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## How Morgan Brown Turned His Job Expertise Into A \$4,000/Month Blog Income, Then Sold It After His Blog Landed Him A Dream Job

Hello, this is Yaro Starak. You are about to hear an interview with Morgan Brown. I love Morgan Brown because he is one of those really great case studies of a person who went through my training materials and actually implemented them.

Morgan went through my Blog Profits Blueprint and then, later it was one of the very first members of my Blog Mastermind Coaching Program. He used that to grow a successful blog in the mortgage refinancing industry which is the place he was working in at that time.



So, he was employed in that area and took what he was learning and what he was actually unhappy about the industry and turned it into content for a blog and slowly grew his audience.

So, you're going to hear in this interview how he grew his audience and how he produced content and how he started making money. He actually started to make as much as \$4000 a month in income from this blog.



You'll also hear how he hired writers which is a great way to produce more content without you doing the labor. So, you're going to hear how he found those writers and what he paid them as well.

It's a great little case study of my teaching materials and my methodology for building a successful blog. I am so happy to hear a story of someone who actually implemented it and got results.

So, that's why Morgan's on this interview. You'll get a lot of information just from what Morgan did. However, if you are interested in actually taking part in the new version of Blog Mastermind, I am actually completely updating the program. So, it will be fresh. It will be relevant. It will be current and you can go through the program as I do this. In fact, it may be open right now.

If you are interested in joining Blog Mastermind, I want you to go to [www.blogmastermind.com/signup](http://www.blogmastermind.com/signup) – all one word. There, you'll find all the information about how you can become a member and take the Blog Mastermind Training Program.

It doesn't matter if you're a new blogger or you already have a blog. I'm looking for people who are interested in using their blog as a platform to build an audience, to build an email list from that audience, and then, to sell some kind of information products.

So, if you have something to teach, you know something about something, you are maybe an expert or a hobbyist or you have a strong interest in a certain area that you want to translate into a successful blog, a successful email newsletter and a successful training product that you can sell and make money from, that's what Blog Mastermind is going to be all about this time in the new version.

Again, if that's you, go to [www.blogmastermind.com/signup](http://www.blogmastermind.com/signup) and you can take part in the updated version of Blog Mastermind.

That's enough from me. Here's this really great interview from Morgan Brown. I hope you'll enjoy it. I'll talk to you soon.



**YARO:** Hello, this is Yaro Starak and welcome to an Entrepreneur's Journey Interview.

Today, on the line with me, I have a gentleman named Morgan Brown who popped up via my email initially inquiring whether I'd be interested in talking about a service that he's working for called Qualaroo which he's currently working on and through our email discussions, I discovered that Morgan actually had a blog and he read my Blog Profits Blueprint eBook when it first came out and that led to him joining my Blog Mastermind Training Program. He's nodding his head to agree that all these things are true, so that's good.

And, he then went and applied pretty much everything that I taught and created a blog and I'll just quote some numbers here that ended up getting one million visitors a year and he was making about \$4000 a month in affiliate income and had about five writers during the peak of his site and then, sold it all a couple of years later.

I grabbed Morgan to tell this story from start to finish. Morgan, thank you for joining me.

**MORGAN:** Thanks for having me, Yaro. It's great to talk with you.

**YARO:** Okay, I'd love to hear more about this blog. But, first, has this been an Internet career for you? Was the blog just one of many projects you had? Where did it all begin?

**MORGAN:** Sure, my background has always been in the online marketing space and start up space and so, it's for a variety of startups and when I came across the Blog Profits Blueprint eBook, it really struck me that there was something that I could do and take advantage of. It really was a blueprint for how to go about doing it and executing a blog marketing strategy.

So, when I read it, I had already been blogging on the side, just sharing my thoughts on the mortgage and finance industry which I was working in at the time.



And so, when I read your eBook, it really just occurred to me that I could really make something in my blog and really make it a traffic and revenue and lead generator as well.

**YARO:** Were you working a job before this? What was your career? Did you go to high school, university then, get into the Internet?

**MORGAN:** Yes, so I went to high school then, I went to college in...

**YARO:** Where? Where are you from?

**MORGAN:** I live in California right now, Orange County, California and I went to school in Santa Barbara, California at UC Santa Barbara. I graduated at the height of the .COM bubble in the late 90s and joined an internet Startup in Los Angeles, spent a year living overseas and Frankfurt, launching the German version of their products and that's really where I learned a lot of the online marketing skills that I have been practicing ever since.

**YARO:** What was that company?

**MORGAN:** That was called SalesMountain.com and it is no longer around unfortunately but, picked up a lot of great marketing lessons and really cemented my career in the Internet/startup space since.

**YARO:** Did you have a specialty? What were you hired to do?

**MORGAN:** I was hired to run operations. I was fresh out of college at that point but, I quickly moved in to product marketing and affiliate marketing so, working to drive traffic to the site and also, market the product on varied space.

**YARO:** All right so, you're in Germany and did you get fired or you quit. What happened next?

**MORGAN:** Sure, so the founders called me. We also had an office in Cambridge, London at the time. They said, "We have two weeks, try to get the best price you can for every piece of furniture and computer in the



office and then, fly to Cambridge and do the same thing and then, use whatever proceeds were to fly home and then, give us the rest."

**YARO:** Wow.

**MORGAN:** It was quite the journey, quite the adventure.

**YARO:** Wow. Those were the times though, weren't they?

**MORGAN:** Exactly.

**YARO:** Yes, fire us out.

**MORGAN:** Great.

**YARO:** Well then, you must be thinking next, what do I do? Because you were out of a failed start up. It's not your fault or any sense of that but, you're starting from scratch a little bit, right?

