



SPI 287

Should I Create a Personal Brand? Pros and Cons

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Pat Flynn: This is the Smart Passive Income Podcast, with Pat Flynn. Session number 287. 287.

Announcer: Welcome to the Smart Passive Income Podcast, where it's all about working hard now, so you can sit back and reap the benefits later. Now your host—he still considers himself an architect, because he builds stuff people use—Pat Flynn.

Pat Flynn: Hey, what's up everybody? Thank you so much for joining me in this session of The Smart Passive Income Podcast. I'm super thankful you're here. If this is your first time listening to the show, make sure you subscribe to get more goodies coming your way. If you're back again, thank you for coming back.

Now, today we're going to talk about personal branding. This is sort of branding month here on SPI, and actually starting next week, on October 16th—don't worry if you're listening to this way in the future, this is still relevant, because you'll be able to do this—but launching for the first time ever is the BYOB Course. That's the Build Your Own Brand Five Day Challenge course, which is going to be posted up, and live next week. So, it's really exciting. Go to SmartPassiveIncome.com/byob, and there you'll be able to get access to the challenge, where you'll be able to log in and see five modules, one for each of the five days, with a few lessons in each, to help you go from no website, to a website that is branded, that has a theme, and that is also connected to an email service provider to help you get your brand up. So you can start building up that trust and that relationship with your audience. So you can start getting exposure out there. So you can start actually making a mark in the online world. Again, SmartPassiveIncome.com/byob.

Now, I said the C word, the “course” word. I don't want you to think that this is something that you have to pay for, because this is actually a free course. I've come out with two courses recently, and they were paid courses, premium courses: Smart From Scratch, at SmartFromScratch.com, which has done very well, and then also, PowerUpPodcasting.com, for those of you who are wanting to start a podcast. Those two are great. But this upcoming course,

Build Your Own Brand, is free, and it is by far one of the most requested items now. So I wanted to deliver it to you and not give you any excuses to not get started, with getting your website up. No matter what stage you're at, if you have yet to get your website and brand up and running, or maybe you have it up and you're just not sure very much, kind of unsatisfied with it, start over. Go to SmartPassiveIncome.com/byob, and I'll take you from there.

Now, today I wanted to talk about building a personal brand, because one of the most common questions I get through my show, AskPat, and one of the most common questions that get via email is, "Should I create a personal brand?" First, we're going to define what that means, and then we're going to talk about it a little bit.

The first thing I want to say is, there's no right or wrong answer. I think you have to look forward into the future to determine whether or not building a personal brand makes sense for you. That's really where it starts. What makes sense for you? This is why I talk so much about, especially in my book, *Will It Fly?*, about understanding where you want to go. What is that destination point for you? You have to get very clear with why you're doing what you're doing, and what it is you want the outcome to be, because if you are not, then you're essentially driving to nowhere, and when you're driving to nowhere, you are losing gas. Eventually, you are going to stop. You are putting wear and tear on your vehicle, if we're going to continue with this analogy, and you may end up further away from where your actual destination may be. So it's important to be clear on the direction you're headed, and where you want to go.

Now, does that mean you need to know all the steps? No, you likely will not, and never will. That's why it's important to get started, but even before you get started, knowing why you're starting and where you want to head is important, because even if you get off track, at least you can get back on track, or you can have other people who understand where you want to go, who can give you directions along the way, which is kind of why I'm here.

So, personal branding. What is that? Now, you may have some sort of

idea what it is, but here are a few definitions for you to ponder. The first one here, coming from Wikipedia, and that is, personal branding is the practice of people marketing themselves and their careers as brands. Personal branding is essentially the ongoing process of establishing a prescribed image or impression, in the mind of others, about an individual group or an organization. I love that.

Now, a quote that comes to mind from Jay Z, to me, sums this all up, what a personal brand is, and that is, “I’m not a businessman; I’m a business, man.” So, he himself is the business. You are, yourself, the business. Without you, your business would not be the same. There are many businesses out there where, if the CEO or the Founder or the person who is sort of behind it, if they were to leave, things would still continue to run. In many cases, many personal brands, things can still continue to run because we have devices like blogs and podcasts and videos with our face on it that allow us to still continue to build a relationship, without actually having to be there in real time, but over time, there’s a diminishing effectiveness, if you will, of how powerful that content can be used to help promote your brand, or your products, or your content, or your offerings, right?

