



SPI Podcast Session #43 –

How to Have Laser-Like Focus and Stress-Free Productivity Summer Marketing Mashup 2012

Show notes at: <http://www.smartpassiveincome.com/session43>

Pat: This is the Smart Passive Income podcast with Pat Flynn, session #43. Hey-o!

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 thinks honesty is the best policy online, Pat Flynn!

Pat: Hey, what's up? This is Pat Flynn and just to clarify, I do believe in honesty both online AND offline. So there you go!

Anyway, thank you for joining me today. And I want to give a shout-out to YOU, because as of today, the SPI podcast has 512 5-star ratings on iTunes. And seriously, it's just really awesome. I can't thank you enough, and I appreciate every single one of you listening to this today. Thank you.

Today we have a pretty unique episode. We don't just have one guest with us, or two, or three, or four, we actually have FIVE guests in what is dubbed the Summer Marketing Mashup. This was actually a great idea by my good friends Jason and Jeremy from [Internet Business Mastery](#). Some of you probably listen to their podcast, too.

So we have this, I guess you could say "panel" of six people, including myself, from a number of highly-ranked and well-produced podcasts in iTunes and websites. Each week for four weeks, this panel is doing a live webinar, and we pick a different topic to discuss each week, and then each of the four podcasts represented here in this panel of six, we'll be publishing one of the webinar's sessions on their own podcast.

This one you're listening to today is the second gathering where we're all going to go down the line and discuss our best tips for staying productive and staying laser-focused, which is extremely important to get anything done in our businesses and blogs, as we all know.

The first part is published on Internet Business Mastery podcast, and that one was all



about traffic. So myself and the others share our best traffic tip and then answer questions from those who were sitting live on that webinar. If you're interested in listening to that one, later on you can get the link at the end of the session, or as always you can get the links for that and anything else we discuss today on the show notes on <http://SmartPassiveIncome.com/session43>.

Enough of that! Let's get focused and listen in on the second meeting of the 2012 Summer Marketing Mashup with myself as the host, Jason and Jeremy from [Internet Business Mastery podcast](#), Dan and Ian from the [Lifestyle Business Podcast](#), and Tim from the [Foolish Adventure podcast](#). Enjoy!

Pat: Welcome everybody to the second edition of the 2012 Summer Marketing Mashup. We had a great turnout in our first webinar, which was all about traffic, and today we're going to talk about the topic of focus--staying focused and being extremely productive. Stress-free productivity.

Before that, if you have a chance, please share the love on Twitter or on Facebook or wherever, just quickly share this link that you see here if you're watching this. goibm.us/smm, and that will direct people to a quick form where they can come on live and join us here today, and that's more questions to answer, more interaction, which is everything we want.

For those of you here already, thank you for showing up. I already see a few questions and comments coming in on my [GoToWebinar](#) panel here. Hey Nick, how's it going? Alec, what's up? Thank you for coming!

Of course, we have our outstanding panel here from some of the top business podcasts you can find. Of course, my name is Pat Flynn from SmartPassiveIncome.com and we also have from the Lifestyle Business Podcast Dan and Ian. What's up, Dan and Ian, how're you guys doing?

Ian: What's up, Pat? We're joining you from Bangkok, and it's 8am over here, so it's no minor feat that we've managed to make it to the call, especially in this city.

Dan: Thanks for having us, Pat.

Unintroduced Guest: It's about time you guys got up! 8 o'clock...

[laughter]



Pat: So are you guys at an internet cafe or something, or are you guys just sitting in your kind of...dwelling there?

Dan and Ian: We're in our hotel.

Pat: Okay, awesome. Well, thanks for joining us so early!

Ian: Sure.

Pat: We also have Jeremy and Jason from Internet Business Mastery. How are you guys?

Jeremy: Great!

Jason: Hey Pat, hey everyone! What's up, everyone?

Pat: Thank you guys. And also from the Foolish Adventure Podcast we have Tim Conley. What's up, Tim?

Tim: What's up guys?

Pat: Okay. So if any time you guys have questions along the way for those of you watching or listening or if you're listening to this in the future, you can go to <http://summermarketingmashup.com> and you'll see the replay or the comments that's going on there.

I want to start by asking--we're going to go down the line and everyone's going to give us their best focus--how to stay laser-focused. How to have laser-like focus and stress-free productivity.

So we're going to start with the guys from the Lifestyle Business Podcast, Dan & Ian. I'd love to hear a tip from both of you on how you guys stay focused and stress-free and productive.

Dan: Man, really putting us on the spot here! Eight in the morning! This is rough.

Pat: Yeah. We don't mess around.



Jason: Number one tip is get up early.

Dan: Number one tip is make it to coffee before you start the webinar!

So I was thinking about this last week, Pat, about productivity and focus. I want to focus on the productivity part of it. I think my biggest tip here is probably hiring. I say that because it's been the #1 multiplier for me, so when I look back at our business that we started back around 2005, I think the best thing we could've done ultimately was get somebody on board as quick as possible.

There's only so many hours in the day, and I'm only one guy. So the quicker I could get somebody else involved in our business, the more productivity I was going to see myself, and the business was going to see. So my #1 tip is hire early.

Pat: Yeah, that's a great, solid tip. Absolutely. That's something I've learned recently as well, hiring two VAs. Now, I do have a follow-up question for you now. Some people, they feel like they can double their work and clone themselves by hiring out, but what ends up happening is they're doing a lot more work trying to manage that person.

So what's one or two tips that you have for making sure that if you were to hire out that you're actually making it work in your favor and not against you.

Ian: Yeah, you're right. It does become somewhat of a job to try to manage people once you've hired them, but I think that comes with the process. So I think it's important when you hire somebody that you also have a process down and they're not just aimlessly going at work. You've got a structure set up for them and that's going to make your job of managing them much easier.

Dan: In many ways, the history of our business has been about learning how to create a culture and manage people and build a team. I think if, ultimately you're feeling really ambitious about your business, which that's our approach, and you really want to get a ton done in the world, that's precisely what you need to get good at.

