



SPI Podcast Session #145 - How to Become a Contributing Writer on Large Media Sites - From Bread Delivery to Content Delivery with Kimanzi Constable

Show notes: www.smartpassiveincome.com/session145

This is the Smart Passive Income podcast with Pat Flynn session number 145. 45...Omaha...hut!

Intro: 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, whose favorite number is inbox zero and three, Pat Flynn!

Pat: That's right. Three is my lucky number because the third time's the charm, third base, third degree, third wheel, Third Eye Blind, and all the other thirds that are out there. Sorry, this is getting weird now.

But anyway, welcome to the 145th episode of the Smart Passive Income podcast. I'm really excited because today we have a great guest on, somebody who has just gone through so much and has had an amazing journey. I actually had talked to him for years over e-mail, just randomly. He's always kept me updated on what he's been up to, and I believe I remember one of the first e-mails that he sent me was about how much he enjoyed reading my e-book that I give away for free at ebooksthesmartway.com. You can check it out there.

And he just told me, "That e-book was really useful," and so on and so forth, and I just had no idea how much has happened since then, after talking to him in this interview. I mean, I knew he had some things going on. He wrote some books. He actually got traditionally published, and so many other things happened—just the sequence of events that made it all happen, starting with getting involved with my book and everything, which is actually a book about how to write an e-book. So you can check that out again at ebooksthesmartway.com, it shows you how to do everything from outlining to completing to publishing and marketing and automating an e-book. And it's all right there for you.

So Kimanzi, who is this guest on that we have on today. Kimanzi Constable is his name. Such a cool name. You can find him at kimanziconstable.com. Don't worry if you don't know how to spell it right now. All the links will be in the show notes at smartpassiveincome.com/session145. But you know, enough of me. Let's just get right into the interview and let him tell his story.

Also, he's been doing something to market his books and his blog and himself lately that a lot of people can benefit from, even if they're just getting started, and that is



becoming a contributing writer on large media sites. And he's going to walk us through, exactly step by step, some of the secrets and tips that you can use to have yourself become a contributing writer and stand out from the thousands, the tens of thousands of submissions that those sites get, so you can have a better chance of landing an article on one of those sites and help promote yourself and your site as well. There's a specific way to do that, and Kimanzi's going to tell us. So here he is, Kimanzi Constable. Let's go.

What's up, everybody? I'm so happy to welcome Kimanzi Constable to the show. What's up, buddy? How are you?

Kimanzi: Pat, this is kind of surreal to be here because I remember listening to you when I was delivering bread on a bread truck in Milwaukee, Wisconsin at midnight, and I was listening to Smart Passive Income.

Pat: That's crazy. How long ago was that?

Kimanzi: That was in 2011.

Pat: So I had just started my podcasts at that point.

Kimanzi: Just started. Well, I didn't even know what podcasting was back then. I was a bread guy for 12 years, and I started listening to Dave Ramsey because we wanted to get out of debt. And I thought, "Hmm, what else is out there as far as these kind of shows?" I found Dan Miller, who is a hero.

Pat: Dan's great.

Kimanzi: And then I was just browsing through iTunes, and I saw Smart Passive Income, and I thought, "Man, with what I do, I would love passive income." And I was hooked ever since.

Pat: And now you are making passive income, am I right?

Kimanzi: Yes, sir.

Pat: That's all right. That's awesome. We'll get into that journey in just a sec, but the first time I remember chatting with you over e-mail (this was a long time ago) it was about my e-book. And a lot of people who are listening to this may have already downloaded my e-book *eBooks The Smart Way*. But you talked about how you had just downloaded that book, and you loved it. And that's the first thing I remember you saying. So when you did that, tell me how you took that information that was in that book, and what you did with it, and kind of what happened after that.



Kimanzi: Yeah. So up until that point, I had been a bread delivery guy for 12 years. When I started at 19, life was good. When I had children, and they started getting older, and they added school activities and all that good stuff, it was getting hard to wake up at midnight and go deliver bread and get three hours of sleep a night. And so over the years, it just turned to not liking the job, and then towards the end there in 2011, I mean, I hated it. And I don't like to use the word hate, but I did hate that job.

I didn't have a college degree. I didn't have any special skills, so I just kind of felt trapped. And there were some changes at the company. They got bought out by a larger company, and we were independent operators. And we were worried that we weren't even going to have a job anymore, kind of a little bit like your situation. But I wanted to vent [about] what was going on, and I didn't think my wife would get it. And I didn't want to talk to my co-workers because everybody was kind of looking out for themselves in that way. So I started journaling what was going on.

And up until that point, Pat, I hadn't touched a computer. I wasn't on social media up until the middle of 2011. I didn't know any of this world at all. So after journaling this stuff, I thought, "Man. What can I really do with this?" And I kind of checked that in the back of my mind until about a couple weeks later, I saw an article about a woman named Amanda Hawking. She was a 19 year-old CNA from Minnesota. She had written 17 novels by the time she was 19. Yeah. So she liked to write. And she tried to get the agents. She tried to get the publisher. She had something like 20 rejections. And she decided to self-publish.

