

Plain Spoken - Chat with Chrissanne Long.mp3

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Interviewer: **[00:00:00]** Hello this is Derek Fournier with Plain Sight Strategies Group. This is the first in a series that we are going to label or market, or brand as Plain Spoken. In this particular case it's a chat with a long time friend and expert here in the Lakeland business area, Chrissanne Long of Marketing Systems Blueprints. Now the backdrop for this before I bring her into the conversation formally is that I'm an idiot, and I'm an idiot, which means I fail faster than most everybody I know, which has allowed me to develop this thing we call wisdom. Which is a really nice word for you screwed up a lot, and so you've learned how to screw up that efficiently anymore. And so I'm hoping that you guys if you watch these little video interviews and such can learn from my mistakes, and maybe do things more intelligently than I have over my career. Now another part of the backdrop here is the concept of value based billing and fees as opposed to time-based billing. **[00:01:00]** I think that it is interesting that so many of us go immediately to a concept of oh I have a great lawyer, he's \$375 an hour, oh I have a great yard guy he's \$10 an hour. The time is not what we pay for, and as business owners it's not what we should be charging for either. Right, so there is problem on both sides of this table where we have to understand it is the value, the end results that we really are trying to purchase and that as business owners we are trying to provide. This was made crystal clear to me when I started reading Allen Weiss books around the Million Dollar Consultant, I highly recommend you read them if you haven't. Though you do need to be careful he is a bit on the pretentious side, and, and he does definitely think that he has every possible answer locked down. But if you can read through that there is a lot of great material to, to, to ingest, and to take in as a business owner. Now to the specific in why I have Chrissanne with me, and I will introduce her and let her talk a little bit about her background as well. I have a website Plain-Sight.net you can take the umbrage to the hyphen **[00:02:00]** usage and the dot net if you want to but that's not the topic today. I have hated for as long as I have been working with the Internet landing pages. I hate a lot of things that have become very standard in Internet ease, and so I've rejected them, I understand the concept of called actions. I understand the need to drive leads or interest through your website. I have done an absolute crap job of it, now I know that, I know that that's not my field of expertise. What's even worse than that is that I have a friend who I've known for longer than I care to admit who happens to be an expert in this field, and instead of talking to her and the folks, you know, and Craig and her company I've sat up for ten hours trying to figure this crap out. And I've gotten no further, and it was like this big sledgehammer or an anvil from Wylie Coyote kit me on the head and went, okay this is a really good example of how not to do something. So that's why I, I thought about getting Chrissanne in



here, and with that being said Chrissanne welcome. Why don't you give the folks a little bit of background on who you are and what you do?

Respondent: Well thanks Derek, appreciate the [00:03:00] opportunity to just be here for this little chat, this is pretty cool. Chrissanne, I'm Chrissanne Long form Marketing Systems Blueprints, we started an internet marketing company for local businesses, it's just really that's our target audience. In Lakeland back in 2009, and we have been helping small businesses understand the Internet and how to market their, their products, their service, and to be more visible in the online arena in whatever way that they need. And I think one of the things that Derek and I talked about earlier is that every business is different, every business has a different need, a different strategy, and a different result that they're trying to achieve. So our, our strength I think is really building the relationship and better understanding each individual client as a, as an individual client and not packaging that up and saying here is, here is what you're gonna pay, here is the box, you know, let's put you in it. It's really more a hand holding process, and walking them through [00:04:00] each of the, each step, each area that needs to be addressed. Whether that's search engine optimization, social media strategy building, building a mobile marketing campaign, talking about video marketing strategies, whatever that may be, or in this case a landing page strategy.

Interviewer: Now you said some really important things in that preamble, but I want you to explain a little bit about the Lakeland Business Leaders as well because that's really the auspices under which this started was to discuss this amongst other folks who have offices or do business in the Lakeland area. Could you tell people a little bit about that? I know many of them who are watching this are going to be members of it, so it may be a bit redundant but for those who don't then they'll at least know what the hell is going on.

