

# Verizon

*Tech Adoption for Small Business through COVID-19 and Beyond*

## CORPORATE PARTICIPANTS

### **Ramon Ray**

*Smart Hustle Media - Founder*

### **Shelly Palmer**

*Author, CEO and one of LinkedIn's Top Voices on Tech*

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## PRESENTATION

### **Andy Choi**

Hi, I'm Andy Choi with Verizon. I want to welcome you all to our Small Business Webinar Series. With every webinar, we feature a professional insight and ideas. It's all about small businesses and how you can innovate during these times. Now, returning as our host today is Mr. Ramon Ray. Always nice to have Ramon. He's an entrepreneur, author, and speaker, as well as the founder of Smart Hustle Media. Our guest today, we are honored to have Mr. Shelly Palmer. Now, Shelly knows a thing or two about tech. He's the CEO of the Palmer Group, which advises Fortune 500 companies on tech, media, and marketing. He was recently named one of LinkedIn's Top Voices on Technology. He's already regular commentator on CNN and CNBC. He's also an author and the cohost of the podcast, Think About This. So, as we all think about small business, let's get the webinar started. Here's Ramon and Shelly.

### **Ramon Ray**

Hey, Andy, thank you so much. It's good to be here again for another Verizon Small Business Webinar Series. Those of you, it's your first time, welcome. You're in a safe space. We're going to have great information today from our expert guest, Shelly Palmer, and for those of you who joined us for multiple times, thank you for coming back and seeing that we had something useful for you today. So, Shelly Palmer, welcome, and thanks for joining us, we really appreciate to hear your insights on a few key tips for small business owners. How are you?

### **Shelly Palmer**

I'm doing great. How about you?

### **Ramon Ray**

I feel great, man. I feel very good. I'm blessed, and I feel good. Many, of course, as you know, Shelly, it could be some of your clients, my clients, people we work with, are hurting, not doing well, business or personally, but I'm glad that you and I could be here today and serve the Verizon Small Business community.

So, let's jump into it. I think one thing, Shelly, I'm curious to get your thoughts, I don't know about you, but I know many people thought, at least a few weeks ago, oh, when this is over, we'll go back to the way things have been done. We're working from home, half the people doing it probably, Shelly, are not used to it. People like myself, maybe you, I worked from home for years, but a number of people, they thought we're going to go back to the way it was, Shelly, I don't think that's going to happen any time soon. So, my first question to you, what's your advice, thoughts just for people who are settling in and realizing this is the way things will be? What do we do, Shelly?

### **Shelly Palmer**

So, in practice, there are two ways to look at this. You are not working from home yet. Right now you're at home working, and that is really different because the kids are at your knees because they're not at school, and the world is upside down and everyone is scared to death and there's not enough good data or good information coming back to give you a way to make an intelligent decision about what to do. I think it's really clear, really clear, that there's no right way for America to go back to work, there's just whatever way it goes back to work, people are going to go back to work, and they're going to do it however they do it, and whether that's right or wrong, whether you personally feel that's right or wrong, it's not going to change what's about to happen.

So, what we need to do as small business owners are two things. One, we need absolutely to understand the difference between the people we have who are at home working, and what it will mean for them to productively work from home. Now, a lot of people who get into working from home start to measure stuff because it's easy to measure. How many meetings did you take online on Zoom or BlueJeans or whatever? How long were you sitting at your desk? Did you write your report? Like, all of a sudden, because you can measure it, you start managing it and so we're going to talk about that in a second. And then the second thing that's really important to understand is that workflow is different, is totally different, when you are working remotely with a team that's also remote to you, and there are also some physical spaces involved.

So, let's talk first about what it means to work from home for real as opposed to be home working. If you're working from home, then you're going to set up a safe space that is a workspace. It's a workspace like your office, it might be Harry Potter's cupboard under the stair, but it's going to be a space that you can actually post a sign with your working hours and say open from nine to five, closed for lunch from 12 to one, and you need to adhere to it because otherwise the boundaries of the people in your house will not be acceptable to you. You're going to have a lot of things go on that can't actually help you do your work.

## **Ramon Ray**

I wanted to just underline there, Shelly, what I'm hearing you say, I just want to underline that point. This is not just for you and your sanity. This is for those you are sharing, whether they're working or not, for everybody's sanity to work together. Is that what you're saying?

## **Shelly Palmer**

Absolutely. There just needs to be boundaries set up with real posted hours. I try to keep my morning routine exactly the same. I go out for my walk, I try to have breakfast at the same time. I actually get dressed every day. I think sweat suits are the enemy. Athleisure wear is the enemy. I made the mistake about a month into the pandemic of trying to put on a pair of jeans that I hadn't worn in a month, that woke me up. It's like, oh, no, wait a minute, my sweatpants are much more forgiving than those jeans were, uh oh! So, you try to keep the routine together, but most importantly, most importantly, is to set up a workspace, and that includes really good broadband, because we're doing these kinds of online chat meetings all day long, and they're going to become, unfortunately or fortunately, the norm. It's just the norm. Now, a lot of people when they are on Zoom meetings or BlueJeans meetings or Teams meetings or Slack meetings, if there's video involved like we're doing right now, what people tend to do is look at themselves, like is my head the right way, am I smiling? Stop that. One of the most important things you can learn from doing this work is that the Zoom fatigue, or video chat fatigue, is real, and what causes it, oddly enough, is not what you think; it's not sitting for hours in meetings.

