



PHASES OF A
COMPUTER BUSINESS
AND THE DANGER OF
EXPANDING
TOO QUICKLY

with *Lisa Hendrickson*



Bryce: Hello, this is Bryce Whitty from Technibble.com and welcome to our first and hopefully many podcast interviews. My guest here with me today is Lisa Hendrickson and also a close friend of mine. She started her computer support business on the side while working for someone else. And eventually went full time with the heavy use of social media.

She expanded to the point of having three brick and mortar stores at one time and eventually have to close or sell them all. She built up successful remote support only business and can live relatively location-less.

This is her story. Lisa, thank you for joining me.

Lisa: Thank you for having me Bryce

Bryce: No problem. To paint a picture of where you are today, tell us about the business today.

Lisa: Well.... I think... if you have been following me on Technibble forums or through my podcasting shows. It's been kind of known that I have now been living on Florida Keys. Been here about five weeks or so?

And because i am remote only, I, you know, can live where I want to and when I'm watching the weather in Minnesota get colder, I am happy to be here right now.

Bryce: Nice nice. Tell us about the business, so you do mostly remote support work and office 360 work?

Lisa: Well, you know that, it's kind of changed up a little bit now Bryce. It's not just remote support work its actually business application support. Because remote support is the way to support your clients but the work I am actually doing in the past year.

I have kind of outsourced a lot of my virus removal tune-ups and all of that and my focus is now Outlook and Office 365. So when you kind of get in a niche market you know you changed it all up. And its solely now, it's all remote. Focusing on those 2 product lines to get the work done.

Its kind of hot right now. So I kind of got lucky because I have so many years of experience with Outlook. That when office 365 started to get popular, I was in the perfect position to slide right in and work on that too. So that's where I think that a lot of Technicians might need to fine-tune their Outlook skills coming up here.

Bryce: Yeah yeah, so, well, take us back in time, I think lot of listeners would be really interested to see how it all started. This is the end goal and you are doing very well. But I think people would like to know how you got to this point so will you take us back in time and let us know how basically the whole business started?

Lisa: Well, the business started... officially, well not officially, in 2003 when I was in between some jobs and it was a summer of unemployment, I got laid off from my job and I got to play around. And a friend of mine and I created a... Lets... you know, have Lisa go to a women's home and fix computers. And at that time, interestingly geek squad.

The home base is out of Minneapolis, so I used to see geek squad boys back with their beetles. You know they were just getting started going big time. So you know I can do that too. You know and I just had some downtime so.

The CallThatGirl brand got built. I have said this before. Just from the people at my corporate job saying "call that girl at the helpdesk" so it kind had a ring to it. Didn't have a technical feel but that was my first attempt.

And I marketed to the... I don't know if anybody is listening but, know, but there is a company called Curves, That is a workout place for women. So I sent out 80 flyers telling the Curves in the Minneapolis areas as my first marketing efforts and I got a few calls, so I know I can do it. Then I went to got a corporate job shortly after

And I started working on clinic...

And there wasn't many techs doing it. So I said well, I'll start up my business again and that's when Call That Girl was kind of official. Actually, got business cards, I had a website, and you know, did some advertising. Kind of just like, "I'll do it part time."

And then I moved away, I left that job, so CallThatGirl kind of just went through a stop for awhile. And then moving into 2007, about this time there. I got fired from a job and I sat down and said "That's it I'm done."

I am done looking for jobs, I mean, when you are IT, your job jump a little and I just knew I want to do my own thing So 2007 is I went full time and I had to go through the you know, days of unemployment and fighting it and should I get a job and should I try this and I don't even know what I am doing and Bryce you know this, when you start an adventure. If you don't know what you are doing, it is even more stressful.

Bryce: Yeah its difficult, you just have to solely take them as they come, just take some punch really and see how it goes. I have been there and done that before.

Lisa: What I don't even know... I have told this at the start before; I don't even know what a Work Order was. Now in my corporate jobs, I knew we had a ticket system. That made sense. But it took me a long time, in fact, it took me my first failure at a home job for my friend to go "Lisa, you need a paper work order to take them with you and have them sign off" and I was like. You know what, I had to after I have that because I lost a \$135.

So that's a small success for me to learn from a failure. Because you go through the bumps of you know, someone that doesn't want to pay you or you drive too far for a job you should have secured better or you know, all just the little stuff of your first year, I think. I tried tribulations of owning a business, plus I didn't know I think about marketing or advertising. Nothing.

Bryce: When you first started CallThatGirl, how did you find you've got your first client? How did you advertise for example?

Lisa: Well you know, I kind of got lucky, my neighbor upstairs was. She kind of came from a corporate world and she said "You know Lis, you should get out and do networking. I was thinking like IT networking." And I was like "No, I am not a networking person." She was like "Oh you are. You just need to go the events."

Then I found out what networking events were and what really works on my favor was a year before I started a business where you have a LinkedIn account. So when I went out to network, I started finding

all this people have business cards and I was really enjoying, you know, because I had my new cards. I was all like, excited and one day, I had a stack of cards and I was like, I am going to invite them to LinkedIn. There was like 30 or 40. And I then started seeing people interact with me and back then, social media was very kind of new I guess? And it came around a time of the recession up here, states starting. So, to me this was like I launched my business through Social Media because I got active input.

So social media was huge for me plus I went to the events, gave up my cards.