**MORGAN:** Yes. So then, I went to a digital marketing agency and where I was building websites for the agency for big brands. So, brands like Sunkist.com built their website. This is in about 2000, did all my marketing campaigns for various movies and email marketing, pay-per-click, some SEO, that type of thing, all for the client's side.

This was from 2001 to 2004 and so, really starting to understand all these different pieces and how they work together but, in the background, blogging was starting to really gain traction and I was pretty much oblivious to it because I was hands down with all these client work.

So, it really wasn't until about 2005 when it really got on my radar and then, that's when I picked up an interest in it.

**YARO:** And, you must have been around your mid-20s then or maybe your early 20s?

**MORGAN:** Yes, exactly.



**YARO:** So, it sounds like you weren't an entrepreneur for a lot of that early career but, you were around entrepreneurs. Did you have a great desire to become your own boss sort of thing or have you always liked a bit of a mix?

**MORGAN:** I loved startups and so, I loved making new ideas happen, bringing them to life and seeing people adopt them and resonate with them and watching them grow. That's really what excites me.

So, whether it's someone else's idea that I think is really excellent or my idea or whatever the case might be, that's really what's exciting to me.

**YARO:** So, tell us the blog. Did you then start researching blogging? How did blogging come into your world?

**MORGAN:** Sure, I think blogging came into my world... After the agency, I went to a mortgage company which was started by my friends and they had hired me to generate leads for their business.

So, in the mid-2000s here, the mortgage industry was very hot, lots going on and they needed someone to come in who knew online marketing and could acquire leads and users at a reasonable price.

I came in and started doing that and while I was in this space, two things happened. First, I found out about blogging through a book called, *Blogging for Real Estate* by a gentleman named Paul Chaney and one of my friends was reading it, that type of thing.

There was some social media circles starting to pop up in that niche and they were happening around me and so, as soon as I found out about blogging, I realized I was totally behind the eight-ball because here I had been in the digital marketing space the whole time but, the whole social blog, Cluetrain Manifesto movement had popped up all around me and I felt like I had my blinders turned off.

And so, I immediately went to just devouring everything I could get my hands on about blogging. So, that was one part of it.



Then, the second part of it is that I really became a bit disenchanted with the mortgage industry. There were a lot of things, a lot of greed and a lot of things happening in the space that I didn't particularly love and so, learning about blogging and having a platform that I could actually publish my thoughts on and that type of thing is really how it started.

It was just very organic as I started my own personal blog and then, found quickly that I had a passion for writing about the ways that I thought the industry that I was working in could be better and how consumers could be better protected about when they go about financing their house and that type of thing.

And so, it really evolved organically from there.

**YARO:** Okay, it sounds like your background was lead generation and you're probably quite familiar with paid traffic methods so, you're paid per click and you're buying banner ads maybe or media buying those sort of things but, not so much, just like you said, the Cluetrain Manifesto which was all about building community and getting social and building free organic traffic which probably though is not the foundational pillar for that movement, I'd say and it's spawned Facebook and every other social media tools since then.

**MORGAN:** Exactly.

**YARO:** Did you, like I know when I started blogging, I wasn't even sure what the difference between the blog and a website was. It looks like a website. How does this thing act as a blog and make it different? Did you get that to begin with or did you have to start blogging yourself, install Wordpress or maybe install a mobile type or use Blogger back then, whatever it was and then, learn through that experience?

**MORGAN:** Yes, so I definitely didn't have a great concept of the power of it at first. I started just with a moveable type blog and then quickly learned about Wordpress. When I get my mind into something, I tend to obsess over it. I want to learn as much about it as fast as I can.



As soon as I saw the blogging book then, I read the Cluetrain Manifesto and I read the book by Scoble and Shel Israel and I found Entrepreneur's Journey. I really tried to immerse myself into this phase.

I learned about Wordpress and then, went on to set up my own Wordpress blog but, it was very kind of an organic type of thing and I remember a lot of people around me in my space, my family, that type of thing didn't quite understand what it was either.

I would say, "Oh, I wrote this article on my site." And, if I said, "blog," they were totally baffled so, it was definitely something very new for me and like you said, I was very much familiar with paid and traditional digital marketing.

When I saw this, I was fascinated and it wasn't until I read the Blog Profits Blueprint book where I started to understand the implications of driving traffic, monetizing it, that type of thing and then, I was really excited.

**YARO:** Let me toot my own horn here, my head really big. When you read the Blog Profits Blueprint, my report, what was the big "aha" or is there something you can remember that stood out, not even necessarily a technique but, what changed your way of thinking?

**MORGAN:** I think it was the system. It was an approach to really looking at what I was doing holistically and as an enterprise and as an opportunity to really go beyond just a place where I could wreath or jot down some thoughts but, to a place where I could really build a publishing platform that could earn money, drive leads, build my reputation and all sorts of things.

So, it was really a holistic approach that you laid out that really resonated.

**YARO:** It made you see your blog as the serious business as opposed to a hobby almost in the system behind that.

**MORGAN:** Exactly.

**YARO:** That's interesting. It's funny because when I wrote it, I'm not thinking about necessarily as what people are going to take away so, that's



why I like hearing that from you. So, take us forward now. Your domain name, you registered blownmortgage.com. Why?