You've been sitting for hours in meetings your whole career, so you don't get tired in a regular meeting. What is freaking everybody out is they're busy looking at themselves and wondering if their head is right, or their smile is right, or their eyes are right. What you need to be doing is looking at who the person is you're talking to, and yes, your eyes will not be in the camera like mine are now, your eyes will be down because I'm looking at you, but we, for hundreds of thousands of years since modern humans, have

interacted by picking up small cues. We have thousands of muscles in our face, and we make thousands of facial expressions, and those expressions are how we communicate. A lot of people talk with their hands and their hands are not visible, so all of a sudden, you're taking away all of the cues you normally use to communicate and because you're on video, you are paying too much attention to things you shouldn't be paying attention to. So, do yourself a favor to reduce video chat fatigue look directly at who you're speaking to, do not worry about where your eyes are vis-à-vis the camera. If you need to speak to someone, you need to adopt a new technique called I'm now going to speak directly to my audience, and you look right in the camera and you pretend that the person you're speaking to is right there.

Now, you're going to deprive yourself at that moment of every visual cue that's coming back so you're not going to know how the person you're speaking to is reacting to you. People who are professional video people, people on television, people who make a lot of videos for a living—

## **Ramon Ray**

Lime Ramon and Shelly.

## **Shelly Palmer**

Hmm?

## **Ramon Ray**

Like Ramon and Shelly.

## **Shelly Palmer**

Yes, I mean, if I look down here, like this would not be a thing that I would normally do. I will normally look here because I've been trained to look here. But if you're doing a video meeting, you're not helping yourself by looking in the camera or looking at yourself, so that will cause immense fatigue. Your brain is working overtime, trying to listen for audio cues that you don't need to listen to normally because you can see a glint in somebody's eye, you can see an eyebrow go up, you can see a smirk and you know what that means intrinsically because you're human, and when you take that away from yourself, you will get very tired very quickly.

Now, moving on, we want to have a safe space, we want to have posted hours, you want to have really good connectivity, and not because we're talking at Verizon, because if you don't, then you're fighting with a tech all day long, and the last thing you want to do is fight with tech. And on that subject, there are two kinds of video meetings or two kinds of videos now in your world. One is what we're doing now. We're having a video chat, and we can have 20 people in this meeting or five people in this meeting or 500 people in this meeting because the tools allow us to do that. We're not making a video right now. This is not for YouTube. This is not for MTV. This is not for distribution widely on Twitch. This is not for TikTok. We are not making a video. We are having a video meeting.

So, two kinds of spaces. One is a space that you can instantly, easily properly light and go immediately into a video meeting without any muss or fuss, and whatever that means to you, whether it's an external camera, the regular webcam, the audio from your laptop, wearing an external mic, whatever it is, get it set up, test the tech, lock it down, and call it a day. If you're going to go make video, because the world is all video centric right now, great, then build a small little video area where you can make videos with a demo mode or whatever it is you need to do to communicate to your business, but don't confuse the two, because if you can't sit down and just do business, then you're just taking time away from yourself. You should never fight with your tech for something you need to do day in and day out, and it's not hard to do.

If you want the simplest setup possible, you take your phone, you log into whatever app you're going to use, you stand facing the window so that the light from the outside falls on you and you do this. Now, you're video conferencing at the highest level, probably with better light than the person you're talking to.

## **Ramon Ray**

Sunlight, Shelly, is awesome. I mean, you're right. Sunlight, as I've seen people do – right now, my lights there but I have so much light, but you're right, the simplest thing, and I think, Shelly, what it is, sometimes the simplest things work the best. Now, I don't know about you, I happen to have some cool gadgets and lighting and all that, but I'm in a different business. This is my business, but I think for most people, you're right. It's the lighting that works. I have one of those. It works well.

## **Shelly Palmer**

It's like 11 bucks on Amazon. There's about a million versions of it. What it does is it holds your phone, and it attaches to any mic stand and/or light stand. Just do it and call it a day. You don't have to think about it. You take your phone out of your pocket, you stuff it on the stand, you sit by the window and you talk. It's that simple, and if you can wear headphones when you do it, it'll help because you won't have outside noise coming in and people will appreciate it, but the theory, the strategy is be ready to do video business all day long, and that's just what you need. And also speak with the people in your house and wherever possible, and it's not always possible, right? Wherever possible, set yourself up some hours for working from home.

Lastly, I would say one thing, a lot of my friends and a lot of clients have both people working from home and people working from the office, because that's just the nature of their business, or on the factory floor or in the warehouse and also interacting with some who are not considered essential, whatever that means, so they get to work from home and others have to come and go into the office or the workspace. You need to give everybody a little bit of a break right now. I mean, there's a little human kindness here. This is new for everyone, right? You don't usually have your kids or your grandkids or your dog nipping at your heels while you're trying to do business, and you just have to give everybody a little bit of a break. This is a very tough time for everybody, and I don't think you should be judging people based on your own criteria, and I don't think people should be judging you based on their criteria. Right now, a little bit of kindness is going to go a long, long way.