In 2011, self-publishing wasn't what it is today. So this was kind of a new thing, and she put it out there. She didn't have a big Twitter following. She had, like, 800 people on Twitter. She put the books out there, not knowing what's going to happen. And the first day she sold 456 copies. If anybody's listening to this and they self-publish, they know that that's a decent amount of copies to sell of your book.

Pat: Absolutely.

Kimanzi: After a month, she had sold 10,000 copies. And then after eight months, she had sold one million copies of her self-published books. And Random House and all those people that had rejected her, they came and offered her, and she signed a deal for \$2.5 million with Random House. And I was reading this story in USA Today and I thought, "Man. If this girl from Minnesota, my neighbor here, could do this, why couldn't I self-publish my little thoughts right here into this e-book thingy?"

So that's where the problem came. I didn't know anything about putting this together. So that's when I found your site and I found *eBooks The Smart Way*. I had no clue what I was doing, but that e-book—that little e-book—walked me through how to self-publish a book, how to put it together, how to make it nice, and I came out of reading *eBooks The Smart Way* with an actual e-book, which was my first book, *Tales of the Everyday Workingman (and Woman)*.



Pat: Nice. Talk about what you did after you wrote that e-book. I know a lot of people out there who get to the point where they decide to write, and they write, and they have this finished product, but then they don't know what to do with it. I'm curious to know because I don't even know the full story really. After you had that, what did you do with it? How did you get it out there?

Kimanzi: Oh man, I put it out there, and it sold 10,000 copies the first two days. ...I wish I could say that's what the story was.

Pat: Okay! I was like, what?

Kimanzi: [laughing] No.

Pat: [laughing] What is your secret? How did you do that? Okay.

Kimanzi: Absolutely not. I joined social media. When the book was done, I joined social media. I joined Facebook and Twitter and all that. And I didn't even understand how Twitter worked, Pat. I followed all these people, and I thought that if I posted, they saw it, not realizing they have to follow me first. That's how clueless I was. So I put this book out there. I told everybody in the bread world, the delivery world, and grocery stores I went to like, "Hey. I got this book coming out." Everybody's like, "Yes. Yes. We're going to buy it when it comes out." The day that the book went out it was August 11th of 2011. I ran home from work. I thought I was going to log on to Amazon and see 100 sales from friends and family and all these people. And I logged on to Amazon, Pat, and you probably can guess what I saw was a big, fat zero. Nothing.

Pat: Not even one.

Kimanzi: Not even one. But I thought, "Hey, maybe Amazon doesn't update their results in real time." So I waited a few hours, and I checked again, and it was zero. I checked again throughout the day, and it was zero. And three days later it was still zero, and three days later, I went on Facebook and I'm like, "Everybody's fake. You're not my friends. You're a bunch of liars. You said you were going to buy my book." I was... I'm not even exaggerating, Pat. By the end of that, the only Facebook friend I had was my wife. That was it.

Pat: I can only imagine how, after putting in all that work and hearing these success stories, and then doing the work yourself and doing essentially the same thing, to see a big, fat zero—how deflating that can be.

Kimanzi: It was crushing. I thought, "You know what? Forget this internet stuff. Forget this. I'm going to go back to the bread world and just be a blue collar guy the rest of my life." But I have a really good group of friends. It's two friends and my little brother, and we had talked every day about our dreams and the things we wanted to do.



So when this happened, and I'm telling them that I'm not dealing with this anymore, they're like, "Yes, you are." They're like, "Stop being a baby. You haven't put your effort into this. Figure out how to do this kind of stuff, and get back and keep going." They were really the reason that I just kept going.

Pat: That's great. I felt the same way when I lost my job. It was the people around me who helped keep my head above the water and keep going. But when did things finally start to take off for you?

Kimanzi: So I spent the rest of 2011 trying to figure out this internet world, and I researched. I got really involved in your blog, and I got involved in all of our heroes, you know, the Jeff Goins and the Dan Millers and the Michael Hyatts, and really researching. So I came to the beginning of 2012 with a game plan. One thing that I had seen that really had worked time and time again—and this was a credit to Jeff Goins—every blog that I read, Jeff Goins was on. This Jeff Goins guy is everywhere. And I noticed something in the beginning of the article. It said, "This is a guest post by Jeff Goins." And I thought, "Guest post. Guest post. I keep seeing this everywhere." I started researching guest posts. I saw, "Hmm. You can write an article for a site that probably has more traffic than yours, and they'll give you some links back to your site."

So in the beginning of 2012, I spent January and February—and this is another Pat strategy because he had talked about this with his Ease On articles—I spent the beginning of January and February just writing guest posts. I'd written 80 guest posts in those two months, and I had been sending them out everywhere. I got quite a few rejections because, you know, I didn't know what I was doing. But the first person to say yes was Dan Miller. That was in March of 2012. He ran that post. I got traffic. It was something like 300 e-mail subscribers. It was stuff that I had never seen before.

