

## **PODCAST 2: THE AUTHOR BEHIND SMART PASSIVE INCOME – WITH PAT FLYNN**

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Hello and welcome to podcast number two from the Self Publishing Formula.

Speaker 2: Two writers, one just starting out, the other a best seller. Join James Blatch and Mark Dawson, and their amazing guests as they discuss how you can make a living telling stories. There's never been a better time to be a writer.

James: Hello and welcome. Yes, how brilliant to have you here, we're getting really into the swing of things with the Self Publishing Formula Podcast. We hope it's turning out to be what you want it to be, what we want it to be Mark, which is something that's going to be giving them the direction that they need to get revenue in for their books, yeah?

Mark: Exactly, and I'm really excited about this episode today, we've got Pat Flynn on. Pat for those who don't know is the guy behind Smart Passive Income, which is one of the podcasts and in fact one of the media empires that I subscribe to outside of the Self Publishing space. I haven't heard Pat on a podcast like this before talking specifically to authors and imparting a lot of the good stuff, we hope to hear from the results of his latest book launch, which hit the New York Time's Best seller list. Hopefully very interesting James.

James: Absolutely. A lot of you will know who Pat Flynn is, if you don't you really do need to know who he is in terms of going into the space because he's somebody who just, through the way that he works and what he's done in the past, kind of owns it. He's a really, really good person to be close to and to hear, and to feed of, and that's how he operates as well. Look, let's not talk anymore because it's a great interview. Let's go over to Pat Flynn. When it comes to online businesses, Pat Flynn is a name that stands above others. After being laid off from his 9 to 5 in architecture in '08, Pat built an internet business, the Smart Passive Income blog, that today brings him a six figure income every month. Yeah, you heard that right, every month. How do I know that for sure? Well, that's one of the things that sets Pat apart from the others, his transparency and openness. He writes about, talks about and publishes about pretty much every aspect of his business, and he's always on the search for inspiration from others, one of the things I hugely admire him for. We are both big fans of yours Pat, so thank you very much indeed for coming on to our podcast today all the way from San Diego.

Pat: Thank you for having me. I'm so glad to be here, I'm excited to talk to all the authors out there and do what I can to help out.

James: A lot of people are very familiar with you but not everyone for certain, and I want to take you back to the beginning, just to set the scene a little bit, and ask you a question. Obviously, not a great experience being laid off.

When you started this business, when you had the Genesis of the idea, is what you've ended up with what you set out to achieve?

Pat: No. Definitely not, and I don't think that's ever the case. When I got laid off in '08, I wanted to get back into architecture, I loved my job. I wanted to do that for the rest of my life but this was back in the recession in the US, so there was nobody that was hiring anybody in the architecture field because nobody had any money to build any buildings.

I got really lucky that I found this podcast that was talking about online business. There was an episode where there was a guy talking about how he had helped people pass an exam, and he was making six figures a year doing that. His exam, that he was helping people with, was called the Project Management exam, and that was kind of my ah-ha moment, my light bulb moment.

I had passed a really difficult exam in the architecture industry, that I had some knowledge about, that I then decided to really package and turn into a website that then had study guides and practice exams that people could purchase, and it did really, really well. After a year, it made a little over \$200,000 and really saved my life really when I think about it.

Now that I look back on that dreadful day of June 17th 2008 when I got laid off, it was really the best thing that could ever happen to me. It really opened up my eyes to all these opportunities and more importantly it helped me just realize that I had nothing else to lose and take the required action to do what I needed to do online. I know for a fact that if I hadn't been let go, I would probably still be doing architecture. I'd probably want to do something different but I just wouldn't have the guts to or I would be too scared to do it because I had this other thing that was going, so I was very fortunate that I got laid off.

Now, since building Smart Passive Income to share how I built that architecture business and several other businesses that have come out since then, I've gotten put into this place where I'm seen as the leader in this transparency, authenticity movement in the online business space which was definitely not planned.

I didn't think that would happen but now that I've come to be here, I definitely I'm trying to own that, and be a good example for people because my first thought of online business when I first got into it was red flags, snake oil salesmen, that sort of thing. Here I was getting into it, teaching stuff in a way that was helping everybody, everybody was happy and I was getting paid. I knew that there was a right way to do it, and that's

why I started [www.smartpassiveincome.com](http://www.smartpassiveincome.com) and it's grown since then into a podcast, a blog, a speaking career and now a best selling book, so I'm super stoked about the whole journey and that's for sure.

James: The fact that you had to be laid off to find that motivation I suppose, you said that you perhaps wouldn't have done it without it.

How would you advise other people then who are in comfortable livings, paying their mortgage to make that jump without perhaps being laid off, without having that absolute moment?

Pat: You don't have to quit your job, and you don't have to really just go in the deep end necessarily. The thing that I realized is that I just didn't know it was possible. I didn't know what the options were and I got a lot of inspirations finally from other people who had become successful, which is why I'm really encouraged that you have this podcast, because you're featuring great advice and great people here, who can then inspire those who are in that situation to take that action that is required.

If you really want it bad enough, it will happen and you just would put in the required work to do that. For me, when I got let go, that was my way of saying, "Okay, I have to make this work," and there were other means of doing that and of course it's just really how bad do you want it. That's what I would advise.

Mark: When I started, I was a lawyer originally, I don't know if I've told you that before Pat, for 10 years. When my second novel came out it was an exposé of what it's like to be a lawyer in London and it's been subsequently described as the longest resignation letter in London.

Pat: I love it.

