



**SPI Podcast Session #77 –
From Nothing to 5-Figures Per Month in Less than a Year
with John Lee Dumas of Entrepreneur on Fire**

show notes at: <http://www.smartpassiveincome.com/session77>

Pat Flynn: This is The Smart Passive Income Podcast with Pat Flynn Session #77.

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 listens to remix pop music when he runs, Pat Flynn.

Pat Flynn: Hey, what's up everybody? This is Pat Flynn and welcome session 77 of The Smart Passive Income Podcast. I am so, so thankful that you're here whether you're a first-time listener, welcome to the show or a long-time listener, welcome back. I just – I love you so much. I appreciate you taking time out of your day to listen to me and to also listen to the incredible guests we have on the show, which I'm really, really excited about.

But before I get to that, you might be able to hear it in my voice. I am just in such a good mood right now and it's not only because you're here and not only because I'm recording a podcast, which I love to do but because I just published my [July monthly income report](#) for 2013. And the numbers just blew me away. These income reports are a great opportunity for me sort of mid-year to calculate everything and see how my business is running and really get a good snapshot of how the business is going.

And in July 2013, I grossed over 6 figures, \$116,000 and the net income for July of 2013 was \$99,000 after expenses. And it just, like I said, completely blows my mind especially when I think about just five years ago I was still in a job in architecture. I had just lost my job and took off from that to this now. It's just incredible. And honestly, I have no one to thank but you for that. All the inspiration you've given me, those of you listening, you are so amazing. The fact that I can produce this content and share it for free like you're on the podcast, on the blog, and I'm getting paid back for it.

I mean part of the reason for the big jump in income in July was because of the recent release of my course, Breakthrough Blogging, which you can find at BreakthroughBlogging.com. Enrollment is currently closed but it's opening up later this year. But that just launched in July and it did really well.

The response has been amazing and that's why there's a sudden jump in income. And I'm just so thankful for it and so blessed and it just provides me a lot – even more motivation than I already had to keep pushing forward, keep providing content to you. And I'm not stopping at all.



Don't worry I'm not going to be bombarding you with pitch after pitch for that product in the future. But I am going to keep doing what I've been doing ever since the beginning and that is focusing on you and serving you because the one thing I learned and this is the business model that I currently practice and teach is that the better you can serve your audience and the more you can do that, the more rewards will come back your way. And I'm trying to be an example of that to you.

And so with that said, again, thank you for everything but with all that said, let's get to today's content, and today's special guest. His name is John Lee Dumas. You've probably heard of him before. If you haven't, he has a one of the hottest podcasts out there right now, one of the hottest, probably fastest growing brands I've seen in a while called Entrepreneur on Fire. You can find him on EntrepreneuronFire.com.

And it's incredible, he, a year ago had no brand, just an idea. And now, he has a podcast, a top-rated business podcast, 300,000 downloads a month making five figures a month and he's also pretty crazy and you'll see why when we talk about it. But he's crazy because he had this idea, it was shut down by experts who said that this wasn't going to work, he did it and it's working and it's incredible. And it's a great example – John is a great example of someone who takes action and he has an idea or was told to implement something and he does it and he does it really well and he creates his systems and you'll hear a little about his Army background and how that's helped him and things like that.

But you know what? I'm just going to go right into the interview that is so inspiring. I just completed the interview and I wanted to edit it right away because I was so stoked about it and I wanted to get it out to you as soon as possible. And the cool thing is today, the day I launched this podcast or release this podcast episode 77, John just came out with his 300th episode. He's doing an episode a day. So we're going to talk about productivity and systems and batch processing and all that stuff that helped him get to where he's at so we can help you get to where you want to go to. So let's all welcome our good friend, John Lee Dumas from EntrepreneuronFire.com.

All right. What's up everybody? I'm so happy to welcome my good friend and colleague, John Dumas from Entrepreneur on Fire. John, what's up man? How's it going?

John Lee Dumas: Pat, I'm stoked to be here. Everything is going great.

Pat Flynn: I have to just congratulate you just upfront because I believe that the day that this episode is going to go live, your 300th podcast episode will go live. And I just have to congratulate you on everything you've done in such a short time period. It's just really inspiring. You've come sort of out of nowhere and just blown everybody away and are seeing amazing success which we're going to talk about today. So dude, congratulations.



John Lee Dumas: 300 Pat. Thank you. I am so excited.

Pat Flynn: And who was number one? Who was the first person you interviewed?

John Lee Dumas: Pat Flynn was my first episode, guys. Check it out, EOFire.com/PatFlynn. I'm not good but he's great.

Pat Flynn: No, you were good, dude. And it's funny. We're going to talk about this. I mean you've done 300 episodes in 300 days about and you've obviously improved. And we're going to talk about some of the things you learned from when you first started to what you're doing now. We're going to talk about monetization. We're going to talk about how in the heck are you doing a podcast a day which is what you are sort of known for and you're just blowing everybody out of the park.

So before we get into all that stuff and all the juicy strategies and things like that, why don't you just tell us before Entrepreneur on Fire started, what were you doing before and how did you sort of come up with the idea for Entrepreneur on Fire?

John Lee Dumas: Yes. So basically my real quick history is after I graduated college, it was on a ROTC scholarship so I spent four years as an active duty officer and then four years in the reserve so that pretty much took up a lot of my 20s. And then when I left that, I was actually a real estate guy both in commercial and residential so I was in the car all the time, Pat, driving here, driving there, and that's when I fell in love with podcasts.

And I started with the big boys like the Dave Ramseys and the Wall Street Journals but then I started finding the Mixergys and the Smart Passive Incomes and those are the ones I really fell in love with because it was just people like you, just people like myself who are coming out with incredible content.

But back then Pat, you're kicking out amazing podcast but only once every two weeks so I kept running out of content. So one day, driving to work, stuck in traffic, I ran out of my last podcast and I hit the wall and I said, "You know what? There's a niche that needs to be filled and there needs to be a seven-day a week podcast. I'm going to be that person."

Pat Flynn: That is so crazy. I mean when you came up with that idea, weren't there thoughts going across your head like this is a crazy idea like this is going to be a lot of work? What made you believe that this could work?

