

\$21K Profit Flipping 2 Domains in Less Than 4 Months - With Christian Calvin

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<http://www.domainsherpa.com/christian-calvin-flips/>

In this DomainSherpa Show, Profitable Flips, skilled domain name investors share all the details of how they bought low and sold high. On today's show, we're going to learn how a \$80.55 domain name bought on a GoDaddy auction sold for \$12,500 in only one month of ownership. But it's not a one-off sale, we'll also learn how a \$98.37 purchase sold for \$9,000 and how you can reproduce these kinds of sales. Stay tuned.

I have three sponsor messages before we get into today's show.

First, if you have a great domain name and nothing to show when people visit, you're missing out on potential advertising revenue, leads and partnership opportunities. NicheWebsites.com can build you a site quickly with a price option to suit any need — but as their tagline says, they don't just build websites, they build businesses. NicheWebsites.com.

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Michael Cyger: Hey everyone. My name is Michael Cyger, and I'm the Publisher of DomainSherpa.com - the website where you can learn how to become a successful domain name investor or entrepreneur directly from the experts. Welcome to the Domain Sherpa Show called Profitable Flips. In this show series, I invite domain name investors to share all the details of how

they bought low and sold high, an investment philosophy called value investing, where you can buy assets that appear undervalued that at a later date will be valued properly by the market.

Today, I am pleased to welcome Christian Calvin, Owner of the Domain Portfolio, PlentyOfBrands.com. Welcome to the show, Christian.

Christian Calvin: Hey Michael, thank you. Glad to be here.

Michael: I met you, your wife and your lovely daughter at the TRAFFIC Domain Name Conference back in October of 2013, not even a full two years ago. It seems a lot longer than that, doesn't it?

Christian: Yeah, it does. It seems like a long time. That was our first domain conference we had ever went to. It was a wonderful experience. We got to meet a lot of people that I had interacted with before, whether it be through email or phone conversations, and finally to get to meet people was a great experience. And yeah, it does seem like a long time ago, but yeah, kind of crazy.

Michael: Because I have not been in the industry that long either. Now, in the pre-interview, we chatted about a few different things and you told me that when you entered the industry, you did something that I think most new investors to the domain name industry would be way too insecure to do. What did you do?

Christian: Well, actually I kind of reached out to someone that is already in the domain industry and, to tell you the story right quick, I was reading an article online and I saw where a guy had actually bought a domain. Actually he bought it for a lot of money, but he sold it for a whole lot more money, and it kind of sparked my interest. I was like how in the world did this person do this.

So, the domain was MusicVideos.com. So, I researched it out and found out that Merlin Coffman had actually purchased it and sold it, so I actually got online, did a little research, found his number, and called him. So, that was kind of scary. And actually, when I called, he did not answer, so I left a

message, so I basically chalked it up as hey, that was a nice try and not really expecting him to call me back or anything. And I still remember exactly where I was.

I was in a casino of all places. I was in Mississippi at a casino, and I get the call. Actually, about an hour later, I get a call back and it was Merlin, and so we had a really good conversation, and so I actually kind of reached out to him for some advice and that is kind of how it all got started.

Michael: That is great. And what advice did he give you?

Christian: Well, we talked for a little while and I asked him. Hey, it is very intriguing how you bought a name for this amount and sold it for a whole lot more money, and so I asked him any secrets or anything that he could tell me, and basically he left me with one thing when I hung up the phone. He said, "Do not hand register domains." That was kind of what he had told me. So, I did not understand at the time. I thought that was the only way that you could actually buy domains.

So, I hung up the phone and I remember thinking I guess he just like does not want me to have any domains or something. I do not know. So, anyways. I got off the phone and I go and register like five hundred domains.

Michael: Not literally that day, but following that conversation you hand registered five hundred domains.

Christian: Yeah.

Michael: Somewhere around there.

Christian: Yeah, but it took several months to do that, but yes. So, obviously I did not listen.

Michael: Yeah, because you spent five thousand dollars or a little bit under, registering domain names. And what happened to those domain names that you bought?

Christian: Most of them have been expired. I did not renew them. They were terrible. And it is funny. I have a big notebook that is full of every domain that I have ever purchased from day one. And I mean going back to the very first day, and it is all hard copies. It is all sheets of paper that I had printed off a receipt or something, and I mean seeing these domains that I registered were just. I mean it is kind of funny now. I mean they were horrible.

I mean terrible, but I mean it is a learning experience and I am glad that I did that because it has helped me understand what to look for today. And it is an expensive lesson, and I did not stop there. I have registered more.

Michael: And so, the lesson that Merlin was trying to get across to you was that it is easier to spot domain names that have value in the after market and to spend more money for those that hopefully are under appreciated, undervalued that you could sell for some multiple above that.

Christian: Yeah, and just like what you said, the message he was trying to get to me was hey, there are several million domains out there that people are either dropping or expiring, or they are selling just part of their portfolio and maybe they want to get rid of it that you can buy for a pretty good value and resell it for higher. So, I think back then I did not really know what he was talking about because I was so brand new into the industry, but basically what he was saying is do not waste a lot of money hand registering a lot of names. Look at expiring lists. Look at drop lists. Look at auctions. Get involved in those, and that is probably the message he was trying to.

And it was a very smart message to me. I just, at the time, was not aware of what he was trying to say.

Michael: Right. And in fact, there are multiple ways to invest in the domain name industry, and Merlin suggested one path and you have actually gone down a different path, even after you understand the path that he was recommending, and that is the path that we are going to talk about on today's show. So, just to remind the audience that you can learn more about Profitable Flips at DomainSherpa.com/Flips.

