

Protrada's Deal Spree to Grow the Domain Name Industry - With Troy Rushton

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<http://www.domainsherpa.com/troy-rushton-protrada-interview/>

Three messages before today's interview educates and motivates you.

First, if you're a domain name investor, don't you have unique legal needs that require domain name technical know-how and industry experience? That's why you need David Weslow of Wiley Rein. Go search for David Weslow on DomainSherpa, watch his interview and you can see for yourself that he can clearly explain issues, can help you with buy/sell agreements, deal with website content issues and UDRP actions, and even help you write your website terms and conditions. David Weslow is the lawyer to call for Internet legal issues. See for yourself at NewMediaIP.com.

Second, managing multiple domain name marketplace and auction site accounts is a pain. Inevitably, you forget to sign into one and lose a great domain...or worse. Now imagine using a single, simple-to-use and comprehensive control panel to manage all your accounts. That's Protrada. You can setup search filters, analyze domains, automate bidding, list domains for sale, and buy domains across all major marketplaces. Protrada also has a new semantic engine that builds Google-friendly websites with rich content and network feeds. Sign up at Protrada.com to get 20 free credits and start building and monetizing your domains today.

Finally, if you have questions about domain names, where should you go to ask them? The answer is DNForum.com. Not only is DN Forum the largest domain name forum in the world, but it's the best. You can learn about domain names and the industry, buy and sell domain names, talk about domain name news, and meet other domainers just like yourself. Register for a free DN Forum account and begin advancing your skills and knowledge today. And when you do signup, send me a friend request so we can connect.

Here's your program.

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Michael Cyger: Hey everyone. My name is Michael Cyger, and I'm the Publisher of DomainSherpa.com - the Domain Name Authority and the place where you come to learn how to become a more successful domain name entrepreneur and investor directly from the expert themselves.

There are a lot of deals happening in the domain name space; and even more, I think, will happen in the near future. You know what I'm talking about? GoDaddy taking private equity investment; Donuts.co raising more than a hundred million dollars to invest in new GTLDs; thousands of new applications for new GTLDs. You are also probably aware of a company called Protrada that has been revolutionizing the domain name processes, including buying, selling, building, and monetizing. They are a sponsor of DomainSherpa, but they are, more importantly, one of the biggest innovators in the industry in my opinion.

Joining me today is Troy Rushton. He is the CEO of Winged Media - the business that owns Protrada. He is a past Sherpa from a previous DomainSherpa Show; and I encourage you to go watch that show to learn more about Troy's entrepreneurial past and how he previously built multiple successful companies. Troy, welcome back.

Troy Rushton: Thanks Mike. Good to be Sherpa number two.

Michael: I like to get you guys - the Sherpas - back multiple times because I know you have more than enough to share back with the community, and we are all grateful for that.

Troy: I appreciate being here.

Michael: So, I want to start with a little bit. We got some really big announcements that you are going to make on DomainSherpa today. One of which has been announced. By the time this comes out, I'm not sure if the other two will be announced; but all very exciting and we are going to dig into them. But I want to start with a little background on Protrada in case someone has just turned in and signed into DomainSherpa. And we see them every week; "Hey, I just discovered you guys. This is great - the information you provide. I've never found anything like this before". And so, if people

haven't heard of Protrada and they don't know what a domain name trading platform is, how do you describe it to somebody in an elevator speech?

Troy: Yeah. I think, typically, we sort of bring it back to a basic and sort of talk to people and say, "We do what stock trading platforms do for shares; we do that for domain names". So we try and provide a platform of purchase and sale - trading, as we call it - of domain names. So, we have had a lot of the domains from all the various marketplaces. The GoDaddy's; the Sedo's; the Afternic's. Even Bido and some of the smaller guys. We have got them in there as well. And then we provide a platform for people to buy them, bid them, and manage that; and then, also, to list them for sale. And, in the middle, we do some monetization. We help people point them automatically to some of the parking solutions and we have even got our own development platform that we have been BETA testing over the last few months.

Michael: Excellent. So, they don't have to go to multiple locations to track auctions and then multiple locations to list their domain names for sales. They can come onto your platform. They can say, "Give me a search for everything that has Cyger in it that is dropping, or for sale" and your system will notify them.

