

The Magic of Joint Ventures

An Interview with Internet Marketing Legend Willie Crawford!

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Michael Ambrosio	Willie Crawford

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About the author...



Michael Ambrosio

Michael Ambrosio has been doing business on the internet since 1999. He cut his teeth as a web host, starting not one, but TWO successful web hosting businesses. He also started a script installation business, installing scripts for some of the biggest names on the internet.

Michael is also the author of several ebooks, and the developer of several programs and scripts as well. Some of Michael's sites and products include:

- [PLR Dominance](#) – No experience required. Learn how you too can change Private Label Rights into your own personal "cash on demand" system. Dominate Your Niche Today!
- [Database Backup Generator](#) – Is there any reason why you're not backing up your database of names, email addresses, customer information? This is the heart of your web business. DON'T wait until you lose it. Back it up NOW!
- [You Cant Block This](#) – Finally: A popup creator that creates "unblockable" popups. But not just ordinary popups. These you'll have to see to believe...
- [MrOverDeliver](#) – MrOverDeliver really over delivers! This site is loaded with ebooks, scripts, programs, Private Label Content and much more! It's free to join...
- [Butterfly Riches](#) – Find out how these marketers found success or took themselves to new heights by using and applying Butterfly Marketing concepts and tools. You'll be amazed by what they have to tell you. And it's free to join!

Michael continues to build his business by learning from other marketers, and also helps many other marketers make their first dollars on-line. He also has developed a knack for buying private label content and turning them into his own products, then selling them on-line.

Michael enjoys playing raquetball, cooking, walking, reading, the internet and his family. He is the father of four children and lives in upstate New York.

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Mike: Willie, thanks for joining us. Today we're going to talk about the magic of joint ventures—how to approach people about them, how to deal with them when you get them and all sorts of things. Willie, welcome and thank you very much for sharing your time.

Willie: It's my pleasure, Mike. Thank you for inviting me.

Mike: Any time. I love doing these interviews with you because they're always a lot of fun and more than that, very informative.

Willie: Yes, they're fun. I guess we probably should start with a disclaimer so people won't try to sue us later when they use our advice and mis-follow it. I would like to add that the information that we provide on the call today is for informational purposes only.

So when people take this information and use it, they're assuming the responsibility for the results they get. If they need professional advice, they should seek it; we're just going to share with them what has worked very well for us. All rights to the recording are also reserved.

Mike: Thanks for covering that.

Willie: Sure.

Mike: I'll just open this up by saying that joint ventures in general have probably been, for me, more responsible for my own personal success with my Internet marketing business than any other form of marketing that I've done.

Going back to 2005 when I did my first successful joint-venture project, which Willie was a part of, being the Mega Fire Sale, I can't get enough of it. I love working with other people, getting together with a common goal, a mission, or whatever it is, putting together a great product and getting it out there. That's how it works for me.

I'd like to get a little bit of background from you on the success you've had. I'm thinking of one in particular when you did your Wedding Fire Sale, for example, but I'm sure

you have many examples. Can you share a little bit about how joint ventures really work for you?

Willie: The way they work for me is, I have a project or product I want to launch, and when I'm using joint ventures in this sense it's primarily me looking to get someone else to promote my product. I have to convince them that it's in their best interests to promote my product over something else. How do I convince people to do that?

With the Wedding Fire Sale that I did, I had to first of all, make it different enough that it would be exciting for them. I had to offer them enough commission and did things like pay instant commission so they wouldn't have to wait and that way I knew I was incentivizing people who were having cash flow problems. I just made it as easy as possible for them to say yes.

I also made an incredible deal for their customers so they could get excited knowing that they wouldn't lose subscribers. The subscribers would know they were getting a real bargain and would be happy that they actually told them about it. To me, it's all about making the potential joint-venture partner look good to his audience and he actually wants to do it because he gets a good feeling, as well as gets some money out of it.

Mike: That's a good point because these days, with the amount of launches we see every day—and I'm not even talking about Fire Sales anymore because they've kind of lost their luster so you don't see quite as many of them anymore—they're still very important joint ventures for launching new products. You see them all the time.

Understanding that, you have a certain reputation and name in this business as do a lot of other marketers. Off the top of my head, you've got guys like Mike Filsaime and Frank Kern. Then you have a bunch of people who are just coming on, they've finished their first product, they're convinced it's wonderful and they automatically think, "I'm going to get Willie to do a JV with me."

What do you say to people who are just starting out or are unproven about trying to look for joint ventures? Do you

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think it's better for them to go for the gusto, write you an email and see what happens? Or do you think they should work their way up and make more of a name for themselves first?

Willie: I think that unless it's a really, really incredible product, they should not start with the top marketers. They should start with smaller marketers who have decent-sized lists and loyal audiences. The reason they shouldn't go for the top marketers is because I have days when I'll get 15 to 20 emails from people asking me to joint venture with them.