To be on the show, a domain name investor must meet three criteria. They sold a domain name that was purchased within the prior 12 months. They achieved a profit from the sale of at least five thousand dollars. So, we do not want tiny, little flips, where you bought something for ten dollars and flipped it for 20 dollars. It has to be a profit of at least five thousand dollars, and then achieved a profit from the sale of at least one hundred percent of the purchase price.

So, we are going to talk today about two profitable flips that you made, Christian. What were those two domain names, and then we will go through them one by one?

Christian: Okay. The first one is RaiseTheMoney.com.

Michael: RaiseTheMoney.com. So, is that sort of like a play on the phrase raise the roof or raising money?

Christian: I think it is just about raising money. At the time, I bought it in auction, so at the time I just kind of liked it. It is a three-word. For some reason, I love two-word and three-word .COMs. I do not know why, but RaiseTheMoney was one. I got in at a good price.

Michael: How much did you pay?

Christian: I paid 80 dollars. I actually paid \$80.55.

Michael: \$80.55, and then how much did you sell it for?

Christian: \$12,500.

Michael: \$12,500. And how long did you own that domain for?

Christian: I owned that domain. Let me see. I have got some notes here. I owned that domain for seven months.

Michael: Seven months.

Christian: I bought it in May and sold it in January, so that is right at eight months.

Michael: So, the purchase price was basically a rounding error of the sale price.

Christian: Yeah.

Michael: How did the buyer discover that it was available? How did they contact you? Did you have it listed for sale in certain marketplaces or did they think about it?

Christian: Yeah, generally, I mean I have the majority of my names that are not a part of plenty of brands I have on the Frank Schilling's platform.

Michael: DomainNameSales.com.

Christian: DomainNameSales, yeah. And usually, if I buy a domain, I will change name servers over. I will get it to a parking, and then if I want to sell it, I will put a for sale sign on it. If I do not, then I do not worry about it. This particular name I had parked there and received a phone call, so I am thinking they looked up the WhoIS and got my actual phone number. The first transaction was through a phone call.

Michael: Got you. And when they called you, what did they say?

Christian: He called and he said he was interested in the domain that I own, and you always want to know which one because sometimes I will get an inquiry and it will be something I do not even own anymore that had already sold and I am like how did you get my number for this, but this particular name I did own. Obviously it was RaiseTheMoney, and he first started off by saying, "I want this domain," and he started off with like a pretty good offer, like he said they were willing to pay like 25 hundred dollars for the domain.

So, I mean I knew at that time he was pretty serious. That particular domain had had a couple of other offers on it, and one lady was in Minnesota and I kind of told him look, I am speaking with somebody else about it. They have

kind of made an offer. It is higher than your offer, so I just kind of told him the story right quick and then we kind of left it at that.

Michael: And then he hung up?

Christian: Then he hung up, yeah. I said look, let me talk with them. Let me see where they are at, because basically he said let me know where they are at. I really want this name, and so that is kind of how it played out.

Michael: Got you.

Christian: So, I knew where they were at, the other party was at, so a few days later, he emails me, asking me how is it going. Did I find anything out? And I did. I told him yes, and we kind of went back and forth for maybe a phone call or two and a few more emails. The whole transaction period was not really that long. I am thinking maybe a couple of weeks. And the other party was at 75 hundred. The only problem is then that other party, like I could not find them. I could not email them. I could not get in touch with them. I could not do anything because once I had negotiated a price with him, I was going to see if she wanted to match it or something.

Michael: Yeah.

Christian: So, I got back with him and I told him where she was at, that they were at about 75 hundred, and then he said, "Okay. Well, let me talk to my investors and we will think about it." So, I thought okay, at this point, I lost the sale. I figured I would never hear back from him. Well, I got an email a few days later and they offered ten thousand dollars. So, I was like he is going over what they had offered and he is not going over by just one dollar.

Michael: Right, not 50 bucks or something. They are making a substantial increase over the previous offer.

Christian: Right, and to be honest, at this point, I kind of thought in my head it would be really nice to get about 15 thousand dollars for this name.

Michael: All right, so going into this, that is where you wanted to be. Even when you received 75 hundred from the other potential buyer, you were thinking that is only half of what I wanted to get out of this name.

Christian: Right, and even when they offered the 25 hundred, I kind of wanted to be at around 15 thousand. So, even from the very beginning, I had kind of that number in mind. So, I got back with him and we talked a little bit, and I told him, "To be honest, I would really like to get 15 thousand for it," and he said, "I will give you 12,500," and that is kind of how that price came about, was in between the ten and the 15, and we agreed at 12,500.

Michael: Yeah.

Christian: It was a great transaction. It was a good learning experience for me too, because that was kind of the first time that I had had a five-figure sale, so it was nice.

Michael: I have seen a lot of people negotiating. You see it on TV. Not just in the domain name industry, but I see it in the domain name industry, where one party will say ten, the other party will say 15, and then they will say well, we will just split it in the middle. Did you ever think that well, maybe I should have asked 20 thousand for it, so we could have split the middle and tried to get it to 15?

Christian: Well, I mean obviously, looking back, I wish I had said that because that would have been right at my number that I was wanting. I honestly, going in, was thinking that they may do 15. I was thinking if he went from 25 hundred to ten, going to 15 is not too much of a stretch if he went 75 hundred on his first one, so I thought maybe he would go 15 and I was going to be happy with 15, but I also thought if he does say 12,500 or 11, it is more than what I was at before and I can be happy. And I feel like they feel like they probably felt like they got a good deal for the name too.

