

Ep #60: Why You Should Join the Digital Marketing Revolution



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Tobi Fairley

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You are listening to *The Design You Podcast* with Tobi Fairley, episode number 60.

Welcome to *The Design You Podcast*, a show where interior designers and creatives learn to say no to busy and say yes to more health, wealth, and joy. Here is your host, Tobi Fairley.

Hey there friends. I am so happy you're here today because I want to talk to you about something that I literally work on every day of my life. And it may not be what you think. It's digital marketing.

And you may be thinking, "Boy, Tobi, you have a super boring life if you think about digital marketing every day," and that may be true. But what I really love to think about is making money, and I love being an entrepreneur, and I have shifted to a lot more of my business being online. An online business model, but scalable. You know, that makes me money while I sleep.

And that happens by marketing primarily online, digitally. And it was the biggest game-changer I've made in my business in the last 10 years when I shifted to this way of working just a few years ago. So how did it change things, you ask?

Well, prior to that time, to make money, I spent a lot of time traveling. Traveling to out of town design projects, traveling for speaking engagements, traveling to teach in-person courses and mastermind events, and traveling for work sounds really glamorous, but it's hard when you're operating a traditional business model where you aren't at work when you're traveling.

Because when you're not there in that kind of business model, you're not making any money really. And yes, technically, the travel is work, but you can't really work while you're traveling to work. Even when you're doing the work thing that you're traveling for, it's usually not making you that much money.

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And so you can't bring your whole office with you, you can't bring everything you need with you, so it's really an either-or situation when you don't have an online business. You either travel or you do all the stuff that needs to be done at the office, but you can't do them both at the same time with that type of business.

Now, I love to travel when I can do it for fun and with my family, but traveling for work, it's a whole other thing. And it's okay occasionally, but doing it multiple times a month is exhausting because there's always twice as much work waiting for you when you get back, and really, twice as much to do before you even leave.

And it's just not very efficient or effective for running a business, especially if you're operating an old, outdated business model. One that's broken, really. Because when you're never in the office, it's really hard to work on the business, and that kind of work is often even more important than working in your business, if you know what I mean.

So creating an online business where I can work on all facets of my work; interior design, coaching designers and creatives, creating content like podcasts and blogs and more all right from my desk at home, or my laptop where I happen to be, that is totally different. And there's no need for me to attend speaking engagements or events unless I just really want to, for me to reach my potential audience, because I can meet them right from my computer.

And frankly, if I do want to travel, I can take them with me just by bringing my laptop, or my phone even, or my iPad because wherever I am, my business is now there with me when I want it to be. Now, this approach really increased the quality of my life in so many ways, and it drastically changed my profits. That's one of the best parts.

Because all of that marketing and promotion and following up with interested people that I always had to do before meant that I had to find time to get around to it, and it happened to be very manual and sending out

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individual emails or calling people on the phone or trying to meet people in person. There was nothing automated about it.

And the number of leads that were coming my way at that time were pretty small because I just really didn't have the time or energy to put into it. But when I shifted to an automated way of marketing digitally online, the number of leads per customers and clients and all parts of my business literally exploded.

And the best part was my leads didn't die with my good intentions anymore. You know, the good intentions were always going to take time to call somebody or check in with them or text them or email them, but I was always just too tired. Well, that didn't happen anymore because it's always running in the background because we've set up a digital marketing system and yeah, it takes some attention from some of us, but it can be happening in an automated way without me literally typing an email or getting on the phone and connecting with a potential client, and that was a huge, huge game-changer, time-changer, money-maker, all the stuff that I was looking for.

I can't even tell you how much it changed my life. It also made me more available for my family when I am home, which is so fulfilling. Because in the past when I would travel, then when I got home, there was so much to do that I always heard myself saying, "Mommy has to work, or I can't go to this thing, or I wish I could," and that didn't happen anymore because everything keeps going no matter where I am.

And I have teams of people and contract employees and software and other stuff that's making things happen and that means that there's so much more time for me to not miss out anymore on the good stuff, on my priorities that I have for the other parts of my life besides business.

So I'm not always ignoring those or putting those on the backburner because I'm busy catching up on work or manually trying to contact and convert clients 24/7 anymore because that is the absolute slow boat to success, I'm here to tell you. And a lot of you have tried it. And some of you

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didn't even try because you're like, I don't even know, that's just too much time.

The online business with digital marketing means having the freedom to have more time off work and creating more balance while making more money than ever, if you do it right. I mean, there are people not doing it right and not setting it up right, and it's really not turning into anything. And you have to work hard, let's be clear.

It's not like you can just have nothing of value to give to the world. You got to have valuable products and services to start. But when you do, when we take that for granted, that's a given. Check the box. Yeah, I'm super valuable. Getting the message out into the world, to your audience, connecting with the people that really want what you're selling, that is where it really changes.

Because you're meeting clients where they are, including with digital assets like things they can download and print off and learn from, or things that you can sell like courses. The opportunities are endless once you take your business online. It's so cool because you can create something once and sell it many times to people right where they are.

And guess what, people don't want to leave where they are. They don't want to come to you, so why not go to them, and that's been so much fun. And the best part of this is that your cash flow can become balanced as you wait for your ideal clients who are going to come and really trickle all the way down through your sales funnels to your highest in services.