John Lee Dumas: It wasn't just me too, Pat that was thinking that because I was thinking it was crazy and I went out and hired Jaime Tardy who was my mentor and my coach for the first three months of this venture and she was telling it was crazy. I joined Cliff Ravenscraft's podcast mastermind and Cliff told me that it was crazy as well as everybody else in the mastermind.



So I had all of these people who I admired and respected telling me that it couldn't be done but deep down, I knew that I could apply some great work ethic and be that and have that unique selling proposition that really identified me as something different. It was just going to take that hard work. So I set the systems up. I really focused on that batch mentality and I was able to make it happen.

Pat Flynn: That's awesome. And we love Jaime Tardy from EventualMillionaire.com. We also love Cliff Ravenscraft from PodcastAnswerMan.com. It's really interesting that these experts in podcasting, people who have been doing podcasting for a very long time now, told you, "Don't do it." or "This is going to be crazy." or "It's not going to be done." I mean how does that feel to have that kind of advice from somebody who is an expert versus what you really feel like you should be doing?

John Lee Dumas: I think that's where a lot of entrepreneurs really need to listen to their gut and keep those blinders on when they really believe in something strongly. But at the same time, continue to take advice and to seek it out from those mentors and peers around you because Pat, there was a ton of great advice from Jaime and Cliff that I did implement directly into Entrepreneur on Fire and it made it a great podcast from very early on.

But on that one thing, I was not going to budge. Cliff said, "John, people will not listen to a seven-day podcast." And Jaime said, "John, you're not going to be able to physically produce a seven-day podcast." But you know what? I knew that there were people out there like me, Pat, who are driving to work five days a week, who are going to the gym three to five days a week looking for more quality, more quantity so that's why I made the podcast for.

John Lee Dumas: Yeah, that's so awesome. And you know what? You've done now 300 episodes in 300 days and you just surpassed how many downloads last month?

John Lee Dumas: July was 308,000 downloads.

Pat Flynn: That is ridiculous. That is so awesome, John. I mean this is so cool. OK. So when you have this idea and you got this advice from Cliff and Jaime and you're like, "You know what? I'm just going to do it." What were your first steps? How did you first proceed into what you do now?

John Lee Dumas: So the best thing that I did do was hire Jaime Tardy as a mentor, as a coach because her first step for me was to go to Blog World 2012, New York City in June. She took me down there. I had no idea that this world existed that people like Derek Halpern, David Risley were making livings from what they were doing online. And so, my eyes were opened and because Jaime was a speaker, I got to go to the speakers' parties and that's where I got to shake your hand, Pat and Adam Baker and chat with you and him and Derek Halpern and shared with you guys what I was doing



because I was friends with Jaime Tardy so I was able to become semi-friends with you guys. And I told you about Entrepreneur on Fire. I got the verbal yeses from a few of you.

So when I got back to my little studio up in Maine, I could use that social proof from that first experience at that conference to continue to go forward. And I set up 40 interviews that summer from my launch date of September 28th.

Pat Flynn: So September 28th was your launch date. When did you actually start doing the interviews?

John Lee Dumas: I started doing the interviews August of 2012.

Pat Flynn: OK. So you gave yourself a little bit of time. Now, there are some really important things that you mentioned there that I think that everybody should pay attention to.

If you want a quick start your business, if you want to put yourself in the world that you're trying to get into, whatever niche you're trying to get into, I mean you physically did that. You went to Blog World and put yourself in that world and luckily, you had that connection with Jaime which I don't think that was really luck. I think that was very smart of you use that connection and meet people like myself and David and Adam and Derek and everybody else. I mean the relationships that you have in business are everything and you had a very important vital relationship there right from the beginning.

What – I mean you've done 300 interviews now, how many of the people you've interviewed and also based on your experience have said that relationships are important?

John Lee Dumas: It's over 300. I mean literally, it's every single person that I've interviewed always traces back their success to their connections, to their network, to relationships they built. It's that Six Degrees of Separation. I mean literally, I can probably trace every interview that I've ever done six degrees back to my mentor, Jaime Tardy, probably three degrees and it's just like that small of a world. Once you get out and really start interacting and once you put yourself out there and start making those connections and those friendships.

Pat Flynn: Yeah, that's really important. And also, just getting uncomfortable a little bit. I mean how was it – I mean I don't know what kind of person you were before you went to this conference. But were you somebody who was just always down to meet new people and kind of extend your hand and introduce yourself to others who you never met before or were you like me when I first started and went to my first conference and I just kind of just sat in the corner and watched everybody?



John Lee Dumas: I was definitely that person who loved meeting people and loved socializing. But I will say with that caveat is that I had just sat in this crowded room seeing you on stage, Pat, commanded the room and then David Risley and then Derek Halpern and hearing what you guys are doing. So I was definitely in slight awe of you guys at the same time.

So it wasn't just like I was meeting some random friend of a friend. It was like I just am meeting this person who was on stage, who was presenting to a room full of captivated people who were hanging on to his every word. And now I have him one-on-one, I really better make this count.

So it was on that roof deck overlooking Madison Square Garden. I can remember it very clearly. It was a beautiful night. That's when I first met you guys and saw that you know what, these guys are just people like myself. They're just really cool, genuine down to earth people and I'm going to really enjoy having conversations with them not only now but on a podcast wherein I can share with the world their journeys.

Pat Flynn: Yeah. I mean I remember when we first met and I think it's really important because I remember when I first met a lot of people who I looked up to when I first started and it was surprising to me how they're just like me. They're just regular people. They just happen to have a little bit more experience in doing what it is that I eventually wanted to do. And so, it's really good that you connected with those people, you built those relationships, and you've really hung on to those friendships. And I'm sure that's how you've been able to amass 300 plus interviews now, like you said with that Six Degrees of Separation based off of the relationships that you've created.

So for those of you out there listening, the key big lesson here is you have to go out and meet people and there's no reason to be afraid to do that. And really, what's the worst thing that can happen when you approach somebody to potentially do an interview or just talk to or get advice from? The worst thing that can happen really is that they're just going to say no. And I don't know, John, how many times people have said no to you for interviews but I'm sure there's been a few. And you know what? You still have been able to just crush it.

