because you know, I know a lot of people when they're starting a show, and me when I was first doing my show at Midwest Sports Fans, it was erratic because it was just hard to schedule. And so I think that one is the hardest, but I think it's really going to depend on the person.

I think you really need to, that's where kind of knowing yourself is really important because - you know if you're trying to do a show on a topic that you don't really know inside and out - trying to do it just yourself, you know you may get through the first six or seven episodes, but then you may really struggle to come up with content after that, so that may be a harder one.

You know, and if it's with a new co-host, or with it's with someone that you don't work great with, you know that one may struggle to get off the ground.

I think it really depends, for me it's an interview show , but I think it's just about really taking a step back and looking at your own work habits, what you really enjoy, and maybe where you find frustrations, and then, kind of trying to project that toward how this podcast would go.

And I think this is a great question, because I think people really should analyze it and think about it before they start. Because that beginning momentum is important.

Everybody when they start a podcast has enthusiasm about it. It's something they want to say -- that they need to say, so they're excited about it, and that gets you going. But that enthusiasm for almost everybody, you feel a little dip after about 7 - 10 episodes.

So what gets you past that? And as little friction as you can have from your format, and from just the stuff you have to do to get in front of the mic, as much of that as you can remove the better off you'll be, and the more auspicious your beginning.

You know, you'll be set up for success, so. It's not something that you can't change, that you can't adjust as you go, but I think the better that you understand yourself and go out the door with one that fits, how you like to work, the better off you'll be.

Dave: Yeah, and if somebody's already down the road of one format, and they're realizing, or maybe listening to this and realizing that it's not working, do you think it's okay to change directions?

Or do you think they should try to taper off the podcast and launch something new? I know you can't - it'd probably be unique to each scenario, but what should someone consider, as far as whether or not they should change formats or start something new.

Jarod: Yeah, sure. You're right, it will depend, but in general I would just say experiment. Try something new. you know I think we, shoot, with the Showrunner, we've switched our format a few times, and finally after like six or seven episodes, we settled on the one that we have now, and we really like it, but I'm sure it'll change in the future.

But the Assembly Call for the first two years, it's a post-game show for Indiana Basketball Games. I know I can explain this to you, because as someone from North Carolina you get passionate basketball fans.

We started out just as a call in show on blog talk radio, and you know, which was great and all but it kind of got stale, I thought, anyway after a couple of years and so then we switched and did it as a google hangout, so there was actually a video component and we took away the call in part.

It was really hard to try and screen calls and we had to always have a producer, so there was friction there, and obviously you never know what you're going to get with a caller.

And we actually had feedback that was like 'hey, we actually kind of prefer just listening to you guys talk,' and so we switched that. And I think it really kind of gave the show a little boost of adrenaline. And then took us to the next level.

So that's what I would say, is experiment and be open about why you're experimenting, and hey this is an experiment. We're just trying something new. You know, if you don't want it -- maybe you have a show that comes out every Wednesday.

Maybe you don't do it right away as a substitute for your normal show. Maybe you put out a couple of new episodes as a bonus. See what the reaction is and then see if you work it in.

I would say try something a little bit different, because you never know. You might decide to do some interviews when you've just been doing a monologue and you find that you love the interview and this is a great new direction for you to go in.

I've really found that a lot of times my preconceived notions of what is going to work aren't always right. They often aren't right, and it's not until I actually get into it that I'm like - okay, this is actually better than I thought oh 'wow, this isn't what I thought. So, just try.

Dave: Yeah, that's great. What is an example of something, I like to try to figure out what's not working as well, if you don't mind sharing. What's something that you've tried to do in the world of podcasting or marketing for one of the shows that you just kind of fell on your face, or it just didn't work out at all. Does anything come to mind?

Jarod: Yeah, there's a lot of them that come to mind. I've got to choose one. So, [Podcast on the Brink](#) is another Indiana Basketball podcast that I host. And we were kind of going haphazard with it. We didn't have a set date, and we were just kind of scheduling episodes whenever, and it's funny, because, you know I've thought about not doing that show anymore.

