

SPECIAL GUEST

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STEPHEN A NEWTON

NSS: First of all Armond, thanks for taking time out from your busy schedule to talk with us. Please tell the readers a little about yourself; where are you from?

SAN: Thanks for having me. I am originally from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in the United States. I have been fortunate enough to live in the US, UK, Europe, Scandinavia and now South Africa.

NSS: What type of work do you do?

SAN: I have worked in the internet space for the past 12 years. Most recently as Head of Google South Africa, previous roles were Head of Analytics and Commerce for Europe Middle East and Africa (EMEA) for Google. VP Ad Exchange EMEA for

Double Click, Managing Director Hitwise EMEA, I am also trained as an attorney.

NSS: When did you first realise you wanted to pursue your career? – What prompted you?

SAN: Sorry to say that there was no real plan to my start. I went to University with the intentions of becoming a doctor, but found the maths and science courses challenging, and sadly, I was too proud to accept a tutor. It was the first time in my life that education challenged me. So, I gave up hopes on medicine and then set my sights on law. I did my four years of undergraduate and 3 years of law school, and then realised that after 7 years of schooling, I was expected to work 70+ hours a week for a salary. I decided that I didn't do 7 years of schooling to work longer. I put myself through university and law school by working at retail store called Nordstrom in sales. That experience showed me that a good salesperson in a quality organisation could pretty much write his pay cheque, and could do it in 40 or less hours a week. So after law school and some work in the law field, I decided to go into managing sales organisations. Even as Head of Google South Africa, a large portion of what I do, is manage sales teams.

NSS: Who has inspired you in particular?

SAN: So many people, some business people, some political figures, some family members. Mo Ibrahim, Nelson Mandela, my daughters, my mother and father, and all the strong examples of character from my aunts and uncles, my grandfather (your father), I could go on and on.

NSS: What do you most enjoy about your work?

SAN: I enjoy the selling process; the education of a prospect, the building of a relationship and trust and the reaching of mutually beneficial terms. I firmly believe that we are all sales people in whatever we do. We are sometimes selling ideas, products, services or ourselves every day. I also enjoy the travel.

NSS: Does your career enable you to visit many countries? – If so which countries have you visited?

SAN: I have been very fortunate on this front. I've been able to visit so many countries for work. Let's do this alphabetically: So far from memory, I have visited Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Cote d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, France, Germany, Ghana, Gibraltar, Greece, Iceland, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Mexico, Monaco, Morocco, Netherlands, Korea, Libya, Panama, Poland, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Senegal, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Trinidad & Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, UAE, UK, USA, Venezuela, Vatican City.

NSS: Wow! I know you speak a few languages. How many do you speak and do you have a favourite?

SAN: I speak Spanish, French and am learning Portuguese. I really enjoy Spanish, but I love the way Portuguese is spoken. I have to get better at this one. I am determined to begin to learn an African based language this year, Zulu, Yoruba or Twi.

NSS: What kind of research is involved with your work?

SAN: You have to be versed in the online digital community. You need to know the trends and upcoming technologies it helps to be on platforms like Twitter, and to subscribe to blogs and newsletters from the "technoratti" across the globe. So, yes, I am always reading and learning.

NSS: Do you impose a discipline on yourself regarding schedules, goals etc?

SAN: First, I wake up early; that is a personal choice that I think has held over from my time in the Army (5am daily). I find it necessary to keep a physical fitness schedule. I train at least 3x per week with a trainer, and try to run and do body weight exercises when on the road. It is very important to keep physically fit as you ascend your career ladder. I try not to over schedule myself, but commit to giving people the common courtesy of calling if I am going to be late or cancelling early in the day, if I will not be able to make it. This is very important, respect your time and others time, people will remember you for it, either positively or negatively.

NSS: What does it take for a person to be a successful in your type of career?

SAN: You have to be curious, a bit of a dreamer/visionary and willing to be consistently "ignorant." Technology moves so fast, that what you know today can be completely challenged tomorrow. If you are secure in the basics and willing to constantly learn and be challenged then maybe the digital space is for you.

NSS: Outside of work, what other interests and hobbies do you have?

SAN: I love to play basketball, I play Capoeira and I love music, particularly live music, theatre, plays and of course...travelling.

NSS: Finally, do you have any advice and encouragement you would like to share with any potential budding entrepreneurs?

SAN: On your way to your dream job, don't discount anything that you can do in between. It sounds cliché, but your life is a journey and you will be surprised at how some odd experience, role, interaction will come into use at some point in your life. I have been a sales person, and a sales director, a bartender and a bar/club owner, lived in a 5+ bedroom and lived in an abandoned flat with no

power, I've had paper routes, worked as a labourer on a construction site, packed canned goods on the midnight shift for extra cash, sold ice cream on a ice cream truck, tele-sales, I think you get the picture. You have to keep it moving, get busy. You can't always do nor can you have what you want, when you want it, but when you get moving, opportunities present themselves.

NSS: Armond, this has been a proud moment for me hooking up with you again and sharing your experiences. May our creator, bless, guide and protect you in all your future ventures.

SAN: *Bless. Once again*, thanks for having me Uncle Norman; and you continue to spread the word, you're doing a great job.

BIOGRAPHY



Stephen Newton

Stephen Newton is an accomplished business leader who has spent close to a decade working in the online space, where he has been responsible for successfully and profitably growing and leading top on-line companies

As General Manager and part of the founding team of Hitwise UK, he helped the organization more than double its employees, customers and revenues, and consistently over-achieved company revenue targets in one of the group's most profitable division. Stephen's efforts were also pivotal in the eventual sell of Hitwise, to the consumer information company Experian.

Post Hitwise, Stephen served as the Vice President of Double-clicks Ad Exchange Covering the Europe, Middle East and African markets (EMEA). In the Google acquisition of Double-click, Stephen took on the role of Head of Analytics & Commerce EMEA, where he was responsible for the Google Analytics product (GA) and growing the third party GA proposition.

It is his ability to effectively manage sales, marketing operational and account management teams and to motivate them to deliver in a way that meets board expectations that has led Stephen to his current position as Head of South Africa Google.

A strong leader with excellent communication, inter-personal and negotiation skills, Stephen brings a wealth of sales and business expertise to the table. As a qualified lawyer, he also has substantial legal expertise. His skill set is topped off by broad international exposure gained from working in the US, UK and Europe, Middle East and African markets, all of which gives him a valuable and unique perspective, making him a key asset to any company.

A native of Philadelphia, Stephen received his undergraduate degree from the University of Washington and his JD from Loyola School of Law in Los Angeles. He speaks conversational Spanish, functional French and is currently learning Portuguese.

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