John Lee Dumas: There definitely have been a few, Pat. And I will say this, some of those people have even come back afterwards and said, "You know what? That just wasn't the right time for me. I was going on vacation. I had a lot going on. I had a book deal." And then they came back when the time was right for them and that's totally great. That's definitely how it works. So go for that no. If you're not getting any no's, Pat, then you're not pushing the envelope. You're not getting out of your comfort zone and that's really what I continued to do.

Seth Godin said no to me four times and then I randomly emailed him on a Thursday and he emailed back within 20 seconds and said, "How about tomorrow at 1PM?" Well,



you better believe I cancelled my dentist appointment that tomorrow at 1PM and Seth Godin and I had that interview.

Pat Flynn: Yeah, your teeth can wait for Seth Godin.

John Lee Dumas: Take a couple of more cavities, please.

Pat Flynn: OK. So, I've been dying to ask you this question. Like you said earlier, I was only able to produce a podcast once every two weeks at first. And lately, I've been doing it once a week. And I've noticed and I know this, it's hard work. It's a lot of hard work to put up a podcast and have it be valuable and also, connect with other people for interviews and schedule those. I mean how are you able to do one episode a day because I don't think I would be able to do that? What's your secret?

John Lee Dumas: So Pat, I do trace some of these back to my Army days because as an army officer, we did learn very quickly that time will expand or that task will expand to the time that you allot them to. And I also believe that like a Parkinson's Law where if you give yourself four hours to do something, it will take four hours. But for me, from the very beginning I'm like, "I am going to have a batching technique. I'm going to utilize this."

And so, every single Monday, I'm going to have eight interviews scheduled on the hour, every single hour and I'm just going to go back to back to back and this is going to be a very long day and emotionally draining and there's going to be a lot else that gets put in the back burner. But at the end of that Monday, I'm going to be done for the week. And so these Mondays, Pat, have continued since I started Entrepreneur on Fire. Every single Monday, I am putting in these really crazy hours, usually about 16 hours total including edit. But by the end of that day and specifically when I wake up Tuesday morning, my week is my oyster. Literally, I can run Entrepreneur on Fire on one day a week.

Now, I am busting my hump the other five plus days a week that I'm working for sure on everything else of the business but just the interviews alone, I get all of them done, edited, uploaded to Libsyn on Mondays.

Pat Flynn: That's awesome. So you're basically putting in the hard work on Mondays so you could reap the benefits of the rest of the week.

John Lee Dumas: It's all about the passivity, Pat.

Pat Flynn: Yeah, the passivity. No, but I mean batching is such an important strategy and the first time I heard about this was when I was reading the *4-Hour Workweek*, which is of course, all about productivity and efficiency and things like that. And it was based off of Tim's experience with emails and taking specific timeslots during the day to specifically just answer emails.



And that has been a huge productivity tip for me and I think this is sort of another even greater example of how batch processing and batch creation can work for you. And you know going into Monday, I'm sure, that that's your day to do the interviews and you're in interview mode and that's when everything gets scheduled so it's a lot easier.

I know a lot of other people who do consultations and they only do them on certain days of the week as opposed to just randomly. And it probably makes your life a lot more organized. And so, I have to ask. When you're not doing interviews, what are you – on Tuesday through Sunday, what are you doing?

John Lee Dumas: So, I am running every other aspect of Entrepreneur on Fire to make it as viable of a brand and as known of a brand as I possibly can. So I am on social media, every one that you can name, really just continuing to post content and to give high-quality interviews. I'm actually being interviewed on other people's shows in average of six times a week and I batch all of those on Thursdays.

So every Thursday, my schedule looks back to back for 6 hours of being interviewed on other people's shows. So that's continuing to just kind of give back in a way, pay it for because people like yourself, Pat, who agreed to be on my show before I was anything, I love when people reach out to me and say, "John, will you be my first interview?"

I am honored by that and I can never say no. So I am forever scheduling those on my Thursday interview days. I've written a book. I am creating products. I have created a membership mastermind that now has over 80 people that takes a lot of time and management as well. We do webinars for that.

So, let me tell you, I have a RescueTime app and it's very rare that my RescueTime app is under 70 hours a week for actual on the computer action.

Pat Flynn: OK. So you are putting a lot of work into this.

John Lee Dumas: A ton.

Pat Flynn: But what are you getting back from it?

John Lee Dumas: Well, I will say, I'm getting a lot back from it. Personally, I'm getting freedom and by the word freedom, I mean freedom to do what I want to do. And that's exactly what Entrepreneur on Fire is. I created a business of things that I love to do and things that I enjoy, that's talking to incredible entrepreneurs that's sharing their message and their journey, that's inspiring literally hundreds of thousands of people around the world with their journey to take their leap or at least to start down that path whatever that maybe.



And to me, that's incredibly rewarding and I knew that it wasn't going to be an immediate monetization. I knew that it wasn't going to launch on September 28th and then start bringing money to the bank October 15th. Like I knew there was going to be some time that I had to put in of just creating a lot of value before I start seeing things in the back end. And for me, Pat, it was about five months of just constant content creation and constant giving of high-quality value before I really started seeing monetization.

Pat Flynn: Right. And then speaking of monetization, you said – you mentioned you wrote a book, you are creating products, you have the mastermind webinar thing, and I think you're also doing sponsorships, is that correct?

John Lee Dumas: Yes, absolutely. So for sponsorships, to start off with that, I pretty much hit my critical mass that Seth Godin talks about back in March of 2013. That's when I was generating over 200,000 downloads per month. I started being approached by sponsors, by Audible, by LegalZoom, by Squarespace, by 99designs. They wanted to be on Entrepreneur on Fire or they wanted to sponsor the episodes to speak to my guests who are all entrepreneurs, wantpreneurs, and small business owners. And I definitely resisted at first because I wanted it to get to certain price point before I diluted my podcast to bring sponsors on because I do believe that sponsors do dilute the podcast.

Now, if you bring the right sponsor on, I believe they dilute it less because Audible, 99designs, LegalZoom, they're all of great value for entrepreneurs at certain levels but I still wanted it to be worthwhile for me. So, it wasn't until I really hit the \$500 per episode mark that I started bringing sponsors on and that meaning that I was bringing in an income of \$500 per episode by having two sponsors on my show per episode.