The reason I do it is because it's almost like having a regular guest posting spot on a blog, you know, it's kind of that same principle. Obviously, people, we've gotten a big traffic boost on the assembly call since I've started doing that. Finally, this off season, I said to Alex, the guy that I co-host with, it's his site, I said 'let's start doing this every week.'

Which was kind of ironic, because my main problem with it was that I felt I spent too much time with it. But what's interesting is that as soon as we started doing it every week instead of this haphazard scheduling and not really knowing, it just became a regular part of the week.

It became a lot simpler to plan, and actually spent less time working on the planning and the scheduling because it just became regular and it was simple and it was streamlined.

And so that was actually something that was successful. You know, I look back at the lead and some of the early episodes that Damian and I did with The Lead. we did that eleven part series on the Essential Elements of a Remarkable Blog Post and some other ones, and you know, one of our big goals was we really wanted to do just short 10-15 minute episodes.

We had them pretty well scripted, and really tried to be real organized with it. And it just - people like those episodes, I think they went really well, but he and I never really got into it.

And it wasn't until we kind of threw the scripts away a little bit - we still have a pretty detailed outline that we'll work from, but we kind of threw the scripts away and made it more conversational that our chemistry really started to come out in the show.

We got so many more comments about how much more people enjoyed the show and how much better it was when we started doing that, bringing in interviews, so we thought, 'hey, keep it to a real tight 10-15 minutes, people appreciate this so it'll be shorter.

Some people did, but people just weren't connecting with it since they have since we've been a little bit more casual with it.

Dave: Yeah, that's good to think about and think through as far as trying to find the balance, so I was not aware that you shifted quite so dramatically from fully scripted to just sort of an outline. It's good to know that's going well for you.

I'm planning to do a few monologues myself, and I'm teetering between fully writing it out and just more of having an outline, so I'll be testing though and see what works.

Jarod: I've gone through that too. I went back and listened to some of my old podcasts that I did for Midwest Sports Fans, and I pretty much scripted everything out back then. Which you can tell - I mean, obviously, and I wasn't very good at reading a script.

I think just through practice, I've gotten better now, when I do have script, that I feel more comfortable so it's not quite so obvious. I go back and forth, you know, with the Showrunner we script absolutely nothing. Sometimes we won't even have a complete plan for what we're going to do with the show. But then, that's kind of how we want it.

That's kinda the style we've established. For Podcast On The Brink, for example, I pretty much script my entire opening. Just because I don't know. it just fits better that way.

For some reason I'm not quite as comfortable riffing on that show as I am on the Showrunner. And then The Assembly Call, this a live post-game show. There's no time to do anything because as soon as the game ends, we hit record.

So I mean, it's one of those things, you know, practice and really just see how you feel more comfortable and you may realize that different episode formats will dictate, you know, a different path for whether you go scripted or unscripted.

Dave: Who do you like to listen to? What types of podcasts do you listen to on a regular basis?

Jarod: That's a great question. Obviously I listen to a lot of our Rainmaker.fm shows. Both just to stay up to date with what's going on with the network, and because I learn a ton. I mean, that's, you know there's so many just talented smart people -experienced people- that work at Copyblogger that have shows.

When I'm not listening to Rainmaker.fm, there are certainly some marketing shows that I listen to, but I try to get out of that frankly, and listen to show that are a little bit different.

You know, I love listening to Dan Carlin, whether it's [Hardcore History](#), or [Common Sense](#). I really like story based podcasts. I like listening to [This American Life](#). I like [Mystery Show](#), you know podcasts that really get into telling stories. I like listening to [TED Radio Hour](#) and some of those. So, and I just like exploring.

I've found an incredible new fantasy football podcast. I was getting ready for some of my drafts a couple of weeks ago, and was just kind of scrolling through, and found a really really good podcast where the guys give good information.

Their production value is real high, and I actually learned a few things about podcasting just from listening to them, and how they structured their show. I love that kind of exploration of just going and listening to new shows because there are so many showrunners out there doing great stuff, that you know, if you just listen to the same podcasts all the time you'll never find.

