



SPI 328

3 Ways to Use YouTube to Grow Your Business & Make Money with Sean Cannell

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Sean Cannell: So I walk up to the counter. I don't even know her name yet, right? I'm just like, "Hey. Can I get an Americano, and will you marry me?" Then I lean over the counter and I kiss her on the lips. How do you think that would've went?

Pat Flynn: You'd probably be kicked out.

Sean Cannell: Yeah. I might have been arrested.

Pat Flynn: Don't worry. That actually didn't happen. But that was our guest, Sean Cannell, today talking about what some people do when they market, what it's like. It's like building a relationship with people. That's what we do online. But some people go way too fast and get right to the call to action a little too soon.

Sean's superpower is with video marketing. He's known for a couple large channels on YouTube: Video Influencers, and also Think Media. He's personally inspired me in my latest run to get onto YouTube as well. He's helped me out quite a bit. We're going to be talking today about ways that you can use YouTube to grow your brand and influence online. More specifically, how you can use YouTube to generate an income to sell more things and make money other than with AdSense, which is sort of the default way a person can make money using YouTube. There's a lot better ways to make money on YouTube. We talk about all those things today.

So stick around. Thanks for being here. Let's cue the music.

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—if he wasn't an entrepreneur and could work at any business in the world, he'd work for Pixar—Pat Flynn.

Pat Flynn: Yo, what's up. Thank you for joining me today. This is session 328 of the Smart Passive Income Podcast. My name's Pat Flynn here to help you make more money, save more time, and help more people too. We got Sean Cannell here on the show with us. So without

further ado, let's just dive right in.

What's up, Sean? Welcome to the Smart Passive Income podcast. Thanks for being here, man.

Sean Cannell: Pat, super pumped to be with you on the podcast. Fired up.

Pat Flynn: We were together in an episode of Tactics in a Tesla. One of the first episodes actually, and I want to thank you for that because it's gotten a great response. I recommend everybody go check that out. We'll have links in the show notes and stuff.

But I wanted to discuss a little bit more about video today with you. You were a huge inspiration for me to getting my channel over 100,000 subscribers. How many subscribers do you have now? I'm just curious.

Sean Cannell: Between the two channels, Video Influencers and Think Media, it's about 800,000.

Pat Flynn: Almost a million.

Sean Cannell: Almost a million. Yeah.

Pat Flynn: That's amazing. Well, thank you for the inspiration. You've helped a lot of my people who have watched that video, and hopefully we're going to help a lot of people who listen to this podcast episode again today. I want to start with talking about video in general. We have a lot of options when it comes to where to put our time and effort into, from blogging to podcasting, also video, social media, all the things. From your perspective, with somebody who has video as their primary platform, have you seen it sort of get a little bit . . . Is the acceleration still there with video? Is it decreasing because of all these other things, or is it actually . . . What's your pulse on video right now?

Sean Cannell: That's actually a great question. I was just at a conference in Palm Springs, and I was having this discussion with some people that are

YouTube certified, work with YouTube at deep levels, and I was like, “Is this thing over? Is this bubble popped kind of like the housing market? Just be honest with me. Your take.” The person I was talking to said, “Absolutely not. It’s just getting started.”

Pat Flynn: Really.

Sean Cannell: That resonated with me, but I was talking to him as well. I mean, we think about . . . take, for example, YouTube. It’s 13 years old. So it’s approaching maturity, but I’m still not giving the keys to my Tesla to a 13 year old yet, right? They’re not quite there. So I think that it’s approaching maturity but it’s still getting started, and the data backs that up. Cisco years ago did a report that said by 2019, 80% of the internet will be video. So we know video is such a dominate player that entrepreneurs and anybody that wants to build their influence online should be leveraging.

But even Google just had a conference and released some new stats that YouTube is at 1.8 billion monthly active users that are logged in and watching over an hour of content per day on mobile. So the consumption and the health is really healthy. Then Fool.com, the investing site, actually looked in deeper into some data and discovered that YouTube currently is growing almost twice as fast in monthly active users than Facebook. As you know, Facebook’s gone through . . . Cambridge Analytica, a little bit of drama and different things. But nevertheless, other platforms are still doing great. But YouTube’s really on fire. It’s speeding up. There’s more adoption, whether that’s smart TVs . . . It’s become more mainstream for all ages and older ages, different demographics. It’s becoming kind of more user-friendly on just how good it is on mobile and the different types of content that are going there.

So YouTube is a major, major player. Let’s remember, it’s free. So everybody in your community, everybody listening should absolutely have some sort of presence and strategy to leverage the massive opportunity that is YouTube right now.

Pat Flynn: Now you say that if you have a business, or even if you don’t, you

can get onto YouTube. Does that mean you have to become a YouTuber and go full time with it, or can you develop a YouTube strategy that still is sort of just kind of a little branch of what you do and still be successful? In order to be successful in YouTube, do you have to go full time with it?

Sean Cannell: I don't think you have to at all. In fact, YouTube will really adapt, I think, to your aspirations depending on how you approach it. So for example, there's actually someone who works on my team named Heather. So the main thing she focuses on is our team operations, paid traffic, different things we do, but she has a separate kind of hobby YouTube channel because they're a homeschool family. She homeschools two kids, and she just started putting out content really pretty sporadically. I mean, I know you teach consistency and so do I. But what's interesting is she just puts videos up when she can. She posts when she can. But because she's got a clear focus, she's sharing what she's learned about homeschool, homeschool versus public school, all these different things, and she's doing it strategically. She's about to cross 10,000 subscribers, over a quarter million people have viewed her content. That's the view count already. It's nearing 300,000 views. Again, just from her and her husband Isaiah's home, shooting, starting on a smartphone, then just a point-shoot camera, and uploading when she can. Just kind of sharing her answers and sharing her journey, and she's monetizing that, whether that's affiliate marketing or whether that's even some brand deals with, for example, a homeschool curriculum company.