Bryce: That's the huge part of it is just getting out there and getting your face out there and letting people know who you are and that you're a good person and I think works even better than just advertising in a newspaper. It's sort of 1 on 1 and people kind of try to engage you in the first, sort of 7 seconds of whatever they say. It works a lot better.

Lisa: You know what though, if I had to do it now. I look back how I started my business. I don't know if I can do it exactly the same way now.

Bryce: Why is that?

Lisa: You know, because LinkedIn is changed so much since 2007, and it's just more like a thread posting of junk almost, it's really changed a lot.

Back in the day, people were engaged in it. They want to meet you, they want to, you know, get together. And also to add, events were a lot more popular that people want face to face stuff. So I go out 5 nights a week to all these events, come home with ton of cards, pumped them to my LinkedIn and then start doing newsletters.

Nowadays, people, we barely do any face to face events and people aren't connecting in person anymore.

Bryce: Yeah

Lisa: You know, so they all are "Let's all be in Twitter together, let's all do this and that" and then you might, how you meeting face to face to bring that personal touch to it. Which I have learned with Google you don't need to anymore but like I am saying its I don't think I could've done the same

business start up now. Building a brand is tough as it is but well I got lucky back then, I had the energy to go out.

I was recommending people to get out as much as you can. No matter what. I am doing that here right now. Going to events

Bryce: A whole new place and so we can start a little locally at least anyway. I know that you brought your clients along with you being relatively “virtual” but I can imagine.

Lisa: Yeah it is different down here from marketing I’m actually going to taste of Florida marketing/networking. Cause its really loose down here and very casual were from Minneapolis is very business suit, business casual and people down here wear shorts, t-shirts, hats, it’s all lot different.

They really were... Just open, you know. But I went to my first event, the last week and I, you know, met a bunch of people and you got to tell you how you do it and move somewhere fresh.

Bryce: Yeah it’s almost starting over.

Lisa: Yeah I am lucky I got my clientele and my future clients are Google common, but I feel like I am part of the community here. I have to get out. I want to.

Bryce: Yes, start the referrals and that sort of thing? Now, it’s about this point you started bricks and mortar stores you reach this sort of a level's success that’s required two stores, tell us a little bit about that.

Lisa: Well the first store I had actually I had to have. Because I was just tired of hauling computers to my basement apartment and I was just was, kind of I don't want to do it anymore so I went and rented a little store front and then kind of get robbed a couple of times and I don't want to be robbed anymore so I moved out to a cool suburb and that was an office. I call it a store but it was an office and I had that for like a couple of years. And then I have happened to move back to my hometown to live in my house that I owned down there so for like 6 months I drove back and forth and that was about the time I started being on Technibble, during that time.

And then I finally I said okay I will open up a store in Rochester because I think that the marketing proved that it could do it and the... I think I bit more that I could chew probably. You know, I still drive to Minneapolis and still be in Rochester and still attend to the store and then finally I have hired a contractor to run the Minneapolis store and then I hired my intern-moved-to full-time employee. So I didn't have to be at both locations all the time. It made it a little easier. But then the marketing was up that I could afford two people.

Bryce: Those two people could run the store relatively themselves like just...

Lisa: Yeah.

Bryce: Were you might actually on site and fixing computers and they were at the physical presence at the store or...

Lisa: Well I was either working in either one of the stores, I would drive back and forth. Still, one day I will be with one of my techs and then the next day I will be at the Minneapolis store but also back then I was doing a lot of Minneapolis marketing and networking side I had events, I had to go to. So I trusted the two guys to run each store and then they became tech friends and basically I was still running all the phones.

Bryce: Yeah

Lisa: All I was triaging everything. And so it's a time I started watching the money kind of go up, but when you started making money, the money goes right back out. The employees, the needs, the tech and need to order parts and I was like you know I think I went back I think to those days, I am like if I know what I was got to be up for, I don't think I would have done that. For sure. It only got worse Bryce. There are a couple more years after that.

Bryce: At what point did you feel like that you wanted to sort of break into those stores were you pretty much sort of busting at the seams or was it more of a leap of faith like "I believe I can get a lot more of people if I have a bricks and mortar store."

Lisa: Well I think back to the first office I had in Minneapolis it was kind of an exciting thing I was like I have my own office store you know. It was like a sign of success and basically I was just like tired of dragging the computers around. I want people to drive them to me.

And I got to admit it was kind of nice to say I have my own store you know and I felt successful in a sense.

Now, 6 years later, I don't judge success by stores. I judge success by happiness now because I already been through that what did not worked for me, and if some people listening, if they are like ill charge up to have a store, maybe the rest of the interview will prove you may need to do something else sometimes.

Stores are not a sign of success to me is the sign of a... you have to be there 9 to 5, you have to have it manned and you have to be there. There have a lot of struggles with that I had.

Bryce: Yes I think I know what you are saying with the physical side when people have something to see from the outside they'll see 2 to 3 stores "ooh you are quite successful" but it's often the home office people who are just turning over the massive revenue because they haven't got a lot to spend.

Lisa: Yeah and also just a side note here, I am seeing a lot of people in the forums talk about that they have their own home office and their tech has a home office and they're doing remote and then they don't need the overhead because what they're doing they don't need a store or an office for that matter and I am like "yeah that's why you should do it", you don't have to pay for the overhead.