So sometimes, it's just about going out and trying something random based on a topic I happen to be interested in that day. And a lot of times I'll find something great about that topic.

Dave: Yeah, I totally agree. I'm the same way. Does any particular podcast come to mind if I ask you what's the most remarkable podcast that you've listened to? Or you continue to listen to?

Jarod: The most remarkable. That's an awesome question. Um, I feel like I'll be unfairly leaving some out if I choose one. I've actually - so here, as I talk right now, I'm actually opening up my podcast app. You know, I've got to say, in terms of remarkable, [Radiolab](#) is incredible, and I know sometime, you know, public radio show and a podcast - what's the difference?

I only listen to it as a podcast. So that's how I know it. In terms of storytelling production value, that show is remarkable.

I'm a big fan of [Fresh Air](#) as well, and I think the interviewing on that show is pretty remarkable too. Those should be the main ones that come to mind.

Dave: Have you come across a podcast with probably a smaller audience, or kind of an off the grid - is there anything that you have in your list that, I like to say, most people probably haven't heard of but that you find really fascinating or remarkable/unique.

Jarod: Well, the [Fantasy Footballers Podcast](#) is definitely one. So for anyone who plays fantasy football, that would be one to check out. because it's really good. That's probably the main one that comes to mind.

I guess defining small is vague. I'll tell you the other one is '[Stand Out Get Noticed](#)' by Christina Canters. I talked about this at the podcast movement, I'm a big fan of her show. Just her - what she stands for, what she talks about. About being confident, and how she shares stories of her own vulnerability and her own moments where she's not confident and how she overcomes them.

It's really really relatable. It's kind of one of those where a lot of times the best athletes don't make the best coaches. You know, like, Michael Jordan would probably make a horrible coach, because there's no way he'd ever be able to relate to someone who wasn't as murderously competitive and as athletically gifted as him.

Dave: Right.

Jarod: But a lot of times the guys that make better coaches are the ones who struggled as a player because they had to really be cerebral and kind of maximize what limited ability they had so they ended up being really good coaches. And that's the kind of feel I get with Christina's show, where she's gone through all the struggle with having confidence, but then teaches you how to do it based on her experience.

I think that a lot of the shows I like to listen to, they have kind of that element to it. You know, I hope that's what we bring to the Showrunner where it's 'Hey, you know, we've gone through so many different challenges and issues and have made pretty much every mistake in the book.'

You know, we've just kind of been doing this longer than most of the people who listen, so, let us share with you our experiences and hopefully you can learn from them along the way.

I think a lot of times we underrate the value of just what we've learned through our own experience. There's a lot of people that are starting at a place where we were once that could really gain value from that. So I think that's a great starting point for anybody who wants to start a podcast and who may be fearing that they don't have anything worthwhile to say.

My guess is you probably do, it's just about mining your experiences and matching that with an audience.

Dave: Yeah, I would absolutely agree, and I think that comes into play for a lot of small business owners or people who are doing something as an art - either writing or literary art on the side, is that people buy into it, or they value it because it's that unique person's experience.

It's what they have to bring to the table. So I'm always encouraging people to quit trying to be like other people. You have something unique to say and a unique experience, and so to let that shine.

Jarod: Absolutely.

Dave: Do you see any trends in podcasting right now that you think are worth noting? I think we're in kind of an upswing, or an upcurve of the number of podcasts that are coming online and being adopted.

Since you've been in it for so long now do you see anything changing or any differences as far as when it comes to marketing or promoting or what it takes to get noticed?

Jarod: Yeah, I mean certainly there's a lot more podcasting coming which is great, and I love seeing that. I think really the biggest trend I'm seeing now is there's a lot more advertising on podcasts. I think that's going to grow.

I think we're kind of in an - and blogging went through this too - where it was almost like sites that had ads on their blog were kind of bad, and they were just out here to make money, but then it just became normal, that almost all sites were making money somehow.

And I think podcasting has gone through that, where obviously you have big shows that came from radio and became podcasts - where they're going to have an advertising because they always have and that's okay.