Mark: It was a mutual parting of the ways that came out after that. I decided I wasn't ready, I didn't want to keep doing it and my employers did tell me

that my heart wasn't in it. I think in my heart I knew what I was doing, I knew that I was going to get myself into trouble, and I actually wanted to be given the push because I wasn't quite ready to forgo the monthly pay cheque.

External events are the kind of push that you need sometimes and it sounds like that was pretty much what happened with you.

Pat: I mean it's interesting, you hear about a lot of success stories and get into their background, there's always some, not necessarily dramatic event, but something that just triggered that thought of going in a different direction. Sometimes it's a lay off, passing of somebody in the family, sometimes it's another event, but there always seems to be a moment and I think that's really important to understand.

James: I suppose we have to find our moments, we have to find our motivation, but one of the great things about your SPI blog is it really sets out, not just some of the nuts and bolts about the business. There's incredibly useful stuff in there, but I think a lot of it is about the lifestyle approach as well.

We've talked about this on this podcast before, that what I sell to people when I'm talking to people about what I do is an evangelistic view of how you live your life and for me the 9 to 5, it just does not belong to me anymore. I don't want to be part of it anymore, I don't think I can ever work in a 9 to 5 environment.

I think the way that we live our lives is much closer to people than they think it is. It feels miles away. Most of my friends look at me like I've got some sort of witchcraft going on, but it really isn't actually, is it?

Pat: No. Again, it's just certain actions that you take that help you build the lifestyle that you want, and it doesn't happen overnight that's for sure. It's

definitely not easy but it does come with a mindset shift and then the shift and the actions that you take because of that new mindset.

It is totally more possible now than ever to have that kind of lifestyle, by that I mean you're doing work still, obviously you're not just sitting back. I'm never on the beach sipping piña coladas all day, I work. I work hard but I work around the life that I want, and for me specifically that's very much in tune with being here with my family.

My wife and I drop our kids off to school every single morning, we pick them up both together everyday, that's very important to me. I go to my daughters dance class, and that's like at the top of my priority list. I have a business that allows me to have a flexible schedule that allows me to do all that and that's just one example of how I've been able to build a business in a way that is shaped around the lifestyle I want and not vice versa which is what most people are doing. Which is, they work, and then they try fit life into that or on top of that.

James: You're an author now. You're actually an author because you decided to write a book and because you're Pat Flynn, once you decided to write a book that was in the top and the best seller list fairly quickly. Let's talk about your approach to that.

First of all, why did you want to write Let It Fly?

Pat: I wanted to write Will It Fly because it was very important to me to create something that would actually help a lot of people. Any content I create I want it to be helpful of course but I knew for a fact that this would do really well; not just because it's me. I think part of that is, I do what I know is going to be helpful, and this topic of business idea validation, that is, when you come up with an idea knowing for sure if it's going to work once you do the work, that's validation. It's an important topic and I'm not the first one to write about it, I'm not the first one to talk about it, but I'm definitely the first one to really just write an entire book about it.

It was so important for me to do this, and I knew this was the right topic because in several occasions leading up to the decision to write about this topic, by far this was the number one question that my particular audience had. I confirmed that through surveys, direct one-on-one conversations with my audience and also through a way that I collect voice mail questions from my audience too, for the purposes of actually taking those voice mails and putting them into a podcast.

I have another podcast beyond the Smart Passive Income podcast called Ask Pat, where I answer voice mail questions 5 days a week. The cool byproduct of that is I get my audience asking me questions everyday, literally dozens of questions every week come in, and by far the number one question is, "How do I know if this thing I'm working on is going to work?"

When you think of somebody who is in a 9 to 5 position for example, there's only so many hours of the day left. There's the 8 hours or 9 hours of work, plus the time that you want to spend with family, and then any time you need to take care of yourself in the gym and eat. Where is the rest of the time to do business? It might only be an hour. A lot of people want to make sure that that hour is well spent on something that's actually going to work, and because of that they actually don't do any work because they're not sure if it's going to work out or not. That was the Genesis for this idea and this book.

Mark: I find that really interesting. We get questions quite a lot of the time from non-fiction authors who are asking me, "I think I want to do something with the specialism that I have, but how do I know that there's a market out there for the particular book that I want to write?" You went through that in a very systematic fashion. I listened to one of the ... Is it Ryan? I'm going to forget the name now, is it Ryan Levesque?

Pat: Ryan Levesque. It's not spelled like it sounds but, Ryan Levesque who wrote the book Ask. That book is all about surveying your audience,

whether you have an audience already, a following, or even if you don't, there's ways to go about finding information about your audience. In that way, you're not guessing anymore.

The worst thing you can do is just guess and then of course once it's out there you just hope, and then if it doesn't work you're left wondering why it didn't work. The cool thing about validation and going directly to your audience first is that you're not guessing anymore. When you know you have motivation, when you have the motivation you're going to do the work, and you're going to get that work in their hands much sooner you're going to serve more people too. With authors specifically, there's some really interesting things that you can do with validation.

Jay Abraham, who's a famous marketer. Back in the day - this is pre internet days - he would use validation strategies to determine what books he should write. I don't know if you know about this, but he would actually come up with a whole list of ideas of books to write, and the way he would test them is, he would actually buy classified ads in the newspaper, one for each of those books and collect orders for them. He would see which ones would actually collect the most orders and that's how he knew which he should write first, and everybody else he would just refund that money. That was kind of primitive ways of determining what to write about, but it makes sense, right? Because he has some proof, he has validation. There's numbers behind the fact that people want this book, so then of course he's very motivated to go through that rather quickly from there.