When you build a targeted, focused, niche channel and have influence, even if it's not "large," not millions of subscribers, not even 100,000 . . . but she's got this community that she's serving. She's been able to monetize, and it's just all a side passion and side income for her and her family. She's making a difference in the lives of people in the process.

Pat Flynn: That's really cool. You know what, when I talk to a lot of people about YouTube, one of the first thing that comes to mind is, "Well, okay. How are you monetizing this?" I think the most obvious way a person can monetize their YouTube channel and the videos that

they have on there is through AdSense, which is where you just turn on monetization and ads come up at the beginning of the video, sometimes in the middle, and you can make money that way. But I know personally (and I know you know this), that's not how a lot of people should be making money because, like you said with this example of Heather, there's a lot of other ways to do it. I'd like to dive into that today. So other than AdSense, let's create a list of all the different ways that a person can utilize YouTube and videos to monetize. Then we'll kind of dig into a little bit deeper into some of those. You had mentioned a couple already, affiliate marketing, brand deals. I'd love to expand on that. What else can a person do?

Sean Cannell: I love it. So if we were to break it down, in my journey what I first figured out was affiliate marketing. I know you've shared a lot about that, and it was the Amazon associate's program that I first signed up for. I learned that once I got proof of that program, if I shared a link to anything on Amazon and someone clicked that link and made a purchase, I'd get credit. Also, if they clicked that link, didn't buy anything I recommended, but purchased anything within the next 24 hours on Amazon, I would get credit. So that kind of was initially what peaked my interest. Like you said, I had ads turned on for my videos, and this was just a personal channel called Sean Cannell around 2010. I'm just experimenting. I'm trying to figure this stuff out.

So I remember one month when AdSense was actually about \$60 because of the views that the videos on my channels were getting. But my affiliate income was around \$260 back around 2010 or '11. What I was doing was I was experimenting with kind of different product review videos, which I think is a huge opportunity for everybody listening because every niche has products they use. If you're an entrepreneur, you use tools, you use software, you use conferencing software, you use laptops. Of course, if you do health and fitness, you use yoga blocks, yoga mats. Of course, if you do software, if you do investing or home decor or fashion, right? Just literally anything. Most niches have these different products. I realized that people were searching for them. They weren't searching for me, but they were searching for gift ideas

for their husband, or they were searching for a review of a pair of headphones that, again, I just purchased personally. But I was like, “Wait a minute. People want information. They want to see this hands-on. They want to see this touched and people feeling it, so they can maybe make a purchasing decision themselves.”

So originally it was YouTube being the traffic source because what we learned was that not only do people love reviews and they want to see video content around almost anything . . . If a picture speaks a thousand words, video speaks a million. So when they see the product or see behind the scenes of the event or just hear someone’s experience with a coaching or a diet or anything at all, YouTube is such a place where people are looking for information like that. Then it’s also very conducive to then letting people know, “Hey, by the way, everything I’m talking about in this video is listed in the YouTube description below, the show notes. You can check all that out.” That’s where, of course, those clickable affiliate links are.

So I like to say that I think affiliate marketing is the first and best way to really generate some serious income on YouTube because, again, you don’t necessarily need tons of views, and the AdSense not paying very well even if you get a lot of views. But you can have a very specific topic or niche that you’re covering and you can start scaling that income pretty fast.

Pat Flynn: So what was the first video that you remember that you had generated income through affiliate marketing on?

Sean Cannell: So probably the first kind of one that stood out was a video I did called “Gift Ideas For Him.” This also goes into a little bit of my SEO research, search engine optimization. I was curious, what are people actually searching for? If you go to the YouTube search bar, start typing, it’ll give you predictions. It’ll finish your sentence. I’m sure everybody in the Smart Passive Income community knows Google, YouTube. You start typing, it starts finishing your sentence. But what Google is showing you there is actually search words people are searching for.

So I was thinking, “Okay. This is fourth quarter now,” when I’m back around 2011. I’m like, “It’s the holidays. People are searching for gift ideas. I don’t probably necessarily know how to get good gifts for women. I’m not an expert there. I’m trying with my wife, Sonya, but I know what guys like. So what if I just talk about what I know, and then let me just round some stuff around the house?” I got a little laundry plastic bin and I threw some headphones in there, threw a couple of my favorite books I there, threw whatever. Then I just sat down on the couch and said, “Here’s some gift ideas for him, whether that’s your husband, your brother, your boyfriend, whatever it is.” That video to this day I think still ranks number four in search. So if you go to YouTube and type in “Gift Ideas For Him,” it’s approaching nearly a million views. It’s five, six years old. It keeps getting traffic.

Interestingly enough, right around the holidays every year, it spikes big time because that’s when people are really in that gift-giving mindset. It’s performed really well. I listed those things in the description. But here’s what’s so interesting that I’ve learned about YouTube is, again, it’s kind of a wider net than maybe a blog or other things like that. So YouTube’s kind of a wider net, so a lot of people are looking for gift ideas, clicking on things. What I learned was that a lot of the sales I was making were not things I was recommending but other things. So even when I started putting this content out there, I remember once I checked into my affiliate account and I sold a \$1500 gold coin off of Amazon. Never made a video about a gold coin. Don’t know anything about coins. But because I had those links out there, someone might have been like looking at a camera or a gift ideas video, but then they’re a coin collector, so they purchased that coin. My commission was around \$186 off of that sale. So I was like, wow. This really scales if you put out videos just as consistently as possible, you add value, and you educate people and let people know that those affiliate links are there.

