



New Rainmaker

Behind the Scenes: How the New Rainmaker Strategy Evolves in Plain Sight



TRANSCRIPT



Robert Bruce: So we missed last week. What happened? What's been going on?

Brian Clark: Can I just blame it on you?

Robert Bruce: No. No, I'm not going to allow that this time.

Brian Clark: Oh. *Well.*

Robert Bruce: Because this actually has to do with you.

Why We Missed Last Week's Show

Brian Clark: Well, that's true. Actually, I'm impressed that we went on a run and were consistent. As you know (but no one else seems to know), since early February I've been sick with this weird ... not normal sick.

I've been every form of normal sick with one unifying, really crazy, weird sickness that has been a really trying experience. Basically, I was in Austin doing a live training event. I basically got the flu. So I did 10 hours onstage in two days, suffering from the flu. I made it through it and it was all cool, and I was all proud of myself.

I never really got better from that, because then I went to Las Vegas to speak at the email summit, and that's when things got really weird and I got hit with vertigo.



Robert Bruce: *Vertigo*.

Brian Clark: Yeah. So it's not just [an Alfred Hitchcock movie](#). It's basically, everything spins around and you can't walk straight, can't think straight and can't do anything. You get very nauseous. During the first few days of that, I was bedridden.

Finally, I went to the doctor, and they were like, "Well, it's either a virus and it'll clear up, or it's this other thing. If I make this adjustment on you, it'll go away in a couple of days."

Well, it turns out it was probably the virus thing. In hindsight, if I would have gotten really strong antivirals, at that point I would have been laid up a couple days. I probably would have been better.

Instead, it's been weeks. And then to top it all off, because it attacks your immune system in addition to your vestibular system, I've gotten every possible sickness that two little kids, little germ factories, biological warriors if you will ...

Robert Bruce: ... dragging that into the house ...

Brian Clark: ... that drag right into the house. So yeah. It's been five weeks of suck.



Robert Bruce: I'm thinking maybe that's a good enough reason.

Brian Clark: I was trying to make it. That was the badge of honor. But doing half-days of work would basically exhaust me. So last week, I had a really rough week. And we moved into our new house at the same time.

So come on people, please give me a break! That's a good excuse. I mean, in the realm of excuses.

Robert Bruce: Maybe we'll do a poll or something at the end of this program.

Brian Clark: Yeah. "OK Brian, we don't care, suck it up next time." (Laughs)

Robert Bruce: Moving, on top of it. I forgot about that.

Brian Clark: Yeah, that was fun. That's always fun. I'd like to use that as an excuse alone.

What We've Learned so Far About Maximizing iTunes

Robert Bruce: Okay. So we're back. This is episode eight of The New Rainmaker podcast. We're doing another behind-the-scenes episode here. We're going to talk about some specifics of what's been going on since we last did one of these.



We're eight episodes in now, and I just want to ask you what we've learned in those eight episodes ...

Brian Clark: Well, starting off with an audio focus. I think we talked about in the last behind-the-scenes, that audio is really just the beginning point as opposed to the goal. A lot of people doing podcasts right now, I think that is what they are thinking. "Let's put on a podcast!" Which is important, and we've learned some interesting things about that.

You also have to keep in mind, and I think this behind-the-scenes episode will make it a little bit clearer in anticipation of the webinar that we do, where we lay out our entire content and traffic strategy in detail. This is going to be a warm-up for that, as we're in the midst of doing it.

The thing I've learned with audio, and specifically iTunes, as an audience-building and discovery platform, right? So you create content, [you are distributed by iTunes](#). iTunes, depending on how popular you are, will rank you and expose you to people that have never heard of you before, which is amazing.

That's of course how the social networks work, too. Here's the tip I would give people about iTunes: If you have any existing audience or customer base, or people that you have an existing reach with, if you want to do well on iTunes, *make iTunes the only audio channel you offer.*



We're offering MP3 downloads and we're offering transcripts as of the first day. We're offering Stitcher, SoundCloud, and iTunes, right? We're doing great in iTunes, by the way. If we really wanted to own iTunes, we would only own iTunes.

I've seen some people, Robert — you know our friend Ben Settle — he's always [focused on email](#), so he's got a fairly significant email list. He drives them all directly toward iTunes. And he's kicking ass in iTunes, because it's very focused, right? iTunes basically operates on usage, listening data, ratings, reviews and all that kind of stuff.