Keep running your business how you have been and add just more people on.

Bryce: You hired a full time contractor for this, was that for the stores or was that for a later on point?

Lisa: So here's what kind of happened, its I had contractors for awhile and then now to add in to the situation, I didn't talked about this freely on the forums a lot but I did sometimes. I ended up landing a contract with a very large retail shop and they slowly tested us and once they said okay we want to work with you. They kind of forced me to have employees because I was going to be doing 4 states.

And when you are managing, you know, that's actually 22 stores in 4 states, people had me you know, we have unemployment. It was a huge quarter million dollar contract. And it was probably, supposedly, half a million dollar contract after the first year so basically in 2011 to 2012, I spent that whole year gearing up the company to support that first contract and support the secondary contract.

Bryce: How did you get that contract?

Lisa: Well, you know what? Funny enough, is I had, before I moved back down to Rochester, I was planning on what I was going to do for marketing. And you know, how you just make a list and stuff, I said, go to these kinds of retail stores and ask them if they need computer help.

And one day, I had an assistant called there for me 'cause she have nothing to do when they said "yeah come on down, let's talk." Well, one short talk with the manager turned into "hmm, let's have corporate talk about this because you already have a store in Minneapolis, you have one in Rochester and dadah dadah dtadah".

Next thing, I am having meetings with the vice president them saying "we like your ideas we want to slowly have you do one store and have you do two". Within the short amount of time I had to, a store, that was my third store and that store was 40 miles away. Next thing you know I have 5 employees and I went to 16 and it was within a short amount of time, it grew very quickly. And because they end up giving us all 22 stores within the six month period.

Bryce: Yeah yeah that is massive expansion.

Lisa: That's why I tell people I was told this when you grow too fast, you better watch out. Because I didn't have my stuff in order for that kind of growth period.

Bryce: So you are talking about your systems or you just didn't know what you were doing or systems?

Lisa: Systems, processes, everything. I didn't have like any HR policies but I kinda stayed consistent with what I was doing but I mean, you know it was just a messy, grew too fast, the thing that is the company, was loving the work we are doing. We are doing a thousand systems a month. We were banging out computers!

So yeah, it was awesome. It was a lot of work and the techs were loving it and everybody was happy and, and, to kind of, let you, let the listeners know about the third store, that the third store got opened right after I opened my second store, like shortly like maybe 6 months later. Because I had an intern who was like "hey, you should go..." it was my college town."Yeah you should come back to the college town and open up a store, literally, I think what he wanted was for me was to open up a store for him because he lived there and so I did.

Bryce: You mentioned in a previous chat out, I have spoken with you that you eventually let that person have access to the store or run it completely by himself or you sold it to him or something?

Lisa: Well, it was a year after I opened it I let him have it. I basically said I am not going to renew the lease, I am not making any money of the store and I can't keep putting money into a store he knows while I take it. Just take the whole thing and I just want to be done with it.

That was when the start of the collapse I called it happened, it was you know, the collapse of that business, of CallThatGirl. Not the whole company but I just didn't like the hardware, the stores, the order and parts and all the employee drama and it just got to be too much for me. It wasn't the right company for me and I started like I just gave him the store. And now he's thriving and re branded it and he loves it. So I am happy. Yeah he is happy with it and he's successful.

Bryce: Was there any sort of events that caused the start of the downtime with the stores?

Lisa: Well I think it started in my Minneapolis store. I went from a small office to a real store, store. Like real brick and mortar, wasn't just an office and I put a lot of money into that and then that contract, they said they will not go with that second quarter million, and we are going to be done in 2 weeks. Now my downfall with that is that I didn't have a lawyer reviewed it but, honestly, there was no service level agreement, there was no out clause, they just realized in their contract they had signed that they can just end it so I spent all these time and money to build and they just cancelled that.

We were doing great work, no problems. It was an in house decision based on their budget. After that, everything started to go downhill. Every month I have to let people go and every month I have to make more decisions and finally I sold the store to one tech and then the second one I just closed up and said I was done and then Rochester, I said I was done few months after that, and I felt a lot of Freedom.

Bryce: I suppose it's a bit bittersweet closing all those stores you expanded something quite large. 3 stores is very impressive and obviously huge contracts but as you said the loss of the stress. It takes a lot to manage that and then not having to do that, I can imagine what should be a huge weight of your shoulders.

Lisa: Took awhile for me to close the stores even after they were locked up because people calling for so long. "Hey I am at your store, you are not here". I am like "I know I closed it", that probably took 6 months for people to stop being at the store itself. So you got to remember that you were out branding a store, people will still call and come.

Now luckily because I had remote support going, I can say "I am really sorry, lets remote in and if they weren't too mad at me for wasting their time they would go home and hook up and I'll remote in. During that time there was some sadness and guilt and regret but on the other hand I was so happy and

it's like a mishmash of emotions like I don't have to be at the store anymore. I didn't like being on the store when I was on a \$200 outlook job and someone come in with a fan broke.

I don't know how to replace fans for one thing so then I was like just stressful. I am not a hardware person. That's where this whole thing is kind of of chummed for me as the biggest learning lesson is, I wasn't passionate about the hardware and I don't know what happened and how did that all happened. I think the excitement of growing a successful business kind of got me. I don't get excited about that kind of success anymore

Bryce: As I mentioned a little bit earlier it's a different kind of success you know. The three stores look awesome but once it all closes. It seems you got over it.