**MORGAN:** Sure. Actually, like most things with the early start of my blog, it was all kind of organic but, some of the people in my office when they were trying to help people find new homes or finance, they would say that their credit was blown meaning that their credit was bad. They couldn't qualify for a home loan. And so, that word was just floating around out there and obviously, I was in the mortgage phase and I was actually dissatisfied like I said, with the state of the industry and some of the practices that I saw going on.

So, load mortgage just seem to make a lot of sense for me as a way to talk about the challenges that people face when dealing with mortgage and financing ways that they can use the system to their advantage as opposed to falling victim to some of the unscrupulous folks that were in the space.

**YARO:** Did you have a grand plan with this? Was this something you're thinking side project, I'm going to keep my full time job and play with this on the side or no, this is going to be my new source of income and equip my job and focus on this blog?

**MORGAN:** No, it was totally organic and it was really a place for me to get some of the frustrations that I encountered in my day to day out and kind of a stress reliever.

But, once I read some of the tips and tactics that you had in Blog Profits Blueprint and I saw some results, I remember the first time that one of my posts was excerpted and featured on another popular real estate blog and something like 35, or 45, or 50 people came and visited my site when the four of us, just my mom and my brother doing it a favor of clicking over from an email I'd send, that's when it kind of dawned on me that, "Oh wow! Maybe I have something to say. Maybe this can be something more than just a repository from my thoughts."

**YARO:** Okay, so that sounds like the turning point where you are thinking this is serious now. Did you have a plan at that stage or were you still like, "Let's just keep seeing where this goes."



**MORGAN:** It was definitely, "Let's keep seeing where this goes." I think I started to think about it as a way that I could generate business for the business that I was working at. I still hadn't gotten to the point where I thought that this could be a revenue generator, an income for me personally.

**YARO:** Weren't you ranting about the bad things in your industry? How is that going to be good for the business you are working for?

**MORGAN:** Yes, sure. So, what's funny is you're totally right. It's a bit counter-intuitive but, what I found was that people, and this is down the line but, people would read what I wrote and they would write me and say, "Finally, someone is being honest about what's going on. You want to work with someone who is honest."

**YARO:** Counter-intuitive marketing.

**MORGAN:** Yes, the people in my industry did not care for me very much.

**YARO:** That's a great point because I have actually heard a lot around the concept of counterintuitive marketing and if you are saying or doing the exact opposite of what's the standard way of doing things, it's a great way to get attention and be a thought leader, as long as you actually believe what you're saying of course which you obviously did.

**MORGAN:** Right, yes. That was totally, that was exactly what I figured out is that by taking contrary in point of view in that space, it was very refreshing to people in the industry who either agreed with me and didn't have the platform or the opportunity or the desire to really speak up but, wanted to be on that side of the game and also for people who were trying to learn about the industry, who were tired of a lot of generic marketing that was out there around it.

**YARO:** Okay so, before you take us forward with this, can we just get a little bit technical, a little bit how to and tell me, you said it was Movable Type. Did you switch to Wordpress or did you stay with Movable Type? Did you switch to Wordpress or did you stay with Movable Type?



**MORGAN:** No, I switched to Wordpress and I had a short [*unclear*] with Typepad but then, I really learned about Wordpress. That's what everyone seemed to be recommending. It offered a lot of...I used the Wordpress.org and set up my own server and used the original theme off of Wordpress and made a terribly designed little header and the way I was.

**YARO:** And, you're yourself obviously.

**MORGAN:** Yes, exactly, all by myself.

**YARO:** This was still on the side. You did this at nights, in weekends?

**MORGAN:** Yes, at night I would come home and write about, I would jot things down or just kind of stub some posts on my Wordpress admin throughout the day and when something would strike me, I would write it.

**YARO:** How many posts, do you think, a week you published?

**MORGAN:** In the early days, I was only doing one or two a week but, I quickly realized that more content meant more traffic and then, I was doing one everyday and then, I would do one in the morning and one in the evening.

**YARO:** Wow, [*unclear*] that was a job.

**MORGAN:** Yes. I would do it first thing in the morning and also later in the evening and luckily, I was doing well at my job so, I had a little leeway or time to...

**YARO:** How long were those posts?

**MORGAN:** They were relatively short. Before I really got into the Mastermind Program and before I learned about your concept of the killer content, I was really writing shorter and also news-driven type of posts. So, there was a lot of talk about the industry out there and there was lots of information coming across my desk just from working in it that I would turn into short posts.



They're all 750 words at that point. It wasn't until, like I said, that I started learning about killer content and that type of thing where I started getting longer.

**YARO:** Tell us about that.

**MORGAN:** Sure.

**YARO:** When did you decide to join Blog Mastermind and why?

**MORGAN:** I read Blog Profits Blueprint and it made a lot of sense and it gave me, my marketing background, I always learned to have a strategy, have objectives and then, have tactics to make that happen and I wasn't doing any of that with my blog because there was this organic little hobby but, your report aligned with my traditional view of how to be successful online and it just came to know it struck a chord and I was like, "Yes, this is exactly what I want to do and I see how this can be really successful. It made a lot of sense."

And so, some of the concepts that you had in the report and just really resonated and I thought it would be a great investment to take the Mastermind course to get really in detail and learn exactly the strategies and the things that I had to do every day to make it successful.

**YARO:** Now, I launched it in 2007. Did you jump on board that first group, do you remember?

**MORGAN:** Yes, I was in the first group, yes.

**YARO:** Wow, Morgan, did you join any teleconference calls, do you remember?

**MORGAN:** I don't remember. If I did, I was definitely in the forums more as a lurker and just kind of picking up ideas but, I followed along really diligently.



