



Affiliate Marketing and Revenue Shares with Matt, Joe and James

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Matt Wolfe and Joe Fier

James: James Schramko here. Welcome back to SuperFastBusiness.com. This is Episode 796. Today, I'm joined by special guests, [Matt](#) and [Joe](#) from [Hustle and Flowchart](#). Welcome.

Joe: Hey, James, great to be here. What an interesting episode. I guess, tell the folks what's going on here, and this will actually tell our folks, too.

James: Right, so what we do is, from time to time we collaborate, and we decide to get together. We often have really good conversations. So I think our past choice was to actually record it because it's kind of like eavesdropping on a conversation that was going to happen anyway.

So we do a simulcast. We record this episode, we publish it on both SuperFastBusiness.com and on Hustle and Flowchart, and I think [we've been together many, many times now](#), probably four or five times where we've come together, and every time, I certainly get great feedback from SuperFastBusiness listeners.

We have had you in the top 10, which is good, considering we publish about two episodes a week. So we're very close to 100 per year episodes, and to get in the top 10, I think, is a significant achievement. And I think we have a wonderful audience overlap. We have a lot of friends in common. I mean, I've surfed with some of your friends.

A string of common connections

Joe: Well, name some of them.

James: Well, there's [Paul Clifford](#), there's Aaron Fletcher, there's the Candy Man. He used to have a van that was like a candy and ice cream truck.

Joe: Wait, hold on. Who's the Candy Man?

James: He's one of our friends who lives next door, I think, to Aaron.

Joe: Oh, okay, yes. Aaron's been moving. Got to give a shout out to Aaron too, because he's the one that originally connected all of us, well, us to you.

James: He's a great guy. I think I just bought one of his Black Friday Specials because he was haunting my inbox and my remarketing, and I thought it might get rid of him. But I don't think the segmentation is there. But evidently, he did really well. And I remember many years ago, he did something tremendous for me. He was able to pass on a whole hard drive full of Jay Abraham things, with permission from [Jay Abraham](#), of course.

So he's been a great connector, and I've had lunch with him when I went over to TNC in San Diego many, many years ago. A bit of history, he was an early member of the SuperFastBusiness forum back when it was actually [SuperFastResults](#), like his very early days online. So we have a long history. I love his stuff. He does good work. I know you're very close friends, and of course, you're close friends with even people in my country like [Stephen Esketzis](#) and...

Joe: Yeah. [Charley Valher](#)...

James: Yeah, Charley is, you know, he's very close to my inner circle. He's a partner of mine. And I love what he's doing over there at [ValherMedia.com](#).

Matt: We actually hired Charley to help grow this podcast now. And then we're partners with a guy, Chris Benetti, who's also in Australia and inside your membership. And we just had [Gert Mellak](#) on the show recently, and we've been talking to him about maybe doing some SEO help with us in our business. So lots of interesting crossovers there.

James: Yeah. Like, it's such a good community. Like, Gert's my SEO man. He's the real deal. The backstory on him was fascinating because he was a member of SuperFastBusiness, and I was coaching him with his thing, and he had a few things that he was doing. But I found out he'd been in SEO for a long time.

And one of my other clients was asking for [help with SEO](#) and I said, "Why don't you have a chat to Gert?" And then Gert just transformed this guy's site almost instantly, and I got to see that because I'm coaching, you know, and I got to see this site that was tanked, revive, you know, rise from the ashes and start outperforming the competitors.

And I'm like, 'Okay, I got to get to know Gert a little more and find out what's happening.' And I recommended him to another client. Same thing. It's basically, everywhere I sent him, they're getting a result, and so eventually, I asked him to help me with my stuff, and we ended up becoming partners.