To follow that up, March 9th I guest posted for Michael Hyatt. This was back in the day when he didn't post as much, and you were the only guest post that was going to be up for a long time. So when that post hit, that month that I had that guest post on his blog, that whole month I ended up getting 6,000 e-mail subscribers between him and Dan Miller, and then a few other little websites that I had guest posted on. But in 2012 I guest posted on 50 different blogs, Pat.

Pat: That's crazy. You put in the work, and that's the thing. You know, you can't just "build it and they'll come." People think that that's the case, and we often hear these success stories of people who seem like they just build something, and all of a sudden it's just an overnight success. But they don't know the back story behind it. I'm always reminded of Rovio and Angry Birds. That was the 60th game that they created. Tim Ferriss, it seemed like he came out of nowhere, but he was rejected as well—20 times—before a publisher finally published *The Four-Hour Work Week*.

Here you are finally putting in the work and connecting with the right people and getting these guest posts. That's amazing. That's great. I'm curious to know, because I



know a lot of people run guest posts and a lot of people get rejected. What do you feel made Dan and Michael say yes to your guest posts?

Kimanzi: Well, back then you could interact with them directly. So when I would e-mail Dan or Michael Hyatt, I would get responses from them. Dan Miller, he's so gracious. He's my hero.

Pat: Dan's amazing. 48days.net, for those of you out there.

Kimanzi: Yeah. He is the kind of person, I will tell you, he's straight up with you. "Hey, Kimanzi, I like this, but this is where it needs some work." That's the kind of guy Dan is. Michael Hyatt was the same way. He said, "You're close but this is not quite it. Work on this." Sent it back. He's like, "Okay, just work on this area." Third time, sent it to him, he's like, "Okay, now this is ready to run." So that feedback really helped.

Pat: That's really cool. I think that's a testament to why they are successful. They are just so generous in that way but actually care and are willing to help people. I mean, that's me as well. Your earnings are a byproduct of how well you serve your audience, and here they were serving you, and you're giving something to them as well. I think it's really cool that you kept going, too. I think a lot of people, if somebody came back to them and said, "You know what, this really isn't there yet," they would stop. But you kept going.

Kimanzi: Yeah. Well, after a few of those rejections, something that I really picked up on was I was writing articles that I thought would be a good fit. And I thought they were great articles in my mind. But then I realized, when I looked at the ones that were rejected, I realized that they got rejected because I wasn't writing for that blog's audience. I was writing what I thought they would respond to. But guess what? They might not respond to that. And so I started, when I wanted to guest post, I would research the blog. I would see the style that the blogger wrote in.

Michael Hyatt, for example: He likes numbers and alliteration. That's what he likes—"One, two, three, four." And he likes alliteration. Jeff Goins, for example, is more of a free-flowing write, so he's not going to have the numbers. It's not going to be a listicle. It's just going to be a free-flowing article. So once I could figure out the style of the blogger, and then really take their pulse and see what their audience was responding to, that's when I became more effective at landing those guest posts.

Pat: That's really cool. Okay, so you're getting these guest posts out. Traffic's coming to your site. Take us through the next part of your journey.

Kimanzi: Yeah, so I self-published a second book which was called *The Difference Between Living and Existing*. And by this point, the e-mail subscribers were up there, the traffic was up there. By the middle of 2012, I hit my first 100,000 visitors on my



website from all this guest posting. And people actually said that they liked the content. So I wasn't a very good writer, but they appreciated that I was honest.

I talked about some hard things, Pat, because when I had the bread business, going through all that I had racked up \$180,000 in debt to the IRS from mismanaging business for 12 years. We had to declare bankruptcy. I put that on my blog. My wife's like, "Don't put that on there." And I'm like, "I have to. This is going to help somebody." When I did, Pat, I got 136 e-mails. I had never gotten that many e-mails in my life. There were people like, "I can't believe you wrote about that, but I'm going through that. Thank you, thank you. Me too, me too."

And so I wrote about that. I wrote about the time my wife and I split up, just because the money problems were there. I wrote about all these difficult situations just to encourage and help people. And people responded. They shared the blog like crazy. They bought the books. By that point, when I logged back on to Amazon in the middle of 2012 (because I hadn't even wanted to look at it), I had sold 10,000 copies of both books by that point.

Pat: Wow.

Kimanzi: And so in the middle of 2012 I went to Brendon Burchard's [Experts Academy](#), and at that conference, I'm sitting there at dinner yapping away, because one thing Brendon does is make you network with other people at the event. So I'm sitting there yapping away to this guy at dinner about my books and how they had sold 10,000 copies, and I even took my laptop out and showed him because I was that proud. By the end of the dinner, I'm like, "Oh man, I didn't even ask you what your name was." He's like, "Hi, my name is Nathan. I'm the publisher at Sound Wisdom Books." We walked away from that, Pat—I was shaking.