Troy: Yeah. So we would probably take a slightly different approach to most other platforms in that most other platforms tend to start with a keyword. It could be Cyger. And then you'll say, "What are the domains available?" So we provide that as well as, what we call, a keyword search; but we also just simply deliver all the domains that we have access to and we segment them by the way you purchase them be it a dropping domain, or it is a buy now, or auction, or pre-auction from NameJet. So we deliver all those through on different tabs and allow people to, fairly efficiently, navigate through a large sizable amount of domains. So, at any one point in time, we have upward of eight to ten million domains in the platform at any one point. I think we have got about eighteen million in our archives that have been tracked by us over the past twelve months.

Michael: Yeah. And it is a beautiful user interface. Andrew Chinn, who is your Chief Technology Officer. We talked last year at Traffic when you guys

had just launched and people saw the sponsorship and the screenshots just before this interview rolled, and it is a beautiful interface.

Troy: Yeah.

Michael: And, for those of us that have been on the Internet for a while like you and myself, Troy, there are a lot of interfaces out there that are not intuitive and that are not easy to use.

Troy: Absolutely. I mean that was the main. Andrew has got a great team there and Andrew, himself, as you know. Mike is a talented designer. And, again, that interface has been a challenge. I mean we have wrestled through a number of versions. In fact, we have got another version coming out in about a month or two. So, Andrew has gone on another level again. And just some things that could have been improved on this version like remembering a previous search if we go to a new tab and just all those little things; it just made the user experience better.

Michael: Sure.

Troy: We have taken a lot of feedback. We have a lot of customers now - a lot of users now - coming through, and we are really excited that they keep giving us the feedback and we are rolling that our shortly.

Michael: Great. How many customers do you have today, Troy?

Troy: I think active right now is about ten thousand.

Michael: Excellent.

Troy: So, I think we are going to talk about an acquisition we made shortly, but we have sort of doubled the user base in the last sixty days through the acquisition.

Michael: Wow.

Troy: And so, we are transitioning, bit by bit, that audience that come through that acquisition we are going to cover off.

Michael: And then, how many transactions per month do you typically - a transaction could be a buy, it could be a sell - however you measure it -, and it could be searches on a regular basis. How many transactions do you handle for those ten thousand active users per month?

Troy: Yeah. Well, it is a lot. I mean, in terms of searches, I think we have got a track record of how much searches and calls our system does and that includes pulling domains in, placing bids, and doing a whole bunch of stuff. Nine hundred million calls our system has done over the last twelve months.

Michael: Wow.

Troy: So that is a substantial amount of data flow. In terms of actual transactions for users, I would say the average user probably does about a hundred searches a month. They probably place twenty to thirty bids. They probably win maybe ten domains. That is typical. I mean we have got some users who login five times a day and are quite extreme, and they are which we love. And then we have got some people who maybe once or twice a week will login and take an update. We also got filter sets in the system, so people can set that up. We daily e-mail them and, only if they see something of Internet, will they sort of come back in.

Michael: Yeah. No. I had multiple people on the show that are using Protrada, and they are in there on a regular basis. So they are making Protrada their livelihood essentially.

Troy: Yeah. Well, that is good. And I think we are going to talk about it shortly, but we have also done an API and so, we have got two levels of transaction flow now. One is like on platform where you are directly bidding, buying, and listing; and then we have got, through the API distribution, partnerships, I think we are going to talk about. And we are getting probably ten times the traction in terms of transaction and query on the distribution partner's platforms now.

Michael: Great. So, is Protrada profitable right now, Troy?

Troy: Absolutely. Yeah. It is profitable.

Michael: Excellent. And who are the investors of Protrada?

Troy: I don't know if you recall, last year, in Sherpa one, we talked about Mark Carnegie, and he is Venture Capital Group out of Sydney there, so Mark is one of the leading venture capitalists certainly in Australia and the Asian Region. Probably not as well known here in the States. The surname is probably certainly famous.

Michael: Carnegie. Definitely.

Troy: So he invested. Carnegie. Yeah. So, he invested last year - him and his team, and that is actually our media fund they raised, which was half supported by the Australian Government. So I guess, even directly, the Australian Government has sort of invested into the business via Mark Carnegie. And it has been a great relationship with those guys. And it is fair to say we probably haven't achieved all that we wanted to achieve that we thought we would have by now and some things take a bit longer to get going, but I think, overall, we are all very pleased with the progress. And we are trying to bring something new and that gets a bit disruptive; and people have got to change a patent and changing a patent is not easy.