Those people that you're waiting on, you can keep waiting on them and wait for the right people to really be a fit for those services because you got other things that are happening and selling that are really bridging that gap for you financially while you really wait and you're choosey about who you want to work with.

That really is probably the best part because we know that those really ideal clients for our top-level premium services, they're fewer and farther

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between, right? There's so many more people that just need some help or some guidance or some information, but if you're an interior designer or a creative like me, you probably haven't ever been offering anything that was a fit for all of those people. You were just waiting around like I was for the phone to ring at that tippy-top part of your service ladder.

Really that premium high-end service. That's not very fun. That is stressful when you are trying to run a business and a life waiting for your ideal clients to show up. So it's just, as I've said, so game changing. It's a huge business shift, really that ends what I call and we all call - those of you who know this term - feast or famine in our bank accounts.

It's either a whole bunch of clients at once that you really don't even have time to take care of and do it well, or there's none and it's like, crickets chirping and your bank account is like an empty well that you hear yourself echo in. There's nothing in there, right?

And that's what it used to look like in the past for me, before I started creating these other services and these other things to sell initially, but even that was hard because I was trying to convert them one-on-one. And then when I started using the internet in the way I do now, wow, totally and completely different.

Because guess what, before if I wasn't doing a design project personally at any given time, or I wasn't traveling to teach a live class personally, me in person, then I wasn't really getting paid. But by creating things online where I can have classes and courses and programs and all kinds of cool stuff for people to buy, which by the way, it's super fun to create this stuff, now that I'm into it, it's not scary and it's so cool and I totally geek out on all the cool stuff I can create because I know how many people I can help with it all.

But now that I've done that and I have all those options for people to buy, and really, I've created video and audio and all sorts of methods of people consuming my content and if I wanted to be and if I get in front of enough people, it can actually be delivered to hundreds or thousands or actually, it

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could be delivered to millions of people in an ongoing way without me having to be there to teach something live every single time, now that is a whole other level of game changing.

That is when what I call financial freedom and time freedom, my two main goals, that's when those started to actually look like a possibility. And it's been so fun to achieve higher levels of financial and time freedom, and I'm just getting started. I now know all of these exciting things that I'm going to do and create and be, and really truly as they say, the possibilities are endless.

So, why am I telling all of you this? Well today, what I really want to do is I want to talk to you about this some more, about what digital marketing really is, besides what I've told you so far, what an online business really could look like, and why you should consider this option.

And here's what I want to do real quick. I want to stop for just a second because I know there are going to be a lot of you listening that are either in interior design and you have been for a long time, or even if you're new, you have a vision of what it's supposed to look like. Or if you're in another creative industry, you're feeling the same way about your industry.

You're like, "That's not how my business works, that's doesn't apply to me, Tobi, because I am a" - fill in the blank. Whatever you are that you believe about yourself. I'm in a one-to-one service business, high-end interior design business, or really any other number of things that make you believe you're the exception instead of the rule, as far as whether digital marketing and scalable products and all of that stuff could work for you, well, I want you to know that you're not the exception.

You're really not the exception. And we all want to think we're special, and you are special, and I'm so happy you're here. You're special just because you're here, taking your time to listen to me and I thank you so much. But in the grand scheme of things in businesses, we're not special. None of us are special. We're not exceptions.

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So any time we hear ourselves thinking that we're an exception, I want us to check in and say, "Yeah, Tobi said I'm not." Because that is only your brain's way of holding you back from doing something new and uncomfortable.

And even if you never ever, ever intend to have all of those cool types of online products that I was just talking about that can make you a lot of money while you sleep and I mean, seriously, who doesn't want money while they sleep? But even if you never did any of that, I want you to know this; you absolutely in 2019 and in 2020 and in 2021 and in all the years past that, you absolutely need digital marketing for your business even if you're not going to have those online business offerings or products because your customers are online.

There are literally thousands of businesses including people who only work one-on-one, and those who are in very high-end industries, even like the financial industry, where people spend tens of thousands of dollars in services with them and those people are having extreme success with digital marketing once they see what the possibilities are, and they can really get their head around the results that they can get.

And when that happens, when they start to see it, they can get really on board with it. And a lot of times, those people that start with us some type of digital marketing, when they start to see the results and the reach and the opportunities that are created by the internet and Facebook ads and retargeting customers and all the cool things that you can do, then they even get on board with scalable services and product offerings.

So I'm just saying, you're not the exception. I promise you're not. And I'm just asking you to try this new way of doing business because you just might get really excited about it, once you really start to believe that it can actually work. And that's really where I am.

So I just want you to just open your mind about the possibilities. And I do realize that maybe you believe you are the exception, and that's a mindset

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thing, and if you have a mindset that it's not going to work for you, then you're going to be right.

So if you're in a place mentally where you're thinking, "Tobi, I really need to create additional revenue streams, I've got to have something to make my cash flow more consistent and to get rid of the ups and downs, the feast or famine nature of my business, but that online stuff, that's just not for me." I want you to think hard about that.

So when you're saying, Tobi, just help me find way more of my ideal, perfect - what I call idealized client. The ones who let me spend thousands and thousands of dollars and they really understand my creative vision and they'll just get out of the way and they'll trust me to do the whole kit and caboodle and then they're just so happy afterwards, I just want more of those people.

