



SPI 332

How to Build and Scale an Agency Model Business —with Jason Swenk

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Jason Swenk: They tell me their gross revenue. I'm like, "I don't care about your gross revenue." I knew a lot of 10 million, 100 million dollar industries that make zero, so that's not good, so what is your profitability margin? They say, "Oh, it's 15-20%."

I'm like, "Okay. Do you know all the Service Space companies in the US based on the Service Bureau is around 32%. That's the average, so you're way below the average, so let's focus on profitability."

Pat Flynn: That's Jason our special guest today. S-W-E-N-K is his last name, and Jason is a master at helping people build their agencies; an agency being a business where you are in the service-based business helping others do something, whether it's an SEO agency, a design agency, a copyrighting agency, what have you. It doesn't really matter. If you have the ability to serve others through your skills or the skills of those who you hire, then this is going to be a show that you're going to want to listen to, because Jason is an expert. He's helped people build their agencies and he can help build yours too, and even if you don't have an agency, you have more of a personal brand and you sell digital courses versus services, this is still going to be very helpful for you as well, so make sure you listen all the way through.

I appreciate you for sticking around. Let's get to 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. And now your host. He once lost his wedding ring, but found it hours later on the floor of a train station: Pat Flynn. What a lucky break.

Pat Flynn: Hey, what's up. This is Pat Flynn, and thank you so much for listening to session 332 of the Smart Passive Income podcast. I'm here to help you make more money, save more time, and help more people too, and say, we got Jason Swenk on the show. You can find him at jasonswenk.com, but like I said earlier, he's a master at helping people build and scale and profit from their agencies. He sold one of his own, and he's doing great and he's helping a lot of

people, so let's just dive right in. Here we go. Jason Swenk.

What's up, Jason? Welcome to the SPI podcast. Thanks for being here, man.

Jason Swenk: Oh man, Pat, thanks for having me on the show. I've been listening since 2014, so it's an honor to come on.

Pat Flynn: That's crazy, man. It's funny, a lot of people, they set their goals, too, when they hear the podcast; like, "One day I'm going to be on the show," and I never even knew you listened to the show, so that's awesome, and in what we're going to be talking about today, hopefully one day somebody's listening, has listened to this and goes, "Man, it was that episode with Jason that really changed everything," because I know you are able to do that and you are doing that for people.

Tell us what it is that you do, Jason.

Jason Swenk: Yeah, I help agency owners grow a little bit faster and just provide a resource I wish I had when I was growing my digital agency, and yeah, I mean, I started in 1999, back when Al Gore invented the internet, right? If we can remember back that far enough, and really had no clue of what to do. I got my start because one of my friends looked like Justin Timberlake, and so I created a fake band, fake website, and I know you like the rap and all that kind of stuff. I could not sing, even though we put out some music and if anybody finds it I'll deny it, and it got popular, and then people offered me money to design websites, and that's how I got my start.

Pat Flynn: That's crazy. Can you define for us exactly what an agency is for those of us who are like, "What does Jason mean?"

Jason Swenk: Yeah, so it's a digital marketing or a marketing agency, so think about Admin, right? Anybody creating a website, doing Paper Click ads, Ad Words, doing any kind of marketing services for your business, that's what an agency is.

Pat Flynn: Okay, and then tell me about the first time you've dealt with agencies and why that model.

Jason Swenk: Well, I mean, I fell into it by accident, and I think all of us are accidental entrepreneurs or agency owners, right? I always joke with people; when I created that fake website, I knew how to do websites back then, and then that's when people started wanting websites, and so I just faked it till I made it. Literally, I think they fall into it going, "Hey, I can get this freedom. I don't have to work for the man any more, and I can do what I want to do," and so they just start jumping into this life, and it's an amazing life. It's a challenging one as well.

Everybody always thinks it's sunshine and rainbows, but you just have to work at it and create the right systems and really surround yourself with the right people and just try to help people out and pick a market and you can be successful.

Pat Flynn: Yeah, you mentioned a couple key words: systems and people, we'll get to those in just a moment, but an agency, correct me if I'm wrong: it's not you doing the ads. It's not you creating the materials and all that stuff. It's people that you hire to do this for you, correct?