If you're concentrating all on iTunes, you're going to get the most performance gains from iTunes. That's just a hint, or a tip, if you're starting with audio. Make iTunes — or it could be SoundCloud or Stitcher, I suppose. But iTunes is the big daddy.

Robert Bruce: Choose one.

Brian Clark: Yeah. Robert, you've got insight on the numbers, iTunes is still the big platform.

Robert Bruce: They came out and they made a big deal, Apple did, last year, promoting the fact that there were over [one billion subscribers to podcasts on iTunes](#) alone. That's a staggering, staggering number.



So if you were smart about it, and you wanted to do this hyper-focused, driving everything and everyone to iTunes — which then you turned into something else — it's obvious that the audience is there. It's there in almost any category you want to talk about.

We're talking one billion total subscribers to podcasts alone. I like to bring up, again, this idea that that number is, I'm guessing it'd be just the start. It's still hard to get through the process of subscribing to a podcast in iTunes for the average person.

Brian Clark: Right.

Robert Bruce: We've got all these options and we want to really, really make something happen there. Even if you've got a smaller audience, you can make something happen on iTunes by driving everyone there. Our focus has been on the email list first and foremost, and then giving these options elsewhere as well.

Brian Clark: That's important. [Email is higher value than any social network, iTunes, RSS or anything else.](#) And even that's not really what we're trying to accomplish, now, is it?

Robert Bruce: No.



Brian Clark: We're trying to gain customers, and maybe different levels of customers, which we'll talk about here. As a discovery channel, iTunes could put you in touch with people who have never heard of you before. Then you can use the recordings like we have, to say, "Hey, you get more stuff at newrainmaker.com if you subscribe by e-mail, stuff that won't be delivered by iTunes." It's a really nice, congruent strategy between the two.

What if You're Starting with a Small Audience?

Robert Bruce: So you're talking about focusing and driving your audience to, in this case, iTunes. That's easy for us to say. We've got a fairly significant audience that we can drive traffic to those places. What if you don't have an audience or a customer list? What do you do then?

Brian Clark: If you're a startup or a completely new endeavor, I would want to one more time say you do want to let them know about it. Even if you haven't been doing any sort of audience building or content marketing and if you have existing customers and you're creating high-value content, you do want to let them know about it.

They become your advocates. Not only do you have the ability to talk to them, but they have done business with you and hopefully are very happy with you. Don't forget about that if you have an existing business.



That said, even if you did eight episodes of content that's focused on your prospective customer or client like we've just done, *it wouldn't matter if anyone heard any of them*, necessarily. Like I said when we started off, it's really just step one. It's content creation. That's often the hardest thing.

Once you have something to work with, you can do a whole lot more with it. So again, at some point we're going to teach all of this step by step. We're also demonstrating what we're teaching by doing it at New Rainmaker. So what's next? This is our eighth episode.

The Next Stage of Evolution for New Rainmaker

You're about to see [the home page of New Rainmaker](#) shift from "join our podcast," or, "get episodes by email, get some webinars by email." It's going to shift towards "get the New Rainmaker report." That will be housed in a content library, much like [MyCopyblogger](#) is, if you guys are familiar with what we do at Copyblogger.

We have a whole bunch of ebooks behind a free paywall, if you will. You have to register, but once you do, you don't pay money. You do get access to the ebooks. So we're going to shift to that focus.

Now you're saying, "Oh, so now you've done eight episodes, and now you're going to have to write this report, and you've been sick, you poor thing," is



what you're saying. I hope. Right?

Robert Bruce: No.

Brian Clark: Still no sympathy, right?

Robert Bruce: *Crickets.* I think it was crickets.

Brian Clark: (Laughs) No, I'm not writing anything, because I already wrote it, or we already created it. *It's episodes 1-4 of New Rainmaker.*

The True Power of Repurposing Content

Robert Bruce: All right, so let's be clear about this. We talk about this a lot. *Repurposing.* Is that what we're getting at? Would you describe the process of turning these four episodes into a report?

Brian Clark: Well, you take the first four transcripts which, by the way we did it, were fairly close to report quality. I actually had Sonia edit it because I wanted an outside eye. You could do the same thing with a freelance copy editor or actual, more substantiated editor. It's as if they're doing a book chapter or four book chapters, which is really the closest analogy to what each episode has been so far. As a chapter of a book.

So we created that content once. I had someone edit it at a very low



investment, and now it's a repurposed form of content. And you're like, "Well, wait a minute, how does that make sense? The content's already out there." Right. Well, not everyone wants to pay attention. The hook of a podcast is not what gets some people's attention, right? A lot of people aren't paying attention and haven't read the transcripts.