And guess what, I'd absolutely love to give you an entire business full of those people, but that's what's called waving the magic wand or finding the place where the unicorns live. Seriously. Because we're never going to have a business full of those people. Maybe a handful of people are, depending on where you live, and you might.

But that is the exception and not the rule. And here's the thing about those clients anyway. They're amazing, and they do exist. I've had some. Most of you, a lot of you have had some, but when we get one of them or even a few of them, I mean, it's super fun, right? And those people, they're 20% maybe, of our business.

And just those 20% bring in 80% of our revenues a lot of times, and we get that whole thing, it's called Pareto's law. The 80/20 rule. So we just have 20% of our customers that are going to be bringing in 80% of the revenues. And I understand that. And sure, we can do some things to attract more of them and by the way, it's through digital marketing and clarifying your message, believe it or not, but I just want you to see that we will never have a business that is made up of 100% of those people.

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We just said they're the 20%, right? The 20% of our business. And here's another thing about that 20% that's really important. Big projects with big budgets, which trust me, I love them too, they're super fun. They allow us to bask in our creativity and get a taste of success, but delivering those projects often comes with long hours and for interior designers like me, they come with a lot of procurement or purchasing.

Purchasing furniture, so procurement related headaches. And they really can rob us of the time we need to really prime our pipeline for the next client. Even another one like them, which means we have all these gaps in between projects. That's the famine part, that plunges there into that famine phase of the cycle where we're feeling desperate and waiting for that next big client, but because of the nature of these big jobs, kind of don't have another option because they're all encompassing.

When we have a handful of those, we literally do not have time to be out marketing, to be out trying to network and get the next client. At least not in the old-fashioned way. So sure, this new digital way of working does seem foreign to a lot of us, especially when you start thinking about selling a service or some kind of a course or something online, and yeah, it's super uncomfortable.

And it's easy to want to believe that it doesn't apply to us because we'd rather just think of business as usual being finding and signing more of those high-end clients, those unicorns. And of course, we all want that. We all want to be working with million-dollar budgets, and things that we consider long-term projects, and really that dream situation.

But here is the most important part of that. What I call the hard truth. Only 1% of Americans have annual household incomes over \$421,926. Only 1%. So think of your best most lucrative clients, or if you've never gotten one, think about what they would be like. Those unicorns, those dreamy ideal or idealized clients that many of us are looking for.

If they're to qualify for the dreamy budgets that we really want to work in, their incomes have to be well over the \$421,926 mark a year, right? I

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mean, I know how much my husband and I make, and I'm my own interior designer. I didn't even have to pay for me. We make a lot of money.

But we spend a lot of money to live. We all have houses and cars and private schools for our kids and we want to go on vacations, and so you got to have way more than a \$400,000 a year income to be qualifying for the level of interior design that we're all wishing we could be working in. So what does that mean?

Well, it means we're all scrambling to sign people not from just the 1%, but the tippy-top of the 1%. And when we do land one of those unicorn clients, as I lovingly call them, we are continuing to toil away in those procurement nightmares, not just selling our ideas. Heck, a lot of us don't even really charge for our ideas the way we should, but we're mainly being a seller of stuff and we're pushing through the old, broken business model where we're buying and selling stuff, and that model gives us a paltry 30% profit margin a lot of times, if that.

But we just keep doing it anyway because we don't see another alternative. So we're all fighting for the tippy-top of the 1% and we're all doing business the hard way, and we just don't see any other way of working but to do more of both of those. But I want to tell you, there is another way and it works far beyond what you can imagine, but you first have to believe that it does.

And I've even had people tell me that other industry experts in my industry, the design industry and consultants have told them, have literally said to them at conferences or at meetings not very long ago honestly, and I quote what some of these people have told me, one in particular said that a consultant told her no high-end designer would ever have an online program or course, no way a digital business, implying that it's just beneath them and unsophisticated as a high-end reputable interior designer or other creative to have that type of business.

Well, guess what I think when I hear that? First of all, I just laugh because guess what, A, I'm a high-end interior designer. B, I have online courses

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and programs, and C, I don't think I'm unsophisticated but maybe I am. but here's the thing; I'd rather be unsophisticated making a ton of money and living the life I want than pretending to be sophisticated and hardly having enough money to live on and then I spend all of that energy trying to look like I still have money.

The bank account, like the big empty well that I mentioned earlier. So I want you to think about this. I want you to open your mind and say okay, well if 20% of my business, or even 10 was still those dreamy clients because I get to scratch my creative itch and I get to work with amazing things and I love these clients and they let me be creative, what if there was another way for the other parts of my business?

Well, I want to tell you first, if you're thinking, "Yeah Tobi, you are unsophisticated," maybe so, I'll own it. I want to tell you that one of my favorite authors, Jen Sincero, who wrote *You Are a Badass* and she wrote *You Are a Badass at Making Money*, which is one of my very favorite books, she puts it this way. Would you rather be rich and cheesy or cool and poor?

Well, I absolutely know which one of the two I'm going for. So ask yourself that. I want you to ask yourself right now, which one are you? Which place? And are you in that place of believing that it's not very sophisticated and I am the exception and it doesn't apply to me, and would you change your mind about creating an online business or even just starting to digitally market your existing business if it could create a six-figure or multiple six-figure income for you?

