

Want More Great Interviews Like This?

Visit Entrepreneurs-Journey.com for articles, downloadable podcasts, videos and more to help you start an internet business...

www.entrepreneurs-journey.com

Nicola Lees: Founder Of TVMole.com A 'How To Pitch Your TV Program Idea' Blog Explains How She Makes A Full Time Income Blogging About Such A Unique Topic

Hello, this is YARO and welcome to the Entrepreneur's Journey podcast. Today's guest is Nicola Lees.

YARO: My guest today is Nicola Lees coming to you live from London which you'll be able to tell from her accent. She is the founder of [TVMole](#) and I brought her on to this podcast because she took my Blog Mastermind program, so that's always great for obvious reasons but, she makes money from her blog without actually asking or selling anything directly, which is really interesting. She derives an income from speaking and selling things but there is no actual, obvious pitches for this on her blog.



Her blog is making the sale but very, very soft, and people contact her to then hire her and buy things from her. She's making a full-time income from

it. So, I think this is a great example case study for anyone who is out there with an expertise or specialization to show you that a blog can really be the gateway to a thriving business simply by demonstrating your expertise, through the blog as a content distribution platform. Let's find out how Nicola does that. So Nicola, thank you for joining me.

NICOLA: You are very welcome. Thank you for inviting me.

YARO: Can you just clarify what I said there. You do make a living indirectly from your blog, and what is your topic area?

NICOLA: My background was as a TV producer and specifically a TV producer who doesn't actually produce TV but, my job was to develop new television shows, to research them, to write a proposal and then, to pitch those ideas to broadcasters and then, when and if they were sold, then I would step away. Somebody else would go on and make the show and I would continue developing more ideas and pitching again.

It's a very niche area. When I started about 10 years ago, it wasn't really recognized as a specialty in its own right. I was really passionate about this particular area of expertise and felt that it was very unrecognized and undervalued and that in fact, it had a very distinct skill set different from the people who actually make TV which wasn't being recognized.

So, I set up the blog partly for people like me who wanted to work in this area but, for who knows no training, nobody ever taught me how to do this job, so it was all trial and error.

Basically, I wanted to build a resource that people like me could go to, to stop making the mistakes that I made and to stop people having to reinvent the wheel every time they started the job.

Essentially, it is a very niche resource for people who specifically develop factual television ideas so, unscripted. So, that's anything from maybe entertainment shows to series, documentaries... So, not drama, not comedy, but anything that doesn't have a script attached to it.

The idea of the site is that you can go to the site and in one place, wherever you are in the world, you got a really good snapshot of current industry trends, what is being commissioned recently, who the key players are, who is being hired and fired, so it is important for me to pitch to them.

Alongside other flagging sources of training, pitching opportunities, funding opportunities, people who are trying to fund their own shows, and also how to articles, how to pitch and how to write a proposal. So, it is kind of one-stop shop for a very niche specialty area.

YARO: And, how exactly do you make money from it?

NICOLA: Well, I don't make money directly from the site. I have a couple of basically freelancer, I have a couple of regular freelance jobs that I've had for a few years now, which, so both them are in fact not about developing ideas or about developing talent but, the people came to me because they knew me from TVMole and they liked what I was doing and they liked the fact that it was, I guess, very much about giving information to enable other people to do their best work rather than, I guess, selling a service or something. That's kind of slightly a little tangent but, it is more directly related to development.

I have people coming to me to ask me to do, you know, come into their company for a few weeks or months to maybe cover maternity leave for one of their members or staffs who just developed and they just want me to step in and take over for a little while or at the other end, just go in for a day and do some strategy about whether they are developing the right kind of ideas, whether they are developing the right kind of ideas for their company, the things that most likely need to be successful in terms of being pitched or to do brainstorms with companies just, they've got their own ideas and they just want somebody with a fresh eye and a neutral background to come in to their existing teams and just help them work through sync new ideas

I am also increasingly get asked to go and speak at conferences or chair panels. In the last few weeks, I have been to Las Vegas where strangely, I was asked to speak at a conference which was all about tiles and stones, interior design which was perhaps the most unusual request. But, that type

of the talk was *How do I get on TV?* So, that was for people like, interior designers, architects, and contractors who might want to be on a make-over show or act as a show host.

