



Episode 19

Danny Iny



Danny Iny is the founder of Firepole Marketing, host of the Business Reimagined podcast, bestselling author of multiple books including Engagement from Scratch!, The Audience Revolution, and Teach and Grow Rich. He's also the creator of the acclaimed Audience Business Masterclass and Course Builder's Laboratory training programs, which have together graduated over 3,000 value-driven online entrepreneurs. He lives in Montreal, Canada with his wonderful wife (and business partner) Bhoomi, and their beautiful baby daughter.

Voiceover

This is Business Reimagined.

Audra

Every week, we talk with thought leaders and revolutionaries who are bringing innovation to their industries, like today's guest, our very own Danny Iny.

Danny

If you look at the big picture, if you look at creating real value, you recognize that being successful financially and creating success for others, creating impact, they go hand and hand. They come together.

Voiceover

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Audra

Hi there. I'm Audra Casino. Today, we have a very special episode in store for you. Danny Iny and I sat down to talk about the end of Firepole Marketing. We've had the incredible opportunity to serve a massive community over the past five years, and the company itself has grown to over 25 people. You might be wondering why. Why would we go to the effort of rebranding such a successful company? It's not as simple as a name change, but according to Danny, that's a big part of it.

Danny

It wasn't as bad then as it is now. I've said this publicly in different places. I hate the name. I think it's not reflective of who we are and what we do. A big part of that is that we were not doing what we do five years ago. Five years ago, it was like, "Let's start a blog that will teach people about marketing, let's have a course, and let's use it to sell our consulting services." We were just getting started, not really a clear vision of what it was going to be or where we were going to go. It wasn't a great name but it worked.

Audra

Firepole's roots were in the same shifting ground where a lot of entrepreneurs get their start. They have a vision but lack the clarity to see what the future will hold for them. Their beginning years might reflect their personal values but not their real potential for their growing business. Sometimes, that lack of clarity is almost willful.

Danny

I had a bias against internet marketing for a long time because it's such a legitimately disreputable industry. For a long time, I resisted doing anything relating to online marketing. When I created Write Like Freddy, a lot of people don't know this because it was just so long ago, when I created Write Like Freddy, which became my first blockbuster course about my rapid writing and guest posting strategies, it was in response to this massive demand from the audience and I resisted it for a very long time because I didn't want to be teaching online marketing



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type stuff. To the point that even though it was our most successful product for the year and a half until we launched the Audience Business Masterclass, there was no link to it on our website. It was completely separate. I was like, "I don't want to be known for this guest posting thing or for this blog writing thing."

Audra

Danny couldn't hide from the demands of his audience, or the success he found in creating what they were asking for, even if it was initially against what he wanted. What Danny found was that he could bring his values and his ethics to a space, along with creating stellar content that desperately needed it.

Danny

At some point, it just crystallized that, "Okay, the things that people are really resonating with that we have a really unique and valuable perspective on is audience, is engagement, is the relationships that we build with our audience, the values that we're bringing to our work." That's what people are resonating with and it's because that's what we're most passionate about. It's not like an under the cover by the way kind of thing, it's like this is who we are and what we do.

Audra

With his newfound insight, Danny began to realize how different his company was from what he began with years ago. The name Firepole Marketing had been decided on in a Montreal restaurant over breakfast and it was chosen after an hour and a half of searching through available domain names. The rationale? When your business is on fire, you don't use the stairs. You use the pole, like a fireman. Obviously, it was time for a change.

Danny

I feel like we've evolved further and further away from what we used to be and so the name ... It's reflective of where we were and isn't reflective at all of where we are and really works at cross purposes for where we want to go. Firepole Marketing, say



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that to someone ... The people who know us, the more you get to know someone, the more you associate everything that you know and feel with them with the name. Firepole Marketing, say that to someone who's never heard of us. Show them the website that, the messaging was great but you've got this garish Internet marketing you've read an orange everywhere. You look like a sleaze ball Internet marketer. That's what it looks and feels like.