Jason Swenk: That's correct. You first start of doing it by yourself, but really at the end of the day you're a freelancer with a lot of contractors, but then what you start realizing is there's a cap on what your time's actually worth and actually how much you can actually do, and then what we want to do is we want to scale that, right? I think that's with any business, and I heard a great analogy the other day. It's called milking the cow. I don't know if you've heard this.

We think about you're a cow, you can only produce so much milk, and that milk will only get you so far, but then you start trying to spread that a little bit thinner and you try to make that milk into cheese and then try to distribute that cheese, and you try to do all these things, but what got you to where you're at right now and when you try to scale is totally different of what you need to do to get to the next level, and it takes a while to realize that.

When they start realizing that, they realize that they have to surround themselves with people to do other things that you don't need to be doing, and you only need to be doing your milk; the things that you're really good at that no one else can do, so for your business it's doing the podcast, doing the videos, speaking. That's your milk. Everything else, people can slice and dice your podcast for you, distribute all your social media content, create your funnels, all that kind of stuff.

Pat Flynn: Okay, so let's take it back to a person who is a freelancer; they're doing some work for others, but they are getting at that point where they're feeling capped and tapped out and they know they need to start growing and scaling. What might their first steps be to head down into the agency model?

Jason Swenk: To charge more. Look, I talk to so many freelancers and even agency owners all day long, and the biggest thing that they tell me is, "Look, Jason, I'm too busy and I can't afford to hire anybody," and the biggest thing that they're not doing is they need to charge more. They need to charge more so they can afford to bring in the right people to do the things that they don't need to do anymore, and then the other thing they need to really do is niche down and really pick a particular market, because we always struggle with knowing where we need to go and who do we need to contact, and we're always wishing, "Hey, that perfect client needs to come to me, but I don't know who that perfect client is," and those are the two things I always tell a freelancer to do.

Pat Flynn: So, raise your price, which in my experience will do a couple of things: It'll allow you to get better clients and it will reduce the number of clients that you have, so you can have a better experience and you had mentioned something I hadn't thought about, but now you have more money to start hiring people.

Jason Swenk: Exactly. It's the easiest thing that you can do, but you have to figure out, how much are you worth? We always undervalue ourselves; even me, and probably even you, Pat. We always think, "Wow, man, I'm charging this much? I don't know about that," and we know a lot

more than everybody else, so we're always like, "Well, I think they'll pay this," but the funny thing is, when someone challenges you to charge more, you start to, like you were saying, you start to get better clients and then you're able to bring in other people to even deliver a better experience; a better process, and that's everything.

Pat Flynn: Why do you think we undercharge or undervalue ourselves just in the first place?

Jason Swenk: I just think it's always self-doubt. I think we all lack the confidence because this is the first time going through this particular thing, like when I created this particular business my whole goal was to create a resource I wish I had because I remember how hard it was, and I would always second-guess my decisions and I would be like, "Is this the right decision?" Then I finally realized, the wrong decision was not making a decision. I just needed to go at it. It was just like we just ponder back and forth, and even when we buy something or we buy a course or we start working with someone or hire or whatever, our first idea after that is, did we make the right decision?

We just need to be like, "Yes we did, let's move on. We'll either learn from it or we'll make money from it." That's it.

Pat Flynn: Okay, so we're hiring somebody now that we've started charging more, and we have some money to work with. We're hiring somebody; who do we hire first, and I know that's kind of a loaded question, but you've had experience with this, so where might I start?

Jason Swenk: Well, it comes down to self-awareness of figuring out what are you really good at, so what I was really good at was sales and getting in front of people and talking with people and walking them through a process in order to sell them, but I was really bad at attention to detail and really doing follow-ups, so my first hire would be the project manager, and I think it's for everybody. My first hire for everybody, I really think it comes down to a project manager, because too many of us try to manage our clients and when we're managing our clients, who do we forget about? Ourselves, and then

we are the cobblers kids, right?

How many times do you talk to an agency or you see an agency's website and be like, "Don't look at her website. It's horrible." We never have time to do it, right? All the time, and so we're the cobbler's kids, but if we can hire the people to actually manage the project, you are going to free up so much time so you can actually focus on growing the business.