Because when people think of personal brands, they think of the person behind it, and if that person were to disappear and not continue to interact, and no longer be active, well then, the effectiveness of the content that was previously published would diminish. There is some sort of upkeep that goes along with building and maintaining, and growing and scaling a personal brand, which . . . we’ll get into some of the pros and cons, of personal branding, versus some of your other choices. But another way to frame personal branding is what I like and what I’ve heard from Chris Ducker, from ChrisDucker.com and Youpreneur.com. He teaches people how to create personal brands from their expertise, from their superpower. What he says is, “It’s what people say about you when you are not around.” I absolutely love that, because it’s what people say to each other, or how people talk about you, which goes along with the Wikipedia definition of that perceived or that prescribed image, or the impression. And that’s so important nowadays, especially with social media, and how connected we

all are, because we all talk to each other about things we love, but also things we don't love. You think of, for example, Yelp accounts. The reviews in Yelp can be that brand image, one way or another. It could be positive, or it could be negative, and that really plays a role in the overall success of that brand.

I was doing some research, and I found out the term “personal brand” is believed to have first been mentioned in an issue of Fast Company Magazine 10 years ago—actually to this month, 1997, in August. There was an article about management guru and author Tom Peters, who wrote, and I quote, “We are CEOs of our own companies. Me, Inc. To be in business today, our most important job is to be head marketer for the brand called, you.” Now, that is very forward-thinking. In August of 1997, before it was very easy to go up and set up a blog, before it was easy to start a podcast. Before YouTube channels were like a thing that you should have, right?

Nowadays, when people think personal branding, it's like, “Oh, where are you posted up? Where's your content being created? What kind of things do you, specifically, have to offer? What are your superpowers?” But I think even before 1997 and this quote was made, I think this is something that's kind of known, right? When you want to excel in your job, you need to create a brand for yourself, so that you can become known in the company that you work for, as somebody who can deliver, as somebody who has these, like I said, superpowers, that can contribute to the success of the company in whole.

When you are a parent, you need to brand yourself as the somebody in the family who is the discipline, the commander, the person who leads by example. You can shape yourself in any which way you want, no matter what position you're in: parent, group leader, manager, president, or even employee. You're always branding yourself at all times. But the sense of building and creating a personal brand online—to then turn into a business, to build rapport, to serve an audience, to sell things, to offer value—well, this is obviously becoming a lot easier nowadays because of the tools that are available to us.

That begs the question, should we all have a personal brand in that sense now? I think we should. I think it's important for all of us to have a personal brand of some kind. Does that mean you have to have your domain name as the name of your brand? No. AmyPorterfield.com, RickMulready.com. There's other websites out there that do that already. However, you can do like what I do, which is, I'm Pat Flynn, but I have SmartPassiveIncome.com, and even though SmartPassiveIncome.com, in a sense, could have anybody sort of manage it and become the sort of leader behind it, it's because I'm the one who's doing it, because I'm a very forward-facing in that brand, because you're getting to hear my voice on the podcast, because you're seeing my face, because you're seeing me at conferences. I am Smart Passive Income. So you don't necessarily have to have your name, but what I think is important is that you have to fight to become well known for something. You have to break through that noise, as Michael Hyatt says, and share and showcase what it is that you have to offer that's special.

I'm going to ask you to pause for a moment. If you want to play along, you don't have to. Maybe you're driving. I don't want you to mess with the controls. I'll just be silent for a little bit, as you consider this, and you can run through this exercise later. But I wanted to walk through a thought experiment with you. If you've read my book, *Will It Fly?*, then you know this already. Hopefully, you've done the experiment, because it can be one of the most helpful things you can do. But what's really important is for you to understand, like I said, what your superpowers are. What is your unique and unfair advantage? This is different than your USP, your Unique Selling Proposition. Those can typically be the features and the benefits, of whatever it is that you have to offer, but I'm talking about you. You as a person. What is it that you have to offer, that other people in your space, or nobody else can? Or what is it that you have more of than others who are out there fighting for the same audience? It's important to know how to answer this and to know what those things are, because then, you can use those things to your advantage. Whereas most people, they don't necessarily know, so they try a whole bunch of things, and they try to become an expert in places where they don't really need to know

how to become an expert, but it just seems like in the moment that that's the right thing to do, even though it totally works against who their character is.