Unfortunately, that's a tough thing to have a few tips about. It's something that we're still figuring out ourselves and still making a lot of those mistakes. Like, we've done all that. You hire people and then all of the sudden you have more work and all of that kind of stuff, but that's precisely what we're banging our heads against because that's where we're seeing the most returns.



Pat: Right. I know we could all talk about outsourcing and hiring out in a totally different call and spend hours about that. But I know Jeremy and Jason, through your Internet Business Mastery, as far as hiring out, since understanding what's going on with them--they have amazing systems going on. I mean, can you talk about that really quick, Jeremy and Jason, about how you quickly get your VAs to do exactly what you want them to do?

Jeremy: Yeah. Procedure lists is how we do it, so when a task is done--originally, when it was just Jason and I doing everything, one of the things we did was make step-by-step checklists of how we do all the different tasks that we were going to give away to a virtual assistant, and then that way when we bring somebody in, we can say "just follow these steps" and the training is basically handing them over the digital checklist and they just follow the checklist and we correct and say "Oh, you should do it like this" and then we'll change the procedure list to make it so it's absolutely clear.

And then it makes it so that if there's something even that Jason was doing and he can't do it for whatever reason, I can jump in and do it because I got the checklist, even though he's the one that knows how to do it, so to speak. So the procedure list, we call them, but basically the checklists, are one of the big ways we got people up and running really, really fast.

Jason: Yeah, we called it an "operations manual" and it's something we started very early on. It can take some discipline to do, because I know you have to sit down and go "okay, I'm about to do this task that normally takes me ten minutes, but right now I might need to invest 30 so I can sit there and document it as I go through it."

A big tip there is once you do have people on staff, THEY can make the procedures for you, so now it's a matter of we record a video saying "this is how we want things done, can you go do this and then please make a procedure for that?"

Here's a real ninja trick. I actually shared this recently in the private mastermind community that Dan & Ian have called [The Dynamite Circle](#) and people were really interested in seeing behind the scenes of our operations manual, and it's basically a WordPress installation that we make private on our site so we can only access it. WordPress make a nice database, so all of these different articles--we used to keep it on Google Docs, but then it got really unorganized, it was hard to find what was what, and different people owned different documents, so eventually we just pulled it all into a WordPress installation where you could search for it very easily.



We had 10 different categories for the ten different areas within our business, like "marketing," "website," "upkeep," "operations," whatever. Then we basically used all those categories and tags to organize those in a really useful way, so now if someone goes to do customer service they can search for customer service, bam, all of the procedures about customer service come on, they can bring up that one that relates to that, and basically our team is constantly updating that themselves now. It's seldom that we are in there ourselves actually editing or adding documents.

But early on it is going to be you, and that is absolutely worth the time investment to do so.

Jeremy: Yeah, it's been a while since I've even seen that. Maybe over a year.

Pat: That's really cool. Hey Dan, how about you--any particular productivity or staying focused tip that you'd like to share?

Dan: A productivity tip. Staying focused is not my forte, so I have this concept called "finding your best 20 hours." It's a bit of a "duh" kind of point, but when I look around at a lot of people who are successful online, they don't waste their core and essential energy.

What a lot of people do online is they say "Well, I have a job and I want to come home and put the kids to bed and then I want to start to build my online business." And of course that's an essential approach in a lot of cases, but it's a very, very, very difficult approach.

So what I would encourage people to do if they have jobs is to become intrapreneurs and find a way to either find an apprenticeship or a job at a small business that can help you build a skillset that leads you toward something you'd ultimately like to do for yourself.

Even if that means taking a pay cut, I think your best and most productive 20 hours every week--that's sort of about investing in yourself and focusing on those 20 hours is so critical to building something, an asset for your life.

So that's what I encourage people to do is not to sort of split your best energy and make sure that your trajectory is heading to where you want to go so, if you have a job, make sure that you believe in that job and that you're building something there, and that it's leading you toward the kind of business and life that you want.



I know that's sort of a simple point, but it's very difficult to abdicate consistently on a weekly basis your best energy and value toward something that you don't believe in. If you find it difficult to find a job that you believe in, you're going to find it a lot more difficult to build your own business. So it's sort of like a lesser challenge in my book. That's my productivity tip.

Pat: I really like that. When talking about productivity and focus, the tools and things like that are really interesting, but I think it all starts with a mindset like you're talking about, and really just not splitting your best energy, like you said, and really making sure that you're putting your best effort in whatever it is that you're trying to do and accomplish. Thank you for that Dan.

How about you Jeremy? How's it going, man? I've known you for about 4 or 5 years now, I know you have a TON of productivity tips, and I'd be interested in hearing what your top one is.

Jeremy: Great. Well, trying to take the *4-Hour Work Week* to a higher level. I try to work 14 minutes today, so I've had to come up--no, I'm just kidding. What I like to do is, one of the things I realized very quickly when I started doing Internet business is that I was an information gathering fool. I learned everything constantly, and maybe six months into learning about Internet business, I realized I'd done a lot of learning and not a lot of doing.

So one of the things that we do even now is anytime we have time allocated to actually working. The goal is actually not to consume any information that is out there until the moment we need it. So for instance, and this would be something I wish I could do if I could go back and I was a beginner again, is I would say "I should not be learning the 45 different ways that I can use Google+ if I don't even have my niche yet, let alone a website."

We call it "just in time learning" and it's been a major way that I've been able to be extremely productive and work much fewer hours than normal. Again, the "just in time learning" is just learning the bit of information you need at that point, and only going to the point where you could take action and then once you take that action, then going to the next step and simply doing the next piece of information.

I know it's hard for most people, especially when you'll go to some blog and "Now they're talking about Pinterest! Oh my gosh, I'm going to learn everything about this" or whatever it is. You've got to go to the foundation, get things started, and only bring in



that information when you need it. So that's one of the major things--again, like Dan, it sounds like a simple thing but being able to actually do it takes some time and, you know, actually takes that willpower not to just go off on all of these reading expeditions or video watching expeditions when you haven't gotten whatever you need to next done.