## **Ramon Ray**

I think that's powerful, Shelly. You brought the tech and the human to this and I think it's so important. I was on a video call with a young lady a few weeks ago. Her baby was crying, she put her baby in your lap. Point taken. I'm glad that she had the courage and whatever not to, I mean, apologize meaning for the slight inconvenience, but she was like, this is the world we're in, and me, I said it was great. It's a baby, it's a child. I'd do the same thing, so I think you're right, the things that we may have said, this is so unprofessional about before, I think goes to the side, and the second thing I want to add, Shelly, I can see – and by the way, everybody, don't forget to submit your questions. This is Shelly Palmer on Twitter, Shelly Palmer. Don't forget to tag Verizon Business. I Ramon Ray on Twitter, tag, tag, tag, retweet, retweet, retweet.

Going back to the tech, Shelly, I just wanted to show [inaudible] many people. What Shelly showed you, it fits on something – this is just my little tripod. I've got so many of them, but it would fit on this, just get a little techy, so people, and this is just an expandable tripod, just to show that as well. So, there's 1,000 different ways to do this, and Shelly probably has 100 gadgets around him, but I think what you said, Shelly, is right. Set yourself up for success, and I liked what you said, Shelly, then we will move on about the camera, because you're right. Here, you and I are used to it, we're trained, we're looking at the lens, which looks good to other

people, but you're right. In a meeting like this, we're just trying to be bros, I need to see your face man and your smile, it's so important.

## **Shelly Palmer**

No, we are first and foremost human beings, and the technology is a very, very poor proxy for being together as humans. You want to just hang out with someone. The physical act of going out for a beer with your friends at the end of the day is not replaced by having video chat cocktails.

## **Ramon Ray**

That's right.

## **Shelly Palmer**

But rather than nothing, I'll take a video chat cocktail right now, and one has to understand that the tech, we're lucky to live in a time when technology allows us even this level of communication. So, it's not hard to be good at it. It just requires us to learn some new behaviors and to act a little bit differently, and to give everybody a break.

## **Ramon Ray**

You're right, you're right. Let's go to another thing now, Shelly. You work with the biggest, biggest, biggest of the companies in the world, billion-dollar big companies and help them with their tech and management leadership and other things, and so we're so glad, Shelly, that you're here talking to us. Smaller business owners, whether we're salons, lawyers, accountants, doctors, whatever it may be, massage therapists, etc, this aspect of innovation and pivoting, I know it's a big question, we've covered this a lot on the Verizon Small Business Webinar Series, but can you touch on that? What are the things that you're talking about to the big companies? What are you seeing behind the scenes in boardrooms or Zoom calls that you can share with us who may have two guys in a garage, 10 girls in a dorm or whatever it may be? What can we learn from these bigger brands that you're teaching them, or they've done, that we can learn to innovate and reinvent ourselves?

## **Shelly Palmer**

I want to counter this by saying that what I'm about to say is going to sound both awesome and arrogant, and I don't want you to take it the wrong way, but I want to be very clear. Nothing is sacred anymore, and what I mean by that is they used to say the only two things that are certain in life are death and taxes. They moved April 15 to July 15, so clearly taxes are not certain yet. Nothing is sacred, and so as a small business owner, or a big business owner, something amazing has just happened. Now, the pandemic is super tragic, and I have... I could go on for a long time about personal tragedy with respect to the pandemic, my family, my friends, people that I know have been terrifyingly affected. I want to leave that aside for a second because I just want to talk about something else, which is the opportunity.

Now, there's a terrible, terrible, pejorative evil phrase called, why would you ever want to waste a perfectly good crisis? You hear it all the time, and whenever says it out loud, they say, oh, but you're not supposed to say that. It's like, OK, let's put all that aside for a second and talk about I'm in business right now. It's the toughest economic climate ever in the history of our lives. There may have been tougher economic times. We will not have known them. 2008, every metric that made 2008 evil has been exceeded by 10x right now. Will there be a recovery that's a snapback? I don't know, I don't have a crystal ball, but I do know this. I know that

things that were absolutely sacred – for example, they were never going to release a major motion picture directly to video ever because of windowing.

## **Ramon Ray**

Shelly, I just want to underline that and echo it, because I've been following this too. I was amazed. I mean, I thought in our small, it's a first world problem, but media people continue on, but I was like, what?!

## **Shelly Palmer**

That was never going to happen. 65 days ago, I called my doctor for my normal checkup. I knew that I was going to go on a vacation on spring break with my entire family that was planned for a year, and I said, you know, I know I'm supposed to wait a couple weeks but I'm thinking maybe I'll get my checkup, my annual checkup, a couple weeks early if you don't mind because I'm going on vacation – which never happened by the way. The doctor would hear nothing of telemedicine. The doctor would hear nothing of emails. That was a phone call to a service, I got a phone call back. I could not get my doctor to give me the time of day over text and/or email because insurance companies wouldn't copay and there was a paper trail, in quotes, an email trail for liability insurance, I guess MedMal wouldn't cover it. You can't find a doctor 60 days later who won't see you via Zoom or video chat in some way. You will have telehealth if you want it. You get a text back of your doctor. This was not possible 65 days ago. In 65 days, we have experienced something between eight to 10 years of innovation. Social innovation, behavioral innovation, and by the way, technical innovation because what we're doing right now in this Verizon Small Business Webinar has been possible for 15 years, no issue, but we're going to have an audience today we would never have had 65 days ago because this is what people have now trained themselves to do. So, small business owners, take heed. People in the garage, who are two people trying to figure out how to create value now that the business you are in is somehow decimated by the pandemic, nothing is sacred.