The emails often say, "Here's a sample copy of my software," or "I've set you up with a free membership to my site," and I don't have time in my schedule to actually even go and look at all the things people are sending me.

I know that many other marketers have that problem, so unless it's something that's really, really good, something I know my market is going to flip over and just me reading about it is going to make me want to promote it, they're better off starting with other marketers.

Mike: I personally have found that that still works for me a lot. I know that I can send an email to you or to Mike Filsaime and unless schedules conflict, I'm relatively sure that I can get decent JV partners. I've also found that going for other marketers who might be at my level—or maybe not even at my level but who have started to build a list and they're very responsive...

Sometimes you're better off by getting 10 guys with lists of 10,000 each than trying to shoot for that one guy with a list of 100,000. This is because the odds are, you're not going to get that one guy anyway. Sometimes I've found it works out better anyhow.

Willie: Right, and the reason you'll get a positive response from me or Mike is because we know you. If the person is completely unknown, we've never met them, we have no idea who they are and we're getting bombarded...we all naturally prefer doing things with friends and family—that's just human nature. If I see an email from a friend,

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I'm going to read it before one with some name I don't recognize. I'm more likely to say yes to a friend too.

Mike: That was the lesson I learned firsthand, right before I did the Mega Fire Sale. It was right on the heels of going to my very first live event, which was the Mega Seminar back in July of 2005. I know you and I had exchanged emails and phone calls before then, but we had never met and that's where we first met face to face.

I already knew Mike and he introduced me to all of the speakers personally because he knew them all. After I got home, we were talking on the phone and I had said to him, "I want to do some sort of a project. What do you suggest?" That's when he told me, "Look, you just went to this seminar. Everybody there that you've talked to knows who you are now, so send them an email and put together a Fire Sale."

Back then, Fire Sales were very big still and everybody was still doing them. It was amazing, out of the 13 speakers I got 10 responses. Out of those responses, I got three people, including you, to create a brand-new product just for my Fire Sale, because we had met in person and they knew who I was. So yes, you're right—that does make a huge difference.

Willie: I like helping people and I like promoting products that I know my list wants, but the reality is that there are more really good products out there than there is promotion capability. So we have to pick and choose and I'm more likely to promote a product for someone that I've sat down and had lunch with at a seminar, talked to on the phone, or somehow met someplace and have a feel for them rather than a complete stranger.

It's not discriminating really. It's that you're more of a known entity if I know you personally, if I've seen pictures of your children and stuff like that.

Mike: You read threads like that in particular marketing forums and they call that, you're not part of the "old boy network" and that's really not what it is. It is because you know people and you consider a lot of them your friends, and

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yes, I would consider mailing something for you before somebody that just emailed me out of the blue.

There's a definite difference. To me, that is one of the most important things you can do if you want to start forming joint ventures—get out and meet people—and I think that is what turned my whole Internet marketing career around.

Willie: Also, with the people I know, I look very closely at the products, but I'm trusting that my friends won't ask me to promote something that's going to make me look bad, some product that, halfway through one of the DVDs, it's blank or something. I'm trusting that my friends won't burn their friendship by giving me a product that's not up to par. I do look at everything prior to promoting it. It's just that I can't go through every second of every CD.

Mike: That's absolutely correct. I've promoted items that have 16 DVDs or whatever, and to go through every one, every minute, is darn near impossible, but you're right, I think that's important. When you know a guy or are friends with somebody who has a reputation for putting out quality products, you tend to trust them a little bit more.

You'll go through it more as, "Let's check this out," and make sure the presentation is good, everything looks good and everything is what it says it is, but you don't really look to see how good the quality is, because you trust people. Actually, 9.9 times out of 10, I've never had a problem doing it that way when it comes from people I know.

Willie: I promoted one product where one of the CDs was some people on a webcam and on the telephone and halfway through the CD, you did have this person in front of the webcam animated and talking, and there was no audio. They sold a whole bunch of those. So I do look at the products, it's just that I can't sit for 30 hours and go through a weekend seminar just to make sure every DVD is perfect.

Mike: That's impossible. I'll check software if somebody is launching it, but I'm a software junkie anyway, so that's

right up my alley. If it's an e-book with a membership site, I'll take a look at everything. I'll print out the e-book and read it, especially if it's from somebody I haven't met in person, but maybe we've known each other through a forum, through email exchanges, or even telephone exchanges. I will still go through their products with a fine-tooth comb if I don't know them personally but I know them through our business.

Willie: I think that too many people that I deal with don't realize that their products aren't that good. They email and say, "Your customers are really going to like this. This is really great, it's needed and it's going to make your life so much easier."

You look at it and you yawn because it's old, not an exciting idea, and doesn't do a lot. I see too many people who come up with products like this, that don't even merit the price they're asking for them. For me, it's a challenge to get excited about the majority of the products that are sent to me.