Pat Flynn: Which is I think where we should be focused on as the agency CEO, if you will, but I know a big issue that a lot of people have when they start expanding their team, especially if it's sort of an agency model where now the hires are the ones that are doing the work where before it was the CEO that was the one doing the work; they feel a little disconnected between them and the clients now. How do you help facilitate that and keep ... even from the client's side, somebody might hire you because they're hiring you but then you're not doing the work for them. How do you position that in a way that makes sense so they still feel like they're getting the right thing?

Jason Swenk: It's all about positioning in the very beginning, so I used to work for Arthur Andersen right out of school, and so they were famous; the paper shredding company, the big consulting firm, and so they were famous for the partner selling the deal and then the school bus dropping us kids off that knew nothing what to do, right? Then the clients would be upset. Well, what you need to do is in the sales' process start introducing your team or the person that's going to be the project manager.

Once you get to a qualification process, like you don't want to bring your team in for every prospect that ever comes to you because they may not be qualified, but once they're qualified, start positioning them as the experts. I would say, "Look, you don't want me managing your project. My attention to detail really stinks, but Beth here is amazing at follow-up. She's going to take care of you," and all of this, and just setting them up and positioning them as the expert, as their advisor going forward and say, "Look, I will always

be here to listen to you, but at the end of the day they know what's going on. I'm just the pretty face or the goofy guy on the video, and wining dining you. This person's going to take you where you need to go."

Pat Flynn: I really like that positioning. It reminds me of in architecture, because the principal's of the firms, they were the ones striking the deals, going out and building the relationships, but then, who was actually working on the projects? It was the project manager, who was in charge of the captains and the senior drafters and what not, and the principal was just there to make sure everything was cool every once in a while, but it was the project manager that was really the one working on it, and yeah, that's a perfect way to position it. I like that a lot. What are some of the challenges when a person starts to build the team that maybe I'm missing or we haven't talked about yet that are pretty common that we should avoid?

Jason Swenk: So, remember when I was saying that everybody's accidental when they create their agency or even their business, and this applies to any business out there. You have to have clarity of where you're going. You have to be able to set that vision and communicate that to your team often so they can make decisions without you. When you start building a team at first, all of your employees, all your team members are always going to come to you for every single decision, and you're creating a huge bottleneck, and it's happening because you haven't given them the ammo in order to go make a decision, so let's say you all jump on a boat, and the boat starts going east. Well, they don't know how to course correct it because you never told them to make sure the boat's always going north, so giving them the clarity of where they're going.

Once you do this ... Zappos follows this. All these great, amazing companies follow this of going, "Look, this is our vision. This is our 'why.' Now, I will always back you up on whatever decision you make if it's always leading towards this. You just need to help me out with this," and I'll use an example. This was a most recent example. We were developing a blog post of the top market conferences agency owners needed to go to, and my team listed

three or four that I was like, “Dude, I don’t like those people,” and I said to them, “Look, we can’t. Take these people out,” and they asked me why. I said, “Well, I just don’t like them,” and they go, “Jason, that doesn’t fit the vision. You want to be the number one resource in the world for agency owners and provide a resource you wish you had.” And they called me out. I said, “You’re exactly right. Put it back in. It’s not about me. It’s about them.” Because I gave them the ammo and the clarity of where to go in order to make that decision.

Pat Flynn: Wow. That’s a really powerful example. Thank you for sharing that. How do you communicate with your team effectively?

Jason Swenk: A lot of people are creating remote teams. Like with my company now, I didn’t meet my right hand person for three years in person.

Pat Flynn: That’s crazy.

Jason Swenk: I feel really bad about it, but in my agency I had we had over 100 people and we’re all in one office, so it’s a totally different caveat. The biggest thing is just give them the ammo that they need in order to be more successful, and give them ... What I would do. I would always do daily check-ins with them, so I would say, “Look, I want you to do three things in the morning every morning for me, if you’re remote or in the office. I want you to let me know, what did you do yesterday? What are you planning to do today based on the goals of the organization? And do you have any problems? Send this to your team distribution list,” or put it on Slack nowadays, right?

Pat Flynn: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jason Swenk: And what it would do is it would put everybody on the same page and so they would do it for their small team, and then that team manager would do it for his small group, and then it would just bubble up and it would all go to me by maybe 10:00 in the morning so we’d always have a good snapshot of what everything was going on. So for example if a client wasn’t paying or they were having trouble in an account and the designer shouldn’t be designing that

website anymore because they haven't paid, we would know about it before he even started his day, or we would know when someone was having a problem so the other team could actually help them out. And it was just a very easy thing that we could do to make sure everybody was on the same page and support them.

