

BUILDING THE ULTIMATE VIRAL TRAFFIC POWERHOUSE

Cindy: Oh my gosh, Wilco, it's so good to have you here on the show. For people who have just tuned in to 7 Figure Furnace who haven't heard anything about you, how about you let them know, who is Wilco? How do you pronounce your name even? I think it's Wilco, yes?

Wilco: You did really good, actually. It's Wilco

Cindy: Who are you and what is your thing?

Wilco: You did it better than most though.

Cindy: Oh, really?

Wilco: Well obviously I'm Dutch hence the name, right? I've been online full-time for over a decade now. I won't make it boring, but I'll start it off doing AdSense like most people do, then I'll shift it over to affiliate market and give a lot of buying traffic to all kind of affiliate offers, and then shift it over to a sort of software focus basically. We release software. What I do ... I just love marketing. I'm probably just like you Cindy. I'm a geek when it comes to marketing. I love driving traffic, I love testing traffic I love everything about it. That's what I do, and that's what really makes me stand up in the morning. I think that's what really counts, right, that passion. I don't want to go into all the boring stuff, but in a nutshell, I'm a marketing geek, I guess, from an adult [crosstalk 00:01:16]

Cindy: It's funny because you say "All the boring stuff," but you and I, and people ... A lot of people that really get this internet marketing thing just get a total buzz out of anything to do with marketing. I don't know about you, but we walk down the street and I see a billboard and sometimes I'll just take a photo because I'm like "That's a really good ad, I want to throw it in my swipe file." [crosstalk 00:01:38] Today you mentioned you're going to be talking about a [inaudible 00:01:46] method that I think a lot of people are really going to get a kick out of. Why don't you tell us a little bit about that?

Wilco: Yeah, sure thing. In short, it's word of mouth, but in a way that I don't think many people are doing it. It actually started about three years back. I was creating a new tool. I was just starting out creating tools, and I didn't know how to drive traffic good because I didn't want to spend beta ads on it because I was going to give it away for free. It was to build my email list, so it wasn't really confident on driving beta ads, So I figured how am I going to get the word out? It's a cool free blog, and it's not like if you put something out there that people are just going to share it on Facebook, twitter. People think that happens, but-

Cindy: Unless it's Donald Trump.

Wilco: Yeah, unless it's Donald Trump or a really really cool cat. I was looking at Dropbox and ... You use Dropbox, right? How did you get to know Dropbox?

Cindy: I don't know. Someone sent me a link.

Wilco: Exactly, someone sent you a link, because what they did really cleverly is they said, "Everyone who signs up, we'll give you a unique link and every single time one of your friends signs up to that link, we'll give you extra storage." What they did was they gave everyone their own personal unique tracking link, and they said, "Hey, we'll give you something of value if you refer one of your friends." Not just the sharing.

A lot of plugins or tools out there, they say "Share this and you'll get that," but we don't want to share because a lot of people they just share it on a fake account or they delete it right after. Even if they do share it, they only share it once. What they did is they only give something of value if your friends actually signed up. If, for example, you wanted 10 people to sign up, you're going to keep on sharing that. You're going to keep on hustling until your friends actually sign up. That's the end goal. That's the same goal I had. People needed to sign up to my email list.

I hacked something together about three, three and a half years ago to try ... I was hoping that some people would actually share it. I said "Hey, if you enter you email address here," and then after I gave them a unique link, I said "Hey, if five of your friends sign up to your link, then you'll get this tool for free." That's the deal. Like I said I was hoping some people would share, and what happened was people shared everywhere. Not just on twitter or Facebook, but they started sharing it on [washpost 00:03:58] they started posting it on [foreigns 00:04:00] everywhere. Those people that were sharing it ... On average they were sharing it two and a half times each because they wanted to get to those five people. From that point on it just took off. I was expecting that the traffic would suddenly slow down just like most things, but even a couple years after, every single day people were still sharing it because new people came into that sort of funnel where [crosstalk 00:04:24]

Cindy: Then they want a copy

Wilco: Exactly, so that got me thinking, what makes that work and what doesn't? In a way it makes sense that it works, but at the same time there is a certain trick to it, or a certain formula that makes ... That makes whether it's going to work, whether, it's going to fly, go viral, or not. That's what I've been focusing on a lot over the last couple years, and I think I've got it pretty much down to a science. That whole way of getting people to drive traffic, getting people to promote your business, that's what I want to dive a little bit deeper into.[crosstalk 00:05:04]

Cindy: Oh my gosh. I'm definitely keen to hear more about this. Hotmail was probably one of the first companies, even before Dropbox. It was very simple because not very many people were doing anything like that before, but they just had an email, and when someone sent an email it said, "Do you want a free email of your own?" It's as simple as that. Of course people are seeing this and are just going to go and do it, of course.