When we got home from that conference, he had e-mailed me and said, "Hey, I'd like to look at your books and see if we could work together. Sound Wisdom can publish it." I sent him *Tales of the Everyday Workingman (and Woman)*, and he said, "This is not going to be a good fit." I sent him *The Difference Between Living and Existing*, and he said, "We can work with this. It's going to take some work. We can work with this." And so Sound Wisdom Books ended up giving me a four book deal, and in May of 2013, they published my first book.

I was able to walk in the bookstore (Pat's seen the picture here on Skype) with my 86-year-old grandfather at the time. Oh until that point, Pat, I had told my grandfather that I had e-books, and he's like, "What are those?" Because he doesn't touch computers. And I'm like, "Those are books in the computer." And he's like, "A book is not on the computer. You got to hold a book." I'm like, "No, Grandpa, it's a book." He's like, "No, it's not." So when the book came out I was able to pick him up. We walked in Barnes and Noble. I'm like, "What's that over there?" He looked, and he looked back at



me, and he looked again, and he's like, "Is that your book?" I'm like, "I don't know, Grandpa, pick it up and look inside." He saw my picture, Pat, and he just started crying.

Pat: Oh my gosh. I'm tearing up right now hearing the story. A lot of you out there know that one of my life goals is to write a book and be able to take my kids to the bookstore and do essentially the same thing. Man, he must have been so proud.

Kimanzi: Because when we were younger, he had given my brother and I, from the earliest birthday we had, he gave us a book for every one of our birthdays. And it was always a new book. So he really instilled that love of books in us. So to see his grandson's book in there... And I said, "This is because of you, Grandpa." It was like a surreal moment. And then, it's special because (I told Pat before we got on the interview) he died on Tuesday. I'm just glad that he lived long enough to see that.

Pat: Dude, thank you for sharing that and being honest and being able to live through that with you. It's incredible, and I'm so sorry to hear about your grandfather, but I know he's looking down and really proud of you. I hope this inspires people like I feel like it will.

Kimanzi: So up until that point the books had sold incredibly well. They had sold a little over 82,000 copies. Then the publisher took the book. They re-edited it, they put a new title on it, new cover. They released it as a traditionally published book. Around that time, beginning of 2013, I had gotten some exposure. I had sold some books. My conference in West Virginia, my social media conference, was called The Bam Social Media Conference in Huntington, West Virginia. They said, "Hey, we see what you're doing online and with books and all social media. We'd like to have you come out here to speak." And then they said the magic words, Pat. They said, "We'll pay you."

Pat: Yes.

Kimanzi: And I am an extreme introvert, Pat. Somebody said, "Speak on stage." I said, "No way. I'm not even going to do it." But I told my wife about it, and she's like, "Yeah, you are going to do it." So being the good husband, I said, "Okay." I got to Huntington, West Virginia. I got on stage. I looked at all the people, and I walked off. I'm like, "There's no way I can do this." But I could hear my wife, and I could hear people channeling. I channeled them. I got back up there, and I was terrible. Like, it was bad. I'll send you the YouTube video. It was really bad, Pat. But people said, "Hey, you don't speak very well, but the content is good." And I thought, "Well, you know, there's something I can work on." One thing I did love about that, Pat, was the travelling. To go somewhere new. People on the airplane were like, "What are you going to West Virginia for?" I'm like, "I'm going to speak at this conference." They're like, "You're a speaker?"

Pat: Yeah, right?



Kimanzi: I'm like, "I'm a speaker!" Like me, the bread guy, I'm a speaker! So after that experience, there was a conference in New York put on by some guys that I had met at Experts Academy. And they said, "Hey man. Come out here and speak. We'll pay you. Come on out here." It was the first time in New York. It was the first time seeing Times Square and having New York pizza, and it was surreal. I went up there, and one of the speakers right before I got on said, "Hey man. Remember two things. Number one, these people are here to see you. And then number two, have fun." He's like, "If you remember those two things you'll be great."

And so I went out there and I just had fun and I was infectious. And the audience loved it. They laughed. Inside the audience was a woman who was organizing a conference in Sydney, Australia. She came up to me afterwards. She's like, "I love your story. Would you come out to Sydney and talk about this?" And I'm like, "Are you serious?" She's like, "Yeah." I'm like, "Are you going to pay me?" She's like, "Yeah." Pat, I didn't know anything about this world. I didn't even have a passport, Pat, and this was in March, and this event was in June. So I had to get my passport fast tracked.

Pat: Right, right.

Kimanzi: And I had to get a visa to enter Australia. It was a lot of stuff. But I went out there. I spoke at the University of Sydney in front of a thousand people. That one didn't go quite as well because I said a couple jokes and a couple things that only we would understand here in America. When I said them, people didn't receive it well at all.