Pat Flynn: I like that. I like that a lot. Okay, so your website, Swenk.it, which is an amazing domain name. Swenk.it. You're helping people grow and scale their agencies which is fantastic. I imagine that as you start to build your team, okay, now you have all these resources. Now you need to get more clients, and so it kind of goes back and forth right, and then you get more clients, and now you need to hire a bigger team if you want. I'd love to talk about any strategies that you have for agencies that are growing on how to get more exposure now that they are building this team and they have all these resources now. Any specific marketing strategies that agencies can focus on that work better?

Jason Swenk: Yeah, I really think before you even think about the strategies I think it's all about the positioning, and I think so many agencies out there are positioned as me too agencies. They all look the same. And they all look the same because they keep talking about themselves, and in someone else's story they're telling themselves as kind of the lead, right?

Pat Flynn: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jason Swenk: Where they really need to focus on everybody else. So if you go to anybody's websites, they always say, "Hey, check out our portfolio. Check out our work, and this is how we can actually help you." Even if you go to the about page, all they do is talk about themselves, and I want you guys to think about, how can you switch that and how do you switch it to make everybody else, like your visitor, the person actually coming to you, how can you make them the focal point and make yourself as the trusted advisor? Like if you looked at my about page, if you would go to JasonSwenk.com/about, you won't find anything about me until the very bottom. I ask questions and I say, "Hey, are you struggling with lead generation? Are you

struggling with scaling your agency? Are you wanting to sell your agency one day? Well you may be in the right place.”

And I ask those right questions and I position myself as this trusted advisor rather than a me too business, and I think once you do that then you can get into the strategies. One of the strategies I tell everybody is, hey, you should have a podcast, and I actually direct them to your course. I used to direct them to your free course all the time but now I know you have a paid one so I always tell them go there, because this is an amazing strategy because you can reach out to your perfect client that you want to build a relationship with. You’re doing a couple things. You’re building the relationship with them, but also you’re building amazing content for other people, so it just helps and most of the time when they reach out, they actually become clients. They’re like, “Dude, I really like the podcast. You’re an agency. Can you help me out a little bit more?” I’m like, “Yeah, sure. Come to Papa.” Right? And you start helping.

Pat Flynn: I think a podcast is a great strategy and I’m not just saying that because I do have a course and free resources and stuff, and we’ll let you know at the end of the show where you can get more of that, so thanks for plugging that, Jason. I’ll send you your check later, but honestly we should talk about that affiliate thing at some point in the future because I don’t want you to have to just continue to send people over for free. But anyway, you’re providing so much value here which is great, but the podcast I’m curious. I’m an agency. I want to start a podcast. Do I just name it my agency? Or how do you position that podcast to best feed people into the agency?

Jason Swenk: It’s all about the audience that you’re serving, and what are their biggest problems, and what do they want to transform into? Then thinking about that name from that.

Pat Flynn: So this is where niching down like you said earlier really pays off.

Jason Swenk: It is. I don’t think you can do it without niching down. I really don’t, and I think a lot of agencies, we look at bigger agencies and we go,

“Look, they’re serving everybody, and they’re doing this.” But what we need to look at is, how did they get there? And if you actually start looking at how they actually got there, they started small.

Just like Facebook. Facebook didn’t come out to compete with Myspace for anybody that doesn’t remember Myspace. They came out. They said, “Hey, we’re going to do this for Harvard students, and then we’re going to do this for Ivy League schools, and then colleges, and then ex-girlfriends and boyfriends stalking each other,” and they just started getting bigger and bigger and bigger, and that’s the same thing you need to do.

Stop looking at what the big guys are doing, because look. I know all the big guys and I talk with the big guys, and they laugh at their websites. They laugh at their marketing, because they’re doing it wrong. They’ve built a huge database and relationship with all these big brands and that’s how they’re getting the big brands. They’re not winning them because they put the portfolio of Porsche on their website.