They had a serious business that they were trying to run with the name, so they pretty much let me know real early in the conversation this is the name that we want. I mean they did not hide that or anything.

Michael: So, you knew you were in the power position there, because they really wanted the domain name.

Christian: Yeah, and they pretty much let me know this is the name we want. This is the company that we are trying.

Michael: Well, it is easy for me to second-guess and like a backseat quarterback, try and suggest other tactics. I was just wondering if you had thought about that or what your mindset was. I think 12,500 sale on a 80.55 domain name is a great profit.

So, once you agreed to the price, Christian, how did it proceed? Did you use an agreement? Did you go through escrow? How do you typically transact a domain like that?

Christian: Majority of my transactions, I went through escrow and Escrow.com, and I have been very happy and pleased. I have had no hiccups. It has been a very good partnership. This was no exception. This was the same. We agreed on the price. They created an account. We went through the whole process. Now, the difference is this domain name sale took longer than the average one. After we had agreed upon a price, it took them close to 30 days to pay.

Michael: Wow.

Christian: Most of the time, it is within a week.

Michael: Yeah.

Christian: He had told me count it sold. And even at this time, you do not really know. Are they going to buy it or what? So, it was a 30-day waiting period that I had to wait, and basically there are some investors and some other people that they had to go get the money from, something and put it in the account. It just took a little bit longer than the average sale, but it did go through escrow. Everything went through fine.

Michael: So, the whole time you are worried that maybe it will fall through. Maybe they will not fund it.

Christian: Yes, actually, probably for the first 20 days, I was really worried because I had no communication with them. And then I kind of reached back out to them and say hey, is this still something that you guys are wanting to do, because we had agreed on the price, but it was just through an email. I actually did not have a contract or anything.

So, yeah, they got back and he was like yeah, no doubt. We are doing it.

Michael: No doubt. I just have not funded it.

Christian: Yeah.

Michael: So, how did you come up with a value? Why did you think the domain that you bought for \$80.55 was worth 15 thousand dollars? What would make you think that?

Christian: Well, this particular name, when I first bought it, I honestly did not think much about it at all. I was like RaiseTheMoney, because I was thinking to myself does that even make sense. Like RaiseMoney is wonderful, and you can almost put any word in between raise and money. Like we were talking about earlier, RaiseCampaignMoney, RaisePoliticalMoney. This is RaiseTheMoney.

Michael: Yeah.

Christian: So, at first, when I first bought it, I was thinking this may not be a wonderful domain here. Then I started thinking about it and look at all the ways that you can raise money. They are using it for campaign use, for political purposes. So, ball parks. You raise money for awareness. You raise money for cancer treatments. You raise money for all different types of things. Startups raise money. I mean this can be used. This domain, when you break it down, can actually be used for several different businesses, whether it is startup funding.

So, after a few months of owning it, it kind of hit me this is a pretty good domain. And when I got the offers started coming in, they were not really like low offers. They were nice offers.

Michael: Yeah. Now, I went to EstiBot.com and typed in RaiseTheMoney.com. Do you know what their valuation is?

Christian: No.

Michael: What do you guess? And they do not have your sale price in their database, by the way, so that is not included in here.

Christian: Okay, I was going to say if they had my sale price, I would say 12,600.

Michael: Yeah, exactly, but they do not. So, what do you think it is?

Christian: I would say five hundred, four hundred. I do not know.

Michael: 23 hundred dollars.

Christian: Oh, that is not bad.

Michael: That is not bad at all, especially because EstiBot is not known for valuing brandable domain names like this.

Christian: That is interesting.

Michael: And in general, if you get a good, brandable name, I always use the rule that any decent domain name is probably worth one thousand to 25 hundred dollars. This is right there in this range.

Christian: Right.

Michael: So, it just makes me think how do you come up with 15 thousand dollars. You did not like necessarily love the domain name at first, but then you grew to like it more and more.

Christian: Right.

Michael: 15 thousand dollars definitely sounds like a price that Michael Berkins would ask for one of his domain names.

Christian: You mention Michael. I see him still on these two-word and three-word domains for 30 and 40 thousand dollars, and to be honest, I am glad that a lot of these domains, the sale prices sometimes are put out there because it does allow you to think about the name a little bit more and say hey, can this be a valuable domain.

Michael: Yeah.

Christian: I mean that company could have gone to 30 or 40 thousand dollars for it. If it was perfect for their company, the price sometimes does not matter. This is going to be their storefront on the Internet. And since their business is Internet run, this is like their brick and mortar. So, to me, 15 or 12,500 is really a very cheap price in the grand scheme of things of what maybe they are trying to do with their business. So, it kind of depends on the company and their use for it. If it was like a third domain for the company, maybe it would have been five hundred dollars.

Michael: Right. Exactly. And if you go to RaiseTheMoney.com, you can see the platform that they built there. The buyers of the domain. Politics: accept contributions from candidates and committees. Churches: provide an easy way for congregations to give donations. Not-for-profits: make it simple for people to support your organization and social: support the causes that matter to you and make a difference. It is a beautiful-looking website. People should go check it out.

Christian, we did talk about a couple of other domain names that you have purchased as well that are in the same space, and I wanted to compare and contrast those. I believe you own RaisePoliticalMoney.com and RaiseCampaignMoney.com. We already talked about RaiseTheMoney as sort of an overarching umbrella. You can raise any type of money as RaiseTheMoney.com is indicating. Do you look back at

RaisePoliticalMoney.com and RaiseCampaignMoney.com and think they are not brandable enough? They are not broad enough for a large marketplace, or do you think that they are a great keyword, exact match domain names?