Respondent: The Lakeland Business Leaders was an idea that I, I developed after getting involved with networking and understanding that all of the components of networking traditionally still exist, and they're very, very important. But I had a problem when I was, when I was into the networking, and I was, let me give you a personal example. I had a testimonial, we were in a leads group [00:05:00] and we had a testimonial, somebody stood up and said that they had gotten a wonderful lead from me setting up their Google places page. They didn't have a website, they weren't ready to move in that direction for their website, but they had gotten t his awesome lead from a railroad I believe, or yeah I think it was a railroad. And they were just thrilled with the fact that they had gotten some new business from something that I had set up for them. And all I could think about was these 12 people aren't going to tell anybody that this other business just told me this wonderful story, so the solution is, you know, most businesses need to start thinking about how to put things online. How to, how to get their customers, their happy customers to, to proclaim their greatness in

an online arena, where it's in front of more eyeballs, or where it's permanent. Whether that be a Google places review, or whether that's a testimonial that can be published on our website, whether that's a Facebook recommendation. There is a lot of different avenues, so what I felt would be important would be to bring all people together [00:06:00] without there being any affiliation to one. Whether it be a BNI, or the chamber, or this group over here, but everybody's interest being they work, they live, they thrive, they play in Lakeland. And so we, we developed the Lakeland Business Leaders, and it's been a growing community of people who, whether they're paying attention every day or not isn't the point, the point is that they have a resource. They've created, we've created a resource for other businesses to share testimonials in front of everybody, or to go to their websites and say hey let me write a review for you to your Google places page. So it's, it's building an opportunity for networking that has not existed previously, and I think that's been the power is that it's, it's new frontier. Seems to be pretty popular so we'll see where it goes.

Interviewer: All right, so that's, you know, I've known you far before that, and before, before you started Marketing Systems Blueprints, but to get back to the root question here and, and to give you guys an idea here in [00:07:00], that are listening to this video what the heck the point is. We started out with a problem; I needed something that I didn't know how to do. I had finally given in and decided that landing pages were, were acceptable to me. And instead of going and talking to an expert I tried to do it myself, which a lot of us do especially when we are either sole proprietors or small businesses. We think, oh I don't have the capital to invest in, whether it's a, a good web designer, or someone to do landing pages, or whatever happens to be, there is a billion of things that fall into this bucket. I know that, I happen to be a business coach, and I tell people about how stupid this is on almost a daily basis. And here I sat looking at Instapage, and Hyperconversion, and all of these things to figure out what the best solution was for me instead of calling Chrissanne. Right, because I lost sight of the value, so the, the way this all comes back to this is Chrissanne you said something really important when we were talking here a second ago, with the way you work with clients, you have to, you really want to [00:08:00] understand what they're doing. You want to understand their problem, and I think that quite often, and again here is a place where we're the problem as well. We have been trained almost to look for a menu, right? We want a menu of services, what does a widget cost? Because then I can see what widget costs here, and there, and there, and I can see what he best deal is for that widget. Many times irrespective of the value, or the actual quality of the widget right? And so what you had discussed was actually understanding the business problem, so can you describe a little bit from a value perspective how you would consult with me on how to get to a landing page solution?

Respondent: Well the, the questions that we would ask would, would involve what current systems that you already have in place so that we can figure out