Pat: Right. Well, that's okay. I mean, you're travelling the world. You're speaking. You're getting paid to do that, and we've all heard the journey you went through. It's just incredibly, incredibly inspiring

Can you tell us really quick where should we go and see what else you are doing, and your books? What's your website, and also, what's the name of the new book that you worked on with this company?

Kimanzi: The website is kimanziconstable.com. You could Google it. There's not that many. Or you can go to livingorexistingbook.com, and that'll redirect you to the site. And the book that Pat is referring to is *Are You Living or Existing? Nine Steps to Change your Life*. And that was originally a self-published book.

Pat: That's really cool. There will be links in the show notes as well to Kimanzi's books, to his website, and all that stuff. Now, I mean, geez... we could end the conversation there, and I think a lot of people will go and continue to keep doing what they need to do to make things happen in their life, just like you did. But before the call, we also talked about some of the stuff that's been working really well for you now. You're doing a lot of writing on a lot of these big sites now. Can you talk about what it is that you're up to and what's working for you?



Kimanzi: Yeah, definitely. Since 2014 came around, and with guest posting now, it's a little bit of a different game. There's definitely places you can go in your niche or your topic and guest post. But a lot of the larger sites now do not take unsolicited guest posts anymore. I don't believe Michael Hyatt does anymore. I don't think Jeff Goins does, either. So it was something I kind of had to figure out. "Okay, how am I going to get traffic?" And one thing that I had always wanted (and Pat kind of wants this to an extent) with the published book is I wanted to go a little bit more mainstream this year. I wanted to go after some of these bigger opportunities.

One thing that I had seen constantly in my Facebook news feed was articles from The Huffington Post, from Entrepreneur Magazine, from MindBodyGreen, all these really big sites. I would read these articles and not think twice about it. One day when I was reading this article, I looked, and I saw something on The Huffington Post. It was a person not on staff that was writing this article. And I clicked. I saw that this person was a contributor. And I thought, "That's interesting. That's kind of like guest posting."

So I started researching and trying to figure out, well, I want to write for The Huffington Post. The place, it seemed big, and it was intimidating, and they had an online submission portal thing, and I just didn't know what to do. The research that I did, there wasn't a lot of information on how to get on The Huffington Post. So I just went with what I knew, and that was write a good article that would fit the site and send it to the right person. I didn't want to do the online submission portal thing. I wanted to get this to an actual person I can interact with.

And so I went to their staff page. I saw their editors. I looked that person up on Twitter, and I saw what they were tweeting, and I just started retweeting some of their stuff. I started seeing what they were into and just getting to know them. We established a little bit of a rapport. I was on their Huffington Post articles commenting, so I had somewhat of a relationship with them. When I had felt that I shared this person's stuff, and we had a little bit of a rapport, I said, "Hey, how can I write for The Huffington Post?" He DMed me and said, "Here's my e-mail address. Send me your article directly." I sent him the article directly, and to my surprise, he said, "This is good. We will run this."

Pat: Wow.

Kimanzi: Once you're in a large magazine site, you are officially a contributor. They give you a blogger account where you log in. You write articles whenever you want. You can write once a week or once a day. You could write it once every year. You have the blogger account, so you can blog whenever you want and on whatever topic you want.

Pat: Interesting. Wow. So once you're in, you're kind of in. I'm assuming there's still an editor that goes in before they go out. You can't just mass spam. They check everything to make sure it's legit and everything, right?



Kimanzi: Oh yeah. Absolutely. Once you're in, you submit your articles kind of like WordPress, and it goes to their editors. They'll check them to make sure there's nothing offensive. Self-promotional is something that they do not like at all. They don't want direct links to your website and stuff like that in articles. They'll strip all those links pretty quickly. They want something that is going to be for the readers and give real benefit for the readers. And just because you're in as a contributor doesn't mean that you won't get an article that gets rejected.

Pat: Okay.

Kimanzi: It will get rejected if it's not the right content.

Pat: Now, I think when you said that you can't include a link back to your website, everybody who is listening had their high hopes up and was at the tip of their chair, and now they're kind of sitting back down because they're like, "Oh well, what's the point if there's no link?"

Kimanzi: I should rephrase that because that's not entirely correct. They don't want it to be self-promotional. There's a few ways. I'll walk people through this, Pat, if they are going to pitch to a large website. I'll walk them through it really quick, the Reader's Digest version.

Pat: Perfect. Thank you.

Kimanzi: So this is what I would do if I was going to write for a large website. Identify the site that you want to write for. Make sure it's for your audience. Let's say it was entrepreneur.com. I would go to entrepreneur.com, and I would go to their top 50 posts—their most popular posts. Those posts are popular for a reason. That's what their audience responds best to. So if you model your post off of something in the top 50, that's what an editor's more than likely going to accept because it's already the kind of content they like. So you'll scan through the top 50 posts. If you saw a post that said, "Ten Ways to Connect with Pat Flynn," I'm not telling you to write an article that says, "Nine Ways to Connect with Pat Flynn." That's not what I'm talking about at all.