Mike: Even where I am now with my marketing career, I get not quite as many as guys like you or Mike, but I'll still get 10 to 15 a week, most weeks, depending, and I've gotten to the point where I don't really even read past the first two or three lines of the email anymore unless I know the person, or if there's some unique way they've gotten to me.

I did a video about somebody who approached me to do a joint venture, who I'd heard of before and never met personally. The only reason I opened the email was because I had heard of him. When I went through the email and saw how he presented it, I was intrigued enough to go and join the site and I was convinced. Then I actually did the video and mailed for him later that week.

So sometimes you can catch somebody at the right moment or with the right product or the right approach. That brings up a question: When it comes to approaching somebody, not necessarily upper-echelon marketers, but just other marketers, do you find that just a simple email is okay? Do you find other approaches to be a little bit

better, like maybe sending a video, snail mail, or going so far as to call somebody?

Willie: I find that if you can get through to the person, email is fine. It's just that with somebody like me, it's breaking through the clutter. I have people submitting lots of joint-venture requests every day through my help desk and through email, but I'm also getting FedEx packages and internationally I'm getting Airborne Express-type packages.

I'm getting lumpy mail with the bells and all kinds of little toys and things in it. So I'm getting bombarded with stuff and the stuff that gets noticed is the lumpy mail just because of the curiosity factor. If you're in a niche where it's not so competitive, I think email is fine, assuming your emails are getting through.

But if it's the Internet marketing niche, I think you almost need to pick up the phone and call them, which might irritate some people if they don't know you so you have to be very, very brief. You don't start out by saying, "I just need a minute of your time," and then 20 minutes later you haven't even explained why you called. There are people who do that in emails too. They'll say, "I know you're busy, but..." and you look at the email and it's 20 pages. I don't read those.

Mike: I agree. I'm a skimmer anyway. On the latest project I'm doing, I wrote a very long email because there's a whole rationale behind what I'm doing and I wanted to get the point across. Even after going back and reading it again, I thought, "Wow, it's probably a little long," and my point was proven to myself by the answers I got.

People said, "Yeah, what do you want me to do?" I'm like, "Well, everything was in the email." So obviously they're skimmers too, and the subsequent emails after that, I shortened quite a bit to make sure they actually read them because marketers in general all seem to have very short attention spans. I should say that—we get sidetracked very easily because there's so much going on.

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Willie: You mentioned videos, which can work if it's an email that says, "I have something..." and it describes to me what it is—a piece of software that does whatever and says, "...the video will explain it quickly," and then in the video you do actually explain it quickly. In the email, since I do skim, I'll jump around too much, but on a video, you're forcing me to follow your path through the video so they can work.

A lot of people lose me as a potential joint-venture partner because of their process in becoming a joint venture. They require you to get on an early registration list which is fine so they can send you follow-ups, but then sometimes you've got to jump through 10 different hoops just to become a joint-venture partner. Somewhere in there your joint-venture partners say, "Why should I continue signing up at 20 different membership sites and doing all these other things just to be a joint-venture partner?"

I've seen back ends where you have to register as an affiliate and then you practically need a PhD to figure out how the back end to the affiliate program works—how to get your link. I've looked for my link and had so many different links to click on within the control panel that I just gave up on looking for the link.

Mike: I actually use a very well-known management program that has a built-in affiliate program and it's like that. The membership is over here, but for the affiliate area you have to actually log in to a separate area and then you have to click a couple of different links before you find your affiliate ID. Well, I figured out how to put it on the thank-you page and on the members' page and that's what I do now because I had complaints.

You don't think about it when you're putting your site together because you're so focused on getting things together, but that's an extremely good point because I've had complaints about that, so take the extra mile and find a way to get it to them. If you think about it, if you want other people that join up to also promote for you—like people that bought through one of your partners—it makes sense to have a link for them right there.

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So the first thing they can do is say, "I'm going to try to make my money back by promoting this," so the link and the tools are right there and very accessible. That has helped me with the viral nature of any of the sites and products that I've done.

Willie: I've said yes to promoting certain products and then simply could not find the link. Then I've even requested the link and then maybe been sent an email that says, "Go here and log in," and the instructions weren't very clear and maybe the login process just kicked you out and sent you someplace else. Basically, you want to make it so easy for your joint-venture partners.

You're acknowledging they're busy and so you need to give them a cut-and-paste email or something that says, "Send your people to this video," and if they want to go with that cut-and-paste email, they can and it would work for them, although you should put it in your own words, of course. Make it so easy that there's no work involved for your joint-venture partners, assuming that they are interested in the product in the first place.

Mike: I agree 100%. I did a promotion for somebody once who, again, was one of those people I've seen around in forums but never really exchanged communications. He had approached me, the subject line got me to open it, as well as the fact that I knew who it was.