You can see how this can be a time suck. It can be an energy suck if you go down that path. The thought experiment I want to challenge you with is one that comes from my book, *Will It Fly?* There's a chapter called "The Shark Bait Test," and in this test, I'm actually going to just walk you through this process right now. I want you to imagine right now, wherever you're at, that you are just magically transported to a hallway. In this hallway, you're walking down it, there's carpet on the floor, but on either side of the hallway, there are aquariums with bright blue water, lights pouring down from the ceiling as well, and then you start to see these sharks and these fish swimming along these aquariums that are lined on either side of this hallway, and as you're walking down, you see these giant double doors and you open these double doors. They make a loud noise, and as you walk in, the room opens up, and you can see it's a dark room, except for the spot that's lit in the middle there.

In that space, lit by those bright lights, are the sharks from Shark Tank. For instance, Mark Cuban, Kevin O'Leary, and all the others, right? If you've seen the show, Shark Tank, you know what I'm talking about. What this essentially is, is a panel that is there to judge you and your idea, or your business, or your blog, or whatever it is. That next project that you're working on or whatever it is your brand is. You're going to go there, and pitch your idea to them, and tell them why it is something they should invest in. Whether you're looking for investors or not, that's not the point here. The point here, is that you pitch it to them, and they stay silent, and then Kevin O'Leary, Mr. Wonderful there in the middle, he puts his fingers together and he says, "You know what? What is stopping me from hiring somebody to do exactly what you do? I can just hire somebody I know to do all of that for me, and I don't need you. So, why should I work with you?"

It's interesting, because this is the exact scenario that I see over, and over, and over again on the Shark Tank. This is a question that

often pops in during these sort of question and answer sessions, between the investor and the person who's making the pitch, and it's interesting to hear a lot of the answers, because a lot of times, people fish for an answer, or try to provide an answer that they think the investors would sound . . . kind of, what they want to hear like, "Oh, well the market share of this product . . ." No, that stuff doesn't matter. The question is, What is your unfair advantage? How would you answer Mr. O'Leary there? What would you say is your unfair advantage? That should absolutely, whether you're building a personal brand, or building a regular brand . . . not that a personal brand is not regular, but I mean a non-personal brand where it is essentially a company that's doing the interactions. You're being known as a logo or a personality that's not you, yourself, but what the company makes up in whole. What is it that you have, or that company has to offer, that nobody else can? What would make it so that Kevin is wrong? He cannot hire somebody to do that. Why?

In many cases on the show, it's a patent of some kind, but at other times they do a great job of sharing exactly what they have inside of them that others do not. It could be a special skill that they have that they know, they know more about that thing than anybody else. They've practiced many more hours. It could be, perhaps, the network that they've created, the connections that they have in that particular space.

I did a podcast episode once where we spoke with Lain Ehmman, who talked about how she used her unfair advantage, which was her connections in the scrapbooking space, to connect those people together in an online virtual conference, or virtual summit, which ended up helping her earn over six figures in the scrapbooking industry. So that was her superpower and her unique unfair advantage. But we still haven't really spoken on the question of, well, what's better? What's best: to create a personal brand, or to kind of just create a brand where maybe you're working behind it, but you have a whole team? Other people could potentially replace you, and that would be okay.

There are pros and cons to each. With a personal brand, the pros

are, it is you, and like Chris Ducker says, “You are 100% original. Nobody is like you.” That’s why, when you see people start to kind of copy and mimic other people, it’s like, “Why are you doing that? You are yourself.” That’s your biggest advantage is, you are you, and nobody is like you. When you can amplify those things that are unique about you, and they become a part of the image that you are sharing with others in the online space or in the world of business, well that, then, helps you become your brand, and nobody can copy that. People can attempt to, but they’re always going to be second best because you are doing you. You do you.