What about if it could create a seven-figure income for you? Revenues or even salary. What about that? What if it could create an eight-figure business? That's 10 million or more. What if it could take you from barely keeping your head above water a lot of times to a seven or eight-figure business? And what if instead of a 30% profit margin that a lot of us are operating on, especially with regard to selling product, what if you were at a 75% profit margin or higher with those numbers?

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If that was possible, would you open your mind to the opportunity that's in front of you with the online world? I sure hope that you would. I want to give you a little insight into the potential of being in the online scalable information products industry, or what Tony Robbins, which I know you've heard of Tony Robbins, even if you're not into personal development like I have.

You may or may not have heard of another guy named Dean Graziosi but they're both big time gurus in that whole online personal development and really what they call knowledge industry. And they're two huge players in it. Tony makes six billion a year, a measly six billion, and Dean makes multiple hundred million. Over a hundred million, but I think several hundred million.

Not bad, right? Now, Tony's been doing his work for, I think he says 40-something years and Dean 20-something, but whatever. Hundred million, six billion, pretty good. So just last week, they had a product launch and they shared that the online information or knowledge business as they call it, and what is that?

That's this business of being in the online world and selling your knowledge. Not a physical product like a chair, but selling your ideas through a course or a program or a membership or a mastermind or something like that. That online information business is currently a 355 million dollar a day business right now and by 2025, it is projected to be a one billion dollar - which is 365 billion friends, a year, industry.

So one billion dollars a day by 2025. That sounds pretty similar to the interior design business, right? No. Absolutely not. So do you see? And it's going to basically triple, more than double in the next six years, they're projecting. So it's going to go from 355 million a day to one billion a day. So do you want to be part of that 600 million dollar a day growth over the next six years? Or do you want to sit back and not jump in and see what this can do to change your business?

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And for what it's worth, I bought the program they were selling for \$1997 and trust me, I buy tons of stuff all the time and I use it all and I get so much out of it, and it's crazy valuable and it's not in any way unsophisticated or stupid or cheap or silly or worthless.

So when I bought theirs for \$1997 and I got inside their community, guess what? So the very first day I joined and I went into the accompanying Facebook group that they have to go with it, and on day one when I got access, what's really the next morning because they had so many people buy it it basically broke the internet.

So when I got my credentials and got inside and logged into the Facebook group, there were 4200 people on the first day. Now, these people are huge names, granted, they are, but let's look at that. What does that mean? That means that they had made 8.3 million dollars in about 12 hours.

Now, as of writing this podcast, which was even a few days before I recorded it, when I was writing this content for you, they were at 7300 people, so that's 14 million that they had made in less than a week, and now I should have checked before I started recording this because it's been a few more days since then. I think it closes on the day I'm recording this, so I have no doubt they're obviously well over 15 million, they might even be at 20 million in about a 10-day period. 20 million dollars.

Now, yes, they are amazing and they are masters at this and they're very famous. So I'm not saying we're all going to make 20 million dollars in a week, but what I can tell you is that if you aren't willing to jump into the 255 million a day business, which is 124 billion dollars a year right now, then you are keeping yourself from getting a piece of that pie.

And if you do it right, you can get a big piece of that pie, if you bring real value, really good stuff that makes a difference for the people that purchase it. So what I know most people will likely do in the design industry and some other creative industries that are similar to ours is not believe in it right now because it still feels new and it feels weird, right?

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It's like, I don't know, I'm going to hang back and watch for a little while. And for our industry, not getting in now means not being really on the front end of this curve because there's not a ton of people operating this way right now in the interior design for sure, but some other creative businesses that some of you may be in, not a huge part of the industry is operating this way fully at the moment, if at all.

So most of you are going to wait, and you're going to see a lot of evidence over the next few years, six years maybe when we hit the billion dollar a day mark because it'll probably actually happen, so you'll start to see evidence that others in your industry besides me are having great success with these types of business models and then you're going to jump in years after it could already make an enormous difference in your business to the tune of six, seven, maybe even eight figures.

When the landscape is way more crowded, two or three, or four, or six years from now in our industry, in the online world, then you're going to decide to get in. And it's not going to be too late. It's not going to be too late because you're going to eventually have to do this if you want to be viable as a business in the future because all businesses are going to have to be way more online than we've even thought about being, but I want you to think about this as an example in our industry

So do you remember those who became design bloggers very early on? I've been blogging for 11 or 12 years, and I was really early as far as an actual interior designer blogging. A lot of the first bloggers in the design industry were enthusiasts. And then a lot of them went on to become very successful designers. They started with blogs.

But at first, we were like, what is this blog thing? And I just happened to learn about it early on and because I'm such a progressive thinker and a futurist, one of my five strengths from Strength Finders, you all may have heard me say before is futurist, so I love real progressive thinking things, so I leapt in pretty early, and it paid off in a humongous way.

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But remember when that was first happening and we were like, what is this blogging thing and I don't really understand it, and then it started catching on and then there were so many more people and then by the time everybody else just all of us kind of started to get in there, it was pretty dang crowded when it had trickled down to mainstream.