what we're already playing with. If you're, if you're a brand new business and you don't have any systems then we would provide you with solutions. What email company are you using, are you using Constant Contact, are you using Mail Chimp, are you using [A-web ?], or Vertical Response, [00:09:00] whatever, because that's gonna be a huge component of your landing page. The other components are, are you looking at having a video landing page where the page itself has a video where you can have a, a 30 second welcome hey this is the deal, put in you're email address, and I'll send you an instant report. What are the people going to get in return for, for entering their information? There has to be that call to action, but for most people today there has got to be a reason. So a lot of landing pages are tied to information, info products, or information, you know, maybe a preview to the book, or ten reasons why you should do X, or why you shouldn't do X, or solution based info products. And then the other would be whether you're giving away a, a lead in coupon, a special deal, or special option. Hey enter your email here, and we'll send you ten percent off of your first visit, or you know, some sort of reason, cause there has to be today, there has to be a compelling reason. [00:10:00] So those would be the first initial questions that I would need to ask. Now every one of those questions going to ten different businesses would result in ten different answers. You know, somebody would have an email solution already in place, somebody would want a video, somebody wouldn't want a video. Somebody would have a coupon offer; somebody would have an info product. Somebody would say what's an info product? How do, how do I get one? So every body comes from a different place, and therefore I can't walk down the landing page aisle at the, at the grocery store and pick one off the shelf and put it in my grocery cart. Because everything has to be customized to the needs of the person that we're talking to.

Interviewer: So, conceptually the landing page services that I would purchase from Marketing Systems Blueprints may cost me one amount, but a second company down the road could be totally different?

Respondent: It could be, or depending on, I mean if we're building all the systems it would be probably more expensive, so [00:11:00] a fresh business, you know, fresh out of the blocks would probably need us to help them build those systems to be able to put that together. So if you took it piece by piece, and you said okay Chrissanne I already have an email client, and the next question that I would ask you would be can you get me the form code, you know, the html code for the form from your email client. Well the answer would be either yes, or what is that, or no. And then we would go from there, so the answer is yes one businesses landing page would be differently priced than another businesses landing page solely based on what pieces of that landing page needed to be put together for the project.

Interviewer: Now that's very interesting right? Because even with our discussion and you guys who are watching this video don't know necessarily that

we chatted beforehand, and we talked about some of the things that we're gonna cover, cause otherwise we'd look like idiots. But even with that sort of a, a preface correct me if I'm wrong it sounds like the time would scale based on the time necessary to get the work, or the price would scale based [00:12:00] the time necessary to get the work done.

Respondent: It would. Although the time would be better, the time would be adjusted based on, okay, so let me, let me, let me present it to you this way. Let's say mail chimp is relatively new to the scene, I don't know maybe they're less than a year old, they came on the scene, or its' been a little bit longer than that probably. But when mail chimp came on board, I had to go learn that system. I needed to go in, create an account, figure it out, all of that. So the time there is not something that I'm charging the client for me to learn, it's just simply a fact that I've got to figure this system out in order to be able to provide that service. Typically what we, what we do is we figure out when all these new, these new companies startups or whatever come into play, we figure them out in advance so that we can provide the solutions or the answers to the questions that the customer or the client might have. [00:13:00] So yes there is, there is an element of time, sometimes I'll be honest with you, sometimes they'll bring to me something I'm not familiar with, and the typical thing is, well hey I, I need to figure this out for future clients, so I'm not gonna charge for the time element of learning this new system. But I've got to provide them with that solution for that particular project, and so we go based on, on that. So the, it's, it's, it's a lot more complicated than I even know how to explain, but yeah it does scale. It does scale.

Interviewer: And there is nothing wrong with that, and I think that's gonna be the, I think that's gonna be the value in these sorts of videos right? Because you're being very honest and open, and I think that other business owners, especially the ones that we work with on a daily basis can benefit from that. Because they've all been here, how do you charge for your goods and services, what is a fair way to charge for your goods and services, and the thing that never came up in our little sort of mock [00:14:00] conversation there is what value was the landing page to me? Had I done the due diligence to figure out what it meant to me, and that quite often is the hardest part. When we're going to make a decision to spend our wampum, our dollars right, we have to figure out why we're spending it? Do I expect to improve my Google page rank? Do I want to get an email list built? Right, what, what is my goal? Because unless I have these goals, targets, plans, expectations, there is no way in hell you can meet an expectation that isn't set. Right? So, so if I establish a value that says, well I, I intend based on using this I have an info product, it's a chapter from a book I wrote. We've done a nice finished pdf that people can download, there is value in that, I think that they're gonna want to read it. And I want an email its that then I can, I can go ahead and prospect against in exchange for this info product, and I think that's gonna lead to 20 leads per month, and I, I have systems internally hopefully knock on wood that tell me that my conversation

rate is 30% [00:15:00] or whatever, and that's gonna lead to X amount of dollars. That allows me to assess a value, so let's just say in this example I've determined that the landing pages, because of the increased conversion rate that they're supposed to provide according to every we expert in the universe right, will lead to an increase in revenue for me of \$50,000, let's just say. What's the fair price for you to charge to build me a landing page that makes that happen?