Pat Flynn: OK. So, you were making \$500 per episode so that's basically \$500 per day.

John Lee Dumas: Yes, because there's 30 a week, yeah. I mean, a month.

Pat Flynn: Wow! That's awesome. When was your first sort of taste of monetization? When did that come into play?

John Lee Dumas: So the first real taste of monetization probably was April 1st is when I really started that sponsorships and that monetization. So a month after that is when I started really getting the big checks from the sponsors, that five-figure monthly income started rolling in at that point. And that was for the sponsorships. And so, that's been a very consistent, very steady stream of monetization that's only continued to grow, Pat, because they pay per download. And so, when I was getting 200,000 downloads, I was at the \$500 per podcast.



But now, I'm at 300,000 downloads per month so that's about a 65% increase that I'm now generating for every single podcast. So that is continuously increasing the monetization that I'm bringing in from the sponsorships.

But there are definitely many other things that I'm currently doing right now to continue to open up different income streams because one thing that you talked about that I'm a big believer in is to diversifying, not just relying on one income stream because as entrepreneurs, we all know that that can be gone in any second.

Pat Flynn: Right, right, exactly. I mean I was just talking about this in my July income report and the recent release of Breakthrough Blogging and how important it was for me as a business owner to have a business model that I can take control of because yes, I'm making good amount of money through affiliate marketing like how you're making good money through sponsorships and I want to dig a little bit deeper into sponsorships really quick before we move on but at any moment in time, any of those companies, any of those affiliate relationships could go away and that income would be gone in an instant. So it's really important to create something for yourself too. And I know you're doing that.

But going back to sponsorships really quick, how are these sponsors advertising through your brand? Are they – like do they have commercials on your show, are they just mentioned in your post, or how long are the spots on your show if there are spots on your show?

John Lee Dumas: So, another reason why I did agree to go with the sponsorship route because I really do love the approach that sponsors take because these are very savvy, smart companies. They understand what converts and they know that coming on and having some random advertisement or random commercial on a podcast is going to be tuned out like any other advertising that we currently tune out on TV, on the radio, et cetera.

So they come to you and they literally say, "Pat, we just want to give you talking points. Here are 15 talking points. You can use them in any way that you want." And basically, what my team here does is we take those talking points. We craft them into my own personality and then for 15 seconds at the top of the show, it's called a pre-roll, we do that sponsorship slot. And then for 60 seconds during the middle of the episode, we do what's called a mid-roll and that's where for 60 seconds, I'll be talking about that slot.

So it's in your own voice, it's in your own personality. It's you talking to your audience and they know that your audience is going to respond much better to someone they know, like, and trust and that's the host. So for me, I have these sponsorship slots, they go very naturally with the podcast because it's just me saying how I use Audible, which books I've recently listened to or how I recently use LegalZoom to form an LLC or how I use 99designs to get a recent logo and how they can get \$99 off of their next design if they go to 99designs.com/fire.



So I'm actually giving the listeners some pretty solid value if they do want to get a logo or a banner for their site. And it's also the company's way of tracking the kind of engagement that they're getting. So it's a win-win when people go through and utilize those different offer codes or landing pages.

Pat Flynn: Right. And I've been approached by sponsorships too and I have my own take on them. And obviously currently, there are no sponsors for The Smart Passive Income Podcast but it is something I have considered and I've talked about on the website before and we'll see where that goes.

But for other people out there listening, John, I mean I've gotten approached by a lot of the same companies that you mentioned, LegalZoom, 99designs, Squarespace and what not but for other people out there who have podcast or who have other shows in different niches, I don't know if they would necessarily be approached like we are since we in the space of savvy business owners who know that this can convert for them, how would you recommend that someone else with a show in a different niche would go and find sponsors if that's something they're interested in?

John Lee Dumas: And this is a great example because I did this actually with Shopify so even in our niche, we can go out and be creative but for anybody else that are in different niches and they are looking for potential sponsors, you know what kind of companies resonate with your brands.

You know what your audience goes to and what they utilize so go to that company's website, scroll to the very bottom, at the very bottom, there's always that contact us, there's that affiliates, there's that partnerships, there's one of those links. You click on those links and that's going to give you the email address of the company, of actually part of that company that deals in those areas and that's who you can start the conversation.

For me, I just tweeted the CEO of Shopify and literally, he tweeted back, "John, here's the email address of the guy you should talk to." Within two days, we had a three-month sponsorship deal. It was really that quick. And that's how people can go out and either go to that website or just go ahead and tweet the CEO, why not?

Pat Flynn: I love that because – and I'm partly asking in a selfish manner for myself too because I am going to be actually doing another podcast for the food truck site that I'm putting up for the Niche Site Duel.

John Lee Dumas: Cool.

Pat Flynn: It just makes complete sense that business owners who have food trucks, they are going to want to hear from other food trucks and they might be on the road and doing other things where they might be able to take in information through a



podcast. And one of the things I'm interested in is monetization through sponsorships for food trucks.

And there are so many vendors and other companies who deliver products and offer services for food truck owners so I'm really interested in how that's going to go and I'm going to definitely take that advice. And a lot of food truck owners I've learned are really savvy or use Twitter quite a bit. So I'm definitely going to take that route. And once the site is up, once the podcast is rolling, I'm definitely going to take that advice from you. So thank you for that.

John Lee Dumas: Yeah, rocking.

Pat Flynn: Now, you said that you work with a team. Can you describe your team and what they do for you?

John Lee Dumas: Yeah. So my team has – since I started, I started day one with two virtual assistants. I went through Chris Ducker's [Virtual Staff Finder](#) to get two really incredible virtual assistants from the Philippines who both work 40 hours a week for me and that started literally from day one. They were doing my social media. They were doing design work for me. And they were just doing a lot of great things and allowing me to focus again, on the interviews and the Entrepreneur on Fire content specifically. So ever since day one, that's been my team.

However, I will say and I'm very proud to say that about five months ago, my girlfriend left her job as a very high-level advertising account executive and joined the Fire Nation team as the Director of Content Creation. Pat, you've met her a couple of times.

Pat Flynn: Yes, she's awesome.