Ian(?): One of the challenges there Jeremy is determining what your problem is. Sometimes that's a challenge in and of itself is what is the information that's going to help me get to the next level? It's just so easy to follow that next tweet.

Jeremy: Yeah, absolutely!

Pat: I was going to say, that's really hard and I probably don't help with that, because my blog I'll have a post about this one day and a post about something else another day.

Jeremy: Yeah, well, with you though--people are different levels, too. We'll talk about different levels, and it's more about people being able to understand where THEY are and going "Okay, I'm going to file that away. I'll come back to that because I'm not there yet." At least that's what I have to do, because there's a hundred people I want to read their blogs every day, and I'm very, very influenced with what other people are up to that are doing awesome things.

I didn't know I wanted to write an Amazon book until, what, a couple weeks ago? When YOU mentioned it, Pat? I was like "Oh gosh! I gotta do an Amazon book! And then I got to go to China with Dan and BUY STUFF and SELL IT!" Oh my gosh, I'm insane.

But that's the big key, trying to go "Okay, what is the next thing?" and just focus on it.

Pat: Yeah, but at the same time, you don't want to miss out on anything that could potentially help you out later, either. One thing I like to do is, I have [Evernote](#) hooked up and I have a particular [Chrome plugin](#) that lets me save particular stuff into a particular folder that I have in Evernote, so in case I need to come back to it later--like if I see something interesting on video marketing but that's not something I'm doing right now, I'll put it in my video marketing folder in Evernote, and I can come back to it later when that's something I'm going to be focusing on. Or maybe it's a "things to learn" folder that I don't have to learn RIGHT NOW, I guess.



Jeremy: That's a great tip! Jason and I both do that exact same thing with Evernote.

Pat: Evernote's a good tool. We can get into that in a little bit. Jason, I want to hear what you have to say. I know Jeremy revealed some stuff that you guys have done. What else have you guys got going on?

Jason: Well, here's a tip that I found really helpful. Realize that there's two kinds of time in your business. First of all, recognizing that there's two types of time helps you to organize things better and realize that there's different kinds of energies that go into both, and then you also need to keep a very distinct balance between these two different kinds of time.

Really, we could extend it to a third kind of time, but let's go with the two right off. That is, when you sit down to work on your business, you have what I call "money time" and then you have what I call "prep time."

Prep time tends to be those things that's like we feel like we have to do them, and if we don't do them, our business is going to fall apart. Paying the bills, keeping the books up, hiring and firing, operational type things. A lot of times, checking email ends up being very much prep time. It's those kinds of tasks.

Whereas money time is any of those things that are actually directly leading you to making new money and reaching new people or creating new value, however you want to think about that. It tends to be for people--a lot of people listening to this call, I know, in our own business, money time basically falls into three different things. Creating, relating, or strategy.

So am I creating content that's going to attract me to traffic, or creating content that I'm going to sell, or creating content that's engaging with my market, or am I relating with my colleagues or my peers and with my customers, my followers, my coaching clients, things like that.

Strategy is obviously the time--every week on Monday for two hours Jeremy and I are on the phone together deciding what's the big picture moving forward, what does our market need the most right now, what do our followers want the most right now?

Those three things are actually leading to bringing new money or reaching new people. If you aren't focusing on money time regularly, it's very easy for us to get caught up in the prep time. Partly because those tend to be very brushfire things that catch our



attention very easily. Also, because they tend to be easier things that, in a way, help us avoid doing some of the creating and relating that we know we SHOULD do, but it's harder because creating and relating tends to require putting yourself out there, and then obviously when you put yourself out there there's always that chance that people won't like what it IS that you put out there. Whereas doing my books is very safe, because the books--they're not going to yell back at me or be disappointed in something that I do.

Jeremy: Depending on your books!

Jason: -- or say I'm not good enough, or whatever the case may be. So all of those little voices that might be inside of our head.

What I encourage people to do is, to actually use your Google Calendar or whatever Calendar you use for a couple weeks...

Well, obviously the first thing you do is sit down and make a list of all of the different kinds of things you do in your business, and then categorize them as what you think is prep time, and what you think is money time, and then track for two or even one week your blocks of time, and see if you aren't bouncing back and forth between money and prep.

I find it very useful to say "Okay, here's a day where I'm just going to do prep things." Or maybe an afternoon where I'm just going to do prep things. And I also encourage people to try to get to a 2:1 ratio, so for every one hour of prep time, you're spending two hours trying to bring new money in.

Hopefully that ends up being an even higher ratio eventually. Ideally once you get outsource and all of the things and systems and stuff like that, you can get to where 80-90% of your time is money time, and you'll find that you're a lot more fulfilled because it's probably things that are more within your strengths and unique abilities and the things that you got into your business to do to begin with.

Making that list, categorizing it out and then tracking it, extremely helpful. And then trying to establish that 2:1 ratio I found helpful--or even just being aware of this concept will help you try to be more focused, more efficient and not end up in the brushfire mode that controls so many of our days. So that's the tip. Money time versus prep time.



If you want to throw the third kind of time in there, which is quite important as well, that's free time or renewal time which we all need, but as entrepreneurs we can often forget.

I know I can't be as creative as I really need to be, I don't come up with my best ideas, unless I spend that time. It's just like working on a muscle--you burn the muscle, burn the muscle, burn the muscle, then I've got to let it release and actually relax for a little while. Our minds, our brains, our creativity, our inspiration work the same way.

So if you're just like, 7 days a week, all the time, going, going, going, you might feel like you're being super-productive but really you're burning the candle at both ends and you're not actually allowing yourself to get some of that creative energy and power. Kind of goes into the best 20 hours thing that Dan was talking about as well. So there's the tip. Money time versus prep time.

Dan: I really like that idea of prep time versus money time. One of the things as it relates back to hiring--a lot of the time we're going to be hiring people to do things in the prep time space, I think, because as entrepreneurs, we're really the only ones that can push our businesses forward, so as much time as we can spend in the money time is really important for our businesses.