Now, all of the tools, in order to start a company right now, what you used to need, which people didn't realize, was a laptop and a Starbucks card, and the reason you needed a Starbucks card was there's free Wi-Fi at Starbucks. Now, you have Wi-Fi at home and you're not going out to any place that has Wi-Fi, so all you really need is your laptop and broadband connection, and with that, the world is your oyster. Whether you're making something at home and you're going to sell it on a platform like Etsy, whether you're going to avail yourself of eBay, whether you are going to decide that JavaScript and HTML and CSS are your friends, and you are going to get hardcore, or even if you just have an idea for some digital product and/or app, and although you don't quite know how to do it, you know exactly what you want. There are services like Upwork where you can go and find employees, vet them and have them demonstrate their skills. These are amazingly, highly evolved ways to manage talent that you don't have to have full time. There are very safe ways to hire these people. Almost every one of these services allows you to put money in escrow, and the money is not released until the job requirements are met, and so if you've got an idea, there's nothing holding you back, and I mean nothing is holding you back. Nothing whatsoever. In fact, so much so that –

*[All talking]*

No, there's just nothing holding you back, and I think in a weird way, that's – and it's a tiny silver lining, but that's the silver lining to the pandemic. Sacred cows no longer exist, things that were barriers, business rules that could never be broken, release windows, things you're allowed to do online things, things you're allowed to do, period, they don't exist anymore. You do what you want. So, if you can create value, then go create it, because nothing's stopping you.

## **Ramon Ray**

This is powerful, Shelly. Powerful, powerful, powerful. I want to remind people, put your questions in the questions chat. Shelly and I are going to wrap up a bit. I want to now hold him for, like, two hours, but I can't be selfish. Please put your questions in the chat. Ask Shelly, ask me questions about your business, your situation, whatever you want, Shelly, [inaudible] ask, and don't forget, please tweet, and share. Tag Shelly, say thanks. Tag Verizon Business. Tag Ramon Ray.

Shelly, I'm curious, you mentioned one word I want to underline and give you time, if you don't mind, just to say it again even. You mentioned value, and I think that what I'm hearing you say, and I like that you said it, it hurts. We acknowledge people have been fired, laid off, furloughed. This is a fact. What I'm hearing you say, and you said there's a small silver lining, for others it can be bigger, is that, though, you may have to get reeducated, you may have to hunt for new opportunities, but value, value Shelly, never dies out. So, a laptop and value, this could be a defining moment in a good way. We acknowledge the bad for some. Does that make sense?

## **Shelly Palmer**

So, I've had the unfortunate opportunity to reinvent myself. This will be the fourth time. No one's bigger than the market. So, in 1989, when the market crashed, that was bad. When the dotcom bubble burst, that was bad. When the 2008 recession hit, that was bad, and I come out of the music and media business and television business, so in 1993, when the SAG strike hit, that was bad, like we've had some really, really tough economic times in my business career, and this one is no exception. This one's going to be hard.

There's two ways to look at it. You can either just roll over on your back and go, I'm out, or you can do something that everyone has the capability of doing, which is open your mind, and understand, truly understand that you can't know everything and you don't need to. You need to know what you need to know, and so the way to approach this is pick a problem that you are passionate about solving. Now, today that passion may be I've got to put food on the table, and I need to pay my rent. That may be today's passion, but there's something happening in the world, there's a problem in the world that you will identify that matters to you, that matters to you enough where you want to try to solve it, and when you solve that problem, you will solve it for not only the world, but you'll solve it for yourself. Because in the creation of the value of solving that problem, you will find economic success. It's called a side hustle normally because you do it as a passion project. Now, take your passion project, take the tools available to you, if you think of anything, anything today that you want to do, just type it into YouTube, somebody will teach you how to do it. Type it into Google, someone has done it and will teach you how to do it. There's nothing you want to learn, there's no ounce of knowledge out there that you can't find right now. What you can't find out there is what's inside of you. What's inside of you is an ability to take all your worldly experience and everything that's forged you to this day, including the failures, and say I see this problem I need to solve and I know I want to solve it. Now, how do I do it? You go out there and there's nothing standing in your way, that's the good news. The bad news is everybody's in the same boat, so the competition is going to be fierce. You know what? The competition was always fierce.

## **Ramon Ray**

You're right. Always.

## **Shelly Palmer**

You just didn't know it. Now, you're going to get an up close personal view of what it's like to fight above your weight class. Welcome. We're all on the same boat.

## **Ramon Ray**

Shelly Palmer, I love this. I think I'm going to turn –with that, I'm going to turn to Q&A, and I say that, Shelly, because, I mean, it's amazing. I think even this, what you said, is kind of a, it could be, a tipping point in the Verizon Small Business Webinar Series. Like, not quite get back to work, but we've talked about PPP, we've talked about recovery, we've talked about just surviving and slogging through it, but this could be the moment, Shelly, where it's time to let's brush off and move forward. So, your comments just now were amazing, and thank you, Shelly, for that.

