

BUSINESS MADE EASY[!]



Episode 18

The Importance of Great Web Design and How to Get a High Performance Site for Your Business

Full Episode Transcription

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Jason:

You're on episode 18 of the 'Business Made Easy' podcast, let's do this Mia.

Mia:

You're on the 'Business Made Easy' podcast, where we make business easy. Here's your host, Jason Skinner.

Jason:

G'day, g'day and welcome to the 'Business Made Easy' podcast, where we make business easy. Jason here and thank you so much for joining me today, wherever you are in the world. I am glad that you're here. Thank you also too, to those who have subscribed lately to the show. I thank you so much for that, it really does help the show to grow. And if you are enjoying the show, please don't hesitate to leave an honest review over on iTunes because that really helps me to get the show going.

Today, we've got a great episode with Greg Merrilees. Greg is the owner and director of Studio 1 Design and Greg's going to share his story in business. And how he got started in business from designing t-shirts with Just Jeans and Cotton On etcetera, right through to having his own design agency now that's designing websites and some fantastic graphics stuff for businesses all over the world now.

And Greg's going to share some fantastic tips with you on building a great website and what features, things are needed on the website. What elements you should have in a website and the importance of having the right type of

website for your business. Fantastic episode, let's get into it. Here's a great chat with Greg.

G'day Greg, welcome to the show mate. How are you going?

Greg:

Good thank you, Jason, how are you, buddy?

Jason:

Yeah, fantastic. Just been on the back of another weekend and a trip down to Sydney, so I've been having a good time and getting ready for the Christmas cheer, as they say, it's all happening..

Greg:

Nice.

Jason:

.. pretty fast. So, what's been happening with you in business, mate?

Greg:

Well, look I would say, we rolled out a thing called 'Designer on Tap' so that, to me is probably the most exciting thing at the moment. We've just got a lot of clients that have taken that up, that have an ongoing need for design. And it's really good from a cash flow point of view because it's recurring income. That's exciting for me, in business at the moment.

Jason:

Yeah and how does that work, is that a monthly subscription service?

Greg:

Yeah, exactly. Yeah, so you just pay one month and then we just give you as much design as you need each month.

Jason:

Oh wow, fantastic.

Greg:

Yeah.

Jason:

So, you just basically, like you've got a designer on tap? Sort of thing.

Greg:

Exactly. That's it.

Jason:

Nice.

Greg:

And that's the website, www.designerontap.com

Jason:

Oh very good, there you go. Greg, I'm interested in your story about business.

I mean, you're in the graphic space and graphic design and web development. How did you get into this? Have you always been doing it, or?

Greg:

No actually, I've had my business since the year 2000 and what's that, 17 odd years. And we primarily just designed t-shirts for the first 10 or 12 years, or thereabouts. And so we designed t-shirts for wholesalers that were selling to the major retailers. Like Myer, Target, the 'Just' group, which is Just Jeans, Jay Jays, the Cotton On group, Witchery group, all those big players. And then they decided to go vertical, meaning they tried to cut out the middleman and build their in-house teams. And unfortunately, our clients were the middlemen so..

Jason:

Wow.

Greg:

So they were beginning to drop, yeah it was terrible. They were dropping like flies and our business was really getting hit hard as a result. I had to look for online opportunities and, look I found a podcast and this podcast changed my business basically. And it was an educational based podcast and the two hosts that were hosting the podcast reached out and said that they didn't like their logo. I thought, "There's an opportunity, I'm going to design them a new logo."

I designed them a logo and when we design logos, we design logos that we think would look really cool on a t-shirt right? We designed them a logo and

they loved it, that was kind of the in-roads to designing other things for them, like their website and all that sort of stuff. And then eventually, they, after building trust with them, they pushed us out to their communities and we started designing for all their clients and things like that as well.

Then I hired one of those podcast hosts as my business coach, which is James Schramko, who you know.

Jason:

Yes, yeah.

Greg:

And he said, “Look, this worked so well for me. Why don’t you repeat this and do it for other influencers.” We started designing t-shirts for other podcasters and influencers that had their own communities and yeah, that was kind of the catalyst to us really designing a lot of online marketing graphics and websites for many businesses around the world.

Jason:

Oh, fantastic. You’re now, I do know your customer base now is worldwide, isn’t it?