Pat: *Back to the Future*, family...

Kimanzi: Yeah!

Pat: Anyway. Go ahead.

Kimanzi: Yeah. Exactly. But you could say it different. You could say, "Seven Unique Ways to Connect with Pat Flynn," or you could say, "Seven Ways People Connect with Pat Flynn the Wrong Way." You just mix it up, and more than likely, you're going to make it relevant to your topic. So you see something in there that's about



entrepreneurship, bring it back to your topic. You see something that's in there about leadership, bring it back to your topic. But get your idea from those popular posts.

I'm going to tell you: As much as people say they don't like them, your first post, your first pitch, should be a listicle. It should be seven ways, five ways, four ways, etc. The reason being is because people scan. When they're reading those websites, they're just scanning. They'll look at a post, they'll see seven ways, they'll say, "Hmm. This tells me seven ways. It's a definite beginning and end. I'm going to go on that article." They click on it, and they scan the main points. If anything at the main points catches their eye, that's when they'll dig deep because people just are busy, especially entrepreneurs. So when you have an article that's not a listicle, somebody would see that, and they're going to say, "Okay, this is going to take a little time to read. I don't have time for that right now." That's why those listicles are so popular, because people can just buzz through them. When you're an editor getting thousands of submissions from people, you're going to scan through. You're going to see all these posts, and the one that's a listicle, that's the one that they're going to jump on and pick because they can scan the main points. If the main point looks good, they can say, "Okay. We want this person to be a contributor." I'm going to tell you that your first post should be a listicle.

Once you have an idea for the post, you've got the listicle, you write it out, you're getting ready to pitch at this point. What I would do is on each of these websites, they're going to have a staff, or they're going to have an editors page. An editor is the person that can kill an article, or they can accept it. They have the authority to do that. There are always online submission portals, but I'll tell you, Pat, one of the editors at The Huffington Post told me that in their online submission portal, they get 30,000 submissions a day.

Pat: Wow.

Kimanzi: Yeah. So you submit to that thing, and I don't think your chances are very high of them actually picking it up. So what you want to do is you want to go to their editors page. Find the editor of the section that you want to write for. As much as possible, build up some kind of rapport with them. You don't have to be best buddies, but they have to, at least, look at your name and recognize your name—that you're not completely unknown. I have seen people pitch completely unknown and get articles, so it definitely is possible. If you can build up a little rapport, I think that helps you. But when you've built up that rapport, or if you want to pitch them directly, most places will have the e-mail addresses of the editor where you can just click and e-mail the editor directly.

A place like The Huffington Post, for example, does not. They just have a list of the names of editors. So I'm going to give SPI listeners a little exclusive tip that I picked up here, okay? So this is just for you, Pat.



Pat: Cool, thank you.

Kimanzi: The Huffington Post uses a "first name.last name@huffingtonpost" format. So if you're going to pick an editor on Huffington Post, that's what their e-mail address is going to be. You pick the section that you want to write for, you look for that editor, and you e-mail them the article directly in the e-mail. Do not put in an attachment. An editor will delete an attachment really fast. There's viruses and who knows what. So you want to put that in the body of the e-mail. As far as what your pitch should say, I like to keep it short and sweet. So, "Hello, Pat Flynn," if he was the editor, "Hello, Pat Flynn. My name is Kimanzi Constable. Here's my website. I've written an article that is this many words."

The word count is very important. When you are going to write for a place, you always want to research their terms and conditions and get a feel for the articles. Entrepreneur.com, for example, articles cannot be more than 800 words. The Huffington Post is going to be 500 to 1,000 words. Anything above or below is not going to get run. You really have to know the place. When you say in that e-mail, you say, "Hey, this is a post that I've written. It's 600 words. Here are some writing samples."

I would, as much as possible, link to writing samples that are not on your blog. Your blog is probably great, but they want to see some of your work elsewhere. They want to see that you have been out and about and you've been writing for other places. If you haven't, don't get discouraged. That's totally cool. You can still list your best two or three articles on your blog. But just let them see your best work, and then say, "Thank you so much. Your name," and then put the article in the body of the e-mail, and that's it. And you send it to them directly.

Pat: Awesome. That's really cool. What has been the result of doing all this kind of work?

Kimanzi: I started writing for The Huffington Post. The first post was in July, and then I picked up Entrepreneur Magazine, MindBodyGreen, The Goodman Project which I later became an editor at, and then on Business Insider. From July until this point, Pat (I just looked before we got on), my e-mail list went from 3,000 people... it's a little bit over 17,000 people right now.

Pat: And that's mainly from just putting yourself out there on just bigger sites?

Kimanzi: Putting myself out there. Traffic has been crazy good. The e-mail subscribers, my social media has grown as a result of it. The kind of the surprising thing is all the business that you get, people that want coaching or want to buy some of your other classes, people that want to work with you. I get a lot of, "Hey, I loved your Entrepreneur article. I'd love to partner with you on this project." And then here's the crazy one, Pat: the job offers. Yes. There's been five or six job offers from SEO



companies, from social media companies, from marketing companies. That's been the crazy part of all this.