Audra

Right. Tell me about ... It couldn't have been an easy decision because like you said, the people who know us have come to know our name and that's synonymous with the quality of work. Tell me about that moment when you just finally said, "Yes, we're going to do this. We're going to change the name."

Danny

You know what? That wasn't so hard. It's a name that again, I didn't like very much. I knew it had to change. I don't know who said it, but I thought it was very powerful and something that I try to live by. Something that will have to be done eventually should be done immediately. Whether that means ending a relationship, cutting off a project, starting a new direction, it's always going to be worse if you do it later. Yes, there are costs, and we don't ... Right now, as we're recording this and as this is going to air, the new name, the new look will have just gone live. I don't know what the fallout's going to be. I don't know how many people are going to stop receiving our emails because they don't recognize the new name in their inbox. I don't know what all that's going to be and I'm assuming, I'm hoping there won't be a huge cost but there may very well be a substantial cost. Whatever it is, it's going to have to happen sooner or later. It's cheaper to do it now than later. If there is going to be all that disruption, then you've got to do it.



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Audra

I'm curious, you're the visionary obviously. What did Bhoomi think? Was she just immediately on board?

Danny

That's a good question. I don't remember. I want to say she ... I don't remember having any big arguments or disagreements about this. I'm going to say she probably was. I'm also going to say it probably because ... She doesn't come from our industry. She had a "real job" at a management consulting firm when I met her. She came to join us at what was then Firepole Marketing when we were a couple years in, we were doing a little more than half a million dollars in annual revenue. I was managing all the numbers on Excel and in my head. I always knew what they were within, give or take 10%. We were reaching a point where give or take 10 percent's a lot of money. People sometimes take this to mean, "Oh, I was doing so well that my wife could quit her job and come work with ..." No, she did me a favor. She wanted to quit her job but she was doing us a favor by coming on board and her involvement's a big part of why we grew. I usually don't have a lot of flattering things to say about the grownup corporate environment.

Audra

Nor do I.

Danny

But coming from that environment, the name, the look, Firepole, it's like ... It's not confidence inspiring. I get that, which is why I'm assuming ... Maybe I'm just blocking it out, but I can't remember that we had any big arguments or disagreements about it.

Audra

No, I think you probably would've remembered it. You mentioned a little bit earlier, you're the type Danny, I've worked with you. You love to test things. You love to document and test and just make sure that things are going to be a success before



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you do them. This isn't the case with the rebrand. What is your thought process there?

Danny

There's a lot that you can test, but there's also things that you can't really test and you shouldn't really test. When it comes to you ... Let's use the, politics are fresh on my mind. We just had elections here in Canada, which is ... I never pay attention to anything political at all. My wife does and so I know we had elections. She made me go vote. Which is not to say, everyone should vote, voting is important, but the point is, if she hadn't told me, I wouldn't have known. Anyways, it's at the top of my mind.

When it comes to specific policies, when it comes to initiatives, again, you want your leaders to test and make sure it's going to work, make sure it's going to be successful. There's no point rolling out a program regionally, nationally, whatever, if it's going to be a failure. Test that, make sure it's working. Learn, optimize. I'm all for that. When it comes down to what your leader believes in, what they want to stand for, I don't think that's something you test. I don't think you split test to see which position is going to play better in the polls or with your audience. I think it really comes down to ... For you to be a leader of any substance, you've got to stand up for what you believe in.

The rebrand, the new name, the solidification and articulation of where we are and where we're going, which is what the rebrand really is, it's about standing up for what we think is important. I certainly hope this will be well-received and I'm confident that it will. If it isn't, if a whole lot of people say, "You know what? Actually, Firepole Marketing is the brand that I resonated with and I liked whatever that implicit feeling was and ..." This new direction that is more open and aspirational and speaks to the vision that me as an individual and us as an



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organization have, if that doesn't work for people, then maybe it is time for us to part ways because this is what we stand for and this is what I believe in and this is the impact that I want to make. You can't test everything. You shouldn't test everything.

Audra

What steps have you taken up in this process that have helped people stay on board, to identify and communicate with them what the new message is or the refined message is?