John Lee Dumas: Kate, she really is great and she's completely just come into Entrepreneur on Fire and immersed herself and done some amazing things for the company and for Entrepreneur on Fire as a whole. And that's been a real blessing for us on a lot of levels. And so now, our team is four people strong.

Everybody is working very hard and they're very passionate about it and that's really where at right now. We're not even looking – we don't really need to expand at this point. We're not looking to continue to bring on potentially more virtual assistants. We're not there yet. We've found a really good niche at this point.

Pat Flynn: That's awesome. That's – having your girlfriend come on and work with you, I mean that – maybe we can dedicate a whole another episode on that.

John Lee Dumas: Sure.



Pat Flynn: Because – anyway, your VAs, really quick, what type of VAs did you hire? Because I know Chris Ducker does a great job of outlining the different types of VAs and the price points that you might be paying for full-time work for each. So if you don't mind, what kinds of VAs did you hire and how much you're paying them monthly?

John Lee Dumas: Totally. And Pat, I take 100% after your lead with 100% transparency so no question can go unasked, no rock will be unturned.

Pat Flynn: Awesome.

John Lee Dumas: And for me, when I went to Chris Ducker Virtual Staff Finder and I said, "These are the kind of virtual assistants I'm looking for." I was looking for someone that understood social media, that knew how to use Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and to create groups, and things that maybe are kind of basic to certain people but I really was looking for high-end and advanced virtual assistants who had worked with other companies in these manners. So I specified all that stuff out.

And then for the second virtual assistant, I was looking for somebody that did have skills in design like Photoshop, like Adobe Audition for some editing if need be, and some transcription skills. So I was able to get two different sets of three virtual assistants each who I went through all of their resumes and talked to them on Skype and interviewed them. And from each batch of three, I chose one virtual assistant from each of those that fit my needs perfectly and they've been on the team ever since.

Pat Flynn: Awesome. How much are you paying each of them?

John Lee Dumas: \$500 per month each and that's for 40 hours of work.

Pat Flynn: Yeah, and I knew that was going to be the answer or somewhere near there. And the reason I want to bring this up is just because you can leverage so much time for hiring virtual assistants from the Philippines. We've talked about this before. I've had Chris on the show to talk about the benefits of doing that. And it might seem ridiculous that you're only paying \$500 per VA every month when you mentioned that you're getting \$500 per episode, probably more now. But that's just how these different economies work.

And I remember back when I had my Filipino VAs and they did excellent work for me. I just – unfortunately, the work I hired them for was no longer so I had to let them go. But when I had them on board, they were amazing and I even offered more money because I just felt sort of weird not – it was just like I was paying my developer, Mike, \$800 a month to do a lot of technical stuff, WordPress design, and things like that and I offered him more. And he's like, "No, no, no. I don't want anymore."

And it's just the way the culture works over there. \$800 is actually on the high-end and they don't want to make more money because they don't want to become a target, still



a third-world country and if you're making too much money, you have a bull's eye on you. And it's just really interesting how that whole thing happens. And ...

John Lee Dumas: And I actually had a talk with Chris about this, Chris Ducker specifically, because I really wanted to come in at what was the right number. I wasn't trying to scam because I'm a huge believer in you get what you pay for, and he said, "John, \$350 is really the base that you pay per month." And I said, "Well listen, I'm really looking to go high-quality like I really want the best applicants for these positions. Like what number would it be for these really high-quality applicants?"

And he said, "Listen, \$500 for this level of VA and they're doing social media and design work is really high. They will completely dedicate themselves to you. They will not be having any second jobs. They'll just be working for you 40 hours a week and it will be a life-changer for them. They'll be able to move to a different neighborhood. They'll be able to support their family and then some on this."

And sure enough, that's exactly the feedback that I get from both of these virtual assistants. They thank me on a monthly basis. The 13th month, which is when you actually pay them for an extra month during the Christmas period, they are so thankful for and it's just been a great experience.

Pat Flynn: Yeah, that's awesome. So if you're looking for virtual assistants, definitely go through Chris Ducker. I've recommended his service before. My affiliate link for that is SmartPassiveIncome.com/VirtualStaffFinder or you can go directly at VirtualStaffFinder.com and you'll see my testimonial there on his homepage.

But moving on, I want to go back to these other products that you're creating for your brand. So you've built up this audience. You started to do sponsorship. And now, you actually wanted to create products of your own which like we talked about was really smart.

Now, side thing I just remembered, I remember New Media Expo earlier this year in January in Vegas and I did a presentation on the [power of giving stuff away for free](#). And at the end, I did something interesting. I did what's called – what I call a reverse Q&A. So instead of having questions asked by the audience to me, I actually picked a couple of audience members and asked them questions to help them discover what they could be offering for free to help take their business to the next level, to draw in more eyes, to increase their subscription, and build more authority and things like that.

And you were one of the lucky people who raised your hand and I selected you and you came up to the front and you asked – or actually, I asked you a bunch of questions about your business to discover what it is that you should be giving away for free. And at that moment in time, you weren't giving away anything, is that right?

John Lee Dumas: That is correct.



Pat Flynn: And then what did we sort of figure out and what did you do within like two days? I mean that's – if there's anything to take away from what John does, I mean you are, John, an action-taker and when – that's how you know that certain people are going to be successful when they're given a task or they come up with an idea or someone gives them advice on something that they should be including in their brand and they just turn around and do it. I mean you were that person, John. And I'm so impressed by that and inspired and I'm sure everyone else is too.

So after I gave you this advice on what to create for free, you did it in like two days and you sent me an email. He's like, "Hey Pat, check this out. Is this what you're looking for?" And it absolutely was. So what was it that you created and what were the benefits or the sort of rewards for doing that?

John Lee Dumas: So at that time, Pat, you looked at me and you're like, "Well dude, you've interviewed like over a hundred people at this point. So why don't you take like 10 of those best interviews or 10 of the best themes and create an eBook that is 10 incredible insights from 10 incredible entrepreneurs and just put it all together in an eBook format so people can just go, 'You know what? I want to learn a little more about this. I want to see what all these interviews are about. Let's go to the best of the best right here.'" Boom!

So I put that on my website a day and a half after I landed from Vegas. Pat's words were still ringing in my mind. And when that happened, Pat, my email optin rate jumped about 135% from where I was at about 15 a day to over 40 email optins a day because it was something that people want and they were getting it for free.