Christian: I think they are a pretty good keyword domain. To me, one of the main things that people do raise money for is political purposes, campaigns. So, I like the names. They are not great, but I do like them. I think you are right. I do not think it is as big of an umbrella that covers so many different things. It is pretty much a niche. It is like if you are raising political money, this is a good one. If you are raising campaign money, it is a great, great domain, because it is exactly what you are doing.

Michael: Yeah. What would you price those two domains at if I approached you and said how much are they?

Christian: Well, I mean, to me, I think they are probably two-thousand-dollar domains or something. I mean I would be very happy. Those were hand-registered domains, so I mean obviously, and once again, it depends on who is inquiring about it. To me, if it is...

Michael: The Republican National Committee versus...

Christian: Yeah, then we are talking a different deal, and a lot of times you do not know who is inquiring. A lot of times, they do not let you know that. I think they are okay, but for a hand-registered domain, I think it was not too bad.

Michael: Yeah.

Christian: But it is not a 12-thousand, 15-thousand, 30-thousand-dollar domain.

Michael: Sure. How long will you keep those two domains, if you keep renewing them, if you do not get inquiries on them?

Christian: Probably between three and five years. I mean the thing with political and campaign, obviously it is every four years for presidents. I mean you probably have to keep it at least for a cycle.

Michael: Yeah.

Christian: But I think they are decent. They are not my favorite names, but they are okay.

Michael: All right, last question on RaiseTheMoney.

Christian: Okay.

Michael: You got the cash in your bank account, \$12,500. Did you do anything to celebrate?

Christian: A little bit. We were able to travel a little bit. I mean I put money back in the business too, so basically the way I celebrated was buy more domains. I mean you have to decide whether it is a business or an addiction, and I like buying. I like purchasing. I like selling, so I like the whole business. So, yeah, I think the way I celebrated is I probably went out and bought about three hundred more names.

Michael: Nice.

Christian: Yeah.

Michael: All right, the other domain that got you on to Profitable Flips besides RaiseTheMoney was what domain?

Christian: SuiteSeats.com.

Michael: SuiteSeats.com, and how do you spell that?

Christian: SuiteSeats.com.

Michael: Okay, so like suites at a ballpark.

Christian: Right.

Michael: And then seats, like box seats. SuiteSeats.com.

Christian: SuiteSeats.com.

Michael: All right, how much did you buy that one for?

Christian: I bought that one for 98 dollars.

Michael: 98 dollars. You got ripped off on that one.

Christian: Yeah, I paid too much.

Michael: Was that at a GoDaddy auction as well?

Christian: Yes, and kind of what turned me on to that name is because of the brandability of that name. It has got a couple of different meaning. Now, I would say it does not pass the radio test because the first thing I think of is sweet seats, but I still like it because it is a play on words and I did like this name from the beginning. So, it is a little bit different than RaiseTheMoney. I kind of liked this name from the start.

Quick break from three sponsors of today's show:

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Michael: Yeah, I tell you. I took my daughter to a concert a few weeks ago here, in Seattle, and I was sitting in a different location from her, right, because it is not cool for me to hang out with my daughter and her friend.

Christian: Right.

Michael: And I am looking at the box seats and thinking that is where I want to be. I want to go grab a beer. I want to sit in my box seat. I do not want to have to stand up when all the teenyboppers are standing up.

Christian: Oh yeah.

Michael: So, yeah, SuiteSeats, to me, definitely appeals to me. What did you end up selling that domain name for?

Christian: I sold that for nine thousand.

Michael: Nine thousand dollars.

Christian: Right.

Michael: Wow, and how long do you own the domain name?

Christian: I owned that one for about a month.

Michael: One month.

Christian: Yeah.

Michael: How is it possible to own a domain for only a month and sell it for a thousand times more than what you paid for it?

Christian: Look, I do not know. That was one under PlentyOfBrands.com, so the inquiry came in from that. I had actually created a website. I make these cheesy, very simple logos, and this was a totally different guy. This was someone that was kind of experienced. They actually called me on my phone as well, so they knew, and he actually said, "Hey, I want this domain that you own. I see it on your website." And at the time, Michael, I had a \$16,900 buy it now price on it.

So, the phone conversation was like six or seven years. It was real early in the morning. It was like six or seven o'clock in the morning, and he said, "Hey, I see the domain, SuiteSeats. We really want to purchase this name from you, and it is on your PlentyOfBrands website and it has got a price. We were just wondering what the price is." And I said, "Well, the price is on it."

To be honest with you, I did not know what the price was.

Michael: Right.

Christian: It could have been one thousand. I did not know. Sometimes I just put prices on it because I was like testing the website. So, he said, "Well, I will be honest with you. I am not going to pay that," and I was like okay. I said, "Well, make an offer," and he said, "I will give you 75 hundred dollars for it."

So, his very first offer right out of the start was a nice offer.

Michael: Yeah.

Christian: So, I was asleep to be honest. I was sound asleep. I said, "Sir, can I just wake up and let me call you back? That has got my attention, so let me wake up, take a shower, think about it, and I will give you a call right back." And he lived in the Eastern Time Zone and since I am in central, he was already an hour ahead of me. I called him back and this was a pretty quick transaction. He said that he had a certain budget that he needed to be at, and I was assuming it was ten thousand dollars because he said he would not go to

16. He did not want to go to 12, and I said, "Well, just shoot me off your highest offer that you feel like you could pay for it."