What’s cool about a store like Amazon is someone might click through and be like, “Well, I’m not ready to buy a camera. I’m not ready to get that podcasting setup that you recommended, Pat, but I got to get my wife all of her birthday gifts.” You’re going to

get credit for that too as well. So I learned that. That really began to scale my income with affiliates. By the way, when we talk about these different monetization strategies, what allowed us to go full time doing this started as a side income. It was kind of part-time. Then eventually just affiliate income actually off of Amazon Associates leveraging YouTube for traffic was how we did that. The disclaimer there was I pivoted eventually into a tech channel. So the niche matters for sure.

So when I started reviewing cameras because that's my background, helping people with video (I've been doing video since 2003), it scaled pretty fast because those are some high-ticket items. So helping people find the right camera, helping find the lighting kit. And yeah, Pat, that's eventually what we were able to go side, part-time, full-time, build a six-figure income profit just off of affiliate marketing before we delved into other monetization strategies that we can talk about.

Pat Flynn:

There's a lot of interesting things you talked about. I think the first thing that comes to mind is the fact that you mentioned that this video's five to six years old, the "Gift Ideas For Him" one. But it's still getting traffic and still making money for you. This is very different than video on, say, YouTube or Instagram that has a much shorter lifespan. YouTube seems to me like it's something that becomes almost like a library that can continue to serve you over time. I don't know any other really platforms that do that for you in the video space. But that's really interesting. I think that starting out with affiliate marketing is very encouraging for people to hear because, like you said, you don't need a large number of subscribers or views to actually help people out. And it just seems like, based on my experience . . . Sean, correct me if I'm wrong, but it's interesting, a lot of the videos I create don't get a lot of views right away. I don't know why. Sometimes six months later, a year later, YouTube just decides that hey, this video? We're going to rank it really high now. We're going to put it in the suggested videos area for other popular videos. Then it just starts to get traffic over time.

So is that kind of how you feel YouTube is? It can become like a

bank of content that just continues to work for you over time and potentially even accelerate?

Sean Cannell: You hit the nail directly on the head, Pat. That is why I really fell in love with YouTube years ago because I realized, in my opinion, it's the highest leveraged social media platform. You mentioned Facebook, Instagram content, it can perform really well. But not a lot of people are seeing it a couple days later, especially not a week later and not six years later. That's for sure. Nobody's watching Facebook uploads from six years ago. But on YouTube, you're right because it's a search engine. It's actually the second largest search engine in the world, second to Google, and it's owned by Google. So Facebook . . . These other platforms are great. Snapchat, Instagram. But they're just not search engines. They're different. Twitter's not a search engine. So YouTube is very much a content library, as you said. Therefore, I started to also focus on, strategically, concepts and video ideas that could be as evergreen as possible.

Facebook is a lot more conducive to going live, giving some updates, sharing some really relevant "now" content, but, again, not a lot of people are going to watch that later. So you might commentate on something that will expire. Maybe it's the latest Star Wars movie that's hot now, but it's not going to always be on trend. Whereas something on YouTube, you could focus much more on evergreen, something that could be watched year after year or season after season. So a lot of people we've seen in our community and different influencers we work with are doing things like . . . If they do something that's seasonal every year, it'll spike again, right? Every year, so long as it kind of stays ranked and stays relevant, it'll get that boost because people are always going to . . . Kind of like people will go to Pinterest. Full disclaimer, Pinterest is the other social media platform that's very much a search engine. Thus you can change your mentality and strategy when you approach it.

So people are looking for . . . whether it's home decor, how to fix something or how to build something, that's probably going to stay

the same year after year. So yeah, videos can be . . . Video's hard. So I empathize with someone being like, "Well, wait. Where do I get started? I don't know about being on camera. I don't know about some of these things." That's a real struggle. But when you really get crystal clear clarity on how much return on investment there is for punching your fear in the face, hitting the record button, getting started, and really putting some effort to make a really quality video . . . because two years later when you're on the beach with your family on vacation, and you're getting views and it's building your business, you're going to be really thankful that you put in that upfront work.

Pat Flynn:

Well said. Now you had mentioned the affiliate videos and people like to see you touch things and feel things. I've always said that affiliate marketing is great because people want to see what they're going to get before they get it. That's why I always recommend people create demonstration videos for things. So it perfectly aligns with what you said, Sean. Do you have any tips specifically for, let's say, the members of the audience right now, they're going to create a demonstration video. They're going to create a video reviewing a product or comparing a couple products. Do you have any specific tips for those kinds of videos to help drive more clicks? This is something that I think can make or break a business is . . . not just what you're doing but how you do it. So any tips there for us?

Sean Cannell:

Yeah. That's a great question. I think that number one, the overarching tip would be: Create the video that you wish you had. Scratch your own itch. So sometimes maybe I'm looking to buy a pair of pants or something online. Maybe there is a little video about it and it shows it from one angle, another angle, but then I'm like, "Okay. I'm more confused than when I started based on the information that was conveyed there." There's a brand that I like it's called Zanerobe out of Australia. Just when they demonstrate it their own products. They go, "This is how it fits." They show you the details. They explain the size of the model and his height. I'm a longer, taller guy. That's why a lot of times, short sleeves are too short on my arms.

So as they describe all these details for the body type and the model. So I'm like, "Okay. That will probably fit me." All of my questions are being answered. So probably the biggest thing is to think what kind of honesty, transparency, detail, information would you want, and include those kinds of things in your video.