Then, last week, I was in Poland in Krakow for a week to kind of part with development workshops. About 20 different filmmakers came, pitched their ideas, we fed back to them, and I kind of dragged and stay in the panel and then, we worked one on one with them over the course of the week on their pitch and their story and then, by the end of the week, they had to pitch to 20 commissions there just to skim around your... for funding on money. So, that was quite high stakes.

That's all great fun because I get to do lots of different things. Then, more recently, I've had, and this is a surprise to me because again, I'm not asking or selling. This is a service. People are approaching me on a one to one basis, asking for consultancies so perhaps, working with somebody over a period of weeks on how to write proposals or how to develop very specific ideas.

So, I had somebody who is an assistant producer who wanted to get a job in development but she had a bit of a phobia about proposal writing which is a problem because that's what her job is about. So, I was able to work with her for about six weeks and by the end of it, she was able to write a proposal within about an hour with some confidence and that was great.

I've been going for five years now and it's still evolving and what's great is that the work comes to me and it all feels very organic and natural.

YARO: So, you are like a consultant, a coach, a speaker and you are getting paid for all these things and they're all different and they're all dynamic but, they are all related to your expertise.

What I love about this is you just started a blog, shared your knowledge, and you let the market decide how you get paid for it which is really cool.

NICOLA: Yes.

YARO: And you make a full-time living from that, too. Awesome. All right.

Well, I would love to know how this all came about. You have been involved in the industry for a long time. Take us back in time, you were born and raised in London, and did you go to some sort of film school or script-writing school or something, production school?

NICOLA: No. I was actually born in Manchester which is in the Northwest of England, and right from the age of 4, I wanted to be a nurse and so at the age of 18, I went to nursing school and I was a nurse for ten years. I specialized in Accident and Emergency Nursing. I didn't go to University at all originally. And after that in Emergency Nursing and then, I was kind of disillusioned pretty quickly actually, within about three weeks of starting my training, got honed in there.

But, after ten years, I applied to be a volunteer medic on an expedition which I ended up in Chilean Patagonia for three months. And, that was really the break that I needed, because as I was nursing, I was in a situation where I was only mixing with other medical people and you're always told that's your job for life and you're supposed to cure, and you're doing a good job and all that. But, I wasn't finding it very fulfilling for various reasons, but, didn't feel able to leave. But, having this break to be this volunteer medic, certainly I started thinking with this, there are lots of other things that I could do because at this point, on the expedition, I was mixing with people who were sound engineers in music studios, journalists and they were working for big consulting companies.

So, my eyes were kind of open to the possibilities but, I had no clue what I wanted to do. So, I thought, I should maybe go to University on the basis that I'd probably get better paid job if I had a degree, and just ended up taking a Media with Cultural Studies degree not because I particularly wanted to work in the media but, just because it was very broad and arts-based degree and I'd always liked English at school, and I just wanted three years to explore the academic side without being funneled into being an accountant or a doctor or a lawyer.

That's what I did and I really enjoyed myself and came out of it still not really wanting a career in the media but, not having any idea what I wanted to do and moved to London and signed under a... agency and the first job I got was a day answering the telephone at the BBC. That day turned into

ten years [*laughs*]. As I kept saying, I didn't want to work in television but, they kept extending my contract.

During those ten years, I started off doing an office job and I then, I was an assistant to an executive producer and then I worked on some shows, mostly Science and History Programs but, still I knew that this wasn't really me. I'm not a director. I don't want to make films.

But then, I found myself between jobs because I was employed by them between jobs. You kind of got put in this place called development whenever you wanted to work. And, it certainly clicked for me. And I thought, 'This is what I really enjoy. I enjoy researching lots of things, learning about subject areas that I didn't know anything about really quickly, being able to condense that down into something that has a very clear narrative writing proposal and then, pitching it and doing that everyday, different things everyday, juggling lots of different proposals.'

So, I found my niche and as much as they tried to dissuade me that this is not a job career, I persisted and I went up through the ranks from being virtually a researcher to eventually being the head of Science Development of the BBC, so developing all the big BBC landmark series that ended going on around the world.