I know a lot of authors who are utilizing more modern strategies to validate the ideas for their book by just writing a little bit about it and making it something that they can give away for free or something that's very cheap. One, maybe section of an entire book for example, just to see what people think about it, see what the reaction is like, to see if it's even anything you should expand on into a full size book. Michael Hyatt's book that just came out called Living Forward, was actually a free guide, that was a lead magnet. A lead magnet is something that you give away in exchange for a



persons email address. Over 200,000 people I think he had said, had downloaded the free copy of Living Forward back when it was just a lead magnet.

Of course since then, he's expanded on it but back then it was just a dozen page PDF that helped people and people loved it, so then he knew that that was an idea that people wanted more on and he turned that into a book. We don't know how it's done on the best seller list. It's gone up to top 5 overall of all books on Amazon at some point, even during the pre-order process. Those are just some cool ways that you can validate a book topic.

Mark: In practical terms, because I know that we'll get this question if we don't ask it, how did you practically go about surveying your audience? Was their something like a SurveyMonkey survey or something along those lines?

Pat: Correct. SurveyMonkey to my entire audience and I didn't ask them, "Would you buy a book on this?" I asked them, "What are you struggling with most?" and then from there I would then break them down into, how long have you had your business? Do you even have a business? How much money are you making and if you want to share that?

You know the cool thing about SurveyMonkey is I can pull out all the people who have yet to start a business for example, and just look at their answers, and their struggles are going to be a little bit different than somebody who's had a business for 5 years for example. Then I can really pinpoint that one big audience who has the most requests for help and serve them through this book, and that's it. That's exactly what I did. That was really cool.

Because I wanted to actually practice what I preach in this book, in terms of getting people to pay for stuff before hand, I actually set out to see if I could get 10 people to pay for the book even before I started writing it, and

I did get 10 people to actually pay for it. 10 bucks. They just sent me 10 bucks via PayPal and I knew that that was confirmation that, "Yes this is okay. I at least have 10 customers now, let's move forward with it." Of course in my mind, it's super motivational to have somebody on there that believes in you, who knows that this is a topic that they want to see a book about and of course we just fired up from there.

James: Is it funny how consumer habits, where we get used to different things. A few years ago that would have sound slightly crazy, but because of crowdfunding and so on, a lot of us, we're paying for stuff we don't see for months. I mean I bought a header display for my car, I think 18 months ago in a crowdfunding thing. At some point in my life I'll get it but, we change our habits.

Pat: I still have yet to receive something that I purchased on Kickstarter actually too. Then you also think about events, you pay money upfront for an event that you obviously don't get access to until it actually happens. It's not something that's outlandish.

You're right, back in the day maybe 2, 3 years ago, it would be kind of like, "Really? You're asking me to pay for it, it doesn't exist yet?" But now it's like, "Oh yeah, I want to pay for this idea." Not everybody who you ask is going to say yes. There's just people who won't part with money until that thing exists, but there's a certain set of people, early adopters, and that's what you're kind of looking for here.

The beauty of working with early adopters is that they're going to be there during the process that you create this thing, as a resource for you to make it exactly what it needs to be, instead of just, you have customers then you build it and then you share it with them. You're actually working with them along the way, and that's how you can engage them, and of course once you come out with this thing it's perfect for them, which means it's great for everybody else out there once you go full scale. Then you'll already have testimonials, reviews and so on and so forth.

Mark: Yeah, and that's something that I do. Obviously I'm writing fiction, you're writing non-fiction, but having a launch team, and before that having beta readers. It was one of the big accelerators that I found over the last couple of years. I was going to ask you that question a bit later on, but I think since you've brought it up let's deal with it now.

In terms of practically how you interacted with that advanced team or those beta readers, what were you doing? What were you showing them and how did you take their advice into account?

Pat: Yeah, that was a lot of fun working with the launch team. The first thing is we announced to everybody that we were building this launch team. That of course creates buzz, makes people aware that this thing is coming out, and of course you want to collect applications. I could accept everybody but we did applications because it made people feel like it was more of a professional process, that this was like a serious thing. You know we also wanted to see who was actually into it. We've received some applications where it was obvious that they didn't care, they just wanted to get the manuscript for free and of course we didn't let those people in.

Once you get this group together, we then managed them on a private Facebook group. That was fun because, not only was I interacting with them, and I had actually a manager to help manage the launch team too in the mean time but, they were also able to interact with each other. The cool thing about Facebook is everybody's, most people are there already and you could share things and you'll get immediate feedback on those things. Some of the things we shared were timeline, just to give people that expectation of when things were going to happen. Then we also shared the progress of the cover. That was a lot of fun and actually an interesting process because the interesting thing about a cover or design in any way is you're not going to be able to please everybody and so there was this definite division in the group which was great. It made it exciting and then when the book finally came out people were very interested in it of course.

I didn't have the complete manuscript done by the time the launch team was created, but I did share the intro at first and that was the first part. Then later, once the manuscript was done, I sent the early first draft, told them, "Hey guys, we haven't gone through copy editing yet but I wanted to give this early to you to make you feel like you're part of the process. Don't worry about spelling or grammar, that's all being taken care of, I just want you to read the story, and let me know what you think."

We did some other things, where we ask them for their favorite quotes, that we then used for social media purposes which was a lot of fun, and of course I shared some videos along the way too. I shared all the way through the set up process and to CreateSpace in Amazon, and just really sharing all those small things along the way, getting everybody excited. Then on launch day, it was all about sharing, leaving feedback and reviews and just making people feel excited and loved for being a part of this. They get their manuscript early and they get to see the behind the scenes. The interesting thing was I got some sales from people in the launch group. They got the book already. I don't know the exact number, I wish I did, but I would guess 75% to 80% of that group, which was about 500 people bought the book anyway because they just loved seeing the behind the scenes and felt like they owed it to me, which was really cool. That helped obviously with numbers and rankings and whatnot, but beyond that it was just a great experience to have people and very motivating to have them in my corner when I launched.