And he said, "Nine," and honestly I just said that is a fair offer. I said, "I will accept that." And that was a real smooth transaction. It took place really fast.

Michael: Do you worry that when you say give me your best offer and he comes back at nine that you accepted too fast and they might get cold feet?

Christian: Yes. I was watching actually the Sherpa Show last night, and one of the comments that someone said was, and I think was Shane Cultra said, "You are in a really good position when you do not need to sell a name," and I think there was a domain that you guys were talking about that someone had sold and he did not really have to sell it, so you could hold off for more money.

Michael: Right.

Christian: There is a balance between do you hold off or do you accept a very reasonable, good offer, and that is a very tough balance to be at. Obviously I like that domain and I thought 16 thousand dollars was the value of that domain, and I thought if someone saw it and wanted to buy it, they could buy it right then. To me, I probably did leave some money on the table by accepting too quick, but I also had that balance of you know what. This is a really nice way to start off. That was the very first. Not even 30 days into Plenty of Brands.

Michael: Yeah.

Christian: So, that is a very good way to start off, so I kind of had to balance the two and I decided that it was a fair amount. And yeah, I mean they are not doing anything with the domain yet, but they were a company out of Canada and he actually told me the background behind the company. It is a large entertainment company, and what they do is they buy up the suite seats and sell them to corporations. So, it would be concerts. Maybe the arena football games.

Michael: Sure. And yeah, because they buy them in bulk, they get a cheaper rate and then they are able to increase their profits. I love the idea. Yeah, I want to check them out as soon as they go live.

Christian: Yeah, and the crazy thing is I know that I had this domain a month and two weeks. I had it right at a month and a half. I had received two other offers.

Michael: Wow.

Christian: Crazy offers before that.

Michael: Crazy offers. What is a crazy offer?

Christian: A crazy offer is someone calling you ever five minutes, wanting the name. Will not let you go. From New York, so they kept calling and calling and calling and calling and calling, and finally, apparently he was in the ticket business, so this made a lot of sense for him.

Michael: Yeah.

Christian: And he was offering me to fly me to New York. I like the NBA, so I am a big basketball fan. So, he said that he had tickets to the NBA All-Star Game in New York City. He was going to give me tickets like on the front row.

Michael: Oh, so he was going to pay you with tickets and a flight.

Christian: He was going to give me some money for it, and then he was going to add in a bunch of extras, like tickets to this event, tickets to this event, airfare.

Michael: Which would be awesome and really expensive, and he probably gets them for cheap.

Christian: Right, basically let's say he gave me 2,500 dollars for the name, and then he gave me tickets to this event, tickets to this event, front row

tickets to this, and then airfare and hotel. He may have contacts with all that stuff. He said any football game I wanted to go to. I could be any seat I wanted. So, he was in that industry.

Michael: Yeah.

Christian: I am a huge football fan too.

Michael: Yeah, why didn't you do that deal?

Christian: Believe it or not, that weekend he had called me on a Friday, so it was that weekend that I was thinking about accepting this offer, and then Monday is when I get this call from the gentleman that bought it. And at the time, I was thinking I do not know if I am going to get to travel. I do a new baby. I have got a wife.

Michael: Right.

Christian: I have got a lot of other stuff going on too, so at the time, I was thinking just straight out sale would probably best for me.

Michael: Yeah, definitely. And so, when you agreed on a price with the purchaser of SuiteSeats.com, did you go to Escrow.com and start an escrow process there as well?

Christian: Yes.

Michael: So, you asked the buyer to go create an account, and then you initiated the transaction. It emails them, you agree to terms, and then he funds it.

Christian: Right, and it was really fast.

Michael: You never use a separate agreement. You just go through Escrow.com.

Christian: Just basically go through Escrow.com. The good thing about escrow that I like is it gives you a place to put in what the domain is, whether it is a domain with any content, whether if it is the domain only. It really lets you kind of spell out exactly what you are getting. So, yeah, we have just basically used Escrow.com.

Michael: Yeah, so great sale here. Did you take any of that profit and go buy yourself some local tickets to a game?

Christian: No, I bought more domains.

Michael: More domains. So, is it an addiction or is it a business, or is it both, Christian?

Christian: I think it is both. I mean with anything that you do, you kind of have to like it. I love the domain industry. I really enjoy it, and one of the things that I like the most about it is once I sell a name is what they do with it and when they turn it into a business. That is one of the greatest feelings. Now, I have got a list of my domains that I have sold and I like to go back and visit what they are doing now, and it is really cool to see somebody buy a domain from me and then turn it into a business and run a nice operation on it.

So, it is an addiction. I mean some people are addicted to work. I like the domain industry. Everybody is really friendly and nice, and I enjoy it.

Michael: Yeah, so do I. So, you buy a lot of domain names and these are just two that you have sold. All the domains are on your marketplace called PlentyOfBrands.com. How many domains do you own in total today?

Christian: I am close to about eight hundred now.

Michael: All right, eight hundred domains. And how many of those do you anticipate you will let expire at the next renewal period?

Christian: Probably around a hundred, and the thing is, is that now that I have been in the business a couple years, I can cycle through the ones that I want

to keep and I do not want to keep, and I probably do a really bad job of not selling the ones that I am going to let drop. If other people would want them, I just kind of let them drop, but yeah, I think I have got about a hundred that I do not think need to be in my portfolio, and then I probably have got a hundred that I would call good domain that are good to me. Maybe terrible to other people, but to me they are good. And I have probably got five to six hundred that are just decent names that I enjoy having.

