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INTERVIEW SERIES

**One Man's Amazing Story:
"How I Made \$8,000 Selling
Books On Craigslist"**

 Michael Senoff's
HardToFind Seminars.com

Dear Student,

I'm Michael Senoff, founder and CEO of HardToFindSeminars.com.

For the last five years, I've interviewed the world's best business and marketing minds.

And along the way, I've created a successful home-based publishing business all from my two-car garage.

When my first child was born, he was very sick, and it was then that I knew I had to have a business that I could operate from home.

Now, my challenge is to build the world's largest resource for online, downloadable audio business interviews.

I knew that I needed a site that contained strategies, solutions, and inside information to help you operate more efficiently

I've learned a lot in the last five years, and today I'm going to show you the skills that you need to survive.

It is my mission, to assist those that are very busy with their careers

And to really make my site different from every other audio content site on the web, I have decided to give you access to this information in a downloadable format.

Now, let's get going.

Michael Senoff

Michael Senoff

Founder & CEO: www.hardtfindseminars.com

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Any perceived slights of specific people or organizations is unintentional.

One Man's Amazing Story: "How I Made \$8,000 Selling Books On Craigslist"

Like so many people nowadays, Bob wrote a book but wasn't sure how to sell it. He put up a website but knew he'd have to generate a ton of traffic in order to make any kind of money. For most people, that usually means paying for advertising, persuading bloggers to promote them, making joint ventures, writing e-articles... essentially putting in a lot of time, trouble, and money in order to make money.

But Bob didn't do any of that, and he's successfully sold more than 400 copies (and counting) of his book so far. He also didn't spend a dime to do it because he only used Craigslist to promote and sell his book. And in this quick audio, you'll hear exactly how he's doing it.

You'll Also Hear . . .

- The little-known (but insanely easy) way Bob wrote his book using other people's knowledge and a well-thought-out plan for picking a market with plenty of money to spend
- An insider's look at the kinds of ads that sell – believe it or not, get too fancy on Craigslist and people won't like it
- Exactly how much traffic you can expect one ad to generate (and how many sales Bob usually gets from there)
- The wealthiest city in the United States you need to put your ad up in – Bob put his up and got 5 orders right away!
- The one thing to look for when posting a Craigslist ad that will help you know for sure you're "selling where the buyers are"
- A quick-start guide to reducing your number of flagged posts – the Craigslist community is a little particular about the kinds of ads it allows, but if you know what to do (and what not to do) you should be fine
- The 3 things you absolutely must change about your ads if you plan to post a lot of similar ones

If you or someone you know may be interested in personal coaching from Michael Senoff call by phone in the US 1-858-692-9461 or e-mail senoff.michael@gmail.com

Bob says he's always got a few ads going on Craigslist because it's so easy to change things up and get consistent sales. It takes only a couple of minutes a week to get everything going, and then he just sits back and waits for PayPal to tell him when customers make purchases. It's really that simple. And in this audio, you'll find out how you can do it too.

Senoff: I have been doing a lot of buying and selling on Craigslist, not really as a business, but just on the side, as we have more toys in the house and we need to get rid of things. Instead of donating them or throwing them away, some of them, I'll say, "Hey, let me try and sell them on Craigslist." We're remodeling the house, so there is some old furniture and antique-type pieces that we're kind of bored with and I've put on Craigslist and wanted to move that way.

And, things that we come across, whether they're on the side of the street or someone's giving them away for free, you know, I take advantage of these opportunities, and I try and show my two boys that, "Yes, you can make money if you're aware of opportunities and if you can take some pictures and post stuff on Craigslist. And, I'm also demonstrating for them, as they get older, I want them to know that Dad could make money very easily buying and selling on Craigslist.

I mean, I told them this morning, I would love it for them to never have to go to work, and whatever they did, that they always really enjoyed. And, I'm just trying to demonstrate for them over these years, so that when they get older, they'll be doing this stuff themselves when they want to earn some money.

I had my third recording session I did with a gentleman named Clayton Bretty, and he needed some help on making some money on Craigslist, on EBay. And so, I had sent out the email and you generously replied and told me about how you sold 8,000 books on Craigslist. And, I'm going to continue to do these recordings, so maybe we'll add this as one of the recordings to further my students' education on opportunities in Craigslist.

So, you told me that you sold 8,000 books, but why don't you first tell me, what was the title of the book and how did you even consider selling this book on Craigslist? Where did it all start?

Bob: Well, I was getting involved in photography again, and I was trying this digital photography and I was trying to figure out this Photoshop program and I was really struggling with it. And so, I started searching around on the internet, and I was watching the videos about how to do Photoshop and I saw there were all kinds of books on Photoshop, and the books were all long and complicated and hard to follow along with the steps that they had.