Mark: That's something that I'd do too. I'm always completely surprised when people, after helping me with beta reading and fact checking and all that kind of stuff, then are prepared to buy the book as well. It's like, "Okay. You've already more than met your side of the deal and now you're going to buy the book too." If enough of them, as you say, enough of them buy the book, it doesn't need to go wide to give you a really good kick in terms of Amazon's algorithms and start to launch it with a high rank and then the reviews and the like kind of good stuff that starts to factor in together.

I remember I was watching the launch quite carefully and you started ranking very high, very quickly even before you went wide to your full list.

Pat: When the book finally was out and available, I shared it in two places, the launch group and just my Twitter account, and that's it. By then it was already close to, I want to say top 100 at that point, which was amazing. Then once I sent out the email, which came later than I wanted it to because actually the Kindle version, took a little bit longer to be approved than I was told it would be, even though it was within their "72 hours approval", it was a lot longer than I thought it was going to be. It was more than 24 hours, so I kept checking and refreshing because I didn't want to send an email out where it was just the paperback, and the Kindle wasn't there yet because I can't determine what a person's preference is for how they want to consume content.

Also, when the Kindle finally was available, what a relief but the two pages weren't connected yet. There were two separate Amazon pages, one for the Kindle page, one for the paperback and I'm like, "Can anything else go wrong here?" Because I'm waiting to send this email and then finally when they got connected I just had the email already written I just sent. I just hit send broadcast and then everything just exploded from there.

It climbed all the way to top 22 of all books on Amazon which was incredible and to see the grass on KDP and the numbers. It was just awesome. Then the cool part was, a few days later, when everybody finally got their paperback that they ordered, I started seeing Instagram photos and tweets and all these things where people are like, "I got it. I got it," and people were doing unboxing videos. It was an awesome experience.

Then I had my very first experience at a recent conference, where people had the book, actually the conference owner bought 200 copies, that was another part of the marketing process was in lieu of speaking fees I actually had conference directors purchase books instead. This person gave away 200 books to the VIPs in this audience and after I spoke, all 200 people lined up to get it signed and that was a trip. That was incredible.

James: I should just reiterate again that all this stuff, that's the great thing about Pat, everything is laid there on the website. I recall Pat, I think there's a blogger from one of your of your team?

Pat: Yeah, no one knows his name.

James: He does the social media strategy I think you published last month and then it's really interesting to read the nuts and bolts of it.

That's how you operate this kind of nuts and bolts guy. This is how I did it, this is how it's going to work and a few failures in there as well.

Pat: Oh a lot. That's what people love hearing about the most, and I think again, you had mentioned earlier that, I do a lot of things that's stand out in this space, and I think that's one of them. I'm more than happy to share my failures because whether it's a win or fail, it's always a lesson for somebody. If I could take a failure for somebody so that they don't have to do it, I mean it just increases my brand, it makes me happy to know that I did that. In the book I talk about this failure that cost me \$15,000 because I was rushing into developing a software that I didn't even know what I was doing, and that was a very expensive lesson, but I think I've saved a lot of people money by doing that. Of course, when you help people, they're going to want to help you back. It always comes back in returns in one way or another. Whenever those failures happen I'm more than happy to share it.

James: Yeah.

Mark: Talking about software, when you had one failure but you had one great success with the Smart Player and that's what we're using on our website for this podcast, which is a really cool piece of software that we're doing this with.

Pat: Awesome. Thank you. Yeah, that was definitely a slower approach and I definitely validated that product before actually building it this time and it's doing really well, so I appreciate you guys using that.

James: I want to talk one or two other bits of machinery and software beneath the surface that you use, and obviously a mailing list is massively important to you, in a way a big advocate software as well for authors right from the beginning, and I've noticed that your mailing list is quite sophisticated.

Just talk to us a little bit about how the email streams to an individual member of your list, starts to diverge and specialize for them.

Pat: This is really cool. I've been doing this over the last 6 months and it's had a dramatic effect on everything, from open rates; I'm now seeing open rates between 50% and 70%, and click-through rates of 15% to 20% which is huge in this space. That's an email list of over 150,000 people.

For the longest time I just had one email list, like one giant bucket with everybody in it and I would just send them all the same emails, both broadcast emails and autoresponder follow up emails. They'd all get the same set of emails, which it worked fine and it did okay. Recently I got in line with a new email service provider called ConvertKit. I love them so much that I'm now on the advisory board for the company. What's cool is, they make it really easy to do some of the stuff that, some of the more sophisticated, email service providers can't do like Infusionsoft or Ontraport, which are very sophisticated but also very confusing. There's a reason why some people call it Confusionsoft instead of Infusionsoft. ConvertKit was made by a guy named Nathan Barry who's also an author. He's written a lot of books but he self-publishes them and he sells them directly from his own website. He has quite a large audience and he's a designer. He built ConvertKit as an email service provider to really just handle the intuitiveness of what it should be.

Here's what happens when people subscribe to my list. Depending on what they subscribe on, different things happen. Let's say they just subscribe to the main list. When they get on the main list, one of their first emails, if they get that lead magnet or whatever it is that they subscribe to or for, after that they get a follow up email that says basically, "Hey, I want to give you emails that matter to you." I realized that there's a number of different kinds of people in the audience who have different needs. "In order for me to do that however, I need to know a little bit more about you and I want you to answer just this one single question for me." Then it has a question with three answers, and that question is; which of the following best describes your business? The first choice is, I don't have a business. Second one is, I have a business but I'm struggling to break \$500 a month. The third one is, I'm making over \$500 a month in my business.