Pat Flynn: Yeah, that’s great and I think again, niching down, even though you’re serving less you’re actually serving more people better. That’s great, and then I also love the podcast because it’s to me the most intimate form of a relationship building process here online through hearing a person’s voice, and if it’s anything it’s like you’re already getting a taste of what that service is going to be like and the kind of vibe that they have and that sort of thing, and it’s just very simple to have a person lead into if they need some help-

Jason Swenk: Big time.

Pat Flynn: To get that help, and I also like the niching down thing, just to further that a little bit. Because the riches are in the niches as I always say, and I think for this particular show and with the agency model it makes even more sense because you can now, even though across all different industries the pains and the problems are similar, you talk about it in a way and use the same language as that niche so that they really begin to understand that you are the

solution for that, because if you can understand and show that you understand using the same language, it's just kind of an obvious end of that conversation is, "Oh, yeah, I want to work with you."

Jason Swenk: Yeah, and I always tell people too. Don't worry about the numbers, and I think you say this all the time. I always joke with people. I'm like, "Look, Sara Blakely of Spanx, all she needed was one. That one listener was Oprah." Right? And so we always look at people with these huge numbers, and I think people get a little discouraged when they do their podcast and they think that it's going to happen overnight. One of our mutual friends like Jaime Tardy, or Jaime Masters now. I think she did her podcast for nine months and was about to quit and just hung in there, and then things just clicked for her and things changed and it built up her momentum. I mean, I've built this whole business off my podcast because of listening to your podcast. I was like, I didn't even know what a podcast was. Literally I was like, "What is this podcast thing?" Because I was watching your podcast on the website, not even over the phone, and then someone was like, "You know you can listen to it on your iPhone?" I'm like, "Really?" I was like, "That's cool."

Pat Flynn: Yeah, by the way guys, if you're listening to this on my website, you should subscribe so you can get it on your device. Yeah. Thank you for that one too, Jason.

Jason Swenk: You're welcome.

Pat Flynn: But moving on to something else, I think a lot of people who start to grow a business like an agency get into this sort of rhythm of hire and get more clients, and hire and get more clients. I've seen people fall off the rails because it just grows too big too fast. How would you help people understand growth pacing and what's too big? How do you begin to even discover what that is before you even get started?

Jason Swenk: Well it's really about the systems that you set up, and really the first system I talked about was clarity. Giving them that power in order to make a decision, but the other ones is making sure that you

have systems for sales, you have systems for delivery and standard operating procedures, and when you hire people and when you're doing the budgeting or even starting back in the very beginning when you're doing your pricing for your services that you're actually providing, assuming a year out, who are the people that you need to hire?

Look, I always tell everybody. Everybody comes to me. They're like, "Hey, my profitability." They tell me their gross revenue. I'm like, "I don't care about your gross revenue. I know a lot of \$10 million, \$100 million agencies that make zero, so that's not good. So, what is your profitability margin?" And they say, "Oh, it's 15, 20%." I'm like, "Okay, do you know all the service based companies in the US based on the service bureau is around 32%. That's the average, so you're way below the average. So let's focus on profitability."

Then what we need to do is factor in all these people I need to hire. Let's factor them in like we already have them, so now we can price our services at the right time with the right price so when we do bring them in we're still at a profitability range, because a lot of people get to let's say the million, two million mark. They hit a ceiling, and then they're like, "Man, I'm making less. Let me just go back," and it's kind of like a lifecycle of your business.

The very beginning of your business is fun. It's in that fun stage. But then it starts getting more complex and you start going through this whitewater phase, and the only way to get through it is to implement systems and operating procedures and hire the right people in the right position. You're perfectly fine to go back, but now the business is all dependent on you so you can't do vacations and you basically built a prison for your job that you can never leave and you're just trapped, and I remember going through this.

I remember I got to a point that I literally, my marriage was a train wreck from it just because I was so stressed out, and my wife said, "Why don't you just quit?" Literally I had about 20 people at the time and she goes, "Why don't you go get a job? Because it's just getting too stressful for you." And so I literally, I started applying to NASCAR

and I used to race cars and so I was like, “That’d be cool,” and so I started applying for the CMO of NASCAR and they asked me two questions. What do you want to do? And what don’t you ever want to do ever again?