The second thing I would say is one of my mentors Chalene Johnson always says . . . this when you get on camera, she says, "Be brief, be bright, be fun, and be done." I think when it comes to doing a product review, that's great information. You want to give as much detail as possible. But I would say this: Your video should be as long as they need to be but as short as possible. So cover the details, convey the information, but then get out of there. Be done and just get people that answer because sometimes we've probably seen both sides. You can have too little information, you're left wanting, or you could be like, "Okay. This person's just going on and on. Some of this stuff is irrelevant," whatever it is. So try to find that sweet spot.

Then, I think, really contextualizing in sharing a story would be the next tip. Meaning, the one unique thing you're going to be able to bring that isn't . . . that people could read about the features and the benefits on the website. You don't necessarily need to echo every single piece of information that they can find somewhere else. You might touch on the highlights, but contextualize it. I think that's where these videos can become powerful because you're able to say, "I'm Pat. I'm a father. So as a father, I'm thinking about this, this, and this." Now that person can now relate potentially and actually hear in context from someone who's really like them and get some data. Because, again, if you just list the features and some people do that. It's kind of a good place to start, but you're like, "I could've just read that on the website."

So what relevant benefits can actually be integrated into your life depending on what the product is? Why does that save you time and sanity or stress? Those types of things are where you can contextualize that information to add some value. That not only potentially . . . Know that the ultimate goal is to make a sell or

something. But that not only would then help that person make that buying decision, but it'll also be building your reputation online as someone who can be a source for just good information. It's clear, it's quick. As long as it needs to be. It's honest. It's transparent. Then it's contextualized.

The last thing you said I think was also good. If you're doing a comparison, I think that's also really helpful. If you've really tried two different things, comparison can help others make comparisons because I do the same thing. I'm like, "Should I get this lens or that lens?" I'm looking for videos about it. So comparisons are really powerful.

Then the final thing I would say is something I've done early in my career is when I first started making videos, I would kind of just always wanted to be positive. I think it wasn't like I was being sponsored by a brand early on, but I think we're all skeptical of a paid endorsement, at least mentality. We're not really talking about that here; we're just talking about product review. But in the long run, you're never going to regret being honest, being transparent. This goes so deep. Now we're working with different brands. We're working with Canon, for example, but one of the things we clarified with them that took me years to learn this was like, "Look, I'm not going to sanitize my social media and only talk about Canon. We also use Sony cameras. We also use other brands. The only way we're going to be able to work together is if I can stay, of course, open and transparent." That might seem like common sense, but it's really not that common.

Sometimes I just feel like we have a pressure. I don't think people's intent is wrong. We just kind of are so, "Let's get the sale. Let's just be positive only." But what I've learned (and you probably feel the same way) . . . it's the person who will tell us the truth. I think you also boost your credibility when you put out some, if you will, negative information because then people know you're balanced. So if they will tell you when something's not good, when it will let you down, or when there's some features that are lacking and you need to know about these, it's still great, but you need to know

about these, that's just going to build more trust. And that's going to build longevity and legacy in your brand, as opposed to just kind of going for a short-term income off of some video you create.

Pat Flynn:

Actually, it was one of the first videos I watched from you related to . . . Before I even knew that you worked with Chalene Johnson and that we were kind of in the same community even before that, I found one of your videos, and it was a comparison video about a Sony RX100 Mark V versus like the Canon equivalent. You had said some things in there about the Sony that were like, "This is a great camera but there's no audio input. I really wish it had one, but the microphone on it is pretty great. Here's an example and here's it with . . . Here's literally what it sounds like." Then I bought that camera through your affiliate link because it was just so helpful. It was honest, and you told me basically answered some questions I didn't even know I had. It was great and it was very relatable too. I think that's what you said about like the storytelling aspect of it. You make your videos very relatable. It helps you stand out from everybody else because that's what's uniquely yours.

Now, by the way, for those of you listening who are like, "Video. How do I even get started? What camera equipment should I use?" Make sure to check out the link, or we'll probably embed the video of Sean on Tactics in a Tesla where we go deep into how to get started on a budget right now. So that's where you go and get that. Show notes will be available. I'll let you know where to go at the end of this episode here.

But related to affiliate marketing, affiliate marketing is great because you're getting paid a commission every time you make a sale. Now there are other ways to make money through working with other companies, right? You had mentioned earlier brand deals. What is the brand deal structure like, and how do you even get those?

Sean Cannell:

Yeah. So "brand deals" is kind of an interesting term. It's where you essentially would be working with a company. Probably the best way to illustrate it is actually a site called FameBit, which was an independent site. That's F-A-M-E-B-I-T.com. FameBit.com. It is a

marketplace that connects brands with content creators. Now it was actually acquired by Google and YouTube because they actually wanted to give more energy behind that company to support more creators with brand deals.

The way that site works is you log in, you create an account, and then it takes you to a marketplace. You can even categorize brand deals by niches. So you can go pets or beauty and makeup, lifestyle. You could go tech, gaming. You could go “Other,” and then it expands into other areas. They’re adding other categories all the time. When you look through there, tech would be what I would be doing for Think Media. So I might see there’s a Bluetooth speaker or there’ a camera or there’s some lighting or there’s a new app. It could be anything at all. Under “Other,” it might even be musical artists, like an artist wants to get their knowledge out about their album. So really almost anything under the sun, and then what you would do is you apply to . . . You send them a proposal. They even will tell you the range of their budget.