As I was reading, like you had talked about earlier, it was short and to the point, explained everything and said, "I've taken the liberty of creating your account. You can log in here. Here's your username, here is your password. When you get in, if you click this link, that's where you'll find the promo tools..." and everything was completely explained.

It was a no-brainer for me to at least go in and look; he had an account for me. That got me at least to the point where I said, "Let me check this out because it looks like a very interesting product," and that's important too—the fact that the product was something that I thought was rather unique, that would be a pretty good seller.

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As it turns out, it is. It was a monthly residual program that was relatively inexpensive and I think I recommended 60 or 70 people and the majority of them are still in it, and this was over a year ago. So that worked out for me because of the guy's approach.

Willie: That makes sense. It's the whole process that has to be really, really easy to say yes to and it has to be easy to follow through on afterward. Very often you will get people saying yes and promising to promote things and then you will notice from time to time that they don't follow through on their promises.

My friend Ken McArthur over at jvAlert said to me that was one of the things that surprised him the most, the number of high-level marketers who say yes to something and then don't follow through on their promises. I see part of the problem is that they overpromise—they hate saying no—but then part of it also is that they can become so frustrated at trying to follow through that they change their minds and don't tell you.

Mike: That's very true. Working with some of the marketers that I have in the past, the overpromising is a big problem because they're all friends, they want to help each other and they just forget, "Oh, I already made a commitment on that day so I'll mail a few days later," and it's just sometimes very difficult trying to please everybody. You might owe a couple of mailings or something and it becomes a problem.

I have a buddy who had come across my "You Can't Block This" product and he emails me saying, "Dude, this is a rockin' little product. It's priced to move. How many affiliates are promoting it?" I emailed him back and said, "Well, nobody. I just kind of did it for myself and started selling it."

He basically smacked me around and said, "You've got to email people now because this is one of those impulse items like at the supermarket where you grab it on your way out. It's a perfect product for that—you'll sell a ton." We were talking and I said, "Well, you know how it is. They say yes and then nobody mails."

He says, "You have to send multiple emails because they're busy, they forget, whatever the case is. You can't just email them once, get an answer and take their word for it, because they're going to be busy." I'm not saying to email people who have said no to you, but if you did get a commitment, send gentle reminders. Don't get nasty, just say, "Hey, listen, we're launching on this date. I just wanted to make sure you're still committed."

Then on launch day, remind them again. I'll tell you what, that advice paid off for me on that particular product. Sending it out to 20 people, I had about eight or nine who said they would and out of those, seven of them mailed, and all of a sudden I had several hundred units move that I wouldn't have before if I didn't follow through and push a few people.

Willie: You have to be the squeaky wheel because there's so much noise out there and because they are overpromising they'll notice that they're being asked three or four times by the same person and they'll maybe go ahead and mail to get you off their back! Sometimes that's what you have to do.

Mike: Yes, you do. I'm not a really pushy character to begin with, so I sometimes feel guilty about it. The emails I get back are always friendly: "Oh, dude, sorry I forgot—thanks for reminding me." It's like, oh, okay, they're not mad, which is great. So don't let that stop you if they've already committed to saying yes.

Willie: Just a subtle email that says, "Thank you for keeping your promises to your friends," or something like that.

Mike: Yes! That works like a champ. Since we're talking about approaching potential JV partners, you and I play a lot in the Internet marketing niche and we both know that when you get out of this niche, things change sometimes considerably.

I know you do products outside the Internet marketing niche, and you do them very well. Do you approach people

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in that niche about joint-ventures, and did you find the process to be a little bit different than in this niche?

Willie: The difference is that you have to educate them as to why they would want to do that. It's getting them on the phone and explaining to them that by promoting your product or service, they're not losing business, they're gaining business because you're exposing them to your customers that they wouldn't ordinarily be exposed to.

They're giving their customers, who perhaps aren't even buying their products, the option to buy something else that they really want. It's just showing them that their piece isn't going to get smaller by them promoting yours.

Some people are going to say no, so you just move on and try to find someone who's enlightened, because there are people who just will not promote anything to their list. There are even Internet marketers who, if you ask them to do a promo, their first question is, "Who controls the list of customers?" They're just that protective of their customer base.

Mike: I find that to be the case also. A good friend of mine does a lot of work in the eBay niche and he's crossing over to Internet marketing. He knows quite a few successful eBayers who really don't do anything in Internet marketing. They've built a list of customers who have bought through them and really don't do much with it. They'll email them from time to time about something else they're selling, but that's about it.

So he saw some potential on a particular Internet marketing info product and started approaching these well-known eBayers and got rebuffed in almost every case because they really didn't understand the process and how much more business they can get, because they're very protective of their lists. You really can't fault them for that, but that's just the way it is. If you can educate a few of them, you've got a few gold nuggets there that you can play with.