Danny

That's a great question because a huge part of ... We're talking about now the tactics, the strategies of a rebrand is that people need to be involved and onboard. There're a lot of people who ... If they've been following Firepole Marketing and engaged with us for a long time, if one day simply, my emails came from a different address, and we haven't said the name yet on the call. I don't know if...

Audra

We have it. I think we're all a little bit worried. We've been, "Don't say it, don't say it," but this is actually, in less than a week, this is happening. We can say it.

Danny

This is airing after the rebrand will have gone live. The new name is Mirasee. The tagline is Reimagine Business. Mirasee is a play on vision, it connotes vision, mira connotes vision in Latin languages, see is obviously to see something. It's a coined name and I can talk about what that means, which means it's among other things, it's an open canvas, it allows you to put your own meaning into it rather than glomming onto existing concepts. It connotes vision, it connotes seeing what is possible and then moving in that direction. It connotes not being constrained by what's already out there and what the existing frame of reference in the landscape



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might be and it speaks to the deep conviction that I have that business is a concept that is deeply, deeply misunderstood.

People think business is about making money. It's not. Making money is a small part of it, but business is about much more than that. Business is about sustainably creating the impact that you care about creating, making the difference that you care about making. If it's not profitable, it's not sustainable, so it has to be profitable, but it's really about impact. It's about the things that you care about. Our mission is ... I can go into more detail but ...

Audra

Yeah.

Danny

It's to reimagine business. That's what we're inviting our audience and our community to come along with us as we embark on this journey.

Audra

Awesome. As a little aside, I heard one of your other interviews that you did. You mentioned that Google missed an incredible opportunity and I tended to agree. Back to my previous question, how are you communicating this to your audience? How are you getting them to understand your vision? Could you speak to that a little bit more?

Danny

Sure. What Google did for those who don't know, Google a little while back ... First of all, they changed the parent company. The parent company is no longer Google, it's Alphabet, which is a holding company. Google, they changed the logo. If you've seen the Google page, Google homepage for the last few months, it looked a little wrong and you couldn't put your finger on why. It's because they changed the logo, they changed the fonts. It's a Sans Serif font and I personally don't like it. I think it's a



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little reminiscent of fridge magnets for kids. That's because I was used to something. It had a meaning for me, I grew up with Google in a lot of ways and I got to the homepage and it looked different. I didn't have a narrative, I didn't have a story. Something was missing.

We're not doing that. You didn't just show up to Firepole Marketing one day and it's like, "No, this is mirasee.com now." That's what it is. You're like, "Where am I? Did my computer just glitch out? What's going on?" We've worked very hard and we're still in the process of working hard to communicate what is changing and why it's changing. I introduced the narrative of the change, I actually foreshadowed this back in April with an April Fools' email. That aside, for the last week, I've been telling people, "Hey, things are changing, we're moving in a new direction, new name. Here's what it means, here's why this has been happening." When it was introduced, "Okay, here's what's different. Here's why this is reflective of where we're going," and there's more messaging that is going to be coming out over the next few days as well.

Something that we've built into the site is that if you land on a page, if you try to navigate to a firepolemarketing.com page, it will redirect to the appropriate page but there's a little popup that says, "Hey. Were you looking for Firepole Marketing? We're Mirasee now. Here's what this is about." We've involved people in the narrative of how we began where we began, how we have been in the process of becoming what we are becoming, which is not just our story as a company or my story as an entrepreneur, it's really our story as a community in terms of where we're going, what we stand for, with what business can and should be. This is not our change that we are informing people of. It is the articulation of the evolution of



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who we are and what we do as a community that we are sharing with everyone who's been a part of it over the last five years.

Audra

With your new vision, you know the change, the shift in what we're doing, who is this for really?

Danny

This is for anyone who believes that business can be better. There's the proximate and the ultimate in terms of where things are going. The proximate is right now. Our work is about serving people who care about doing business online in our industry in a way that is ethical and heartfelt and value creating and at the same time successful and profitable. I don't believe you have to choose one versus the other. If you buy into the ideas that we've spoken about for years about putting the audience first, about building engagement, about creating real relationships, about all of our course building and piloting ideas which at their core are about marrying smart business with putting the audience first, then you're in the right place, you're not abandoning any of that.