And it was near impossible at that point to really set yourself apart and monetize blogging at the level that people had monetized it just a few years prior. So really, by that time, a lot of people weren't even reading blogs anymore. By the time everybody gets in and it's trickled all the way down to the masses, then the next thing is already happening, and that was very much true for blogging.

Now, does that mean you don't need a blog? No, you still need one for a number of reasons, which is a whole other thing or a whole other podcast, or come join *Design You*, my program. But I'm just saying, don't be late to this party. It takes time to build just like with a blog and with a blogging audience. It takes time to build a digital marketing strategy, an audience, a tribe, an online business, followers, fans.

So in my opinion, there is never too early of a time to get in. There is no time like right now to get started. And in fact, I think this is so important. It's the main thing I teach in my whole *Design You* coaching program. So we teach other things about design and mindset, which mindset was one of the main reasons I got in there and we still cover mindset, I promise.

I'll tell you about that in a second because as you can tell right now, you might need some mindset work if you're not buying into this. We really do three things primarily in my program. I call them my three pillars of the program and we transform your business model, which is this stuff.

We transform your schedule and time management system because we need time to work on your business and really be efficient, and then we transform your mindset or help you do it because the mindset is what you have to do first really a lot of times before you can believe in the other two, or you're going to quit on yourself.

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But the number one pillar, the main one is the business model. And the way I help people transform their business model is through this very thing, digital marketing and scalable services, because I know it works. But don't just listen to me. Look at the size of that 124 billion a year marketplace of the knowledge business, y'all. That is humongous.

And it is so important that all of the big guys know that it's important, if you look at huge companies today this year and next year and beyond, guess what they're making a huge priority. Companies like Apple and PepsiCo, LinkedIn, they're all investing millions of dollars in content creation and some even creating entire divisions of content creation, which is online education, which is the knowledge industry that Tony and Dean are talking about.

They're creating entire divisions of their company just for online content and education. Now, not all those people have something to sell online. Some of them still have physical products like a Pepsi or an iPad, or your Mac computer, but they're marketing in that space and it will not be surprising at all if a lot of those companies have online information products in the near future.

So there has never been a time when consumers love learning as much as we do today. Hence the size of that knowledge industry. And the internet puts information and education right at our fingertips so we can access it easily and immediately. But designers in the traditional business model, we aren't really doing either of those things.

We're not giving them a chance to buy from us easily, and we're not giving them a chance to get results and access immediately. We do the opposite. We make it hard for you. You better really want to hire us. We make it hard for you. Unless you are that unicorn with a great big budget, we make it pretty easy for those people, those unicorns.

But we make our process take forever so that if you do hire us, you are so over it by the time you get the results and we're all frustrated a lot of times at that point, and there's usually no immediate access or gratification even

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because most of the people that want that, that stuff that we can get right now, that 99.9% of the customer base, those are the ones we're not serving. Those aren't the unicorns. They're everybody else and we're not creating anything for those people at all.

And I'm not saying you have to be all things to all people, but I'm saying there is a part of the market that is a fit for your business. Doesn't even need to be cheap. I don't want to imply that getting online is buying things for \$39. It can be, but I just told you last week I bought something for \$1997 and what I didn't tell you is I bought two courses last week that cost \$1997.

And there are a ton of people exactly like me buying very valuable, very important things on the internet that are about knowledge and learning, and things we can put into practice in our own life that are spending a lot of money, and we just don't think that applies to us.

So let's be clear. Those 99.9% of people are going to be interacting with and learning from somebody online. Whether we get in and get a piece of that is completely up to us and our own limiting beliefs. Remember the mindset pillar in *Design You?* Well, that's why you need it because whether we leap in and change our potential clients' lives forever and our own is completely up to us.

It's going to get changed. Theirs are and ours eventually will get changed when we don't get in there, but those people are going to get what they're seeking because if we're not willing to give it to them, somebody else will. So the longer we hold out believing that online is not the place for our business, the farther behind we're getting, and the less often our phone will be ringing and the fewer profits we will be making.

And I believe in just a few years, it will be a miracle if many interior designers and creatives who are in business today are still in business if you don't start doing things differently. We already see this evidence in our business. It's harder than ever to get clients the old-fashioned word of mouth way. We're going to get a few always. I'm not saying that these industries are going away as we know them at the top end.

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It just is that those will continue to be a tiny piece of our business and maybe even a tinier piece because even some of those people will start doing their own work or doing it in a different way because it's just too easy to not because it's going to be so available and it's becoming more so all the time.

So again, not that referrals don't still lead to the best clients in our opinion. They do. But there are so many distractions for even those customers that it seems harder than ever to get them to take the leap with us. Even to get our best clients to refer us. So those potential referrals are our considering all of their options, even if they've heard of us, and they're even considering doing their own projects, or even part of their own projects themselves because they can go find those options right at their fingertips.

And when we only have one way of doing business, full service for unicorns as I call it, and to work with us they must go all in and they must have way more than the 1% who have \$421,000 a year, then we just don't give very many customers a lot of ways to get started with us now, do we?

So we spend a lot of time waiting around and hoping that today will be the day that a client finally wants to start a great big expensive project, and until they do a lot of times we just don't hear the phone ringing at all. We hear those crickets.

