



**SPI Podcast Session #143 -  
Actionable Email Marketing Strategies  
and How to 3X Revenue Using Your Autoresponder  
with Steve Chou**

Show notes: [www.smartpassiveincome.com/session143](http://www.smartpassiveincome.com/session143)

This is the Smart Passive Income podcast with Pat Flynn session #143.

**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, who is completely jealous of anyone who has been to Europe, Pat Flynn.

**Pat Flynn:** I haven't made my way there yet and it's sad because I really want to go, I know I have a lot of listeners over there, especially in the UK and other parts of Europe. Thank you all for listening, no matter where you are in the world, I appreciate your time today.

We have a great episode today with Steve Chu from [MyWifeQuitHerJob.com](http://MyWifeQuitHerJob.com). I actually met Steve last year at the Financial Blogger conference, actually two years ago. Super awesome guy. I connected with him really fast because he's totally involved with his family and stuff like that.

He was able to do stuff online with e-commerce so he was able to allow his wife to quit her job so she could be a stay-at-home mom, super cool story. We're going to get into his story about how he built his e-commerce site and then we're going to get into some really interesting and very actionable pieces of content and strategies you can use to help promote your own course or product.

He's done a few tweaks on his email sequences that have yielded massive results and we're going to talk about that specifically. We're also going to talk a lot about the best practices when it comes to email. We're going to talk about the debate between single versus double opt-in and a lot of things that you guys are probably thinking about when it comes to your autoresponder sequence.



So without further ado, we're just going to get right into the interview. This is Steve Chu from [mywifequitherjob.com](http://mywifequitherjob.com).

What's up SP listeners? I'm so happy welcome Steve Chu from [mywifequitherjob.com](http://mywifequitherjob.com) and even though he is a Stanford grad, I'm happy to have him on the show today.

We've just been going back and forth. I was on his show recently, he did a really awesome and not very funny - I feel because I'm a Cal Bear. I'm from UC Berkely and he had this amazing graphic of me and he Photoshopped - he has great Photoshop skills, he Photoshopped me in a Stanford jacket with all this 'Go Stanford' stuff. It was actually truly an amazing Photoshop piece of work.

So I'm going to do something for you.

**Steve Chu:** I'm scared! I'm terrified!

**Pat Flynn:** Steve, welcome to the show, thanks for coming on.

**Steve Chu:** Thanks for having me. I'm really excited to be here.

**Pat Flynn:** My first question for you is centered around your domain name, [mywifequitherjob.com](http://mywifequitherjob.com). Can you tell us where that comes from and a little bit about your back story?

**Steve Chu:** Absolutely. A long time ago when my wife still worked a full time job, she actually really hated her job. Every single morning, we would have breakfast and she would leave the house with this really long face. She'd tell me "Honey, I'm off to the hell hole I call my job." It was like this for a long time but that's the thing that you do, right? You go to college, you come out, you get a job, that sort of thing.

Then a couple of years later, she became pregnant with our first child and we both have this philosophy that at least one parent should stay home with the kids and you probably have a similar philosophy, right Pat?

**Pat Flynn:** Yep.

**Steve Chu:** So at that point it was the perfect opportunity for my wife to quit her job. The problem is, we live in the Silicon Valley and I don't know if it's the same priced



housing as it is in San Diego, but up here it's pretty expensive and most people require two incomes in order to get a pretty decent sized house in a good school district. We felt that we needed two incomes in order to get by without really sacrificing our lifestyle.

We knew my wife was going to quit and we needed to find a way to supplant her lost income. What we did was we decided to start an online store. We ended up selling wedding handkerchiefs online.

**Pat Flynn:** Wedding handkerchiefs? That's such an odd niche. How does one decide to do that?

**Steve Chu:** The back story behind that was when we first got married we spent a lot of money on photography as most couples do for their wedding and she knew she was going to cry at the altar and she did not want to be seen in the photos using nasty tissue. She wanted to buy a handkerchief and we looked all over the place for handkerchiefs and in fact she wanted a handkerchief with our initials embroidered and the wedding date to make it extra special but we could not find that anywhere here.

The only place we could find was this place in China and you actually had to buy a whole bunch. By whole bunch I mean we ended up buying 240 of these handkerchiefs. We ended up using maybe 3 to 6 of them for the bridal party and that sort of thing. Then we sold the rest on eBay and they sold like hotcakes.

So, when it came time and we were brainstorming ideas for products that we could sell online, we immediately got in touch with that initial vendor, bought a small initial order and threw up a website and the rest is history.

**Pat Flynn:** Is that site still up?

**Steve Chu:** The site is still up. It ended up making six figures in it's first year, which supplanted my wife's six figure salary and it's been growing in the double and triple digits ever since. We started in 2007.

**Pat Flynn:** Wedding handkerchiefs...

**Steve Chu:** Wedding handkerchiefs. We've since added new products. We started doing linen napkins, linen towels. Everything can be personalized. Our core product is still handkerchiefs.