They were entering their email address and then they were getting emailed with this eBook for free. And so, I was growing my email list and because of that now, I'm at over 4,000 email subscribers to Entrepreneur on Fire at that very steady clip where I just really started collecting emails about 8 months ago.

Pat Flynn: Yeah, that's awesome, dude. And again, congrats on the success and also, just thank you for implementing. I mean, executing it. A lot of us who are listening I'm sure have ideas that we want to do or things that we know we need to do. You just need to do it. I mean you need to show up and do the work and make things happen because this is the kind of stuff that can happen. So thank you for being an example, John.

John Lee Dumas: Yeah. If you want to be, do.

Pat Flynn: If you want to be, do. I love it. So now that you're creating these other products of your own, ones that you would sell, what was the first one that you created and where did you come up with the idea for it?



John Lee Dumas: Well, one thing that I love that you said really recently during this interview, Pat, is now that you've built your audience, and that's one really key thing that I think a lot of listeners can take away that's not podcast specific. It's all about building the audience because once you build an audience like when Pat Flynn built his audience, when I built my audience, we start getting emails on a daily basis from our listeners, from our followers who are giving us the products to create, the services to create. They're saying, "John, this is what I'm suffering from. This is what I'm struggling with." And those are gold. When you hear those enough, you can move forward with it all because you've built an audience that's communicating with you.

And so for me, Pat, the email that I've kept getting over and over again with, "John, here I am in this small town. I am so entrepreneurial. I have all these passions, all these ideas but I have nowhere to go with it. Nobody is around me, inspiring me, supporting me, giving me feedback and criticism when I need it, and most of all, nobody is committed to my success like I would be to theirs. I don't have like-minded entrepreneurs." So that just kept coming off over and over again.

Finally, I just said, "You know what? I know exactly what's needed because it's something that I wish I had when I first launched Entrepreneur on Fire, and that was a mastermind. So that was the birth of Fire Nation Elite and that is really when I started the mastermind and started reaching out and sharing with my audience what I was creating.

And we actually launched just recently, July 1st, but I'll tell you Pat, the response has been unbelievable. I was just one of those guys that was like, "You know what? We'll probably start with 15 or 20 people and grow very slowly because I know there are people that want this." But we've thus far have close to 300 applications now for this membership mastermind and we're currently at an active 82 members within Fire Nation Elite.

And the reason why we're only at that number right now is because I'm actually having one-on-one conversation with every single applicant because I'm really looking to grow something very special with Fire Nation Elite, one Fire Nation Elite member at a time. So I'm having an actual 15-minute chat with every applicant going forward and that's just an example of me listening to my audience, creating something that they're telling me that they want and planting my flag and then them flocking to it.

And it's been such a great not only success but experience for me, for Kate, for everybody that's involve in the Entrepreneur on Fire team because these people are just inspiring entrepreneurs who are sharing some great insights with me and with each other and the success stories that are already coming out of that are blowing me away.

Pat Flynn: Yeah. I mean I had Chris Ducker over at my house and we recorded an [episode](#) a couple of weeks ago, few episodes back, and we were talking about the importance of a mastermind and connecting with other people and having a group of



people you can rely on and go to and get criticism and feedback from. And I think it's so cool that you combine that with exactly what your audience wanted.

I mean like you said, you just listen to them and you provide it. And I think a lot of people don't do that or they think they know what their audience wants but they don't know for sure. And it's very risky to create something and then to spend all that energy and money to create something that may or may not work where you on the other hand and me with Breakthrough Blogging and a lot of other people who are doing successful things and creating successful products, they are coming out as a result of the feedback and the needs and the pains of their exact audience, the people who are going to be using those products anyway. And I think that's really smart. I think that's a huge lesson for everybody here listening.

A lot of people, they create the products first before even building an audience or understanding exactly what their audience wants. And that's a complete mistake and I know we want to rush and create something that can make money for us first but I think speaking long-term, build that audience first, understand all about them, and then provide them what they need to improve and just serve them in any way you can. And you found this way to serve them, which I think is really awesome.

John Lee Dumas: Thank you. And I mean, I couldn't agree more because that's exactly what it's all about. It's listening to your audience and then when they're telling you what they want, create that minimally viable product, just a shell of what you're actually going to do and then bring it out to them and say, "What is this? Is this what you're talking about? How can I improve? How can I pivot this to make it better for you?" Don't stay behind closed doors and work on it until it's a finished product.

Pat, your course is a great example. I mean you released the course and they're still some that are being added to it as you're continuing to work on it. And the feedback that you're getting is allowing you to improve it along the way.

Pat Flynn: Right, exactly. And part of what goes along with that is allowing people and making them feel comfortable enough to give you feedback. Actually asking for that feedback even before you know what product you want to create. I think like you said, you got to listen but you also got to give an opportunity to your audience to say something first before you listen. So that – I mean there's a lot of things that go along with that, being open, giving permission to do that, making people feel comfortable, and giving them a platform to easily to do.

And of course, a blog is a great way to do that. If you have a podcast, I'm also very interested, John, on how you do this. I mean you have a podcast. On a podcast, you can't click on anything. You have to take further action in order to get a response from your audience. How are you doing that through your podcast and how are you able to listen to your audience when they're listening sort of when you don't even know who's listening on the other side?



John Lee Dumas: So one thing that I've really found is effective because you can go through Go Daddy and get some really cool very, very cheap domains. And so for me, I've really gone out and just found some really great and cheap domains that do ring a bell. So when you are on a jog, when you are in the car and you're not able to click, it's going to ring true because you're hearing it a couple of times. And for me, for Entrepreneur on Fire, I use EOfire.com multiple times throughout the episode and that's a very easy phrase that people can remember and go back to.

And for instance, for Fire Nation Elite, I just got FireNationElite.com and that is something that's going to redirect. So I'm just buying these great, easy to remember domains off of Go Daddy for \$1 and then forwarding them to different pages on my site. So I'm not opening a new site every single time I'm meshing a different domain. I'm just buying a domain that's very easy to remember and then forwarding to EntrepreneuronFire.com/FireNationElite. But instead of having that whole mouthful, it's just FireNationElite.com.