It reminds me of another quote by Frank J. Giblin, II, which sums this up completely, and that is, “Be yourself. Who else is better qualified?” So that speaks to a lot of things, right? Also, just being confident in who you are and the experiences that you have, the information that you’re sharing. When you are you, you are more able to stand out of the crowd. You may be discussing and sharing things that are very similar to what other people are sharing, but they are not you, and there are other people in this world who will want to follow the way that you teach it, the way that you propose it. The way that you share that information.

They’re going to want to follow you because it’s all about that connection, which leads us to the second advantage, which is the fact that we live in a world where it’s all about the P to P relationships. The person-to-person, the people-to-people relationships. Again, Chris Ducker—I keep mentioning him here, not just because I love the guy, but also because he knows personal branding—and he tells this story about Bob the Baker, right? Bob the Baker is like, if you live in a small town, you go to Bob to buy bread because you know Bob. Not just because his bread is great, but you know Bob. He welcomes you, and you get to know him. He gets to know you. He knows the name of your kids, and maybe a grocery store opens up closer to your home that has bread for even cheaper, but you’re gonna go to Bob’s Bakery anyway, because of Bob, because of what Bob has given you. It’s more than just the bread. It’s the experience. It’s that culture. It’s the friendship. So it’s about those people-to-people relationships.

A good personal example of where the P to P relationship really, really helped me out was in . . . I think it was April or May of 2009. By this point, I had published my first ebook, which was a guide to help people pass the LEED exam, an exam in the architecture space. I was doing very well. I was making five figures a month, anywhere between 15K and 30K, per month. Then, a big piece of news came my way, and that was that the United States Green Building Council, the USGBC, which is the organization that actually creates the exams, that actually writes the questions for these exams, the exam that I was teaching people how to pass, they came out with their own study guide to compete with mine.

I thought I was done for. I thought I was screwed. I thought, “Well, why would anyone want to buy from me, Pat Flynn, who didn’t even get a perfect score on the test? Who was just this random person who started talking about this test online, and started selling an ebook study guide to help people pass it? Why would people buy from me versus the actual organization that creates the questions for this exam? Little did I know that that would be a record month for me, because I found out that when people bought from me . . . A, knowing that there were study guides for these things, because they got news from the United States group, Green Building Council. They literally sent an email to everybody, but then people started to shop around, and they started to see that there were actually quite a few study guides beyond the USGBC one, which was quite expensive. And there’s many reasons why that’s the case, because they have bills to pay. There’s a lot of administrative and costs to running that business. Mine was fairly cheaper, or fairly less expensive, but it was still a good price point for what people were getting, and people, I found out, they told me, that the reason they bought from me . . . You know, I had the most traffic I had ever had that month, but the reason they bought from me was because they connected with me, because I was somebody who was just like them, just a couple steps ahead. Not a faceless organization. Not an organization that was going to charge, already \$400.00 to take the exam, let alone \$85.00 for an exam guide.

Well, here was Pat Flynn, somebody who had taken this exam,

who seemed to have gotten to know his way around studying for and passing this exam. So it made sense. It was surprising to me, because I thought I was dead, but it made sense to me after I started to hear the feedback about why people really wanted to buy a guide from me, and then later this was confirmed when . . . I remember one of my mentors, Jeremy Frandsen, who was one of the hosts of Internet Business Mastery. He and I would meet every once in a while, and we had lunch one day at Cheesecake Factory in San Diego, and I had pitched him on the idea of these 10 different business ideas I had because I was just kind of doing okay with Smart Passive Income. Green Exam Academy was kind of set already. It was at that set-and-forget stage, and I pitched him these 10 different business ideas, and he said, “Man, these are pretty amazing ideas.”

There was like a camera review site. All these things I was interested in, I had turned into an idea and I shared with him. He said, “You know, what’s missing from each of these things is you. Your personality. You have this uncanny ability to connect with people through your writing, through your videos.” So that’s when I decided when I was going to start a podcast. I was going to include a lot more of myself in it, which is why at the beginning of every episode, if you’ve listened to all the episodes, or any other episodes in the past, you’ll notice that the beginning where I share a random fact about me from my voiceover guy, it’s different every single time, because I knew that would help with that personal touch, by keeping it different, keeping it interesting, but most of all, keeping it relatable.