Lisa: I got over it quickly once I realized that I was still rocking with remote support. Because the branding and the marketing I have done from all those years states wrong and I learned. I have spoken a lot of this in many podcast shows that people call and say "Hey I wanna bring it to the store if you like", "Let me just remote in".

So flipping this people to remote was absolutely easy and it was so easy to do that. Once it's over the store problems, now I finally can spend probably the last, or almost a year now. Just focusing on rebuilding what I want in a company. When I want it to run and how I want to manage it in my life in the past years been so much more enjoyable and I am running a company I enjoy. I don't have high blood pressure which was serious. If you try to do all that work and I had 29 employees, in 2012. I mean that's a lot...

Bryce: That is lot to handle.

Lisa: I laugh but it's true. It's like "How are you even?" "Did you have a heart attack during that time??" But now I got a nice team of contractors and I am not stressed out and I am still making money so is those contractors and I am not stressed out and I am still making money.

Bryce: So those contractors are they doing physical work or are you entirely in remote support and then the contractors doing the actual hands-on stuff, tell us a bit about that.

Lisa: Well, I have a outsourced partner who manages my remote support work during the day and night and weekends and they also manage a couple of other site services I do. And there are two of those

techs. Now we have a relationship for about a year now so that's been real nice and then we have my technician in Minneapolis who does all my on-site. I have a back-up onsite tech in case he is not available. Because I have lots of clients in Minneapolis, so I have to have on-site people. And then I have a tech in Rochester that I still work with, he is really not a contractor, he is more of a referral partner and I just give him the work and he can do his own billing. I think that's it. I got the four groups, works out fine though.

Bryce: Do your clients have any problems sort of knowing that you are down in Florida and its completely remote support? Are they fairly accepting over remote support?

Lisa: Well, they're all accepting of it. I think the only people like my Minneapolis people throughout all the marketing I have done there, very used to it. I think the problem I am having is my fresh new clients of Google that are new to me because in the past year, I have also upped my Google work so I am getting like 50% a week of Google now.

So I am not just a Minneapolis or some national there. And they get nervous about remote support the most. I tell them, "Look, if you want me to come to Tucson, do this migration it's going to be very expensive. I get a lot of work from that area so there must be a lot of people there who know it how to do it but, I just pull that up from my head but I tell them "You don't want me on site for a migration because it's could be hours of waiting for a server to update to export your mail." and they were like "Yeah you're right".

I said "Look, I sent you the client agreement form, you put down your credit card..." I don't tell them that they get a refund anytime but of course you can if you pay through credit card. And plus the client agreement form kind of secures it like it's a little legal and I send that form and the payment stamp prior to me doing work so I get paid before the job is done. And people do it.

Then I know I am doing a good job of people paying you before the job is done.

Bryce: It's so much that carries to the business as well, the worse thing is chasing up invoices and stuff and it's even worse when it's in another side of the country as well. You can't just head over to their place and ask what's going on.

Lisa: You know Bryce, I called it about 2 months ago, I said I am done with this, I am not invoicing anymore. The clients I think I tell him "I am fixing your computer now and I expect payment now". and what would happen if they will go like "Okay, just pay you tomorrow or tonight" and I be like "sure" and a week later no payment and I hate chasing invoices so, strict rule.

No appointment on the calendar until you done the form and the payment. That secures your appointment. So that kind of puts me at the "Okay she is really important, her time is valuable so I better pay to get this done". And I almost had nobody not want to work with me because I require payment. So it's just I am very firm with my interview, with my processes and I have never have to give refund because I almost pretty accurate with my quotes.

Bryce: With the interviews, you are pre-qualifying people to make sure that you're a good fit or where they a good fit?

Lisa: Yeah, it's kind of a pre-qualifier if they going to pay me and do the form that means they want my help and they know my rates are worth it. If someone does, this happened, where I sent them the form and the payment and they never filled it out and they never called me back. So I just move on. I have chased the appointment before where I called it like t 2 o'clock and said that we have an appointment and they are going to say "Oh I am running late, can I call you later?"

Well, if you haven't done the forms and the money, that's how they get out of it. They say they are in a meeting, or some other junk and I am like I am a professional, my time is valuable and I am billable 8 hours a day. So it really cuts out that "I am running late, I call you later", people does not respect the calendar.

Bryce: Yeah they are bit more motivated when they serve us down, well, I guess they need the work before.

Lisa: Yeah it really changed my whole perspective when I started commanding the client agreement form and the money. Because I have got other things to do, if you don't have that 2 o'clock appointment secured, I will go to other things that make me money. If you cancel at me at 2 then I go find things to do and that bothers me. I sent them to get involved in project and they are not available. So that were the one of the first things I have learned this whole last 6 months, I have to figure out a whole bunch of processes, just little things, you know, 'cause life changes. That was kind of important, securing my work.

Bryce: Did you find that most of your time is billable nowadays, is 8 hours you have is mostly billable?