Greg:

It is, yeah. We have 50% of our clients are in the US and the other 50 are made up from every other country. Australia’s about 40%. Yeah, it’s amazing how it’s spread and I guess the lesson there for the listener, is to think about, a couple of things. If you can learn anything from what I’ve done, is reach out

to influencers in your niche and potentially send them a free something that's unique to your business's skillset. Not just an e-book or whatever, but something that's unique and that really provides value to them or a benefit to them, or their audience. And even that appeals to their ego, like a t-shirt, what we do with a t-shirt was put their slogan on a t-shirt rather than just slapping a logo on there. And it's a slogan that not only, this podcaster would want to wear but it's also a slogan that their audience would want to wear.

Jason:

Yeah, nice. And I think that's a very valued point, is that I see so many businesses starting out and they put their shingle up or, worse still, if it's a physical brick and mortar business, go and actually pay for a lease and set up a whole thing. And then sit there and wait for people to come in the door and I don't think you can really do that in business, so much anymore because you really need to, when there's so much competition, and it's. You're really gotta offer value upfront. Show people your product, how you can help them and how your product will solve their problem. And create that conversation first, before just becoming a customer. And that's what you've done in your business.

Greg:

Spot on, yeah. You have to lead with value first, there's no doubt about that, Especially, gone are the days of just having a website brochure and expecting people to find you and call you.

Jason:

Yeah.

Greg:

It doesn't happen anymore, there's just way too much competition. You must lead with value first.

Jason:

Yeah and as more and more people come online and Google's looking at all these websites continually and ranking everyone according to value.

Greg:

Yeah.

Jason:

They want to be the most valuable search engine in the world, it's critical that your business is actually offering value upfront as well. Is that?

Greg:

Yep, 100%. And realistically, Google just want to give the best answers to their audience, that's why blog posts rank so well. If they're really well written, they're based on facts, not just an opinion but they're super helpful and usually the more in-depth and detailed a blog post is, the better it will rank. And especially over time as well, the more you add these type of high-quality blog posts to your website, the better your entire website will rank.

Jason:

Yeah, there's no question. Do you still see, there's a lot of? I've been reading a lot lately about the development of YouTube and video content coming into the sphere and dominating that blog space. Do you still see the blog writing or the written blog content on a website, just as important?

Greg:

Absolutely yeah. Because Google, sure they can read videos and they can spit out a transcript from video but a blog post, there's no mistaking the words on the page. And the words on the page do rank based on what the content's all about. The best kind of posts, in my opinion, are a mixed media. You might have video, you might have written as well. If you do a video or even a podcast, like this. If you have it transcribed word for word, then you have no mistake and it's really meaty, chunky blog posts as far as the written goes, then Google's going to favour that more. You can also put in infographics as well as really high-quality graphic images and all these things, as well by the way, really should be congruent with your overall brand, look and feel so it becomes more memorable.

Jason:

Yeah, so carrying that theming through, right through, your colours and...

Greg:

Yeah.

Jason:

.. looks and feels. That's the importance of a style guide, is that what you would use typically?

Greg:

Yep.

Jason:

In that instance?

Greg:

Absolutely, we do a lot of complete brand refreshes and it's usually because a business has grown organically and they might have various sales pages and websites that all have a slightly different look. They were created at different times, so what we like to do from that point is start fresh with a brand new look and we would always start with, the logo might not change for instance, but we'd always start with a style guide to make sure that, from that point forward all of their online presence will be congruent and they can give it to any designer once you've got that style guide and it could be a designer for your print marketing media. It could be for your social media, whatever the case is, it will all be congruent if each designer follows that one style guide.

Jason:

Yeah, nice. I know because you did my website Greg, how we, well we actually met at a conference but I know when we sat down and did my

website, I was sort of all over the place with. I think too, there's stuff out there that's free and there are lots of programs like your Canva and...

Greg:

Yep.

Jason:

.. all these free graphics resources that you sort of go in and think, "Oh, I could just do this myself" and I'll go in and get that and do that. But you're right, what I ended up with before going to you, was this mismatch of imagery. There was no central theming, yes I could put it up on WordPress but at the end of the day, it was my brand that was just not gonna make it.

Greg:

Yep.

Jason:

The way it was looking and I think that's probably the importance of, yes there are free tools but you really do need to start with that professional approach to it and structured approach. Is that the way you're seeing it?