We're starting to see the smaller shows get it too and it's been really hard for smaller podcasts or even medium sized podcasts to have advertising because there haven't been really accessible networks. You know, midroll is still only really for the big podcasts. I mean you have to have significant downloads to even get in there.

John Lee was talking about that on the Showrunner. He's in midroller, but he's well below what they normally will accept in terms of average downloads. And I think a big part of that is just because podcast metrics are so unreliable.

I think as metrics get better, and advertisers start to trust the fact that they are talking to more affluent - on average - more affluent, more engaged audiences, typically more educated audiences, and once they can kind of drill into the numbers, I think we will see more networks start to popup for mid range and even lower range podcasts. And it will be easier for podcasts to have ads on the show and it will just start to be more widespread.

I just did a read on Podcast on the Brink last week for draftings, it was the first ad read that I had ever done on one of my shows, and it's coming. We've talked about doing it with Rainmaker.fm and so, I think that's probably the biggest trend, and so for anybody who loves listening to podcasts just because of the "purity" and because you never have to listen to ads, I would say indulge because that will probably change. Maybe not in the next 6 months, but I think over the next couple of years for sure.

Dave: So you mentioned that for Rainmaker.fm. I'm curious as to if you look at most of your web properties that there's very little ads, and if there are anything related to an ad or resembling an ad it's for your own product. But you mentioned possibly opening the podcast up to ads. What is your stance on that, why is it different for audio vs. written content.

Jarod: Yeah, it's interesting. I think it's still evolving right now. I think we're still deciding what we want to do. But we've had those internal conversations because frankly, I think we all had high hopes for Rainmaker.fm.

I think it has exceeded those. I think it's exceeded it both in what it was going to cost to run the network, but then also how much reach we would have and how quickly it would grow.

And so obviously, it makes it interesting and it presents interesting questions about where to go with it next because there's an argument to be made that it can just be it's own thing and it's own profit center, and we can put ads on it and it will pay for itself and that gives it value beyond just what it's been as a content marketing play.

It will still be able to serve a role as a content marketing play no matter what we do for the rainmaker platform and for anything else that we come up with, but there's an opportunity cost there of all we do a Rainmaker platform as because there's a lot of people that would be interested in our audience that would be willing to advertise.

And if there's synergy there between whatever the product is and if it would be useful to our audience, you know, is that revenue worth taking?

So it's really interesting. I think it's a little bit different - I know you asked why is it different on audio. I think it's different on audio for us anyway because Rainmaker.fm can really in a sense be siloed in a way that the other elements of our company can't be.

Dave: I can see the podcasts consumed differently than your regular content and that if I'm reading your blog it might make sense to go to authority and go to the next level and just get additional written content with some video. There's not that transition so much to the podcasting world.

Jarod: Yeah, and I think you hit on it. We've seen that our audience in a lot of ways, there's obviously a ton of overlap between Copyblogger and Rainmaker.fm, but there's also a pretty distinct difference between the people who are audio people and the people who are written people. We've heard from those people who would prefer that we stick with just written content.

I think that makes the difference. And really I just think for us internally how it would work - it would make sense. So, I don't know. I'm interested to see where we go with it. I mean those are conversations that we're having and we'll see what we end up doing.

But I think that there is just such an opportunity with podcast advertising now that it could just be one of those things where the numbers make it almost something that you can't turn down.

Dave: Sure

Jarod: And part of that is just how hot podcasts are right now and how much the network is grown, and obviously the credibility that it has with the Copyblogger brand, so we'll see. I mean that's something in the next 6 months to a year it'll either stay the same or you'll start to see that change.

Dave: Do you think there's an opportunity or have you seen anybody do a good job at offering a premium audio content, so you've got the free podcast but then maybe people to subscribe to get some behind the scenes or a paywall for our audio content. Have you seen anybody do that well?

Jarod: Dan Carlin does that with Hardcore History, actually. I believe the 10 most recent episodes are available for free. And then you have to go to his site and you can buy individual episodes or a series, like a series on World War II, or whatever it is.