Listen, let's open up to questions and answers and I hope you've been typing. I know you've been. I see the questions there, you're typing in your questions, to me and Shelly Palmer, and let's do it now.

So, I would be remiss if I didn't also say three things, Shelly, before I start. I want to remind you all, please check out Shelly's website [www.shellypalmer.com](http://www.shellypalmer.com) for all the goodies and information, email list I am assuming and all those good things that Shelly Palmer has at [www.shellypalmer.com](http://www.shellypalmer.com). I see your head nodding, good Shelly.

Two, Shelly has agreed to answer questions. We have about 20 minutes or so of Q&A we're going to do here. We will try to get to many of them, but if your question wasn't answered, especially if it's one of those, 'oh no, you didn't get to my question', just tweet @shellypalmer and he has been so kind, over the next day or two or three, we'll see whatever Shelly has time for and try to answer as many questions as he can. I'll make the same offer as well. I'm @ramonray on Twitter, feel free to tweet at me.

Shelly, before we get into the Q&A, we've got a lot of questions coming in, Verizon had a very interesting and useful press release that they – or a survey, I should say, that they put out, they had a recent press release and you all can check this out but, basically, it's giving a bit of optimism. I know we're all feeling very yucky, very eww right now, I know I am in my own business, Shelly is talking about challenges in his own business, in his clients' businesses, but a study says that in a nutshell is that businesses are feeling very optimistic, and I would say a renewed confidence about what's going to be as the economy starts to open. It's been opening slowly right now, but we hope it opens faster and faster, and the Verizon Business survey says that, basically, businesses that have weathered this epidemic to date expressed an overall optimism and the financial wherewithal to eventually reopen.

There's some good news there. Some percentage points, they talk about almost 70% of businesses believe they can recoup COVID-related losses and more. So, if you're interested in seeing more or further about that study, definitely check out [www.verizon.com/](http://www.verizon.com/) and just look at the News Section at [www.verizon.com](http://www.verizon.com), but some optimism there.

Shelly, lets dive into some questions. We've got billions of questions here. One question here that came in, Shelly, was the aspect of the virus has made people rethink needing to go into a corporate office and, basically, stay at home. What are your thoughts, guidance, real quick tips on just more people not having to go to a corporate office, not having to be in a traditional office, but having an office from home? What do we need to know, Shelly?

## **Shelly Palmer**

I think, in practice, we've learned over the last 60-70 days that most of the things we thought we had to do or the ways we had to do business were artefacts of another time. It's very efficient to work from home, you can get you work done. What I think people are struggling with is how to schedule that work at home work. Did you send the email? It's not a metric anymore. Laying out accomplishments and having people self-report as opposed to watching them. Did you attend a meeting? How many meetings did you attend? Did you need a meeting? Did you need that to be a Zoom meeting? We're just learning how to do that.

But my suspicion is that we are – it's going to be a long time before everybody just goes back and sits next to each other in an office and does meeting after meeting after meeting. One of the things that has really become clear is that you can be very efficient

using a chat client like Slack or Teams and a couple of video chats during the day, and a few regular conference calls, and a few emails, and all of a sudden you've accomplished what you would have done going to seven meetings.

One other thing I found fascinating, because when you're in an online meeting, you can have collaborative tools open like a Google Sheet or a Google Doc where everyone can work at it at the same time or on a white board that everyone can work at the same time, plus all of your tools are on your laptop or your desktop in front of you, more work gets done immediately as opposed to the classic, 'OK, I'll take that back to my team and I'll let you know how it goes'. People are right there working on stuff right that moment and the productivity has increased pretty dramatically. So, no one is going to give that productivity up when the pandemic is over, they're going to actually want to increase the value of that. They're going to try and probably build on everyone's ability to collaborate and work together.

So, it would not surprise me to see work from home deeply, deeply incorporated into all of the corporate culture from the big businesses I work from. A lot of the companies I work with – and they're all on my logo wall, they're big companies – they've learned in the last 60 days that a big change is actually not going to be a bad thing.

## **Ramon Ray**

Absolutely, Shelly, you're so true. It's like the more you're going to see the bosses saying, 'you know what, please wash your car at 1 p.m., no, have a dinner date with your lady, please because you were more productive in the past three months'. A question, Shelly, to underline this and recap, because I do think it was interesting about this video fatigue. I know, for me, as you've said Shelly, we're both kind of trained in the camera, it's hard for other people. I do look in the lens, because I know for you, the person, it just looks better that way. But I think it was interesting, looking at the person you see that physical connection that we're not having normally here.

Just briefly, just underline that because I think it was asked and I think it's an interesting tip. Although I do look at the camera, maybe I need to look more at people, so talk about that, just in brief.

## **Shelly Palmer**

If you are making a video for people to consume, then what I'm doing right now, which is looking directly into the camera and pretending I'm talking to one person, but it is a one-to-many communication. I am giving a speech right now. I'm not having a meeting. If I was going to have a meeting and you're going to see the difference right. Now, I'm looking right at Ramon on my monitor, and the difference is I can see Ramon smile, I can see those very, very attractive dimples, and the glint in his eye, and we can now interact with one another because I can see him. It does nothing for you who are watching me because I'm looking off-camera, but I will not get tired from this at all, and I can pick up visual cues I just can't get when I'm doing this.