The game plan for this episode

I think that's what we're going to talk about today is, I want to talk about the affiliate marketing side of things. And I want to talk about perhaps the partnership side of things, because they are somewhat interrelated. And it sort of describes my journey of starting out online, where I was in the beginning an affiliate, and that was all my income. And then I added in services, and then I built on the coaching side of things. And then eventually, I've found some really fantastic people to partner with and to strengthen their brand, at the same time as becoming my business model.

So we could talk about the various stages of that. And I was also really interested in the affiliate marketing stuff, because I know you've been on some kind of a mission to go deeper into affiliate marketing. You interviewed me, you interviewed Stephen, but you've also spoken to lots of other people, really successful internet marketers, who have cracked the formula with affiliate marketing.

So I would love to extract from you a summary of sorts of everything you've learned from these experts about affiliate marketing, strained down into the 80/20 of the 80/20; what I'd call the 64/4, you know? If we could pull it into the top few bullet points that you must know, if you're going to do affiliate marketing, and then let's see if we can bridge that across to what would happen if you became an affiliate of someone's entire business or whole product line, which is essentially the kind of deals that I structure for myself these days.

So with that being said, why don't you weigh in there with some good stuff?

Graduating from the launch model

Joe: Yeah. That was an amazing intro. And I feel like that we've learned so much from you. So we have to take our collective hats off, because we're wearing hats, to you.

James: You literally are wearing hats.

Joe: No, I mean, but it's in full total truth and truthfulness to everyone listening is that you have been such an amazing guide and mentor to us for even before we were, you know, a paying customer of yours and a member of everything there, because we have a similar business model. Definitely different, but there's so much influence, the way that you communicate with your community.

You know, you have these deep relationships. And just to kind of answer some of your first question that you posed there is, relationships is really the key to everything we've done and from the people who are really good affiliates. It's relationships is really where it starts, at least the long-term affiliate promotions, which is what we prefer. We don't really like the, you know, let's get on the leaderboard launch day, and then off to the next thing. That's just too much work for us. And I'm pretty sure you would agree with that.

James: Yeah, you know, like, when I started online, there were those leaderboards and the contests. And I used to actually do one sort of promotion a month, one big launch. Back then, that was sort of \$1,000 products that then became \$2,000 products. And I would often go really well in the leaderboard. And there was a few peers back then who are still going well now.

But I quickly realized this launch model is exhausting. And I don't like those one-time shots, you know? I think I'd make 5,000 or 10,000. And the most I made was about \$78,000, I think I sold 78 of a \$2,000 product. And that was actually the birth of SuperFastResults, my original community, because my bonus was, 'I'm going to help you go through this training, because you're going to struggle unless you have my help. I know this material. I know the person selling the course. And I can go deep with you on all the things,' and I gave everyone who purchased a 60-day access to my brand new community, SuperFastResults.

In the beginning of 2009, this is before Facebook groups. And I had the foresight to set up a 60-day trial that then starts billing at what was then, I think, \$67 per month. And that was a 50/50 partnership, that venture. And that's how I started my first community of recurring subscription income. And to my surprise, I got no complaints and almost everybody renewed. I think somewhere around 65 people stayed in after 60 days. And then that was it.

Many years of building relationships

I've never, ever looked back when it comes to recurring subscription. But it came off the back of an affiliate promotion. And to speak to your point about connections, I think that's one of the things I brought from my old job as a general manager with a big team, having dealt with strangers every single day, for many, many years, in a showroom environment in a retail environment, but also building very strong connections inside the manufacturer.

I was working, of course, for Mercedes-Benz, having to establish very strong key partnership relationships with our competing dealers. I mean, the crazy thing is, we could sell something to a customer that they could also buy from any one of 10 competitors who were within a one-hour drive of our showroom; the exact same product. But if they purchased from us, then sometimes I would have to go and get that car from one of our competitors who had it in stock.

