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www.womansdivorce.com (started January 2001)

www.creditsourceonline.com (started September 2001)

www.makeyourownwebsiteguide.com (March 2003)

How did you discover SBI?

From Allen Gardyne at AssociatePrograms.com. I signed up to receive the Affiliate Masters Handbook and was able to see the real potential of building a website with SBI.

How did you come up with your site theme(s)?

After reading the action guide (which tells you to focus on something that you are passionate about) I chose to focus on the subject of divorce from a woman's perspective. After being emotionally and financially devastated by my divorce, this was something that I was definitely passionate about. I wanted to help other women prepare for and understand the divorce process so that they could avoid some of the mistakes that I had made.

I started my credit site later that year after seeing the income potential from commission off of credit cards. After doing extensive research on the keywords, I decided to have the site encompass the major areas surrounding credit. This is because each area affects the other. Basically, I offer general credit advice, information about credit reports, and a system to find different credit cards. This is a constantly evolving website.

My last website I built due to the conviction that the SBI system is the best way to create a website. It offers the basics of how to build your own website and what you should consider along the way. This site is really fun to work on because it makes me go back and review what I have done on the other two websites, helping me to make changes to improve them. They say that the best way to really learn a subject is to teach it, and this has certainly been true in my case.

What was your motivation for starting an online business?

After my divorce, I was financially strapped and looking for some extra income. I had gotten interested in a MLM venture, but was disappointed that I would have to pay outrageous fees for a website that I had not control over. This began my journey for information about starting my own website which I could have total control over it.

How long was it before you found success with your site(s)? Please define what “success” means to you.

My first year, I was able to see a small profit with my divorce website, but my real success came in the form of positive feedback from my visitors. Women across the country and the world were letting me know that my website was making a difference in their lives. I admit that it takes a lot of time answering their emails, but this was something that I chose to do from the beginning. In fact, had I known how much time this aspect would take, I probably wouldn't have ever started in the first place. Luckily, I didn't know. The fact that I can truly help other women far outweighs the efforts involved. The letters from the women make it all worth it.

I need to point out that not all websites require so much email support. The divorce site does because there is such a wide variation in divorce law from state to state. The questions to my credit site are really basic in nature. In fact, I will probably be adding a FAQs section that answers all these questions. And I really don't get that many questions from other site because I try to provide the information that they are seeking directly on the website.

I measure success with my credit site by the commissions that I make, but I also know that I am providing relevant information due to the steady increase in traffic that I get. My success on www.makeyourownwebsiteguide.com comes through the sharing of information. I'm steadily building traffic and subscribers, which in turn will lead to revenue as I begin to monetize it at some point in time.

What is your average monthly income?

\$1857/mo. For January 2005, my income was \$1409. In September 2005, my income was \$2943. Generally, there has been a steady climb in income each month.

What monetization models do you use?

78% of the money I make is through affiliate commissions. Basically, I post links to merchant sites, and they pay me a commission when someone purchases from them. Also included in this figure is income from Google AdSense, but it's not a great amount due to the fact that it's only on a few of my pages. 14% of my income is from the sale of my book about divorce, and I also make 8% from directory listing fees from the lawyers who list their services on my site.

How many hours per week do you work on your site(s)?

I spend approximately 40 hours a week on my website (I know, same as a regular job), but I am able to be home for the kids. I can help them with their homework and listen as they talk about their day.

What is your pre-SBI work experience? Include both WAH and outside experience.

As I look back over my work history, I've spent about 15 years of my life cleaning something. I've cleaned out animal stalls, new-construction homes, occupied houses, and washed cars (about 1500 per week). During my separation and divorce, I decided that it was about time to do something that wasn't dependent on the weather and paid a regular paycheck, so I started working as a magazine merchandiser. I like the flexibility of my work, but the pay left a lot to be desired. I was making about \$700 a month and trying to support my family.

Struggling to pay the bills is what got me to thinking about earning some extra income, which eventually lead me to where I am now. I started my website while I was still working. This way, if it flopped, I still had my job. I continue to build it along the way, eventually adding two more websites. I had a work injury in 2003 and had to eventually quit my job in 2004. Even though it was scary letting go of the security of a paycheck, it was the best decision that I ever made. I've been able to devote my time and attention to my websites, and the effort is paying off.

What "sold" you on SBI? What would you change?

I got my first "real" computer (the first was a DOS) in 1999, so I really didn't have a lot of experience using a computer. What sold me on SBI was the fact that I didn't need to be a computer geek to build my website. All I had to do was pick my template to get the basic look for my website, and be able to copy and paste my information into the building blocks. What I like so much about SBI is that it includes everything that I need, without having to use a lot of outside programs.

For example, I don't have to go to every search engine to submit my pages and check my rankings. When I add a new page to my website, SBI analyzes it to make sure that I have it optimized for the search engines (this way I don't have to keep tweaking my page to get higher rankings). I am able to get the relevant data that I need for traffic analysis and reciprocal linking.

Another added bonus is the email system that filters out all the spam, saving me countless hours of hitting the delete button. There are so many things that SBI

does for me that I would never consider switching.

At times I thought it would be nice to have SSI (server side includes) capabilities so that I could make universal changes across the website without having to edit every page. But the way it is now also has its' benefits. When I want to make such a change on all my pages, I am able to re-analyze and update my pages on an individual basis so that they perform better. If I were to be able to push one button to change everything, those pages might just gather dust and become outdated.

If you could go back, what would you do differently with your website(s)?

If I could go back, I really wouldn't change a thing. Granted, what I started with was not exactly flashy, but I was able to communicate my messages in a way that real people could relate to. It's funny, I started my credit site because I saw how much money could be made on credit cards, but as the site evolved, I found myself again in the position of helping people, only this time it was helping people understand the basics of credit. When you focus your website on helping others, you truly are a winner. The money is just secondary.

How do you “do it all” (i.e. childcare, housework, meals, play, etc.)?

When I first started out, I had to save working on my website until after the kids went to bed or on weekends. The thing is, it never really seemed like work to me. It was fun and challenging at the same time, with me often finding it hard to tear myself away from the computer. As the kids got older, I was able to spend more time on it during the early evening. Once I quit my job, I was able to work on it during the school hours. I take small breaks from the computer to do laundry, clean, walk the dogs, etc.

I could probably cut down on the number of hours that I spend developing my websites, but I don't want to. It excites me and gives me a broader purpose. I am more than just a wife and mother. My oldest son has even bragged that his mom owns and develops websites (this is really big considering that he is a teenager). I'm lucky that my kids and new husband support me, and that I have found something that is so fulfilling.