Greg:

Yeah. It is, to a degree. I would say though if you are starting out, you really want to test your offer first. Make sure it's going to convert into a sale, so realistically, templates like, there's Instapage and LeadPages and ClickFunnels. That have predesigned landing pages that are proven to convert quite well, so you start with one of those templates, you prepopulate

all the information yourself and it's really simple drag and drop type of interface. And that's the type of thing that I would recommend for a new business to start, just test your offer and see if it converts. Then once your offer does convert is when you should invest in your brand and realistically, with 1.3 billion websites online today. And that's doubled since 2014, there's going to be a lot...

Jason:

Wow.

Greg:

Yeah, there's going to be a lot more websites coming online in the next few years. If your brand isn't professionally designed, then there's a very good chance you A. you won't, people will land on your site and they won't convert but also you won't be memorable and realistically, you won't be proud to show off your website to others.

Jason:

Yeah, it's so critical. And I know the difference in just my site and the feedback I've been getting on my site since and everything now I have this formula, graphic formula that I can build products around and keep that central look.

Building a website for someone starting out, or even actually I know a lot of businesses that still don't have a website. They really don't have anything, what's and it does seem like a daunting task, when you sit down and go, "Where do I start?" Can you take us through the process of, if you're going to

build a website today, how you'd approach it and the critical things that you'd need to look at?

Greg:

Yeah sure, well for a start, we design websites without using any templates. So, it's all fully custom right? That's what I'm going to talk about now because we don't do standard template stuff, it's really quite custom and realistically, if you're starting out and you might already have an established business or whatever the case is and you're ready to invest in your brand and your website. Then you really want to find a website designer that understands marketing, understands psychology and web design and has a good process for understanding you, your business and your target audience and it can be a pretty daunting process. But I would first off, look for a designer as opposed to a developer.

A website designer is a different breed of person to a website developer and a lot of people think, "Oh, I'll just go on Fiver and I'll get, or Upwork or whatever and I'll get a cheap developer based in India" or whatever and sure you'll get that but you're going to get what you pay for. And realistically a developer doesn't understand design and doesn't understand conversions. I would look for a designer that's not a developer and our business is just design. We do have developers as well but realistically we're known for being a design business and we try to make that process easy for our clients.

You know, you've been through it and start with a questionnaire and then we'll jump on Skype and have a chat, so we really can dive deeper into understanding more about you and what you're all about. But if we're talking

custom design, then look at their folio as well. Make sure the folio and the testimonials and all those sort of things that you should also have on your website, which we can get into in a minute as well. But you want to look for those things in a web designer as well.

Jason:

You touched on a point there Greg, which was about the psychology..

Greg:

Yep.

Jason:

.. of websites. Because I do know, there are designers out there that are doing great, they're doing great on Photoshop or Illustrator or whatever and can really do some nice stuff. But get carried away with the creative rather than the functionality of the design and page. Is that?

Greg:

Yeah, great point and I appreciate you bringing that up because a pretty website doesn't mean anything. You need a website, that sure, is pretty but that's just a very small part of it. It needs to be designed to influence people to take action and we use, we follow Robert Cialdini's 6 persuasions of influence in every website that we design. And they're things like reciprocity, we touched on that before, you give away your best stuff for free. In other words, it could be a blog post, podcast, video, could be some form of a lead magnet, like a PDF download, a free course, a free trial and you really want to

lead with value first and then in return, people give back. That's just the nature of reciprocity.

And then, just to run through the other authorities, sorry the other principles. Authority, so people trust knowledgeable, credible experts. You really want to show your authority on your website, that could be anything through your headlines to showing you if you're an influencer speaking on stage or even just on the tools or wearing a suit. If you're a lawyer, or doctor's outfit, whatever the case is but you want to show your authority.

Then consistency as well, that's another principle where you want to be consistent with, for instance, the look and feel across your entire branding, online and offline. But also a consistent voice or message of your brand, you want to interact with your prospects. Whether it's on social media or everything that you release, needs to be in a consistent voice that represents your brand. Don't go one week to the next week, changing the way you look at things. It needs to be consistent.

