

# Product Genius Workshop

## Q&A 2

By Tony Shepherd

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*Morning all...*

The first thing to say is that I am available right now to answer any questions you might have.

**You can contact me by email:** [TonyShepherd397@gmail.com](mailto:TonyShepherd397@gmail.com)

**You can live Skype chat with me:** tonyshepdirect (please don't voice call me unless we've made a prior arrangement)

**Facebook Instant Messenger:** <https://www.facebook.com/tonyshepherdhippymarketing> (You might have to 'friend' me first)

I'll be around for the three-week duration of the workshop, Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm GMT

If you're outside the UK time zone or don't overlap in any way you should use email. I'll get back to you.

There might be a delay in getting a reply from me at busy times but I WILL reply.

I'm looking forward to working with you

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tony Shepherd". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

# Q&A 2



I'm being totally honest and totally transparent with answering these questions.

There are some great questions too so hopefully I'll supply everything you need.

If you have more Q's or want more detail just content me in one of the ways above and I'll get back to you ASAP and/or answer fully in the next Q&A

Best

*Tony*

**Q. Subject lines. Short or long? Curiosity-driven or factual?**

**A.** For me it's anything I can think of. Curiosity is always a good one as is fear of losing out.

Lee McIntyre always got a great response with a simple subject line he used that I stole:

*'Quick UPDATE for you'*

I use that, or *'Quick HEADS-UP'*

*'Quick Announcement'*

The use of capital letters seems to make a difference to the open rates too.

But it's the fact that no one wants to miss out on an update, or heads-up or miss out on an announcement.

You have to use them sparingly though.

My personal favourites are simply summary/teasers of the stories I write.

So for example:

*The day the cast of the Titanic movie were poisoned*

*Mike Merrill sold himself. THIS is what happened next...*

*When a photographic memory is used for EVIL*

*Death By Camel.*

The above subjects all got good open rates.

I'm not going into WHAT the open rates actually were because it's a meaningless statistic. My open rates might be far lower than yours because I mail every day or far higher because I do this all the time and I have a sense of what makes a good subject.

For me the test is, if I'd want to open it myself it'll probably work :)

### **Q.How do you get past or stay under the radar of spam filters like Gmail?**

I try not to worry about it, although I try to stay away from any words you might read in a Viagra email. Weirdly the worst blacklisting I've ever had when using Aweber was when I used the word 'spam' in an email.

My emails went into the bin for the next week or more. I don't understand why because I reckon any spam email wouldn't actually use the word 'spam' but there you go.

I used to disguise the word 'free' too, so I'd write 'fr-ee' or 'fr\*e' or similar but a couple of times I forgot and it didn't seem to have any bad effect so stopped doing it. I do know a couple of marketers who ALWAYS disguise that word though and swear it has an impact.

Other than that I just write as I speak.

I have no way of verifying this but I suspect Google is trialling (or will do very soon) a 'natural feel' filter that looks at the words being used and compares them to natural speech patterns and also looks

at layout of emails too - maybe bullet points, too many live URLs, overuse of trigger selling words such as *free*, *discount*, *sale* etc.

It's another reason I sell in the P.S. - because the P.S. usually takes up less than 20% of the email. Just guessing but I'm keeping an eye on results and will let you know.

**Q. Curious, how many books a month do you tend to read and, do you mainly read them cover to cover or just skim them for the juicy bits?**

**A.** I read voraciously. Always have done, from childhood. I usually have three or four books on the go at one time, some I read cover to cover and some I skim. I like books that are 'skimmable' like those by Seth Godin and Dave Trott which have stand-alone chapters. The only thing I don't really read much any more is fiction.

**Q. What are your Top 3 favourite business books related to online marketing?**

**A.** This changes all the time as I read new stuff and re-read old stuff and realise how great it is. Currently my top three are *Price Strategy* By Dan Kennedy, *Predatory Thinking* by Dave Trott and *How To Get Super Rich in the Opportunity Market* by TJ Roehleder. Remember it's not about the book though - it's about what you get out of it.

## **Q. I was wondering about this so I looked it up...**

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*"Myth 3: If You Rewrite, It's Not Plagiarism*

*In the same vein, many believe that the easiest way to avoid plagiarism is to simply rewrite and restate everything in the paper. This, however, does not work.*

*Not only can many plagiarism detection tools spot rewritten text (it's almost impossible to rewrite a lengthy work well enough to completely avoid detection), but it doesn't make the work any less plagiarized.*

*The reason is that plagiarism is not just about words, but about ideas and information as well. If you copy someone else's work, even without using any of their words, and provide no attribution, it might not be a copyright infringement, but it is still plagiarism.*

*So while rewriting a piece could, theoretically, could help avoid detection with automated tools, it doesn't make it any less of a plagiarism"*

*<https://www.plagiarismtoday.com/2015/02/23/5-plagiarism-myths-many-still-believe/>*

===

***So it looks like I'll have to be very careful to attribute sources if I take mostly from just one piece of content.***

***What do you think?***

A. Great question.

It's an interesting one.