Some people come up to me for the first time. I’ve never met them before. I see them in a conference, and they’re like, “Pat, dude, how’s your fantasy football team doing?” Because they know I’ve talked about that, and typically my answer is, “Well, I don’t want to talk about it, because it’s not doing very well right now.” But other times it’s just other random things, like this one other time this woman was . . . We had this conversation about the fact that I was like a giant baby, because I was literally a giant baby. I was 11 pounds, 12 ounces when I was born, and now, saying this again, some of you are going to be like, “Oh, my gosh. I can’t even imagine

that.” Or maybe you had a baby that was 11 pounds, 12 ounces come out of you, and you’re like, “Woah, okay, I can relate to that now and I get it.” Anyway, those little facts that may not seem to matter at all matter quite a bit, because those are the things that people remember. That thing that makes me seem more human, that makes me more of a person, as opposed to just an online robot, right? I have, now, a personality, and that’s the personality that people will connect with.

I encourage all of you to share more of yourself. That doesn’t mean that you have to share everything, and obviously different people have different lines on what is shareable and what people are comfortable with, but I would recommend just trying it and seeing what the reaction is like. Maybe on Facebook, a good challenge for you would be to post a very personal story about something, maybe an embarrassing story, and encourage your followers and fans to share their most embarrassing story too. This is something I did when I was on Michael Stelzner’s show, a social media marketing podcast. It was a fun challenge, because a lot of the comments . . . people were sharing their most embarrassing story, and it was just kind of a fun exercise to get used to sharing something that is from our past, something personal, but something that makes us more human, and I think we can all connect better if we do that.

So why don’t you share your most embarrassing story in the comments section of this podcast episode? So if you go to SmartPassiveIncome.com/session287. Share an embarrassing story from your past. And a lot of you might be like, “What? I don’t get it.” If you don’t get it, well, you don’t get it yet. What it is, it’s practicing the idea of opening up a little bit, being personable and being vulnerable. Those are things that can help you, as a personal brand, stand out and feel better connected with your audience, and have your audience connect on a more deeper level with you because part of being a personal brand is being honest, and this is the one thing that I know I do, that a lot of people know me for. That’s the honesty that comes with where I come from.

From everything from the failed experiments that I’ve had, from

the \$15,000 failed software experiment back in 2010 to my failed membership site in 2013 called Breakthrough Blogging . . . That later, two years down the road, I offered a refund for, because I just needed to wipe that slate clean, because I was just not happy with what I had given, versus the expectations that I was setting for those customers . . . To the random stories about my family that I talk about, to all these little random facts that you hear. If you don't get why this exercise is important, well then, you are not getting it. This whole idea of what a personal brand is. Now, I don't want you to confuse a personal brand with just telling random stories and embarrassing stories about yourself the whole time. This is just one component of what it means to be personal online, and it's this personal part that I feel makes that competitive advantage so attractive to go down that route. But there, of course, are a number of disadvantages to going down this route too. It's scary. It's opening up yourself to vulnerability, and for criticism, and for haters, and trolls, who, literally . . . You're putting yourself out there as a target, and many great things can come from that, but at the same time, many not so great things can come from that too, because it's you.

When somebody comments on, or disrespects your brand, it's a direct. Or it feels as if, and it probably is, a direct insult or disrespectful moment to you, and that can hurt sometimes. That's derailed me in the past, to a point where, almost after a month of not working at all, after a hateful sequence of comments on my blog and many other people's blogs about me, I almost wanted to give up. But then I realized just how insane that was to think that way, because every second that I was wasting on this person and what he had started was the second that I was taking away from the people who actually cared about me, who actually wanted to learn from me.

We, as entrepreneurs, and you all might know this, we have this sort of weird Math, and that weird Math is one negative comment is greater than 100 positive comments. It's interesting. I had an interesting conversation with my son today. He's seven now, and I'll get him back on the show sometime. I know a lot of you who have listened to the show for a while, you might kind of remember when

he first came on the show when he was like two, and then four. He's turning eight soon. But we're having deeper, more meaningful conversations now that he's seven, and his logic is kicking in now, and his emotions are kicking in. He's starting to have personal likes and dislikes. It's really interesting to be here with him every single day, and watch him grow up and notice how he's been changing and growing over time.