I'm also not looking at me. I'm not staring at myself wondering is my head right, I'm not trying to present myself. How often in a real meeting... do you put a mirror in front of you in a business meeting and look at you instead of the person you're talking to, of course you don't. That's what's happened here, and it causes immense fatigue.

The fatigue is caused because you're trying to pick up audio cues to compensate for the visual cues you don't have. Your brain goes absolutely crazy trying to figure out what's happening. It's the biggest organ in your body and it uses the most blood and takes the most energy. Feeding the human brain is what we eat for. That's what we tend to eat for, too much if you're me, but that's what you tend to do is to keep your brain functional.

OK, you don't want to tax yourself that way. Look at the person you're speaking to in a video meeting and look into the camera when you're making a video.

## **Ramon Ray**

For sure, and to many of you who have asked about the tools and all those things that Shelly and I have shown, and those we've talked about, feel free... I do this every time, Shelly, I get bombarded, but it's the best way for me. If you just email me, [ramon@smarthustle.com](mailto:ramon@smarthustle.com), I will send you all those tools and links, no affiliates, I will just send you the links to all those tools that Shelly and I showed. Remember, he has offered, directly tweet him @shellypalmer, and he will do his best to answer your questions over some period of time. You can tweet me of course too, @ramonray, but if you email me, those who asked about those tools, I'll send you links to those specific tripods and tools that you all can look at. But as Shelly said, there's so many, one is not perfect, there's so many out there for you.

Many people have asked for a copy of the webinar and things. Yes, the same way you registered, just go back to the same platform and the registration that you did, and the video replay and all that will be here. Thank you all for asking. Clearly people are liking Shelly's information.

All right, moving on here. A number of [audio] other things. People are talking about – just talk about tech, Shelly, going back to the background we're using and things like this. Any thoughts on lighting, background, audio, like the 101 to what are your best practices. You have a lot I can see there. I have a different one. What would you tell the beginning person that they need to know just for good video as we're trying our best to do today?

## **Shelly Palmer**

Look, thing one, if nature can do your lighting, that is the best lighting director, so put yourself facing a window and get any kind of tripod or stand for you smartphone, and if you're going to take your laptop, get it up, prop it up on a couple of books. You want it, roughly, just above your eye line, you want the keyboard pretty much equal to your nose if it's a plain laptop. The camera, if it's above your monitor, roughly, so that you're looking up, it gets rid of your chin. If you have glasses on and you're going to use lights, you're going to get... these glasses look pink because they have antiglare coating. I haven't been able to get back home to get my glasses that I normally wear for broadcasts, so I'm stuck with these antiglare. If you're wondering about why your eyes look pink, if you've got UV coating on it, you've got to get lenses without that.

If you're going to use a light and you really, really decide you have to have artificial lighting, then you want to close the windows down because you'll look different during the day based on the time of day and you can put either a duvetyn or some kind of blackout shade, use one light to start. That one light will be your key light. It should be up and above the camera coming down at you from one side to give a very specific contour to your face.

I can show you, basically, I've got two lights up right now and what you're going to see is, as I pull this light down, you're going to see a lot of contour and texture coming in, and I can bring it back up and all of a sudden – and I can do that on either side, because I've got two lights going. My lights are actually farther apart than they would be in your world. If you don't wear glasses, you would put them up at, roughly, 45-degree angles to yourself out this way, and the reason you would put them there is that one would be slightly brighter in your key light, and one would be slightly darker, and it would be your fill light.

If you wanted to go crazy, crazy, you would put a light behind you coming down – notice my fluffy hair – it's called a hair light or a backlight, you try to get that lit up a little. I don't bother because I have no hair to light. But if you do, it looks good to put a light behind you.

My background is white. I have 5,600 kelvin, which is practically daylight lights that are... I don't know if I can make this happen for you, but I'm going to certainly try, because it's sort of like... pay no attention to that man behind the curtain, I'm going to zoom out,

you're going to see my monitor and now you're going to see the top... no, you can't really get to it, so I'm going to just go left and right for you real quick. On that side is the light lighting up one background, and on that side is the light lighting up the other background, and you can see that there is a cloth hanging there, that cloth is a white special background that you buy at like B&H Photo or a place like that and then you light it up. You can get them in green screen, you can get them in other colors. My suggestion to you, if you can light a set in your house the way a movie director would light a set, that is best. If you can use a window, that is best. If you're going to do this, you can either get a green screen or a white screen or a black screen, which looks all stark and science fictiony, these are all things you can do... I think a lot of people are having a lot of fun with Zoom backgrounds right now and so if you have a green screen behind you, people love that because they can switch the backgrounds out –

## **Ramon Ray**

Let me just give you my vote, the green screen for me personally, I don't like it, only because if you move, it cuts you off, that's just me, so I prefer a nice set up, a bookshelf or –

## **Shelly Palmer**

Exactly. If you're going to do green screen, you need to light the green screen. It is so much harder to light than you think it is and you're going to spend some real money against it. My suggestion, as Ramon suggested, leave that to people who either do it for fun and don't worry about it, but if you're going to do it professionally, either build a set or just throw something behind you. I did this white thing because Ramon was going to do the white thing, and I was like we're doing a white thing. Ordinarily I would have either black or green or... I'm in a room and when I take that down, there's shelves back there with books and stuff, it's completely fine.