What’s cool about this is I’ve done . . . The brand deals I’ve done through FameBit, for example, you can actually monetize in what I like to say four ways. So you create this video, and you’re probably going to create content for your channel anyways. That’s what you should be doing. So you can turn on YouTube ads. Even if they’re not significant, you make a little AdSense there. Additionally, a lot of times you can do affiliate marketing as well. So now you talk about that product, the cell phone charger or something, and you link to it. So you’re making that affiliate income. Additionally, they’ve agreed to pay you a certain amount of money. A lot of times, if for smaller channels just starting out, the budgets are sometimes deals from like \$100 or \$250. As it scales, they could be multiplied thousands depending on the size of your influence and different companies, different budgets.

Then I’d say the fourth way . . . so you actually get that income from the brand deal itself. Then the fourth way is you potentially get free product in almost every case you would, which is just . . . a dollar saved is a dollar earned if it’s something you’re passionate about

or you might invest in anyways. So that's kind of a cool four ways to monetize around a brand deal.

Then beyond that, you can then go direct. So as you begin to maybe build your influence, especially if you have a niche . . . So if we take it back to mentioning Heather and her homeschool channel, she actually knew about brand deals. Nobody in homeschool does. I mean, what homeschool curriculum companies thinking, "How do we work with YouTube influencer?" You know what I mean?

Pat Flynn: Yeah. Yeah.

Sean Cannell: But she reached out to them and said, "Hey, we use your curriculum. I'm a homeschool mom. I also have this YouTube channel. I was wondering if you ever work with YouTube content creators." They said, "No. We don't even know what that means. Tell us more." She kind of talked back and forth. They come to an agreement, and what they ultimately came to an agreement was a set fee for doing a video a month, updating their progress as a family through that curriculum. Then on top of that set fee was also an affiliate commission, I believe 10% for anybody who purchased that curriculum through her video series. So a really cool way to, again, kind of stack some of these monetization strategies.

Then on top of all that, again, you're still getting content. It adds another video to your calendar. Brand deals can work in a lot of different ways. Sometimes direct. Probably the biggest tip for getting started . . . I remember way back when we had a channel called . . . When I was first starting Think Media and there was maybe only a few hundred or a thousand subscribers or so. But because companies, a lot of times, they just need a video to embed on their website of someone talking about a product. They just want video content. Sometimes it's not just about how big your influence is. It's also just the fact that you could help them do video production. That would be expensive for them to rent a camera and hire talent and get whatever. So even if you can just put together their product in motion, a lot of times they'll send you free product.

So probably the best way to get started is if you have a niche already. A lot of companies would probably want to . . . complimentary like, “Hey, I would love to do a video about your thing. Can you let me test it?” It’s also kind of nice because you’re saying I’m going to do an unbiased, honest review. Just in exchange for this and share your honest thoughts. That’s a good way to build a bridge because future brands, they don’t know if you were paid for that or not. They don’t know what your brand deal prices are or anything like that. But now you’re building up a portfolio of working with companies, even if all they did was maybe send you a \$10 or \$50 product, even let you potentially borrow something. I mean, that’s another way to put some content out there. Monetize it with affiliate marketing, send it back after. There’s a lot of tech companies with higher end tech that will do that, and they’re like, “Yeah, we’re not going to let you keep that \$2,000 camera, but for sure, we’ll send you a lender model and you go through all the contract.” Now you can be talking about that thing, linking to as an affiliate and monetizing on the process.

Pat Flynn:

Wow. I really like that. My videographer, Caleb, who you know, gets a lot of access to products as somebody who borrows them, films a little bit with them because they’re really expensive, and then he sends them back. Now he has, like you said, a video on that camera, affiliate links to that camera, and more subscribers coming in, which is really cool. I think that’s really great. My worry with brand deals and things like that is when a company pays you to mention their brand or have their brand be talked about or have their product talked about, you almost feel like . . . I would imagine that some people, even me, I would feel worried about diluting my messaging and maybe there’s, obviously, tons of brands and opportunities out there. I don’t want every video just to be a pitch to a new product. How do you balance monetization versus staying on-brand and developing that relationship with your audience?

Sean Cannell:

So these are a few personal things. I think everyone’s take on this would be a little bit different.

Pat Flynn:

Sure.

Sean Cannell: But personally, number one, I don't do brand deals for product reviews. It's just kind of a personal principle. What I mean is, we are working with Canon, for example, but none of the videos . . . They are sponsoring a certain number of videos, but none of the videos are a product review. I don't even know how that's possible. "Hey, I got paid to review this." So I mean, unless you go really negative, which then I would also feel like they're probably not going to approve that. So I just don't even go there. So my pivot there is, any video on Think Media right now, when I say, "Hey, we're partnering with Canon," is actually just value-based. It actually is kind of based more in the mentality of what we probably teach about marketing: That modern marketing is not selling, it's not high pressure. It's adding value. It's teaching.

So all of the videos . . . and they've been received so well. I'm just like, "Hey, in this video, the most recent one, which is 'Seven tips for taking better photos.' Super excited. I'm partnering with Canon for this video, and we're going to be using one of their cameras for this shoot. Let's jump into the tips." Peer tips. Never a call to action to go buy anything. Here's the thing: If someone's like, "That camera's awesome and those photos look great. I want to learn more," I just say, "Hey, do you want to learn more about this camera? There's a link in the description."

So that has been a kind of integration. That's how I've personally crafted it whenever I do brand deals. I really shy away from . . . I just keep it teaching, keep it value. Then any product reviews are always completely like, "Hey, this is all me. Yeah, I've worked with Canon, but look, I'm on my own now. I can say anything I want in this video." Ultimately, you get what I'm saying.