Pat: Do you think this is just for people who are sort of in the business space, or can anybody use these strategies?

Kimanzi: I think anybody can use these strategies. You don't have to be in a business space. Huffington Post, for example, is going to have every topic that you can think of.

Pat: That's true.

Kimanzi: They call them verticals. They have every vertical that you can think of. If you want to write about divorce, if you want to write about marriage, kids, whatever, once you're in as a contributor, you can pick any topic. Someplace like Entrepreneur, that's going to be specific to entrepreneurs. A place like MindBodyGreen, that's going to be health stuff. Here's another thing, Pat. You had talked about links, right?

Pat: Yeah.

Kimanzi: Links back to your website. You cannot have overly promotional links, but there is a little bit of a strategy to this. When you write for a large website, most of them, again, you have to research their terms and conditions. You can re-post that content elsewhere. So if you write for The Huffington Post, you can post that on your blog, or you can post it on Entrepreneur Magazine or somewhere else. Or if you write for your blog, you can re-post that on The Huffington Post. And here's the thing. When you re-post an article, you have to give credit back to the original source. So when you write something on your blog and then put it on The Huffington Post, at the bottom of the article it says, "This article originally appeared on smartpassiveincome.com." That's a direct link in the article right back to your website.

Pat: Wow, that's interesting. It almost makes me feel like if I were going to do this that, I would publish it on my site first anyway.

Kimanzi: Oh, there's people that exclusively do that. They'll publish it on their site first, and then they'll go re-post it there. I would tell you that for those of you that are thinking about doing this, I would not pitch a re-post as your first article. After you get in, it's totally fine to do that. But the first article should be original because as an editor (I edit at The Goodman Project, and I've talked to editors at Entrepreneur and The Huffington Post), when an editor sees it's a re-post, the first thing they think in their mind, whether this is right or wrong, they think "lazy writer." That's what they think.

Pat: Wow.

Kimanzi: Yeah. They want to see something original. They want to see your best work, like you're giving them your best foot forward. People even pitch to us at The



Goodman Project, and they'll say, "Hey. I had an article that did really good on my website. Here's the link." They won't even bother to put that in the e-mail. Those just get deleted because, you know, editors are busy. They don't have time to click over here and read this or that.

Pat: Yeah.

Kimanzi: But here's the thing to understand. It's something that Pat and I have talked about. They want to accept your article more than they want to reject it. So a place like if Pat took guest posts... Do you take guest posts, Pat?

Pat: Very rarely, but yes, I do.

Kimanzi: So it's very rarely. But even if Pat posts an article every day, that would be 365 articles in the year. A place like The Huffington Post will post that many articles in a week. That's how much content they have to put out there.

Pat: Yes.

Kimanzi: And at The Goodman Project, for example, where I edit, Goodman Project's a site that gets two million visitors a week. We post 30 articles a day. We have a lot of content to fill. Sometimes we look at that editorial calendar, and we're like, "Whoa. We need some more content here." So we'll scour LinkedIn, and we'll scour different places asking if we can re-post. These large websites have so much content to put out. They're always looking for good content. They don't base it off of their relationship or who you know or how big your platform is. They base their decision solely on how good the article is. If the article is decent enough, an editor can work with it, and they can make it great. And they would love to run that.

Pat: So if you are just starting out with your site or your business, a great strategy might be to maybe build some authority and connect with one of these larger sites and start to build a name for yourself that way.

Kimanzi: Absolutely.

Pat: Beautiful. Kimanzi, thank you so much for sharing that information with us, and also, obviously, your story and how inspiring it was. Before we finish up, do you have any final tips for anybody out there who's maybe where you were at before when you saw those big, fat zeroes back in Amazon?

Kimanzi: Yeah, definitely. That was discouraging, and I know how it is. I would say: Don't get discouraged. Books are one of those things that just take time, and they're not something that you can constantly promote. Books are more of like passive income, wouldn't you say that, Pat? As you grow your audience and your platform, more and more books start selling. So don't get discouraged at first. I would say do your



research, and nine times out of ten, I think the reason that a lot of people don't sell books and stuff like that is just because they don't have the audience for it yet. So if you are going to focus on anything, I would focus on things that build your audience. Maybe writing for a large site. Maybe going out and getting on a podcast interview. That's something we didn't talk about, Pat. In 2012, I got on 80 different podcasts in addition to writing those 50 different guest posts.

Pat: Wow.

Kimanzi: So it was a lot of hustle. It was a lot of work.

Pat: A lot of hustle, but it seems to be paying off for you now.