And then scarcity, obviously it's human nature to desire what there is less of. This can work really well for event sales pages, for instance, that have a limited time offer or limited seats. Something, or even e-commerce, something that has, sorry that doesn't have a limited, sorry an endless supply. Has a limited supply, even add in a countdown timer to support that message to really let people know visually, how much time is remaining. Yeah, scarcity is a big one and then liking, so you want to be likeable, so when you do interact with people or on social media you want to make sure that you're likeable and be extremely helpful in your videos on your website, people will

look at your body language and things like that. Come across as friendly and I know you've done a podcast episode on this.

Jason:

Yeah.

Greg:

Yeah, which is killer and I think it's so important these days and people forget that you don't want to come across as scary and not likable.

Jason:

Yeah.

Greg:

That's an important principle and then finally, sorry, six is consensus. Which is what we call 'social proof' and to me, this is probably the most important. It's having as much social proof in the form of testimonials, they could be written or video, have case studies showing people where they started, how you helped them and then where they ended up. You can even just use logos of businesses that you've helped or show places where you've been interviewed or 'as seen on', 'as heard on' etcetera.

Jason:

Yeah. That last point here is what I'm seeing evolving out of that as well, is the art of storytelling in your business. Is that what you're...

Greg:

Yeah.

Jason:

.. getting at? Telling that story of your brand so you show, showing a story of how you've taken someone who had a problem and your brand actually takes them through and helps them.

Greg:

Yeah.

Jason:

And now they don't have that problem anymore and they're happy and the pain's gone.

Greg:

Yes.

Jason:

Those sorts of things, I guess that's what you mean by that social proof as well?

Greg:

Absolutely, yeah. There are case studies which are more powerful than just a testimonial, if you can, in the case study take people through the entire story of where that business started, or that person and show them exactly how

you helped them and then where they ended up. That becomes a story and that's the most powerful form of social proof.

Jason:

That's great actually, interesting and I'll put a link to that content in the show notes as well, so if people want to go and get that as well. Plus this will be transcribed so, certainly be able to...

Greg:

Cool.

Jason:

.. if you want those points, you'll be able to, people will be able to go back and check out that because it's value. I think that really does highlight the importance of not having someone who can draw, but, or design stuff but actually design with a philosophy and the psychology behind it. Because..

Greg:

Yeah.

Jason:

.. you want people to not only go to your site but you want to then engage on your site, isn't it?

Greg:

Yeah, absolutely. And that's one part of it and then it needs to be designed with the right kind of design elements based on the principles of influence, in

the right kind of hierarchy. And then there's a lot of elements within that that we have to think about and one of the most important ones is actually copywriting. A lot of business owners do their own copywriting, which is the words on your website and they normally make it all about them. If you, yeah, it's like, "Welcome to our website, we are the best accountants in the Gold Coast."

Jason:

Yes.

Greg:

Like.

Jason:

Yeah.

Greg:

Nobody wants to do that.

Jason:

"About us".

Greg:

Yes.

Jason:

It's like...

Greg:

Yep.

Jason:

... "No, it's not about you."

Greg:

No.

Jason:

And you do see it, you see so many sites like that and I am in the accounting space and I do see that a lot in accounting websites. They start with what, their first words are like, "We" or "Us".

Greg:

Yes.

Jason:

You know.

Greg:

Spot on.

Jason:

“We are accountants on the Gold Coast” and you go, “I don’t care.”

Greg:

Yep.

Jason:

Next.

Greg:

Exactly.

Jason:

So are four million others, it’s like, there’s no, there’s nothing there to grab your attention when you land on the page.

Greg:

That’s right because people only think about what’s in it for them. They don’t care about you at all, they just care about what’s in it for them. Your copywriting needs to be targeting them needs to let people know how you’re unique, what you’re offering, who it’s for and how they’ll benefit from it. If you get all those things right, you’ve gotta think about the five-second rule. So when somebody lands on your website, they need to know exactly what you offer and what’s in it for them. Get that wrong and they’re gone, that’s why copywriting is so important but then the design, which is what we specialise in, needs to support that copy and enhance that copy. And especially on, say a landing page where you’re really, you’ve got a long

landing page that's trying to sell a product or a service, the copy's the most important thing on the page but the design needs to support it and enhance it.

We need to consider things like the hierarchy, the structure of the page, the clear space, the colour, the images used need to resonate with your target market and everything needs to be congruent with your brand and have the right flow. The flow's probably the most important thing to take people through that customer journey on the page essentially.

Jason:

I heard the saying that, the idea of the headline is to get you reading the next line and then..