So the second part would be, when it comes to kind of brand deals, is a lot of YouTubers have done this well. I think Film Riot is good. Mango Street Photography is good. They have sponsored segments. They're like, "Give us a second to pay the bills." Those sponsored segments will just say, "Hey, this Squarespace is a great place to buy a site." Something like that. That's the deal with Squarespace. I think what I've also found as we've been integrating

those is you're right up front with it. Like, "Hey, we got to give a shout out to the sponsor because they help us keep the lights on round here." I think audiences are more interested in that. What I've learned there too is that most of those deals are not product-based. They're more brand-based.

The best way to do them . . . and a friend of mine Evan Carmichael has got a great YouTube channel about entrepreneurship. He always says, he goes, "Don't ever do, if you can avoid it, don't ever do a brand deal for just one video. Do a brand deal for a year. Do a brand deal for six months, and go much higher ticket too." Now you can say, hey, even in the modern world, there's so much noise. Let's do consistent collaborative integration to where we're educating along the way, we're teaching whatever it is, and you can potentially charge more. But then you also have a lot less headaches. You don't have to go through 52 different contracts with 52 different companies if you did a weekly sponsored video. But you could just kind of sell the package of, let me integrate this overall. Hopefully, whenever you do these, you're doing it with things that you already love, that you already promote without working with them and working with companies like that.

So a lot of times it integrates again with . . . To your audience, it doesn't feel sold to because they're not being. They're just being . . . that sponsor is paying the bills, is helping you produce that show. You're educating people about it. Never taking over the whole show. Just putting those different spots.

So anyways, that's some of the ideas of how I think you can integrate it, stay on brand, and then work with brands that are on brand for you and you'll do great.

Pat Flynn:

Have you ever experienced or talked to anybody who's ever experienced a brand deal where the brand perhaps was asking for too much, or asking for something that was misaligned with a person's brand? And how do you handle a situation like that if a brand is kind of maybe asking for a little bit too much or just not really understanding how you do what you do?

Sean Cannell: I have, and I think actually I've seen this the most. I'm good friends with the co-founder of Video Influencers, Benji Travis, and he and his wife are vloggers. They're in, I believe, like the top five family vloggers on YouTube. So they're working with big companies, Disney and Kohl's, big brand deals, Target, things like that. But what's cool, and I've learned a lot by them, and I think this goes into when we're first starting . . . Sometimes . . . I don't want to say we're desperate, but we're like, man, if anyone wants to give us anything, we'll take \$50. If the brand says they tell us to jump, we're just going to say, "How high?" What I've learned from them is, Benji's continued to coach me. Like know your worth, never sell out, never do something you don't feel comfortable with, and even if there's potentially good money involved in something, it's just never worth it if you don't feel good about it. So they have turned down big deals. They've turned down deals if they've said, "We need this, this, and this removed," and the brand said, "Well, there's no way we can do it."

But here's what's interesting, is he said, "Either one, they're gone, and we feel great about it," because you have peace after the fact you know you've made the right decision and you didn't feel comfortable with it. They were asking for too much. Number two, and this happens much more often, they actually eventually come back. I've learned that, again, they're negotiating the same way as you. You just have to know that . . . Especially early on, it's hard for me too. I think Canon. I'm like, "Canon wants to work with me?" Back when I was a young video creator, I was like, I can't even believe it. I would drive to the moon and back for them. But just learning you own your own brand. You control your own message. If you're even in talks with any kind of a brand, they're interested. So know your worth, stand your ground, and be willing to say no.

I just did that in a recent another brand deal. Turned out it wasn't a big deal, but as we started to look at the contract, I saw that kind of in the fine print (my fault for not really reading it) that there was something to the tune of 30 Instagram posts that they also wanted included in this deal that was mostly about YouTube. I was like, "What? What in the world?" Because it wasn't even listed as 30, it

was listed as three per thing we're doing. One, two weeks out; one, one week out. I was like, "Oh my goodness. There's no way we can do this." We actually were already in contract, but I got on the phone and I was like, "Look, I'm sorry. I made a mistake. I should've scrutinized the contract better. But that's too much. It's not even on brand for me. It's not what I'm doing over on my Instagram." Sure enough they were like . . . What I learned, I was even talking to Benji about this, that a lot of times they have templates. Maybe that was the language from a past deal, maybe it was something else. They were still in there because they were like, "Oh yeah. That's not even what we meant." I was like, "Well, yeah. I'm glad I'm bringing it up though because it is a contract." They're like, "Yeah, that's fine." So we began to rework it.

But I'll tell you, Pat, before having that meeting, I was kind of sweating bullets. I was like, "Shoot. I'm in contract. What if we lose this deal? This is multiple thousands of dollars. What if we lose this income?" But I felt great about bringing it up, addressing it head-on. That happened to go well. It may not always go well, but they were like, "Oh yeah." Then we just began to rework it.

So I think, again, it's kind of like doing the right thing is always the right thing. Really following the peace of what's in your heart always is best. I know that everybody listening knows that time when they've made that decision they knew just wasn't right. Then the time when they did. Even if it cost you something, nothing is worth your sanity, your peace, your peace of mind, or like your soul, if you will. So yeah. Just trying to stay true to yourself and don't be afraid to stand your ground.

Pat Flynn:

Yeah. Stellar advice, Sean. Thank you. Now to finish off our conversation here, we talked about affiliate marketing, talked about brand deals. I'd love to talk about and to the segment of my audience who's listening right now, they have a product or they're about to come out with a product, an online course, or something of that nature, coaching program, service of some kind. How might one use YouTube to sell their own products? Part of this discussion I'd love to know, even personally . . . I know building your email

list is important, and there's conflict between action here, I'm told. Meaning on one hand, you want to create a great video, obviously, provide a lot of value, and then give a call to action to join your email list. But on the other hand, you don't want to do that because then you'd be taking people off of YouTube into your email list, but when people get off of YouTube, it's essentially end of their session time, which doesn't really help your YouTube rankings and search and those kinds of things. So how do you do that? I know you have an email list and you're building your email list. Give us some insight here for us product creators. How we can utilize YouTube to grow our list and make some sales and still work with YouTube?