Ian: I actually love this framework because I never really had a way to talk about it. I always called it "glucose time." There's certain parts of my day, especially for some reason for me it's between 7 and 11 in the morning and 7 and 11 at night, when I get creative. When I feel that energy coming on, I shut off Gmail, I turn off Skype, and I run away to a cafe where no one can bother me, because I know if I miss the window of opportunity to use that energy, it's going to go away.

I definitely like this framework a lot, because it's really important to our business. You have to catch that muse and use that best energy and make sure that you're not spending it in your email inbox responding to requests, because you can do that when you're on a little bit lower level of energy.

Pat: Yeah, I like that because I remember purposefully not scheduling classes in college after lunch because I was always super tired and I couldn't learn anything. So I would always schedule stuff in the morning or the evenings because that's when I'm most focused, just like you Dan.

So whenever I do my work it's always in the evening, mostly because my son's asleep and he's not bothering me and I can get stuff done. But also because I feel like, like you, I'm the most creative. So understanding when you have the best output is very



important and it might take some recording of data for a week, like Jason was saying, to see when you have high levels of energy and low levels of energy and schedule when you work on your business around that.

Jason: One of the best things I ever did for getting my focus and productivity up was to take the time to track and actually--you gotta get a baseline and a lot of us I think might avoid tracking because we're afraid of what we might see, but that awareness is super, super helpful. So whatever tip of ours you take and put into action, if you come up with some way to track that regularly, that's going to be a great place to start because it's going to raise your awareness and give you a baseline of where you're starting so hopefully you can reach a new higher level.

Pat: Absolutely. Hey, Tim, how about your best productivity, your focus tip?

Tim: Oh my gosh! After sitting here listening to all this smart stuff about productivity and focus, I'm like--I'm the anti-productivity guy! I'm not too keen on a lot of the stuff that's out there about being productive because it kind of treats people like machines.

Like, here's how to get as much stuff as you possibly can in this factory floor of life that you're on. I'm more about effectiveness and prioritization. If you're effective--which as an entrepreneur, that's what you need to be. To be effective, you get your product out there and get it sold to customers, real people. Doing all of those other things, like the prep time, that kind of stuff just takes you away from being effective.

So I try to focus on being effective and an easy way to be effective is to prioritize. If you've only got three priorities, it's easy to be focused, because I just do these things! I just need to get these three things done today, or I have these three goals that I'm trying to accomplish this month, this quarter, this year. And I just focus on those things.

Everything else I just let little--as Tim Ferriss calls it, let "little bad things" happen. If it's not that important, I let it go. Sometimes it comes back to bite me a bit, but then I deal with it then and the get right back to my priorities so I can be effective.

Pat: Very interesting! I think it's important to understand that what we're doing serves a purpose, and to be effective is really all of our main goals. I think productivity is a part of that, and I really think it's interesting the analogy you give of the "we are the life of the factory" and we're just trying to churn things out faster or not necessarily understanding what the end goal is. But I really like how you prioritize your most important things and make sure that that's what you're working towards. And if little



bad things happen, like Tim Ferriss says, then that's OK but you're working what you need to be working on.

Tim: Right. And I have to give credit to [Leo Babauta](#) for his work on this, because when I was doing this, when I was cutting back on all of the things I was doing in my life to get down to just the priorities, I found his book, [The Power of Less](#), and his productivity manual, *Zen to Done*, and those were really effective for me because it gave me a framework and words to put around what it was that I was doing so that it wasn't just being lazy in comparison to the rest of the western world.

I don't have 15 things on a to-do list, I have 3. And since I only have 3, I don't have a list because it's in my head, because I know exactly what I need to do.

Pat: You're taking a minimalistic approach to your business.

Tim: Right, right. Because it keeps me stress free.

Pat: Yeah, absolutely. That's why people...

Dan: We just cut out over here, and I'm not sure--you guys started talking about books, but one of the great productivity books that I've read is called [Getting Things Done](#) by David Allen. I don't know if you guys just mentioned this or not. But you know, it goes against what Tim was saying in terms of life and the factory floor. David Allen has every second of his life planned out and charted out and he has a flowchart that I find really helpful in getting things done. So I think Getting Things Done is definitely worth checking out if you're going to be a machine...

Jason[?]: Well, there's always two elements to the metaphor, right? Like all these cool little life hacker tips and stuff. You're sitting on a bike and you're pedaling, and that's optimizing the pedaling. But one of the things I'm hearing about on this call, especially, some of those biggest gains are about what gear you're in. That's about sort of stepping back and looking at those fundamental assumptions that you're making.

One of the things that we've noticed too, a little bit, is as our business grows, it's more important to be more focused, and it's a lot easier to get distracted. So to find ways to focus on precisely how you're pedaling, become a pro at that, and make sure that you're in the right gear. Make sure that you're riding on the right road, so to speak.

Pat: I love that analogy.



Jeremy: I want to underscore something there. I really like *Getting Things Done* as well. I guess the only issue I have with it is I think it makes a lot of people feel worthless, because it is NOT an easy system to implement, and I think he may even say in the book himself that it can take you two years to perfectly implement this thing.

There are key elements I've pulled from that book that have changed completely for the better the way I do things. At the same time, I can't say that I do 100% his system at all. And maybe this is a bit going to what Tim was saying. It's true that a lot of productivity--well, there's a lot of just pure crap out there anyway. But, there's also the problem that some of these productivity books just aren't going to--everybody has their own style of how they work, and "right brained" and "left brained" and more focused in the morning or more focused in the evening or they like visual--we all have different ways of operating.

One thing I always like to tell people, when I recommend a book, is "Hey this really helped me; I hope it helps you too! Just pick the couple of things that really sit with you and take it out of this and don't like you feel you gotta do it 100%." Because I used to read these productivity books, and afterward I either felt like it was trying to make me into a machine, or I was worthless, I'd feel guilty because I couldn't actually do 100% everything that they said.

Maybe that's just me, because I tend to be a perfectionist, but I have a feeling there's other entrepreneurs out there that tend to be all-or-nothing kind of perfectionist about these things as well. So point being, don't feel bad just because you can't do whatever fill-in-the-blank productivity book perfectly. What I do is an amalgamation of probably four or five books, but it works really well for me, *Getting Things Done* being one of those books.