Lisa: Oh no. You know Bryce, the thing as entrepreneur for you to assume that your billable 8 hours a day for your dream come true but that is far from the truth. I am probably billing 4 hours a day. Since I don't work 9 to 5, I work on the marketing, I work on communications, I email with clients, I do a lot of research, some of my time is I'll help the clients and I'm like I got to go research that. I never say I'm going to Google it. It's always research. Cause' if you say like I'm going to Google it, people are like "Why I can Google that too." I don't bill people from research 'cause I use it for my internal database of learning. I do a lot of research, testing, you know I got to break some things after I go install products I hate that I know I gonna break my computer and figure stuff out but when you are an entrepreneur I just kind of flow everything together but overall, I got to say I have 4 hours of billing, maybe 5. But on project days, it can be a full 8 hours because I do migration work. And depends on how I mailbox I do depends on how many hours I am billing. Those are time consuming.

Bryce: I can imagine, I know that a lot of time is just taken up by invoicing and marketing and billing and that sort of stuff. I do know the lawyers do try to make as much as they can billable and they have all that sorts. Like a secretary or something. I have spoken to lawyers before as well and I have to deal with the secretary for quite some time before I can talk to the lawyer. I guess they are trying to maximize their billable. Lawyer's time is very valuable and I guess they need to maximize their billable.

Lisa: You know I have gone through probably 5, 6, 7 assistants. I would just die to find the right one Bryce and I have just had another one. Planned it for months for her to work for me. First week was training, I got a little messed up 'cause we changed some stuff but basically, her first day of real work, it just didn't worked out for her, she had something in her personal life happened and she end up quitting.

And I am like I needed triage person so bad to answer my phones, do my little stuffs so I can focus. I need to get out of the triage. I have been through for seven years. I mean I don't always do triage during all the years I had assistants like in the stores but I am like it is really time for me to get out. I have just the worst luck. I hired good techs, I can't find someone to help me. Is that horrible?

Bryce: With this new office 360 and doing a lot of stuff remotely, what sort. What's your typical day?

Lisa: Well for me right now is... I handle the email communications for the company which is like the clients who email. I also handle the contact us forms and all the other various ways. Now people are like putting appointments on Facebook which I hate because I don't check Facebook every single second. But suddenly, I am managing the communications, the billing, the triage and all that and the real work which is billable work, almost all of my appointments are Outlook or Office 365 work and most of the time it is all Outlook. Or there's a seg with Outlook, with the product or something.

I am usually fixing configuration issues that people don't always figure right. Sometimes I get a full migration, start to end and then training. So that's what I call full migration which means I do their emails, their phones, the OneDrive, the Sharepoint. I haven't done Yammer yet. And I don't know my people would probably be into that. That's more bigger. And then Office 2013.

So lot of my work is training or hands on or configuring and I think with the tricks I have learned like with iCloud, iTunes, PennyLink, G-Sync, Outlook.com, Google Mail, Google Calendar. Its a lot of 3rd party stuff that goes with Outlook. So to me that's part of the work I have to do is the configuration of all these tools with Outlook. It could be a big mess, these people they do a lot to band aid things for themselves and they ended up just calling me and said "get me out of it all" just frustrated. I said "I would be too". You got iCloud using it for your contacts, syncing with the Google calendar in your android, doesn't match your iPad. It is just a hot mess these people for getting themselves into.

Bryce: It gets ugly. Gets ugly very quickly.

Lisa: Now what I do I kinda wised up, someone will tell me all their third party nightmares and I go well, here's my standard quote. If you get lucky, it might be a 15 minute button that needs to be pushed. Bryce you know, you've talked about it, I know the button to push that can make this work. You don't know that button. I remember years ago you said that. Or it might take me 2 hours to get this fixed so I am going to quote you \$69 to \$258 and that's my quote. It goes over two hours, we'll talk about it. Cause at that point I can't bill someone four or five hundred to fix the problem. So that's kind of where my Outlook jobs are 15 minutes to 2 hour after that, I just move to exchange if it's not that big of a mess. People want to pay 2 hours though to fix that iCloud.

Lisa: Once you get that 2 hours though, have you ever been burned by sort of keeping right low light something that blow out into 5 hours or 10 hours or something like that, it's never been quite that bad?

That comes from my experience, They have so fast some of these tools now that being fast actually hurts my hourly rate because I am fast that's why my rate is high in the first place because I am fast. It's like a two edge sword there, you hurt one way or maybe not but that's a two hour mark.

One guy I did have a struggle with his stuff and I said "look, I am going to give you a deal. Let's just move you into exchange." It was like "let's do it". It was painful for him and myself because I don't know how to fix it. He was understanding it and really moving to exchange is just a fast and nice way to get people out of their problems and I have nobody who want refunds.

None so its work out so pretty slick and i do the migration so fast that I eliminate the third party apps. Lots of them sometimes don't work because of Windows Updates or they forgot the password, I mean it

just doesn't end. I am more of a solutionist provider at this point rather. I am a troubleshooter but I like to move into a solution so they are happy.

Bryce: I guess what matters in the end are that they are happy with the results really and you delivered value and in their mind they feel you delivered the \$250 value.

Lisa: I have one client that calls me every quarter to fix this iCloud and that's \$89. Every quarter. It's always a half hour job. Well, that's a consistent \$360 a year for me. He won't do exchange so I go "Okay, see you in a few months". You tell him what are his options, right?

Bryce: They are not willing to help themselves then so be it, you have told him and what can you do.

Lisa: Yeah I tell him that migration is about \$300 and then they go "Ooh really?" and I said yeah it hurts but then you are free for a long time. Exchange server just doesn't really break too much. People just don't call me after that. I have actually now just launched my Outlook extended service contract I am going to start selling.