Kimanzi: Don't get discouraged, and just realize how everything ties into each other. One thing, Pat, that I had to put in the equation was back when I delivered bread, over the years I'd picked up a lot of bad habits. I was 170 pounds overweight. I weighed 370 pounds, Pat. So when I began this journey to quit a job I hated, to change my life, one thing that I saw a need to do... Especially going out there and speaking, because people would put this on Twitter: "This guy is great, but he's really large." And that hurt seeing that. So when I worked on all this at the same time, Pat, I wanted to work on my weight. And it took a long time, but I lost 170 pounds.

Going through that, it helped me get more energy. It helped me get more focus. And then the last part of that equation, as Pat knows, was we lived in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, our whole lives. In April of this year, we moved out here to Maui, Hawaii. That's where I'm coming to you from, Maui. And I know Pat is a big fan of Hawaii and Oahu, and so it all kind of works hand in hand. You work on one area of your life, and it's amazing how many other areas of life are going to be changed.

Pat: I love that. Thank you, Kimanzi. I appreciate it so much. Everybody head on over to kimanziconstable.com. We'll have links in the show notes as well. Again, it's smartpassiveincome.com/session145. Dude, thank you so much for coming on and sharing your story and these tips. Can't wait to connect with you again soon.

Kimanzi: No, thank you for *eBooks the Smart Way*, Pat. Thank you for continuing to do what you do day-in and day-out all these years. I speak for everybody. We just love what you do.

Pat: I appreciate it. Thank you so much.

All right. I hope you enjoyed that interview, a great interview with Kimanzi Constable from kimanziconstable.com. You can also get that free guide—no opt-ins required, just out of the kindness of Kimanzi's heart—at ripplestowaves.com/pat, which is going to walk you through exactly step by step, like he said, with screenshots and all that good



stuff on how to land an article on these large media sites, which can help you like we just talked about in so many different ways. So check that out.

I also want to thank our sponsor for today's episode, which is 99designs.com. They're doing amazing things over there. If you're looking to design something, maybe you don't have a budget to work with a designer full time. If you're looking for affordable but great quality and also fast turnaround for your next design project, head on over to 99designs.com. What you do is you set up your description of what you like, and then there's a contest. Designers will compete to have the winning design that you pick. You can even have your friends, family, and audience vote on their favorites as well. You can pick the one that works for you, and if you don't like it, you can actually get your money back or run another campaign. They're very great about that.

So if you want to go and do that and actually get a special deal, go to 99designs.com/spi. That'll get you a \$99 power pack of services for free, which will get you or grant you a little bit more features and more designers to work on your next design project. So again, 99designs.com/spi. Anything from logos to web pages, headers, anything. Anything you can think of that you need designed, head on over there.

Cool, thank you so much. I appreciate you, and I can't wait to share what I have for you in next week's episode. We have somebody who is pre-selling and validating a product for their audience. This person is in a very, very specific niche—actually a niche within a niche within a niche—and he's going to walk you through exactly how he's been very successful with some of his latest products, pre-selling the idea for those products to his audience before they're even built, getting cash from the customers that are going to be using this product to help pay for the development. A real-life example of that.

We'll see you next week. Thanks so much, and keep being awesome. Love you guys. Thanks so much. And don't forget all the links and resources mentioned in this episode. Direct links to anything that Kimanzi mentioned you can find at smartpassiveincome.com/session145.

Thank you so much. Thank you especially to those who have left iTunes reviews and ratings. It means the world to me. I appreciate you. Take care. And I'll see you in the next episode.

One quick thing before I let you go. This is related to last week's episode, actually, with Ryan Moran who talked about e-commerce and Amazon. It's a subject that, it seems like, whenever I talk about this on the podcast, SPI Nation goes crazy! If you go back to [episode 144](#), you'll see that there's a lot of comments and a lot of people really excited about what Ryan talked about. Ryan actually wanted to sponsor this episode and next week's episode so we can get more listeners to his podcast. So I thought, you know, I've never done this before. This might be a cool idea. So I want to let you know about



his podcast, which I actually listen to: [Freedom Fast Lane](#). It's all about building an insanely profitable business and investing the profits into truly passive income sources.

Obviously, he was on the show last week, and y'all loved that episode, so I recommend subscribing to his podcast. All you have to do is open up iTunes or Stitcher, search for "Freedom Fast Lane," and hit subscribe, or visit FreedomFastLane.com/pat. So check him out! Thanks so much, and I'll see you next week. Peace.

Outro: Thanks for listening to the Smart Passive Income podcast at <http://www.smartpassiveincome.com>.

Links and Resources Mentioned in This Episode:

- [Kimanzi Constable](#)
- [Ripples to Waves](#) (Free Step-by-Step Guide)
- [eBooks The Smart Way](#)
- Brendon Burchard — [Experts Academy](#)
- Dan Miller — [48Days.NET](#)
- Jeff Goins — [GoinsWriter.com](#)
- [Are You Living or Existing? 9 Steps to Change Your Life](#)
- [Tales of the Everyday Workingman \(and Woman\)](#)
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