FAQ MARKETING LOGIC

ARCHIVE AUDIO INTERVIEW

John Thornhill

Guest Interview Transcript



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John Thornhill

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John Thornhill Interview

Editor: This time we're chatting with an entrepreneur who's an ex factory worker. He left all that behind to become one of the UK's leading online expert. He's also one of the most down to earth entrepreneurs that you're ever likely to meet. He originally hails from the Northeast of England. So John Thornhill is a true British success story, but how did it get started and what challenges did he face along the way? Let's find out. John, it's great to meet you.

John Thornhill: Hi, thanks for having me. I feel honoured to have been asked to do this, so I'm looking forward to it.

Editor: Well, it's great to have you. Now a little bird told me that you started out online selling on eBay. Is that right?

John Thornhill: That is right. I try and keep it short because it's quite important that I tell people this. I started looking to make money online around 2000 and tried some crazy, crazy things. And it was around 2002 I discovered eBay. And I was fascinated by the fact you could take literally anything and sell it and make money. But what got me I've got my attention was I saw a lot of people were selling, they were selling eBooks but not in digital format. They were selling them on a CD-ROM. I don't know if you remember back in the day you would, you would burn files to a CD. And then I basically bought this CD-ROM off someone, it had about 25,000 eBooks on with resale rights. And I paid around 50, $60 for this. Now when it arrived, I thought to myself, "Wow, this person spent around maybe five, $6 to get this to me, including postage. I'm going to do the same."

Because everything had resale rights. So I copied the disc as you do and put it on eBay and for a little while it was doing okay. The problem was lots and lots of people were doing the exact same thing. One thing just to sidetrack, one thing about eBay is you can see what's selling, you can see what's not selling and you can see how much people make. So I was watching people who were doing okay, but then slowly but surely the earnings were dropping, the prices were dropping. So I had this idea that I would take individually books, so the best ones from the collection and just sell them on their own for anything

between $1 and maybe $10. And it flew, it took off. So originally I was literally selling a zip file or sometimes I would send the ebook as an attachment.

That's how I would deliver it. But over the course of around six months, I developed a system where small commitment on eBay, they would spend one or $2 or maybe a little more sometimes. I would deliver the ebook automatically. I would leave feedback automatically, basically everything got automated. And I got to a stage where I was selling around a hundred or 150 eBooks per day. So I was doing okay, I was doing three, $400 gross per day. Now this is what I want to mention my breakthrough came, now I was doing okay. My breakthrough came when I decided to put a course together to show people how to do this. So I would supply everything they needed, I would supply the listing material. I would should them how to automate the process, and I put a product together that sold for $97 and what happened it just took off.

I was selling at least five to 10 copies per day. So I went from doing maybe a couple of hundred dollars per day to sometimes over a thousand dollars in a day. And this is what I want to mention here. I figured a way to make money on eBay and I was doing okay. But when I started to teach others how I was doing it, it exploded. And that was when I realised that people they're prepared to pay to learn how to do things whatever it may be, build a list, get traffic, whatever it may be and that's when it started to take off.

And this was around, I don't know... I started off on eBay around 2002, I started doing this around 2004 and by 2005 I was generating much, much more than I was working in a car plant where I used to work. And then I finally plucked up the courage to quit my job which was on June the 3rd, 2006 at 12 noon, I remember like it was yesterday. So that's basically how I got started and since then I've developed many programmes, software tools, things like that can help people online.

Editor: And it just goes to show that from small acorns, mighty oaks can grow. And for those people that haven't come across you before John, maybe I could ask a little bit more about your background. You mentioned you worked in a car plant, you're an ex factory worker. Maybe you could tell us a

little bit more about your background and how that led you into finding eBay and then your own online business.

John Thornhill: Well, to be honest, I hated my job. I was a human robot. If you can picture a production line, especially in a car plant, I was doing the same thing every 90 seconds or so and I did that for around 15 years. And the money was okay, especially for just a manual skilled labour job but I had to get out and I started to look online. Like I say it was around the year 2000 I was starting to look, I basically got a computer and almost straight away I was looking at ways to make money online. But it took me a couple of years of literally trying some crazy, crazy things. I remember buying into this programme which said if you leave your computer switched on you will make money.