We are becoming much more careful and selective about what we present to our audience, what content we publish. We've really dug deep into rewriting our policies in terms of what gets published on the blog for example to really raise the bar. We've been one of the best blogs in the industry for quite some time now as per lots of other people saying so but I haven't been satisfied. We're raising the bar quite a great deal. That's in the short term. If you want to know about building an online business in a way that is successful and profitable but also ethical and value creating that puts the audience first and builds real engagement and relationships, then in the proximate sense, this is where you should be. Mirasee is the place for you.



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In the ultimate sense, Mirasee is growing into a hub for anyone that believes that business can be better. Anyone who is excited about the vision of reimagining business. You can see that evolution in most of our content and our courses for example, which is where we obviously make our money, and create the sustainable opportunity for us to continue to serve, versus our podcast. This very podcast that you're listening to. Our courses are very much about building online business, whether it's by growing and engaging an audience and serving them, whether it's by building and selling courses, using the audience first approach that we teach. It's about who we serve in the very proximate sense.

The podcast is much more about the reimagination of business globally. There's certainly lessons that you can take out of that that are super relevant to any individual who's operating in our industry and building a business today. I'd like to think there's a lot that's interesting and relevant for someone who isn't an online entrepreneur yet, who isn't very active in this phase but is excited and inspired by what business can become.

Audra

For those people, could you spell it out? What is it exactly that makes business "better"?

Danny

The intentions that we bring to it and the non-myopic perspective that we apply to it. People implicitly think very often that they can always make a choice between doing the "smart business thing", like the way of making the most money and doing the right thing, the good thing. That's only true when you're looking at a very, very short time frame. If you zoom out a little bit, you find that the get rich quick kind of stuff where you're just taking advantage of people to make money, it's not sustainable. If you look at the big picture, if you look at creating real value, you



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recognize that being successful financially and creating success for others, creating impact, they go hand in hand. They come together.

Audra

That plays into your value is greater than cost.

Danny

Absolutely. The core idea is that, and this is why I love business. It's that business is inherently creative, it's a creative act and that you're creating something that wasn't there before. The only time a business is sustainable is when what people get from you, you being the entrepreneur, you being the business, is worth more to them than what they are paying to get it. Value is created for them. What you're getting from them, the money is worth more to you than what you're delivering because it empowers you to do more and create more impact. Again, creative, there's a net creation happening. That's just magical to me.

Audra

Do you have any parting thoughts on what people can expect day to day from Mirasee?

Danny

Change is one of those things that happens very slowly and very quickly all at the same time. On the surface, the biggest change that people can look forward to from Mirasee as opposed to Firepole Marketing is that we're putting a really high emphasis on raising our editorial standards. The content we send you is going to be ... It's been good but it's going to get a whole lot better. Other than that, a whole lot isn't going to change right away because Mirasee, the change in our identity, hasn't been about abandoning what we are to become something different. It's been about changing our name and our look and our feel and our identity to reflect who we have become and paved the way for where we're going. Everything that you probably loved about Firepole Marketing is not going anywhere. It's still going to be



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here, you can just look forward to more and better of the same and exciting new things that are coming. I would definitely say I appreciate what's here, enjoy what's coming, and watch this space.

Audra

Thank you so much for joining me today as we celebrate the end of one era and the start of a new, exciting beginning, on to bigger and better things through Mirasee. As I said in the beginning, it's common for entrepreneurs to start without an extremely focused idea of where they're going. One thing that rarely changes is their values. The things that these entrepreneurs hold dear. For Danny Iny, that is bringing honesty, ethics and genuine engagement to whatever space he's in. That is the most important thing that will never change.

Voiceover

This has been Business Reimagined with Danny Iny. Join us next time as we talk with Lisa Bloom.

Lisa

When people understand the power of connecting their own personal story to the project they're on, to the service they're providing, to the product that they're putting out to the market, and they can talk about it in that way, the client engages in an entirely different way.

Voiceover

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