**Pat Flynn:** That is so cool. Really quick on this, is this a passive business? Do you guys just have a whole bunch of handkerchiefs in your house and you ship them out? How does this all work and function?

**Steve Chu:** It started out in our house. Gradually, as the business started growing, we ended up renting an office space and now we have a couple of employees that pack and place orders. My wife pretty much is like a glorified taxi driver. She's always taking the kids everywhere. Because we have these employees running the business, she can focus on the kids' activities whilst supervising, stopping into the office from time to time to make sure things are going OK.

It's definitely not a passive business in the sense of info products for example.

**Pat Flynn:** Right. We'll get into that in a little bit because you're doing some amazing things with info products.

Going back to your family, one thing that really helped me connect with you right away despite you being a Stanford grad was the fact that it's obvious that you are a family man. I know a lot of people out there who listen to the show know that I'm completely all about – 100% my why in life is to be with my family and to give them the opportunities that I can and to be with them all the time. You're the same way.

When your wife was pregnant and you were starting this business, you guys chose wedding handkerchiefs, what was going through your heads? Did you know this was going to work? What was going on internally in terms of can this actually work or not?

**Steve Chu:** We actually tested it out for a little bit eBay. We knew the demand was there so it was just, we knew they were going to sell, we weren't sure how much we could get. We were actually only shooting for about \$60,000 a year. When we launched it, when you launch any website, it's really slow in the early going. The way we jump started that is we ended up using Google Ad Words early on to drive targeted traffic there.

It was a slow, steady process. We started doing a lot of leg work, calling wedding planners, people who could buy our products in bulk and that sort of thing. We worked on content for SEO. Around the 5-6 month mark, everything started coming together and it kind of snowballed from there.



**Pat Flynn:** That's so cool. So you put in the work, obviously.

**Steve Chu:** A lot of leg work early on. A lot of people who would throw up online businesses initially kind of expect this Google spigot to open up at some point. In the beginning you really have to put in the leg work. Cold calling people, we were emailing people trying to get publicity and that sort of thing.

**Pat Flynn:** That's really cool. I love this topic by the way. We'll move on but was there any point at which you were like "OK, we have a business about wedding handkerchiefs. I'm not very passionate about it." What kept you moving forward? What kept it from being boring?

You're an entrepreneur, like I am. It's very easy to get bored with things, right?

**Steve Chu:** Absolutely. What makes you think wedding handkerchiefs are boring, Pat?

[Pause]

I'm just kidding!

**Pat Flynn:** That's actually a really good question.

**Steve Chu:** I'm just kidding. I have absolutely no interest in it whatsoever.

But, as you know, when you start selling stuff and the money starts rolling in, the business aspects are actually very interesting. I learned a ton of stuff. Pay-per-click ads, SEO, you name it, all the same stuff, email marketing, all the same stuff that we do every day now for our sites, it was this vehicle for me to learn all this stuff. It was like drinking out of the fire-hose in the beginning.

We were getting positive feedback for all of our efforts so that's what kept me going.

**Pat Flynn:** Thank you for sharing that and congratulations to you and your entire family on all of that, that's amazing.

Now, you and I have met each other in person at Fincon, which is one of my favorite conferences. Steve is such a nice guy and he's doing some amazing things with info products now.



Move us forward a little bit to when you started to get into info products. I'm assuming and correct me if I'm wrong, people around you and people online started to notice what you've been doing with your e-commerce stuff and they were starting to wonder how they could do the same.

**Steve Chu:** Yeah. It was mainly my friends. I didn't have the blog at the time. Part of the reason I put up the blog was just to document my experiences running the e-commerce store. There weren't that many blogs out there at the time doing that. Just by nature of putting up content on e-commerce and really giving an in-the-trenches account of what was going on, I started gathering followers and then people started asking me 'How?', how to put up their own e-commerce store.

My blog tends to attract a lot of families who want to start having kids, they want to hang out with their kids more often, which is dear to our hearts.

I put together this blog. People were asking for a course. At the time I did not want to put out a course or any sort of info product. The blog was a way to document everything. It was in 2011 I finally decided to go ahead and launch. I still worked a full time job. I didn't really have any time to put together a formal course. So what I did, I just held a webinar and I gave a brief overview of what I was going to teach and I basically launched the class with zero content in it. People were signing up with the promise that I'd put out good stuff.

**Pat Flynn:** So you essentially pre-launched a course that hadn't been created yet?

**Steve Chu:** That's correct, yes.

**Pat Flynn:** Tell us about that. Where did you get that idea and did you actually collect money upfront before you even had a course?

**Steve Chu:** I did. It was a very small launch. It was about 35 people at around \$300 and these are people that were asking me for the course. When they bought the course, I basically just promised them that I would put out consistent content indefinitely and if they signed up early, they would get lifetime access to anything that I put out.

I launched in 2011. Now that it's 2014, I actually have over 190 videos in the course now and that's just slow and steady progress.



**Pat Flynn:** So you've continually added more people over time. So they paid \$300 to get in initially and that is just a one-time fee, am I right?