So now, the existing audience that's listening to this may say, "You know, I wouldn't mind having the first four episodes in a nice, readable, comprehensive format because there was some good stuff in there. I want it all in one neat package."

It has value for you guys, but the other value, of course, is that that's a completely different enticement to opt in and to register at the repurposed. It goes from email opt in to the registration concept, to the content library concept. And of course, [the Rainmaker Platform](#). That's what it does. That is how you do advanced lead generation.

But you wouldn't use that just for a podcast, right? We didn't start out that way. Now that we have some content to repurpose into a report, we have our first piece of content and high-value content, for the New Rainmaker content library.

So that is the next step.



Is Repurposing Content Really a Good Idea?

Robert Bruce: I feel like there might be a concern out there about this repurposing strategy. I think we tend to think as people that are creating content on a regular basis and creating media ... it's like, "Okay, I already did that, I don't want to re-do it and get it in front of what largely, in the beginning anyway, might be the same group of people."

What do you say to that feeling of, "Is this really a good idea, this re-purposing thing?"

Brian Clark: That's why people run out of things to say. Again, what is your goal here? Is your goal to create content? Look at a film producer. What is their goal? It's to make a film to make money, right? So here we are, new media producers, we create content in order to make money. We just have a different business model. So there's that aspect of it.

We will go through this and we will emphasize that these initial episodes that you create, that you should put a lot of thought into what they are. If you do that well, you are creating material for yourself that can be used in all of these various contexts.

Let's not flatter ourselves. Even with our audience, only a small percentage is paying attention to what we're doing at New Rainmaker. I accept that. It's fine. It's great. It allows me to up the bar each time I repurpose. When I



repurpose content, I get to make it better than it was the first time because I've had time to think about it.

I've gotten reaction from the people who did pay attention to it, and maybe they said, "I'm not so sure what you mean here by 'media' instead of 'marketing.'" This has all been invaluable to me. It's been so helpful getting feedback for the last eight weeks? Right?

I don't know if a lot of people have that concern. I think the opposite concern is there, which is, "how in the world do I keep coming up with new stuff all the time?" I think what we're trying to demonstrate here is that if you create really great content from the up-front by doing the necessary research and thought, then you can take that content, and you don't have to create new content.

It's based off your eternal themes. The themes that really matter to getting across to your audience. Again, you start a podcast. You take X amount of episodes from the transcripts. You turn that into articles. You can turn it into guest posts or you can turn it into a report like I'm doing.

A Real Example of Repurposing

Say for example, you're a service business. This report is used as enticement to register, or opt in, containing a soft "how can I help you more," service pitch at the end.



It's all the marketing some businesses have to do.

This is effectively what I did with my real estate businesses before Copyblogger. I created content, I repackaged it and put it in different streams. I got people to follow me over time until they were ready to do business. *I never had to do a hard sell.* It's just like an automated lead generation machine.

As we go through this further, you'll see that everything we do is designed to create that process.

Not that you ever just set it and forget it, because maybe next year your eternal themes are changing. It's evolving with your business and it's evolving with the industry you're in. It's evolving with all that good stuff. This is designed to get maximum impact out of a certain amount of content as possible.

Why We're About to Focus Heavily on SlideShare

Robert Bruce: All right. Let's move on to ways to drive traffic and lead generation. We're going to talk specifically about SlideShare. Do you have any initial thoughts on this?

Brian Clark: Well, compared to Twitter, Facebook or whatever, there are two social networks that are *highly business oriented*. Therefore, you're not surprised that they're more welcoming to business content, and they do much



better from a lead generation standpoint.

Those two are LinkedIn and SlideShare, which is now owned by LinkedIn. It actually has been for a little while. The other thing that's interesting to me about SlideShare is that it's a copy writer's dream, or a writer's dream. Again, if you're a producer and you've gotten your ideas out there, but you're not a writer, that's okay. You can work with someone to take those ideas and just repurpose it into various formats.

Before we go off and start creating Slideshares to try to drive leads back to our site, we had to repurpose the site into a high-converting mode. That's why first we did the podcast, and we're continuing with the podcasts. That's ongoing.

We did the initial episodes of the podcast in order to make that into a report, which becomes the enticement to get the report. And then receive the podcast going forward. So the podcast and the audio content, becomes your follow up material. But you've already got that in process, you know?