And I want to be clear. I'm not suggesting again, that there's not a place for high-end one-on-one interior design or any other creative service. There will always be some version of that. I'm just saying that it's going to be - I mean heck, it already is really hard to sustain a whole business for most us waiting on those unicorns to show up, especially depending on the size of your local market and the average yearly income of the prospects where you live are willing to pay.

So I live in a pretty small market. There's no near as many unicorns in Little Rock as there are in Dallas or in Chicago or in New York City or in Los Angeles. So in other words, charging you worth for the unicorns as I lovingly call them, and hey, I love unicorns so it's not disparaging and I'm

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not making fun. It's just the best way to describe how they're so hard to find and they're really something that's kind of once in a lifetime or once in a year.

Those clients and being able to charge what they're worth for those can really only happen in any geographic location a few times. Again, in Arkansas, it's not that many. So let's circle back to why I started this podcast to begin with and let me tell you why digital marketing is the solution to this problem and a few of the basic steps or parts if you haven't heard of them, you don't even really know what it is, just to start to help you understand what I'm talking about.

The purpose of this digital approach is to meet customers where they are geographically and financially and really where they are physically at their computer, and offering them a range of options from free advice to inexpensive offerings to mid-range offerings, to filling all of the gap all the way up to your highest end services.

And again, your least expensive option does not have to be \$100 or \$39. You can totally be like Tony and Dean and sell stuff for thousands of dollars and there is still a market for those types of online services. So in the lower parts of that price range or what we call the value ladder in the digital world, which is what you're probably calling your menu of services or your offerings.

So in the lower parts of this what's called a value ladder and you can think of that as your menu of services or your offerings. So think of it like a ladder and you take steps up or even like a staircase. That's kind of what it looks like. So you're over on the far left if you're envisioning it at the bottom step and you're stepping all the way up to the top. That's your value ladder. Your services are on each one of those steps.

And that doesn't mean you have 50 services. You might have two or you might have three, but the point being, at the bottom part you aren't offering one-on-one services. You're really likely not even offering things live.

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So it's either written or a video or something that gives you the option of creating it once like that, like a video and selling it over and over again. So I want you to understand, in no way are we suggesting that you do one-on-one service but you do it really cheap with people. That is the opposite of what we're talking about.

In fact, we're going to take a lot of the customers that you're currently doing one-on-one services with, if you go with this model, and you're not going to be working for them one-on-one anymore because they're really not paying you enough to get you in person.

So you're offering something that is created once. It's called one to many, one of you, many of them, and it's scalable. It's recorded or it's in a format that it can be created one time and a whole bunch of people can keep buying it. And it doesn't mean that it's less valuable.

I mean, trust me, both of the courses I just spent almost \$5000 to buy the two of, super valuable products. So they're not inexpensive and they're not cheap and they're not of low value just because they're online products. So again, I'm not implying that they're free or that they're not super valuable because they are.

If they're not, if they're fluff, if they're crap, if they are just kind of like, not really that interesting or that important and you're thinking I'll just whip something up and throw a bone to these people at the bottom, that's not going to convert. Nobody is going to buy really bad content if it's cheap. They don't even really want it if it's free.

It's so funny. If your content and your offerings and your ideas and your programs and courses are not really good, you literally cannot even get people to give you their email to get it for free. And how will they know if it's good? Well, they'll try one of your things and they'll think it's terrible and so they won't ever try any of your things again, or they'll tell their friends, "Hey, don't get that thing, it's awful."

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So this is not in any way about dumbing down our offerings, our expertise at all. It's actually about maintaining our high standards, but just being very creative and innovative in the way we deliver the information and get the customer results.

So now one of the first things that you really have to do to make this shift is to check in with yourself and really check your ego at the door, and you have to get over what people think about you. Because here's what I mean; did you realize that almost all other interior designers, including yourself, have websites that are not designed to speak to our audience other than maybe a few unicorns that we're speaking to?

But most of our sites other than somebody with a whole lot of money and a whole lot of taste that lands on there and sees our work and is like yes, I have the confidence and the money to pick up the phone and call these people, but other than that, we're not designing customer centric websites that make people feel comfortable and like we're accessible and that there's something for them and they can download something to get a taste of what we do or what we believe or what we teach or what we offer.

Now, we're not doing any of that because we're not designing our sites for our customers. Guess who we're designing our sites for? Other designers. Think about it. Think about your ego. If you're sitting there designing what you want your site to look like, you've gone on the websites of all these other designers, a lot of them probably famous, and you've fallen in love with those full bleed images and it's so beautiful and guess what, we're not sending a message to anybody that is accessible and open.

We're pretty much sending a message that's intimidating and looks very expensive because it probably is, and we're hoping that they'll have the guts to go to the contact page and call us, and most of them don't because they have their own mindset things. They're like, oh my gosh, she's probably famous, she's probably booked, she's probably super expensive, I don't know.

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And we really don't make it easy for them to call us or contact us or work with us but we're not even thinking about them. That'd be a novel idea that they come out our customers. We're thinking about other designers because we're like, oh my gosh, if I do one of those sites that Tobi's talking about that looks sales-y and has her picture on the top and gives people freebies and other things to actually show them what it would actually be like to work with us, that would just be humiliating because my peers would think I had lost my mind and I wouldn't have a really fancy ritzy website that peers and magazines would come and think was spectacular and sophisticated and chic.