**Steve Chu:** A one-time fee, yeah. I continually add content to it every single week.

**Pat Flynn:** Has the pricing structure been the same since then?

**Steve Chu:** No, I've raised it multiple times. Right now it's at \$699 and it's probably going to go up another \$100 by Christmas.

**Pat Flynn:** Why did you do that?

**Steve Chu:** It made sense. In the beginning I had no content and people were taking a chance on me. Once I started adding more and more content it was a greater value to the people that were joining.

**Pat Flynn:** I think that's really smart because a lot of people struggle when it comes to raising prices. My buddy Chris Ducker and I do our one day Business Breakthrough events and one of the big things that comes out of all of our events that we do when we meet in person with these entrepreneurs is that everybody totally under-prices themselves. Even if they've had a business for a while.

I think it's smart to go in knowing that you're going to be charging a little bit less, sort of like what I did with the smart podcast player in my first run at doing software, getting a beta group in there, working with those people closely to help build the software, or in your case the course, in the way that they want it. But then at some point it gets to that product or software that is what people want and then you definitely have permission to charge more at that point.

**Steve Chu:** Here's what's ironic, Pat. Once I raised the price a couple of hundred bucks from \$300, the number of sales actually increased and the quality of the people that were joining increased as well. That's another case for increasing your price-point early on.

**Pat Flynn:** So you not only had more customers as a results of raising the price, but the quality of the customers increased as well?



**Steve Chu:** Absolutely. I had less flakes (people who would just sign up and then ask for a return right away) and the overall caliber and the overall drive of the students paying the higher prices were a lot better. I could tell instantly.

**Pat Flynn:** That's really cool. How did you set up the course? You pre-sold the course, 35 people were interested. What was your next step after that? Did you have a membership site? How did you set it all up for them?

**Steve Chu:** I did, yeah. It was just WordPress and I had a membership plugin. I used [S2Member](#). There's a whole bunch of options out there that you can choose. They all work equally as well.

I was on [UStream](#) and I had this set-up on my computer where I could just record video. I started doing a live broadcast twice a week.

**Pat Flynn:** And there was interaction with you as well at the same time?

**Steve Chu:** Absolutely, there was a chat window. I still do this today, once a week I do a live broadcast and then people can ask me questions in real time in the chat box.

**Pat Flynn:** That's cool. Are those videos recorded and then those become the lessons or are the lessons different than the actual face to face?

**Steve Chu:** I usually have some sort of lesson plan for those office hours. They go in the repository. I also produce videos at home in my own little office studio that I put on there as well.

**Pat Flynn:** Where do you find the time to do this? You said you have a full time job. When do you work?

**Steve Chu:** People ask me that question all the time and my answer is always if you really want to do something, you'll find the time to do it right.

In my schedule, the weekends are always devoted to the kids.

During the week, I have the luxury of having a pretty straightforward job in terms of hours, I work 9-5. After that, it's family time. Usually at night - we're doing this podcast now at about 9pm after the kids have gone to bed and that's actually the time that I use to work on all my stuff.





**Pat Flynn:** So you're just like me, pretty much. Once the kids are down, you can turn that part of your life off and turn on your business stuff.

Walk us through a typical day when you start work. Now that you have your business up, you have the e-commerce stuff still going and now [mywifequitherjob.com](http://mywifequitherjob.com) and some info products to go along with that as well. What is a typical day like for you after the kids are down, what is work like for you at that point?

**Steve Chu:** After the kids are down I actually only spend maybe two hours a night working on my stuff at this point. During the day, just to be absolutely clear, my wife runs the e-commerce store full time. I pretty much do all the tech stuff. Some of the marketing stuff we share duties on.

Usually I devote one night a week to our e-commerce store. The rest of the nights, two hours a night I devote to [mywifequitherjob.com](http://mywifequitherjob.com) or the course.

**Pat Flynn:** Nice. So are you just creating content and writing and things like that?

**Steve Chu:** Yeah. I actually don't post that often either. I write one post a week and then I do podcasts also, which is pretty much one podcast episode a week. I do one office hour session for my course a week.

Prior to the podcasts, just maintaining the blog and that sort of thing really took around five hours. With the podcast it's more like 8 now, with scheduling and that sort of thing. Of course, there's answering emails and questions. Early on it wasn't like that but now that it's in a steady state it actually doesn't take that many hours to maintain.

**Pat Flynn:** When you first started, how long did it take you to get to a point where you felt like there was something here?

**Steve Chu:** When I first started I only had one child, so it was much easier but I was writing 4 or 5 times a week early on for the blog and I had been blogging for two years before I launched my course. Once the course launched I was putting out two videos per week. Same thing, just at night. I diverted more of my time and resources towards what I was working on and stuff like the e-commerce store suffered a little bit during that period.



**Pat Flynn:** Awesome. Before we got on the call, you had mentioned to me that you had been doing some amazing things with your [mywifequitherjob.com](http://mywifequitherjob.com) that has 3x your results. Can you talk about those things that you're doing to help promote and market your stuff that is getting you those 3x results? I think all of us out there listening would love to get those kinds of results.