And you can go buy those. And he does a pretty good job with that. I'm trying to think of some other ones. You know, obviously, I think you see John Lee Dumas do this - he's got his free podcast course, you know, and that's out there on iTunes and you can go download it, and it's 10 quick episodes.

And obviously, that funnels people then into his podcasting course. And so I think - and there are several examples out there like that. I think Marc Maron was doing that before, I don't know if he still is, where a certain amount of episodes are freely available, and then you can go buy access to the archives.

Dave: Do you think that might be a growing trend as a viable way to monetize a podcast.

Jarod: I think so. You know, I think obviously you know it's interesting. I think paying for the archives is really interesting because you know, I think you've got to have something that is pretty incredible to sell the archives, you know, like Hardcore History is just unique and just one of a kind. There is nothing else out there like it.

And there's certainly no one else out there doing what Dan Carlin is doing, so I think people will pay for that. I have paid for those archives.

You know, Marc Maron is Marc Maron. He's got a huge audience, huge numbers and he's interviewed a lot of famous guests. I don't think that for most people that selling access to your archives is going to be a smart way to go about it.

But I think using a podcast as free content for audience attraction and as a way to start to seed your content library - because you can take a podcast and then turn that into so many other, you know repurpose it into different kinds of content, and then use that as eBooks, use it as a content library, use it as a membership site, use it as a course.

I think the modeled that we followed for the Showrunner is a smart model. The type of model that will really work. Where you use the podcast to give people a lot of free education, to build the connection, and then you offer a course for the people who want to go next level. For the people who want the community, people who want the access, people who want the deep deep dives into the information that you just can't give on the free podcast.

You know, I think, using it that way is the smartest way for people like you and me and a lot of the people listening who want to start a podcast but who obviously don't want to just do it without it having a business purpose, and without it eventually having a return on investment.

Dave: So what's next in line for the Rainmaker.fm. I know you've had kind of a big launch initially, and then you've brought in several more shows. Do you have another set of shows that you're going to be launching or another season coming up, or what are your plans there?

Jarod: We do, yeah, we have some new shows that are in the pipeline right now which we're very excited about. I think right now we're in the process of trying to do more things to mix up the content. You know, bring different types of people in for interviews.

Not just people in the marketing echo chamber but getting outside of that and bringing different perspectives. Not just people who teach digital business to talk about digital business, but people who are actually out there executing it.

You know, bring them in get their stories, get their thoughts, you know do some different types of cross promotions within our shows so I think there's a network level that we can do for people who listen to the Showrunner - maybe they don't know confessions of a pink-haired marketer, but I think they'd really like it.

Dave: Sure.

Jarod: And almost following the lead of what a lot of really successful radio stations do to kind of cross promote and do some more of that. And then I think - obviously long term we have some big decisions to make about the direction of the network and where we go. Because I think, again, if we open it up to where it's about - where we ARE selling advertising on it, now that could open up a lot of different avenues for new shows and, so we'll see.

There's a lot of things, I'm really excited about the future of it, because there's so many different ways that we can go, but we've already built an incredible foundation in terms of an audience and learned a lot about what it takes to be successful as a network that now - kind of with that knowledge and those efficiencies built in, will allow us to get to the next level and do it much quicker than it took us to get where we are now.

Dave: Are there any shows that have stopped or discontinued or that you plan on cancelling or have already cancelled? That you can say publicly?

Jarod: I don't believe we've cancelled anything yet. It's one of those things, we do have a lot of people who are doing shows for the first time, and so there's going to be a natural attrition.

And if it hasn't happened yet at some point yet, I'm sure it will, just because - you know, people who started a show, something comes up in their business and they can't keep doing it, and so if that happens we'll either find a new host for that show, or that show will go away.

I think it's crazy that we've been doing it as long as we have right now and there aren't any like that where it's just like yeah, that shows' not happening anymore. You know we had Hit Publish, you know Pamela relinquished [Hit Publish](#), but Amy Harrison took over and kept that going.