Michael: Definitely. So we are going to be talking about acquisitions today. Acquisitions usually take capital to do, so have you brought on new investors in order to be able to make those acquisitions?

Troy: No. We have been able to fund from the organic cash flows and revenues of the business, which is always a nice thing. And some of these acquisitions and deals are also based on a bit of performance as well. So they tend to feed themselves to a degree. That is always a nice way to get involved with a partnership as well.

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Michael: Definitely. So let's dive right into it, Troy. First acquisition that was announced a couple of weeks ago - DomainFace.com. What did you purchase with DomainFace.com?

Troy: Yeah. So, Kenny Goodman is the owner, or was the owner, of DomainFace. He has been in the business for a couple of years. He is UK based, so I think he is quite well known within the Internet Marketing sphere; maybe less on the domain side. I notice a few people commenting on Elliot's blog and they did not know who DomainFace was.

Michael: Right.

Troy: So, it is interesting because had like fifty thousand odd members.

Michael: Yeah.

Troy: And he has acquired those members through distribution partnerships. So, us acquiring that platform, we basically acquired the users and some additional domain data. So, Kenny has been in the business a year or two longer than us, so he just had that longer runway of data collection. Another two principle things. Relationship and a few other things. We did not acquire DomainFace.com as the name, but we have got redirecting place for the contracted period. So, any residual members that turn up we will still come across. And Kenny is going to go into the information space about domain trading and so, he will become an affiliate of Protrada as we move forward.

Michael: Excellent. Okay. So, I read in the press release that Kenny would be working and DomainFace would be coming on as an information portal.

Troy: Yeah.

Michael: So, he is going to keep DomainFace. He is going to continue to educate people on the topic, but then he is going to refer people directly to Protrada.

Troy: Yeah. Exactly. Kenny is a smart guy. Those that do know him, he is a pretty switched on guy. Got good relationships in, again, Internet Marketing

space. He comes from that sort of angle; building technology at this magnitude and it is substantial technology when you look at the service, and the data, and serve that data up. And I think for Kenny and his team it got to a point where they only had a small team. They needed to grow in some way or exit. And I have used some of the partners that Kenny had and I think it made sense for Kenny just to sort of reach out and see if we wanted to acquire the company, and it was just good timing on our part, and it all came together reasonably quickly.

Michael: And so, the main purpose of DomainFace.com was a service; it allowed people to look at expiring domain names and look at how much juice they had. How old they were. How many links they had coming in. How much rank authority they had.

Troy: Yeah.

Michael: Which is the same sort of service that you do on your domains.

Troy: Exactly. So we were effectively competitive and I think in some of the dialogue I had with Kenny that there was some leakage, I guess, from DomainFace over to Protrada, which is how he kind of heard about us, I think, in the first place. And he called himself a domain search engine and, again, they did a pretty good job with a very small team. They handled a lot of data. And I think it was at the right time for them to look for the next level, and their members have been coming across, and they're great. Obviously changing from the old interface to us has taken some adjustment for some people. And they are going well and the transaction flow is increasing every day, so we are very excited about the acquisition.

Michael: Yeah. Nice. Prior to becoming a Publisher myself, I used to work at GE Capital and then Citi Group. Whenever we bought a portfolio or we bought another company and we had to integrate them in, it was always a lot of fanfare and we are talking about the benefits to the users; but on our side - the people that actually had to do the integration -, it was the biggest pain in the you know what possible. You have go to look at every single bit of data. You have got to map it over to your system. You got to bring them over. You got to make sure you have got your messages up to teach them how to use it.

And it is an enormous proposition to do an acquisition. It is not just the price you pay; it is all the other migration that is involved. How has it been for DomainFace - one of your first acquisition, I think, bringing over an enormous amount of data and its customer experiences?