So instead of just doing a podcast, you're doing an entire system of things that, at each level, allow you to attract more traffic, build an audience faster, and keep them engaged as you continue into the future. First thing, we've got to reconfigure the site, which again, it's like Rainmaker Platform was designed to do.



Then we take aspects of the content we've already created, the juicy, cool stuff or the stuff that gets our point across on various topics the best, and we turn those into slide presentations.

Robert Bruce: You pretty much covered everything I was about to cover there.

Brian Clark: (Laughs) I apologize! You got really excited because you just didn't really give a crap one way or another when I said, "Hey, we're going to start doing SlideShare," and you're like, "Okay."

We've never done that. This is a whole new thing. Copyblogger has never done anything in SlideShare, so we're making it up as we go along with you guys.

Robert Bruce: Well, it really got my attention because obviously, social networks are very important as distribution. But SlideShare, your interest in SlideShare was what interested me. And for all the reasons you just laid out. I think, it'll end up being an important thing for us.

I want to reiterate what you said about how we're going to approach it.



Our Initial SlideShare Strategy Explained

Robert Bruce: When you look at SlideShare, just take a look over there at [SlideShare.net](https://www.slideshare.net). There's a little drop-down in the top menu bar. You can go by featured SlideShares, popular, or most 'likes.' They've got it laid out pretty simply.

When you look at what's going on there, it's very simple to see right off the bat what works and what doesn't.

We're thinking about things that are image-heavy, of course. Just like a really great slide presentation. You want to go image-heavy. You want to go copy-short for the most part. There are a lot of these up there that are somewhat successful with heavy copy.

Brian Clark: Right! I remember when you sent me your first draft of the first one you wanted to do, and I'm like, "no, you've got to look at some of these. They only have a few words per slide."

Robert Bruce: Yeah.

Brian Clark: But it's [Copywriting 101](#). You know, copywriting, the purpose of the headline is to get the first sentence read. The purpose of the first sentence is to get the second sentence read.



So when you apply that to SlideShare, *the purpose of each slide is to get the next slide advanced*. I saw demonstrations about people who would use very short bursts of enticing copy to get you to hit the next thing. And the next thing you know, your finger is just moving. Advance, advance, advance.

It's very engaging because it's not a lean-back experience. It's a lean forward. I want to see what the next slide says. And when it's really well done, it's fascinating. The next thing you know, you've gone through 70 slides and read the entire thing.

We're going to embark on this, and then we're going to tell you what we found out, if we failed, and how we had to adapt to figure it out. Just by observing, I think we've learned some things that we're sharing with you right now that may help you if you want to get started.

Robert Bruce: How I'm going to approach this — in the simplest possible terms — is a combination of distilling the very best parts of these first eight episodes that we've done, and everything we've learned to tell very short stories. Combining that as a copy approach, and with really great design, we'll get back to you with the results. I think it's going to be, at the very least, it's going to be a cool test of these.

Brian Clark: Right. Of course, SlideShare is just one way that you drive traffic. Remember, we are going to optimize this site for registration, for opt-in and for audience building by e-mail. So don't forget to do that.



Robert Bruce: SlideShare does *not* become your primary platform, just like anything else.

Brian Clark: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I know. SlideShare is pointing back at something and the thing you point back to should be as optimized as possible for your goals. Of course, that's how Twitter works. That's how Facebook works. That's how LinkedIn itself works. That's how good old-fashioned outreach works.

Copyblogger was built, basically, on creating content, and then hustle. Get out there and get people to notice somehow. The better the content, the easier it is; but you still have to get people to notice somehow, right?

Outside of creating content you can either spend time or money, or a combination of both, to get awareness to that content, right? So we're using something like SlideShare. Remember when I told the story of how we use Digg? You put the content on the social platform and you get the traffic back to your site.

In those days it was going directly to the article, so it was really hard to optimize that for opt in. The Digg crowd would turn on you and bury you, right? So you had to live with the fact that you weren't going to convert that directly to email, but that strategy was to attract links.

With SlideShare, you get to point people back to whatever you want! It has



that same viral vote-you-up-to-the-front page aspect to it, just like current Reddit does, except *SlideShare is business friendly*.

If you have great content, they're happy to let you develop leads out of it. Hooray for business! And this is interesting, coming out of eight years of dealing with social media as it emerges. It was very anti-commercialism or anti-business at the beginning. Even Facebook is still like that to a certain degree.

Here we have LinkedIn and SlideShare, and they're like, "Hey! All you've got to do is do something fantastic, and we're happy to let you build your list."