These two questions I started answering. I started listing it out, and then I was like, “Dude, I can do this in my agency, so let me write out a list of all the things I never want to do ever again, and let me write out the things that I’m really good at that I want to do,” and then what I started doing is saying, “Who can I actually hire for this?” And that changed everything for me. When I did this, the business started taking off.

Pat Flynn: That’s huge. That would be good exercise for everybody to do after listening to this.

Jason Swenk: Yeah. What do you want to do, and what don’t you ever want to do ever again? And then find a way to outsource, to just say no, or have technology do it for you. And nowadays there’s so much out there that can actually help you with it, whether it be any of the cool email marketing systems out there and we can do a shameless plug to the company that you’re an advisor on if you want. Right? All those things though.

Pat Flynn: No, I appreciate that. I want to talk about your team a little bit, or anybody’s team if they have an agency. I think managing a team as a completely new experience is something that I experienced relatively not too long ago in the whole era of me being online and it’s definitely challenging but it’s fun for sure and obviously the business has grown and scaled as a result of that, but managing a team is challenging and I work with contractors and I have people who work for me and I know a lot of people don’t want to go the team route just because they’re scared. They’ve been so conditioned to be the one man or one woman show.

How do you help a person besides yes, your business will grow obviously, but I think there’s just some internal blockages related to hiring other people, managing them, worrying about having to fire

them. That's all really emotional stuff that's hard for a lot of people to deal with, and you obviously can't have an agency if it's just you. I mean I guess you could, but how do you help a person through that, Jason?

Jason Swenk: You got to decide, do you want to grow it further past you? Do you want to serve more people just past you? And if the answer is yes, then there's no question that you have to bring on a team but if you just want a lifestyle business and you're happy, then keep it just you. That's perfectly fine. There's no right or wrong answer. It just matters on don't complain to me and say, "Jason, I'm miserable. I never get to go on vacation." I'll be like, "Well, hire someone." Like go set this up, and then I kind of walked them through the roles that they need to do because they need to transition from agency owner or a business owner to a CEO and there's kind of four or five roles that you need to do.

One I've already talked about. Set the vision and communicate it often to your team. The other one is coach and mentor your leadership team or one level down. Your whole job ... and whenever anybody works for me or works with me, my whole job is to make them a better person and to help them get to wherever they need to go, so if they want to create a competitive business and just learn how I'm doing it and they could help me for a little bit and then do that? I help them with it like, I'm totally fine with that. The other one is assist sales, not to do all the sales. Understand the financials. You don't have to be a financial wizard. Like, I was horrible with math. I loved it when my teacher went to me like, "Jason, you have to learn how to do arithmetic because it's not like you're going to have a calculator in your pocket all the time." I'm like, who won now?

Right. And then be the front face of the organization and really get out there and those are the only things that you need to do. And if you do that and you give the power to your team to make the decisions, then you can get over that hump of going, "Oh my gosh, I'm responsible for someone else." And you're always having that self doubt. You just got to go. Like, if I could do it. And this comes to ... Like when I started my agency I was 22. I didn't even know what

an invoice was, Pat. Someone asked me to send them an invoice in 1999. There was no Google. I literally went to my dad. I go, “What’s an invoice?” So if I can do it and I can figure all this out and create a big agency and sell it. You guys are well ahead of me.

Pat Flynn: Love it. What’s your favorite part of what you do, Jason?

Jason Swenk: Seeing other people successful. And I learned this when I sold my agency. I thought that was it, right? I’d be like, cool, super successful now. I don’t have to worry about money, but I was depressed. Literally a week later, I was depressed. I literally, I was like, oh my gosh. Because I didn’t have that significance affecting anybody and working with the team and making them better. I literally was like, “Great, I’m successful Now what? Is this the best life has to give?”

And then when my old competitors started reaching out to me was like, how’d you get Hitachi? How’d you do Lotus cars? How’d you do Legal Zoom? Like we created Legal Zoom and so like they started asking me how to do this and I started helping them out and I loved it and my wife who’s a lot smarter than me was like, “Why don’t you put out content? You’ve been listening to some dude on your computer forever, why don’t you do that?”

And so I was like, “Okay, like I’ll try it.” Hence like you have the Smart Passive Income podcast, I have the Smart Agency Podcast. Right? And so you can see the similarities. Right? And so I started doing that and I started getting the significance back and I want to make other people successful. That’s what drives me.