Wilco: Exactly. That's the whole idea behind it. In this case, like I said, when you're Donald Trump or a really cool cat, that might be something that's worth sharing, but in most cases a lot of people like you and me, we have something commercial. It's either ... Whatever it is, it's commercial and that doesn't go just viral. People don't ... Nobody's going to promote your business just for the kick out of it. Some do, but not enough to actually go far. That's where that link comes in, because that link gives you accountability. It makes sure that you actually have to get people to sign up. You basically have the same goal as the vendor, the person who's owning that site. Where it all comes down to is you give something of value ... You give something to that audience in return for them sharing, but not just anything. I've seen a lot of people trying to just give something [crosstalk 00:06:26] and it doesn't work.

Cindy: No one really cares about it.

Wilco: Yeah. Over time I found there are three main criteria that really need to make sure you have, and the first one is that it's really exclusive and that means that there's no other way to get it. If I'm giving you a certain ... You know that you can also get it just by typing it in in Google and you'll get the same kind of information. No way you're going to bother your friends about it, because you have an easier way. You always go for the easiest way. It's the same like if I tried to sell you something but you know can get it for free, why would you pay for it? It has to be exclusive. The only way to get it is by making sure you share with your friends.

Secondly, it has to be something of value, obviously. If you don't want to have it ... My rule of thumb is if you wouldn't pay for it, if you wouldn't buy it, then you're not going to share for it in order to get it as well. That's the second thing.

The third thing is it has to be socially accepted, because if it's ... If you're going to get a free sex toy, its not like you're going to put that on Facebook. [crosstalk 00:07:24]

Cindy: You're not going to post it [crosstalk 00:07:27] mother to go and see. Get Auntie Valerie to go and share that one, no.

Wilco: So ideally it's socially accepted, or even better, if it's sort of like an extension of your self image. For example, me, I'm an entrepreneur, I love the software business, so if I would see something that would make me look good in front of my friends ... It's an extension of myself. Started vibing, entrepreneurial, being motivational [crosstalk 00:07:58]

Cindy: Quirky or geeky [crosstalk 00:08:00]

Wilco: That would make it easier for me to share it. If you have these three things in order; something that's exclusive ... The only way to get it is to share it. It has to be something of value, perceived value. People need to actually want to have it. That's where marketing comes in. Thirdly it has to be socially accepted or even better extension of your self image. If you have these three things right, and you offer that in return of them actually getting x amount of people to sign up, that's when you have ... That's where it all starts basically. That's when people say "Well sure, I want to do it."

Just one thing that I want to add, value really has to be about perceived value. I tired it one where I said "Hey, you're going to get this scores, and it's worth $197," and it did not work. People don't want money value. They want more like an intrinsic value. They want to see the benefit of whatever you have to give. If I would have said "You have this problem, this is the solution," that would have worked much better. I figured people, they want to have a $200 value. For sharing something, that's not going to work. It really has to be, problem, solution-

Cindy: A thing that they need.

Wilco: Exactly. Basically what you're doing is you're selling whatever you're giving to them. Just like you would sell it to them for actual money. Now in this case you're going to ask them to get it ... To share with their friends. That's the first part of all this, and I think that's the most important. If you have this ... You give something the people really want to have and it's exclusive and socially accepted, then you're on the good track. The second step, and I might go a little bit deeper on this, and I hope I'm not going too fast.

Cindy: No this is great, keep it up.

Wilco: [crosstalk 00:09:39] I'm just super excited about this.

Cindy: This is amazing, I love it.

Wilco: Basically in the end it all comes down to whether this goes viral or not, and just to make sure that we're clear, when something goes viral it means that it will spread on itself. You could also get people to share it but it's not going viral, which means that if you share this with one of your friends, initially you, as then owner, and then people share it and you get maybe 50 extra people. That's amazing, awesome, but it's not viral. You get more social shares, but if you share it with one of your friends and then the next round you'll get 120, 150. It goes up and up and up and then that's when you have something that goes viral.

Where it all comes down to, this is going to be a boring part, not for me but for some, What's called the viral coefficient. In a nutshell it means that every single [inaudible 00:10:33] person who comes into that sort of funnel, who comes into your bait, will he or she on average result in more or less than one new person. If it's less than one person, on average, then it's not going to go viral. As soon as it hits more than one person, on average, that's when you go viral.