And so, that's a great way as a podcaster, you can really make it easy on your audience by just buying these cheap, easy to remember domains and forwarding them to your current domain, whatever that maybe, whatever page you want them to land on.

Pat Flynn: Absolutely. That's a great tip and one that I've been implementing for a long time. I actually got that tip from the guys over at [Internet Business Mastery](#). They for the longest time and I think they still do it, at the top of their show, they mention, "For your free gift, go to FreeAudioGift.com or FreeVideoGift.com." I was like, "That's such a smart idea."

John Lee Dumas: Right.

Pat Flynn: So it's really cool that you're doing that too and you're also seeing success from it. So anyone out there who has a podcast but not only a podcast, but if you're going to do an interview, if you're on somebody else's podcast as a guest, or if you're doing videos too, it's a really, really smart thing to do. You do have to spend a little bit of money on the domains and if you don't have the budget for that, I mean it's just a little bit of money but you can also use a WordPress plugin called Pretty Link to make something a little bit nicer than what it normally would be.

Now, just a quick question, how are you getting domains for a dollar?

John Lee Dumas: If you literally go to Google and just type in Go Daddy and then it pops up in Google under Go Daddy. It has like all those little sub things like about x, y, z. And literally, there's one of those links that says \$0.99 domains. And you click on that \$0.99 domain link and that brings you to a special Go Daddy page that gives you that domain for \$0.99.



Pat Flynn: Awesome. That is cool. Yeah, I'm in it right now.

John Lee Dumas: Yeah.

Pat Flynn: Nice, nice. Oh yeah, \$0.99 domain names. Dude, awesome. Thank you for that tip.

John Lee Dumas: Did it work for you?

Pat Flynn: Yeah, I see it, I see it.

John Lee Dumas: Sweet. And so, while you're kind of writing that down too, I'll mention one thing that a couple of my guests have done that I think is brilliant, so Greg Hickman runs MobileMixed.com and when he was recently talking with me and he was chatting with my audience, he said, "Hey guys, if you want to go MobileMixed.com/fire, I have something special for you.

So if you're ever a guest on somebody else's show, then it's great to have something set up for them to just go check out because that's going to then draw them to what you have going on. And it's great to have something for them as a little gift as a giveaway. For him, it was a mobile checklist. And so, that's a great example for the listeners to know that they can come prepared when they're being interviewed on other podcast.

Pat Flynn: That's a great tip. That's a great tip. Thank you, John. Thank you, Greg. Greg, I know you're listening to this.

John Lee Dumas: Oh yeah, he is.

Pat Flynn: Check him out, MobileMixed.com, rising star. OK. A couple of other things I want to finish off. We're already at 45 minutes. I can't believe it. I mean ...

John Lee Dumas: Oh, let's keep going.

Pat Flynn: OK, let's do it. You've done over 300 interviews, there's got to be some commonalities between these successful entrepreneurs. What are the top three things that most of these entrepreneurs are saying that were vital to their success?

John Lee Dumas: So, the number one thing that every single entrepreneur talks about is the fact that they just started. They had those exact same doubts, those exact same fears that every single listener has right now that I had back in the day and still have on a daily basis that you have Pat, that Seth Godin has. The same fears and the same emotional roller coasters that we're all on, they had them but they did something different than a lot of people, the other 99%. They just started.



Another thing that I always am hearing from these people and we mentioned it once but it's worth mentioning again, connections, networking, relationships. That is what brought them to the next level. It was literally reaching out to people, to like-minded entrepreneurs, to peers in their groups and aligning themselves with them and getting to know them. One of my favorite Jim Rohn quotes is, "You are the average of the five people you spend the most time with."

So I'm asking the listeners, think about the five people you're spending the most time with and you're the average of those five people. Is that a good average? If it's not, what do you think it would do to drop number five and to pick up a new number one? How much would that bring your average up? So reach out, try to get – surround yourself with like-minded entrepreneurs that are going to bring your average up.

When I moved to San Diego, I was very actively emailing Pat and saying, "Pat, hey. Let's get together." And he eventually relented and we had lunch last week with Amy Porterfield, with Caleb Wojcik. It was an amazing time and we got together and we're building a friendship because of that because I know that I want to surround myself with these people. And everybody that's listening out there can do that as well.

Pat Flynn: Right.

John Lee Dumas: And probably the third thing that I want to talk about is getting out of your comfort zone, and that's what all these entrepreneurs did. Nobody likes the sound of their voice. Nobody likes how they look on video. Nobody likes speaking on stage. But guess what? The people that do those things are the people that are successful in the entrepreneurial world. I don't like it. Pat never liked it. But when we do it, number one, you improve, and number two, you're expanding your brand, and number three, you start to like it.

Now Pat, you enjoy doing podcast. I love doing podcast now. I'm looking forward to New Media Expo in January. I'm speaking on three different occasions, two panels and one solo presentation. And I can't wait. It's going to be a great time. You have to get out there and push the envelope because if you're not pushing the envelope like all these entrepreneurs did at one point then you're not stretching your limits. You're not growing as an entrepreneur.

So those are the three major takeaways and I'm sure you're going to make it much more coherent in the show notes page, Pat. But you can tell I'm passionate. I love talking about this subject. I could probably go on for about ten more.

Pat Flynn: Well, let's do two more then if you wouldn't mind.

John Lee Dumas: Well, I definitely wouldn't mind because I mean – so these entrepreneurs, one thing that they definitely did time and time again and this is one thing that I almost called the baby effect because literally, so many of the



entrepreneurs that I've had on my show always point back to, "You know what? I just had a baby." And I heard it a few times and I'm like, OK, that's kind of a coincidence but it kept happening over and over again.

And so, I really started drilling down into those points and it almost – I think the reason why it kept coming up is because that was their backs against the wall. Now, they knew that they had to support a family. There was no not getting out of the comfort zone because it wasn't just on them they were embarrassing. They were needed to provide for a family.

So, so many times that once these entrepreneurs had their backs against the wall and that survival instinct kicked in, that really got them moving forward. So sometimes as entrepreneurs and as wantpreneurs need to think that sometimes the most difficult times in your lives are the best because that's what's making you flip that switch and start moving forward in the direction you need to go.