Respondent: I don't know the answer to that question.

Interviewer: There is an answer, \$49,999. [LAUGHTER] Right.

Respondent: Whatever it's gonna take for you to make a profit?

Interviewer: Yes, you laugh but yes. That is the funny part about this, and you could actually make an argument that if it's year on year it could be higher than that. Right, cause if I'm going to make that 50 every year, hell if I don't have to change, if it's no maintenance God love you, you just made me 50 grand a year, right? And, and there is people right now that are calling BS right [00:16:00] now. Oh that doesn't make any sense; it only takes her three hours to do it, why should I pay her 49,000? If I told you right now, if I told you right now if you give me \$10 I'll give you 100 how many times would you give me \$10?

Respondent: Every single time.

Interviewer: I'd go to the nearest loan shark if I had to, I'd be selling plasma right? But that is exactly what good services are from a provider, right, and you have to believe in those services, and provide that value. Well or me to make that assessment guess what I have to know? My business. I need to know what the value is. Right?

Respondent: And let me, let me go ahead and make a point here on, on your scenario, and the reality of, of, of a strategy like a landing page that also needs to be considered. Is what kind of traffic is this landing page going to get? And if that landing page is only going to be seen by, you know, let's look at your analytics, let's see how much web traffic your site currently has, how much is that gonna convert? Well if it's a 10% [00:17:00] conversion rate and you've got 100 visits per month you've got 10, 10 new converted email addresses. That doesn't mean you made any money with ten email addresses, that just means you have ten email addresses. So I'm talking bare bones, basics you're talking you know, big numbers, and you know, that's the thing is we, we want, we want to address hey why do you think you need a landing page? And, and if we don't think you need a landing page then we're not going to sell you a landing page, but the difference is you're going to Publix, you're going to the Crowder Brothers, or you're going wherever and you're saying this is what I need. The guy at the counter isn't going to tell you no you don't need that. You need this, because you haven't taken the time to talk to them and tell them what you're trying to do. So when you've

told us, this, there is better ways to do certain tasks, there is better ways to do certain things, better ways to get certain things accomplished that aren't always what you think they are. And [00:18:00] sometimes it comes down to hey I might talk myself out of that sale of that landing page, because that's not the best thing for you. And the value that I'm bringing to you is that I just saved you some money, and I, you know, sent you in a different direction and my experience is going to teach you a little bit more about some of the things that you might need to do, because a landing page is only as valuable as the number of people that are going to get to it.

Interviewer: You know, it's funny again in our little pre-talk we, we, we got into--

Respondent: We didn't talk about that either.