A Different Way to Approach Advertising

Robert Bruce: What about the next step too, of possibility, which is with advertising? We've thought a lot about it. We've been dancing around it for many years. But what are you thinking these days?

Brian Clark: That's what I just said. It's either time, or money, or a combination of both. I will say, again, in the early-days, Copyblogger never paid for advertising. I spent a lot of time.

Now when I build [my Boulder site](#), I don't spend any time. I spend money. You know? That's not to say because I'm the richest guy in the world. That's to say that if I have things structured in a way that I *know* I will get a return on my



money, then I don't care. I think most business people are like that.

What scares them away from advertising is either not enough resources, not enough cash to begin with, or more likely, it's "I don't want to lose my money."

So another thing that we are going to demonstrate for you, and this will be part of the entire Rainmaker content and traffic strategy, is that once you have optimized your home page, it's kind of like going back to the beginning of Copyblogger.

Remember, it keeps coming back to the report that you created out of the normal content that you created. I started writing [Copywriting 101](#). Right? As a series of ten posts. Each one was content as a post.

Then I aggregated them all onto a content landing page. That got shared and linked to, which made it rank very high for copywriting. That brings in traffic to this day. But now it's an ebook. See how the cycles work?

Well, with New Rainmaker we're doing this on a very expedited level so that you can see how to do it. Once you get a page that focuses on getting people to register and opt in, then you can smartly send advertising to that page. The new social network advertising programs, like LinkedIn, now has sponsored posts. Twitter, obviously and Facebook. They are very effective at advertising content.



If you're selling content, you're going to do great. And what are you doing? Are you really selling content? No. You're paying to build an audience faster.

I've done it both ways. But if you can either get a return on your money, or you can break even on the advertising part and then sell something later, that is a lot easier.

Robert Bruce: Right.

Brian Clark: It's a lot easier to go out there. Especially for me, because I don't like to cold email people. I don't like to do all that stuff. I did it, you know. Sometimes we do things that aren't our favorite thing to do because if you've got content that you worked hard on, you want people to see it. You get over your distaste for promoting it because you think it deserves to be seen.

Pay Attention, This is Very Important ...

Robert Bruce: You put it even more succinctly recently, saying that we should use paid traffic (advertising) not to sell *product*, but to build an *audience*.

Brian Clark: Absolutely, because *the audience has value that goes beyond the one-time sale*. The audience I built at the beginning of Copyblogger has supported this business through the launch of how many different lines of business?



Every product we launched was purchased by a portion of the audience and/or spread by the audience. *So advertising a product is very short-sighted.* It's very expensive, especially when you're using the social networks where all the people are. It's very expensive, and unless you have a product to upsell, which we're going to cover, that's it.

If you only have one thing to sell and you just spent all this money to sell it, your margins are probably a lot thinner than if you took a smarter approach. We're going to be experimenting specifically with LinkedIn sponsored posts. We're going to try some stuff with Twitter. We're going to try some stuff with Facebook.

And we're talking about demonstrating this to you in the context specifically of New Rainmaker. It's in a combination of that and then a very step-by-step methodology about how you go about this. That will be in this upcoming webinar. We are talking a lot about it right now. We're actually going to go into much more detail than this behind the scenes.

The Art of the Upsell

Robert Bruce: All right. Talk a little more about what you just said: The idea of selling something, and then having an upsell right after ...

Brian Clark: As I mentioned, if you have a service business, just having the



report with the opt-in, with the soft-sell offer of your services may be all you need.

There is one step further that we're going to go. We sell a relatively expensive — compared to a one-time service or an ebook or something like that — product called the Rainmaker Platform. Right? So we'll experiment with upselling — not even upselling.

We're mentioning creating exposure for the Rainmaker Platform at the end of this free report that we're doing. We are, after all, in the middle of launching the Rainmaker Platform. But there is a better way to do that.

Right now, this is episode eight. We've got a couple of more to do. Then we're going to do these really high-value, intensive webinars. So you'll see, once we get there, that you're really going to have eight audio episodes with transcripts that lead the way to the more detailed, step-by-step instruction that we provide in the webinars.

That is essentially how we are educating you guys and leading up to the introduction of the Rainmaker Platform. That's so that you will be educated enough to say, "Hey, this looks great. I understand the philosophy. I understand the methodology. I know what to do. Sign me up!" Great.

Then we just throw all this away and start over, right? No. What have we just created? *I just created a course.*



You're like, "Wait a minute! Are you telling me you're going to sell the same content that you just gave us for free?"