Because that's our number one goal as designers is those kinds of websites where our peers, the people that we would really want to impress, that they would think they're sophisticated and chic. And I had one of those for years too, but guess what? It doesn't convert. There's a reason. It does not connect or send a message to our clients that we want to help them.

It's not about them at all. In fact, it's about us. The site's about us, and that's one of the biggest mistakes that businesses make is they write a website about themselves instead of about their customers, the person who's coming there looking for a solution.

So guess what? That kind of site, it does, it screams I'm too expensive, but if there's any way in the world you are brave enough to believe that you might afford me, then please get out of your comfort zone and pick up the phone and call us, and it's not happening. And we wonder why they're only few and far between.

That's the reason that referrals work so well because those people are sending a trusted friend to a trusted service provider and so it builds a little bit more comfort so they're willing to reach out. But our sites, not comfortable at all. Beautiful, yes. I call them coffee table book websites. They're gorgeous, but they're not converting anything.

So this is one of the first steps. You have to check your ego at the door, you have to say do I want to be popular with my peers and perceived as

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sophisticated and chic, or do I want to meet my customers where they are? Do I want to make a lot of money, changing a lot of lives by creating amazingly valuable things that are sold online right where my customers want to find them?

And then some people will trickle all the way down in your funnel, your sales funnel and get to the bottom, and that's great. The unicorns will filter all the way through that thing if you make the right kind of site. And I'm not saying an unsophisticated site. Don't get me wrong.

I'm just wanting you to see that we are not making it easy for people to do business with us, we're not meeting people where they are. We're not talking to them in a way that builds trust, that builds rapport, that shows them what we can do to change their lives, and that is one of our biggest problems.

So it's really crazy friends, and that's even just one tiny part. But what we should be doing is telling them, our customers, that we already understand their needs and that we're a perfect solution for their challenges and their pain points, that we offer a few different ways for them to get started with us.

And that if they're not even ready to get started, they can read this free stuff and it's really valuable and it's going to help them and they're going to start to see that we are the business that they want to be working with, but we just don't do that.

So the digital marketing process and the online business is really supposed to do two things if you do it well. It's supposed to build trust that we know you and we have your back, it's supposed to number two, give our customers some results ahead of time, even before they hire us so that we can show them in advance with something we've put on our site that they can get access to for free, but they have to give us their email address of course so can contact them again and nurture them with emails and all kinds of things. That's part of the whole system.

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But we have to show them in advance that we're the person for the job. And again, that's the exact opposite of what we've been doing. Relationship building, which is exactly what that is in 2019 and beyond must happen online because it's a miracle if we even get to speak to our potential clients and customers.

If we don't connect with them for free in the right way, in the online space, we don't even get to talk to them. And to do that, you have to have an online digital marketing system, and you need to know exactly some stuff before you get started, which is part of the whole process, exactly who your ideal customer is and what their challenges are and what their frustrations are and what their pain points are and I'm here to tell you it's not just an ugly house.

Because at the end of the day, that's not that painful when the money that would have to fix the ugly house, that would have to beautify the ugly house is in competition with cars and houses and vacations and college and all the other things that our money needs to go to. So it's a lot of times, you've got to get a lot deeper than just what we see visually in a house but what their house means to them, how their house makes them feel, why it's an important piece of their life. It's got to go way deeper.

It even kind of has to be touchy-feely, and again, where some of the mindset stuff comes in. You need to know who they are and you also need to know what you're passionate about helping them with and how you do that better than anyone else. Because you've got to put this stuff into words or videos, y'all.

And you've got to have valuable not fluff, not crap stuff, freebies that are called lead magnets, if you've ever heard that term, or a content upgrade, which is the same kind of thing. Piece of content online that really gets them on your email list but also starts to show them what it would be like to work with you.

And by the way, I said gets them on your email list. You've got to have an email list if you're going to get them on there, and a lot of you don't even

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have that really, right? So whether they're ever going to hire you, these freebies are going to solve a problem for them first of all, just for free, that really builds trust, and I mean a real problem that's going to really solve something for them and it's going to show them that they need you to go to the next level of what they want to go to in whatever area you work in and whatever problem they have.

So you need a lead magnet, you need an email list. To have an email list you have to have CRM software. If you don't know what that is, Google it, but it's customer resource management. So you might have heard of Mailchimp. There's a lot of other ones that are way more robust than that that you're going to want if you really get into this, and I hope you do.

Like ConvertKit or I have this one called Infusionsoft. It's really robust. We sometimes call it confusionsoft because it's hard but it's important. So you've got to have one of those. You're going to have to regularly send these people valuable not sales-y email content that converts them into clients, but that's the part, remember earlier in the podcast where I said I used to have to call people or go out in-person to do that and now I have a series of really amazing emails that are valuable that offer more free stuff and a lot of other information that are running in the background all the time converting clients for me.

You need that value ladder of service offerings that we talked about that aren't just random stuff like my high-end service and some cheapy thing at the bottom. No, it needs to be cohesive. A whole cohesive offering, group of services. Your whole service offering that are all supported by your main marketing message. Not random revenue streams that have nothing to do with each other that each need their own branding or their own marketing to get a foothold in the market place. That's not what we're talking about here.