Troy: Yeah. (Unclear 12:32.3) And you have got different databases; different services. You are right. It has been a technical challenge. I mean I have been off the grid, I think, for the last ninety days. And I am back in LA today and trying to say hello Morgan Linton and whoever is around Brighton Pollock because we have been off the radar for the last ninety days getting it done. But I think, because we have sold companies before, we are able to sort of anticipate, now as a buyer, what the challenges would be and what we needed them to do as we had done previously. So I think, overall, it has been a really seamless transition.

Michael: Great.

Troy: I have been super impressed with Kenny and his ability to work with our team; with Lou getting all the communications right; with Andrew getting the integration right. And I think, for the main part, it has been quite seamless. I mean I think we did a cutover. It was 9AM on LA time. It was 2AM in Australia. And we were all up at 2AM in the morning. Kenny is in the UK.

Michael: The pizza is there. The Mountain Dew is flowing.

Troy: It was really truly a global take-up. So, Sharon here in our LA office, and we chimed in. And as soon as the e-mail went out to make the announcement, they flooded and we were getting eighty people a minute hitting the server.

Michael: Wow.

Troy: It was pretty intense and a lot of fun time, and it has been great.

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Michael: Excellent. All right. So, the names you mentioned just to point out to the audience. Lou is Louise (Unclear 13:54.9). She is your Director of Marketing.

Troy: Sales of Marketing.

Michael: Sales of Marketing. And Andrew, of course, is Andrew Chin. Your Chief Technology Officer.

Troy: Yeah.

Michael: People want to know, Troy, how much did you pay for DomainFace.com? The user base, the technology, and everything that came along with it.

Troy: Yeah. Look, unfortunately, I got a confidentiality agreement on the price; but I can talk about the structure. So, there was a flat fee for the acquisitions. We did not get any technology, so it was really a data deal. We got data from the domains and data of the users. And then there is a performance hurdle. So, we are validating the quality, if you like, of the acquisition over time as well. So, Kenny is with us for some time now on an ongoing partnership.

Michael: So he has invested because, essentially, he has an earn out. If his people that he brought over to you end up spending more money or become more involved in this system, then he is going to maybe get a payout later.

Troy: Yeah. Exactly. So we are aligned on that, and there is definitely a payout later for Kenny. And I think it is a normal acquisition for both parties to do - risk it up front - and also, for us, for cash flow. It helps us sort of spend money on marketing rather than just the acquisition. So there will be future payments for Kenny and he has been holidaying a lot since he sold the company.

Michael: Get back to work Kenny. You have got some earn outs to make.

Troy: He has got the visa now and he is at the London Olympics today, and all sorts of stuff.

Michael: Awesome. All right. So, the data for the users. All right. So we talked about the integration. Did you need to hire more staff to be able to do this integration or to handle the additional fifty-two thousand people that you acquired as a result?

Troy: No. I think the fortunate thing for us is we have been building and anticipating growth. And, really, for us, this is just another growth strategy; where it had not come in certain ways, it had come in this way. So, Sharon, out of our LA office, was fully prepared and the team back in Australia had a lot of preparations made. The servers and the system has been built for this sort of level, so we did not have to hire anyone in at all. It has been quite smooth.

Michael: Excellent. All right. So you have a technology in place that you have been working on for a couple of years now. This acquisition brought in an additional fifty-two thousand people. You have proven that you can handle the load. You are building it, from the ground up, to be able to handle transactions seamlessly, bring together multiple disparate systems to make what is complicated -- what do here on DomainSherpa is to take an insider's game to regular people. You are doing the same thing. You are saying, "I want to make this a trading platform for regular people".

Troy: Yeah.

Michael: And so, now, you need to open up the floodgates because it seems like the technology is going well.

Troy: Yeah.

Michael: So, by the time this comes out, I'm not sure if it is going to be announced or not, but you have got a partnership coming up with a gentleman on education.

Troy: Yeah. So, I don't know if you caught the news but, back in April, I went to San Jose. So one of my shareholders is a guy called Michael Bennett, who is probably now one of the world's largest promoters. He works with Trump, and Branson, and Anthony Robbins and so, he has got an expanded footprint. So, they are in most continents now. So, Michael did an event here in San Jose and I spoke at that; and, for us, it was just a bit of an experiment to see how the message would translate. We are certainly evangelizing domaining. And we were super encouraged by the response. Actually when I said "Who's got domains?", a lot of people in the room had bought a domain; but no one had thought of the opportunity to sell that domain.