**YARO:** Yes, okay so, if you were the first group and I was writing the course as the first group went through and you getting the lesson a week and there were tasks in every lesson and so, did you learn about pillar articles, "Okay, I'm going to try writing longer posts and instead of covering news, I'm going to start teaching definitions and things like that." Is that what kind of happened?

**MORGAN:** Yes exactly. So, for example, just like you said, you would have a lesson that said, "All right, if you're having trouble generating content ideas, start a content folder and just write down ideas as they occur to you and then, go back through and find [23:35]."

I said, "Okay, let's start doing that," and then, he talked about creating pillar content as just really rich long form content that would be evergreen that would help drive traffic to the blog over time through the search engines.

So, I started thinking, well, in this niche, and I think in any niche, there is this evergreen content that has a ton of value. Instead of talking about how low interest rates work or how you secure a home loan or how does finance markets works. These are all great topics that can be really, really long and create some of those foundational content.

Actually, it was some pillar content that I created around load modifications at the time that actually really checked the blog to the next level by just a lot of great Google juice.

Anything else you can think of from the course that made a difference? Like, obviously, I'd love to talk about when you decided to start making money and we can talk about next but, just before we do that, was there anything else you can remember besides pillar content?

**MORGAN:** Yes, absolutely. You talked a lot about how to get distribution for your content and how to get your name out there and your blog out there through things like interviewing other blog folks in your space and so, that's one of the tactics that I took to heart and I went out and found the highest ranking real estate blogs that I could find and I used different tools like Blog Rank Badge and that type of thing to find higher traffic sites and I would send them an email and ask to interview them.



And so, I built up, I would interview them on my site and they would obviously post a link back to the interview on their site.

And so, there were a bunch of tactics around the distribution so, contributed articles, interviews, all sorts of stuff like that that were usually helpful.

**YARO:** We still use today a lot of that stuff, don't we and I'm still doing interviews. Look, we're doing one right now.

**MORGAN:** Exactly, exactly. It's a homerun tactic.

**YARO:** It's amazing. It's almost like just two pillar content and just getting out there and creating more pillar content without the people being involved, seems to be a good formula.

**MORGAN:** Yes.

**YARO:** So, then take us forward. You must be thinking, I paid money to join a course, that's a little bit more serious as well. You're giving me money so, you must be thinking differently about this whole blogging thing.

Did you then think, "All right now, let's start planning an income stream from this."

**MORGAN:** Yes, absolutely. And so, one of the things that happened also right about the time that I signed up for the course was one of my articles was picked up by a large new site that was specific to the real estate industry.

But, I remember I got to the office one morning and went on to my website and it was down. I couldn't resolve it. Error establishing database connection, the dreaded Wordpress default error.

I called the hosting company and they said, "We're sorry. There's nothing we can do. You're way over your bandwidth. You've been spiking all morning and there's nothing we can do."



It was all shared hosting. They can up the caps or anything like that. That was one of those kind of nightmare situations. It's kind of like being tech crunched but, in the real estate space.

**YARO:** Slashed out it back then.

**MORGAN:** Slashed out, exactly right. I think slashed out is a better example.

When it hit me that, wow, this could drive a lot of traffic and you were putting out a framework to monetize it and so, I started thinking, okay, what are the things that you were talking about putting in place in terms of affiliate marketing and premium content and email capture and a lot of the things that I had learned or had been around from my career started making sense in what I was doing.

That's when I got serious about... If I'm sending 10,000 people in a day to this website, there is a huge opportunity to do something about it.

**YARO:** Did you have a newsletter?

**MORGAN:** I did not have a newsletter. Now, I had with the blog digest through Feedburner but, I didn't have a newsletter. It came along much later in the process.

**YARO:** Why did you ignore my advice, Morgan? I've been writing clearly saying you have to get a newsletter. It was a mistake I made waiting a year. What happened?

**MORGAN:** Right, well so, I was collecting email addresses but, I wasn't creating extra content because I really felt I was pretty much [taps] at the content level but, it became really important once I did decide to focus on it and it actually was the thing that created a ton of value for the blog. It was the ability to capture email addresses in exchange for premium content that I was not able to market back for affiliate revenue.



**YARO:** Interesting. Well, take us forward. You decide you're going to make some money from this and you had a framework. So, what did you do first?

**MORGAN:** Sure, so what I did first is I looked at how I was creating content and if I was creating the right types of content and I really loved the analytics to see what content drove traffic and what types of content drove the big spikes and what content was generating referrals from search engines and that type of thing.

I really went about planning out an editorial calendar, more of a spreadsheet but, basically, I was going to do a couple of news posts and then, I was going to do an interview and so, my goal was to have one interview a week and then, to write one pillar content post that we could add a different topic and then, fill it in with news.

The first thing was to get organized around my content creation because I realized that that was what was driving traffic.

**YARO:** Great, so a schedule.

**MORGAN:** Right, exactly a schedule. And then, I started looking at what were the different ways that I could monetize the traffic so, I did the very basic stuff out of the gate like set up for Google AdSense because I happen to be in a very rich niche.

Mortgage clicks in Google, I think sometimes go for over thirty dollars. So, that wasn't a bad early strategy. But then, I did things like I researched ad servers and then, set up an Open X ad server on my site and then, I also started thinking about premium...