Pat: I read that book too. One thing I pulled away from that--it was actually recommended to me by you guys, Jason and Jeremy, and one thing I pulled out was that you're going to get distractions coming at you during the day or things that you have to do that you weren't originally planning to do.

If something's going to take you 2-3 minutes to do, just do it. That's been really big for me. So I guess it's my turn. That'll be one of my first tips. If something takes 5 minutes or less and it comes my way, I try to not make that happen by getting rid of all distractions and turning Skype off and making sure I'm laser-focused when I'm working on something like writing a blog post, but if something comes my way, or if April comes in the room and says "Oh you got to take out the trash," I'll do that, because it's



just going to take a second, and then it's not something that adds to the list, it's something I cannot even add to the list because I've already taken care of it. So that's something I've taken from David Allen.

But my best tip, and this is different than anything anyone's said so far, is to just eat well and exercise. I don't know if you want to call it a cop out answer, but the one big thing that I know that I've done that has really helped my productivity AND my focus, AND my energy levels is eating well and exercising and just being fit, because my mind is so much more in-tune, it seems, ever since I started doing things like P90X and I'm not going to promote any particular program, just a walk every day will help your mind focus a little bit better, and eating well.

Not to go back to the whole machine analogy, but you're like a car, and you want to fuel yourself with the best fuel to have your car run as best as it can. Really, it doesn't matter even what you're doing. If your body isn't able to do those things, then it's not going to happen the way you want it. So that's my tip, just stay healthy and eat well and exercise.

Jason: Something that really helped me be more active, because I'm definitely not the kind of guy that does tons of exercising or whatever, but two tips here because it IS really easy to sit at the desk and blood stops going to your brain and everything atrophies over time. I bought myself a pedometer, and again going back to the tracking thing, just by owning a pedometer--and now both Jeremy and I own a fancy pedometer called the [Fitbit](#). It counts and then tracks all of our steps and just knowing that I'm trying to hit 10,000 steps a day--which admittedly this week I'm not doing so great on, but usually that's my goal, and it helps me be more aware.

It's like "Okay, let's stand up more, go out for a walk more, maybe I can listen to this on the go, maybe I can walk around while I think about this copy I want to write" or whatever because you're just trying to get more steps because then you're moving more. which is just good for energy in the end.

Ian: I don't think that's a small point at all, especially since we've got a bunch of podcasters on the line. Walking has a long and storied relationship with productivity. Especially when you're trying to generate ideas. So when I'm sitting at my computer and I feel myself starting to click off to YouTube or Facebook, one of my strategies is to load up a podcast and close that laptop and go for a walk. I generally find that by 10



minutes into that podcast, I'm opening up Evernote and taking notes and I'm starting to turn around and walk back toward home because I've got so many ideas!

So I do think taking a walk is just an absolutely wonderful productivity technique, especially when that creative energy is starting to wane a little bit. Put on Tim Conley in the ear buds and you'll have more ideas than you know what to do with in 15 minutes!

Jeremy: I do a lot of walking as well, to the point where I'm really sensitive to different temperatures, so right now here it's 100 degrees so it's just a tiny bit too hot for me to be out walking, so I finally got--it's totally ridiculous, but I totally had to do it--I got a [treadmill desk](#). So now, I'm trying to do about 14,000 steps a day. Much, much easier when I'm just walking while I work. I just considered it an upgrade for myself in trying to get fit as well.

But being able to do all of my email or anything that doesn't require too much movement of the mouse--it's not like you're going to be able to do graphics while you're whipping along on the treadmill! But I'm able to do all of the different general stuff that takes me an hour or two a day, I can do that on the treadmill while walking, and anytime I watch anything on YouTube or any videos, I do it while on the treadmill desk.

It's really cool because it's built around a treadmill rather than just trying to do a makeshift thing over a treadmill. So that was a little upgrade I did, but I'm totally about the walking as well. At least getting that done.

Pat: I've never heard of a treadmill desk.

Jeremy: Yeah, it's awesome!

Pat: I've gotta look that up. That's pretty cool. All right, so thank you all for all of those tips. What I'm going to do now is go through the questions that people have left.

The first question here is one from Chris. "Is there anything that you actually say to yourself to stay focused while doing work?"

Dan: "Reddit." [laughter]

Jeremy: Well, one of the things that keeps me really motivated is I know why I'm doing this, and what kind of outcomes I want from doing this, so long term goals, this kind of stuff. There are definitely times when I've got to do some technical stuff that I've said I'm going to do, and it's just something I need to do that day, or we have to



hurry and we can't give it to our VAs, and anytime I'm doing work that I don't particularly like, I was going to give it its own special name, but I definitely think through what it is I'm doing this for. Not only to be able to make money and stuff, but to reach people. That's the kind of stuff that I try and inspire myself with any time something gets in the way of my just doing tasks I need to do.

Pat: I actually have a framed sheet of paper above my computer that I look at any time I feel like I'm just drifting away. It's the tenets or principles of a book, [*Secrets of the Millionaire Mind*](#) by T. Harv Eker. There's a number of different things here, but one of them that I really like to look at, up at the very top, says "My inner world creates my outer world." How I feel on the inside is going to transpire into what happens to me in my life.

That's particularly important when I feel like something I'm doing is not really going the way I want it to, or I'm in a bad mood, I really need to get my mood into shape and then, as a result my output is going to be that much better.

I actually have quotes from that book right in front of me. I'm looking at them right now. One of them is "I create the exact level of my financial success," which I think is a good one.

Ian(?): For me, it's more about what I DON'T say to myself. I used to get onto myself about productivity, especially focus, because I've been this hyperactive kid. Ever since I was a little kid I was really hyperactive, and it's really hard to stay focused on anything.

I used to beat myself up about it. But now it's more of, I just remind myself to just get refocused and instead of saying all of those bad things I'd say about myself "Oh, you're not getting anything done, you're not focusing." I remove those kind of words from me.

Pat: I think that's a great point. That's a great way to go about it too.