So it was such a knife's edge having to balance the relationship of being peers/friends/enemies, you know, competitors, but then it was us versus other brands, as well. So it was crazy. And then the next minute, I'd find myself in Tahiti, or Fiji, or Northern Queensland, or New Zealand, on a Mercedes-Benz achiever's trip, spending a week with my competitor and their wife, you know, with drinks, and food, and bus tours, and all sorts of amazing, dazzling benefits and entertainment.

So you build these strong relationships. And I think what you did that's very clever is host that drinking get together, you know, around the Traffic and Conversion event. That is an absolute master move in bringing people together, but also being the person responsible for that event. It's probably a little bit of a pain in the ass to organize. But it's also, I imagine, tremendously rewarding in terms of the outcome you get from that.

Joe: Yeah. Yeah, we got to give a shout out to Dan Ryan, actually, he's listening. I think you know Dan. But he kind of helps a lot in the background of organizing. And so it's actually fairly simple.

Matt: Well, he's the one with all the connections to the breweries and those kinds of things, and we're the ones who sort of spread the word about it.

Joe: We're more than marketers, promoters, and we just show up and put the face on because no one else in the group wants to do it. So we're like, 'Okay,' and you came out to one of them, I think, two or three years ago.

James: Definitely. Someone spilled their drink on me, and it was great. I think they were actually a bit intimidated by me, which I always find, like, fascinating. I'm sitting here, in my board shorts and bare feet. You know, in my own little micro environment, I'm an absolute nobody, right? I'm just a dude who goes for a surf, enjoys a coffee at the local cafe shop, spends a lot of time pushing a kid on a swing at the park, and watching Netflix.

So when I go to those events, and then people actually recognize me or know my name, I find that always intriguing, because you get insulated from that to some extent when you work from home for 11 years. And yeah, someone spilled a drink, and they were like, shocked, because they recognized me, and they thought I might get upset about it, but I actually just laughed about it.

Joe: He's going to ruin my reputation on his podcast.

James: Like, if you go to a pub, and there's beers in hands, and it's crowded, I think you could expect that is a collateral damage possibility. And you know, it was great. I was connecting with people from the East Coast, like Matt Coffy. And of course, you know, [Dan Wardrope](#), guys I'm really close to and do a lot of work with. And for me, going to that event is an opportunity to reconnect and strengthen the network; the very, very strong network that I've built in the United States.

Early days as aspiring marketers

And it all started really for me in 2008, when I went to Underground in Los Angeles. It was the first time I hopped on an airplane, since I was about 12, to go to America. And I didn't know a single person at that event. And there was I think 500 or 600 people at the event. And I took furious notes. I became very good friends with some of the people there. I actually won a contest. And I think I've mentioned this a few times before, but that was the big breakthrough.

I won a contest that put me in front of the entire crowd. I got up on stage to explain how I won the contest, and I won access to the Maverick Club, which was a club for millionaire marketers. And to put this in perspective, at this time, I still had a job. I mean, I flew back home from that event straight from the airport, had a shower, got in my car, and went into work, because I was still employed.

You know, I saw Mike Filsaime and Brad Fallon in another part of the bar there, like just there, like they were right just there. And you know, I was so close to celebrity and all the famous people I'd been looking at online, and now I'm right there.

Joe: We have a story. We should tell our versions of it. Like, very similar. Go for it.

Matt: I think yeah, the first event that I remember going to was actually a Mike Filsaime event in Las Vegas.

Joe: I was still working, you were not.

Matt: I think this was really soon after I'd quit my job. But we went to an event in Vegas, and I just remember walking into this hotel, and as we were walking around, like we were like, 'Oh my God that's Frank Kern. Did you see John Reese?' And like, we were whispering to each other, like, pointing out names like Taylor Swift was standing over there, or something, you know? But it was like, other marketer dudes just like us.