So, this is when I started to think about some of the premium content that I could offer an email capture and that type of thing and then, really started to look into related affiliate opportunities that existed in my industry and I was also getting a lot of inbound interests at that time, too because people had started to take notice of the content that I was creating, traffic was building and I was showing up in these different interviews by interviewing people that many people respected.



**YARO:** You're building a brand.

**MORGAN:** Yes, exactly right. You have to start to build a brand. The more interviews that I did and the more that I learned what articles were resonating, the more and more I was appearing in front of these people and the more 8,000 to 10,000 visits a day, I was having from that.

**YARO:** Amazing. So, just to clarify, this was all still done while you had a full-time job.

**MORGAN:** Yes, while I had a full-time job.

**YARO:** Did you ever quit your job to just to do this blog or that was a part time thing?

**MORGAN:** Yes. I left in the summer of 2007 and it was my main source of income for about six months before I was hired to run marketing at another startup which was actually the results of my blogging.

**YARO:** Interesting.

**MORGAN:** Yes.

**YARO:** Was that a mortgage brokering start up or loan start up or...?

**MORGAN:** It was actually an Internet Video startup but, the founder of the startup had come from the real estate space and what had happened was I'm speaking of building a brand, my blog had received notoriety that I was named one of the top 25 most influential bloggers for 2007 in the real estate space.

And so, that one and a bunch of publications and actually, the gentleman who owned the publication that published the awards contacted me about running marketing for him at his startup.

**YARO:** Wow, I still think someone out there has to teach a course on how to use a blog to get a job because I keep hearing stories about people who, totally unintentionally, end up landing work because they just maintain a



blog. It's not what people think about necessarily why you blog but, it's a great side benefit.

**MORGAN:** Yes, absolutely.

**YARO:** Okay, so there's a lot of things you said before. You said you're starting to get interests from people. You're getting a brand, notoriety. You said you put up Open X to run your own advertising on your site. I'm assuming by doing that, you start offering like, "Give me \$100 a month or \$200 a month to put a banner on your site," was that what you were doing?

**MORGAN:** Yes, exactly. So, I just started running flat rate monthly ad units and there were lots of people that were interested in being on my site from people in the industry to... and services and products like credit scoring and all sorts of stuff.

**YARO:** It's a hot market.

**MORGAN:** Yes.

**YARO:** Can you tell me, during the peak then, how much traffic were you getting per day on average? Do you remember like unique visitors or page views?

**MORGAN:** Sure. On average, it was probably somewhere in the five to seven thousand unique visits.

**YARO:** Google Analytics report?

**MORGAN:** Yes, Google Analytics reporting and I would have peaks at ten or fifteen thousand. I think my biggest day was probably around twenty thousand uniques in one day.

**YARO:** And, were you still writing one to twice a day like that schedule, was that just you doing it because I know you did mention you hired five writers. So, when they did come into this?



**MORGAN:** Yes, they came into this, when I was taking your course, I realized that I hit a cap in a wall at how much that I could create and I had started getting people that were in my space who were interested in writing for my blog to get exposure for themselves.

And so, I remember I had to go on vacation and I was terrified about my blog so, I lined up a week's worth of guest posts from people that I had talked to and trusted and they contributed content for a week.

The blog didn't do as well as when I was there full in it but, it did well enough where I could go on vacation and it survived and I realized that I didn't have to do all the work here so, I looked for writers that I could hire and that could create the types of content that I needed.

I had one person focused just solely on the news... and I had one person who was focused more on the educational stuff and then, I was able to look for opportunities where I could add additional monetization.

So, that's at the point when I was able to build my email list out and when I was able to go out and offer content to other sites that were in my space. That's really what started to build up my Google profile and then, on the front page of Google for some very important terms that really supplemented that kind of spiky traffic with really consistent daily traffic from Google.

**YARO:** Did you pay these writers?

**MORGAN:** I did.

**YARO:** How did you figure out how much to pay them?

**MORGAN:** Well, I [backed in] to how much I could afford and I paid them on a per post basis and I gave them some minimum. Some of them were more junior writers and I gave them less. Some were more senior and I paid them a bit more but, it was really an organic process.

**YARO:** \$10 a post. These, I'm assuming are Americans, right? They're not...



**MORGAN:** Yes, I had some at 10, some at 20, some at 30. It just kind of depended and then they wrote varying amounts of content but, when I really got it up and running, I was really trying to have about four or five posts per day up on the site.

**YARO:** Yes, that's a lot.

So, can we paint the entire picture here of this blog, because you did eventually sell it but, during the actual peak, you had five writers and you were trying to get five pieces of content today going out there and you had a schedule some news content, some teaching contents, interviews so various types of formats of content and you're also looking at what types of content were attracting more traffic from Google and trying to hit those things.

You did a bit of keyword research, I assume, to figure that out.

**MORGAN:** Right.

**YARO:** By the way, was that with just the Google's keyword tool? Did you...?

**MORGAN:** Yes, just with the Google Keyword Tool and then, also, I'm just paying attention to what was going on in the news and what other people in the space were writing about.

So, in the real estate industry, one of the things that became really important were loan modifications where people who couldn't afford their existing mortgage would stay in their house with a modified term on the note and there is a lot of confusion about what those were and...

**YARO:** I'm confused already.

**MORGAN:** Right, yes. I do that and all that type of thing. I realized that there were a lot of people. I needed to know how to do that. And so, it was really kind of paying attention to the trends around me and then, also doing keyword research and looking at my referral logs in Google Analytics. This



was before 60% of the traffic was secure search. So, it's a little harder nowadays.