Immediately, once they click on those, it tags them as such in ConvertKit and puts them into a whole brand new different set of follow up emails, specifically for that group of people. Because when you think about it, for example, somebody who is just starting out with building an online business, they're not going to need the advanced SEO strategies for how to rank on top of Google, because they don't even have a website yet. I don't need to send them that and confuse them and most people who see that, for beginners, they're going to feel like it's completely overwhelming, that they're in way over their head, that there's too much to think about. I want to do them a favor and not even let them see that yet. A beginner would need, "Well, here's the first steps. Here's the mindset stuff. Here's the first tools of resources that you need." Based on the actions that they take in these emails, and later I'm actually doing this on the website too based on different things they click on, articles they read, downloads they download; I'll be able to better understand more about them so I could send them content that makes more sense.

Mark: One of the things that's very apparent in your income reports is that your biggest affiliate income is from Bluehost, is that right?



Pat: Yeah. Bluehost is a hosting provider and they've definitely got to that top spot for me in terms of the affiliate income.

Mark: Would one of the reasons for that be because recently you've been able to serve particularly relevant content to people who are looking to build a website early on so they tick that first "I don't have a business yet" box?

Pat: Right, exactly. That's exactly it. That's one of the first steps and I know exactly where those people are, who need that first step, and I can just send them direct messages that are trying to cover a whole wide range of people. I know exactly who they are, where they're at and what they need and I can give that to them.

There're some other cool things in the emails that I'm doing. I'm using that in conjunction with Optimizely which is a cool site. Optimizely is primarily known for allowing you to create A/B tests on your website, meaning you could send half your traffic to one version of a page and half to another and if there's just one variant, you can just see which one actually works better. That's called A/B testing which is really smart and everybody should be testing.

They also have this thing is called personalization, so I can through a special cookie. If people are on a particular email list for example, they will then be served the different resources when they go to my resource page on my website.

The people who are in the advanced part of the list for example, when they go to my website and they go to the resource page, they don't see Bluehost, because they don't need Bluehost. They don't have to build the website from scratch again. They see the more advanced courses: the growth stuff, the virtual team building, and all that sort of stuff. It can get very sophisticated and it's definitely very confusing at first. For me I had to

take it one step at a time and just break down that audience and then see how I could best serve them from there.

Mark: Yeah, because we still use MailChimp for the non-fiction side of the business. I think we're pretty much pushing up against the limits of what that can do. I love MailChimp, it's been great for me for 5 years and for what we do at SPF for a couple of years. When you start to get into tagging and stuff about it, it does get a little bit limited so we've been looking at Infusionsoft and I've been daunted by the complexity of it. I had been looking at ConvertKit so that's really helpful for us actually hear that.

Pat: Cool. If you need any more help with it let me know.

Mark: Thank you very much.

James: Talking about moving your streams Pat, I'm interested about the book.

Is the book a revenue stream in itself for you in the future or is it a lead magnet to encourage other things such as the public speaking? I know it's quite a big thing for you now.

Pat: It is a lead magnet primarily. However, it does come with a byproduct with a little bit of income on top of that too. So far in the month of February I calculated, that was launch month, I calculated that it had generated about \$45,000 in profit, which is great. That's not including the expenses however, to pay for my coach, my editorial team and stuff. True profit would be about \$20,000 from there, which is still great especially for a book and a self-published author.

Obviously I do come with a large audience so that does help, but this was primarily made for lead generation. I just sigh sometimes with that particular term because it doesn't treat those people like people; it's treating them like a number or a lead. I'd much rather see it as a way for me

to start a long-term relationship with somebody. That's really what this book is all about for me because I'm playing the long-term game.

This book is going to lead to potentially more books. Then it'll definitely lead to courses and things that come down the road afterwards. If I wanted the topic of the book to really make money primarily for me, like right off the bat, it wouldn't have been a book. It would have been a course and it would be very easy for me to sell that and I could charge a lot higher for it. However, I knew that I wanted to create as much exposure for me as possible.

If I did it as a course, it would be sold to primarily my own audience already and anybody I reach out to via Facebook ads for example. With the book, I know that I can utilize Amazon's algorithms and reach a lot more people than I would have before and also the notoriety that can come with something like the best seller list or just getting at the top of some of the categories in Amazon. There's a lot that comes with that too. Again, like I said, this is a long-term play for me so these future books that come down the road, they're going to have the success of Will It Fly behind it. I think that's going to help push everything else forward from this point on.

Mark: One thing you were particularly clever about I thought was, and this is really relevant to anyone who's considering non-fiction right now, is that it's more than just a book, isn't it? It's like a mini course really. There's several elements, videos and bonus content that I think you can access only if you do actually sign to a list. Is that right?

Pat: That's actually not true. You could for example, and this is part of the strategy, was at the beginning of the book where people can still see it in the preview in Kindle, it actually has links getting access to the course. The course is free and so the idea there of putting it in early is that some people will probably go and try to get it for free but the course is doing its job in terms of A, collecting emails. B, allowing me to build the relationship with people and I have an affiliate link inside the course to keep track of how many people go into the course first and then actually buy the book and it's

actually converting. There're actually people who are getting access to the course and then buying the book, which is kind of interesting.