Michael: Yeah.

Troy: So we were presenting new information.

Michael: So, let me put this in perspective for the audience too. So, this was not just a hundred-person event that you went to. This was an event that was one of these massive scale events with thousands of people. Trump was there. "Rich Dad Poor Dad" Kiyosaki was there. Who else did you share the stage with, Troy?

Troy: Anthony Robbins. Greg Secker. Adam Ginsberg. There was a bunch of people who have got -- it is a personal development three-day thing. And some people hate these events; some people love them; some people love them too much, and all they do is seminar junkies. But people turn up and they are looking for some change in their life effectively. So, they get all the good stuff and then it is like, 'Okay. Now you got this energy; what do you do with it?'

Michael: Right.

Troy: And we just talk about domaining and it was an education thing for me. It was a chance for me to sort of spread our wings a little bit more and just see what their response was. And several thousand people in the room when I spoke, and that was great. I had them engaged and talking. I am not a professional talker or a speaker.

Michael: But you did pretty well, Troy.

Troy: As I muddle my way through it. And we're really enthusiastic about the people signing up literally while I was on stage. As soon as I mentioned Protrada, people signed up for the free account. So we did sell as many packages as we wanted to sell, but we had the throughput of people had been flowing in ever since. But what it did for me, it really confirmed my thinking that domaining can go to a much small broader audience; be it Internet Marketers, or Wealth Creation Seekers, or Stock Traders. And so, for us, it was about get someone in place who could really do it justice, and that is certainly not me and so, we met a guy called Alex Mandossian. And AlexMandossian.com for those that are interested in having a look. Alex has been around for some time. He planted tele seminars in the States here. He is probably one of the four most thinkers in Internet Marketing teaching and he is a great guy; become a great friend. Him and I spent this week in LA, and he is great. I am really looking forward to continuing to work with Alex. He puts the person first and he just understands how to talk to them and help them learn. And that is a skill. It is not easy to teach someone a skill; particularly on a bigger scale. And Alex is really good at it, and he has got great credentials, good reputation, and does the right thing. So we have done a partnership and so, he is now - we basically appointed him as - our Director of Education, globally. And he is under license. Now we are putting together an education platform that will plug into Protrada and it is going to be under the brand of Domaining Secrets - the brand that we will be.

Michael: Nice.

Troy: And it will just be a curriculum with webinars and just helping people through. Particularly for the beginner, the Internet Marketer; the newbie, if you like.

Michael: Right.

Troy: I am bringing them in. We are not trying to teach the advanced guys. We do not believe we have earned that right, but certainly we have got some great strategies that have worked for us in our business, and it has certainly worked for Alex. In fact, he often tells the story of his eleven-year-old son

who is now a domain trader. And that is a great story. So, Alex is going to take that out and I think he rolls out his first event in probably about a month. He has already brought in about five hundred of his existing student base, so we are really excited about the partnership. And we have broken the world up into Asia, Europe, and North America, and we have got different speakers in each area. So I think with Michael, and Alex and his team, and our team, it is a great ecosystem to really, I guess, expand this opportunity.

Michael: Definitely. So, Alex is mainly going to be bringing in new customers by speaking at events and then leading them to Protrada where they can join in the educational process?

Troy: Yeah. I mean Alex, again, was one of the leaders here, in the States, on tele seminars and virtual selling. He has really mastered webinars, so he is a guy that often tells me that he just likes to work from San Francisco and talk out in his underwear. Not quite, but he likes to do it from home. He has got a good work-life balance and he has really mastered the whole online virtual selling, if you like, (Unclear 21:36.2). And so, because people are on their computers anyway - they are on their iPad or whatever -, it makes sense to also teach them through that same format; and Alex is really good at it. So I am truly excited about it. We have got the curriculum sort of put together. I think it is pretty good.

Michael: Yeah. So, when will the first virtual seminar be? I am sure a lot of people would like to listen to that.

Troy: Yeah. Well, about two weeks.

Michael: Two weeks. Okay.

Troy: Depends on when we air now. I think it is probably going to be late August. I would say late August.

Michael: Great.

Troy: That we will have a webinar on.

Michael: Well, if you have a link to that, we will provide a link directly under this video so anybody that is watching that wants to attend that and learn more about it can definitely do that.