Bryce: What does that include?

Lisa: Unlimited Outlook support for 6 months for \$150.

Bryce: And you will be sending that to the existing clients or do you want to get new clients for that one?

Lisa: I am probably going to be selling it to people who call in from the internet. And some of my clients from Minneapolis will probably buy it too. I have a few clients that always just have the little snags and whatever. So the unlimited support option for them is just to feel comfortable that they don't have to pay \$69 every time which I have to bill that. So I am going to test it. But I think I can do all of it. But I will tell you that the exchange people probably won't buy it because they just paid you \$300 and it's suppose to just work and it does. I mean I'll be honest it does work and there is very people have

problems so I am happy for them. I don't want someone call me all the time because things break and it's my job to fix it.

Bryce: So I suppose after going through all this, you know from the start up to the 3 stores to the closure of the three stores, living in Florida, remote support work, what will be sort of advice you give your past self with these sort of things. If you can go back in time, maintain your knowledge but lose everything. What will you tell your former self?

Lisa: I remember a fella I met in a networking event, probably my first year out, he said "just be careful and don't grow too fast." and I thought he meant like that month. I actually didn't grow too fast a couple of years later. The tips I have been telling people when I see them the forms or with other colleagues when they ask me "What would you do Lisa?" I will go "I will not do that yet."

Because Bryce, we talked about this, what you don't have in place? Systems and Processes and you are not prepared to grow. I am telling you to have your business fine tuned; I wouldn't even take that step because that's what I did not have. I got too excited and jumped the gun, I have branded, life happens and I think everything worked out for me. You know whatever but when it happens for everybody we see a lot of closing.

Bryce: If in a business is a bit of a mess, not mess, it must be the wrong word but not, as you have said, fine tuned. You know the systems in place, once your big it's just ten times bigger it's probably you are ten times worst. Instead of missing five calls a day because a lack of systems, 10 or 20 or 30 or something like that, it's twice as bad with the systems. So I guess it's building a building, you have the foundations in place; you did the floors, and then work your way up.

Lisa: I am doing this right now with CallThatGirl's rebuilt because this is kind of funny when you think about the past, you know how I did all those changes and now I am kind of looking at I am in a new early stage of a new company in a way because I'm marketing for two new things that you don't see a lot just the Outlook and Office and with this new marketing I am doing and everything I look at it like "I am not going to grow too fast this time".

So I'm hiring my brother to be my morning Outlook tech 'cause he knows Outlook very well and that is kind of funny. My brother, he is very good with Outlook and finally I was like, "look, come winter here" and he got have anything to do in the morning so why don't you do some my first level stuffs and he was like "yeah, cool". I got the contractors all fine, been in a year with them. But how do I get to the next level with this company and I am like, thinking you got to start slow and I got to do it right.

And really Bryce, I am not going to be growing too fast anytime soon because I can't mess this one up. This one is not the one to mess up. I have huge Google exposure right now, and I am just getting just enough work. You know I have my brother prepared so when I start getting more work, he is my off shoot for that, my techs are; I got actually a little bit of Outlook to. So they can help a little but I am being very very careful with this growth. I do not want to become that million dollar company overnight. Nope. I don't want to become a million dollar company anymore after what I went through but...

Bryce: Slow and steady wins the race. It's the old saying.

Lisa: Well, I don't think that the Facebook and Apple and Microsoft all became big so, I got a couple years. I was raging against them, they're tightened but yeah the key to happiness in my world is to keep things to a level that is manageable and I enjoy it. You have to like almost everything that you do every day.

Bryce: Otherwise it's just work. It's...

Lisa: Just work! Everybody hates their job and most entrepreneurs don't hate their job.

Bryce: Well that's a lot of people sort of breaking away from and say they hate their job working for the man so I am gonna run my own business and be able to do things my way. That sort of thing but, it don't have a lot of point if you don't enjoy it. There would always be tough time I guess, but overall you have got to enjoy it.

Lisa: Yeah I think I was looking at this weekend, I didn't have any schedule appointment stuffs, like "well, what do I get to do this weekend? I get to make a newsletter, I get to work on some websites stuff, 'cause you know, that's one of my talents. I like doing Wordpress and make some pages and then I hired a Fiverr's guy. A guy from Fiverr and I am like, "this is what I love. This stuff!". I mean I love the work I do but this is the extra stuff that's hard to ignore that makes it worth it that I get to have my hands dirty, the marketing, the fun stuff, and if I have to outsource it all, just do the tech work. That will be so much fun for me. I mean you have talked a lot about lets go do this plug-in and that thing and its kinda like you have to enjoy the extras. That's our work.

Bryce: While even when you are outsourcing most of it, you just generally need to sort have that jack of all trades knowledge to even know the right thing to say to each person and have a good understanding on marketing. Good understanding of the tech work to make sure the techs are actually doing the work properly and it's you have to be jack of all trades.

Lisa: Oh c'mon Bryce you know how it goes, you do it first and you are like "I don't want to do it anymore so I am going to outsource it."

Bryce: Yes that is very much me. That's how I built my manuals, you know. I have done the work myself and then I am just like "Okay I am done with this and I wrote it, this is the way I do it" and with someone else I say "Okay, this is how I did it, read the manual, this is how you will do it." and they always thought the way I want them to do it because I wrote it.