Greg:

Yeah.

Jason:

.. the next line is to get you reading the next line, and thinking of it in that context when you're writing copy is that?

Greg:

Yeah, absolutely. I'm not a professional copywriter but yeah, you're spot on because websites these days, or people have limited attention span and when they're reading a website, they will just skim from headline to headline to headline. Then if they're interested, they'll go back and read the content of

each of those sections. It's really important that your headlines are good and it just draws people down to the next section.

Jason:

Would you recommend, in building a website, would you have that copywriting outsourced? Two questions, two parts to this question. Would you do that copywriting first and have it outsourced before coming to see somebody like yourself? Or would you get your design right first and then worry about the copywriting once that's done?

Greg:

Yeah. If it's a landing page selling a product or a service, you are better off having the copy written first and professional copywriting that's really designed, written well can take weeks and can be quite expensive. But the better the copywriter, usually the more expensive and the better results they're going to get. Think of it as an investment, not an expense but then yes, if it's a landing page, copywriting first but if it's just a full website, we've got a pretty good structure for the majority of pages. We don't need the copywriting first unless it's for an individual landing page within the full website.

Normally we can get started without the copy and then the client would work on the copy for the landing pages within the website, while we're designing the rest of the website.

Jason:

Cool and to clarify, landing pages are really just a sales page if you're selling a

product or service, or something like that on it as opposed to your website which is more about your business. Is that right?

Greg:

Yeah, yeah so absolutely. A website really is your biggest online asset and it is a hub where you will house everything and don't put things on with a lot of effort into social media. The purpose of social media is to bring people back to your website and that's where you should have all your most valuable content. Really, I see the home page as a gateway to get to the important sections on your, important pages on your website.

The home page needs to be designed in a way that positions you as the authority, has a lot of social proof, has a lot of helpful content, has your lead magnets and you don't ask for a sale on your home page. You just want to offer value first, a little bit about you and then all these sections will link off to the relevant pages.

Jason:

Yep and they could be housed on something like LeadPages, they don't need to be on your website, do they?

Greg:

That's right, yeah.

Jason:

They could be, yeah.

Greg:

Absolutely.

Jason:

Cool.

Greg:

Yeah, yeah.

Jason:

That doesn't affect you, your traffic and stuff like that. You touched a point there too, is the central asset, and I saw a diagram of this and I know James Franco who you mentioned, talks of this, by owning the racecourse..

Greg:

Yep.

Jason:

.. in his strategy but this idea that the website is the central part of the wheel and then all the spokes go off to the various things. Your iTunes and YouTubes and, so don't build your real estate on those social platforms. 'Cause they can change at any point in time and...

Greg:

Yeah.

Jason:

.. whereas you own your website.

Greg:

That's right.

Jason:

Sorry?

Greg:

I was going to say, yeah they change the rules a lot so just make sure your best, helpful content is on your website. Simple as that.

Jason:

Yeah, cool. That's cool. Any other elements that we should have on our website? Say, some necessities that we should actually have on there, at a minimum? If we're building or thinking about designing a website?

Greg:

Yeah, you can't have enough social proof. That's number one but if you are starting out, it can be quite difficult to have social proof on there. Then you really want to concentrate on your authority and your authority is the whole history of how you got to where you are now. You might not be able to, because if you're a brand new business, you're just starting out. You won't have much of a story about your brand or your business but if you can just have your story of how you got to that stage, that's going to be pretty

powerful to let people know why you're an authority and how you can help them, based on the previous experience that you've had.

That's super important. But look, overall I would say you really want to start thinking about your brand look and feel. Because of the fact that, it's more memorable if, over time, you've released a lot of blog posts or content or whatever, that have a consistent look and feel and you're always bringing people back to your website and every blog post that you put, whether you're building in Canva, or whatever, doesn't matter. As long as it's got a consistent look and feel, you'll start to become more memorable and then you'll be that authority to people will turn to when they're ready to take action.

Jason:

Yeah, cool.

Greg:

But there are lots of elements and we could go into detail about colour and images and clear space and hierarchy, but you just really want to think more so about those psychological drivers. That's the most important thing.

Jason:

Yep and the minimum pages that you'd want to have, is a home page and an about us, a contact page. Is there any others that we would need to have? I know, particularly starting out in business and this is one thing I've found difficult to start with, if you don't have a lot of content at that, when you're in

that startup stages. To think, “Oh, I gotta have this page, I gotta have that page, I’ve got to write all this,” and...