Give us some actionable stuff that we can put into action.

**Steve Chu:** Absolutely. The way I sell my course and my info product is I use email marketing.

Just a very quick background about the class, a lot of people who when they launch info products, they do a formal launch. They say that the class is going to close at a certain time. They do this really big formal launch leading up to that and then they sell their product, they close it down and then they open it up again.

There is this natural scarcity aspect to doing it that way. For my product, it's open all year round so people can buy it at any time and it's priced pretty high. It's priced at \$699.

The way I get people to sign up is I have them sign up for my email autoresponder and that leads them down a sequence and along the way to try to get them to actually buy the main product.

A very basic high-level structure of my autoresponder sequence. Basically I was just teaching them how to start an e-commerce store. It's just like a mini course. I would give them a little sell, have a little FAQ and then that would be pretty much it. That's the way I had it ever since 2011.

Then in May, I started interviewing people on podcasts and every time I interviewed someone, I actually learned a whole bunch of stuff. I interviewed this guy, I don't know if you know him but his name is Dan [Fegella] and I told him what I was up to and he took a look at my email autoresponder sequence and he said "Dude, for this price point for your product, you really need to make your auto responder sequence longer and hit them up. Don't be afraid to sell them more often."

What ended up happening was he looked at my autoresponder sequence, which was only nine steps and he kind of advised that I made that 3x the length that it already



was. I was like "Wow, that's kind of eye opening." His main point was you have to hit them up multiple times for a course.

Another thing happened in May also that kind of spurred me to change my autoresponder sequence. I got this email from a reader of my blog and this woman said "I have a confession to make. I cheated on you, Steve. Noah Kagan sold me his course day after day with his autoresponder sequence. I have to say yes. It may look like sending continuous emails may bother some of your followers but for me it worked. The email content was day after day relevant and it got more and more interesting so when I saw Noah had a course online, it convinced me and I signed up immediately."

This woman was actually on my sequence but it had ended after 9 steps and here was Noah who had this sequence where he was constantly emailing her with useful content and a very small call to action to join his class.

**Pat Flynn:** So the lesson here is multiple touch points within an email sequence.

**Steve Chu:** Absolutely.

**Pat Flynn:** So initially you had people sign up and then you teach them a few things, a mini course for 9 days and then a pitch and then follow it up with a FAQ and then it kind of just ended there?

**Steve Chu:** It just kind of ended there and then after that I was just sending them blog posts and that sort of thing.

**Pat Flynn:** OK, so they get into a sort of 'main' list and they might get information about the course but it's not really set in stone when that might happen.

**Steve Chu:** That's correct. Basically, my sequence went from 9 to 28 emails. I'll talk about the types of emails that I include in that sequence as well.

The other thing that I was missing - I'm an engineer and everything that I do at work tends to be logical. The emails in my initial 9-sequence was basically focused on the 'how-to' aspect, how to start an e-commerce store, how to launch a website, that sort of thing. What I was missing was I was not really tapping into the customer psyche. What I learned in May was logic doesn't really equate to sales. If you've ever had an argument with your wife, you'll realize that logic doesn't really lead to anything productive.



What I picked up was that I needed to emphasize more on some of the psychological aspects of selling something online. The next step that I took - I still work a full time job and I kind of hang out with these sales guys all the time so I went up to one of the sales guys who I'm friends with and I asked to have lunch with him. I asked him the secret to selling and he gave me this tip. He said when it comes to selling, the product is very important but even more important is the person selling the product.

His advice to me was in order to get people to like you online, you have to show off your personality. This is actually one thing that you do really well, Pat, that I've kind of picked up over the years.

Just an example of your stuff, your podcast, that little intro where you give a little tidbit of your personality, that little thing is actually pretty effective, whether you realize it or not.

**Pat Flynn:** Thank you for saying that man! So many people were like "Don't do that, that's so dumb, nobody cares about your facts" and it seems to be working. Every time I go to a conference now, people pull out one of those things that I've mentioned and they talk about my fantasy football team or the fact that I'm Sagittarius or half Filipino. All this stuff and all these little things make connections with people. I really appreciate you saying that and confirming that for me.

**Steve Chu:** Yeah. What I didn't realize was that people were buying the product for me and not necessarily for just the product. One thing that I did was I started doing a lot more storytelling about my back story so I started including a video in that initial sequence that kind of introduced myself and told my story, pretty much the same one or a similar one that I gave at the beginning of this podcast. I also included a link to my very first episode of my podcast, which kind of told my story in a different form and my philosophies on family and starting an online business.

**Pat Flynn:** I like that. You get your voice in there and people can really connect with that.

**Steve Chu:** Exactly. They're a captive audience for up to 40 minutes with a podcast, which is great, right?

I started talking and giving a lot more interesting facts about myself. We've kind of alluded to how you do that in the podcast but I actually had a post that I started linking



them to in the autoresponder sequence that gave a bunch of funky facts about myself that most people probably don't know about.

