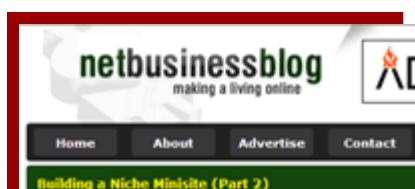




## Movers and Shakers

A Question and Answer Session to help our readers learn from the experiences of successful entrepreneurs and high level executives.



*If you keep moving and keep learning you will succeed. Lethargy kills the majority of online and offline businesses. -Matt Coddington*

## Movers and Shakers - Q&A with Matt Coddington

Feb 13th, 2007 by [John Anthony](#)

I recently had the pleasure of interviewing a young, up and coming entrepreneur - Matt Coddington, creator of [NetBusinessBlog.com](#). I first came across his writing several months ago via his personal blog [MattCoddington.com](#) and was impressed with his clear, concise and down-to-earth writing style. Net Business Blog is not even 2 months old and has experienced extreme traffic growth and a solid reader base. He shares some of his experiences and wisdom with us.

**John Anthony:** Tell us a little about Matt Coddington. Who are you and how would you classify what you do?

**Matt:** Well I'm a 22 year-old web developer from Columbia, South Carolina (USA). I've been doing web design and coding for over 7 years now although I didn't turn it into full-time income until a little over a year ago. I'm graduating from the University of South Carolina in May with a degree in History, but I don't really plan on having to use it. I'd much rather continue to support myself and my fiancé off of my online earnings.

The bulk of my online earnings is still through web design and coding. I now outsource almost all of the coding work but continue to do the designing myself. Working with clients can be somewhat stressful at times but after doing it for so long it's become an easy stream of revenue that I just can't pass up. Maybe one day I'll move on and become a full time publisher.

I just started sharing what I've learned over the past 7 years on my new blog: [NetBusinessBlog.com](#). It was launched in January of this year but is already supporting a solid readerbase.



## **John Anthony: How did you get started in building businesses on the web?**

**Matt:** Like I said I started doing web development about 7 years ago which put me right around the age of 15 when I began. I was (and still am sort of) a gaming nerd. My favorite game of all time was Starcraft/Brood War. I liked it so much, in fact, that I started my own fansite for it. Since I was 15 and broke I couldn't afford a designer or a coder to do the development for me, so I learned how to do it all myself. I remember starting my first website on Homestead (I later had to move it because the service became paid subscription) and thinking how amazing it was that other people actually built their websites with words instead of click and drag.

Anyways, I built that Starcraft site and ran it for about 2 years. I sold it for a measly \$300. It wasn't a huge website but generated a total of about 2k uniques per day when I sold it. This was before I knew what monetization was, before AdSense existed, and before SitePoint's marketplace. So for all I knew, \$300 was good.

*“I like creating a site from scratch, adding value, and then flipping it for a nice profit.” -Matt*

## **John Anthony: How many different sites / strategies do you currently have going? Give us a little info on each one so our readers can visit them.**

**Matt:** My main source of income right now is web development. Most of it comes from people directly contacting me from various forums. I get a lot of work from SitePoint where I post “available for hire” posts occasionally. Other work comes in from my online business front VehoWave ( <http://www.vehowave.com> ). The projects that come through there are usually lower-paying ones and are mostly CMS-oriented. I do get some 4 figure projects every month or two which gives me a lot of my income.

I'm also running NetBusinessBlog ( <http://www.netbusinessblog.com> ) which is a blog aimed at helping readers improve their online business through all the various monetization techniques. This site is making fair revenue, especially considering it's only a month and a week old, but it still has a way to go. I really just enjoy blogging and get satisfaction from sharing my humble amount of knowledge with people who can use it.

Another site I worked on for the second half of last year is Forum Rank ( <http://www.forumrank.net> ). This website will hopefully be a competitor for Big-Boards.com in the next few months. It's sort of a hybrid of your classic ranking system and Google's PageRank. This site was just sold, but I did all of the development from the ground up. I like creating a site from scratch, adding value, and then flipping it for a nice profit. I say I like the change of scenery to keep me motivated, but my friends tell me I lack followthrough. I like my version better.