But, back then, most of the keywords were pretty visible.

**YARO:** Right. I guess, you can look at the keywords of people landing at your site and what phrase they were looking for. And, if you didn't actually have an article matching that, you could have one of your writers produce one.

**MORGAN:** Exactly right, yes.

**YARO:** Okay. Do you remember what tool, was that just your analytics tool?

**MORGAN:** Yes, that was just Google Analytics and the keyword tool and then, what I did from there is that when I realized that loan modification was really important, I wrote a bunch of content around it and then, I did two other things that were really important.

One, I finally set up my email newsletter and...

**YARO:** Yes, right. Was that Aweber by the way? I want to ask.

**MORGAN:** Yes, it was Aweber, absolutely. Everything you have recommended have worked so far. I was going to keep going with it.

**YARO:** [*Laughs*]

**MORGAN:** So, I set up an Aweber form and what I did is I created a piece of content. It was, "The Ten Mistakes You Can't Afford to Make with Your Loan Modification."

It was a PDF of the top ten gotchas that people run into in the loan modification process and I put the Aweber form on my top performing posts around that subject and it was really, really effective. I was getting five hundred sign ups a month from just search traffic coming to that and people requesting that PDF so, it was really effective.



**YARO:** It's not even on your blog homepage. Just on the post related to that topic.

**MORGAN:** Just in posts related to the topic.

**YARO:** Wow, and that's impressive. So, what did you do then? Did that list have a follow up sequence of content and then, you sold them something?

**MORGAN:** Yes. I had been approached by someone who offered a course, information marketing course on how to do your own loan modification because many people, like I said, it was confusing and actually, the people in the industry that I work with everyday didn't even know how to do it.

And so, when I was contacted by this gentleman, I said, "Send me the materials because I was really adamant about not promoting something that I didn't believe in."

He sent me all the materials and I read them and I went over them with some people in my company who, we're all in the space so, we could separate the weed from the chaff, so to speak and it seemed really like sound advice.

So, I put together an email sequence of six or nine emails but, that kind of walked through different ways to handle the situation that these people were likely in if they're interested in loan modification and then, offered this information product for them through it.

**YARO:** Okay, and in terms of making money, did it turn out to be a big seller, your overall income?

**MORGAN:** Yes absolutely. That single product was probably 65% of my income.

**YARO:** Wow, okay. So, what was the peak income? You said \$4000 a month.



**MORGAN:** Yes, \$4000 a month from affiliates and then another couple of thousand at the peak from ad revenue and then, it baselined. I could count on about \$4000 a month consistently.

**YARO:** Okay so, combination of selling things like a course as an affiliate, having ads being bought directly like banners and things like that, and you said, AdSense. Were you still using AdSense at that point, too or was it still just direct ad buys?

**MORGAN:** I was still running some AdSense. I was running it through my Open X server though so, I was serving in remnant space.

**YARO:** Got you. Okay, so advertising affiliate income made about four to six grand a month during the good times.

**MORGAN:** Yes.

**YARO:** Awesome. So, you had a business.

I can see the picture now. You've got a blog. You've got a writing team working towards a schedule. You've done some work to make sure you're hitting the right content to get the traffic from Google. You've created an email list that's targeting a specific area. You went after mortgage changing, something to call that and then, you had a product being sold after that newsletter at the end and that was the business.

The only thing I think people who might be listening to this where they really struggle, do you have to grab something? Are you all right?

**MORGAN:** I'm going to plug in real quick.

**YARO:** Okay, putting more power, no problem.

**MORGAN:** Yes, exactly.

**YARO:** People listening, you can't see this but, I can actually see Morgan on video right now and he is walking through his, where he is. We're running out of power, yes.



So, the only thing Morgan, that I'm pretty sure everyone listening to this, I can understand that concept, it's obviously what I teach and what a lot of other people teach, it's start a blog, get a bunch of traffic and then, start making money from advertising affiliate income and maybe, even eventually doing your own products.

The hard part is almost always traffic generation.

**MORGAN:** Right.

**YARO:** So, it sounds to me like you haven't really said anything that you did beyond just interviews and going after keywords and creating a really good piece of content on a regular basis and working to a schedule but, you never... It just worked, right? You didn't have to--

**MORGAN:** Yes, and I think there were probably a couple of other things that I did that were helpful with driving traffic. One, like I mentioned, the interviews were really important but, I used each interview to get "a bigger interview."

Actually, we'd interview a blogger that was slightly bigger than me and then, find a bigger blogger and email them that I had interviewed these people and then, used that to, I actually ended up interviewing people at CNBC who would then share the interview. And so, working my way up the ladder with the interviews and being strategic about it was really effective.

The second thing that I think I did really well in retrospect is that there are a lot of people in my industry who wanted to blog or who needed content but, they didn't have either the resources to create it or the drive to create it. But, they had very authoritative sites and so, I would reach out to sites and offer to create content for them about loan modifications.

I would say, "Hey, I would send you a five-part series on loan modification that you can provide to your readers and if you'll publish it, just as is and give me attribution for the content."

I had 30 or 40 people raise their hand and say, "Yes, send it."



I created a ton of extra work because I was very conscious not to publish duplicate content but, I had the opportunity to, over 30 or 40 blogs to publish five posts with their permission on their sites and so, I was generating 150 to 200 links very quickly.

**YARO:** Wow, that's great.

What was with these sites? They were just not updating them anymore or...?