Willie: It goes back, again, to educating them as to how they'll actually look better to their customers if they present them

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with something that's really going to make their lives better. It's showing them why their customers will actually appreciate what they're doing for them.

Mike: I would have to agree with that. It's like starting out and expecting people to joint venture with somebody who is very new to the game, they're putting out their first product and expecting a flood of people to JV with them without having done something first. I think that's important too. This advice was given to me: If you want to get known to certain marketers, promote their products as an affiliate and do it well because you will get noticed.

Willie: Right; they will notice that you can follow through and that you deliver.

Mike: You talk the talk and you walk the walk.

Willie: One of my habits is to actually look at the affiliate sales contest that I have access to on who are the top producers. I look at those lists to see what marketers in certain niches are actually skilled and know what they're doing. Those are the people I often approach with all kinds of things, and I am more willing to do joint ventures with them to promote their products because I invoke the law of reciprocity too. I'm not above, when they ask me to promote one of their products, suggesting that they also promote one of mine in exchange, provided my product meets their needs and lives up to quality standards and all that stuff.

Mike: I can attest to that; it works like a champ on two fronts. To go back to your lumpy mail thing I had to giggle because Jeff Dedrick did a sale last year for his hidden sales project and the way he got me on board was to send me a FedEx envelope with Mardi Gras stuff—beads and stuff.

Willie: I got the same one! I opened it and all of the glitter fell all over the floor.

Mike: I sent him an email and said, "You got me. I've got it all over my desk." But it got me to open it, I looked at what he had. He had a video online that explained everything. I

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signed up and was in his top five and subsequently won a trip to New Orleans.

Because of that, the fact that I was in the top five for that launch and I finished number one in the launch for Liz Tomey about a year and a half ago, when I do well on a launch, that's when, when I'm looking to launch my own product, people can see that I at least know how to promote.

I do a lot of work with Mike Filsaime, as you know, and when he's getting ready to do a launch, he will actually assign somebody in his office and say, "I want you to go back through the last three big launches and the affiliate contests," because usually they'll post like the top 20 and they start grabbing names. He's even surprised sometimes at some of the names that pop up that you don't know.

"Who is this guy? He finished number six and beat out Willie Crawford," for example. Then you'll get approached that way sometimes too, without even having to go after people and saying, "I heard you're doing a product, I'd like to promote it for you," or, "Can you promote mine and when you do a launch..." then the law of reciprocity, as you mentioned, comes in to play. Being a good affiliate for some of the top marketers is a huge "in" if you can do that.

Willie: It is, and also, if you can get just a few of the top marketers to promote your product, it's almost like the other marketers will notice what they're doing, get curious and want to get in too. If I see Yanik Silver, for example, promoting something, or Frank Kern, I'm assuming that he really is convinced that it's a great product so I'm more likely to look at it.

I'm using him as a screen to tell me what I should look at, to an extent. That's social proof that it's okay for me to think about it because somebody whose judgment I trust thought it was good enough.

Mike: That's a great point. There are ways, if you're just starting out, to get yourself noticed. I think part of the problem today is the Internet "I want it now" mentality. There are

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more and more people who aren't really either understanding the process or willing to take the time to do it that way. Everybody wants something 'now,' and that was me.

Willie: It's not just "I want it now," it's "I want my million-dollar day now."

Mike: Yes, that is to true! And I think you hit on a point before about how some people who put together a product—and God bless them, they're taking action—and if the product isn't that great and they don't see it, you can be gentle with them and tell them and all that, but you have to give them kudos for at least taking the action because a lot of people don't even get that far.

Willie: A lot of people need to acknowledge that their DVD course or video lessons on how to do whatever aren't going to make half a million or a million dollars, and they should be happy with \$100,000 if they've started from zero on their first product. That is a success so it's all relative. That's what I meant by a lot of people rolling out a product because they've heard of certain marketers making millions from a launch.

They want that too but they don't realize how much time those marketers spent building relationships and getting other people to promote their product. There's a large amount of energy that goes into setting up a joint venture in the first place.

Mike: I've been behind the scenes on a couple of different big-ticket launches and yes, I do know the months of planning between how the product is put together, what's going to go in it, if there are external interviews getting that all set up. I was part of Ken McArthur's "Info Product Blueprint" and I was approached probably three months before launch to submit an eight-page report to put into one of the chapters.

I also did an audio interview with him. We did that months before he launched. I know, working with Mike Filsaime, it's the same thing. We go out and look for JVs and potential partners two months before launch date just

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because it takes that much time. Schedules are what they are, so you have to give other people enough time to say, "Two months from now I have a pretty clear calendar. I could probably fit you in then."

Willie: It's much easier for somebody to say yes two months out and even if they don't mark it on their calendar, as it gets closer, you can remind them that they did promise.