So I'm not saying, go out and just have a kid or get fired from your job, but it is so consistent that one of those two things are what spurs so many entrepreneurs' careers because they had nothing else and they had no other way to go but up.

And the last thing that I'll talk about Pat is passion because this is a long game. This is not a sprint. This is a marathon. And if you really want to end this marathon near the front, you need to be doing something that you are passionate about. And if you are doing something just for the money, if you are doing something just to succeed and to be successful, you're not going to be able to stay in the game long enough. You're going to get burned out.

And I'll end this little rant, these five things with an Albert Einstein quote which is, "Try not to become a man of success but rather become a man of value." And so for me, I believe in that quote so I led with value with Entrepreneur on Fire and success followed.

And I feel like a lot of entrepreneurs that fail try to lead with success hoping that value and the monetization is going to follow them. But it's really the other way around. So really find the passion that coincides with a viable business and move forward in that because that's the long game, that's something that you're going to be around in ten years still talking about and that's where the success is going to come.

Pat Flynn: Yeah, absolutely. I love that. I love that, John. Thank you. So just to recap those five things because I think they're all really important. Just get started. Just do.

Number two, the connections and relationships you have are incredibly important for taking you to the next level, connecting you with the right people to help take your business to where it needs to go.



Number three, getting out of your comfort zone, and I love that one because truly, life begins at the end of your comfort zone. And for me, that's how I know that whatever it is that I'm about to do, if that fear kicks in, if that resistance kicks in, that to me is a sign that whatever it is that I'm about to do is worth doing. And knowing that and having that sort of mentality and approach, always pushes me forward.

That's how it happened – that's how I felt when I started my online business. That's how I felt when I started my YouTube channel, my podcast, and especially public speaking. Definitely afraid of it but I had enough experience knowing that when that fear kicked in, that's something that's good and I should complete and do. That's how I knew that I should just go out there on stage and like we said in number one, you just do it and get started.

Have babies. Not really but I have two and I will tell you that they are incredibly motivating and they are the reason behind everything I do. And I'm not saying go and have babies but I think your point and like you just mentioned, it's that survival instinct and putting your back up against the wall one way or another and there are different ways to do that.

And number five, passion which obviously is very important. So ..

John Lee Dumas: Pat, real quick. Have you seen the movie, *Old School*?

Pat Flynn: With Will Ferrell?

John Lee Dumas: Yeah.

Pat Flynn: Of course.

John Lee Dumas: OK. Well, I'm really glad that you just rephrase all of those five things because I thought you might ask me to repeat them. It was kind of like that scene in *Old School* where Will Ferrell just blacks out. He goes off on a rant about the economy and he comes back. Like that was kind of me so I had actually no idea what I said. So I'm really glad that you recapped it for Smart Passive Income nation.

Pat Flynn: Oh man, thank you. And I'm really glad you referenced the Will Ferrell movie right there. That's funny. Now to finish up, have you been doing this for a year now?

John Lee Dumas: No. Well, the idea for Entrepreneur on Fire hit me in about June of 2012 and that's when I went down to Blog World and I still – I had nothing. I had no domain. I had no real anything viable at that point. I just had an idea. So I've been doing it really for about 10 months but the idea did spark about 12, 13 months ago.



Pat Flynn: OK. So that sort of feeling of having nothing is still sort of fresh in your mind because it was less than a year ago or just about a year ago. So I want to ask you, what are some of the biggest things you learned in your short journey here so far, an incredible amount of success that you wish you knew when you first started?

John Lee Dumas: One thing that I really wish I knew was what happens when you do take action in this space? I had seen the results in the military. I had seen it in real estate. I knew that action did result in success on certain levels but I didn't have any passion in any of those things so I didn't really know because I wasn't taking passionate action.

So I wish I knew that finding something that you are passionate about can create a viable business and then taking passionate action on that consistently and really busting your hump on a daily basis to make it happen that that is really going to get you to where you need to be quite quickly.

Another thing that I wish I knew, Pat was just how friendly and how open and genuine the people are in this industry that have risen to the top, the Pat Flynn's of the world, the Derek Halpern's, well, maybe not Derek Halpern, just kidding, the Adam Baker's, just these really nice people. I was just kidding because Derek is a super nice guy. He just comes across as a pretty brash New Yorker which I love that personality.

Pat Flynn: Right, me too.

John Lee Dumas: But just how nice and genuine these people are that have risen to the top and that's one reason they have. And so, the listeners should be reaching out to people like Pat, to people like myself because I want to interact with you because you are the listeners that I'm looking to inspire and I'm looking to be inspired likewise by you, the listeners. It's a two-way street. And so, those are a couple of things I really wish I knew because it would have made my leap a lot less scary and I would have had a little less fear going forward knowing that it's a really friendly, fun place at the top.

Pat Flynn: I love it, John. I love it. Dude, thank you so much for coming on the show, all your insights, and your inspiration. And just again, congratulations for all the success. I know a lot of people are going to get a lot out of this episode. And if this doesn't light your fire to do stuff and get stuff done now and take action, I don't know what will. John, you're just a prime example of someone who takes action and just thank you for that.

John Lee Dumas: Pat, it was my pleasure. And I hope the listeners just come on to these show notes pages and ask for a smart passive fire podcast. I think it would be great.



Pat Flynn: All right, sounds good. Everyone, you can get the show notes at SmartPassiveIncome.com/session77. John, hope to have you back on again soon and we'll talk about how much even more successful you've become.

John Lee Dumas: Oh, I'll love that.

Pat Flynn: All right, man. Take care. Thank you.

John Lee Dumas: Thank you.

Pat Flynn: All right. I hope you enjoy that interview with John Lee Dumas from EntrepreneurOnFire.com. He is absolutely on fire as you could tell. Just a lot of great things to share not only from his experience with doing a day-to-day podcast but also, the experience he's had interviewing people, successful entrepreneurs from day-to-day like we heard at the end there. Now, if you like the show notes, all the resources, and links mentioned in this show, head on over to SmartPassiveIncome.com/session77 to get all those.

And really, I have nothing else to say but thank you and I hope to hear your review, your honest review of the podcast on iTunes and really, just take action. Get stuff done. Do something now. Get started. That's what I'm going to leave you with. Whatever it is that you want to do, get started now.

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