Lisa: That's right. it's funny I have felt the same way. I am like I have had enough graphics stuff, that Microsoft Word, it's time for me to hire the pros from Fiverr. Actually, I tried to hire marketing people to do my graphics and I swear I went through six of them. I think I am done. I got a guy from Fiverr we are in a deep relationship now.

Bryce: Someone is difficult to find good outsourcers. I think the problem is the price point as well, are they really the good ones, know that they really good and they generally cost way too much and that's a problem. But sometimes you find that the unicorn were this person is very good and they don't know how much they worth. That's the best kind to have.

Lisa: Well I think that the dollar value, and this is not to say outsourcing, you know, is good or bad but I didn't care on Fiverr who I hired, where they're from. I just picked one random ad and the guy, I think \$5 for him is like probably 50 to us 'cause he is like "Hey, got more work?" He wants more work and I am like "Gosh for five bucks, sure I will give him a whole bunch of stuff" and then I just realized that the dollar value on where he is, is different.

He is cranking up his awesome graphics for me and I am like just keep paying him \$5, I mean that's discredit of other people in my area but I couldn't find anybody to work with. And lots of this people didn't like 50 bucks graphic. I was like "I need so many more, I am a hot blogger, I am a hot Wordpress person, and I need more. I'll change my banner 4 times a year. So yeah I need that kind of person.

Bryce: And you didn't outsource, it's just become too much, I have tried to do it all myself as well and it becomes too much. It's always you have to think about the marketing, the website. That's not even talking about the actual work you got to do, you got to do well. Its way become way too much. If you outsource it, it helps a lot.

Lisa: Well I think a lot of entrepreneurs actually have to outsource a lot of other stuff like book keeping and and all that. I mean we don't make enough money to have those people on house. Silly. So that's one thing I have learned is I don't like relationships with my vendors, actually I have more than 4. I think about all the people I hired, you know, to do the things for me. I have kind of of a payroll. Kind of keep the machine going so you need people here and there and I just hired a assistant back in Minneapolis to do some blogging for me. I can't blog like I used to. I am blog blocked. Well yeah, you know what, I can make the announcement I guess.

I am doing a... You know in the CallThatGirl's remote support show and I kind of have like I was saying remote support book is great and everything but it's been 4 years. I need something fresh in my life. It's stale. Well, people are still buying the book, that's awesome. They are learning and they are following. But for me to do something else, I am going to be closing the CallThatGirl remote support show, flipping it over to CallThatGirl's Office 365 show. And this show is gonna be a lot different formatted. It's going to be formatted differently than the other show and I really think that people are gonna be excited 'cause it's going to be marketed to end users and technicians.

Two in one.I think I can do it right. And I have hired a production company to help me make the videos and to make them high quality. And everybody can follow me on YouTube. I will put the link in there, people can sign up and I will put at my signature in Technibble. But I think this is gonna be the fresh thing because it's so many people that need to learn Office 365. It's kind of where I am going.

Bryce: I have noticed on the forum, there's an absolute lust with this sort of information. Everyone knows where it is going and there's a whole lot of information out there.

Lisa: Well the thing is, you get guys like at MSP, they know Office 365 from their point of view. Then you get the other break-fix people like me that don't deal with them as Office 365. Then you get an end user, and that's like "I am go buy off Office 365 premium and pay \$15 a month" and they happened to buy the wrong products.

So it is really a jumbled mess out there and my shows hopefully will do teach people what I have learned through a problem-solution format and I never get to know it all because Microsoft just changed again, their products and packaging so it can change any day. Some are trying to keep people address to what's going on as best as I can 'cause I am in the world everyday now. 'Cause that's everything I do. But I am excited for the new show and the facts and what we are saying about the blogging. The shows are

actually my new blogs. It's a two in one. So you get double Google loving. Why do one thing, let's do a video and a blog so I will be doing the shows when I record them I'll be doing it through my drive and speak as well, I don't want to write them anymore.

Bryce: Okay so it's all transcribed?

Lisa: Well, I am hoping that I can send my blogging assistant up in Minneapolis, my drive and speak notes from the video I just made. And she can piece it together by listening to the video and then blog it for me 'cause I just... Just to write these videos earn blogs is a lot now.

Bryce: That's what I am saying a little bit earlier, there's always you need to be doing and just blogging being one of them, it's just becomes too much so yes, sounds like using the transcribing automatically just eliminates one of those things. I mean this automation and outsourcing is like a massive topic in itself and it sounds like you are doing a fair bit of it, taking the load of you quite significantly.

Lisa: Well I am hoping 'cause tomorrow is launch day for this, the Office 365 shows not launched tomorrow but for me and my new format to do blogging and videos are to have a consistent. Every time I do a job, I am going to do a little talk about it because the things I learned in these trouble calls are just, it's just so much then I get to my drive and speak that's done. And that's where I really need to start thinking every single call. Now some of my clients have actually said feel free to use my name, 'cause they want the promotion and I am like sure. You know my first big show is going to have my client Jim in there. Not on the show but he wants me to talk about it 'cause he was in huge mess, and he was like "yeah go ahead and tell the whole story" and I will. That what exactly what people are doing.

Bryce: People loved the down the trenches stuff, it's sort of when you working by yourself, its hard to... You didn't really have that benchmark so when you are with other employees, its easier to know what you are doing and how good you are doing and that sort of stuff because you got the guy next to you doing the exact same thing but when you are by yourself, that is a problem.