The videos were good, except that you'd watch the video and then, you'd go over to your Photoshop program and try to do it, and the two were competing on the screen. It was really hard to watch the video and go back and forth, and it was really tedious to keep rewinding the video. So, I was trying to find an easier way.

So, as I was watching the videos of the Photoshop tutorials, I started writing down all the steps that they did. And so, I had all these index cards of Photoshop tips, and I got this whole box of these. I had like, maybe even 80 to 100 cards of all kinds of Photoshop tips, and it was all step by step from what I learned watching the videos. And, I decided that it would be kind of neat if I made a deck of those cards, and "Oh, I can make a Photoshop tip card deck."

So, I made all the tips into a deck of cards and I made a box for them. This was all done right in my house here, and I put them up on the internet for sale. And, photography friends and acquaintances that I had started buying them, and they really loved the tips and everything, but they hated the fact that they were in a loose deck because they would fall all over, there was no order to it. There was no Table of Contents. They couldn't find what they were looking for.

And, somebody said, "You should bind these in a book because that would be a lot better." So, I said, "Oh, that's a great idea." So, I did that. I made them a little bit bigger. They're 5x7. I put them into a book. I bound it together with just a spiral bound so it would stay open as you're doing your work.

And, I was trying to think of a clever name for it, and I thought, "Hmm, what do people associate with easy to follow tips that get you from Point A to Point B into a nice finished product?" And, I thought of recipe cards. These are like recipe cards. So, I called them Photoshop Recipe Cards, and that was the name of the book, and I put up a website. I was selling it off of that, but like with any website, you're an island out there all by yourself unless you're getting traffic.

So, “How can I get people to my website?” And, I noticed that people were buying and selling things on Craigslist. I posted an ad in the cameras and photo section for just a regular kind of ad, “Photoshop book; If you’re struggling, get a copy of this book. It really helped me.” I put the url for my website, and I got a few people buying from that.

So, I posted it here and I thought, “Well, there’s another city not too far away.” So, I posted it there and a few people bought it there. And, I thought, “Well, there’s a whole country full of Craigslist people.” So, I started posting it on different websites through all the different cities throughout the U.S. See, it’s a 70-page book, and I sold \$80,000 worth of it.

Michael: How much were you selling them for?

Bob: It’s about a \$20 book with shipping and everything.

Michael: So, how did you do it? Do you remember the headline of your ad?

Bob: I varied it because I found that if you’re doing a lot of different ads on Craigslist, if you try and use the same headline over and over again, they’re not going to allow you to do that. They’re going to tell you, “We already have an ad like this out here.” They don’t want you to have the same ad. So, I put in, “Photoshop tutorials, step-by-step book.” That was the popular one.

Michael: And then, in the description, what did you have there?

Bob: There again, I varied that a lot. But, one of the latest ones I have that’s doing really good, it says, “If you’re struggling to create cool photos with Photoshop, this book could help you to. It shows you step-by-step, recipe-style, how to do all kinds of cool edits and effects. Really simple to follow. Nearly 100 tips, tricks, and shortcuts. Great for beginners. Quick reference for experienced users. More detailed info here.” And, I put my website, which is PhotoshopTipCards.com.

Michael: And then, they would go to your website and then, there was a little bit more of a sales letter and an order button?

Bob: Right. It was strictly an order/pay. There was a sales letter, “buy now” buttons on the bottom through PayPal. The transaction would go through, I would get the notification from PayPal and I would just send the book out to them.

Michael: Wonderful. So, when you were really cranking it up, how many books could an average ad sell, and what category did you put the advertisement in on Craigslist?

Bob: I always put the ad under the...I think it's the "photos and camera equipment", or something like that. I'd always put it there because I figured that's where people who've got camera and stuff are buying and selling. They're into photography. That's where the buyers are going to be.

And, on an average ad, I would get...Because my website tracks how many people go there. I would typically get about 30 to 50 people going to my website, and from that, I would typically get 5 to 10 orders.

Michael: Not too bad. Did you capitalize the headline, or did you do upper and lower case or lower case?

Bob: I also varied that, but usually, I'll put PHOTOSHOP all in capitals.

Michael: I see.

Bob: I generally won't capitalize the whole thing because then, it kind of stands out. But, one thing I notice is I kind of follow along with the traditions of what everybody else is doing. So, I'll look at all the other ads in the photo section and, if there are a lot of people capitalizing and bolding and trying to go all out and grab attention, that's what I'll do too. But, if I see it's a more laidback kind of style, I don't want to be too standout-ish and you know, make it too sales-typey.