**MORGAN:** They were all real estate agents or mortgage sites that had blogs who were nascent in getting into the business or maybe they had launched the blog off of their business website that type of thing where they already have page rank and authority from their current business and so, you can imagine a real estate agent isn't really involved in home financing but, obviously, it's important for their customers.

They would say sure, why I don't really know about this element of home financing but, I know it's important because I have people, my past clients and current clients asking about what the implications are.

And so, I would say, "I will send you a five-article series on it that you can run and you can point people to it on your site whenever."

**YARO:** So, you were like a pioneer of super guest posting.

**MORGAN:** Right, I guess so. Right.

**YARO:** Yes, because that's what people love talking about today. It's one of the best ways to build links is guest postings but, you aren't just saying, "Here's one article." You are creating a whole series for them and it's clever actually when you talk about going to real estate, you think about complimentary industries to your own.

If you get links from [raywhite.com.au/California](http://raywhite.com.au/California) or some area in California, it's a fairly authoritative link back as well, a very relevant link back.



I can think with me with blogging, I can go to all the other people out there writing about maybe email marketing or even go to writing sites so, people are learning how to write and say, "I'd give you a series on using a blog to do what you do and do the same thing you did."

So, it's not directly competing with them. It adds to their content and yes, that's a nice little tip and it worked well.

**MORGAN:** Yes, absolutely.

**YARO:** Awesome.

Okay Morgan now, we'll probably just start wrapping up this interview. I know I grabbed you as long as your battery is running out here. You sold this website. Why? What happened?

**MORGAN:** I had started out of it out of a place where I was not thrilled with the industry that I was in and so, once I have been named this Most Influential Blogger, a lot of things had happened. I was named Influential Blogger. I was asked to speak at a bunch of places. I was quoted, Bloomberg News would call me regularly, NPR their reporters would call me regularly to try to get the understanding of the insight that I was sharing and so, when I was offered a job to run marketing at this Internet Startup company up in San Francisco, I was taken out of the industry pretty abruptly which was fine by me.

But, I found that it became harder and harder to stay passionate about it being disconnected from the space and frankly, I had written about it for a couple of years at that point and I was ready for a new challenge.

I was also going through some life changes. I had moved up to San Francisco for the job and that type of thing and so, I decided that it was time to sell it. I just didn't want it to die on the vine and I knew that my attention was being pulled elsewhere and so, I loved to find and get a home for it.



**YARO:** So, even though you had guest writers or regular writers, you were still the main brand behind it. I think, what you're saying is you personally started writing this site would slowly die, as well.

So, you were thinking, "Let's sell it. I've got a team of writers. It's still a good asset to move on to someone else. Is that what your thinking was?"

**MORGAN:** Yes, and the guest writers or my contributors had really done a great job keeping it up and keeping the traffic up and all of that type of thing but, I just knew that my heart wasn't in it and I wanted to sell it to someone who would keep it going and keep it alive because I thought there was a lot left to say but, it just wasn't my time to let someone else say it.

**YARO:** So, how did you sell the site?

**MORGAN:** Yes sure. I had no idea how to sell a website. I have never done it before and so, I think through some links to interviews that I found in the Mastermind forum and following down some different trails, I got an idea of how to price my blog based on the multiple of its monthly earnings and find a range for it.

Then, I made some dumb mistakes. I posted it on some public sites where you can sell websites. I talked to some people afterwards who said, "That's usually not the best idea on how to do it." But, I've only sold one so, I guess your [51:58] may vary.

And so, I was contacted by a couple of people and I had really put together, from listening to the interviews and following the resources that I got out of the Mastermind forums, I knew that I had to, people weren't just going to buy it based on my words so, I started pulling together all of the stats that I had about the blog.

So, a number of email subscribers, revenue by month, expenses by month, profit and loss and all my Google Analytics, traffic screenshot it and all of that type of thing to get it ready and so, when I had a couple of buyers contact me, we would do a little confidentiality agreement and then, I would turn over all the information. I found a buyer who was very interested and



motivated to move quickly and so, we did a purchase contract and used Escrow.com and negotiated on a price and closed fairly rapidly.

**YARO:** So, all those buyers just came from you posting it on public sites.

**MORGAN:** Yes, and I had a few people come through me because at that time also I was on Twitter. I posted a tweet saying that I was going to sell the blog and so, I got some interest inquiries inbound and just through some that as well.

**YARO:** Now, you told me that you made enough money on this sale to buy a car.

**MORGAN:** Yes.

**YARO:** Is that where you'd like to leave the statement on that on what you got?

**MORGAN:** Yes so, I will say that towards the end, when I was in the new job, my revenue kind of tailed off a little bit and I was anxious to sell it. So, I sold it for \$30,000. I probably could have gone more and if I had sold it at its peak, I definitely could have gotten much more.

**YARO:** Yes, I would buy it from you, I think at that price, to be honest.

**MORGAN:** At that point, I was just glad that I had moved it on and had given it someone else and all that good stuff and I was happy.

**YARO:** Since your biggest reason for a sale is just burnt out and you don't want to be doing that.

It's funny, some people just keep going like they love, like for you, the mortgage industry, and you would have wanted to become bigger and more well-known and more well-known and become a speaker and then, releasing your own products and built a whole business around it.

It sounds like no, you were still more interested in technology and startups and less about mortgages and financing. And so, hence you didn't want to



go down that path but, you certainly... Considering that, you built a pretty massive platform getting yourself interviewed on TV and radio and all these sorts of things as well.

It shows all you really have to do is publish content and start getting exposure for it and you really do, you become framed as a leading expert.