Mike: That's another big thing, and I noticed that big-name marketers will do this with their JV partners. We call it "pissing on dates," and I hate to use that terminology, but if I'm planning a launch for this date, it kind of spreads the word to other people that might have product launches in the works to not pick that date so they don't conflict with each other.

Also, it helps people free up some time to mail for that product, so subsequently when they do their launch, maybe you'll mail back for them. It's a whole behind-the-scenes thing that really is very interesting to watch from start to finish. So if you've got a product, you can't expect to mail somebody and say, "I'm launching this next week. What do you think?" and expect an answer other than no; it's going to be very difficult.

Willie: I get a lot of email saying, "I started my product launch yesterday or last week and it's not doing that great. Can you do a mailing?" I may have my month full of emails more or less written, so I get a lot of those too. People acknowledge that they need to give you advance notice, but then they continue to ask you to promote tomorrow.

Mike: Advance notice is always better—plan ahead for sure. Sometimes you strike gold. When I was doing my little pop-up thing that I told you about, "You Can't Block This," I got a list together of about 20 different marketers and I included Mike on that email, not expecting him to mail. I just include him. He's on my JV list.

So I emailed 20 people and my wife and I went to watch a movie downstairs. Two hours later, I come upstairs and I notice I missed a call from Mike. I looked at my email and the subject line was "Mike, I just mailed for you."

It turned out that there was a product he was supposed to mail for the next day that got pushed back a week and he had an opening. I got lucky. He slid me in and 150 sales later.... So you can get lucky from time to time, just don't expect it. It doesn't hurt to ask, but don't be a pain in the neck either.

Willie: No, it never hurts to ask. Again, if you're in a niche like Internet marketing where it's so competitive, you can't afford to be shy, you have to ask. You asked the question about do you ask the big dogs or somebody who is more of a smaller marketer, one who hasn't built a list of 200,000 or whatever. I say go for the top at times, but acknowledge that you're probably going to get a no and then also make sure your product is really good. But I see nothing wrong with going after John Reese or Frank Kern if you have the world's greatest product.

Mike: If you see that some of these guys are going to be at a particular gathering, sometimes it's hard to plunk down the change, and believe me, I know—I was in debt for years when I was doing this—and I actually couldn't afford to go to my first MegaSeminar, I had to scrimp for that one. In fact, if it wasn't for Mike "subsidizing" my trip, I wouldn't have gone.

If I had not taken that opportunity, I would not be on the phone with you right now, creating this interview. If there's a way you can go...don't look for one you have to fly to. Look for one that might be within driving distance, a five or six hour drive even, and make it a point to go. Bring a camera, get pictures, talk to some people, offer to buy a lunch here and there or whatever you have to do.

There's a fine line between being a pain in the neck and just making yourself known. Don't walk up to Willie Crawford and say, "Hey, Dude, I've been on your list for a year and a half. I love your stuff. By the way, I've got a product launch—you want to talk?" All due respect, Willie's going to say, "Who are you again?" Maybe not those words, but you know what I'm driving at.

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Willie: I have a membership site at TheInternetMarketingInnerCircle.com and in that site I have interviews I've recorded with about 50 people where I ask them, "How does an unknown get to do joint ventures with you?" Some people, like my friend Yanik Silver, said, "You probably don't." He said that he has dozens of clients, apprentices and people like that who are rolling out new products plus he's a very prolific product creator himself.

So the odds of him promoting your product are very low. That's another thing you have to think about. Yes, you can look at Mr. Big speaking at a seminar or just hanging out, but he's probably there because he's getting ready to launch a product too. My friend Larry Benet calls himself "The Connector."

He walks up to you and the first thing he asks is: "What are you working on?" Then he tries to remember anybody that he's already talked to that might be a useful resource. He's looking for how he can help you to connect with somebody who's ideal to help you with your project. That's what he does, is he works the crowd and I think it's really neat the way he does that.

Mike: That is very interesting and that's actually how I met Fabio Marciano. I work with him and we do products together all the time. We met at a launch and that's exactly how that happened. Someone said, "This guy, Fabio, does a lot of writing, this, that and the other thing, and he's a good content creator. He's looking for somebody to help him set up butterfly sites."

At that time, I helped a lot of people get their butterfly sites running to get set for launches. We connected that way because he has stuff that would help me and I have stuff that would help him. It's been a partnership for about two and a half years now that's been very successful.

We've had like three good, successful launches and then two or three smaller ones that were a niche-type thing. That's another form of a joint venture, which is actually probably more of a true joint venture than just looking for affiliates, which a lot of people call joint ventures.

Willie: I actually prefer joint ventures where you co-create the product. I get a lot of people approaching me to ask if they can interview me or something, and I know very often the reason I'm being asked to participate in the interview is because the person wants to then turn around and say, "Can you help to promote 'our' product?" We know that before being asked.