So I was like, "Oh wow, this sounds good." I paid $20 or something like that. And it was just throwing ads at you and getting you to click links. But for people who have tried things and believe me I've tried literally everything, and it was almost by fluke I discovered eBay. I can't even remember how I discovered it. Obviously it's a big site and I'm pretty sure everyone's aware of it. But back in 2002 I just stumbled across it was fascinated by the way everything worked, and luckily I stumbled onto someone selling ebooks and that's where it all took off.

Editor: Wow. And when you stepped away from working in the car plant, that must've been quite a worrying thing. Because a lot of people, I believe think that, "Will this last. I've gone into the online world but is it going to be almost like a job for life."

John Thornhill: Yeah. I probably could have quit about a year earlier than I did. Picture this I'm going and doing a night shift, some 10 and a half hours night shift. And I would sometimes get home and I've earned a month's wages online and I haven't done anything if you know what I mean, while I've been at work. And I was thinking, "Wow, this is unbelievable this is taking off. This is big." But still I had a secure job, a steady job it paid decent money I got by and it was a big, big step. Because obviously when you go it alone it's down to you.

But I think with what's been happening recently in the last 12 months or so, I think a lot of people have realised even people who maybe had secure jobs and maybe realising that's maybe not the thing now. I personally don't think there's many secure jobs out there, anyone could lose their job tomorrow. So I actually think I'm in a better position now that it's down to me. I'm in control and I'm not relying on a company telling me I've got a job. I work for myself and I'm in control.

Editor: And you're also responsible for the amount that you earn as well because of that. You can decide if you want to do a promotion for another product or launch a new product yourself. Whereas if you're working in a 9:00 to 5:00 job, then you're pretty much dictated to what you will earn each year, so there's an attraction there as well.

John Thornhill: Of course. If you've got a job and you want to earn more money, you've got probably two choices and that's to get a second job or work a lot of overtime. Believe me where I worked there was people who were tied into mortgages and things like that, and they literally had to work overtime every weekend and that's not a good life, is it?

Editor: That's right. That's right. So what made you want to get into the online space in the first place? Was it just that desire to make more money.

John Thornhill: Yeah. I think we have this vision of pushing a couple of buttons and a tonne of money is going to almost come out of the machine in front of us. I think it's the freedom it gives you and I'm going to be honest the financial side of it is fantastic as well, but for me it was a freedom to do what I want when I want. Like I said, I would go to work and work 10 and a half hours and my online business had made more money, sometimes a month's wages and I didn't do anything, everything was automated. All I had to do was provide some support, which eventually I outsourced as well. But so then you realise you've got this time freedom as well and I think you've only got so many hours in a day, do you really want to be spending a third of your life working for someone else? Well, I didn't want to do that and that's why I started looking online and luckily I found a way.

Editor: I love this story as well because as you say it starts almost accidentally humble beginnings just selling things on eBay. And then it

morphed itself into more of a training kind of business and since then it's just exploded. Do you have any idea how many people you've trained over the years John?

John Thornhill: Wow. Wow. Wow. That is a good question. It will be thousands. Sometimes I go to an event and the amount of people that come up to me and say, "I remember you from the eBay days." I haven't done eBay since 2008, 2009, something like that. The amount of people who tell me that it's unbelievable. People come at me and say, "You're the guy who got me started." And I'm like, "Oh my God. I feel humbled." And so there's a lot of people who just basically they mention eBay and I'm blown away.

Editor: And you're all doing this from your home, you're based in the Northeast of England. And a lot of people think that you need to be based in a big city or wherever to be able to achieve the kind of results that you've achieved over the years. How much would you say where you're from has had an influence on the success that you've had?