Sean Cannell: Yes. So you're totally right. One of the things that YouTube is paying attention to is, if you start sessions, meaning if you can send some people from outside of YouTube, you sent out a tweet, you send out an email, you bring people to YouTube, they love you because you're bringing people to the platform. Now they're consuming content. It can help boost your channel. Conversely, when you end sessions, when someone says, "Okay. They were watching Pat's video and they keep dropping off. They disappear after that because they leave to go to a landing page or whatever it is."

Now, YouTube . . . I've talked to a YouTube employee about this, and they actually equip you. They give you the ability to link out to your website, to connect your website to your YouTube channel. So they're ultimately not opposed to you sending people away from YouTube. They understand that's how the world works. But nevertheless, that watch time and keeping people on platform, time on platform, is so important.

So I've altered my strategy in the last couple years. Three years ago, any video you watch from us, pretty much 100% of the time would be some value content and at the end would give a call to action to get a free gift, to get a lead magnet, a freemium, whatever you want to call it. 100% of the time to build email list. This was very effective. It grew the email list very well and was adding a lot of value. It honestly didn't hurt, per se, our growth, but as the algorithm continues to change and things begin to update, I began to alter

my strategy. A lot of that was inspired by an article from Salesforce that said, “It now takes, in the world we’re living in, six to eight touch points to generate a viable sales lead in today’s market.” A viable sales lead. Let’s define that when we’re talking about email. That would be that time when someone finally trusts you to enter their email and say, “Okay. Tell me more. I want to go to the next level with you.”

So I was like, “That’s interesting.” It started to make me think, then, “Well, wait a minute. I think people should maybe watch six to eight YouTube videos before I send them off YouTube.” Now I can’t control that completely, but what I did to alter my strategy was now, nine out of 10 YouTube videos I create just link to other YouTube videos. So a key component of this thinking is not thinking in one-off videos but thinking in series. So typically if I finish a video about . . . Like, again, what camera do you need for YouTube? At the end it, might be like, “Okay. So now we’ve talked all about cameras. The next biggest thing you need is lighting. If you want to check other videos out in the YouTube equipment series, click or tap the screen right here.” I’m referencing the clickable end cards at the end of videos. Keep people on platform knowing that one out of 10 times, I’m uploading a video that will give a call to action to go watch a webinar or to go download a free guide.

What I’ve learned is if you can create binge-able series, like when someone wants breakdown, what you teach, how you educate people into . . . don’t just create one hour-long video. Create 10 five-minute videos. They’re connected. They’re each adding another layer. Then somewhere in that process, eventually send someone off-platform. I’ve found that this is very, very effective because it keeps your watch time high.

The final reason why I also think this is effective is this dating analogy when it comes to really online marketing in general. So when I think about six to eight touchpoints, I think about when I first met my wife Sonya. She’s a Starbucks barista. Pat, how do you think if . . . day one, I walked in. Marysville, Washington. She’s working at the counter. I see her. I’m like, “Wow. She’s cute. She’s beautiful.”

So I walk up to the counter. I don't even know her name yet, right? I'm just like, "Hey. Can I get an Americano, and will you marry me?" Then I lean over the counter and I kiss her on the lips. How do you think that would've went?

Pat Flynn: You'd probably be kicked out.

Sean Cannell: Yeah. I might have been arrested. She's like, "That's sexual assault." Now that's fast forward to today, and of course I'm not arrested. She does like me. I am allowed to . . . I eventually did say, "Will you marry me?" But that would've been too fast. So when I think about that online, I think about YouTube videos as like dates with people. This is why YouTube is so powerful because video builds no lack in trust. It's a chance for someone to see you, learn from you, build rapport with you, and go on multiple dates. So my wife Sonya and I first, we started to go on dates. We're getting to know each other. I consider engagement that when you get that email address. Again, you're not married yet, but now someone's like, "Okay. Let's progress this relationship." Then I see marriage as the sale.

I think a lot of people online are moving too fast, and they're not thinking about the different steps and stages of kind of the customer journey. So that's why I love YouTube the most because someone can go on six to eight dates. "Whoa. This video is good. Well, that was good." Maybe they check in with you later. They eventually even subscribe, which would be definitely different than even giving you an email address. "I kind of want to hear from you on this platform, but I don't necessarily want you in my life all the time," or whatever it is. But now multiple videos give you these multiple dates. Eventually you're like, "Hey, let's go to the next level with this free gift, with this webinar, with this coaching call, this discovery call." They give you that email address and then they get to know you more, develop the relationship further, and then eventually you make an offer. A lot of times you find that, again, you're not having to sell. Of course, nothing is high pressure. Why? Because you've built this process of getting to know people, adding value, letting people get to know you, and that's what I found to be most effective for selling on YouTube.

The last thing I'd say is what we're ultimately saying there too is I don't think anybody with a product should really sell on YouTube. YouTube, I think, is where you build a bridge, build relationship, but where you should sell is probably what most of your audience knows potentially in that deeper relationship on that email or in that email sequence on a webinar, on a call, or wherever it is where you can take it. One of the things that's powerful about that is because YouTube is such a crazy place when it comes to the comments, random people who stumble on your videos. It also is much better for your brand because then, what you do is you're just adding value on YouTube. You're just sharing kind of free information, getting to know people, and most kinds of trolls, people that will be critical or just those types of . . . We've all seen them, right? YouTube can be a toxic place when it comes to comments. It actually kind of deals with that because I've noticed those people are not analyzing everything you're doing and going all the way down your funnel, if you will. A lot of times they're just getting that first impression.