This course, I got inspired to make it instead of just a random bonus book or a bonus starter guide or some give away. Like you said, there're some multimedia that I felt would have added to the book a little bit. There're some parts where I talk about how to set up spreadsheets in Google and I figured that would be best to do a video. I have that mentioned in the book and there're many moments in the book where I say, "Go to [www.willitflybook.com/course](http://www.willitflybook.com/course)." You could all go there right now actually if you wanted to. You can see how that works. I got inspiration for this through one of my favorite TV shows. It's called Walking Dead on AMC. I don't know if you've heard of that show.

Mark: Yeah.

James: Yeah.

PatIt's a great show. My wife and I are obsessed with it. Right before every episode you hear the voice over guy say, "Go to [www.walkingdeadstorysync.com](http://www.walkingdeadstorysync.com) to get your behind the scenes about this episode." While you're watching the episode on TV, on your computer if you go to that website, you actually see some stuff related to the scenes that are being shown and stuff. It's really cool. I figured, "Whoa!" I was like, "Maybe there's a way I could do this with my book."

I actually have this course, it's completely free, and it's meant to collect email addresses and it's laid out chapter by chapter exactly like the book. Within each of those chapters there's videos if there're any videos in that particular chapter that would be helpful. There's also worksheets, bonus downloads and my favorite part, the links that are mentioned in the book. They're all clickable right there so it's very easy. That was one of my memories from when I had read books and saw a bunch of links, I felt like it was hard for me to keep track of them.

That's all there. It's a big value add but here's the thing; currently there're, I would say close to 17,000 people who've purchased the book, both Kindle and paperback. The course has 5,000 people in it now so it's converting like 30% or something like that, which is great.

Now I have 5,000 emails of people who have read or are reading or are about to read *Will It Fly* and I could directly contact them. Here's a moment where it has already paid off. My coach and I were talking the other day, his name is Azul, he was helping me with accountability with this book. He saw that I had like 170 reviews after a couple of weeks and he's like, "This is great. This is great but I think you can get the 300 by the end of the month." I had only a week left and I was like, "Well, it took 3 weeks to get to 170, one week to get to 300? This is kind of insane Azul. This is ... I don't how ..." He was like, "You have emails in your course, right?" I was like, "Yeah." He's just like, "Send an email to them and say, "Hey guys. I'm looking for reviews."

I did that. Within 24 hours I gained another 100 reviews. It blew my mind and of course, because they were all in the course and because they were all getting a lot of value out of it, most of those reviews, I would say 98% of them, were all 5 star reviews. It was mind blowing. I did actually get the 300 two days before March 1st which was awesome.

Mark: This is real outside the box thinking and it works perfectly for non-fiction, it's absolutely ideal for that. It could work also for fiction. A lot of our listeners will be fiction writers and one thing you could do if you're writing fiction is to say have ... Like that *Walking Dead* example. You could have notes from the author, say like an author note at the end which instead of being written to be read, it could be a video. You could say, "For a back story on how I wrote this book, then visit this link," at which point you collect the email address. Then you could do all those cool things that you did; getting reviews or you know that these people have bought from me which is very valuable information.

Pat: Thank you. I've always had the dream of writing a fiction book. I don't know if you knew that Mark?

Mark: No I didn't.

Pat: I want to, like really bad, one day. It would be awesome. Here's what I would do to take this example that I showed in the non-fiction world of this course, chapter by chapter.

This is what I would do if I was doing fiction.

I would write this amazing book and then it wouldn't be called a course, it would be called something else. I don't know what it would be called off the top of my head. In each chapter I would have art work that shares some of the scenes that I envision. Maybe I'd work with an artist to create these worlds that I envision so other people can be in that world too. I would create areas, and I have this in my course too, where in a couple of the chapters I actually ask people to answer questions and there's a commenting system there.

Now they're all talking with each other, they're answering my questions. I would have a couple of parts in that, whatever we call it, bonus thing; where people can add, "Hey, what would you do in this situation? Would you do what Joey did or would you do ... Are you on team Joey or are you on team Sarah?" Really start to create this community within your book too. That would be really fun and of course the more you can get your audience involved and make them feel like you're allowing them to be a part of it, you're set for life in the series of books that you come out with after that.

Mark: Yeah. Not many people are doing that. I only know of one other fiction author who's done anything like this and he ... I'm going to have to put his name in the show notes because I can't remember at the top of my head. He writes sci-fi, kind of space opera, and the thing that he does is he built this website which all links into the book, which describes his ships.

He's got this massive, massive ships and he's like, "Okay. This scene is set in the bridge," so there's a clickable link that will take readers to it. On their tablets for example, they will go to the bridge and see a plan diagram of what it looks like.

Pat: So cool.

Mark: He spent like 20 grand on this. It was a huge amount of money but it's so cool. I don't write that kind of fiction myself but if I did I'd be all over that. It's just really, really clever.

James: Pat, let's talk about audience engagement a bit because obviously it's important to you. I hear what you said just now, you're using terms like lead magnet and lead generation. I think it's probably a good way to think about it properly as a relationship but you do have to find each other. Now, it's only going to work if they really like the stuff that you're doing and this works for authors who are non-fiction or yourself with your model. If they like what you're doing and it's of value to them, then that's great, but you do have to find each other, right? We call it lead generation or whatever, at the beginning.

Pat: Yeah.

James: That relationship that you then work with people, as your list gets bigger and bigger ... What are you? 150,000 now, I think you said.

Pat: Yeah.

James: How do you do that? How do you keep that person? Do you work, how many hours a day? Do you reply to all the emails you get from everybody on your list? Can you still do that?

Pat: No I can't. It's just impossible. I wouldn't be able to do anything else if I replied to every single email which is sad because when I first got started, I

would reply to every single email, and I would reply to every single comment. When you start out and you have that capacity.