Michael: How did you stumble upon one of the wealthiest zip codes in the U.S., and how did you end up going on to start selling there that night? You had avoided this entire state until then. You thought it was a big mistake.

Bob: Yeah, I thought that was kind of a funny story. I was watching TV one night, which I don't do a whole lot of. I had some down time and I was flipping channels and 20/20 was on, and I was watching this show and they were doing a story about...I don't know. It was some horrific teen murder or something that went on in the city, and they were talking about how unlikely this was to occur in one of the wealthiest cities in the country.

Now, my eyes perked up because I wanted to hear, "What is this place?" And, they said the name of it and I was really surprised because it was not like one of the big metropolitan areas, you know,

New York or Chicago, one of those kind of areas or one of the wealthy suburbs that I'm familiar with.

But, it was in a State that I really hadn't paid any attention to because I always thought it was a more poorer State. I'd even gone onto to Craigslist and looked at some of the photo listings that were there and some of the bigger cities there and there just wasn't much action. So, I...

Michael: What was it called? Can you tell me the State and city?

Bob: Sure. It was Knoxville, Tennessee. I had never heard of that before, so when the show was over, I hopped on the internet and I looked on Craigslist to see if there was a potential for listing in Knoxville, and sure enough, I put an ad up there and I said, "Well, these people have got a lot of money."

You know, photography is one of those hobbies where if you're struggling to get by, it's kind of an expensive hobby and the people that do it don't usually spare too much of an expense to make sure that their photos look good. So, they're always buying something new. So, I popped an ad up there and I got five orders that night.

Michael: Wow, that's wonderful. And, did you continue to keep ads running in the Knoxville area and continue to bring in that type of orders?

Bob: Yeah, well, not every day. You know, I'll do a section at one time and when I see it's not doing too good or it drops way down in the rankings, it's just not pulling anymore, I'll take the ad out and move on to some other areas. And then, I'll pop back in there maybe the next month, and I'll put another ad up there. And, yeah, it's been pretty consistent each month I pop an ad up there.

Michael: Did you use any photographs at all?

Bob: I do. I experimented a little bit with that. I used to put a photo of the complete book. So, you're seeing the cover of it in kind of a 3D, so you can see how thick it is, and I also tried putting some samples of the tip card pages inside. And, I just found out that putting the samples of the pages inside, I don't know if it killed the curiosity of what's inside, so people didn't click over to the website, or they thought, "Oh, I know what this is." And, they just didn't bother.

So, I started leaving off the interior and I've just got a little picture of the cover and that seems to get people to hop over to the website for more information better.

Michael: Very good. What is your simple and free method for picking the best Craigslist regions to advertise?

Bob: It's an old trick I learned from another marketer, a guy named **[Jim Straw 09:16]**. You know, he always advocated selling where the buyers are, and so, what I would do is I usually hit the major cities. I found that a lot of these smaller towns just don't have enough listings for photo things. You'll have, you know, maybe four or five days all lumped into one listing, and I found out that's not a good place to advertise.

So, I just look to see who has the most listings for the amount of photo and camera gear for one day. And, some of the major cities, they'll fill up the whole page and half the next day. You'll have to scroll through the screen to include all the listings, and I found out that's a better spot to advertise, than to go into some of the smaller areas where maybe, there are only one or two listings for any camera gear each day.

Michael: You're listening to an exclusive interview found on Michael Senoff's HardToFindSeminars.com.

That's an excellent idea. Tell me how you created your simple book from OPK. First of all, tell me what is OPK and tell me how you did it.

Bob: OPK is Other People's Knowledge. When I started out, the whole book came about because I was really struggling in Photoshop. I was just pathetic in the beginning. I couldn't even open up a file to do any editing in there. So, I started going on the internet and looking for information on how to do Photoshop. So, I found a lot of written tutorials. I find a lot of video tutorials, and a lot of those are really complicated.

So, I really had to study all this stuff, but I didn't know going into it. So, I honed in on the videos because those were the most help for me when I was getting started. But, I noticed when I was looking at all the videos, I had a lot of problems with it because I'd have to keep looking at the video, going back to my Photoshop program, looking at the video, and kind of working my way back and forth through all the steps, and that was really time consuming and tedious.

So, what I started doing is watching the videos and just making notes, you know, like cliff notes or little shorthands of what they were doing in the video. And so, I created all these little note cards of how to do certain Photoshop techniques and that's how the whole book came about. It was just watching what other people are doing, recording their actions in basically, a different format, and putting it into pages that eventually, became my book.