Greg:

What I would say is, don’t worry so much about all those pages initially. What you really want to do is start a conversation with a prospect, you just need a mini sales funnel, if you like, and depends on your business of course. But if you’re a service business and you’re just starting out, you might want to offer a free strategy session. But people might not be ready, there’s going to be super cold leads on your website. There’s going to be warm leads and there’s going to be hot leads, so you need to have lead magnets that cater to each of the situations that they’re in.

And then let’s say if you have a PDF download right? A helpful guide that helps a prospect get from A to B, that’s relevant to your business and that’s for a cold lead. Then on the thank you page of that could lead, you want to have the next step in your funnel. I would also recommend having video, saying, “Hey, thanks for downloading the free thing and here’s the next step,” and you’re telling them what you want them to do next. And if you add a little bit of scarcity into it as well, it might be a free strategy session. If you take action, it’s valued at \$300 or whatever, but if you take action in the next 24 hours or whatever. Then you have a countdown timer, then it’s free.

Something like that but then you might also have something on your website that is catering to warm lead magnets. They might have been following your blog for a while, they’ve downloaded your free stuff, you sent them a lot of emails. And with your emails, you want to bring them back to your website

once again, instead of putting all your helpful value content in the email, just have a link sending them back to your website.

But then you want to have things like a webinar, which is super helpful or a mini training course or all these things take time to build these assets but they will become more popular over time and they essentially going to cater to that warm lead magnet. And there's nothing more powerful than a webinar, for instance, that's going to take them from warm to hot and that's when you can offer, you have a sellable product offer or, once again it could be a free strategy session. Something like that. But just think about what's, they're going to think about what's in it for them, so you want to be helpful as possible and cater to them, no matter where they are on the journey.

Jason:

Nice. Thinking of it as a journey and mapping out that customer path from taking, I love the analogy of, and I've heard this a few times now, I think the guys over at Digital Marketer talk about it. This idea of, you wouldn't just walk up to a girl in a bar and ask her to marry you, you would say hi first and then, and it's the same with your customers, or potential customers, people coming to your website.

Greg:

Yep.

Jason:

Really welcome them in and have a conversation...

Greg:

Yeah.

Jason:

.. and through your site, it's what it's all about, isn't it?

Greg:

Yeah, spot on. That's exactly right and we use that analogy as well 'cause it's exactly like that. Imagine that in the real world.

Jason:

"Hi".

Greg:

"Let's get married".

Jason:

Yeah that's it.

Greg:

Yep.

Jason:

"And by the way, we're going to have a house and we're going to have a car. The girl would just run for the hills and.."

Greg:

Yeah.

Jason:

.. so yeah, it's a great analogy and applying that in designing your website. A great way to look at it as well.

Greg:

Yeah.

Jason:

'Cause, and it's the same as, whether you're doing social media, whatever it is you're talking to real people. I think that's something people forget about too, and I hate the word subscribers for that reason.

Greg:

Yeah, me too.

Jason:

They are people, it's a person that's joined your community as opposed to a subscriber on your email list.

Greg:

Yeah. I couldn't agree more and I think it's so important that you treat them as a person, instead of a subscriber. And people, they don't want to be sold to

as well. They don't want to be just another number on your list. Treat them like a person, reach out and always be helpful and ask them how you can help.

Jason:

Yeah, yep. And that way too, asking the questions is good because you get to know what your audience and community want too. Which is, it's good to do that before going and building a whole lot of stuff that nobody really understands or wants. Love that concept too.

Greg, there's a lot of, I wouldn't call them pop up but made to measure or made easy type offerings out there. In terms of website and some of the groups that I'm involved with, this discussion comes up quite a bit, which platform to build your website on. Should I go to WordPress or should I go, Wix, because Wix is already made up? I've heard mixed things about all of those, have you got any thoughts on the best place to build your website? If you want to build one?

Greg:

Yeah. It depends on your business model but if you're selling physical products, the best platform no doubt is Shopify. Shopify is an incredible solution, they're always pouring a lot of money and effort into the development of that platform. And it's the easiest platform for anybody to get started, even a lot of big businesses still use Shopify because it's so powerful. Has a lot of extra plugins that you can use to really concentrate on the lifetime value of a customer and offer all sorts of things in the process of the customer journey.