So I think we've been really lucky and really fortunate that the people who have started hosting the shows have been really committed to it and have really found it to be enjoyable. Because a lot of people are past their 7-10 episode dip, they may be approaching or getting past their 20-25 episode dip, and a lot of times if you get past that you can really get rolling, you can really get moving.

But I'm anxious to see as we move forward how many of those shows are able to do that. At some point you can't just churn out a new episode every single week forever. At some point we'll go back through and pull in some greatest hits and do some different things to allow, to give people a break. And also, because you do a podcast for long enough, you've got a lot of great content in your archive that new listeners aren't going to be aware of.

So I think there are some smart ways to bring that content back in and then also give your hosts a rest. And I think people listen to this who maybe haven't started a podcast, that's something to remember.

You're not signing up to do a new show a week in perpetuity. You certainly can, you know, but there are ways to structure it in terms of seasons, you know, pull back episodes from your archive, that kind of thing. So you know, at some point, we'll start doing that. We're getting to the point now where we have that kind of archive, so it's like okay - that's pretty powerful, we've got to do something with this.

Dave: Since you've got I guess a vast amount of experience with a number of different shows, either in house or externally - what do you think the biggest mistake that people, either in the early stages, either getting started or maybe in that 7-10 episode - what's the biggest mistake that you see people make that kind of hurts their long term success.

Jarod: Getting impatient, I think. Getting impatient with your own aptitude for it, especially if you're new, but more than that getting impatient with the audience response. I think again, I talked about this earlier when we launched the Showrunner. Having the built in audience of the Copyblogger and Rainmaker.fm was huge for us to go out and have a built in audience to hear what we wanted to say. That was huge.

But I've been on the other side of it where you start a show with no one listening. And you're just putting it out there, no one is going to listen to it, and you've got to build it brick by brick, audience member by audience member and it goes so -- and sometimes you have a week where it's the same download numbers as the week previous and the next week it's fewer, and it's like 'I'm not even growing! I'm getting smaller!' It's just like that in the beginning.

You've got to be patient with yourself, be patient with the audience, because in a lot of ways it is like a snowball, and instead of working about the fact that you don't have a thousand people on your email list, focus on the five people that you DO have. Those are the people that clearly have gotten something from you, and they may end up being your best advocates.

They may be the people who go share it with the next five that you get, and so it starts to happen, and it starts to build on itself.

I think a lot of people get really impatient 'podcasting is great! Everybody's talking about podcasting! Okay, cool, I can do this and a month later I'll have everything!' No. This is a long term strategy, and if you're in it for the short term you probably shouldn't even start. It really is something to get into a make a long term commitment.

And the people I've seen who have done that have been really happy that they have. It doesn't mean that you can't ever quit or that you shouldn't ever quit - you know, obviously there are times when that is the smart decision. But I think if you go into it really thinking that you're going to get this quick hit success and that everything's going to be perfect and all that, you're just setting yourself up for failure.

Dave: That's great advice, and probably a good place to wrap up. Where do you want people to go to find out more about you. You've got your hands in a lot of different pots.

Jarod: I mean, certainly, we've been talking a lot about podcasting, so anybody who wants to learn more about that, you know, the Showrunner is probably the best place to go. Showrunner.fm is the URL.

You can go there, that's the show page, and you can both sign up for the email list to stay updated, and you'll get our content series 'the 4 Essential Elements of a Remarkable Podcast,' which basically is where we break down our core curriculum, you know, authenticity, usefulness, sustainability, profitability - those are the 4 essential elements and we talk about what those are and what they mean.

And the great thing about them is they're not just specific to podcasting. It's really about creating an audience experience. So whether you're blogging, whether you're planning an event, you know whatever you're doing, I think, understanding those elements and how they work together can be really beneficial.

So if you want to continue this conversation that we've been having right here, something relevant to that, I think going to the Showrunner and getting on the email list would be the best thing to do.

Dave: I'm going to make sure that all the various things that we've mentioned are linked to in the show notes once the episode is live. But that should be it! Jarod, I really appreciate your time and your insight. You've provided quite a lot to digest. It's been really helpful. I really appreciate it.

Jarod: Well, thank you! This is fun and I appreciate you having me on.