Jeremy: I find not saying "I should be at the beach right now" helps, too. Or whatever else I want to do outside of work, you know! I try not to say those things too loudly to myself.

Pat: Here's a good question. Another one from Chris. "If I'm on my own, how much percent of my work time should I spend on answering emails, SEO, social media and content creation?"



And I know that those are--it's hard to get a breakdown of each one of those things, but I want to particularly spend time on answering emails and social media. How much time should we be spending on answering emails and social media? Because I think that's something we all do a lot of, and it seems like it's never-ending. How much time should we be spending answering emails and being on Facebook and Twitter?

Jason: Well, I'll go ahead. I'd refer back to my 2:1 thing as a baseline, first. The two hours of money for every one hour of prep. Email is often prep because it usually brings up brushfires and things that have to be attended to.

There was a post that Tim made on last week's traffic thing. He said "focus on one traffic thing first, and get that really going well for you, and then go ahead and add a couple secondary ones."

I know a lot of people might look at what Pat's doing, and he says "be everywhere" which is absolutely true, but be everywhere one channel at a time--and I think you would agree as well. So if you're trying to do social media AND all of your SEO and a podcast and Pinterest--you're trying to do five things all at once, pick that one that you're going to get established next, apply Jeremy's "just in time" learning, so say if I want YouTube to be my first primary thing, okay, I'm going to dedicate myself into learning YouTube, I'm going to put into action right away everything I learn about YouTube.

I'm ignoring anything that people are saying about Twitter and Facebook and other things right now until it feels like YouTube is just down pat for me and I've got a nice system going and maybe even automated and streamlined and outsource some of that process as well.

Then maybe move onto "Okay, now the next thing. Let's dial in my on-page SEO really well." And once that's done "Okay, let's start a link-building strategy."

Not that you stop YouTube once you move to the next one, but you don't move on from YouTube until YouTube is naturally flowing for you. So for us, it was the podcast first. Once that was naturally flowing, then we started adding the next thing. So that's how I would think about it, rather than going "spend 20 minutes a week on Twitter, two hours a week on YouTube" or whatever the case may be. That's my input on that.

Dan: On focus, especially if you're a solopreneur, one question to ask yourself is, if you have customers or listeners or readers, why aren't they telling their family about it? Why aren't they selling it for you?



Sometimes when you're having to do a lot of clever thinking about promotion, it means your product's not good enough, or your content's not good enough.

So if we're going to talk about focus, and you're just one person, I think the place to go back to the drawing board and spend the lion's share of your time is in building a product that really delivers for people, or a blog post or a program or a podcast or whatever it is that you do, that where your time should be, ESPECIALLY at the beginning.

If you're spending 80% of your time out there on Pinterest and YouTube and all of this kind of stuff, I think you're hurting your chances. Flip that around and spend 80% of your time focusing your best energy on a product that is going to sell itself, and your customers are going to go out and say "Hey, you HAVE to listen to this" or "You have to get a subscription to this piece of software, it's incredible!" That would be my piece of advice, especially when you're just getting started.

Pat: Absolutely. We live in a time like no other time where when you DO create a product that's awesome or a post that's amazing or some type of thing that people consume that's amazing, we live in a time where that's going to be self-shared. It's going to be self-propelled. That didn't happen as much before, but now with all the tools out there, if people like it, they're going to go share it. They want to feel empowered and share it with their followers and friends and family, like they're doing THEM a favor by sharing what you have to offer. Unless you have something good to offer, then that's definitely not going to happen.

Ian: There's a whole book about it called [Purple Cow](#) by Seth Godin. It's about baking that idea into your business concept or your content. It's worth taking a look at.

Pat: I love *Purple Cow*! We have some other comments sharing that there are people who are loving Evernote, thanks. A couple other tools that people are sharing. [Flipboard](#) as a feed reader when he finds something that's really useful, or he can implement later, he uses [GetPocket](#). That way he can filter all of the great content and save the decent ones until later.

Thank you for that tip, Andy. It's similar to our little Evernote tip that we were sharing earlier.

Carol has some interesting stuff going on. I want to share this personal tip with you guys really quick. She says "I have a full time job, an online store, and a campus where I teach for money." She had to make herself a schedule. "I work on my online store on



the weeknights and on campus on weekends, and that's the best way to make sure that one thing doesn't get forgotten and things stay balanced. I also use a to-do list every week for both businesses and it's always nice to see things being checked off the list."

There's a couple of important things that I want to touch on here. The importance of a schedule. I know as entrepreneurs we're trying to break away from the 9-to-5, but I still think it's important to have some sort of schedule and structure to make sure that you're doing the things that you need to be doing when you need to be doing them.

The second point is that some type of list that you can check off, psychologically for me at least, and I want to know if you guys agree, is that when I see a list and I start to check things off, it makes me feel so good that I can see that I'm making progress. Do you guys feel the same way?

Jeremy: I need that, for sure. I need to be able to check stuff off. Actually, Jason and I, we do schedule things. But the great thing about this business is, it schedules around our life. We design our lifestyle and then schedule our business at times that work for our life. Certainly yet another upside of Internet business.

But being able to schedule is something that really helped us propel things. Sometimes if I just wake up go "Okay, there's a couple things I got to do" and then it'll be night, and I was like "Oh! I forgot to do those things" because even with the laser-like focus, sometimes you get derailed.

So being able to just go "for this two hours, everything's going off and I'm working on this one thing and then I can come back and be a little bit more random or a little bit more off the top of my head if I need to be." It was very useful to have that schedule, too. So I'm like you Pat, with both of those.

Pat: This is a question for Pat--that's me--from Andy. "How do you ensure you get 3+ post per week with such in-depth quality?"

First of all, thank you for saying that my posts are in-depth quality. I appreciate that. Really, though, it's the difference between forcing a post out, and just making it happen and flow from my head. I used to force myself to write three posts a week, because I wanted to stay consistent and be on that schedule, and I think that's important, to be consistent, but it's also important to produce good stuff.