Within that time, I also spent two years working in New York developing shows, still for the BBC but, pitching them to all the different cable networks in the US.

By the time I came I had a new and a good understanding of the US which has since so much paid off. Then, after 10 years, the BBC was making a round of redundancies as it tends to do every couple of years and I felt that the time was right for me to leave. I don't yet really know what I wanted to do but, I left, took myself off to New York to do an editing course because although I don't like middle production bit where you're actually filming, I do like editing where you are pulling all the stories together and making it all make sense.

And, whilst I was doing that in New York for six weeks, I also signed up for an online book writing course without really thinking what the heck I was

going to write about because I didn't have an idea and it was just something to challenge myself with because writing proposals, we were always trying to put it into one page, always trying to be succinct. So, the idea of writing a book was just to challenge that I couldn't write more than 200 words.

And then, by the time I came back from both of those courses, I had 70,000 words in this book. At which point, I thought maybe I can write a book. So, I slightly got distracted from my editing ambitions and thought I'd write a book proposal which again, I've never done before and they are very different from TV proposals and they are about 25 pages long. I sent off the proposal thinking I can put in the door now and I had a response from an agent within 24 hours which I think is pretty impressive. And, partly because it was very good timing. She knew that there was a publisher who was looking for TV related books at that time.

So, the book I had written was about *how to develop and pitch TV artists*, so again, very much related to my area of expertise. And so, then took me off. I got a publishing contract pretty quickly. So, I wrote the book and the mantra was always, 'You'll never be successful as an author if you don't have a platform.' And, I'd never even heard of a platform at that point.

So, even as I sent off my proposal to the agent, I was thinking maybe I need to get a platform. So, I think it was in the October or November time. I think that's probably when I joined Blog Mastermind because I haven't ever had a blog before but, I was aware that a platform probably involved a blog or some description. So, I signed up for Blog Mastermind.

YARO: How did you find me, Nicola?

NICOLA: I actually have no idea. I don't remember. Because of my job, I'm always signed up to lots of different newsletters. That's part of my job, scanning these letters and looking at trends.

YARO: Maybe I should ask why did you choose me then?

NICOLA: You know I still cannot remember, maybe because... Honestly, I do not know. I think I must have come across... I looked at your site and

looked all your materials and thought that it was perfect moment, perfect type of course for what I needed. And I think I'm better online than going in person to a class and just because I can work, as and when I've got time. I don't have to turn up on a specific date. So, I think that probably appealed on the online aspect.

YARO: Okay.

NICOLA: Yes.

YARO: So, you joined Blog Mastermind. Obviously, you were going to start a blog to create the platform for this new book you were creating.

NICOLA: Yes.

YARO: So, what did you do next? Did you just follow the instructions, set up Wordpress to try and find the domain name you liked and all that?

NICOLA: Yes, I started completely from scratch. I didn't know any about it so, I completely followed step by step through the whole process. I got down with [Hostgator](#) which is what you were recommending at the time, and with [Wordpress](#) which is what you recommended so, completely... join the dots.

YARO: Paper and ...

NICOLA: Exactly [*laughs*]. So, I'm very good at following instructions and I followed them to the letter. So, I remember that Christmas, I was writing my pillar articles and that's what I spent my Christmas doing, and with it, a launch date in mind for January and I got myself in quite a technical mess with my Wordpress site and I'm still not quite sure how but, I ended up hiring somebody to try and sort out the mess that I've made in technical terms.

But, in terms of content, I was quite happy. I was very reassured actually and this is what I tell people, and I'm coaching them as well now, that it's all about, don't worry about being perfect. You have viable time, pillar articles that you start with sequel content that people come to. And then, you keep

building it and people keep finding it based on the feedback that you get. And, that's very much the way it's been since then, I guess.

YARO: So, you published these pillar articles, so this foundation blog content, did you notice that people just discovered you straightaway? How did the actual traffic growth come to you and did you actually market yourself?

NICOLA: No. I have never marketed myself. When I was working in New York for the BBC, I was asked to send marketing intelligence back to the team back in London and so, I started writing it, just a Word document, but, it was things that as a foreigner in the States, that I was just noticing, so cultural things that was slightly different, things that were on TV that were different, trends on television that I thought might be interesting for the people back in the UK to know about, a very simple Word document with links to articles and things.