As I understand it (and do your own due diligence I'm not a legal professional) an idea can't be copyrighted, but the expression of an idea - the presentation, words, images, audio etc CAN be copyrighted.

With factual things such as the stories I write about castles, Napoleon, the civil war, serial killers and the like, these are historical facts available to anyone so it's unlikely I'll fall foul of any



law. You can find the same facts in Wikipedia, encyclopaedias, niche websites and they all say the same thing because that is what happened. There is no idea involved. John Lennon WAS murdered on 8th December 1980 and there's no 'interpretation' involved. It happened so can't be plagiarised.

With ideas it's a different story perhaps. The idea that (for example) Jesus married Mary Magdalene and had children that eventually became a royal European bloodline was put forward in a non-fiction book in the 70's or 80's (forgot the title) so if you were going to base some work around that you would definitely (in my opinion) have to credit the source. I think the authors tried to sue Dan Brown for pinching their idea in one of his books but it was unsuccessful,

I think if you credit any source but at the same time put forward your own opinions and experience you won't go far wrong.

That said I think it's also fine to take someone's idea and expand on it OR disprove/disagree with it. For example you could suggest that Tony Shepherd's idea of using stories in your emails doesn't work and in your opinion a better way to do it is XXXX and here is your proof/theory then that's fine too.

This is only my opinion remember so check out the legalities for yourself.

**Q. Are there any sources of FREE content that I can just go out and use for my paid products?**

A. Not that I would personally use. There are books and other content that have come out of copyright (ONE version of *Think and Grow Rich* has, but the others are fiercely protected) but even if you found the correct version (and I'm told that Project Gutenberg won't go near it) would you feel OK about selling it?

Personally I feel that I have to bring a LOT of value to my paid products and just using something without adding anything wouldn't sit right with me.

Now a version of *Think and Grow Rich* where I added my comments on the chapters, brought it up to date and gave examples from my own life and business is another matter. That could work, but it's a personal choice.

So in terms of ideas and theories to work from YES there are loads of sites out there that provide free content in the way that I outlined in Module 3 but nothing that I know of legally that you could just cut and paste into a paid product.

I have worked with clients who hate rewriting and so dictate speak

**Q. Is there a missing part of the puzzle? Surely it's not as simple as just using content for research then basing your own products on it?**

**A.** Well yes it is. Until you have a lot of experience and results under your belt so you can write about what you are doing in your business or niche or how it went when you climbed Everest, survived a plane crash or bedded a supermodel then YES, content is the way to go.

If you put me in a room with just an internet connection and a word processor I could create a product that would sell. You could, anyone could with a little practice.

The wealth of content that is out there right now is stunning. Use it.

**Q. Do you have a fast-track guide?**

**A.** I do have a fast-track PARAGRAPH outline - here it is:

Once you've decided on your product, go out and research it. Find the three top (top-selling AND in terms of customer reviews on Amazon) books out there and buy them.

Use the method in Module 3 (How to find what content you need to include) to list what you need to put into your product.

Research it and write it up.

Next either look for QUOTES (use Google) from experts who have done the thing you're writing about OR interview experts in your niche who have done it or have an opinion on it.

Here's an example:

If I was writing a book about email marketing from the point of view of how repulsion marketing works (being very opinionated so you attract rabid fans who agree but repulse people who don't agree or who are offended by your opinion)...

...I'd look for who stands out in this field.

Ben Settle does this really well although I don't think he'd agree to an interview so I'd read his books and quote him.

Michael Cheney on the other hand who began using these techniques a year or two ago is a really nice guy (despite his emails sounding harsh sometimes) so he might agree to an interview, even if it was just by email or FB chat about how he uses repulsion marketing.

I'd get on a few lists like those from the guys I mentioned above and make notes about how the technique made ME feel.

By doing this you're turning cold, factual content into living, breathing examples of how your idea works in the real world.

If you want to know WHO to research/interview jump on a related group on Facebook or Reddit or ask in a related forum (Warrior Forum if you're in IM)

*Who is the best repulsion marketer?*

*Who teaches the best Keto diet?*

*Who does the best conspiracy theory podcast?*

*Who has the best SEO blog?*

*Who has the best FBA Amazon course?*

And so on.

Whatever your product is about, find the go-to guys or guy-esses in that niche and read their blogs and their books.

Interview them if you can, quote their books and blogs if you can't.

Sprinkle it among your content.

They'll bring your content to life :)

Best

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tony Shepherd". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the word "Shepherd".