Absolutely I am.

That's why we paid a lot of attention to detail about what we wanted to say and why we tried to do a different kind of production that was very engaging to listen to. I love the fact that everyone — most everyone — I guess there's been one person who said they hated jazz.

Robert Bruce: Who is it? Who is it!

Brian Clark: I know! I know! I didn't want to tell you that because I thought you'd flip out.

For the most people, they were like, "Wow! That's really interesting to listen to! I like listening to that."

The Pricing Strategy ...

Brian Clark: So you take the transcripts, you turn them into the e-book or the manual. You've got the audio version. We literally created an audio book. Then you've got the really high-value webinars. These webinars are going to be the type that get sold around the web for \$97, just for that one webinar.



But we're going to have the whole package. At that point, you can do two things. One thing that you do is, you sell that as a course. I'm not going to sell it for \$97, or \$1,000, or some of that crazy stuff that people try to get away with. It'll be more like \$20.

You're like, "Twenty dollars? Why would you sell it so inexpensively?" *Because that's not what I'm selling here.* I'm selling the Rainmaker Platform. I need you to understand this stuff, just like I need you guys to understand this stuff before you're ready to buy the platform.

In this case, once we've gone through the initial launch it is much more high-value to have a very focused list of buyers who paid you \$20 and invested in learning, than it is to just do straight opt-in lead generation. Added to that, the best time to present an offer for the Rainmaker Platform is right after they've purchased the course.

Now you're like, "Wait a minute! Shouldn't they go through it first?" No, that's *the second offer.*

Actually, presenting someone with the actual tools, the mechanism by which they can make all this happen, when they're really fired up about the fact that they're going to learn to do all this stuff is actually the greatest moment to do an upsell.

That's what we're going to do.



And we're going to show you how it works, and we're going to tell you what happens. The reason I'm telling you this now is for you to start thinking about: What do you sell? What information product could you sell at a lower price that naturally supports what you're ultimately selling?

I can think of a lot of service professionals, consultants, et cetera, who could write a great book and they could sell it. And that, literally, gets a highly qualified list of educated people that are more likely to do business with them.

But if you're selling software or if you're selling an expensive course or a live event, or training, et cetera, leading with a low-cost e-book or course that you create from the content that you've been creating all along is a very smart way to go. You'll build a smaller list, but those are buyers.

Always Go With Your Buyer

I told Robert early, it's literally the difference between our existing StudioPress customers and our MyCopyblogger list. Our MyCopyblogger list is incredibly valuable to us, but Robert, which one?

Robert Bruce: If we had to choose?

Brian Clark: If you had to choose.

Robert Bruce: You've always got to go with the buyers.



Brian Clark: You've got to go with the buyers. People who buy from you are of an *infinitely* different character to you than someone who has only opted in for free content. Now, they're both valuable. But there are degrees of value.

Robert Bruce: They are talking business, here.

Brian Clark: A buyer is your favorite kind of list.

Clarifying the Repurposing Process

Robert Bruce: Before we wrap up here, I want to circle back around and talk about one thing. I want to talk about this entire process leading up to this product, which then sells the product.

It begins way, way back with the idea of these scripted podcasts that we did. I hope you're able to see the through line through this that Brian just described. And not that everything was laid out and everything was perfect from the beginning, but we spent the time creating those scripts for those initial podcasts.

We knew we were going to get here at some point. And Brian did, obviously, most of the heavy lifting in that. The point being, you've not just made your way with some rambling audio that may or may not be useful to you. From the very beginning you're creating the product that you will then use weeks or months, or maybe even years, later.



Brian Clark: Absolutely. Again, this step may not be necessary for every business. Like I said, with my real estate businesses, I never sold a low-cost book, or whatever. I could have, actually, because that model depended on buyer agency.

There was a lot of information that people would be willing to pay some money for, just to be educated on. It had independent value to protect yourself as a real estate consumer. For the most part, because the commissions in real estate are so high, I would give that away. I would educate them, and then just say, “Hey, so if you want to put this in practice, I’m your guy.”

I can tell you it works like a charm. But if you’re selling something else, there is no better time, or no better person, to sell the next thing to, than to someone who’s already bought something from you.

Robert Bruce: So, we’re very grateful that there’s been a lot of interest in what’s coming next with the Rainmaker Platform. People have a lot of questions about what it is, when it’s coming. Let’s talk a little bit about that.