If I get an email saying, "Can you do this interview for an e-book I'm working on, on time management?" I know that this person is going to then turn around and ask me to promote the e-book. I've even had people say, "Now can you give me a couple of bullets for my sales letter and a testimonial for the e-book too?" which is pushing it a bit.

Mike: I guess, like we said earlier, it doesn't hurt to ask, but you've got to draw the line somewhere too. You can turn people off very quickly by being overly [demanding].

Willie: You mentioned the group projects—another thing that does is, as you roll out a project, if you do create something with other people, it has more credibility. If you're an unknown, even if you work with five other people who are relatively unknown, when people see a website with five or six people working together, you instantly have more credibility than if it's just one person working by himself.

Mike: I can attest to that too. After my first Fire Sale, on my sales page there was a picture of Willie and me standing together, there was a picture of me and Mike standing together. I think Lorrie Morgan-Ferrero and Michael Port contributed.

I had quite a few good contributors to that and that actually took my own credibility up at least a notch anyway, to the point where when I started going to other seminars, by the time I went to my third seminar, I had people asking me for pictures, which really took me aback. You don't really picture yourself in that mode but it's really amazing when you do that kind of stuff. Like you said, it's incredible what it can do for you.

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Willie: Yes, you're leveraging the other person's name recognition, the other person's credibility. For example, at that first seminar, Jonathan Mizel was there, who is one of the "grandfathers" of Internet marketing, if you will, and I snapped pictures of him because I wanted them on my blog, showing people that "I know Jonathan."

Mike: I've got a picture of him too. It's funny, because I didn't recognize him and I was probably talking to him for a good ten minutes before somebody whispered in my ear, "That's Jonathan Mizel," because all of the pictures I'd seen of him were from his younger years.

Willie: That Hollywood look.

Mike: Yes, exactly! I was enthralled and transfixed listening to him talk for a good half hour at least. He's a very genuine, good-natured guy. I actually defend a lot of what people are calling "gurus." I get smacked around by people, "Oh, you're just a guru defender," but that's not really the case.

When you take the time to meet a lot of these guys and get to know them, they're very accessible and I've gotten more help without even asking for it simply because of associations with other people and because they're good natured and good hearted. Willie, you're a great example of that.

You helped me out, I think, before I even got fully into Internet marketing on another project that I was doing with another former marketer, Brian. I was on the phone for three hours with you and him going, "Wow, this is incredible!" There are a lot of really good and genuine people in this business.

Willie: There are and part of the reason people probably get into guru bashing is because they are envious and they see certain people stepping on people. There's good and bad. I view the marketplace as a bunch of individuals with dreams and it's my job to help people to reach those dreams. But then there are people who will just waste your time too, so it's a balancing act.

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Mike: Oh, it is. I did a launch last year with a product I put together on how to create products from scratch using resources. One of the bonuses I gave to the first 100 people was if you create a product from scratch and I approve it, I'll mail to my list for you. I got a lot of awesome responses.

The idea wasn't to just "pimp out" the list. I had guidelines. It had to be your own product, not PLR, had to be good quality, something that was useful. I had to approve it and had the right to refuse it and the whole bit. It's been about a year and I've had just one person take me up on it.

Willie: It's very rare that people actually follow through. There are lots of starters in the Internet marketing niche who need to team up with finishers. It's just our nature.

Mike: I think people get entrenched in that "make money in your underwear" to coin somebody else's phrase there. They really don't understand that, except on rare occasions, that's really difficult to do without interaction with other people. You do get some people who buck the trend and make it, but they're few and far between. I don't even know anybody personally who has done that without help.

Willie: Very, very few. You mentioned the MegaSeminar—the guy who hosts that prided himself on being a lone wolf but I say lone wolves starve.

Mike: That's right, and in fact, I had the dubious distinction of being the first person that he contributed a product to on a Fire Sale, and that was because I went to the seminar and met him. He was a nice guy. He gets a reputation for how forward he is, but he's really a nice guy and I had an opportunity to sit and chat with him.

Willie: Of course, we're talking about Ken Calhoun. He comes from a day trader background and that's a zero-sum game so in order for me to win at day trading, somebody has to lose so that's the nature of business to him.

Mike: That is so true. Willie, this has been so cool for me, I even learned a couple of things because that's the way this

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business works—you're always learning. Are there any last words of wisdom or bits of information that we haven't already covered that you want to bring out before we wrap this up?

Willie: I mentioned those interviews I'd done for my membership site. One of the people I interviewed was Mike Filsaime and I asked him, "What's the secret to getting to JV and network more with the big dogs of the inner circle?" He told me that he actually formed his own inner circle.

He said he came into the Internet marketing space and not everybody wanted to play, so he said fine, and reached out to certain people and groomed them. By the time Butterfly Marketing was ready to launch, those people were the ones who made it a success; not the huge names, but the people he'd been working with all along.