Troy: And it is going to be, again, aimed at the beginner.

Michael: Sure.

Troy: This is not for the Castellors or Frank Schilling. None of those guys.

Michael: Well, you know what? The DomainSherpa audience is a little bit different. The DomainSherpa audience; I like to say they are open to learning. We do not all know every single secret there is and, sometimes, if we watch somebody else do something, we can pick up one little tip that makes us a little bit more productive, or efficient, or effective and make a few more bucks.

Troy: Yeah. I mean we have learned a lot from Morgan Linton, and Domain Shane, and Elliot. So, those guys we have called our gold rush. So there are a lot of guys out there who have got a wealth of knowledge and we have tabled some of that as well. And those guys are very generous in sharing knowledge with myself and I am going to connect them with Alex at some point and, hopefully, people like Morgan get to talk directly to these audiences as well.

Michael: Yeah. Excellent. All right. So you built the technology. You have brought a massive number of people in. You know that it works. Now you have got a whole new distribution platform. You are bringing in Alex Mandossian and he is going to go through the virtual seminars. He is going to bring in Internet Marketers into the space. They are going to enter into your system. You have got your processes down. What is the other growth area that Protrada is looking at?

Troy: Well, what we have done, more recently, is we have actually developed an API. And that has been, I think, a huge catalyst to really get the distribution up. And so, rather than trying to do all the marketing ourselves - technology, and marketing, and teaching. There is a lot of stuff going on -, we have really partnered up with some of the guys I have known for many

years now who have got their own unique Internet Marketing audience. And so, what they needed, really, was an API for the aged domains and we have created that. And we have done a lot of things around the API; a lot of special stuff that integrates nicely into these platforms. So, lately, it has been all about integration. DomainFace coming in and those partnerships going out. And some of these Internet Marketing platforms have got substantial audience size. One of our key partners is out of Melbourne, Australia, which is obviously where we are and that has been a great relationship. Some of the guys here -- Brad Callen, for example. One of the world's leading Internet Marketers. He is on the East Coast of the States, and he has got a great audience, and we have plugged into his platform. And so, it is just the number of these deals that we are doing that already in, happening, or about to happen over the coming ninety days.

Michael: Excellent. All right. So let me unpack this API. API. I always get the acronym wrong. Application Programming Interface. I think I might have nailed it there.

Troy: Yeah.

Michael: So what you are doing is you are providing a third party website the ability to pull information from your system and display it on their system. You have got to be a program in order to use it essentially, or have a programmer.

Troy: On their side?

Michael: Yeah. On the third party site.

Troy: Yeah. They are just a normal user like you and I.

Michael: Right; but the website needs to integrate the API into their interface.

Troy: Yeah. So what has happened is my tech team and their tech team have worked together and integration is fairly seamless, and the plug in. All of a sudden, our data pops up on their side. And so, if their user puts in a keyword. So, this is a niche finder type product. They are trying to build a

strategy. They are trying to do some marketing. And these Internet Marketers are a bit of a different audience to domainers, traditionally. They will build websites. They will market products. They will buy traffic. It is a slightly different play, right? And that is what I'm more familiar with. That is our background. And so, we understand the space and the API meets the market. And so, they keyword research. They put a name in. We give all the WhoIS; all the different data sets. The page ranks. The backlinks. All that stuff in the API. It delivers up into the third party platform software and it has been seamless, again, on doing that. And then can click out to buy domains from there.

Michael: So, for example, on DomainSherpa, which we do not do any affiliate links on DomainSherpa; but let's say that I did integrate with your API and I ran an article about how to do drop shipping, and I recommend that it is really important to pick three keyword domain niches. So, ComfortableSofaChair.com or ComfortableSofaChairs. And then I tell you, 'Okay. So what you need to do is you need to find those three word domains, so go and do a search for domain names, and then we will tell you how to build it out in the next post' or something like that.

Troy: Exactly.

Michael: So then I could provide that search box, which queries your database and brings it back. And then, would my users then be able to buy the domain that they see right there?

Troy: Yeah. So, there are two ways. They will either click back to our system and then use the power of Protrada to bid on or whatever they need to do. Or they can simply click straight through to the third party platform, which also could be Protrada, GoDaddy, Afternic, and then they can do the transaction there.