You can define your personality that way. Whatever your personal video brand is going to be, the first time in your life you're ever thinking about yourself as a brand, well, you are and so the things that are around you say something about you. We wear our clothes, we own our cars, we wear our beard, we wear our music, they are all cues that tell me people who we are and what we're about. Well, now, your video background is part of that, and you can treat it like the theme in your browser or whether it's day mode or dark mode on your smartphone. Or you can just ignore it, right, those are the other possibilities.

So, if you're going to get into it, get into it. If you're not going to get into it, I really don't know it's that important. What I will tell you to think about is the content.

If you were thinking about... if I had a chance to hear a long lost recording of a famous recording artist from a time past, if there was a John Lennon, may he rest in peace, recording of a demo that he did into a pocket cassette recorder, would you care about the quality of the recording? No, you just really want to hear that John Lennon lyrics sung by him in a long lost recording, because the content would matter to you. The content is what's important when you're doing video chatting, when you're doing a video meeting. The look really isn't a big deal.

What does become a big deal is when you get in ahead of your skis and you get in over your head, or whatever metaphor you want to use and you're trying to do stuff that you shouldn't be doing and you're paying much more attention to the book cover than the book. Do yourselves a favor, don't try to be Steven Spielberg this week. Look in the camera when you need to look in the camera, look at who you're talking to when you need to look at who you're talking to, know that the content, the substance of what you're doing is important. And if you can possibly get your head wrapped around it, stop paying attention to the video completely. If this were not a webinar, if this was just me and Ramon, I promise you I would be doing this the whole time, because that's what I should

be doing. I should be concentrating on what Ramon is saying, what I'm going to say to him, I can only know by listening to Ramon and I need to look at him to do that.

Unless you're going to go deep into this – and there are plenty of YouTube videos about it – unless you're going to go deep into it, don't. Simple is great. Simple is awesome. Simple, simple, simple.

## **Ramon Ray**

Got it. Shelly, awesome, we've got more questions. And remember ladies and gentlemen, as you're listening to us today, tweet directly at us if you wish if your question wasn't answered, we've got a few more minutes. Shelly Palmer, he has kindly agreed to answer the questions. If you have questions for me, you can tweet at me too @ramonray, or email me, especially for those specific questions for the tools we were talking about, [ramon@smarthustle.com](mailto:ramon@smarthustle.com). Do that. I'm happy on behalf of Verizon Business to answer those questions and help and serve.

Shelly, somebody asked an interesting question here. They have a daycare business dealing with children and educational business. How [audio] online, again, if it's childcare and children have to come somewhere. That may be tough. I have some suggestions. But, Shelly, in brief, what do you think, anything that comes from your head, childcare business, nobody can come in, we're dealing with shelter-in-place. Eventually things will reopen, but what are your tips so they can digitize a childcare business?

## **Shelly Palmer**

That is a really tough one, because childcare is about caring for small children in a small environment that is intimate and nurturing. It's funny, I wrote an article a few years ago called The Five Jobs that Robots Will Take First, and then I followed it on with an article The Five Jobs that Robots Would Take Last, and one of the jobs robots will take last is preschool teacher, childcare, because in order to teach a child to be human, you need to be a human. It's really hard.

I have a granddaughter, a little granddaughter who is 9 years old and her older sister is 12, and they're in a virtual school right now and it's online teaching, it's not online learning, the school is using Zoom and that kind of stuff to teach with, and they're doing the best job they possibly can and they're mimicking what happens in the class.

Well, the 12-year-old is doing great, because she has got some facility with a computer and understands it. The nine-year-old is bouncing off the walls because it's not as interesting as a videogame. It's a teacher standing there that they can't see her necessarily, or can't/isn't paying that much attention.

I think the childcare thing is really tough and there isn't a virtual proxy for standing or sitting or playing blocks with a two and a half-year-old, there just isn't. I wish I had better news for you, there are all kinds of things you could do, none of which are inside the scope of this webinar, but as Ramon said, @shellypalmer or you can just go to [www.shellypalmer.com](http://www.shellypalmer.com) and fill in the Contact Me and I'm totally happy to talk to you about it. It's a giant problem. I understand the business is greatly imperiled right now and I would be happy to try to talk you through some ideas about other ways you can enrich parents' experiences virtually.

## **Ramon Ray**

Shelly, this is not going to replace childcare, for sure, but the one idea and this is a crazy idea that I have is that you could have one hour a day, we're having a puppet show or something. Hi, we can help with your child, how are you today. So, one idea is, hey, you know, maybe and [audio] or charging people to give... because childcare, part of it is maybe give parents one hour of relief, in a good way, as it were, for that small child so they can cook or do something else.

## **Shelly Palmer**

Spectacular, that's exactly right. There's plenty of content. Video babysitting and childcare are kindred spirits, but one is not a proxy for the other. Again, we're in very tough times right now and COVID is asking us to do things that human beings don't normally do, which is to stay separated from one another, and it's beyond a burden. Please, just reach out, I'll do what I can for you.