Michael: Yeah, so are most of them brandables? What percent would you say are brandable and how many are word combinations, like RaisePoliticalMoney?

Christian: I would say probably half. If you go to PlentyOfBrands.com, you will notice that I have about 380 names on there right now, and I own probably 99.9 percent of them. Merlin did put a number on there. StoryScape. So, Merlin was first customer that put a name on there, but the majority of all of them are mine and I probably have maybe four hundred that are brandable and maybe another three or four hundred that are maybe a category domain or something like RaiseCampaignMoney. I am not sure that is brandable.

I kind of like short brandables too. I kind of like made up, short, brandable words is kind of what I like.

Michael: Yeah, like Caytr.com.

Christian: Yeah.

Michael: Or Shayv.

Christian: Yeah, Shayv. I like names, or even something like Nooble. I like names like that. They could be a really cool brand. I mean obviously Google probably was not a word before it was Google.

Michael: Yeah. Well, it is a play on a word, but what is interesting is I do not watch a lot of TV, but last night my daughter was watching like a cooking show and the commercials came on and there was a commercial for Houzz, which is goes against everything that we, as branding experts and domain

name investors, would suggest. Like does it pass the radio test? Can you just say it without having to explain it? And they just said it. It was on the screen, Houzz, but Shayv.com I think is just as good as Houzz.com.

Christian: Well, shaving is a very popular thing now.

Michael: It is massive, yeah.

Christian: I mean people are. There is Dollar Shave Club. There are all different types of companies out there that they have a very nice business of shaving. So, when I saw that Shayv, I initially bought it. It is a hand-registered name, but I see value in that name.

Michael: Sure. What is the price on Shayv? So, that is one that stands out to me that I actually like. I do not see a price on it actually.

Christian: If I do not have a price, it has an inquire button.

Michael: It does.

Christian: So, a lot of times I will not price some names to get an inquiry to see where the company is at or who the name is for and try to get a little bit of information before I put a price up, and it does fall in the line of do you want to leave money out on the table or not. I mean a lot of times the communication part is where you make the sale.

So, if I have 35 hundred dollars on that name, I could sell it tonight and then I do not really know who. There was no communication. It is a done deal and I could have gotten eight or ten, and that company could have been happy paying en.

Michael: Right.

Christian: So, I do like that brandable for a shaving company. Shaving cream. Shave butter. They sell all this stuff. I also have names like for shaving, like ReplacementRazor.com and ReplacementRazors, because I know each month people are buying the replacements, so it depends on what your niche is. I try

to stay in the two-word domains or two-word brandable domains and just a made up word.

Michael: And are most of them in .COM top-level domain?

Christian: Almost every one of them are in .COM, yes.

Michael: So, if you have eight hundred domains, I do not know exactly what you paid to buy them all, but I am assuming most are low, like under one hundred dollars or hand registration, but your holding cost is probably around ten dollars per year, eight hundred domains, eight thousand dollars.

Christian: Right.

Michael: Okay, so eight thousand dollars is basically your cost to be in the domain business, plus your website hosting, plus your time, plus your phone service or whatever else.

Christian: Right.

Michael: What do you estimate your revenue for 2015 to be for PlentyOfBrands.com?

Christian: Right now we are at about 55 thousand.

Michael: Wow.

Christian: Yeah, I mean it has been really good and I am hoping maybe between 75 and 100 hopefully.

Michael: Nice, that is a great little business.

Christian: Yeah. Well, I mean next year, we are really going to try to. This is kind of like a getting-to-know year, so hopefully next year we will be able to add. Basically what we are trying to do is get, and there is a platform on there, where domain owners can go in and put their own names on there. So,

I think to get it to the next level is going to take domain owners putting their names on there and us helping them make sales on their names as well.

I mean basically what we would like to be is another choice of startups besides, say, BrandBucket, BrandRoute, and some of those other companies. Maybe another search tool that they could find a name on us too.

Michael: Yeah. So, let me ask you a couple questions about your marketplace and then we will get back in. So, what does it cost to list a domain name and what do you charge for a sale?

Christian: It is ten dollars to list the name. So, basically what the ten dollars, just so everyone understands. If you if you go to Plenty of Brands, there are a couple things that I try to be. One, I wanted to be different, so you are not going to have a lot of the white background logos that you see on all the other marketplaces. I basically have a very colorful marketplace. To me, I wanted a happy environment. Happy-looking website, so that is one thing that I went for on the homepage.

And the second thing is I do the logos and I also have a logo designer that does some. They are not beautiful by any stretch of the imagination, but they are just to paint a little picture of what the name maybe can be used for. And sometimes I just choose the words, but it is ten dollars to list. You do get a logo and I will write a description, a short, little description. And so, you get the logo, the description, and I will actually post it on there.

And the sales fee is 20 percent, where the others are right at 30 percent, so we are ten percent lower. So, for instance, if we sell a name for, say, five thousand dollars, it would be 20 percent of your sales price, plus the ten dollars listing fee.

Michael: Yeah, and so then if I wanted to list DomainSherpa.com on there, if it was not developed, I would pay you ten bucks. You list it. You design it. And then, when people inquire about that domain name, you talk to them. You negotiate it. You setup the transaction in Escrow.com. You follow up with them to make sure that they are going to fund it. You do all the work and then cut me a check after it is done.

Christian: Correct. And I think that we have it setup, and I have to go back and check, in Escrow.com to there is a place where I can put this portion goes to this person. This portion goes to this person.

Michael: So, you act the broker and you take your commission, and then the rest goes to me, as the seller.