Michael: Okay. So I, as the content provider, could provide a search box right there so people can try it out, and then they could buy, and then I get an affiliate commission based off the sale.

Troy: Correct.

Michael: Okay. Makes perfect sense. So, who are you targeting for partners?

Troy: Well, I mean almost anybody who is Internet Marketing space. And there is a substantial list of them. There are two predominant groups: people who teach Internet Marketing and they have got a whole audience, and there is probably about two hundred of those guys. So, either myself or Alex collectively knows those guys. Principally, Alex and so, he is reaching out through that group. And then, the other side is, people who have got the software platforms. The technology guys who either I know or seek out and reach out, and just sort of pitch and say, 'Hey, would you like to plug this in?' And some people have thought about it, some people have never thought about it, and it is just a matter of going through a process and so far so good. It is an exciting thing to watch, as soon as the integration happens, bang. The numbers just jump up. Effectively, they have to come over, create an account on Protrada, plug those details back in so the data is opened up and so, we can literally see things running in by the minute, which is quite cool.

Michael: Nice. You have your own dashboard where it is not the technology dashboard; it is the business dashboard that lets you see how many new users signing up and where they came from?

Troy: Yeah, more or less. I mean I have got to admit it is not as advanced as it probably should be compared to Protrada, but we certainly track it. We use AWeber and all sorts of different metrics. Google Analytics has been quite good. And so, we are tracking people live on the site, so we can see all the conversions flying through in real time, which is a lot of fun.

Michael: Yeah. Definitely. All right. So we talked about your technology, bringing more people in, and expanding your technology to other sites. Clearly, that is probably going to take up a majority of your time for the rest of the year.

Troy: Yeah.

Michael: The thing that I love about your team, Troy, is that you are always open to feedback - constructive criticism - from users. You want to hear it. If

I look at other people in the space, yeah, they have technology and they are focused on it, but I do not see the kind of activity that your team is producing on a regular basis. That is why I think you guys are innovating and you are moving in the future. What is on the forefront for Protrada in 2013?

Troy: Well, I guess it is going to be just continuing much of the same. Keep reaching and spreading this audience. I mean I have got some goals. I won't share them because they are ones that get laughed at, but we have got some serious goals about how many people we would love to get into the platform and just buying and selling domain names. I think there is enough inventory there. I think with the new GTLDs coming online next year. I think there will be more inventory. And I have seen many commentators about that saying where the buyers are going to come from and I am hoping that we are going to be somewhat of a contributor to that as well. We are reaching to Europe and to Asia. So, I think, for me, it is really about just focusing on getting this done really well. Get the education right, and a lot of investment we are going to do in that. We are going to do reunions in three different parts of the world, so I think we will have a lot of fun in 2013 about getting these groups together and networking together. We will keep refining the platform. We want to do some more work on the app. We have got a mobile app that we launched last year that needs to be upgraded, so that will be on the agenda. I have got some other projects that will sort of feed in, so we will probably get focused on them if and when we get clear. But to be honest, Mike, the roadmap ahead is still fairly tight and we want to keep delivering maximum results for our users. I mean it hasn't been smooth. I will be honest about that. Integrating with platforms like GoDaddy and these other guys has been some challenges for us, but they have been good partnerships. They are pretty responsive. I mean we are not the only thing they are worried about, right? They have more things to worry about than us, but I think the good news for us is, because we are selling domains, we get some priority and it is great. And I feel good about that support, so we would just like to keep exploding opportunity for everybody's sake.

Michael: Nice. What about drop catching? Domains that don't go through GoDaddy; that don't go through NameJet; that are not on a third party auction site that just go through the redemption period and drop. Do you have any plans for those in the future?

Troy: Yeah. Good question. I should be thinking that myself, but we just rolled in our dropping domains. So, getting them before they drop. So, that is rolled out now and so, within Protrada, you can simultaneously backorder onto NameJet, SnapNames, and Protrada.

Michael: Oh great.

Troy: We do like a twenty-dollar price because we do not have the credentials that NameJet and SnapNames have. So we tend to win the names that the big boys don't compete for; but, again, we are selling a lot of them because it is twenty bucks and people love that service. And so, we can do more there and I have been talking to (Unclear 31:38.7) about getting to the, as you said, expired side. Once they are dropped, they are still a lot of gold nuggets out there. I think domains are just all the way through.