I would absolutely recommend doing that because there's no better way to really start that relationship than that small interaction. At the start that's what you have to do but later on you have to implement some strategies. For example, I do a lot of interaction on live streaming platforms like Periscope and there's ways for me to be personable and show behind the scenes and share more than just what you would get on my content, normally through these social media platforms, in a one-to-many fashion. I think that's really important, to understand that that's how you can scale this relationship building.

That's the cool thing about podcasting also. I feel podcasts are an amazing way for people to listen to you as if you were in the same room with them. As a producer, I'm just talking to a microphone but at the same time I'm speaking to 80,000 people every time I hit publish on my episode. They're feeling like I'm just right in their living room, in a car with them, on a ride or walking their dog with them or whatever. That's how you can scale these relationship building things over time.

But as far as finding each other, I'm going to take a note from Mark Zuckerberg over at Facebook. He said that there's no better recommendation than one that comes from a trusted friend. With whatever audience you have, no matter what size it is, there's always an opportunity with the people that you have, to reach more people through them. Starting those relationships and making them feel great is what's going to make people want to share you to everybody else. Think about it. You share stuff that's awesome, and if you're the first to find something that's awesome you share it because you want to get credit for it. That's why we share or one of the many reasons why we share. If you provided this amazing experience, if you share something that's amazing with somebody, they're likely going to share. They're more likely going to share if you actually give them permission to do it or ask them to do it. Sometimes



when you have that relationship already, a lot of people don't ask and they feel afraid to, but if you provided value, you have the right to ask for them to do stuff for you.

I think a lot of people, especially in sales, are afraid to do that. People who are trying to start a business, they're afraid to ask for money. You can't be afraid to ask for money. You should be afraid to ask for money if you don't have something worthy of asking money for. If you have something that you know is going to be helpful or entertaining or obviously worth their time and money, then it's your job. It's your duty to do that because if you didn't you'd potentially be letting them down and not getting in on that experience.

Mark: I think that you're actually right when you say that in the early days you should respond to as many emails as you can.

Pat: That's your advantage.

Mark: Exactly.

Pat: That's somebody's advantage over me. I can't do that.

Mark: Yeah, and it doesn't take too many of those to build up. There's the 1,000 true fans. That's the kind of magic number most people say this days to sustain a creative business. I can't think of anyone who comes across in podcasting as approachable and as likable as you. By being that friend who you haven't met yet, if you like, it does create the relationship with your listeners or your readers.

It makes it more likely that they're going to tell their friends, you'll start seeing those tags on Facebook posts saying, "You've got to listen to this podcast," or read this book or this blog. That to me, that's the secret this days of making money from digital products. It's kind of taking it back to

almost hand selling things and being someone who is approachable and that you can ask questions and that kind of stuff.

Pat: You're absolutely right. I know that when I go to conferences for example, people come up to me, who I've never ever met before and they start talking to me like we've been friends forever. Because they've heard my voice over and over again, or they've read my book. They hear me and they know me. They know me because I'm open about a lot of those things and I'm just not afraid to be me. I think that's the number one advantage that we all have, is that we're ourselves. Nobody is like us, but a lot of us are too afraid to be us sometimes on these platforms.

I think another part of it, for me specifically, is that I'm definitely open to being vulnerable and sharing these failures, I think that makes it more human. In this online world the more human you can be, the more likely that somebody's going to be attracted to you. As my good friend Chris Tucker says, if you're you, it's going to really work because your vibe attracts your tribe. That's what he says, "Your vibe attracts your tribe," and I love that.

Mark: I haven't heard that before. That's good.

James: You can feel it working with you as well. Pat, we're hitting the 45 minute mark for the interview and I know your daughter is going to be waking up soon. I do want to get a couple of extra bits in quickly.

James: We talked about podcasting a bit and I love your enthusiasm for I come from a background of radio and television. I know from my time in radio, I have such a fondness for this, the most personal of mediums. I used to do a radio show here in the UK and I always used to do Christmas Day breakfast. On Christmas day breakfast I would speak to the same people every year and they would say, "You're the only person I'll speak to today." You were their friend, they were all elderly by themselves or whatever and it was just a beautiful medium.

Podcasting is such a liberation for me that's come along because particularly, it sounds weird but with so many people listening on headphones, it becomes an even more intimate experience that you're speaking to people. That's why people feel they know you and I feel I know you almost just from this chat here, but people listen to you every week as we do. Your enthusiasm for that, that's good, but I do want to ask you a question about podcasting as well and I'm afraid I'm going to use the old tacky term "lead generation" going back a little bit as well.

We've covered it, why we say that. We're just getting into podcasting and it was really hot 2, 3 years ago and you've been a master of it. What's your advice to us and do you think it's still in the same position that it was a couple of years ago?

Pat: I think it's even hotter now to be honest, because now it's going mainstream. Now podcasting applications are on your phone and you can't delete it because Apple put it there because they know how popular podcasts are. Now podcast applications are being built into cars dashboards, so people are going to be listening to podcasts just with a click of a couple of buttons while they're driving already. In terms of lead generation and building an audience in that way, because more and more people are listening now, you definitely have a great opportunity. More new listeners are coming every day and you want to be the show that they find and really get connected with and listen to on a regular basis.

At the same time of course, there's more podcasters who are coming into the game and actually trying to get involved too, trying to build their list and trying to get in front of an audience. Because of that there's more competition but like with anything, the cream will rise to the top. I think it's really important for you to be smart with your approach with your podcast and really target the right people, and also proactively go out there and promote your show.