Joe: And it was a VIP, it was like an affiliate appreciation party. So it wasn't like, it was this mass, or you know, this thing with, we were just one of them, but like we were, yeah, we felt like we're the outsiders, like I don't know how we snuck into this party, but cool. And then now, those guys are buddies, those are friends of ours. And we share masterminds, we text each other, call, whatever it is. I mean, it's like us here, and it's fascinating. And it's fun to look back on those days. It wasn't that long ago. You know, like you said, about 10, 11 years ago for us as well.

James: I think when I started online, John Reese was a huge influence, because he had his million-dollar day. And that really struck a chord with me. I'm thinking, hang on a minute, this guy just made a million dollars in a day. Now, I can't even fully understand that most of that goes back to affiliates or traffic or whatever. But it was such a breakthrough at that time. And it really inspired me, and I went deeper into his stuff.

And then, was it just a couple of years ago, him and I are out there fishing in a boat on Sydney Harbour, you know, catching fish. I'm just there catching fish with John Reese, you know? Like, it's almost unbelievable. And then we go watch a movie or just chat, same as I hang out with - well, I literally stayed in [Dean Jackson](#)'s house last November when I went over to [Kevin Rogers](#)'s event. And our other housemate was [John Carlton](#).

You come out in the morning, and you're having breakfast with John Carlton and Dean Jackson, you just think, this is just unbelievable. That, you know, over the long haul, and I want to stress this, if you're listening to this, and you still think that most of these people you see are like a huge celebrity and untouchable, you'll find they're actually just normal people. And if you actually have a long-term outlook, you could actually befriend and become very close to these people in time. If that was your goal, if it was a part of your plan, then it is achievable.

But you just have to take a long-term approach to it. Don't do the things that annoy people, you know, like being overly eager or too in your face. I've always been reserved. I've got people's phone numbers and email addresses, I very rarely would use them. I think that's one of the secrets, is, the longer you can wait to monetize something, the more powerful it can be when you do, and this is sort of a classic startup philosophy.

Insights and experiences in revenue share

It's why I don't have huge expectations on new projects in the beginning, especially [revenue share deals](#). I want to keep it on topic here. Revenue share deals are like acorns, and they might not always be an oak tree in the first month. They might, however, in a year or two from now, have a dramatic difference. I'll tell you what that meant for me, and then I'll step aside for a sec.

For me that meant that as recently as a few months ago, I was able to switch off [SilverCircle](#) for new customers, as in I'm not taking new customers, I'm straight up coaching at high prices. Because my revenue shares have replaced that income. What that translates to is I've found another six or seven hours a week of calls I'm not doing to focus on the relationships I've already got.

So to put a bullet point on this, if you go in there for the long haul, and you want to build relationships that survive the test of time, they can snowball and compound, and you don't need many relationships to have an amazing business. And you really can [work less and make more](#) if you build those kinds of relationships, because they compound. And the average revenue share deal for me now pays more than three or four SilverCircle clients.

And when you have a portfolio of them, you can see that this actually could be a really serious business model. And it's a fairly fuss-free, sustainable model. I love the relationships I have with my partners. I actually still have all of my partners. That's the other thing, because I chose well this time. When I first tried this in the beginning, like 10 years ago, I made a lot of mistakes, and pretty much none of them survived.

So there is a learning curve. And it would be advisable to get help from someone like me or someone else. I know that you've got friends like Roland who teach putting together deals. There are people out there who do this. It would be wise to learn from them, pay them the money to shortcut the mistakes, because, you know, I made some expensive ones. The most expensive one I made cost me about half a million dollars over four years in partnership fees that I really didn't need to pay, if I were to look back in hindsight.

Joe: What's the big mistake in that venture there?

Lessons learned from partnership dealings

James: In that venture, I just went for your typical 50/50 deal, which almost every new marketer makes. You know, it's funny, I'm looking at you two on the screen thinking, 'Oh, crap.' Yeah, maybe you guys have got a 50/50 deal. And they can work. And I think you guys are a good example of a tremendous partnership. But in this case, there was a lopsided input. I got really heavy help in the absolute beginning.