**Pat Flynn:** That's a great idea and I see that on blog posts all the time, perhaps it's somebody's birthday or they just might say "20 things you might not have known about me." For some reason I haven't seen many of those lately but they used to be really popular. They used to be the most commented on posts because people can relate to it or they share some of their own facts about themselves as well.

I think that's really smart and something that I actually don't do in my own autoresponder sequence so I really appreciate that tip and I think any way that you can make connections with people is going to help you down the road when you're starting to make sales and pitch things.

You added storytelling, you added links to your podcast, people heard your voice and resonated with your story and your why. Some interesting facts about you. Were there any other things besides that that you added? Was it just 19 more emails about those three things or were there any other strategic types of emails in there to help with that eventual pitch?

**Steve Chu:** Absolutely. The idea of giving out the random facts first of all was just try to get people on your bus. Who knows when someone might resonate with one particular fact that you're revealing about yourself. That's the rationale besides that.

In terms of the other parts of the sequence, the other thing I started doing also was starting a conversation with the people who were signing up. What I started doing in that initial order responder email was that I have people hit Reply and basically tell me their story. That does two things.

By replying to my very first email, it pretty much guarantees that all future emails will reach their inbox and not their spam folder.

The second thing is you're trying to create a conversation with your reader so a lot of times people would tell me their full story and I try to respond to every single email that I get. It's not always possible but I try to do it because they're pouring their heart out and it just makes sense that I need to respond. I owe it to them to respond.

**Pat Flynn:** And when you do that you stand out from all the other people who aren't responding or starting a conversation. I think that's really smart, especially if you're



just starting out, you should absolutely be doing that to as many subscribers as you can. I feel like if I were to start doing that now from the first email, it would be way too much so I'm looking for new ways to make connections at this point and stage in my business career.

But if you're just starting out and you have up to 20 or even 50 subscribers per day, responding and starting conversations is smart. I know Derek Halpern does the same thing, he asks "What are you struggling with?" Not only is he getting people to reply, getting people to favor his emails in their folders, but also getting exactly what his audience needs help with. Those are courses, podcast episodes, blog posts and all types of things. I think that's really smart.

What does a pitch look like in this sequence? Are you just saying "Hey, buy my course" and then linking to your sales page? How are you doing that?

**Steve Chu:** I mentioned that I increased the sequence from 9 to in the twenties of emails. The next thing I did before I even wrote that sequence of emails was I sent an email to my list and asked them why they weren't buying the class.

**Pat Flynn:** Straight up?

**Steve Chu:** Pretty much straight up. Kind of like a bone-headed question right? But people were responding. So I sent out this survey asking them what was preventing them from buying the course and what was stopping them from starting their online store right now.

I got a whole bunch of responses and based on those responses I formulated the remaining emails in the sequence.

The first response that I got was "I'm not sure if your course works". It's a valid question. Does it work? Are there students in your class that have been successful taking your course?

Here's the funny thing, I have testimonials for the class sprinkled all over the sales page, I occasionally mention them on my blog but people don't pick that up. It's almost like you have to kind of emphasize the testimonials that you have rather than just assuming that people are going to see them.



I started interviewing some of my successful students. I had a couple of them as guests on my podcast and I added those to the autoresponder sequence. I started creating student stories and allowing them to write posts on my blog, like guest posts on the blog and that was a win-win situation. They got a back-link, I got a testimonial.

I chose students in different demographics for this autoresponder sequence. I chose a single mother who was not that tech savvy and basically wanted to earn extra money with her e-commerce store and told her story.

I had another person that I had on the show that was just a young professional, a single guy working who just wants to perhaps someday quit their job.

I also had another single guy who was not really tech savvy at all but really liked the learning process.

I incorporated all these guest posts and interviews into my autoresponder sequence.

**Pat Flynn:** I like that because what happens is over the course of these emails, maybe they get an email that features the story of the single mom and that email gets to a guy who thinks that's not relevant but they stick around in that sequence and they eventually get that email about the single guy who they can totally relate to and then that triggers that "Hey, I can probably do this too".

You cover all the bases there. I think that's a really smart idea to not only have success stories but make sure you have all different kinds of success stories under your brand and share and feature those things. I really like what you said about the fact that you have to emphasize the testimonials and the case studies and I think it's really smart that you're getting your audience involved too. Students writing their own stories and featuring students on interviews. I know for me, most of my most popular episodes of the podcast are when I have students come on and talk about how they've been able to build their business from scratch. People have said that they can relate to those more than when I have the Tim Ferriss's on and the Gary Vaynerchuk's. They feel that they can actually do it when there are regular people on the show.

**Steve Chu:** Yeah, absolutely. That's a huge point.

When they feel like it's a regular person that you're talking to, they kind of become more emboldened into actually giving something a try.



The next reason that people weren't signing up was something that I'd not really considered at all. We live in a global world now and people were asking if my course applied worldwide.

It's something I wasn't thinking about at all when I first started selling the course because I assumed everyone was in the US but it turns out that I have a lot of students all across the world and people were asking me if it applies.