And you'll need to figure out how to create, if you want to get to that scalable place, online courses or products when you're ready so that you can really start making money while you sleep. And you really got to

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understand also on top of all of this, the new rules of social media and how they fit into the digital marketing plan because they are a huge piece of it. That's a whole other podcast that I promise to record soon. The new rules of social media or really kind of the new opportunities would be a better way to say that.

But you have to know that too and you also - and you may have been ignoring this part of your business - you've got to have your finances in order so that you're engineering all these new online and even your offline offerings that you currently have so that you still create a business that is profitable, or maybe profitable for the first time in a way that is really sustainable for the long haul, because that's what a lot of us are trying to get out of.

The feast or famine, the unprofitable stuff. So you'll likely need a team of people to help you do this. It's not inexpensive, but it can pay for itself if you do it right. So you'll need a team of virtual people potentially, not in person. There's no reason to have an in-person. There's people all over the world.

I literally work with people on my team in - let's see. We've had people in Israel, we now have people in Denmark, we're got people in Canada, we've got people all across the United States. We have companies that we work with in the United States that also have people on their team in the Philippines. Literally all over the world.

And I've got about 17 team members right now, but trust me, I didn't just get started. I've been doing this for years. So you're going to start with like, one or two people that are virtual employees to help you get this stuff off the ground. And the first steps are really just starting to market your existing high-end unicorn services to the world because people don't even know those are really available because you're not making yourself stand out. You're not showing up where your clients are.

And that alone is going to start to fill your pipeline in a way that you can't really imagine if you start operating in an online digital way. But then you

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can add those other offerings and you can grow a whole tribe of people and they're going to love you.

So every time that you launch something new, they're going to be lining up to buy it because you have cultivated a tribe or a following of people that are very aligned with your beliefs and your offerings and the value you create in what you're selling.

And you're not just having a distant relationship with people because they're online, because believe it or not, online relationships for businesses who do this really well have very close relationships with their tribe of people, and their tribe really likes them, they know them inside and out, and they really trust them completely, and that's where you want to go.

So that, my friends, that whole long, I hope you think, amazing episode, I think it's amazing. It's one of the most exciting things I've ever done and I get more excited about it every single day, that is a taste of what digital marketing looks like and why you have got to get on the digital marketing revolution now, sooner than later.

And guess what? To show you how this online relationship building works and what those parts and pieces really are a little bit more, I've created something amazing for you that takes you deeper into what digital marketing strategy really looks like or the assets in a digital marketing strategy, what they really are and how it can work for you.

And guess what, I call it my digital marketing primer e-series. It's an email series. It's 12 emails that are super packed with all kinds of really cool information about digital marketing and guess what, we're going to soon have this on my website as one of my freebies and with even some other downloadables and some other things.

But if you don't want to wait until that's all ready and you're like, tell me more Tobi, I want to know all about digital marketing and what you have to say about it and I want your series of emails about this topic, then I want you to go to tobifairley.com/podcast/digitalmarketing.

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So go there and sign up and start getting these emails that I've crafted for you very meticulously to help you understand exactly what a digital marketing strategy is and another step in how you can start to envision this in your own life, in your own business.

And if you want me to hold your hand through all of this because it sounds super scary and complicated so that you can work in the 124-billion-dollar industry right now, then you need to join me in *Design You* because this is what we do. And if you just want to ask me a question about *Design You* and how it could help you create a digital marketing system in your own business, then send me an email at info@tobifairley.com.

So it's not free coaching. Don't send me all your questions so you can set this up on your own, like I would never get to all those emails, but if you want the information on what and how to do the digital marketing, get my e-series by going to that tobifairley.com/podcast/digitalmarketing. But if you want to ask me a question about how I can help you do this in your own business, about *Design You*, then send it to info@tobifairley.com.

And in that subject line, put digital marketing or *Design You* question, either way. Tell me about it. Tell me why you're afraid of it, tell me the questions you have about how could this work for your business. All of that stuff you can put in that email.

And then if you decide you want me to help you do it then we'll get you in the program and I'll literally start helping you put this to work in your business because it's so cool and it makes a lot of money and it frees up a lot of time, and I happen to think it's the coolest thing I've done in a long time.

Okay friends, sorry for another long podcast, but guess what, there's just some topics that are super crazy important, and this one about the future of your business, I mean heck, the future of your life, I think it's super crazy important, and guess what, I'm going to bring you a couple of other long podcasts soon on finances and really getting that part of your business in

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order and then I will do one as I promised on social media because a lot of you have been asking me for both of those.

So it's basically Tobi's free version of *Design You* right here on the podcast. If you want to go deeper, join me in the program and other than that, I will see you next week with another exciting interview I think because we've got some of those coming up again, or it'll be one of these super fun in-depth podcasts just like today and just like last week where you need to listen to it again and get out your notepad and start taking notes.

But either way, we're going to have a really good time so I'll see you again really, really soon. Bye for now, friends.

Thank you so much for joining me for this episode of *The Design You Podcast*. And if you'd like even more support for designing a business and a life that you love, then check out my exclusive monthly coaching program Design You at tobifairley.com.