And I, as far as I knew, was emailing it back to a team of six people in the Development team in London. When I got back to London two years later, I discovered that this thing had gone viral. The head of BBC Scotland into the people in publicity, and the children's department, and commissioning editors and all kinds of people who, had I known, it would not have been the same niche, I think I would have sensed it a lot more than they did. But, you know, it was clearly popular and I continued doing it every month.

YARO: So, was this part of your blog, or was this before your blog?

NICOLA: This is before my blog. This is just when I was doing at work. But, it wasn't really part of my jobs back here. It was just something that people found interesting.

So when I was leaving the BBC, I sent a final email saying, 'Goodbye, this is the last one.' And, I had a flurry of panic, people emailing me saying, 'You are going to continue doing this, aren't you?' At which point, I said, 'No, I'm not because I'm leaving.'

But then, when I was thinking about a blog, I thought, actually, I've already got a ready-made market there for all those people. So, I went back and

found the email addresses that I thought. So, the only marketing I ever did was when on the day I launched was to send an email with a link to the blog to the people who were on that original mailing list.

YARO: There is a tip for anyone who's listening who is currently in a job, start a newsletter to your fellow employees, getting ready to leave and then, you can send them to your blog when it starts. That's clever [*laughs*].

NICOLA: Yes... So, and then since then it's completely been word of mouth. The point of the blog is that, there's again, following Blog Mastermind, I setup an [Aweber](#) newsletter. So, it's just a blog broadcast. So, anything that is posted in my blog is automatically sent out in an email newsletter and it gets out on a Monday morning to arrive in people's inboxes for when they start work on a Monday. The idea being that you know, you start work on a Monday morning, you're not quite awake yet. You want to ease yourself into the work perhaps by reading emails or a cup of coffee, and I thought if I send this on a Monday morning, people can just scan through who has been commissioned and that will set them up for a week with a bit of useful content but, nothing too strenuous.

YARO: Right. How many subscribers do you have now?

NICOLA: Well, now I have about, again, this is all down to you about the subscriber thing, I think I've got about 3,500 subscribers which is—

YARO: In a very small niche, right?

NICOLA: It isn't huge but, I get about 65% open rate on that.

YARO: And, your market is, what? It's 10,000 people in the entire industry probably and in the planet, right [*laughs*]?

NICOLA: Well in that niche, yes. [*Laughs*] So yes, it's small but very dirty and I know that it's word of mouth because every Monday, that's when signups peak. I always get a flurry of people joining the main list on a Monday. So, it's obviously people saying, 'Have you seen this? You should sign up.' They pass it on to their colleagues. So, that just continues, and it grows every month by a small amount.

I have a similar number of followers number on Twitter which I don't quite know why it's the same numbers but it tends to be the same numbers.

Another thing I'm noticing is the demographic is slightly changing in that my main readership is obviously in the UK, Los Angeles and New York as you might expect. But, over the last few years, or probably the last year or eighteen months, I've really noticed that a lot of subscribers are coming off from Africa which is really interesting because that's not really a part of the world that you know, people on TV in the UK and the US really think about but, there's clearly a big appetite in Africa.

YARO: So, can you explain? Because this sounds like, like you said, paint by numbers following what I teach in Blog Mastermind, set up the blog, you've registered TVMole.com, set up a newsletter which just sends your blog post in your case and people are sharing it because it's relevant.

Now, I know you were taking my program and you said you didn't even really reach the part where I talked about setting up ways in making money because people started asking you to, I'm assuming to, hire you. Can you remember the very first time this happened? Did someone just reply to your newsletter and say, 'Hey, can I hire you to do something?' Was that what happened?

NICOLA: You know, I don't really remember. I was working religiously through all the different sections of Blog Mastermind. It may have actually been at that point my book contract, I had to concentrate on writing the book process and doing the blog.

So, I think I was probably maintaining the blog at that point on a weekly basis but, not doing a lot of really original content because a lot of the content comes from press releases and its industry intelligence.