These down the trenches sort of show allows other technicians who are working by themselves sort of listen to what you are doing it's like "Yeah you know that's sounds like the right way to do it" or "I can be doing that instead." That is a great idea to do it that way. I can see the appeal for it.

Lisa: Well, you know what Bryce, I am alone all day every day. And where I am living is so gorgeous and I am this is my kind of sabbatical. I am actually gonna be doing a video series too to sell after the Office 360 show going on, that's after my next project. I came here to kind of get the stuff done, focus on my personal stuff but I don't have co-workers, I am alone all day long my only communication is people on Skype, e-mail, Facebook, people calling in the clients at me so I am really not alone but I get it.

I just happen to be very communicative. Some people, they love listening to this stuff and they soak it up. I am not a big podcast downloader but when I do get a link to one I do like to learn from them so hope people will learn from them.

Bryce: That's also a bit of the bright side is to never stop learning. Its stuff that move so quickly, if you stop, it is basically, when you stop falling behind, lot of people with the attitude that they know everything but once they reached the point that they know everything, its usually the point you stop learning and then they suddenly don't know anything.

You don't know everything because its moved from what they thought they knew. Its keep learning and I know when I go for a walk up to the local shops from here, I have stuffs from my iPhone and I listen to a podcast and constantly keep learning. Any travel time for me is learning time.

Lisa: Yeah, you know what everybody have their own ways. I am a big internet cursor and I learned a lot, I mean lots of my stuff I do, I have to research, and research and research. Now I found myself I am in some forum I have never seen and I am like "wow this is so cool!" I love my work some days, getting lost in internet land.

Bryce: This story is amazing, how it started from small beginnings and went up into big three stores and then went down and back up into remote support and low stress and it's just very impressive on what you have done.

Lisa: Thank you. You know the thing is the Technibble folks is, when I find interesting is that some of those members have been following me since I started there and they know the peaks and values I have been through and I think this is a good life full story, as much as we can get and for them to realize you know that, there's a few of them like "ah you suck and you couldn't run a business" and I am like "But I am very successful now". Big news is I am happy as a clown.

I think a lot of people remember the downfalls more than the successes and that's not to be saying against people I think that I got just emailed the other day, they guy was like "I have been following you for a long time and I remember where you close your stores". They don't remember when I opened the

stores. Remembered where I closed the stores. So I am like it's that funny how people remember stuff like that?

Bryce: That's what I mentioned before, when the visual success, you know the stores, the three brick and mortar stores is very impressive and you see this resource like "Wow, she is doing really well" but they don't realize that it's the back offices. When you are sitting chilling in Florida, that's where you getting really good money. That's just visually not as impressive but it requires to actually talk about it.

Actually say "Actually, I am doing quite a fair bit of work done here and I am loving it and not just financially but also life". The stress is low, handled 20 plus employees. That to me is I can see that more success. It's that work-life balance and it's hard to achieve and it doesn't look as impressive as 3 brick and mortar stores but that is success.

Lisa: Yeah I know, I think that a few years from now, I just got out early. I hit the thread. Before the downfall, that was just my opinion because I do so much Office stuff that I just gonna give it the last tip that if you have people calling about it you don't know how to do it, you can call me up, I'll try to help you. I do a lot of counseling now, consulting with techs and they are like "Hey Lis, can you help me out on this real quick?" I am like "Sure".

Sometimes I bill people, sometimes I charge but its fair and they caught a snag and their clients and they don't know what they are doing so they just call me in and help them and that's the Office 365 can be really snaggy. Especially some of the programs. So I tell people they should really be learning it as much as they can.

Bryce: It's where it's all going. So where can people find you when they want to contact you with this sort of stuff? Whether it's your products or a little bit of advice. How can they get in contact?

Lisa: You can email me at lisa@callthatgirl.biz, my website is callthatgirl.biz. Everybody kind of goes over there when they are looking for the remote support book. There's a link, you can put it in the show notes, for the remote support book which is now sold as an ebook set. I kind of put everything together which has my social media book, the manual of operations, the exchange, migration guide and the few of the little nuggets and the templates and documents. It's pretty robust; it's on sale right now for \$19.

I have it on sale till the end of October. And my Youtube channel, that's hopefully, going to be getting going this week. You can put that in the show notes. It's actually the slash CallThatGirl. And on every social media. Just Google CallThatGirl. Just email me if you want my help. If you have a client referral, I

can still do that and actually do hands off too. Some people like "I don't even wanna do this". Okay fine, I will pay commission. Pay commission based on how hard the job is.

Bryce: People believe if you have this sort of work and you don't want to handle it at all well, Lisa's your woman.

Lisa: Yeah some people get a nice fat commission with the jobs. Some don't get it just depends on the trouble I am in, if you made it worse, not anymore.

Bryce: Thank you so much Lis for your time, this story is a whole roller coaster, I love it.

Lisa: Yeah it's always fun doing shows, I was like "Oh that's awesome you are doing a podcast shows like I can step in and help you there. I like to".

Bryce: Well, thank you Lisa I appreciate it.

Lisa: No problem. Well I guess I see you on the forums on Bryce.

Bryce: Alright, see you around Lisa and thank you

Lisa: Bye

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