What I did for that was sent out an email to my course list for people who weren't in the US and I had one person write a blog post. One of the biggest fears on e-commerce is if you live in a country where e-commerce isn't prevalent, can you still make money if you live in a very small market?

What I did was I interviewed this student who actually sells goods into the United States from a foreign country. The way she does it is she uses a fulfillment house in the US. That dispelled two fears that people might have:

- 1) Is the market large enough?
- 2) Can you actually run an online store from a different country?

**Pat Flynn:** Super smart, I love that.

**Steve Chu:** You sold some info products in the past Pat. People have probably asked you why they should buy your product when there's all this information out there online for free. I could listen to your podcast, Halpern's podcast, I could read Noah Kagan's blog and still get the same amount of information to start an online store, right?

**Pat Flynn:** Right. Even the same with Green Exam Academy, all that information I sold in the eBook was exactly the same on the website with Food Trucker and its most recent book, How to Start a Food Truck the Definitive Guide, that's all pulled from blog posts and things like that. It happens all the time. We always get this question.

**Steve Chu:** To combat that sort of point, what I did was came up with two different stories in my personal life that kind of reflected why you would need some sort of guidance.





The first one is probably one that you can appreciate, Pat. When I had my first child I went out and read pretty much every single baby book out there. I don't know if you did the same thing.

**Pat Flynn:** I did.

**Steve Chu:** I read all these books and I got really cocky. I knew all the different steps on how to sooth the baby. When our first child came out and she was pretty much inconsolable. My wife was trying to comfort her and everything. At first I was really cocky and I was like "When you're done trying to console my child, why don't you hand her over to me and let's get some sleep?" She handed the baby to me and I used all the different techniques.

Just to give you an idea, I don't know if you learned this too, Pat but I actually went as far as learning baby language. Did you ever take the Dunstan Baby Language class?

**Pat Flynn:** I didn't go that far, no.

**Steve Chu:** Or The Happiest Baby on the Block?

**Pat Flynn:** I've read that one, yeah.

**Steve Chu:** I basically tried all these techniques and nothing worked. I tried to read the baby's language and that didn't work. Ultimately what happened is I ended up going to Babies R Us and I bought all the different types of baby pacification technology out there. The moral of the story is, I read all these books and I read all these websites on how to do parenting but it was different. Every child is different and that's the same with your business.

That was the sequence I have for mainly females.

I had a different one for guys that I put in the sequence as well. I basically told the story of my quest for 6-pack abs. I know in the past Pat that you had done P90X and you were trying to get in really good shape as well, right?

**Pat Flynn:** Yes.

**Steve Chu:** For me, I was looking online and I thought the secret to getting 6-pack abs was doing sit-ups. Even after doing sit-ups I was getting fatter because I was



building muscle underneath all my fat. I don't want to get into that but what was happening was I was doing everything all wrong. Despite what I read online, I was drinking all the protein shakes and that sort of thing and it was only after talking to certain people who had done it before that I actually finally managed to achieve that goal.

So that's the sequence I have for guys. It's funny. I get responses only from females for the baby one and I get responses from the guys from the 6-pack one. That's just the way it is.

**Pat Flynn:** You don't feel like putting one of those stories out there alienates the other?

**Steve Chu:** I don't think so. If they don't want to read it, they don't want to read it. At the end of these emails I have a small call to action that says "If you want to learn the right way and you want to have someone to ask questions to during the entire process, consider joining my class."

**Pat Flynn:** Does every email have a pitch at the end of it?

**Steve Chu:** Not every email. A lot of times it's just subtle. Sometimes I put it in the 'P.S.' like "P.S. If you want to take a chance on yourself, join the class" so it's subtle.

**Pat Flynn:** It's subtle. It's not a huge page and there's not like a P.S. after, "By the way, last chance to get this!"

**Steve Chu:** I don't do that actually.

**Pat Flynn:** There's a few people out there who do this really well that I follow. Ramit Sethi from I Will Teach You to be Rich, he pitches really well. It's amazing how he does it. And you already mentioned Noah Kagan.

**Steve Chu:** It's funny, I've been trying to emulate some of these people that you mentioned but we all have different writing styles so it's just a matter of finding the writing style that works for you.

I can't be a crazy Indian guy on email as well as Ramit can.



**Pat Flynn:** These links that are in the bottom of the emails, they go to your sales page. Did you do anything to help increase and get 3x results on the sales page? What else has happened to help increase these results or is it simply the autoresponder?

**Steve Chu:** It's mainly the autoresponder but I've also doubled my rate of email sign ups, which helped as well and I can talk about that a little bit.

When I first started blogging, I spent a lot of time optimizing my Ad Sense blogs. A lot of things that you do, the primary technique is to make the blog blend in with the content. For the longest time, the email sign up forms on my blog, I would have content and I would have a Facebook sign up thing and then I would have my email sign up form encased in this border to make it stand out more.

One day, Brandon of Bigger Pockets sent me an email and said "Hey, we've been split testing some of this stuff on my site, maybe you should try to blend in your email form in your content and just see what happens" and I was like "You know, that's ingenious." All this time I was starting to blend my Ad Sense ads in to get clicks, why wouldn't I blend in my email form as well?