For a while I was just posting stuff just to make sure to stay on schedule, and what happened is, I started getting people emailing me saying, "Hey, I can see you're kind of



slipping on the quality, I'd rather see you post one time a week and make it awesome than three times a week and make nothing awesome."

But what's been helping me lately is just being REALLY excited about the content that I'm posting. I think that's how we should all be. We should all be excited about the stuff we're publishing that other people consume.

For me, it's just...if you go back in the blog, you'll see that a lot of what I've been posting lately is just stuff that's been happening in my life, and my businesses. That makes it really easy to post. That makes it really interesting and in-depth because I know all about it. I don't have to do research because it's my stuff, and it's exciting to write, so it flows really fast and I can crank out a good thousand to 1500 word post in 2-3 hours which, if I was trying to force one out, trying to make something up or take a different angle on something that I have to learn, then it'd take a lot longer. I think people appreciate the real-life stuff, too.

Pat: Here's a question for Jeremy from Jeff. "Jeremy, how did you get from dreaming to inspired action when you first started? I'm having trouble getting out of "dream and planning" mode and getting into actionable steps."

Jeremy: Wow, honestly, trying to figure out what the next step is, was a big hurdle as well. But once I knew...again, I had my "why" and what I wanted to do with thing, and that was one of the big things that pushed me forward.

One thing that I did that we certainly don't usually suggest because it can seem pretty dangerous is, I actually quit my job before I even knew what I was going to do. For me, that ended up being incredible motivating, to go "Okay, I said I was going to go do this thing, and I did it."

It's like a combination of multiple things that I had to do it or the house was going to be taken away and the wife would leave--I don't know! There were things pressing on that side of it, but then I also was really big on defining WHY I was doing it and what my ambitions were going toward. Knowing that, every little thing, no matter how little it was, was just one step closer to those things that I wanted. And that's really how I personally did it.

Dan: One huge productivity elephant in the room that you just mentioned, Jeremy, that hasn't been brought up yet, which is external pressure. Nothing is going to push you to succeed like having to! I quit my job WAY, way too early in the game too



because I was obsessed with this idea of Internet business, and I was like "I gotta do it!" And when I quit my job, I NEEDED to do it. Otherwise, it would've been bad.

We talk about that with making sure that you have an accountability partner and you're getting on the phone with that partner every Friday night and talking about what you did that week. If that means publishing it on your blog...although I don't know, I'm a little bit iffy about accountability posts on blogs. I think that make you good at accountability posts, not necessarily on doing the work that you got to do.

But one of the things that really helps with external pressure is getting clients. Get clients, start issuing invoices on day one. Your clients will push you to get work done and to deliver for them. That's a great way to make sure that you're being held accountable.

You know, Ian and I, we have to wake up in the morning or else our customers are going to be pissed. So we've got to deliver.

Ian: Yeah, it's interesting that a few of us on the call, at least, quit our jobs in what we would say a "too early" stage. I know that I definitely did as well, and I think it's very hard to have the duality of "you got to go to work and then you got to work on your business at night and grow it." I think some people have been successful at that, and I really admire that because it's very hard for me to do.

Pat: I know when I got laid off, I was pushed out of my job and that was a ton of motivation for me. I couldn't do anything BUT be productive, or else things wouldn't have worked out.

Jeremy: For me, looking over at my wife and two daughters with the big "doe eyes" going "We would like to eat tomorrow!" That was most certainly a help as well. It's also one of those things of doing whatever it takes, too, because one of the other tips I was debating to do was the "information diet" which is kind of like the "just in time learning."

But I'll tell you when I started 12 hour days were my short days. I was SO excited about this. I was just doing it all the time and I was going "Okay, what television shows, what different things that I do that I can take a break on for a few months while I get this stuff started?" And I basically did an information diet, even an entertainment diet, at first knowing full well that once I got through it and got things started and really got the ball rolling, I can start introducing these things back in. But I was pretty



crazy right at the first, especially, because I just wanted it SO bad.

I read the *Rich Dad Poor Dad* books and I was thinking to myself "if anybody can do it, I guess I should be able to do it, too! Other people have done this!" And I just wanted it so bad.

I guess that's one of the other things. I just believed this would work so, so much that even if it didn't, I was going to MAKE it work. Even if all of the people that were saying "Oh, the Internet business and information products are so great," even if they were ALL lying, I was going to make it happen because I was so tired of sitting in a cubicle working and just doing what other people said. That was just another part of my mindset shift.

Pat: Awesome. We have a lot of questions here, and it seems like we're coming up to the hour already, wow. So we won't be able to get to ALL of them, but I do want to get to a few more before we finish up. A few people were asking about this: Analytics. Is keeping track of your analytics a waste of time, even though it helps you understand where your readers are, how much traffic you're getting?

I know for me at least, I kind of have this addiction to checking my stats all the time. I had to actually consciously cut off analytics and get [Clicky](#) for a while because I was on it so much. It's just so interesting to me to see who's on my site and what they're doing and where they're going, how much time they're spending, where are they coming from, even down to what their screen resolution is. Things like that!

What do you guys think, is that a waste? It's really easy to get addicted to that. To what point does it become a waste of time?

Jason: Well, there's this concept I have called "just in time analytics" that I like to...[laughter]

Tim: It's really determined by whether or not you get any real productivity out of it. If you're sitting around looking at your analytics and just being vain about it like "Oh wow! We got these people on here!" and you're using it as entertainment, then it's definitely a waste of time.

But if you go in there, and you're actually setting goals and you see that you've made a goal or you've missed a goal, you're checking, you're split testing, you're doing those kind of things? Then analytics are helping you out. But for the most part, people are



just going and looking at them for entertainment purposes only.

Jeremy: Well, Jason and I look at ours once a week. We have one of our virtual assistants go gather all of these certain numbers, and we look at them together more with the idea of "What can we do to up this?" and "This one's going down a little bit, what can we do?" or "This one's shooting way up! This is awesome! The thing that we've planned six months ago is really taking off, finally."

We try to do it like that because it can be incredibly addictive, I know.