When you break it down it's all about testing. Like I said in the example before, people enter their email address on an opt-in bait, just a simple opt-in bait. Then they get a URL along with the opt-in bait, along with the URL and I say "Hey, in order to get this, share it with five of your friends and you'll get this for free." What happens is on your opt-in bait you'll have x amount of people who actually sign up. I mean you're not going to get a 100% opt-in rate, you know that. So x amount of people sign up, x amount of people, they don't, They just drop off. That [inaudible 00:11:24] again, it's a simple method, x amount of people will think yeah I want to have that I want to share it with my friends, and x amount of people say "Well yeah, it's not for me," and that's it. What you want to do is you want to break down all these steps individually. You want to make sure that on the opt-in bait you want to test what is the best kind of opt-in bait you can get. What kind of message will get them to share?

I had it once where I tested two things. I said "Hey you can get this and you can get free lifetime access if you share with five of your friends." The other one I said "Hey there are already 5,000 people waiting and waiting. Want to skip the waiting line and get instant free access?" The same thing, but three times as many people will actually share the second one because they're like [crosstalk 00:12:11] No waiting. You just skip in front ... That's what they want to do, They don't just want to have free instant access, they want to beat the rest. They want to [inaudible 00:12:19] It's simple things like that really make a big difference, and where it all comes down to is instead of just you're going to give this away for free, something, and you're going to think, well I'm going viral. Now what you're going to do is you're not going to hope you're going viral , you're just going to make sure it's a matter of testing.

I've seen a ton of [pages 00:12:42] that when they're started they didn't go viral because on average every single person did not result in more than one person, because maybe too many people dropped off at the opt-in bait or maybe too many people dropped off at the thank you bait where you get them to share. When you start optimizing, I want to have the best kind of opt-in bait and I want to have the best kind of message that gets them to actually share.

When you start optimizing it, then it's only a matter of time until that number is going over one, and from that point on, that's where it takes over. I could go into all the math, but I think that's a bit too boring. The main point of what I'm saying is that it's really ... It doesn't have anything to do with luck, it's just math. It's really just optimize until you reach that point.

For example, last August I launched a campaign where I gave a simple tool away if five of your friends sign up as well. When I started off I wasn't going viral right away, so I just started really small, started testing, doing all these things, and from that point on ... As soon as I hit that number, I went over one I just let it go. I never touched it again and I actually just looked at the stats just before [inaudible 00:13:52] and right now we're just over 300,000 visitors so far, and that's expensive traffic.

Once you have that number, and your number's right, then every single day new people are coming into your funnel. They're gonna go "Oh, wow that's awesome, I can get this for free," and that's why-

Cindy: And it starts again.

Wilco: Yeah. For me personally I think the biggest ... Free traffic is awesome, but I think for me personally the best thing about this is that it's not depending on any platform. I've had a couple times in the past where I was doing ... I was doing a lot of Ad Sense. At some point, boom, Ad Sense had come and gone. I was back to square zero. I learned from that. A couple years later I was getting all my traffic from Google AdWords. Same thing happens, boom gone. [crosstalk 00:14:45]

With this model it's not depending on any traffic source, or any network like Facebook, or twitter. It's really depending on people wanting to promote you whatever platform it is. We see they do it everywhere. They do it on Facebook, on twitter, they do it by email. Even if you would take away Facebook or even if you would take away twitter, people will find a way to get to their friends because that's what it's all about. It's not about Facebook trick, or a twitter trick, it's all about people wanting to promote you. That's what I think is the best thing about it, because we all know Facebook is not going to be there forever, twitter is not going to be there forever. Things change, except for this human nature. That's really something that won't change as much over time, at least not as fast. That's what I'm excited about.

Cindy: That is amazing. That is just so cool. All right, questions. I would like to know how ... I don't know if you're even going to be able to answer this, but I think people are probably wondering, how do you find that thing that is going to go viral? You can't just grab a random thing and say "Hey everybody, come and share this." Where do you come up with the ideas for making something actually go viral?

Wilco: Sure thing, so the first I always ask myself is, first of all, what kind of business am I in, because there's no reason to go viral ... You could say "Hey, I'm giving away an iPad," but that's not what you want, because people who want a free iPad, they're not going to be the same kind of people to buy a product. For example, if you sell online marketing stuff.

First of all, you want to have your business clear because it's not about going viral. In the end it's all about our ROI. I'm a numbers guy so it has to be a good ROI. That's always the first thing. What you want to do, in your market, or in your audience that you want to have you have to ask yourself what do they want?

People ask me "what should I give away?" The same thing is, what could you sell them? What is that that you could have that you could sell them? This could be, for example, a tool what I like, what I said, but this could also be a guide or an e-book or a solve a certain problem, or a video where you solve a certain problem. Maybe if you have, for example, any events coming up you can give them an event, or if you have an infomercial, it could be a discount coupon for example, for something you[inaudible 00:17:10]. If you sell something ... You could give away your product.