What I did was I made the email form look just like the content at the end and that instantly doubled my email sign ups for that blog.

**Pat Flynn:** Instantly?

**Steve Chu:** Instantly. Over night.

**Pat Flynn:** And we can see examples of this on your site right now?

**Steve Chu:** Yes.

**Pat Flynn:** This is the opposite of what a lot of people are doing, including myself. This will be a really interesting thing to test. I think that's the biggest thing and kudos to Brandon for telling you that, the fact that he split tested and this works. What works for one person might not work for another but this seems a little counter-intuitive but a lot of times it's the counter-intuitive things that work. For me, what's working is the two-step opt in process, which I've talked about many times with Clay Collins here on the show from Lead Pages. Split test, you have to be split testing for sure.



**Steve Chu:** That whole two-step process seems counter-intuitive to me as well but it's apparently working for a lot of people.

**Pat Flynn:** Yeah. This is sweet. So you have a give-away I see that gets people to opt in. This is Create an Online Store in 5 Easy Steps. How many pages is this give-away? Is it a PDF file?

**Steve Chu:** No, this is my email autoresponder sequence that we've been talking about.

**Pat Flynn:** Oh, so it actually is the email autoresponder sequence?

**Steve Chu:** That's correct, yes.

**Pat Flynn:** So five easy steps, is that five separate emails?

**Steve Chu:** It is, yes.

**Pat Flynn:** And then they get the 24 testimonials, case studies, stories and stuff.

**Steve Chu:** The content is about 9 steps, even though it says 5, it's actually 9 because I have intro and resources and stuff on there. The rest of it is just kind of dealing with more of the psychological aspects of starting an online business and trying to get the person the mindset of wanting to start their own business.

**Pat Flynn:** Right and it's really important to think about that as well. No matter what niche you're in, before people can get your course, what do they need mentally to be ready to get that course? This goes along with what Derek Halpern said in a previous episode with the bonus sandwich and talking about that bottom bread that people will need before they devour that meat... That sounds... Anyway.

I'll link to that episode and you'll understand what the bonus sandwich means after that!

**Steve Chu:** So on the same lines, the best performing AdSense blogs are the ones above the content. It made sense to have a sign up form above the content as well.

Guys like Derek Halpern have this gigantic box above their content. I did not want to do that with my site so I just included a small link in the byline at the top of the article



and that actually converts really well. I was actually quite shocked that people noticed that small of a link.

**Pat Flynn:** Yeah, I see that there. I was curious. It says "What a 6-pack taught me about starting a successful online business," which apparently is one of your most popular posts. The pictures are amazing actually. Underneath that is your name and a click-able link right next to that in very small text, the same size as the author name, it says "Click here to learn how to start your own online store." I've never seen anybody put a call to action right at the top underneath the title. But it actually works?

**Steve Chu:** It works well. If you don't have one, you should give it a try. If you don't want to do that whole feature box above your content.

**Pat Flynn:** Wow, that's really cool.

We're approaching the 45 minute mark and I don't want to take too much of your time. You've already given us a ton of completely actionable...

**Steve Chu:** The major thing is yet to come. You have 5 more minutes?

**Pat Flynn:** Yeah let's do it.

**Steve Chu:** The major thing that made a big difference was going to single opt in. This is a controversial topic but what I did was I did an experiment, I went to single opt in and did a test of engagement.

**Pat Flynn:** So when you say single opt in, this is not sending a confirmation email to people after they subscribe, which for those of you who don't know, typically and the best practice is and this is what a lot of email service providers recommend is when somebody subscribes, they get an email automatically sent to them that says "Hey, before you can get all this content, we want to make sure you really want this. Please click here to confirm" and when they click that button in that email, which is an extra step, but it does confirm that they're human, that it's the right email address and theoretically that they would be a better subscriber.

**Steve Chu:** I found out just by looking at my stats, I was losing 50% of my people who weren't double opting in.



**Pat Flynn:** So half the people that got the initial email that said "Click here to confirm that you want to subscribe" weren't clicking?

**Steve Chu:** That's correct.

**Pat Flynn:** And when they don't do that, they don't get any of the other things.

**Steve Chu:** They don't get anything. Naturally when you go to single opt in, your engagement is going to be a little bit less. I did some testing on that as well.

With double opt in, 75% of people were opening my first email but with single opt in it was on the order of 55%. So just by taking everything into account, by going to single opt in I was improving my effective email list growth by a little over 50%.

**Pat Flynn:** So it was worth it.

**Steve Chu:** It was worth it.

I just want to dispel some of the misconceptions because I actually talked with some of the [AWeber](#) reps about going to single opt in because I was worried about spam. A lot of people are worried about spam. It turns out that AWeber have a lot of spam measures in place. For example, someone can't just go to your form and start entering a whole bunch of different email addresses. They won't let the same IP address make repeated submissions.

In the case that it detects that, it automatically switches to double opt in in case of any sort of suspicious activity.