So that's e-commerce but then if you have a service business, I would strongly recommend WordPress if you are an established business right? I mean Wix and Squarespace and all those types of things, in my opinion, are for businesses that haven't grown up yet.

Jason:

Yeah, yeah.

Greg:

They're for people just starting out and it's a good place to start out. But, they are templates so you're going to look like everybody else. There will be at least, could a hundred, could be a hundred thousand people with the exact same Wix or Squarespace website. If you want to be unique, then custom is the only way to go. But WordPress is the number one platform that, I think they have about, I think it might be about 40 or 50% of the total websites in the world and it's quite easy, it's kind of like Microsoft Word. If you understand that old program, it's pretty easy to use like that. If you're writing a blog post, it's just type in and you got bold and add an image and add a video quite easily.

But then what we design, the majority of what we design end up being a custom WordPress website. So we'll start with the Genesis framework and then customise it to suit whatever we design. I would say WordPress is the way to go if you've got a serious business and you want to use content marketing as a strategy to take your business to the next level.

Jason:

Yeah. And with Shopify, that you mentioned, you can customise a lot of that as well? So they could use...

Greg:

Yep.

Jason:

So someone could use your designs and your designers could build a site within the Shopify framework as well?

Greg:

Well we don't offer Shopify coding but yes, we would design, we design a lot of Shopify sites and then we would send it to our coding partners or our clients can find their own Shopify coders, to turn it into a live functional website.

Jason:

Fantastic.

Greg:

Yeah.

Jason:

And I heard with and I don't know if it's with Shopify but I know, I understand

with the Wix and the Squarespace etcetera you don't actually own. It's very hard to get your site, you don't really own it as such, do you?

Greg:

That's right. Exactly right, yeah. It's a self-hosted service really, as soon as you stop paying them, it's all gone. You don't, you can't take it with you.

Jason:

Yeah.

Greg:

That's the power of WordPress, it's yours. You own it, you can do what you want with it. You can change developers, you're not stuck to anyone on a WordPress website. It's all yours.

Jason:

Yeah. You control the host effectively with WordPress, which is important.

Greg:

That's right. Yeah.

Jason:

It's a major lesson in business actually if we have a physical business and we've got assets, we protect those assets. We ensure them, we make sure they're garaged where we can look after them or install where we can look after them. And your website nowadays is probably one of those most

important assets now, you want to make sure you can host it on something you control and ultimately own. Good point.

Greg:

Exactly. Just on that, if you want a tip on hosting. I believe the world's best WordPress hosting is www.wpengine.com so go check them out for...

Jason:

Oh cool.

Greg:

.. yeah \$29 a month or something, currently, you know you can have the world's fastest, most secure, best support hosting out there. It's just amazing.

Jason:

WP Engine, alright I'll put a link to that in the show notes as well. Thanks for that..

Greg:

Yeah, cool.

Jason:

.. that's very good, very helpful. Mate, I'm conscious of time, we're coming up but, and I really appreciate you coming on the show and..

Greg:

Sure.

Jason:

.. sharing that info, that's great for, I know anyone who's stuck with whether they should build a website or how they, where you'd even start etcetera.

Greg:

Yeah.

Jason:

But what's, and I like to ask people before they go, something that's working for you in business at the moment, that is ticking boxes for you, getting you some wins or it could be software or marketing tip or an app you're using. Is there anything that's kicking goals for you at the moment?

Greg:

Yeah, I mentioned James Schramko earlier. A few years ago, I hired him as my business coach and my tip is to get a business coach. If you really want to grow your business faster, you will reach your goals quicker if you look for a business coach and somebody that has a bigger business than you, that has been in business for, I would say, at least a decade. There's a lot of young coaches out there these days, that in my opinion, haven't had enough experience to really ride the highs and lows of business. Look for business coaches that have a lot of experience and has a lifestyle that you admire as well.

I mean James Schramko's surfs, every day. He works about 20 hours a week, that's the kind of business I want.

Jason:

Yeah.

Greg:

That's hugely profitable.

Jason:

Pretty impressive.