So, a lot of it is about curation of... content. So, once I got the key pillar articles, it is not about maintenance whilst I was writing the book. But, I think maybe the next point came when the book was published may be a year later, because, then I could start publicizing the book on my blog. I wasn't allowed to sell it from my blog because I had to get a special clause

in my publisher's contract because they didn't want me to have a blog at all in the end.

YARO: Wow.

NICOLA: Because they thought it would be competing.

YARO: Crazy [*laughs*].

NICOLA: [*Laughs*] So, they weren't very familiar with the world of blogs at that point. And, that was kind of the purpose of setting a blog in the first place but, by then, it was supposed to be a companion piece to the book but, by then, it was its own thing. And then, once the book was up there, I think people then started seeing me as an expert and that's when I started getting requests. So, I think...

YARO: Such a great combo. I love that having a book, having a blog, having a newsletter, that is the perfect formula for anyone with expertise. It is a platform, just like you said at the beginning and how you can then make a living from this is, like in your case, can be all kind of different ways that, it's not advertising. It doesn't have to be selling information products. It can be travelling around the world speaking at events or getting hired to come in for a weekend on a weekend, maybe a day to work for another company and help them. It's amazing what you get to do, and of course, your industry is a little bit unique like that. I am sure not all industries are so dynamic but, the principle is the same.

Can you may be explain to us, in terms of what you have done, what you have built, did you find... is there anything you can think of over the past few years that you've been running this platform, that certain things have worked really well especially when it comes to getting paid work, like is there a certain type of content that seems to trigger jobs or, it's funny because you never actually send out an email saying, 'Hey, I am available to hire or write a blog post to do that.' I know it's a little bit unorthodox.

But, could you know of any correlations, you can think back over that have led to work?

NICOLA: Well, I guess going back to originally, what was the first paid work, I think actually that was... Ironically, it was one of the trade magazines contacted me to ask me, could they use my blog content on their blog? To which, I said, no because I think they wanted that for free.

But, it turned out that they were also organizing an industry conference which I somehow, negotiated that I would organize their conference for them, so organize all their panels which was I have never organized conference panels before but, because of all the people I've interviewed for my book and because of the profile I had through TVMole, that gave me the authority to approach really high industry figures and I had great contacts. So, I was able to do that. That's what's interesting about all the different things I'm doing. Each one builds extra contacts or extra insights that I can use in another job which it all goes one into a virtual circle, I guess. So, that was the first one.

Then, I guess, there's one pillar article that I wrote right at the beginning, and that has been the one that gets consistently the most hits and all the comments, and that was one about how to write a proposal. So, it was a list post with ten things you need in your TV proposal. And, that has been the one that everybody has flocked to.

On the basis of that, when I was thinking about how I might monetize this further, I set up an online course about a year ago, I think, via a platform called [Skill Share](#) and that was based on that post.

So, I expanded it into a multimedia course with the downloads, and videos, and what have you, and they get charged for that course.

YARO: Okay, so do you have a digital training program as well as a blog

NICOLA: Yes. That was quite recent, a recent addition and it's kind of not within the blog itself. It's on a separate platform. I would like to work out how to do that within a blog around this year.

YARO: Do you sell it from the blog in any way?

NICOLA: There is a link to it but--

YARO: So, you do have one selling aspect on this, one with a link.

NICOLA: Yes.

YARO: Okay. When you talk about that pillar post, when you said, people like they get the most hits, do you find you get a lot of traffic from Google?

NICOLA: To be honest, when I was doing the Blog Mastermind course, I was looking at the stats all the time and I haven't looked recently. In fact, I looked just before I talked to you and I don't understand Google Analytics anymore because they changed the dashboard and I can't work out where I was.

I think I do but, to be honest, I think the people I get from Google are probably not the people I want. I know that I've had, you know like business venturing and so on, they're always about you need to expand your reach and all these.

But actually, my heart always sinks slightly when somebody signs up for my newsletter and they say that they're an actress or a pastor or something because I know that they are not going to be interested in the content because it is their niche, and so specific.

And, so, I sometimes get people who are coming because they want to find out what's going to be on television next week and that's not about—

YARO: Right.

NICOLA: So Google isn't really my friend. Again, it is about personal recommendation to the right kind of people who you know...