Christian: Right, and I think the most important thing about a domain owner that is looking to sell the domain is to forward the domain to the sales page that I create. It would be like PlentyOfBrands.com/TheName without a .COM. So, if it is like DomainSherpa, it would be PlentyOfBrands.com/DomainSherpa/Com.

Michael: Right.

Christian: So, the most important thing is getting it on that sales lander page. I mean the sales lander page is pretty basic and generic, but it also gives the customer a little bit information, There will be a short description, and I do not mind if the owner of the domain. They may have a different view of what that name means, so they can write the description and I can post it on there.

I own Nooble.com. How would you describe Nooble? So, if you own the domain, you may have an idea. Hey, I see this being.

Michael: A skincare.

Christian: A brand of purses or skincare, or something. So, they may have a different outlook on it. So, yeah, we ask for help from the domain owners too.

Michael: Yeah. So, let me get back to your portfolio, Christian. You own eight hundred domain names, so you have got a pretty decent portfolio of inquiries coming in. You may not sell 799, but you do not really care if you sell one of those this week.

Christian: Right.

Michael: Does a domain investor need to have that kind of mass in order to get a decent number of inquiries and to close it, or if I am a new investor that wants to register brandable domain names, like you have done, can I just register ten domains, wait for those to sell, and then move on to buy more domains once I sell some? What do you think?

Christian: Yeah, I think you can. Anything with numbers, like obviously if you register one hundred domains, you may have a little bit better opportunity to sell than if you registered ten, but if you register ten good ones, then the numbers flip back into your favor. So, it is a numbers game, but it is also a quality game too. In other words, RaiseTheMoney. If I would have hand registered that and I had that with nine other terrible names, I would have had a good opportunity to sell that name because that is a good quality, brandable domain.

If I just registered one hundred bad ones, then none of them could sell. And I think one of the most important things to know is the domain industry is really a patient industry. A lot of these names you may have to hold for a year or two. Sometimes things do not happen as quick, and it also depends on if you are going to outbound market them or if you are just going to wait for inquiries to come to you.

Michael: Well, but it is impossible to outbound market some of these brandable, like Nooble or Actigon. I am looking at your website right here. Ceevu. You cannot outbound market Shayv, but you may not get as high for it as somebody that wants to create a brand and thinks of that domain name and comes to you because they want it and they know it is for sale.

Christian: Well, I think the way that you would do outbound for names like what you discussed were to get in with startup companies or get in with the crowd of startup companies. Get into the technology crown. Get into those websites or forums and let those names be known that they are out there for sale, and it only really takes one person say oh, I like Ceevu. That is really cool, or Shayv. That is really cool. We are not a shaving company, but maybe they do something else and they want that name, or Caytr.

For me, I personally love that Caytr domain. That was a hand registered domain and I love that name. Now, I know that there are people that own the Cater.com, but to me, if you are a startup, you may have a smaller budget and if you are looking for a brand, I think that is a decent brand.

Michael: Yeah, because Cater.com is going to cost you five to six figures, maybe more.

Christian: Exactly.

Michael: But you said you were going to have to hold on to these brandable for a year or two. You have held hundreds of domains for over two years.

Christian: Right.

Michael: You probably hold most of these domains for your entire domain investing lifecycle.

Christian: Some of them I will, right. There are other ones that I have bought. I am in the furniture business too, so like BedroomGroups.com. I mean that is the vernacular or the terms that we use in the furniture business. Now, BedroomSets.com, in my opinion, is the same thing. BedroomGroups and BedroomSets are the same thing. BedroomSets sold for 88 thousand dollars, I think. BedroomGroups. I mean I do not know what it is worth, but that is the one I own.

Michael: Because you own it, it is worth more, but in actuality, end users, like myself, consumers, we do not talk about bedroom groups. We talk about bedroom sets.

Christian: Sets, right.

Michael: It is the in-the-industry people, like yourself, that talk about bedroom groups for sale to consumer.

Christian: Right. So, I mean I will probably hold on that one forever. I also own SofaLovesats.com. Every house in America has got a sofa loveseat, right?

Michael: Right.

Christian: So, I loved some of those, and you are right. I probably will hold on to them and keep them for a while, but you never know. There is a guy that has a portfolio of furniture names and he may want all 40 of mine.

Michael: Yeah, you just never know.

Christian: You never know. So, I kind of look at the cost as it has taken me to own certain niches, and I own a lot of educational domain names too. So, I kind of look at the cost of what does it cost to own those 25 domains or those 50 domains, and if we are looking at five hundred dollars a year, well, I mean yeah, if you break it down. I have got these 50 names and it is costing me five hundred dollars a year. That is maybe worth keeping another year because I could sell one of these for five hundred dollars.

Michael: Right.

Christian: So, whether or not I sell it or not is a different story.

Michael: Yeah, so what is your strategy today for buying brandable domain names?

Christian: Well, it has kind of changed. I am just one that just looks at the name. Basically I do not want to call it by feel, but it is kind of by feel. If I see a name that I really like, like I saw yesterday. I was looking at the list and I think it was WeThePeople or WeAreThePeople, or something. I am not sure, but it dropped yesterday and obviously I was like now that is a good name. Now, maybe it is four words, so maybe that is not a brandable, but whenever I look at domains, and especially if it is on the drop list and stuff, I try to pick something out that maybe someone else is missing or did not see, and that is kind of how I do it, but there is really no magic to these brandable names.