Mike: I believe in karma and a lot of what guys like Mike and you, who give of your time and help others, form your own group to help each other, it just comes back to you in spades and those are some prime examples. Even with your own Wedding Fire Sale, for such a low entry price, you generated quite a bit of money out of that. Because you've done so much in the industry, people are so willing and eager in some cases to give back, which is really nice.

Willie: You're right. I think it was at the \$37 price point and gradually crept up and it did over six figures in a week, which amazed me. What was even more amazing was that practically everything in the Wedding Fire Sale was a piece of software, an e-book— something that somebody else had contributed.

It was lots of people saying, "Here, throw this into the bundle." It pushed the stated value up to over \$5,000 and it was a really, really easy project to pull off because of friends who all just jumped in there.

Mike: I love that idea about creating your own group. I think that's a great idea. Do you own mastermind, even, or just a group of people who help each other out by promoting each other's stuff.

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Willie: So instead of looking at the gurus and getting all upset with them, just form your own guru group.

Mike: I found the easiest way to do it (and I started doing this a couple years back) is forming lunches. I call them "Warrior Lunches" because I organize them on the Warrior Forum. I've been doing them since early 2006 and that's how I met my partner that I work with quite a bit, and I've formed other friendships and mini masterminds. We'll get on the phone every once in a while and I'll tell you what, just doing that, you don't always need these big names to create your own success.

Willie: I just did my second major lunch on the beach at my house in Florida and it was fairly small, but out of the last one I did, there are three people that I'm already doing projects with—people who are very savvy business people who already had excellent products but didn't have an idea of how to get them out to the marketplace.

I jumped in with them and said, "Okay, crank out the sales letter and let's get it going." This was like a couple of days ago, and these people are all basically pushing their products toward the market.

Mike: Nice. Masterminds are great.

Willie: It's good to put something together locally. I'm amazed at how many marketers there are in my area and I'm sure that no matter where you are in the US, unless you're in the desert...

Mike: If you go out to the hills of Colorado, you've got quite a few big names. You go out to Idaho, you've got Russell Brunson. In other words, you are right, there are marketers all over this country. You might have less in certain areas, but I'm fortunate to live in an area where there are tons. I met a guy when I was at a seminar in San Francisco who turned out to live three towns away from me so we get together every once in a while on the phone to chitchat and see how we're doing and it's great. It's a big help.

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Willie: It is, and those are the people, when you get ready to launch a product, you actually know them and you didn't have to travel very far to meet them. They trust you and you want to help each other.

Mike: Absolutely. I think we've covered pretty much the whole list of questions that I'd gotten from my readers. Again, I want to say thanks to Willie for sharing his wisdom. I think if you picture a lot of what we're saying, you can create a lot of your own success by forming your own joint ventures.

Or like I was talking about earlier and Willie mentioned, make yourself known in some other way, like by being a super-affiliate or whatever it takes. Don't be disappointed when people say no to you because you're going to get a lot more no's than you're going to get yes's. that's a given, so it's going to be a numbers game anyway.

Pick people who are more at your own level to start with and work up from there. I think if you're taking action, you're winning half the battle right there.

Willie: Go out there and don't be afraid to ask. The worst you'll get is a no and then you just go to the next person. There are tens of thousands of people you can ask.

Mike: Practice too. Write a couple of joint-venture letters in some various ways and get people you know in the marketing field if you want to and say, "Just read this over and tell me what you think. How would you take that if you got it?" Do that first and maybe you'll have a little bit more luck in the long term. If you're giving the right approach and you're practicing, eventually you'll get what you really want, which is to get some partners together.

Willie: Right.

Mike: Willie, again, thank you very much. You had mentioned one of your sites. I'd like to get people to visit your sites because you're a wealth of information and a lot of people don't even realize how much you give away for free.

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Willie: Sure. You can drop by my blog at WillieCrawford.com/blog and I share a lot of my thoughts, resources and freebies there. I have a membership site at TheInternetMarketingInnerCircle.com and you can use the abbreviation TIMIC.org as well for that site.

I also have InternetMarketingSeminarSchedule.com where if anybody in the world is sponsoring an Internet marketing seminar, workshop, bootcamp, teleseminar, whatever—and they let me know, we list that for free on our site.

It's a place to go to find other events. In case anybody is wondering how I monetize the site, sometimes I ask for an affiliate URL. I help people to find live or tele-events and in the process, it's another revenue model for me.

Mike: Excellent. I've actually been to all of those sites and you've got to check them out and listen to Willie. He's been doing this full time for a long time so you can't go wrong following what Willie tells you.

Willie: Thank you.

Mike: Again, Willie, thanks. I really, really appreciate it. Good luck on all of your projects.

Willie: Thank you. You take care, Mike.

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