A Short Preview of the Coming Rainmaker Platform

Brian Clark: Okay. So you know, before this show, as loosely formed as it is compared to our normal episodes, we have seven things that we were going



to cover.

Number seven is the platform itself. My notes here, I realize that we would spend the next hour if I went over all of it. And I don't think people want to hear about it. Well, some people might want to hear about it.

I think there's a better way to get in that detail. But effectively, the Rainmaker Platform is everything that we use on Copyblogger. It's what we use on StudioPress. It's what we use on New Rainmaker.

It is our custom online marketing platform that is built off the core of WordPress. And so people are like, "Well, oh, so it's WordPress." Then I'm like, "Right. The New York Times runs on WordPress. Time.com runs on WordPress." You don't really think that's the WordPress that you get when you push a button at BlueHost or something.

It's a highly customized version of WordPress. That's what we use ourselves.

What we're trying to do, and God knows how much we've spent ourselves developing what has become our platform, but the great thing is over time, we've been selling the pieces of this thing individually.

Of course, we've got [Genesis and all the StudioPress designs](#). We've got our [Scribe content marketing software](#), and we've got [Synthesis hosting](#). We've got a big portion of what we're doing here, like the feature that I focused on



most in this element, is what we used to sell as Premise.

We took Premise off the market, and here's the reasoning behind that. So you hear me say that, and you're thinking, "Well, I could just buy all the parts and put it together myself." Absolutely. That's how we got here.

We can't give you, with the parts, what we actually use. The reason why is because it's not in a hosted-controlled environment. The way we run a site is completely controlled. Everything is controlled from plug-ins to themes to WordPress itself gets updated.

It's not like Robert goes through and is checking plug-ins and going to see if it's been hacked before he upgrades to the new version and all that kind of stuff. No. That would be horrible. You would never expect an organization to run that way. And yet, despite all the wonderful things about WordPress, that's exactly how a business runs with off-the-shelf WordPress.

Whether or not you've augmented WordPress with one or more of our products, we can't give you the exact experience that we ourselves use unless it's a hosted turnkey platform. And that's what Rainmaker is. Not only do you get all the functionality of all those different parts, you get a completely different user interface.

You get advanced analytics that are piped in right through the dashboard in ways that WordPress doesn't do. You get reporting functions that WordPress



doesn't do. Because that's how we run our business, right?

If you're primarily doing lead generation because you're a service business, well that's the equivalent of My Copyblogger. If you're running a membership program, that's the equivalent of Authority. If you're selling software or e-books, or other digital goods, that's the equivalent of StudioPress.

You can see what I'm getting at here. If one of these things is the type of business that you have, then except for hard e-commerce, I think that covers everything.

Eventually we'll talk about hard e-commerce. But you get what I'm saying if that's what you're in the business of doing.

Finally we can give you all of that, and yet, you'll see that because we've already built everything and we're able to put it all together, we're also able to do it at a price that is not at the highly expensive levels that you're seeing out there in other solutions of this kind, without naming names. HubSpot.

Robert Bruce: You said you weren't going to name names.

Brian Clark: Oh, did I? Tourette's, again.

Robert Bruce: Something came out.



The Case for Building Your Business on Open Source Software

Brian Clark: I mean, there are other things out there, and HubSpot. Good people. A lot of friends over there. But they built a solution in a way that I don't see as optimal.

Number one, it's *proprietary*. I would never use something that, at its core, wasn't open source. You look at Red Hat for Linux, right? Linux is a free operating system, but the business world wouldn't touch it until Red Hat packaged it, supported it, made it friendly, and became a billion-dollar business out of it. Billions, actually. Right?

That is even at the enterprise level. People understand that *at the core, open source will win*. That's because you'll never beat that community or that army of developers. They can't be beat from improving the core technology in a way that no proprietary solution will ever be able to keep up with.

But, just like with Red Hat, and just like with my examples with The New York Times and other high-power publishers who use WordPress at the core, off the shelf is not going to work.

Instead of taking 70 million dollars in venture capital and building a product to sell, or I should say, a software as a service to sell, which is what SquareSpace did, which is what HubSpot did, which is what Compendium did.



We started a blog.

We basically started as content publishers and marketers, and then built everything we wanted to make WordPress work the way we wanted it to work. And this is the natural result of that. We made 7.2 million dollars last year using Rainmaker, not by selling Rainmaker.

Robert Bruce: I want to point out, too, as we've been looking at it and using it here for a bit of time before the launch. All of that powerful functionality as we've talked about describing it as a position between something like a SquareSpace, and you said HubSpot as well.