YARO: That's interesting. That's unusual. Most people on some level rely on Google, and maybe you are tying a bit of targeted audience from it but like you said, it's the referrals that the people in your industry to other people in your industry that matters the most.

NICOLA: Yes.

YARO: And, I guess, that is the most important question then. You said, when you send a newsletter that triggers more people obviously sharing the newsletter.

NICOLA: Yes.

YARO: Do you have any advice for the listener who really wants to encourage word of mouth in referrals, what worked the best for you since it doesn't sound like you are not forcing it, are you. You're not asking people, 'Please share this.' They're doing it organically. So, is it a case of just really being on the current trends and being a thought leader and really, like you said, you curate content. You go and find the topics related to your industry, collect them and then, share that information with your audience.

NICOLA: Yes.

YARO: Is that really the secret here? You need to be on topic, really current and stay there, which as an expert, you have to do, right?

NICOLA: Yes. Well, I guess, even if nobody was reading my blog, I would probably still do it because it's useful to me. I know that if somebody says to me, 'I've got an idea about lions,' I will know at the back of my head, I'm sure somebody somewhere just commissioned something on lions but, I will not fail to remember it but, I know that can search in my blog and it will come up pretty quickly so, it's like my memory.

So, it's useful for me anyway. And because it's so niched and because I am writing it for somebody like me, I know exactly what is useful. I am not trying to second guess what people want. I know exactly what they want and I know what's useful.

I'm also providing something that is they can't get anywhere else. So, although I am curating content from lots of different sources, what's unique about TV Mole is that there are lots industry, very established industry, trade magazines that talk about industry trends, talks about what's being commissioned, all that stuff but, they tend to be all the genres, so it's drama, factual, post-production, technical... They tend to be geographically

bounded. Variety magazine is the big one but, that's mostly about the industry in Los Angeles. The UK one is broadcast and that's about drama, entertainment, sport, everything. But, that's about the UK. Whereas, what TV Mole is flick star. So, I'm about only factual but, anywhere in the world.

What I'm doing is I'm creating a shortcut for people who don't have no much time and you don't want to necessarily wade through lot of irrelevant content. I'm giving them only what they need in one place in this kind of old format in terms of the newsletter.

The only thing I have slightly expanded it from originally, I was writing very much for TV people but, I found that was more for a lot of independent documentary filmmakers signing up and finding it useful to us. I've expanded slightly out of what was then my comfort zone. But now, I'm very much across that area too.

But, that was completely in response to the people coming to the site rather than me thinking that this is what I should offer.

YARO: I can tell by the way you've talked in this interview, Nicola that you really paid attention to the sections in Blog Mastermind on content production and plus your own background, obviously. You talked about pillar articles and so forth.

Is there anything you can think that you found really beneficial in terms of, you learned it in the course and you actually applied it, is there an example you can talk about that people could even potentially apply to their own blogs that they're listening in now?

NICOLA: As far as I got, it was all very useful. Maybe, it was just the fact that you impressed upon us that it was a long term... I think one of the most useful things was working and thinking about how often I was going to publish and then, knowing that I was going to have to stick to that because I think you said, it doesn't matter how whether you publish three posts a day or three a week as long as you're consistent so your audience knows what to expect.

That helped me work out what I was doing. And, I had slightly tweaked as I've gone along so, I was publishing... A lot of the posts I publish are very short. They're only like 100 words or something and that will be two or three of those a day and I was doing that every single day of the week.

And then, I did slightly change that to just two in a working week because I was just aiming for people who were at work essentially. And, I did start up doing a series of... which I did focus for about two years of what I called inspiration. So, that was more about cultural trends. I just put up things that I thought were interesting articles of all new books, or I don't know, futurology type things that people might be able to use in a brainstorm but, I kind of ran out of steam slightly or ran out of time. I couldn't do that and everything else, and by this time, I was earning a living.

I kind of dropped that and I also became slightly kinder on myself about producing original content as well. I do that usually after I've been to a big festival on our bit of panels because I also get press passes now because that was a big surprise to me that I could just write to a big festival and say, 'I'm TV Mole...'

YARO: Yes.

NICOLA: 'I've got this many readers. Can I have a press pass?' And, they said yes. I was just astonished [*laughs*].