Like Ceevu. I think it is double E. It is pronounceable. I definitely look for a few key factors. Number one: it has got to be pronounceable to me, in my opinion. So, Ceevu is pronounceable. Shayv is pronounceable. Caytr is pronounceable. So, it has to be pronounceable and it has got to be short. So, to me, I like to stay about eight characters and under when I do my searches. And if it is eight characters and under and it is pronounceable and it makes sense, then I will look to buy it.

Michael: So, the radio test does not matter, because Ceevu I would think it is Seevu and we talked about the other one.

Christian: Like Caytr.

Michael: Caytr, exactly, or even Shayv. They do not pass the radio test. That does not matter to you as much.

Christian: It does not matter to me. Let's say, for instance, it is for a startup brandable company and let's say that they are a shaving company and they are like we want Shayv.com. Well, now they have something to talk about. So, I do understand if you are a business and you want the exact match domain in your business, like a Target. You have got to have Target.com. It passes the radio test. I get it. But let's say you are trying to brand your company different. You are a shaving company. To me, it gives you something to talk about the radio. It is Shayv with a Y.

You can play on the spelling. It is Caytr with a Y. It is Caytr, so there is no E on it, so that one is probably a little bit more tricky. That would definitely be a brandable name, but no, I do not. I mean the radio test will be great for if you are buying high-value domains. If you are buying brandable domains, I think you can get away with not passing the radio test and having something to talk about.

Michael: Yeah, that makes sense. In the pre-interview, we talked about price elasticity of buyers, that somebody may come to you for SofaLove.com and you could sell that anywhere from one thousand dollars to 20 thousand

dollars. Doesn't that sort of frustrate you at times that you do not know the exact price of a domain name?

Christian: Yeah. Well, and I think that that is one of the things that I have learned in this business. I knew we were talking about this earlier, is that I do not know anything about the business, because, just like you said, I could receive a dollar offer for SofaLove or a thirty-thousand-dollar offer, and I think that is the way to look at like all brandable domains.

You could have a brandable domain that sells for a thousand. You can have a brandable domain, the same name; someone offers you 20 thousand dollars for. And I think that is where the negotiation process comes in and that goes to getting to know your buyer. I think that is why a lot of my names I do not like to put a price on. I like to put an inquire button, because I would like to get to know the person and I think, during the negotiation, you kind of feel where they are at, what they are going to use it for, and I think that is the most important part of getting your sales price higher.

Michael: Yeah.

Christian: Obviously if I would have put a thousand dollars on SofaLove.com, I would have already sold it because I have received a thousand-dollar offer before. So, I have not sold it. I kept it because I wanted a little bit more for it, and I still have it though too. So, I did not sell it.

Michael: Exactly.

Christian: You have to think about that. Should I take the thousand dollars or should I hold off for five thousand or something?

Michael: Yeah.

Christian: A lot of dating sites wanting that domain. I have had furniture companies wanting that domain. I have had all different types of inquiries on that domain. So, it just depends, but yeah, you are right. It can be anywhere from one hundred to 20 thousand, and that is the frustrating part of brandable domains, and I see a lot of the places price their names and I think if I have a

domain owner that prices his domains, he is really motivated to sell it. In other words, you have got a price out there and I have heard a lot of different people say you need to price all your domains, and I have heard a lot of people say I never price a domain.

So, there is a lot of which way to go with that. I think a name that you think that it has a 30-thousand-dollar value, then I would not put a price on it. I mean you should know, in your own portfolio, if it is a name that you feel like it could command four to five figures. Then maybe put an inquire button on that that one instead of a price.

Michael: Yeah. All right, here is the last question for you, Christian. New top-level domains. I know there is a .LOVE coming out. Are you going to try and buy Sofa.Love? And I believe there is a .MONEY. Are you going to buy RaiseThe.Money?

Christian: Maybe RaiseThe.Money. Sofa.Love, no.

Michael: No.

Christian: No. I love .COM. I am a big .COM fan. I have bought some of the new names. I own a single letter. I own Y.Guru, so I have gotten some names. I have purchased Refine.XYZ, I think, or Refinance.Buzz. And when I meet the people in the industry that are behind these names, I try to support the what they are doing, but I am a big .COM fan. Most of my names are .COM, but I do like to dabble in the new names and I am going to definitely register some. Yeah.

Michael: Cool.

Christian: But I do not think I would go for like Sofa.Love.

Michael: No, all right. If you are watching this show and you have questions, please post them in the comments below this video on Domain Sherpa and I will ask Christian to come back and answer as many as he can. I also encourage you, the person who is watching this show. Get out from behind

your computer and reach out to people in the industry, just like Christian did when he reached out to Merlin Kauffman.

I should also say congratulations to Merlin for raising millions in his most recent round of his company that he is building out on Soothe.com. But business is done through relationships, just as Christian exhibited in his beginning story on this show. The easiest way to start that is to reach out and make a connection. You can post a comment below. Thank Christian for taking the time to come on the show.

We have a new feature, where you can click the heart button. If you like somebody's comment or you like the show, click the heart button. If you are too shy to leave a comment, you can also reach out to Christian at PlentyOfBrands.com. What is your email address if somebody wants to email you directly, Christian?

Christian: It is just Info@PlentyOfBrands.com.

Michael: Info@PlentyOfBrands.com. I am going to be the first to say thanks to Christian.

Christian Calvin, Owner of PlentyOfBrands.com. Thank you for coming on the Domain Sherpa Show, sharing your story about fantastic domain name flips, and thanks for being a Domain Sherpa for other.

Christian: All right, thank you, Michael. I definitely appreciate it.

Michael: Thank you all for watching. We'll see you next time.

Watch the full video at:

<http://www.domainsherpa.com/christian-calvin-flips/>