Jason: We try not to look at those and get into a brushfire mode right away. If we see something going down, we go "Okay, what might be going on there? Let's watch it next week." Obviously, if a key metric is going down a couple weeks, two or three weeks in a row, and it looks like a trend, and it's an important one like sales then clearly we need to look into it and ask "Why is this happening?"

But I totally adhere to what Tim said. It needs to be analytics for productivity's sake. I would only be checking the ones that really have to do with what...I mean, set them up! We obviously set up Google Analytics right away so it's there and running for you, set up your web forms in [AWeber](#) to track so it's running for you so when you do need to go look that information is there, but I've got analytics that we set up that I haven't looked at for over a year, probably, because it hasn't been relevant to what I'm doing right now.

The ones we look at every week are things like "How many new opt-ins? How many new sales? How are we doing retaining our customers?" Those key metrics that you need to have to have the pulse of the health of your business.

Dan: It's a fascinating process to choose what those metrics are. We do the same thing you guys do. We have employees deliver us with reports every Friday afternoon and for each segment of our business we've selected only two or three "KPIs"--progress indications of where we're at in the business. It's kind of interesting to see that a big operation can be summed up in only one or two numbers. If you continue to focus on those two numbers...

Now, I'm not going to be a hypocrite I say I don't love looking at analytics. That's replaced my TV watching time, you know?

If anything, it's sort of like a more entertaining distraction, a piece of entertainment,



but definitely I don't get a ton of value out of it.

Pat: Charlene says "Timers are a great tip for focus. Set timers for blocks of time." I think that's a great idea. When you put a timer on and you say you're going to do something in that certain time, that timer's a great reminder when you keep looking at it that that's what you should be doing at that time.

I've done this before, when the timer goes off then you make sure you take a break or go have a glass of water or go on a walk or something. So I think timers are good, too.

Again, like we were all saying earlier, everyone has their different style and it's going to take some experimentation to see what works best for you. But I think we've gotten some great tips.

There's one last question I want to ask, and I want to go down the line and get everybody's quick answer. If you had an hour a day to spend on your business, what would you do in that hour?

Let's start with Tim. How about you? If you only had an hour a day to work on your business, what exactly would you be spending it on?

Tim: Money! Making money. That's the main thing to be doing in a business anyways. So for me, I'm in an information product business, so the thing that makes the most money for me is actually getting product into customer's hands. So the main thing is working on sales and customer service.

Pat: Perfect. Jeremy?

Jeremy: I think ours would be traffic and conversion. Traffic for us can be a blog post or a Facebook post or whatever. Whatever is drawing people to our sales funnel--it still comes down to the sales, but it's all of the different ways of getting people to that sales funnel.

Pat: Jason?

Jason: For somebody who's in the beginning phases of your business, the best thing you can do is get to that first sale, and in order to do that, identify your audience. I'd spend that hour a day just tapping into that mind of the audience. Whether it's hanging out on forums online, going to meet-ups in your town, looking at the questions people



are asking on [Yahoo! Answers](#) and [Quora](#) and these other sites. Whatever you can do to get inside the mind of that avatar, that market, that group of people that you want to help most and do your best work with is going to help you get to that first sale, because if you are completely in tune with their pains and their passions, then it's going to be readily apparent to you what you should do to solve those problems for them in the form of products in whatever form that you choose.

So, I think that's a good tip for somebody early on. Spend that time getting inside the mind of your audience and your avatar and getting to that first sale.

Pat: Absolutely. Ian?

Ian: If I had just one hour a day, I think I would probably just focus on--and this is for people with teams--I would just focus on the only thing that I can do. So I got a lot of other people around me that are helping work on our business, but there's certain things that only I can do in our business. If I have an hour, I'm just going to work on THOSE things because only I can do it.

Pat: That makes sense. How about you, Dan?

Dan: If I could only spend an hour a day, which oftentimes I do, I would create a documentation or writing that creates culture in our business. Generally for me, that would boil down to writing, but to me culture is--a great book on this is Tony Hsieh's book about Zappos.

Culture is direction that scales. If you find yourself having to spend too much time managing your employees or managing your VAs, I think that means you don't have a strong enough culture.

Every morning I feel like because Ian and I have focused a lot of our energy on building out culture in our business, we've got 13 people waking up too thinking about what they can do for our business and I don't have to send them emails. I think that's a way to think about productivity that really scales.

Pat: I love that, too. Lastly, for me, it would just be creating. Create something that's out there and gets posted and becomes a seed that could potentially grab new audiences or become a potential affiliate income, or potential relationship, or anything. Just create something and put it out there for people to see, whether that's a blog post, a podcast, or a YouTube video or a Kindle book, whatever.



I'm sorry we weren't able to get to everybody's questions, it was just a few more left, but we are at the end of the call now. Thank you all so much for coming.

If you have your own productivity tip that you'd like to share, you can go ahead and go to <http://SummerMarketingMashup.com/focus> and go ahead in the Facebook comments there add your own tip and contribute to the community and share what's been working for you. I'm sure, like we all said we have different styles, but we're picking up on a lot of other things from other people. That's how I learned, I learned a lot of stuff that I know from Internet Business Mastery, and a lot of their productivity tips have been applied to my business too.

So thank you all so much for coming in. Thank you guys so much for listening in, if you're listening to this on a recording, again summermarketingmashup.com. In the future, if we're doing four calls here, the next one's going to be next week. You're welcome to join us then. If it's already recorded, then you can go over to that link and listen to the recording instead of watching it live. It's going to be awesome either way for you.

Jason: The topic next week is creating your product!

Pat: Mm, nice. So thank you Dan, Ian, Jeremy, Jason, Tim for being here and we'll see you guys next week at the same time. Everyone on the call, thank you so much, and we'll see you here next week as well.

Pat: All right! I hope you guys enjoyed that Summer Marketing Mashup session #2. I know I did! If there's one extra tip I can give you for being productive, it's actually-- learning is great, but nothing will happen unless you take what you learn and take action with it. Actually go and do something! So that's what I'm going to leave you with today.

For the show notes, make sure to check out <http://smartpassiveincome.com/session43>. Get stuff done! Take care and I'll see you in the next podcast session.