But one conversation we had on the way back from dinner today was the fact that he felt like he said, "Hey Dad, I don't think I'm being a good big brother." And I said, "Well, why do you say that?" And he said, "Well, because I do bad things to Kai all the time." Kai is his sister. And I'm like, "Well, what kind of bad things were you talking about?" Well, he offered a couple of examples, and these are just things that had happened earlier in the day that made Kai upset, and he wasn't sharing something, or he had said something and she got upset about that, so he was feeling the regret of that, and I can appreciate that. I liked that he was thinking about something that he had done, and was internally questioning whether that was the right thing to do, and he came to the conclusion that it shouldn't have been that way. So, he then decided to say that he was not a good big brother.

But I asked him, "Can you name off more things that you did that were great?" And he actually couldn't. So I was able to pull out several examples from just today only, of when he was a good big brother, when he helped his sister get her shoes on this morning, when he helped by sharing a snack when they came home from school, and they shared a Popsicle together. I gave seven or eight examples. I was trying to teach him the fact that we just like to gravitate and think about and dwell on those things that aren't working out so well, or the negative things that are happening. But clearly when I told him all the great things he did, he eventually ended up saying, "Well, I guess I'm not that bad." And I said, "No, you're not, but you've got to also realize that we will always recognize the negative things, and we don't always recognize the positive things, but start to train yourself to counter those negative thoughts with positive ones, and start to, perhaps, think of examples

and appreciate those things that you do that are positive, and be aware of those things.

A little lesson for all of you to do that as well. It's something that I wish I knew earlier in life, because I was somebody who was always dwelling on the negative aspects of my life, the things that weren't going well. The fact that I was short, that I didn't think about how quick I was on the soccer field. I always was concerned about how short I was, and things like that. That's just one of thousands of examples that may seem like . . . I could probably make a list of all the thousand different things that I just didn't like about myself or what I did or the situation that I was in back in school. I was picked on a lot. I was bullied. But all those things I realized, made me stronger. Eventually, I got to the point where I was happy with who I was. It took until college to make that happen, but I wish I found that stuff out sooner, and kind of was comfortable with who I was sooner, because I would have probably had a better time in high school. But anyway, I'm kind of getting off tangent here.

But to go back to personal branding. One of the other disadvantages of creating what's called a personal brand, in a sense—for example, building a business where you are the center of it, where you are definitely the engine that keeps it running—is that it's not very sellable. Meaning, if you wanted to exit, if you wanted to hand that business off to someone else, it would likely change overnight, when that transaction would happen. That's an interesting thought. It's not a bad thing. For me, I love it, because I don't want anybody to replace who I am, but other people, they go into a business and they have a certain timeframe in mind in terms of how long they want to work on it, and then will want to hand it off. Exit strategies, for example, which is a whole 'nother conversation. What does that mean, when you approach a business to just simply exit? There's a lot of underlying factors and thoughts that go into that of course. We could probably have a live discussion at some point, related to that, which would be really interesting I think. I'd love to get all of your takes on that. Going back to this whole idea of selling your brand. You are as a personal brand, making it extremely difficult, nearly impossible to sell that business off or to hand it off to

somebody else, without a very difficult transition period. Meaning, it's going to take a lot of work to get your audience who you built, who has built trust with you, to get use to somebody else.

I've seen it happen before. I've seen brands undergo a shift in management, and a shift in who owns that website, and I've seen websites sort of take a dive as a result. I think they're still going strong, but they're just not the same. They're different. Imagine if someone else took over Smart Passive Income. It would be completely different. Now, there's another example that comes to mind: Adam Baker, who I absolutely love. He was and still is a great friend of mine, although I haven't talked to him in quite a while, but back in 2011, he and I grew pretty close. We worked on a few projects together. He is the person who is blogging over at ManvsDebt.com, and I got to know him very well, because I was very involved and the personal finance community. He's partly the reason why I got so involved in FinCon, which led me to start speaking at their events, and all those kinds of things. Anyway, he ended up removing himself from that brand, and hired somebody else to kind of take over the writing for that blog, and it was completely different. It was done in a legit way. It was done in an authentic way. I've seen it happen with several other sites as well. It just never seems the same. That's just something to be wary about, to consider when you are at the point at which you are deciding to go with a personal brand.