John Thornhill: Where I'm from? There's actually a few entrepreneurs from this area but like I say it's just humble beginnings for me. And wanting to better my life. Wanting to have a better life for me and my family and that's where it started. But you're talking about offices and things like that. I've got an office. I basically, I love working from home, but for me there's a lot of distractions. I'm in the home office right now with the current situation and I did get an office and I actually thought, "Do I really want to be doing this? I'm sort of putting myself back in that job scenario where I'm going almost to work." But I'm literally there... Where I am the complex of offices, most guys are in suits and things like that and I turn up sometimes in sweat pants and a t-shirt because I'm going online.

I might turn up at 10:00, 11:00 in the morning. Sometimes I'm leaving at 2:00 or 3:00 in the afternoon, they must think, "What does that guy do?" For me personally, you can do it from home but I just found it was too many distractions. So I did get an office, I've got my son who works for me. I've got a few people who work for me remotely and it works very well.

Editor: Great. And if you were starting out now, what would you say that you would maybe do differently?

John Thornhill: Oh, that is a good question. I think doing differently, I will probably start building a list from day one, building a mailing list. I was probably maybe two, three years into my career and doing okay and I wasn't building that all important list. And when I did start building a list, I was doing it through my internet service provider, my hosting company, sorry, and it cost a lot of money. Get an AWeber account today, get a GetResponse account today, whatever. If you're in a position now where you want to build an online business, I can't stress the importance of building a list from day one. That's one of the things I regret not doing because I was building up this... I probably sold maybe 10,000 units-

Editor: Really.

John Thornhill: .... before I started to think, "Hold on. I need to get the people's emails and things like that." And so I might've made a little bit of faster progress if I'd done that.

Editor: It's interesting though to toll the 10,000 units and then you go, "Actually now I need to start building that list." It shows that it's never too late in many respects.

John Thornhill: That's very true. That is very, very true. If someone was coming to me at the end saying, "John what do you recommend I do?" I think, first of all, most people who I speak with they tell me they've tried everything or they'll say, "I've spent a lot of money." But nine times out of 10 or even 99 times out of a hundred, they're looking for something push button simple. They're looking for that secret thing, the golden goose, whatever you want to call it. And then I usually bring them back down to earth and say, "You're going to have to work hard." And for me it's all about creating your own products and services. Do you know any successful entrepreneur online who doesn't offer some sort of product or service? I can't think of any.

And I think people need to realise that if you can put something together, what can help others then that's the start. And basically start selling product, start building that customer list and take it from there. But a lot of people, they get caught up in this cycle of buying product, after product, after product. Maybe trying it for two or three days, giving up, seeing the next big thing coming or the next big launch buying into that, and they just get caught in a

never ending cycle where they're just spending money and their not going anywhere.

Editor: Yeah. Yeah. And that's the thing you have to break that cycle in order to be able to build a business. And as you say, this is a business. So with any business, you have to invest time, effort, energy, maybe a little bit of money as well along the way. But the great thing about the internet is that it doesn't take a huge amount for you to be able to actually take those first few steps. John you've done so well in your career, so many accolades, so many awards. I know that recently you've won a ClickBank award. Do you want to tell me a little bit about that?

John Thornhill: Yeah. I'm a ClickBank Platinum Vendor. I actually was a ClickBank Platinum Vendor in the past. When I started putting my information products together basically when I left eBay I went to ClickBank and then obviously we've got JVZoo and WarriorPlus. And it was about maybe 2014 I came away from ClickBank and moved over to the likes of JVZoo but I still had products on ClickBank. Anyway it was around... When was it? Maybe the start of 2019, there was all these peer publishers and things like that. So I decided to most so my business back to ClickBank and within... I think it was within four months I was told I'd already qualified for platinum seller status. I'm basically in the top 1% of ClickBank sellers and ClickBank is a fantastic platform.

There's a lot of benefits to using ClickBank for anyone who's not familiar, obviously, it's a place you can put your products on, have affiliates, find your products and promote them. But they do a lot of other things they make it very, very easy for affiliates to find your product, promote your product. But they also take care of things like taxes, paying affiliates, things like that. I first started using it around 2006 and I'm still using it today.