So I think it's very powerful for your brand to operate this way as well because you're understanding the context. In some contexts, when someone always trusts you, they don't mind that you're making an offer, but someone could just drop right into an offer from you. They don't have the right context, and that's like me asking Sonya to marry me without building any context and rapport first. Now instead of saying, "Sean's a great guy. He's very respectful. He's very patient." She's saying, "Sean is an overbearing creep. He's impatient." My whole brand could be perceived differently based on the timing and the context I set when I'm communicating my message.

Pat Flynn:

Yeah. I like that you're selling out of YouTube. Anybody who would even be interested in your product anyway wouldn't sign up for your email list. So you don't have to deal with those kinds of trolls and haters who are there like, "You're just trying to make money from us." But no, you're providing a lot of value up front, which is no matter what platform you're using, that should be the approach I believe. Blogging, podcasting, even social media.

Sean, just such great information here. I think that really sets the tone for the kind of way a person can use YouTube to sell their own products. It's just is very clear and it's a very helpful for me too because the whole, "Should I mention a call to action at the end of every video to grab a lead magnet?" I think taking it in chunks like that, and thinking ahead of time in series too. I think that's another thing that a lot of YouTubers, and even myself, we get into this, "Okay. I just filmed a video and just published it today. What's my next one going to be about?" Instead of planning a little bit more ahead of time and using it as a strategy for bigger call to actions down the road.

So, Sean, thank you so much for coming on today. Where can people go find you? I know you got a couple channels. Why don't you give us the links for those and anything else you have to offer? I know you also know . . . You have a course for people who want to go deeper too. Feel free to mention that as well.

Sean Cannell: Sure. Pat, thank you so much. If people go to YouTube and just type in "Think Media," two words, then that's the best tips and tools for building. "Your Influence Video" will help you find (just like the camera you found that you started vlogging with and different things like that) all the information about cameras, lighting, ethnic media. Our channel Video Influencers. The word video + the word influencers in YouTube search, that'll bring you to weekly interview show with people that are crushing with video, as well as more of the strategy side of YouTube. Then the last thing is we do have a free master class that does lead to our class, which is called Video Ranking Academy. But if people just want to kind of explore kind of an over-the-shoulder look of a lot of things we talked about, more in-depth of ranking videos in search and things like that, you can just go to TubeInfluence.com. T-U-B-E Influence.com. At the end, it's a great free training. Take that information, crush it, and at the end I also educate people if they want to go deeper and check out that course. That's the best pathway to get to it.

Pat Flynn: Cool, man. Thank you so much everybody. I recommend you check out Sean's stuff, and Benji too. Sean and Benji both over at

Video Influencers. I binge watched you guys as I was starting to get serious about YouTube not so long ago. So thank you again for all the inspiration, all the help, all the wisdom today. Sean, we appreciate you, man.

Sean Cannell: Pat, appreciate you so much. Love the Smart Passive Income Community. Love the integrity with which you're building your business and all the value you add. Really you're world class and really grateful for you.

Pat Flynn: Really appreciate it. We'll talk soon, all right?

Sean Cannell: Sounds good.

Pat Flynn: All right. I hope you enjoyed that interview with Sean. But I met him in person, like I was saying earlier, recently, and we've been hanging out. We've done a collaboration together on YouTube. Such a great guy and obviously a wealth of knowledge there too. Check out TubeInfluence.com. It's where you can go to get some strategies for growing your audience and income with YouTube this year. Also check out his channels, Video Influencers and Think Media. They were big influence on me, like I keep saying. I cannot stop talking about it because it really is that helpful.

We'll have all the links mentioned at SmartPassiveIncome.com/session328. Again, one more time SmartPassiveIncome.com/session328. By the way, I've been doing a lot of free live trainings recently. I don't know if you've been seeing the emails or hearing about these, but every month I do them, and they're reoccurring and they're live each time. So you can even ask me questions during those live trainings and workshops, which you can find out and register for for free if you go to SmartPassiveIncome.com/live. That's all you got to do. SmartPassiveIncome.com/live, and you'll see when I'm going to be going live next. Just register there, I'll train you a little bit, give you some information about things like podcasting and affiliate marketing. Even if you're just starting from scratch, how you can build your brand from the ground up. There's a lot of free trainings available coming up and I look forward to



seeing you register and seeing you there live on those calls. So make sure you go to SmartPassiveIncome.com/live and I'll see you there.

Thanks so much, I appreciate you, and I look forward to seeing you in the next episode. Make sure you stick around because the next one we're talking with a friend of mine who was on the show back when it was still in double digits. His name is Dan Andrews. We're going to be talking about one of the most important conversations that you need to have with yourself when it comes to why you're doing your business and especially if you ever wanted to sell it. I'm just going to give you a little preview right now. He sold his business and it didn't go the way he wanted it to. So we're going to have that talk next week in episode 329. That's what it is.

So make sure you subscribe if you haven't already. Plus we got a lot of other great stories and case studies and information to share with you down the road. So if you haven't hit that subscribe button yet, do it right now. Thanks so much. I appreciate you, and I look forward to serving you in the next episode. Cheers. Bye.

Announcer: Thanks for listening to the Smart Passive Income podcast at www.SmartPassiveIncome.com.



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