**MORGAN:** Absolutely. Totally agree.

**YARO:** Quite the journey, huh?

**MORGAN:** Yes, it was definitely an entrepreneur's journey for sure and like I said, pretty much everything that you laid out in the course, I did and it worked really, really well.

**YARO:** That's why I got you here, Morgan. You got to have some proof that this stuff works [*laughs*].

What are you doing today? Have you moved on from blogging to work for that startup and then...?

**MORGAN:** Sure. Yes, I am a marketing consultant and I help companies grow now and one of the companies that I am helping is a company called Qualaroo. It's not from Australia. We just co-opted the name.

**YARO:** Thanks!

**MORGAN:** Right exactly but, it's a really great onsite tool for gaining insights about your traffic and optimizing your content and landing pages and website for conversions. So, instead of trying to guess about how to optimize your content, you can ask your visitors and they can tell you where they're confused or where they need help.

It's a really effective neat little product.

**YARO:** Yes, I've seen it all over the place, little pop up surveys that come at the bottom right corner of the screen. I'm sure the listeners have seen those on site.



Qualaroo, how do you spell that one?

**MORGAN:** It's Q-u-a-l-a-r-o-o.com

**YARO:** I've got to ask, from all that blogging you did and all that experience that you had, did you take that forward into what you're doing today with Qualaroo or do you have a completely different role nowadays to what you used to do?

**MORGAN:** No, I definitely understand the power of content and earned media for traffic and user acquisition. It's an important part of my online marketing strategy that I execute all over the place.

So, the ideas that work really well for blogging also work really well for building any type of business. It's the pillar content. It's the [earns?] distribution. It's the consistent day after day approach to creating it that is really critical.

It's massively important in what I do today.

**YARO:** Okay, Morgan thank you. That was a great detailed breakdown and you executed the model exactly how it works.

**MORGAN:** Thanks Yaro.

**YARO:** Pat on the back for that and it worked and you chose a great industry maybe not necessarily other than because you happen to be in that industry but, still that's a big cash industry so, fantastic.

**MORGAN:** Thanks!

**YARO:** One last question just to wrap it up for those people since you have obviously worked in content online marketing, that sort of thing for a long time now, there's a lot of people listening to this interview who are, they never ever had a website that's had much traffic. It never generated a lot of leads.



Did you have any advice for those people who still have these doubts like it seems to work for everyone else but, I write lots of blog posts or not get interviews and no one ever links back to me. I never get this massive 10000 visitor days like you just talked about and all that sort of stuff.

Give us some hope.

**MORGAN:** Yes, absolutely. My blog started with no one reading it and then, my family reading it and then, I didn't really have an approach. I think the important part is having a strategy around what you think is going to work and when things really started to click was when I looked at the things that were working and that weren't working.

I think there's a lot of opportunities out there now that didn't exist. For example, when I had my blog, Twitter just launched in South by Southwest in 2007. It wasn't even really a distribution platform and now, you can do all sorts of things like tests post headlines as tweets before you write the content. There's a whole bunch of different strategies that you can apply now.

So, I would say, my success was one, I followed Yaro's plan. Two, I was consistent. I just did it day in and day out and then, three, I had a strategy and approach so, I looked at what was working and I tried to do more of that.

Then, I looked for opportunities to get out in front of people by giving first, so by giving content, offering a guest post, doing interviews and promoting other people, and that was the road forward.

**YARO:** Great and you sound so like a normal guy, Morgan. You make that sound very accessible.

**MORGAN:** Yes, it's not trying to dock with international space station.

**YARO:** Brain surgery. Okay, do you want to mention the other websites besides Qualaroo? I know you have a personal blog. Do you want to throw anything else out there?



**MORGAN:** Not at the moment. You can follow me on Twitter, morganb on Twitter. That's the best place to jump off and see everything else that I'm up to. That's it.

**YARO:** Okay, morganb on Twitter so @morganb. Fantastic! Thank you MorganB for taking the time to tell your story. I appreciate that and I'm sure everyone listening in does as well. I'll talk to you again very soon.

**MORGAN:** Thanks Yaro!

**YARO:** This is Yaro Starak from Entrepreneur's Journey, you know where to go. Google YARO to find my blog or you can go to Entrepreneurs-Journey.com and download other interviews like this. Thanks for listening and I'll talk to you soon. Bye!

And, just one more reminder guys, if you are interested in taking my Blog Mastermind Program and following in the successful footsteps of Morgan Brown and the several thousand other people who have taken part in the program over the years then, I invite you to go to [www.blogmastermind.com/signup](http://www.blogmastermind.com/signup) where you can find out all about the program, how much it costs, what you get, how long it takes and I really look forward to helping you to grow your own blog success story in particular, if you're looking to use a blog as a platform to sell some kind of teaching program.

We go from starting a blog, building it up, building an email newsletter and then, having that platform available to start selling products based on information that you can teach to other people.

That's the goal. That's what I want to help you do. So, go to [www.blogmastermind.com/signup](http://www.blogmastermind.com/signup) and I'll see you on the inside.

This is Yaro Starak and I'll talk to you soon. Bye!



## Relevant Links Mentioned in this Interview

- [Qualaroo](#)
- [Blog Profits Blueprint](#)
- [Blog Mastermind](#)
- [Cluetrain Manifesto](#)
- [Feedburner](#)
- [Naked Conversations: How Blogs are Changing the Way Businesses Talk with Customers](#)
- [Blown Mortgage](#)
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