And when I hear other stories like, “Hey Jason, I’ve been listening to your podcast for years.” Like, I’ve been doing it for four years now and it’s just the coolest feeling to be like, “Hey, you changed my life. You were able to give me the freedom to do what we wanted.” I mean it’s just, there’s no better feeling. I don’t think.

Pat Flynn: That’s awesome, man. And name of the podcast one more time, so people right after they listen to the show, they can go subscribe to that.

- Jason Swenk: Yep. Smart Agency Master Class. And then I also have the Swenk Today Show is a daily podcast as well.
- Pat Flynn: A daily show. What's on that one?
- Jason Swenk: So that's kind of a daily Vlog that I've been doing where I answer questions from people or if I get off a client call and I'm like, "Dude, this person was asking questions that I think all my other audience needs to hear." I'll turn on the camera, I'll record it, extract out the audio, put that video out there as well. So you know, we're on Alexa. I have to say Alexa real small or she'll get mad at me in the other room. Right? We all know that. And, yeah. So I've got two shows, but if you've go to swenk.it, you guys can link to it.
- Pat Flynn: Sweet man, this is super helpful and I know a lot of people are going to love this episode. One final piece of advice for the guy or gal who's listening to the show right now and they're getting really excited about the prospect of, you know, maybe online courses and eBooks. I mean they're just maybe not ready for that yet, but they can and they have the skills to help other people and other businesses and potentially build an agency model, but they're still a little bit fearful. Help them through that.
- Jason Swenk: I mean, you just got to do it. I want you to be more fearful of not doing it then actually failing at doing it. Because you're going to fail. You're gonna fail so many times. Like, I fail all day long, but I actually get excited about it. I actually like failing because I'm learning from it and I can actually apply it and then I can actually, you know, go forward.
- But if I'm just sitting there going ... if I'm waiting for it to be perfect and I just don't do it. Like, for example, I have a book I've been working on for the past two years. My fear on it was, "Man, I put all my strategies and everything in this book and it's only \$35," like, oh my gosh. But then I started realizing I was like, dude, I need to practice what I preach. I need to get it out there, find out what works, what doesn't work, just do it and I'm more fearful of not putting the book out there than it actually flopping.

- Pat Flynn: I love that kind of shift in your mindset there and I think we could all benefit from doing that in many areas of our life. Jason, one more time, where should people go to check out more stuff from you?
- Jason Swenk: Yeah. So you can go to my website, JasonSwenk.com if you're an agency and if you're not an agency, totally fine. Go to swenk.it and you can listen to my Swenk Today show because it's all for business owners out there. Just I give a lot of agency advice there, but you just have to figure out how do I take it and yeah, I just try to give away about 90% of my stuff for free. 10%, I charge for. Just to make sure you actually go do it, right? You got to charge for something so they actually go do it.
- Pat Flynn: It's S-W-E-N-K?
- Jason Swenk: Yeah, I'm not related to Hillary.
- Pat Flynn: Cool, man. Hey, thank you so much for your time today. We appreciate it and all the best.
- Jason Swenk: Thanks, Pat.
- Pat Flynn: Hey guys. We're back. Yeah, the show hasn't ended yet. That's because right after I closed the call, Jason came back. He's like, "Dude, I forgot to talk about this really important thing about my contact page and messenger bots," and so Jason's back and we're going to talk about that really quick so you got some bonus content for you, woo hoo! So, thanks again Jason. We'll make this quick and high hitting. So what's the deal here? What's going on?
- Jason Swenk: Yeah. The one thing I was realizing was when I had people going to my contact page and filling out my form, it always took me about a day, two days to get back, and then once I got back to someone I was always competing with their email and I wanted to make it a better experience, so I got rid of my contact page and I changed it into a messenger bot and it's like for example, like think about if you're walking into Best Buy and you go to someone, "Hey, I want a TV," and the clerk says, "Okay, yeah, go to aisle four." Right? That's

kind of how your website's dealing right now.

But what I wanted to do was like, I wanted that person to be able to walk you down to the aisle and start asking you about your house. And how big of a TV do you want? What are you going to watch on it?

And so that's what I do to start the conversation with my Facebook Messenger bot. So I load up mini chat with it. Now I'm going to warn you guys, if you guys go to the contact page, don't overwhelm me, because you'll see this in a second. You'll have a couple of different questions and I make it fun.