Michael: Well, yeah. We have got an article that just focuses on the registration partners of major registrars. And once a month, we get an e-mail saying, 'Hey, I'm using so and so over in New Zealand. Who is the registration partner?' I'm like, 'I don't know'. So, I e-mail them and, half the time, I don't get a response back. So there are a lot of opportunities, I think, for smaller registrars that have domain names that let them drop.

Troy: Yeah. Well, I think we have certainly been exploring the registrar opportunity as well. I think, sometimes, the process is complicated for our users trying to move things around and I think the NameMedia guys - Bob and Jason - have done a really good job at trying to make that faster and more efficient. And kudos to those guys, but I think there is some more work that we can probably do as well in that area just to help our members trade more and turn things over a bit quicker. We bought some domains on the drop or through auction that we are going to sell literally within a couple days, but we have sort of had to wait for the whole process before we can actually move it. So I would love to see the industry broadly turn that up a bit. That would sort of give way, if you like, to the day trading mentality. People will spot an opportunity really sort of automatically and it might sell the same day. So, we are in a great position, I think; and if I can deliver that to our audience, then I

think I could really attract a whole lot of new people that love doing that sort of stuff.

Michael: Definitely. It is a smart way to make some extra cash. If you are an expert in one little area, like Mars Rovers, or NASA information, or cloud computing; you name it. Medical. In high tech. There are such niche areas that you follow those trade magazines, you can snatch up some domains as soon as it is public information and then re-list them across all the platforms. It is a great opportunity.

Troy: It is a really good opportunity.

Michael: Yeah. All right. You are going to Traffic. The Traffic conference this coming October 7 - 11th, I believe.

Troy: Yeah. Excited?

Michael: I am excited. Rick and Howard, if you are watching this, we better have sunshine this year.

Troy: I remember last year. We actually had a stand in the cabana area. And Rick came down and it was raining. And everyone who was local said it never rains two days in a row. Never rained three days in a row. And I remember looking out of the beautiful hotel out to the water - the ocean. It was gloomy. So, fingers crossed for sunshine this year.

Michael: Yeah. It was terrible. And I come from Seattle and I know what terrible weather is. We never have two days of rain here either.

Troy: Yeah.

Michael: All right. So, come to Traffic. Meet me. We have got a brand new producer at DomainSherpa. You can meet our new producer, which we are going to announce. Actually, by the time this comes out, he will be announced. So, it is Wayne Nelson. Come meet Wayne at the conference. Come meet Troy and Lou, and hopefully Andrew, as you call him, Chiny,

will show up because I'm going to call him Chiny and I'm sure he is going to hate that.

Troy: He loves that. He loves that.

Michael: It is a great conference. If you want to meet the who's who in the industry, you need to come to Traffic.

Troy: That's right. It is great.

Michael: Fantastic, Troy. Love to hear everything that is going on over at Protrada.

Troy: Thank you.

Michael: Thank you for your support on DomainSherpa. You help make DomainSherpa what it is. We are very grateful to the entire industry for nominating DomainSherpa as one of the best industry blogs out there. We are doing our part to educate the world and we are thankful to Winged Media, Troy, and Protrada for helping us serve the industry.

Troy: We are trying to be part of (Unclear 35:17.6) as well. Mike, I mean, has a few really good commentators and you provide something different, and Elliot, and Morgan. It is great. Domain Shane. It is a gold rush. There are so many good things out there and it is great for new people to learn and it is awesome. Keep up the good work for you guys too.

Michael: Thank you, Troy. If you have a follow-up question for Troy, please post in in the comments below this video and we will ask him to come back and answer as many as he can. If people want to follow you, Troy, which I do, you can follow @TroyRushton on Twitter and also, @Protrada.

Troy Rushton, Founder and CEO of Winged Me and Protrada.com - the domain name trading platform. Thank you for coming on the show, sharing your knowledge about the domain name industry, thank you for innovating the domain name industry, and thanks for being a Domain Sherpa two times.

Troy: Thanks, Mike.

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

Watch the full video at:

<http://www.domainsherpa.com/troy-rushton-protrada-interview/>