YARO: You are such a good example of putting in the effort to create a valuable resource over time, and we could see that you, during the early day, maybe you worked a little harder on content production than you do now, but that's okay because a new person discovers your site today, they've got mountains of resources to go through, and they build this trust with you, they learn about you, they learn about what you know, they learned from you and that's all being done because you already created the content.

And then, they go, maybe they say, thank you and move on, or they look at to possibly connect with you and work with you, or hire you, or something like that, and it's all because of your past work.

Not only that, you are also using yourself, you are using as a database to look at your own information. I find myself doing the same thing. I often go, 'Wow! I forgot that I knew how to do that,' and I have to teach myself in some regards.

I'm curious, what's next for TV Mole and what you're doing with your online presence?

NICOLA: Maybe I should get back slightly to mention the festivals because that might be a way that other people can leverage their blog. By having the readership and subscribers, I can go to festivals and say, 'Can I have a press pass?' And in return, I publicize their festival on the front page. I have it as a sticky post so, it's up for a number of weeks. And, if there are particular panels to do with pitching or funding, I will publicize those for them. So, that's marketing for them.

But that means, I write a couple of articles following the festivals based again, just on my niche, I don't do film reviews or anything. It's just about, there's a panel about how to pitch and this is what came out of it or, I watched the public pitching section and this is what the feedback was.

But, because I've done that, because I am giving those festivals do some free marketing for them, and they're giving me a press pass, I've become, in a way, part of that informal festival team. So, I don't now have to apply for a press pass. They approach me and say, do I want one?

There's a bit of backscratching on Twitter if I've got things that I'm promoting like my school show class for example. They have in the past, re-tweeted to all their much bigger following than I have got. So, that's great reciprocal marketing tool. So, when I said they didn't do marketing, I don't mean it's kind of an organic indirect marketing, other people marketing me and all this and me marketing myself, I guess.

YARO: It's because you've got pre-eminence. That's basically it. You've established this, 'I am an expert. People know you. They know your blog.' You get all the benefits from that. In fact, I'd really think and maybe, I'm putting my coach's hat on here again, I would love to see you develop more courses and more training products because I think you've got so much

trust in your market, that if you had a range of products that you'd make a lot of sales. I really think that should be the next step. Maybe you can tell me what do you think is your next step?

NICOLA: Yes, so what I've noticed is I have people who sign up for TV Mole, then they bought my first book and then, they bought my second book, and then, I know that they bought the SkillShare class and then, some of those people think, come and said, 'Can I have one on one coaching?'

Again, I've accidentally, I know this is what you teach but accidentally, I seem to have found myself a funnel, a sales funnel. And, I am very much at the stage now where I'm wanting to create more courses but, I just do not have time to do that so, I am right now—

YARO: Too much paid work already, huh?

NICOLA: Well, yes, paid work and keeping the blog going, just too much going on. So I'm trying to free up a bit of time and I'm very much in the process as we speak. I'm trying to hire myself a virtual assistant who can do the kind of day to day curating of content, which will free me up to do more original stuff, either original posts or develop paid classes that I can promote directly from the website. So, that is very much my next and I've got a whole Google document with ideas of courses and some really quite fleshed out. It's just I need time to properly sit down and develop them, find the best platform for them and so on.

YARO: Oh yes, you can take my Information Product course for that one [laughs].

NICOLA: It is on my radar. It's just I need to get an assistant first.

YARO: Yes, that's the right way to do it. I love that. You've got all the components of a platform, like you said -- the blog, the newsletter, you've got two books (not just one book), you've got a course that is selling, you've got speaking gigs. You're the victim of your own success in some ways. You need to sort of take away some of the work that's taking your time and start pushing that to digital product creation so, you can make

more money from digital and be more selective maybe with what you do, paid by the hour or consulting, speaking, so to speak.

But yes, you've done the hard work. You've built the platform. One more question, Nicola, before you wrap it up, for the people listening in, you took my training program, you studied these other courses and editing and book writing and so much education, what's your opinion on hiring a coach or taking a program, something like Blog Mastermind or anything like that, when do you think is the right time to do that versus browsing free information on the Internet and do you recommend people take paid training programs?