**Pat Flynn:** Wow, that's really interesting, I didn't know that.

**Steve Chu:** People are also worried about the rate of complaints and my rate of complaints from my emails have not increased at all from going to single opt in.

**Pat Flynn:** Very intriguing.

**Steve Chu:** The only downside is that you have to clean your list more often because you're probably going to have more inactives. I make it part of my routine, every four months or so I go in and prune out the inactives, which is probably something that you should be doing anyway.



**Pat Flynn:** How do you do that? Can you be more specific about that?

**Steve Chu:** I just go through and I say people who haven't opened my emails in the last 6 months who had joined before a certain date. I use 6 months.

**Pat Flynn:** Then you just delete them completely?

**Steve Chu:** I just delete them.

**Pat Flynn:** You might as well. They're just taking up space and/or making you pay more money for that list.

**Steve Chu:** In the past, the accuracy of these open/click rates were a lot worse before Google implemented their changes, which pretty much opens images in their emails now. That's how [AWeber](#) tracks opens, with a little pixel.

Now I feel like the open rates are a lot more accurate and what I usually do is before I'm about to prune, I have this list of people who haven't opened in a while, I send them an email saying "Hey, I noticed you've been inactive. If you're still interested in being on this list, click on this link and you won't be taken off, otherwise you're going to be taken off immediately."

**Pat Flynn:** Yeah, that's awesome. That's a great tip and a biggy for sure. I would love to hear what all of you out there think about this, it's a huge debate, it has been for a while. Single opt in vs double opt in. Is it worth it? I would love to hear your thoughts about everything that Steve has talked about today.

We've got a lot actionable content here. I think this is going to be a popular episode and one that, even if somebody were to take one tip away, you've given a lot of tips, but even if somebody were to take action on one of them, it could drastically make a difference for their business.

Steve, thank you so much for your time. Where can people go to find out more information about you?

**Steve Chu:** You can go to [mywifequitherjob.com](http://mywifequitherjob.com). If you're interested in e-commerce you can check out my course at [profitableonlinestore.com](http://profitableonlinestore.com). If you're getting married



and you know you're going to cry at the altar, head over to [bumblebeelinens.com](http://bumblebeelinens.com) and we'll hook you up.

**Pat Flynn:** Steve, thank you so much for coming on the show, we appreciate you. Thanks so much.

**Steve Chu:** Thanks a lot Pat, it was a pleasure.

**Pat Flynn:** Alright, I hope you enjoyed that interview with Steve Chu again from mywifequitherjob.com. You can see everything he has going on there, get involved with his course as well. He also talked about Bumble Bee Linens. It's super cool that he was able to build such a successful business in what seems like a random niche. I wasn't kidding when I said I needed those things when I got married because I did cry a little bit.

Anyway, thank you for listening to the show. All the show notes are available at [smartpassiveincome.com/session143](http://smartpassiveincome.com/session143). All the links, resources, everything Steve mentioned will be there for easy clicking and also I want to thank today's sponsor, which is [99designs.com](http://99designs.com).

One of the coolest sites out there if you need something designed quickly and affordably within seven days, you can run a design contest and have multiple designers around the world compete to design the best thing that you need for whatever design job you need. Whatever it is, from a logo to business cards to headers to website landing pages to an entire website to food trucks to anything that you want designed.

Go to [99designs.com](http://99designs.com), punch in your little description of what you need and then all of a sudden, multiple designs will come in and you get to choose your favorite. You can even have your friends, family and followers vote on their favorites too so you can pick the one that you like best. If you're not happy at the end of the contest, you can run another one or get your money back.

So awesome. Go to [99designs.com/SPI](http://99designs.com/SPI) you can get a \$99 power pack of services for free that you can apply to your next design project. Check it out.

Thank you again so much for listening. It's a brand new year. I hope you're as motivated as I am. I have my whole calendar for the whole year planned out and I hope you have too because we're going to make stuff happen this year.





I know we all have amazing things planned at this time of year but not everybody eventually gets around to them so make sure that they happen and do everything one thing at a time. Coming out of this episode, what's that next thing that you're going to do? Head on over to the blog, get the show notes. Coming out of this, how are you going to use this to motivate you? What is it that you're going to do and finish and follow through with next?

That's what I want you to do. Thank you guys so much and see you in the next episode of the Smart Passive Income podcast.

Until then, keep at it. It's the beginning of the year. Keep moving strong. Don't let me down. Peace.

**Announcer:** Thanks for listening to the Smart Passive Income podcast at [www.smartpassiveincome.com](http://www.smartpassiveincome.com)

### **Links and Resources Mentioned in This Episode:**

- [MyWifeQuitHerJob.com](http://MyWifeQuitHerJob.com)
- [ProfitableOnlineStore.com](http://ProfitableOnlineStore.com)
- [Bumblebeelinens.com](http://Bumblebeelinens.com)
- [S2member](http://S2member)
- [Ustream](http://Ustream)
- [AWeber](http://AWeber)
- [Today's Sponsor: 99Designs.com](http://Today's Sponsor: 99Designs.com)