Greg:

Yeah and for me, since I hired James. Maybe four years ago now, I've gone from literally a six-figure business per annum to six figures per month and that's because he's taught me how to grow a team. I mean we have 20 people in our business currently, we have systems and processes that don't rely on me. We have an advertising campaign and marketing funnels set up and working well, we also get a lot of referrals as well and that stems from the coaching community. There's a lot that I've got out of that one thing, hiring a business coach.

Jason:

Yep, having that sounding board to keep you accountable and keep you focused and heading in the right direction.

Greg:

Spot on, you got it.

Jason:

Yeah. No, I love James's lifestyle, yeah it's pretty cool.

Greg:

Yeah.

Jason:

It's not surfing for you though, it's skiing isn't it?

Greg:

It is, yeah. Thanks, yeah absolutely. I love snow skiing, we go to New Zealand every year apart from when my wife did her ACL in her knee.

Jason:

Oh, cool.

Greg:

And then we just went local that year but yeah, love snow skiing and water skiing.

Jason:

Nice. That's cool, well I'll put a link to James's stuff over in the show notes too. And he's coming on the show in a few weeks, so that'll be..

Greg:

Awesome.

Jason:

.. good as well. Yeah, well mate, thank you so much for your time. I really appreciate you coming on today and sharing that stuff. I know, myself, I did tinker, I went down the 'do it myself' path with the off the shelf themes..

Greg:

Yep.

Jason:

.. and I must've lost countless hours, even just trying to learn the challenges of WordPress but I know that once I did actually engage your team, it did all come together nicely.

Greg:

Yeah.

Jason:

And it freed me up a lot and I've got a lot better product as a result anyway.

Greg:

Awesome. That's a tip as well, if you're an established business, should you be tinkering on your website?

Jason:

Yeah.

Greg:

Or should you hire someone else to do it for you? It's not really the best use of a business owner's time.

Jason:

I know and if you look at your equivalent hourly rate and you say..

Greg:

Yeah.

Jason:

.. "Yeah, that's great. I now know how to put bold on in WordPress." But really, it took four days, 60 YouTube videos.

Greg:

I love it.

Jason:

Alright, that's good mate. Well thank you so much and how would people find more about you? What's the best place to get hold of you, if you wanted to talk to you further about web design and see what you're doing?

Greg:

Yeah, well we've got a quiz on our website. If you go to

www.studio1design.com/quiz there's a 50 question checklist that will really show you where your website will be leaking money, essentially. So do that, but if you want to have a chat with me. Just email me greg@studio1design.com

Jason:

Fantastic mate, that's good and I'll put those links in the show notes and make sure that everyone can get those nice and easy. That will be over at www.businessmadeeasypodcast.com/episode18 so, very good.

Greg:

Awesome.

Jason:

Thank you, Greg, thanks for coming on mate. I really appreciate you doing that for us and I'm sure everyone got some great gems out of that one. Yeah, really good to have you.

Greg:

My absolute pleasure, thanks for having me on Jason.

Jason:

Talk soon, bye. See ya.

Well, there you have it guys, that's Greg Merrilees from Studio 1 Design. I'm going to put all the links that we spoke about today in the show notes. I love Greg's stuff, he really has some fantastic tips on designing websites and just a

great all-round designer. I use Greg myself and have just been so happy with the work that he does. Check him out at Studio 1 Design and as I said, I'll put the link in the show notes.

That's all we've got time for today but before I go, if you haven't already, feel free to join our 'Business Made Easy' podcast Facebook group. We're sharing lots of good conversations and stories over there, it's free to join. You really just need to be interested in business and growing business. You might want to start a business, check that out, you can do that by searching in Facebook, up in the top Facebook bar. And just type in 'Business Made Easy' podcast group will come up and I'll be, I'll look forward to seeing you over there.

Until next week guys, I'm going to hand you over to Mia to take us out, and here's to your success. All the best, bye.

Mia:

Thanks, Jason. You've been listening to the 'Business Made Easy' podcast, where we make business easy.

Thank you for Tuning In

We hope you enjoyed this episode.

If you have any feedback or questions about the content in this episode please don't hesitate to drop me a line at jason@businessmadeeasypodcast.com I would love to hear from you.

Other things that you might like to help grow your business.

We have a very active Facebook community that is free to join for business owners and entrepreneurs. You can get access here

www.businessmadeeasyfacebook.com/community

We are also on Instagram at

www.businessmadeeasypodcast.com/instagram

Thank you again,
I appreciate you!

*Regards
Jason*