## **Ramon Ray**

Somebody asked if I had a contact for Upwork, that's just [www.upwork.com](http://www.upwork.com).

One question here, Shelly, about internet access. They're asking about internet cost, will it increase, the broadband will it get faster, access for the elderly who may be socially isolated. I'm packing a lot into that, Shelly, but in brief just talk about the aspect of internet access, whether it's minority communities or those in some middle of the woods, somewhere, or desert, you know all those things that I'm asking. Internet access, what do you say?

## **Shelly Palmer**

I not really happy with the way the country is setup for broadband. We don't have a national broadband plan. We did have one that was being planned, it never got defined properly. If you can do it, you want to buy the fastest connection humanly affordable at this time in your life. The thing you need the most, if there are, let's say, two adults in the house trying to do business, you want to have at least a 500 megabit per second connection. A gigabit per second or a thousand megabits, a gigabit per second connection is better if you're online all day long. If you have not cut the cord, meaning if you are not using the intranet for streaming your entertainment and you are just using it for business, you probably can get away with 100 megabits per second if there's only one or two adults in the house. But if you've got a family of four and everybody is online learning and you're on all day and, especially, if you've cut the cord, somewhere between 500 megabits per second and a gigabit are important, and it's not available everywhere.

Roughly, 100 bucks a month for the gigabit connection. Some places it's 120, some places it's 75. It all depends where you live and what the jurisdiction is. The nice thing is that they don't tax the internet the way they tax the phones and the way they tax television, so one of the real economic incentives to cut the cord is that the internet connection, although it seems expensive, if you can use it for entertainment as well as your work, you might be able to get your boss to kick in for it, which isn't a bad thing. And if you're a small business owner, you can consider just the fastest connection you can get to. Don't only look at the download speed. A lot of these connections are – in fact almost all consumer connections are asymmetrical, meaning that they're faster down than they are up. If you're not moving a lot of files up, you think, well, I don't need a fast connection up, 10 megabits per second will be enough. Remember, Zoom goes two ways, BlueJeans goes two ways, Teams goes two ways. You're sending a video signal now, so you do need the upload capacity.

30-40 megabits per second up would be awesome if you can get it. Gigabit down if you can afford it. If you can't, just get the fastest connection you can. Here's another really important tip, Wi-Fi is always slower than wired, so if you've got a router in your house and a Wi-Fi, sure, use the Wi-Fi on your laptop on the couch, but if you want to have the fastest, best, most secure connection, plug the computer into the router with an Ethernet cable. It should be Cat 5e or above, because you want to be able to get the full bandwidth coming through the cable. This may sound a little technical for a webinar, Cat 5e or above, which is fine, you don't need anything more than Cat 5e as a cable, it's an Ethernet cable and wire your computer. You get a little dongle and stick the cable into your computer. You will get the full bandwidth you're paying for that way as opposed to whatever your Wi-Fi router is doing, which can be quite persnickety. You can get maybe 50% of the throughput on a Wi-Fi router, and that is also dependent upon how far

you are from the Wi-Fi radio itself in the house. So, if it's in another room or if it's on another floor or if there is stuff in the way, you can really, really have a degraded Wi-Fi signal. You're paying for stuff you're not getting.

Bestest when you're on video, wire it up, you will like it. I don't know if bestest is a word, but if it is, bestest would be wired.

## **Ramon Ray**

Shelly, I want to just back up, not that you need me to, to underline what you said, I upgraded my in-house wiring just a few weeks ago and again this is no ding on Verizon, Verizon is pumping in great service, it's just my inside hub and wiring and the things were older, like I moved them from house to house, 10 years old. Shelly, I upgraded, just some cheap router, little boxes, because I have multiple connections, things shot up. So, what Shelly is saying, remember, your broadband connection is outside the house, but if you upgrade what's happening on the inside, it will be faster as well.

Listen, Shelly, time is up for us. We're going to do one more announcement we have from Verizon, everybody listen to this. Remember, email me and Shelly, go to Shelly's website, [www.shellypalmer.com](http://www.shellypalmer.com), use the contact form, hit him up on Twitter, we're going to answer just about every question we can, so copy and paste your question right now, you can email me directly, [ramon@smarthustle.com](mailto:ramon@smarthustle.com), between Shelly and I, we will conquer the world and do our best to answer your questions and serve you. I know there's a lot of questions coming in, so we're going to do our best to serve your needs and do that.

Listen to this quick update from Verizon and, again, thank you Shelly Palmer, [www.shellypalmer.com](http://www.shellypalmer.com). I'm Ramon with [www.ramonray.com](http://www.ramonray.com) and let's hear some final words from Andy.

## **Andy Choi**

And that's it for today's webinar. Our big thanks to Ramon and Shelly for their thoughtful insights. In the "Attachments" tab directly below the video you will see that we are sharing some extra links as well. Now, you can check out the other webinars in this series on our BrightTALK channel page. You can register now for our next webinar, that's happening 9 June, that's Tuesday, Rhonda Abrams will be with us talking about money management tips that are crucial for small businesses right now.

We hope you can join us next time, 9 June, and of course for all the other events during our Small Business Webinar Series. We will see you then, take care.

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