Michael: Excellent. Can you share with me why you chose Photography, particularly Photoshop as your field?

Bob: The photography part came kind of naturally because I have an interest in Photography anyway. I had done in back in High School and I was just getting back into it with all the new digital technology that was coming out. But, the reason I decided to hone into it for a business reason is that photography is one of those hobbies that is not inexpensive to do.

So, the people that are really into photography are generally people who have a lot of extra money to spend and they're not afraid to spend it to improve the quality of the photos that they're putting out. The reason I went a step deeper into Photoshop is that so those people who are into photography, but Photoshop is a whole other level of editing.

And, just the initial investment to get into Photoshop, the program itself is around \$1,000. So, anybody getting into Photoshop and doing that kind of work has already put up a pretty sizeable investment to get going. So, they would hate to see it just sit there and you know, you have a \$1,000 program on your computer and you can't use it. So, that's why I saw a need there and an opportunity to talk to people that had money.

Michael: Now, with Craigslist, sometimes if you're listing multiple listings or similar listings in similar cities, they've got software. They can flag your ad. So, you have created a simple technique for reducing the number of flagged posts. How do you keep within the, I guess, terms of agreements, or without getting your ads banned and still be able to make some money consistently, without too much interference from the Craigslist police?

Bob: Well, I can write a pretty good sales pitch, Michael. I was in sales for quite a while. I've got a little bit of background in copywriting. But, what I found is that Craigslist is designed for the average person to sell his unwanted stuff. It's really just online classified ads, and I found out

if you try to get too fancy, you get flagged. So, it's best to keep your ads plain and simple without lots of hype.

Michael: That's good advice. That totally makes sense. Who's flagging you? The other users or are there people monitoring each one of these ads? Do you know?

Bob: I generally found that there are certain cities where there is like a self-appointed Craigslist militia and they kind of scan the ad. They're overzealous folks who scan the listings, looking to flag anyone they feel has violated their interpretation of Craigslist's terms and conditions.

Once your ad gets flagged in a particular city, I generally will try it at least one more time and maybe, two more times, and if it gets flagged repeatedly, then I just get out of that because I know that there's someone there who's watching all the stuff with a fine tooth comb and, you know, is maybe offended by whatever is up there.

Michael: Alright. What do you do to protect your account if you get repeatedly flagged?

Bob: It reminds me of a joke. "Doctor, Doctor, it hurts when I do this." and the Doctor says, "Don't do that." That has been my experience with that so, I found that if I'm getting flagged repeatedly in a particular area, I just stay out of that area. It's not worth losing your whole Craigslist account to try and put an ad in one particular area where somebody's obviously upset by it.

So, there are so many cities out there. Just look at the listing of Craigslist areas, and there is just no end to where you can go. So, you don't have to get hung up on a particular area.

Michael: What is your litmus test for deciding if you should respond to a potential customer's email request for more information?

Bob: I learned the hard way that when I get a request asking something like, "I'm interested. Where are you located?" If I reply to that, there's like a 90% chance I'm going to get flagged. They're kind of baiting you. They're testing you to see where you're at.

Michael: Because, they want to make sure you're local?

Bob: Yeah. Right. So, they're just checking to see if you're local. If you're local, they'll probably let you go. I'm obviously not. So, when I reply to

that, I go back within minutes of the reply and I'll see that my ad has been flagged. And so, over time, I've come to find out that that's just not going to work.

But, on the flip side, if the email asks specific questions about my book, if it seems friendly, it's signed by the sender and is from an email address that usually includes the sender's name, I'll usually reply to that. And, a lot of times I'll get sales, but I always have this...you know, I'm never sure. It's like 50/50 when I send out the reply if I'm going to get flagged or get an order.

Michael: That's good advice. When you're selling the same thing over and over again, change these things on a regular basis and get your ads accepted. What are these things you change regularly to get your ads accepted?

Bob: The three things that I change is, I notice you have to change the title wording or at least the capitalization. When that's identical, it almost always comes back. You know, Craigslist will put up a thing right there that says, "We already have an ad like this." So, you redo it or something. I find that you've got to change that.

Because the title word in mine is usually "Photoshop", I've also found that if I just change the "o"s to zeroes, that'll go through. That'll be enough change to make the Craigslist scanners ignore that. So, that's one. You must change the title word.

You must change the ad body copy. You can't have the same thing in there. You can rearrange the words and I just keep track of the ads that I put in there, and if I see if they're flagged, I don't put that ad in there anymore. I change them around. You know, I kept track of which ads do better. So, I just grab one of those ads and cut and paste it and pop it into Craigslist and go.