The way it has changed a little bit from back when I first started, was that you could back in the day just put out a show and because there was fewer podcasts it would get exposure in New and Noteworthy, which you can still do but it hasn't had the same effects. The New and Noteworthy part of iTunes is a part that you automatically get on if you have good art work and the sound quality is good, and that gives you some free exposure to everybody really; especially in the categories that you put yourself into. Now, there's a lot of more podcasts coming so you get lost in there really quickly. You're going to have to use tactics and strategies to really get in front of the people that you want to get in front of. There's a number of different ways to do that, it's through connecting with other podcasters and doing a share for share type thing. Here's a great tip, you can interview forum or group owners and when you do that, they feel special because they were on the show but what are they going to do after that show is over? They're going to share it with their entire forum, because it makes them look good and then you have this whole new set of listeners. There're some strategies if you just start smart about it you can think of how to grow your podcast and continue to do that even today with so many podcasters out there. There're many more podcast listeners than ever and because of that I definitely still think it's hot and still think it's a Wild Wild West and it's a great opportunity for people.

James: Good. Well, that sounds encouraging. Mark, take all that onboard. My final question really for me, thinking about the way that you operate and the stuff that I like about the way that you operate, is the content that you produce is really good quality. Funny enough, that's not always the case even with some really great people in the same space as you and us, who are doing really well, but the kind of sound quality in the podcast is not good, the video quality is really rough.

You've set quite high standards. Where does that come from? What's your background and where's the drive for that or how have you made it happen?

Pat: That's an interesting question. I think there's a couple of reasons why that's my approach. I always want to be at the top of whatever I do and I do that. I know that some of these things will give me the advantage and that's really important.

Part of it is also because of the way I grew up. I was the kid who would come home with a 95% on a test and I'd be asked where the next 5% was. Also part of it is because I was just in architecture. In architecture, you can't just put half energy into a building because peoples' lives are at stake. You have to really do it right. That's how I approach my business because if you don't do it right, a building could crumble and fall on somebody or it could just not behave the way it's supposed to, all those sorts of things. My architecture background, and plus that's obviously design. Design is important to me too. I think that all plays a role in why I do what I do now.

That's not to say that you have to be perfect though. It's definitely not perfect and it's definitely progress over time. If you go to some of my earlier podcast episodes, yes the sound quality was okay, but the way that I spoke lacked confidence. I didn't even know what I was doing. Looking at my earlier YouTube videos, it's very apparent that I didn't know what I was doing, and that the visuals and the design wasn't there. You just learn over time as you do and that's been my number one educator, is execution. I execute as much as I can because I know I'll learn the most that way.

Mark: Just to tie that back, as we let you go Pat, to the book. The launch videos that you shot with I think, is it Caleb?

Pat: Yeah. Caleb my videographer.

Mark: They are extraordinary. I don't know if you've seen those James?

James: Yeah.

Mark: If you haven't we'll put them in the show next week.

James: We will, yeah.

Pat: They were a lot of fun.

Mark: With your son it was just beautiful, really, really clever and personal which is kind of ... I think that probably sums up SPI and what you've been doing pretty well on a Tuesday night.

Pat: Thank you Mark.

Mark: It's pretty obvious where people can find you, but is there any particular links you would recommend people visit to get to know you?

Pat: I had to think about that because I'm in the West Coast so I'm like, trying to do the conversion or something. Anyway, thank you so much for having me on guys and I appreciate it. To all the other authors out there, best of luck. I hope this has been helpful to you. You can find the book at [www.willitflybook.com](http://www.willitflybook.com) and that's really where to go, or you could find me at [www.smartpassiveincome.com](http://www.smartpassiveincome.com) and @patflynn on most social media platforms.

James: That's great Pat. Thank you very much. We're really looking forward to the sequel Let It Fly when that comes out.

Pat: Yeah, right? I have to give you credit for that.

James: We'll speak again on the show. Thank you so much for joining us

Pat: Thanks for having me guys. Bye

James: Well, there's no doubt, is there Mark, that he is an accomplished broadcaster as well as an internet entrepreneur for want of a better word.

Mark: That's a phrase coming from you James. Yeah, he is completely a super professional and one of the nicest guys I've spoken to that I have met online. He's just such a nice guy, so easy to like, and that's one of the reasons why he's doing so well with everything that he touches right now.

James: What I really liked about him, we picked up on it a few times in the interview, is this idea that you're not a snake oil salesman. There're lots and lots of people in the organizations on the internet that are more or less, they're shallow. He advocates having something of value that's going to work for the person that has joined you and that's the only way that you can operate.

That's absolutely something I know that you've been really strong about right from the beginning of this SPF project. A lot of the stuff that we've done has been of value and is completely free for people, is because you want to help them and of course there's a business behind it as well, but it's got to be substantial.

Mark: Exactly. That's what it's all about for me. When it comes to some of the things, the transparency with the income reports, that is, I'm not ashamed to say, that's inspired directly by what Pat's been doing for several years now. Transparency is important, integrity and helping people, and that really shone through with the interview with Pat.

James: Okay. Great. Don't forget, as Mark mentioned the income reports are available, they're alongside the podcast. You should get it in the part of your subscription. There will be another one coming along shortly. We also have coming up shortly an interview with Marie Force, who's a fantastic author and somebody else who kind of owns our space more than anything else. She's really shown a way, particularly a way of engaging with readers and how using ... When you get that relationship right with your readers, that's such a great benefit to everyone involved. That's a good interview as well, isn't it Mark?

Mark: Yeah, really, really worth waiting for that one coming soon.

James: Okay. We look forward to catching up with you soon. Thank you so much for joining us on the Self Publishing Formula Podcast. We'll see you next time.

Mark: Bye, bye.

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