Brian Clark: Well the goal is, and I mentioned those two because it's very powerful like HubSpot. It's not as expensive as HubSpot. On the other hand, and this is really the hard part, the power was actually easy. It's the simplicity.

Robert Bruce: Right. That's what I was getting at.

Brian Clark: Right. The simplicity is what SquareSpace offers, even though it's an underpowered product. You can't do real content marketing with SquareSpace. That's why they have such a high churn rate and have to do Superbowl commercials. I don't know anyone at SquareSpace, so I don't have to be nice to them.

So it's very pretty, and it's sold with a lot of money, but it's not really going to



do the job. Of course, you get something like HubSpot which is very powerful and very expensive. It's really aimed more just below the enterprise market, I suppose. So there's this huge middle part where people, businesses, are completely left out in the cold except for the DIY market.

Brian Clark: You know that we build our company around with WordPress. But you talk to people all the time, Robert, and they say, "Just let me create content. Just let me run my business. I don't want to mess with the WordPress update."

Robert Bruce: That's right.

Brian Clark: I don't want to mess with getting hacked. I don't want to mess with wondering if my site's going to go down if Robert tweets it.

Robert Bruce: I'm not sure how to take that. I think I do now.

Brian Clark: (Laughs)

Robert Bruce: All the power, and everything that everybody wants and loves about WordPress— without any of the headaches, is really what we're getting at.

Brian Clark: The other complaint that we see the most is, "God, can't someone do something about the WordPress interface?"



Robert Bruce: Well, yeah.

Brian Clark: We did that. We can't stand it either. Wait until you see it. You're just going to go, "OH! Yeah! There you go!"

Robert Bruce: In a lot of ways what it should have been for a long time.

Brian Clark: But that's the beauty of open source. The developers of WordPress are building a CMS. They're not necessarily thinking, "What's the business case?" That's not how open source projects work, okay?

Two Big Reasons Why We Built Rainmaker

Again, that's literally the role we have performed for the last eight years, which is, "Okay, we had this amazing thing, but it's not going to work, number one, because there's no support.

And number two, because it's too hard for "regular people," of which we, at least me, you, Sonia, Jerod, Demian — we can't call ourselves "normal" in the psychological sense. But we're normal (chuckles) in the technological sense, in that we are not technologists.

We are regular people who create content and need to use technological tools in order to publish it.



That's always been the thing with me. All of this crazy ride we've been on has me going "I can't do anything with this! Let's build something that lets ME do it!" Right?

That has been the model of our company the entire time, and now we get to Rainmaker, which is literally something I can build an entire site with, without anyone.

Robert Bruce: Something we could talk about for the next three hours.

Brian Clark: Yeah, we've got to stop now.

The Rainmaker Platform Launch: What's In It For You

Brian Clark: There will be more information coming out in more detail than you'll ever want as far as all the different features, everything it does and being able to see it in greater detail.

For now, because of the way we're releasing this in batches, basically we're offering our best price that'll never be this low again. You don't have to do bug checks. It's not going to be like beta, like that.

What did I say earlier about the hardest part? The hardest part is making sure that no one to the greatest degree of certainty that we can provide is confused whatsoever about how to do anything that they want to do. That is



the hardest part.

That is why we're willing, as we always do, to give our early adopters the best price in exchange simply for "What would you do better? Where are you getting hung up? What did we guess at and maybe not get completely right?"

That is golden, and it's worth it to us. You get first shot at the product. You get a price that is never going to be lower, and you get it locked in forever, even when we add the really huge next level of features, which I won't talk about now.

That's really, I think, the selling point to me if you're interested in this. The introductory price is good enough for what you're getting, but you're getting the next level, which will be another whole level of pricing. But we won't raise the price for you guys.

Robert Bruce: To get in on that initial list all you need to do is go to newrainmaker.com/platform, and everything will roll out to your inbox. Brian, anything else on all of this before we wrap up this episode number eight, behind the scenes?

Brian Clark: Stick with us. We've got a couple of great lessons that you'll see are getting much more specific. We've moved from general theory more and more towards how it works, and that will continue.



Regardless of whether or not you ever buy Rainmaker, you're going to get what we consider a world-class education in how this whole media approach to marketing thing works. So at a minimum, we certainly hope that everyone is getting something out of that.

Robert Bruce: Thanks for listening to New Rainmaker. If you like what you're hearing, please let us know by heading over to [iTunes](#) and leaving a rating or a comment there.

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