And, the other thing you should change...I'm not sure if this has any foundation at all, but I just do it because I think it helps keep it a little bit more anonymous, is that I change the filename of the photos that I upload.

Michael: That's a good idea as well. So, are you currently selling this on Craigslist now?

Bob: Yep. I'll pop the ads up there and it could be in any city or any State. I've gotten orders from international places too. I don't know if they monitor sites that I don't specifically go to. I think there are foreign

countries that have Craigslist listings. I think there are. If they're monitoring the other ads in different cities throughout the U.S., I occasionally will get an order from them too.

Michael: Have you seen anyone else selling a book on Photoshop like you're doing in your category?

Bob: I have not, no.

Michael: Do you use the relisting option when you go into your account for relisting the ads that make it really easy to get back up to the top?

Bob: Yeah, I use that all the time because I found out that if two days go by, your ad is far too far down the list, especially in the categories that I'm listing in. They can fill up a page every day and once you get off the first page, you're not going to get too much action on there, although I have occasionally gotten orders from ads that were three or four days old that I hadn't relisted yet.

But, I'll relist it at least once and then, I'll just move on to a different city and come back to it later if I'm not getting any orders.

Michael: I see. So, how many cities are you currently advertising in right now? If you go into your Craigslist account and in your account you can see relist, relist, relist, relist...I mean, is that what you're doing? You're logging in every day just hitting the relist on these cities and accounts that you have listed?

Bob: I'll generally go back to it about twice a week. I'll generally let them run about three days, and each one, I'll relist it. But, I probably have ten active listings at any one time. Usually when I go in, I'll usually create three new listings for different cities and start those running to keep the cycle moving through.

Michael: Have you played around with different price point, other than \$20?

Bob: I have, yeah. I've gone up. I've gone down. That seems to be the spot where I get the most orders.

Michael: \$20.

Bob: Yeah. You know, after all, it's a 70-page book, even though it's Photoshop tips. When you think about it, there are thousands of Photoshop tutorials out there that you can get for free on YouTube.

You can get a zillion websites that you can go to for written tutorials. There are just all kinds of free material out there.

The fact that anybody is actually paying for it is bonus, but people want things in different formats. I've had people tell me that, "Your way of laying the Photoshop out for me is the most helpful I've found."

Michael: Wonderful. Do you have any other books other than the Photoshop book you're testing currently on Craigslist?

Bob: Yeah, I'm currently about to put a new book out there. It's called Book Writing Magic, and it's actually a book about creating books like the Photoshop book that I did. A lot of people have an idea that book writing is too hard or they don't have anything worthwhile that they could offer an audience out there that people would pay for.

So, I created a new book. It's called Book Writing Magic, and it goes through just simple steps, and I've had a lot of books out there on Kindle and Amazon, and they're all "how to" books. They're all basically formatted to just walk everybody step by step, how to go from point A to point B and get the results they want.

And, this new book, Book Writing Magic, shows people how to take their idea or any knowledge that they have in their head and/or maybe that they don't have in their head yet, that they just want to learn like I did with the Photoshop book, and just go out there and get the information and put it in a logical format that's helpful to people, and you can write your own book fairly easily.

Michael: Alright. That is excellent. So, for our listeners, if anyone was interested in your Book Writing Magic book, what would be the best thing for them to do?

Bob: I have a website out there, BookWritingMagic.com. They can go on there and get more information about the book, and they can also order the book directly from that if they want to, or they can go on to Amazon or Kindle.com and order it as well.

Michael: Okay. Very good.

Bob: Can I tell you a funny story about that book?

Michael: Sure, Bob.

Bob: I actually did that book because I did a talk for a group of about 20 businessmen and women about how they should write their own book, and just from that five-minute talk I did, four people in the group had started and finished their book when I talked to them not even a month later.

So, what I did was I expanded on the information I gave them and created another step-by-step system to help people create the book they've always wanted to write and show them how to make money with it too, and that's how Book Writing Magic came about.

Michael: That's wonderful. I'm sure there's a lot of valuable information in there. Well, I appreciate it, Bob. This has been a great little Craigslist success story and I think the advice and the tips you shared are very valuable, and my students who are interested in making a small fortune in Craigslist will find this very valuable. I thank you for your time.

Bob: Great, and I appreciate talking with you, Michael. You've always got great information on your website, so I hope that just adds to it.

Michael: Thank you. Well, we'll be in touch. I hope this gets you some sales.

Bob: Great. Thank you.

Michael: Alright, bye bye.

For more exclusive interviews on business, marketing, advertising and copywriting, go to Michael Senoff's HardToFindSeminars.com.