Interviewer: Well we, we got into this concept right? This is an important thing in a consultant relationship sometimes you have to say no to business, right? And, and that scares the hell out of a lot of small business, I don't want to say no to any business. You only want to win the, only go after the business you want to win is the, is the mantra that I try an espouse right? And that's exactly what you were talking about, and if I know the value, if I don't know the value and you point out hey listen we looked at your Google analytics, and you've got six people who have come to your website every month. They love your blog though [00:19:00], they think you're really insightful and witty, but three of them are related to you. Right, and one of them is currently incarcerated, so if you would like to drive revenue and that requires driving eyes, landing pages may not be the first thing we need to work on. We may need to get more than six people coming to your website, that's really, really powerful. So I know that the topic is value, and I think that there is still a pull through to that here. Because the value is in that consultative advice, right? And again I would argue vehemently that that is not based on some arbitrary market normative rate, and, and you know, people say well how much should I charge per hour for my services? Well the market rate for web developers is \$55 in this region, so I'm gonna undercut them at \$45, and I'm going to go buy a bunch of business. Or I'm going to be a Mercedes, and I'm going to charge \$65 an hour, hello. Both arbitrary right? Take the time, understand your customer, understand their needs, right? I had a, a guy that I have a lot of respect for who says that [00:20:00] it all starts with pain. Where is the pain that you're trying to solve right? And then once they can actually articulate the pain, assign a dollar amount to it. Because if there is no dollar amount to the pain, you know what? Go out and have a drink. Right, unless you're recovering obviously all kidding aside, but I'm just saying this isn't a solution that, that Chrissanne and Marketing Systems Blueprints can help, or Derek at Plain Sight Strategy Group can help. Once you get to that dollar value though, then a consultant or any business can provide value, and I think that this transcends consultative business. It goes for product and services as well, because your time, and we talked about opportunity cost earlier. The ten hours that I've

spent already looking at landing page solutions because I am a technical person and I figure well it can't be that hard I'm a technology guy right? I should have been doing other stuff right?

Respondent: Should have been making other things happen right.

Interviewer: In my particular case of developing info products, writing blog posts, who knows what the hell else, spending time with my family right? If you happen to be a [00:21:00] painter, or if you happen to be a, you know, a craftsman you should be doing those things. You should do the things that you do well. Right, and leverage other experts to do those things. And, and my experience has been, even though this can be a daunting conversation to have with people, because I'm telling you, once you go through this conversation enough, and if you go read the stuff that Allen Weiss writes he is very good at describing this as well. If you charge per hour the only, let's say that I charge Chrissanne per hour for my coaching services for her and Craig to use me as a coach. And I charge them per hour, how do I improve my revenue? How do I increase my revenue from them? I take longer? Does that make any sense? No.

Respondent: No, like, like you were saying earlier you're just gonna drag your feet to make it a higher, a higher pay for you.

Interviewer: You want, everyone talks about win-win, and then it became overly popular to say win-win-win because it was an extra win. Right, whatever what you want is a model where [00:22:00] both sides benefit. Right? If, if Chrissanne sees and there are companies that do this, small market coaching companies that go in there and say it's, you know, \$750 a month for, for mentorship right? Well if, fi that mentorship may not this month lead to \$750 more in profit or revenue, but over time could it do it over six months? Could you, could that, could those lines cross at some point? Absolutely you have to assign a value, assign a value to it and sometimes that means making judgment calls, and it's tough, and it's certainly not as easy going, as easy as saying well I'm gonna get this web developer cause they're out of the Ukraine and they're \$26 an hour and that's cheaper than my local guy who is \$50 an hour. Never, never mind the fact that they're going to take three times as long to actually do the work, and that's without a qualitative assessment about the work. Because I've got some Ukrainian developers that are outstanding right?

Respondent: And, and it's, well true, and it's also, there is also going to be some communication issues where you're not gonna have the ability to necessarily communicate accurately, and what if your communication isn't understood, you say this they understand [00:23:00] it X, they do it wrong, they come back, well you've got to pay for them to do it wrong, and then you've go to pay for them to fix it. And it's not their fault that they don't understand that you weren't articulate enough to tell them how to do the job. At least in their, in their arena that's not

something that they're going to guarantee, we're going to guarantee to get it right the first time and you're only going to have to pay for it once. You're paying them by the house, they're gonna do it, and then they're gonna come back and you're gonna say hey I need you to fix this, and you're going to pay them to fix that.