Editor: Wow. That must make you really proud as well to be up in that top 1% of sellers on ClickBank. That's quite some achievement.

John Thornhill: Yeah. Yeah. I had no idea. Like I say I got an email off way off my ClickBank rep because ClickBank is a huge huge company. I could be wrong here, but I think they do over a million dollars every single day in sales. It's a very, very big company. And I think most people who do this online

thing know of ClickBank, obviously like I say we've got the JVZoos, WarriorPluses and there's other networks out there. But for me ClickBank's the big one.

Editor: It's interesting as well that you say it takes away many of the headaches that perhaps a lot of people... If you're just new to the business or just trying to get into the online space, there are so many questions that kick around in your mind. One of them is like, "How do I collect the money? How do I pay the taxes?" And as you say with ClickBank it actually takes away a lot of those headaches right from the get-go.

John Thornhill: Yeah. Yeah. Every Wednesday they pay you like clockwork, I call Wednesday a ClickBank payday. Basically when a sale comes in, if an affiliate made the sale, they will get paid... Basically ClickBank's a merchant on record so they take the payment, take their fees, send the money to the affiliate, they collect taxes, VAT, things like that and then you get your cut into your account and then every Wednesday you get paid.

Editor: Nice. Nice. When you first started John were your family, were your friends supportive of this or were they quite dismissive? Would they say, "Yeah, you'll, you'll never make it."

John Thornhill: That's exactly what most of my friends were like. I've still got the same circle of friends, I've had the same circle of friends for many, many, many years. But a lot of them were sort of thinking, "What's he doing? He's always on his computer." And things like that. And it's surprising that over the years a lot of my friends or maybe my friends, friends, people who've heard about how I'm doing they'll come to me and say, "What is it you do? Can you help?" Et cetera. And I get some crazy requests from people who say, "I want to build a website and things like that, can you help?" But mostly we had the initial, "You're wasting time." But now obviously all my friends realise that I've done the right thing.

Editor: So you had the naysayers at the beginning-

John Thornhill: Yes.

Editor: ... but now they're on side.

John Thornhill: And I think that can help spur you on as well. "I'll show them." You get that attitude where you want to prove people wrong and that can help you move forward.

Editor: Absolutely. And do they ever say John you've changed but obviously for the better.

John Thornhill: To be honest, most of my very close friends tell me I'm the same guy. And I do try to be, I still go out and goof off with them and things like that and party with them, whatever you want to call it. Just to see them now as it was apart from the fact where we maybe got a little bit less hair and we've maybe put on a little bit of weight.

Editor: Haven't we all over the years and you have trained some big names. I don't know if you can name any of the students that you've had that have come through your courses John?

John Thornhill: Yeah. Some of the biggest names Omar Martin, Lee McIntyre who goes back a long way. I helped him get started online and there's some huge names... I'm trying to think of some off the top of my head.

Editor: Yeah. I know, here's me putting you on the spot.

John Thornhill: But Omar Martin is my most successful student. He's done multiple millions online. He literally bought into my first coaching programme in 2008. And he actually said to me, the first communication he gave me he said, "I'm going to be your most successful student. Just tell me what to do and I will follow it to the letter." And I was blown away by that and it turned out to be true. Because I've got my coaching programme and sometimes what I say to my students is, "Just follow my programme because it's step by step daily training. Follow it to the letter and then you'll get results." And we have a Facebook group and then someone will come in and say, "What if I do this? What if I do that?" And Omar is usually straight in, "Stop. Just follow the programme and you will get results."

Editor: That's great. And what an accolade as well because Omar, we'd love to get him on the show at some point, we'd love to interview him as well. Maybe he could tell us some of the other side of the story about how he discovered John Thornhill, for example, that'd be great. But in terms of the

course you mentioned your coaching programme, John. Can you maybe explain a little bit more about that and also how people can find out more about the coaching programme?