Now, does creating a personal brand mean you're never able to be selling anything? No, not at all. Think of Neil Patel, a very big personal brand in the online marketing and advertising space. He blogs at NeilPatel.com. He also has a website called Quick Sprout, which . . . He is indeed the brand behind that too, in that NeilPatel.com, he wouldn't be able to give that to anybody else, right? QuickSprout.com. That's like the medium level. It is very much his own brand, but in a sense it's not so just all his pictures everywhere. He has other guest writers who come on board every once in a while. He could, at medium level, sell it if he wanted it too. Then he has his other businesses like Kissmetrics, and Hello Barn, and several other ones, where he is a major player in those

brands. But he is not those brands. He is an influencer who helps to promote those brands. He is a part of those companies, and he helps to make those companies successful, but whether it's him or another person who steps in as CEO or President can still . . . Obviously, depending on the performance of those new people, it's not going to affect the brand very much, in terms of that transition period. I think that's the best situation, because Neil could always do any other project, and he can utilize the power that he's built with his personal brand to set up shop anywhere else he wants, and to create any new piece of software, and then sell it or promote it, or create any new business. With his personal brand name behind it, he would be able to get it kick started quite quickly, and I think that's the cool thing. You can kind of do both. You can do a personal brand, but also have a business at the same time, but can you do both at the same time? Maybe. Maybe.

There's a person who I know who went the other way around. His name is Stu McLaren. I knew Stu simply as a person who was the co-founder, or founder, of WP WishList, which is a membership plugin that you can install on the WordPress to create sort of dated areas, places where only on WordPress, when people log in, can they see that information. So it's by a membership sort of platform, within WordPress. So, WP WishList was that plugin. I got very familiar with that plugin because it was one of the many that I was experimenting with, and I got very familiar with the tool, and I got to learn more about the team about it, and Stu was just that person who was the creator of the tool. Then, I started to see Stu start to speak a little bit more. I saw him speak at Platform Conference, which was run by Michael Hyatt. That conference doesn't run anymore, but it was great. I saw it and got to meet Stu for the first time. I got to hear his name more and more, and then through other channels and blogs, I started to hear Stu come up again, and it was always about Stu, and not WP WishList.

He had sort of transitioned out of the software space, and he got out of WP WishList, and then created Stu.me, and that's his website, where he now is helping several other people build their tribes and help them with their software companies and do other amazing things to help their brands, and he's done a very good

job of transitioning out of a non-personal brand, but very much a software solution where he was just the co-founder, or the founder. I don't remember exactly, which is why I keep saying both, but then transitioning into, then, what became his own personal brand. I think it may have just taken that experience to work with WP WishList to understand what he really wanted to do and what his personal brand was going to be about.

I think he always knew—and Stu, if you're listening to this, correct me if I'm wrong. I'd love to talk to you more just in general, because you're such a great human being, and you and your family are amazing. I think it just took some experience working in that situation, as the founder of a company, to then understand what his true passions were and what his potential superpowers were. He has some obvious superpowers. One of the ones I remember when I heard him speak was just his storytelling. His storytelling and his passion behind with what he says can really inspire, and he's doing that with his tribe masterminds and such now, that he brings people together. He tells amazing stories. He helps inspire them, and gives them very clear actions in their businesses, to help them propel themselves forward. Stu.com is his website, and he's awesome.

Another person comes to mind. Again, just talking about brands and people behind them. There's a brand called Ugmonk. U-G-M-O-N-K. We actually featured Jeff, the founder, in Episode 285, just a couple weeks ago, and it was a very popular episode, because of just the authenticity that he brought and to show that, this t-shirt company, which is essentially is what it started out as, a design company that used t-shirts, really expanded into something that became sort of just a cult hit and an amazing brand that people love, and that people just are now raving fans of. And I'm now a raving fan of Jeff, because of his story and because of what he's built, but also just because the products are amazing. The designs are fantastic. I've backed a Kickstarter campaign of his. That's Episode 285.