*“I guess the main thing I’ve learned is that you should never just settle with what you have or what you’re doing. Always experiment.” -Matt*

**John Anthony:** I know I’ve made plenty of mistakes in my business ventures, but that’s how we all learn. I truly believe we learn more from our mistakes than successes. What are some valuable lessons you have learned from your mistakes?

**Matt:** Oh man I’ve made so many mistakes it’s hard to narrow it down into one or two delicious nuggets of wisdom. I guess the main thing I’ve learned is that you should never just settle with what you have or what you’re doing. Always experiment. Even when you think you’ve found your niche (as I did with web design) keep branching out and exploring new earning avenues. Who’s to say that in 2 years I won’t have made a complete transition from web development to eCommerce or full-time blogging. Restricting yourself to one method of generating income is self-handicapping.

I settled in for about the first 4-5 years of my “online career.” I did nothing but small web design jobs, mostly PHPNuke. I was comfortable with these, and they generated average part-time income. Wasting so many years running a mediocre business is my biggest online mistake, and it has taught me to never settle.

Oh and always get paid up front (at least a percentage).

**John Anthony:** I stumbled upon your latest venture – [NetBusinessBlog.com](http://NetBusinessBlog.com) recently via a [John Chow review](#) and have come back every day. The content is great; and traffic and ad revenue have really taken off quickly with this site. What would you attribute to such great success in such a short period of time?

**Matt:** I think there’s three reasons NBB has taken off: content, post frequency, and Digg. I try to write content that I wish I had read 2-3 years ago. It amazes me how long it’s taken me to accrue the knowledge I have now, and I’m not even close to the level of industry experts. Another thing I do is post \*almost\* everyday. If I miss a day or two I make up for it by posting extra the next time I get around to it. From the little bit of blogging experience I have, one of the most important things is posting often (and of course with good content). But posting good content everyday isn’t going to make people aware of your site, it will just make them stick when you get them there. That’s where Digg came in. The direct Digg traffic itself isn’t all that great, but the buzz surrounding a front-page story is priceless. My 2 part Building a Niche Minisite article got to the front page of Digg the third day the site was launched, and it just grew from there. A lot of people complain that Digg is worthless for promotion, but I think if you just write something worth reading then Digg can do wonders for improving your site and at the very least get it in front of some faces.



**John Anthony: If someone were interested in doing something entrepreneurial, maybe starting their own business, what lessons could they take away from (1) NetBusinessBlog.com; and (2) your own business experience?**

**Matt:** An absolute truth of making a living online (and for life in general) is that anyone can do anything if they just get out there and do it. I know that sounds cliché and overused, but it's the truth. The only reason I am where I am today is because when I was 15 I \*had\* to learn how to design and code for myself if I wanted to run my own website. So I did. I didn't buy any books, listen to any Robert Kiyosaki tapes, or buy into any get rich quick schemes. I just learned the skill that I wanted to learn and then found a way to make money off of it. If you keep moving and keep learning you will succeed. Lethargy kills the majority of online and offline businesses.

*The only thing that matters to me is that I keep improving myself. -Matt*

**John Anthony: What is your vision for where you want to be and where you want to take your businesses 5 years from now?**

**Matt:** Honestly I'm a pretty content fellow all-around. I don't care all that much where I'm at in 5 years as long as it's better off than I am right now. I'm at a point in my life now where I could continue doing what I'm doing and live comfortably or I could slowly shift into another field and try something new. The only thing that matters to me is that I keep improving myself.

**John Anthony: Matt, thank you for taking the time to share your wisdom and experiences with our readers. Good luck with your projects and keep us updated!**

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If you would like us to interview a specific entrepreneur or high level executive for an upcoming Movers and Shakers edition, let us know on the [contact us page](#).

**For inquiries and comments, please contact:**

**John Anthony, Career Ramblings - Movers and Shakers**

**Web:** [www.CareerRamblings.com](http://www.CareerRamblings.com)

**Email:** [john@CareerRamblings.com](mailto:john@CareerRamblings.com)

You can download this and other important information at [www.CareerRamblings.com](http://www.CareerRamblings.com)