And so think about like I serve agency owners so it's called Don Bot like after Don Draper and I literally have Don on there like smoking a cigarette and it says, "Hey, are you starting agency? Do you have an agency or other?" Right. I don't have an agency. And then I ask it revenue and then based on those answers I direct them to where I think they need to go. And then here's what I do-

Pat Flynn: The bot directs them.

Jason Swenk: The bot directs them, and then what I do is I jump on my phone or my iPad and I record a voice memo to them. So Pat, if you're on my website and you're going through the bot with Don and I'm up front with them too. In the very beginning I say, "This is a Don Bot. This is not Jason. Answer these two questions and then you can chat directly with Jason."

And then I actually go, "Hey, Pat, I saw that you were starting an agency, you definitely should check out the Agency Playbook. If you have any questions, let me know." And then we could start a dialogue. And, Pat, in two months I've generated over \$250,000 just from this because of the personalization and getting people to where they need to go.

And I think everybody should change their contact page to something like this in order to assist them to make a better

experience in. The cool thing is, is like as we're recording this podcast, people are hitting me up. I'll get on it two hours later, I'll start a message. But the amazing thing is it rings their butt, but it vibrates their butt. But so now I can have a conversation with them. I'm not competing with email any more.

- Pat Flynn: That's huge. Is the Messenger situation still on your website or are they being taken to Facebook for that?
- Jason Swenk: They're taken to Facebook. It's totally off my website.
- Pat Flynn: On your contact form, however, on your page-
- Jason Swenk: I don't even have a contact page. I literally do a redirect to mini chat to open up the Facebook Messenger.
- Pat Flynn: Oh, wow. Okay. Okay, cool. Wow, super powerful. I'll have to explore that, but thank you for coming on and giving us some bonus content.
- Jason Swenk: Definitely. Yeah. Guys, check it out. It will change everything for you if you want to have a better conversation and not lose your leads because you can do the followup too. Literally think about your email rates. You'll get 20% response rate, maybe 5% click through rate. I'm seeing 85% readability rate and over 50% click through rate. So guys, go check it out.
- Pat Flynn: And that voicemail is done through mini chat and Facebook?
- Jason Swenk: Actually, just through my Facebook Messenger on my phone.
- Pat Flynn: Yeah, just like a direct ... how personal is that, right?
- Jason Swenk: Yeah. And when you guys are testing, if you guys go test it out, please just say if you're not an agency, go no.
- Pat Flynn: Because I was going to say-
- Jason Swenk: Because I do chat with everybody. And if I get overwhelmed like I

was on Perpetual Traffic and I told them and literally the day it went live. I was like, oh my gosh, I'm so overwhelmed. I was like, 900. I can't respond.

Pat Flynn: Okay. Say no everybody, if you go to Jason's contact page and that's at JasonSwenk.com, right?

Jason Swenk: There you go, yeah.

Pat Flynn: Hey, man, thanks again. Alright, Hope you enjoyed that episode with Jason Swenk. You can find him at JasonSwenk.com or swenk.it. You can even find his new book Accelerating Your Agency at JasonSwenk.com/book.

Jason, congrats on the book and thanks for helping us all out today. This was a very enlightening show because I am not ... I don't have an agency, although I can imagine how much easier it would be now after listening to your show and thinking about SOPs and scaling and keeping that you know the value in your brand, even though you might be expanding and hiring people. This is all incredible, so thank you Jason. I appreciate you so much. Again, JasonSwenk.com.

If you want to check out the show notes and everything mentioned in the resources listed here in this show, all you have to do is go to the show notes page at smartpassiveincome.com/session332. Smartpassiveincome.com/session232.

Now, it doesn't matter if you have an agency or not. I do want to recommend you check out my live page at Smartpassiveincome.com/live where you can find me live and sign up and register for a free training, whether it's about affiliate marketing or podcasting or something else. You can find me there, register for the next date and you can chat with me.

You can get some questions answered and you can learn as I teach you, as best as possible, all the things that you need to know to grow and scale your business. All you have to do is go



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to smartpassiveincome.com/live. Register there and thank you so much. I look forward to serving you in the next episode. Cheers. Take care. We'll see you next time. Bye.

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



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