Jeff is interesting because his brand is known as Ugmonk. I think that is just a reflection of who he is. He wouldn't even tell me why it's called Ugmonk, and I really wanted to get that story out of him, but he wouldn't tell me, but I know that that's just representative of

who he is and what he's trying to create. The brand, even though on the front end, is this thing called Ugmonk, and you don't really even know what that means until you go there and you see what it's all about, and you read his story, or you listen to that episode. Episode 285. It is very much Jeff, and then Jeff's family is also working in the business too, so it's just an extension of who he is, and that's just the personality that it's taken. It's just an extension of him, and it's just an amazing, amazing brand in sort of the design commerce space. All of you, I recommend checking that out.

I could go on and on with different examples of different kinds of brands. There's the people whose names are just so well known that they are their own brand, like Michael Hyatt, Seth Godin. I'm only speaking of the entrepreneurship space right now. If you were to go into the personal fitness space, there are brands in the personal fitness space, which are those people. I think it's Jillian Michaels, I want to say. Then there's, of course, Chalene Johnson and those big names, Shaun T. Who's the guy who I just got so sick of because I . . . ? Oh, Tony Horton. I love Tony, by the way, but I just got so sick of hearing his voice all the time because I kept playing those videos from P90X every single day, for 270 days. I went through three iterations of P90X. I just got so tired of the same jokes, but anyways, it's no offense to Tony Horton. He changed my life there, when I started P90X back in the day. Those are some personalities.

There are people in the cooking space who have their own brand, and yes, they have their own cooking shows, but they are very much the reason why that show exists and why it's successful, right? In any niche, there are those people. They are essentially their brand, and in the same niches there are companies that are known and people connect with and they love because of what service that company as a whole, that culture that it's created, the feelings people get of just belonging because of what these companies have created for them. In every niche there's the exact same thing. There is no really wrong answer. I think the big, big lesson to take away here is, you need to know why people are going to follow you, and you need to put yourself out there, and you need to connect. You need to create.

Now, speaking of creation and getting things done, I'm excited to, like I mentioned last week, to mention Kimra Luna's brand new course. It's open now actually. It's called BeTrueBrandYou.com. She's built this amazing brand with just a loyal fan base that is unlike anything I've seen before, and it's really cool, because she actually came from the ground up. She told us her story in Episode 181 of the SPI Podcast, which was how she went from welfare to nearly \$1 million in less than 12 months. Right now, doors are open to her course. She teaches branding online unlike anybody else that I've ever seen. It's really a whole encompassing online business education for service-based entrepreneurs who want to go just crazy and learn how to stand out, captivate their audience, monetize their brand. It's just packed full of everything.

What's really cool about this is you get a lot of access to Kimra, and also her copywriter, which is what I know a lot of people struggle with, especially when it comes to their brand. I know a lot of people in the SPI audience who have gotten help from Kimra too. The doors are open right now, like I said. She wanted to sponsor this episode, because she knows about branding. I thought it was a perfect fit. I've just been a friend of Kimra's for a very long time.

What also is really cool about this program is that it's unlike many others, where you kind of have to wait a long time before you get access to the modules. I mean, this is a full, complete, 16-week program. It's going to really take you from A to Z, through the whole branding process, and how to really get in front of your audience and start to monetize it. Check it out at BeTrueBrandYou.com. I've been a part of her webinars before, and they just are mind-blowingly practical, and she's very inspirational too. I just love her style. If you want to check it out, BeTrueBrandYou.com, and you can sign up there.

All right, thank you so much for coming on today and listening to the show. I'm really excited to share with you next week's episode too, where we have two guests from Australia, in a niche I had never even heard of before. I didn't even know this thing existed, and here they are making six figures in that space, and it's going to be really fun, so we'll look forward to that one next week. Until then,



SHOW NOTES: <http://www.smartpassiveincome.com/session287>

thank you so much. You can check out the notes and the resources from this episode at SmartPassiveIncome.com/session287, and we'll see you next week. Thanks everybody. Bye.

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