What I've seen a lot of people do, which is awesome as well, some people think I sell this product and maybe it's even a simple ... It's not something people would share it for, but it ... Sometimes you can just customize an item. If I were to give you a book. You get the book which has the autograph of the author [crosstalk 00:17:36] and a personal note in it. That's is like, wow. Sometimes you can make ... You can add a lot of perceived value without spending any extra money on it. One thing that I, that's worthwhile as well, I've been talking about giving something away in return for getting people to sign up.

What you could also do, and a lot of people are doing it is instead of doing it like that where you give something away to everyone who reaches that point, you basically make a contest out of it, and you say "Hey, we have this awesome prize," and if you only have to give it away once you can really spend a bit more on that. Which could be your own product or which could be a related product, and you say "hey, you know what, if you enter an email address you have a chance of winning. Here's your unique link, and every single time one of your friends signs up you'll get 20 extra entries in the contest." Not just one extra entry, because then they'll be like "Well I'm getting one extra entry, but my friend's-"[crosstalk 00:18:30] Now you have one and every single time you get you friends to sign up, you get 20 extra entries in the contest so you get 20 more times higher. If I get five people to sign up, I get 101 entries in that contest, First it's just one. I'm ahead of everyone else. That's what drives them.

For example, we had one of our customers who did that exact same thing, he started the contest. He bought five related products on Amazon, which were $20 each, so he spent $100 on prizes. He then started promoting, and it just took off. He added over 100,000 subscriber within a single month just by doing a contest. Actually he did, you get 10 extra entries in the contest, which, same thing.

Cindy: You get more by sharing.

Wilco: Exactly. You're doing the exact same thing, you're giving them perceived value because you're giving them a much, much higher chance [crosstalk 00:19:30]

Cindy: It actually does another psychological thing here because if one of their friends has referred them, and then they see ... They sign up and then they see that, my friend actually just got 10, they're actually beating me as far as entries go. I want to win. I want to beat them. There's a lot of cool psychology that plays in there as well.

Wilco: Exactly. There's a lot of things that you could do with that. If it's a product you can easily give away to everyone, but if you have an actual store ... Obviously you don't want to send something out to everyone because that's going to be way too costly. In that case I definitely recommend to make a contest out of it, so you'll know exactly, I'm only going to give away three of those things, for example. [crosstalk 00:20:21]

Cindy: If you do samples for your company. If you've got something where you're offering a sample or some sort of entry level kind of thing. Or consultancy, between that branch with thousands of people, that might be tricky. That's fantastic. I've kept you for a little while now. Do you have any last closing words of awesome? Anything last minute to share with these guys before we wrap it up?

Wilco: I think one thing that I just want to ... I don't want to make this a big thing, but I want to make sure that ... Over the last few years I've been spending a lot of time and effort on that. A couple years back I was thinking about sharing a lot of this information as well, and at that point I knew that if I was going to share all of this information that I would do two things. First of all people are going to be like "Yeah that's awesome, I want to do this," and then right after they're going to be like "How do I do that?" There's no way to actually give everyone their own unique [crosstalk 00:21:23] that's automatically sent out, exactly.

I decided to keep it to myself for a few years, and I'm going to build a platform that makes all of this possible, and that platform is called UpViral. You can find it on UpViral dot com. If all this sounds interesting to you, then head over to upviral.com, check it out, because that's the exact platform that we built for exactly this. Everything I just described, you can do that, all and more as well, but you can do all of that. It automatically keeps track of it all, and it gives all the links. It automatically sends out the rewards, or if you do a contest it automatically picks the winner. It's all hands on, all does it for you, but that's what I'm really excited about so I figured if anyone is interested in doing all this, which I highly recommend, then go check it out. If you want to ask me anything you can always look me up. Just Google me, Wilco. You'll find me on Facebook, just send me a personal message or just ask, say "Hey, how do I reach that Wilco guy?" [crosstalk 00:22:23].

Cindy: Oh good. What I will actually do for you 7 Figure Furnace listeners, if you came upon this podcast via iTunes go over to the blog. If you're actually already on the blog then it's easy for you. Just have a look below this podcast and you'll see some links there. I'll throw in a few extra, so if you want to get in touch with Wilco then you can do that too, but also if you want to check out his products, have a look below. If you're listening via the podcast, go to 7figurefurnace.com and look up for Wilco. Also if you want to throw in a comment or a question or anything else, some feedback or whatever in the comment section, by all means throw it on down there as well.

It has been wonderful having you here Wilco. I love your energy, and I love being able to just kick around some geeky marketing ideas, so thank you so much for being on the show.

Wilco: Thanks for having me Cindy.

Cindy: All right, I'll talk to you soon then, bye.

Wilco: Talk to you soon.

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