Interviewer: Right, the meter is running right? And it, it's funny because people want to pay per hour when it's in their best interest and then they want a fixed cost when it's in their best interest right? You can't get the both, the best of both worlds right, you've got to come up with what that value is, and then by god then it's on me if I'm the provider of services to provide it at a level that I can live with from a margin perspective. So I want to wrap this thing up, I don't want you guys to have to watch this for too long. I have a face for radio, as is the case in most of the time, but a couple of things we covered. Value versus billable hours and we can talk about this more, one of the things I want to do and this is another topic we'll talk about, and this is something Chrissanne I [00:24:00] know you're gonna be passionate about, and we may even disagree on a number of things which is always fun. I am starting to become very, very disgusted by social media, because I find it not so social, right? It's not as engaging, I think that and I am a fan of Facebook conceptually for a lot of reasons. But I think that they have changed the word friend, the entire meaning of the word friend, and I think that they have changed the word like. They have made things like, like you said earlier about LBL, the Lakeland Business Leaders, testimonials have lost a lot of their power. It used to be if I told my neighbor oh use my roofer, if my roofer screwed up I felt bad about it, like I was upset about it. So that's one that I want to talk about, certainly.

Respondent: And I don't disagree with you by the way just for the record.

Interviewer: That's cool, and I think that it can be, I don't think that the tool is broken right, I think a lot of times we blame the tool, it's not the tool. Right the tool is just a hammer right? Just because I suck with a hammer doesn't mean the hammer is broken right?

Respondent: No exactly.

Interviewer: So we'll talk about that, but I want to wrap up a couple things we did talk about, getting out of this model of billing for you time. Because [00:25:00] the engagement matters, at the bottom of this video blog, and I haven't talked to Chrissanne about how she can do it, or no but on my page you'll be able to give your feedback. Right through either Facebook, [comics ?], integration or whatever. Let's start a dialogue about this, let's have conversation, we can do it in social media, on the web page, we can do it on Facebook, we can do it on Twitter, we can even do it in person because most of us live or work in Lakeland. We can actually get off our ass and go see one another, it's crazy.

Respondent: That's a novel idea.

Interviewer: It's absolutely crazy. Time matters, but not the way you think it does. Your time as a business owner matters because you should stop wasting it. Right, don't look at it as your billable until, look at it as your investment unit, right and there is an iron triangle discussion there for the old people who are watching this, if they're out there. Market sets your value not the other way around, so just because you think that the value of your services is \$10,000 if everyone else in the market is not charging \$10,000 for it you kind of got a tough road to hoe. So at least be aware of what the market is charging. That doesn't mean you have to agree, and you can take a contrarian stance. There is a lot of power in a contrarian stance, [00:26:00] but at least be aware of it so that when people say my god \$10,000 really? Everyone else charge 16 cents for this. You can go, oh, oh my bad. And then the last note, point here is in my experience people will happily pay for value, right? That \$10 for \$100 is the extreme example right, but if they are made aware of the value people will happily pay for it. And then that's when they will tell others because they have been; they have been shown the value of the services. So that's my recap, Chrissanne do you have any last thoughts?

Respondent: I did have one a minute ago, I wanted to say the, one of the toughest things I think we deal with as business owners is asking others, or maybe even telling others that we don't have something figured out. I, I, I get that impression a lot from people, and I'll give the example, and, I've got people that I'm planning on talking to, but we feel like we have to do it all because otherwise that means we haven't, we don't have the system in place. If we need to go ask for advice then that means something is not working and that's [00:27:00] a vulnerability, and I know most business people are in that, you know, we still tend to be more male driven business world tends to still be more male driven. And I know asking for help is not something men like to do. But I think that that's a big, that's another topic for another day.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah absolutely and, and if you guys have other ideas for topics as well, this is going to be something that we're going to do as the topics come to us. It's, it's just a video blog guys, it's just an interview video blog, nothing revolutionary about this. But it's a way to try and get more engaging, because you can only read so many blog articles before you start crossing eyes. So thanks Chrissanne, again Chrissanne with Marketing Systems Blueprints. Check them out.

Respondent: Thank you Derek.

Interviewer: We'll have a url at the end, a little tag for people to click on and check out the stuff you do as well as Lakeland Business Leaders, and if you want to check out my stuff plain-sight.net, and please do engage. Let's get some conversation about this stuff, thanks again Chrissanne. [00:28:00]



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