NICOLA: Yes, definitely. I think if you're really at a point where you're ready to do something, say for example, I really needed a platform, I didn't quite know what that involved at that stage, but it was something that I had time to do and I was committed to actually putting in the work and auctioning whatever it was.

I guess, you can read, and I do read lots of newsletters all the time that's why I benefit but, also because of these mentoring skills that I learned because I pass a lot of information unto other people. And I think sometimes, it's our very own, while reading something, there was no incentive necessarily to put into action whereas being part of a paid course where you have... you've committed money to something and therefore, it would be a waste of that money if you don't follow through.

And, what I found most, although Blog Mastermind didn't really have deadlines like some of the other courses I've done, it was just very useful to think, I think there is a form of a deadline, maybe do this unit within a week or something...

YARO: Yes.

NICOLA: That was very useful to me. Even in my own mind, I can say, I need to do this by the end of this week and then, I can move on to the next thing.

So for me, personally the way that I work, I find that incredibly helpful. And then, I guess, I get to a certain point where I guess, it's like how instantly it pushed you over the brow of a hill, it's the training course pit and then, at a certain point, I'll pick up my momentum and I can maybe run with it myself or perhaps not and go through the whole thing because it's got its own momentum and it's going on its own way.

But, I still completely intend to come back to the end of Blog Mastermind and finish it at some point. But, I think because I've got a good sense of where it was going, I think all those things are kind of falling into place even if it's five years later or not after six months.

YARO: To be honest, the whole point is to create a blog that ideally, at least a full-time income from it, maybe more, you already got the result and you only did one third of the course, so I can't complain. I think that's a brilliant result there. I wish every one of my students could only do one-third of my course and end up a full-time income. And, that's great whenever it happens, it happens as long as it happens. But, of course, the course is there to go back to whenever you want to and maybe, in particular, the parts about creating more products would be relevant for you.

NICOLA: Yes.

YARO: Awesome, Nicola. Websites for people to check out your work, TVMole.com. Any other sites we should know about?

NICOLA: No. Everything, the email is there. If you're interested in finding how to make proposals and the link is there. No, just that's the only thing that you need, I think.

YARO: Oh, great. Thank you for telling your story. Is there anything else you want to give to the listeners before I say goodbye to everyone.

NICOLA: No. I'm just... I'm so glad I did the Blog Mastermind course. Actually, I had no perception of where it might lead. I think the key thing is, if you're going to take a course is to commit to it to actually do it, sit down and do what you are supposed to do.

But then, you know, in a way, just trust the process and see where it leads because it may not be... I guess, use it as a jumping off point. At some point if you're doing it right and gotten a niche worked out and you bring authentic content that you are giving then, it will start to tell you what it needs, I guess, if that makes sense.

YARO: Yes. You are the case study that proves that, aren't you? You followed the steps, things started to work, and you just followed the momentum of success So, congratulations in there. Keep it up. I look forward to see what you do, and what is a very, I won't say small but, it's certainly a, your specialized niche, let's put it that way. You are giving hope to everyone else out there who might be thinking their niche isn't big enough and if they'll try and build a platform there just won't be anyone out there.

And, if anything, you demonstrated that, that can be an advantage because everyone knows everyone in this space and they'll share your information for you. Like you have, you have very little proactive marketing compared to most bloggers I know. It's kind of all come through your own power of referral simply by being a good source of information and that's, I think can only happen in the smaller specialized niches.

So, great example. Nicola, thank you for joining me.

NICOLA: You are very welcome.

YARO: Good luck. Thank you everyone for listening in. This has been an Entrepreneur's Journey podcast. You know where to find me. My name is Yaro. You can google that, you'll find the blog and all the other podcasts like this one to go along with it.

Thanks for listening and I'll talk to you again on the next interview. Good bye!

Relevant Links Mentioned in this Interview

- [Hostgator](#)
- [Wordpress](#)
- [Aweber](#)
- [Skill Share](#)

Where to Find Nicola Online

- [Twitter](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)

Want More Great Interviews Like This?

Visit Entrepreneurs-Journey.com for articles, downloadable podcasts, videos and more to help you start an internet business...

www.entrepreneurs-journey.com