John Thornhill: Yeah, it's called Partnership To Success. It's called Partnership To Success. My original coaching programme was just called John Thornhill Coaching in 2008. And basically I'd learned the process of product creation from start to finish. And over the years it's evolved. And I think this is maybe... we're into maybe the fifth version of Partnership To Success has been running since 2011. And it shows you literally how to go from zero to build an online presence, create a product and everyone can create a product. I don't care what anyone says. A lot of people think, "What can I teach? Why would people want to listen to me?" Et cetera. But I teach all of that.

And basically we follow right through to building out your members area, creating your sales page, everything. But the thing what I believe makes my programme different is when you come launch, I help you promote it. I basically promote it as an affiliate and I let my affiliates know that you've got a launch and things like that. We've actually got two launches this week from students who are having their very, very first launch and it's very, very exciting.

Editor: Yeah. Sounds it as well. And how can you find out about the Partnership To Success,

John Thornhill: partnershitosuccess.com.

Editor: Nice and simple.

John Thornhill: Yeah. Nice and simple.

Editor: And what advice would you give to someone who is just starting out?

John Thornhill: The biggest advice, I know I said it earlier is don't look for that easy push button, make money for doing nothing riches. I know that out there, we get pushed every single day we get emails all these different marketers having launches from their affiliates, telling you how easy it is and hate to burst your bubble and say it's not as easy as people make out. It takes hard work and dedication, but if you're prepared to put the work in and you

follow someone who's done this before, it doesn't have to be me. I would say find a coach, find someone who's been there and done that. Ask if they've got a course or a programme, or if they can help you personally, whatever.

And just follow the advice they give because it took me almost six years to get to the position to quit my job. I didn't have any coaches, didn't have anyone to go to, made so many mistakes. And that's another reason I put my course together because I made so many mistakes that I can teach people not to make the mistakes I made. So that's the best advice that I can give, prepare to work hard and find someone who is where you want to be and just follow what they tell you.

Editor: Makes absolute sense. What does the year ahead have for you, John? Is there something you're working on?

John Thornhill: Yes, I've got a few products in the pipeline. But this year I'm actually going to try and focus on getting my programme out there more, even though I've been doing it for like I say I think we're in our 11th year, I want to try and help more people. That's the way I look at it, the more I can get my programme out there the more people will hopefully have results. And I'm focusing on trying to push that in a big way this year, I'm looking into doing more things like, for example, Facebook ads and things like that. But I'm also working on a website builder with Dave Nicholson, I've done a lot of stuff with Dave Nicholson over the years. Basically, we've created this over the years, this website builder that we use for ourselves, and we've decided to put it together and launch that... That's probably going to be one of the big launches we've got this year.

Editor: Nice. And do you have a time scale on that?

John Thornhill: Probably March, April, but we're very, very good at putting dates back, things getting in the way. We wanted to be ready before we even start thinking of launch date and we're nearly there, we've been testing it, we've let a few people have access they love it. There's so many page builders, website builders, whatever you want to call them. It is super, super, super simple, very, very newbie-friendly. Because excuse me, I know for a may using website builders myself, I'm not going to name what I use, but a lot of people still have problems with them when they come to my support and

say, "I can't do this, I can't do that." So we've tried to come up with something what eliminates our problem and it's super, super simple.

Editor: Nice, nice, well, good luck with that launch later on in the year. I mentioned earlier about the Partnership To Success programme. Again, if anybody wants to find out more about that it's partnershiptosuccess.com. And if anybody wants to find out more about you John, where should they go?

John Thornhill: Just johnthornhill.com or search my name, go to my blog. And you can find out more about me. I'm not going to send you to a sales page or anything that. You go to my blog, you can check my about me page and you can see some of the products I've got on there. And if you want to connect with me, you can.

Editor: Fantastic. Well, John, thank you so much for your time today. Thanks for being so generous with the information as well. It's been great chatting with you.

John Thornhill: Brilliant. Thank you.

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