My challenge or my struggle was putting together the tech, choosing a platform, putting together the tech and building the first funnel. My strength was acquiring every single customer and coaching them and servicing them, pretty much 100 percent. What I should have done is paid someone a few \$1,000 to set me up, and then own the rest of it. So I had the wrong deal structure for what I was trying to do, and it became obvious after a while that I was doing all the heavy lifting.

I introduced 99.99 percent of customers. And I was servicing probably somewhere around 80 percent of the fulfillment. And I'm like, 'Hang on, why am I sending off 50 percent of our profit every month when it's really not an even split?' And in the end, it was hard to exit that. I offered a buyout. I offered to be bought out. I offered to restructure the deal to take into account what it looks like in reality.

In the end, we couldn't really find an agreement. So I just started something new. And within a few months, everyone went to the new thing, and the old thing stopped, which actually validated my very reason-based hypothesis that I was actually doing everything. The mere fact that everyone came across and the other one pretty much just fell to the ground was proof of that. So that was that one.

So we all have these sort of little hiccups along the way. But I also went into a few other 50/50 deals. So my common strategy was to do a 50/50, but now I've realized that the marketer, the person doing the marketing, really should get a much bigger share than the expert or the person with the intel.



And that's one of the big key lessons, because the marketing is where all the skill and the knowledge and the leverage comes from. Basically, experts are a dime a dozen. You've often seen good, reasonable products that are marketed very well, will outsell an amazing product that's an obscure secret.

Forging good relationships in business

Joe: That's right. Yeah, it's very interesting. So going back to the relationships on our end, they are very long-term, at least, you know, not the newest ones. But our intention is always to stay in front of those folks in helping give value in some way. And usually for us, it starts with this podcast for any new connections we have, which are typically, you know, introductions from our mutual friends, yourself included. So I thank you for that as well.

And that's kind of, I think, have been a big piece of our secret sauce, is that it's a warm connection. There is some rapport built in from day one. But we don't ever drop the ball when it comes to prior to the podcast, during the podcast and after the podcast, there's follow up along the whole way. And now our newest thing, and actually I got to shout out Derek Sivers's new book, what is it called, *Your Music and People*?

Matt: Something like that. Your music, your people, something like that.

Joe: Yup, that's it. I just saw it. New book, I don't think it's even out yet. But we bought a bunch. It's made for musicians, so it's teaching musicians how to market. But it's everything we're talking about here, and it's written in such a simplistic form. So someone who's not a marketer actually understands marketing's probably most strongest principles. And it's said in a way where if you just replace musicians and flop it out with like, podcaster, affiliate marketer, whatever it might be...

Matt: It still applies.

Joe: Yeah. And I feel like it's just wise words. And there's some really interesting ways that he tracks people, you know, and follow ups and their systems. So that's really our new thing, is getting very systematic and let the systems work for us and not us have to think about, 'Oh, we should probably reach out to whoever.'

Matt: Well, while we're on the topic of connections, and you know, really building these relationships, I think one of the sort of things that we've struggled with in the past, we're getting better at it, but we struggled with in the past, I want to kind of get your take on it, is we have a lot of great relationships, in our network of people, who have products that are similar to other products we promote.

So for example, we've probably got four or five really close friends who all sell some sort of like, page builder type software. And so, we run into some issues where we've got this little tug of war going between some of our people that we're connected with for, you know, they want us to promote their thing, and we should be pushing this, but we're pushing this instead.

And that's something that we kind of get in our own heads about a little bit. So I'm kind of curious, when it comes to the relationships, how do you handle that sort of thing?

James: It's a tough one. That's exactly my scenario too. My affiliate story was promoting a web building software. So that's an absolute core strength of mine. I was one of the top affiliates for that software. I was making all my income from it in the beginning. I know [Stephen Esketzis](#) was also similar, I think, when he was promoting software. And then I went on to basically co-invent and encourage [OptimizePress](#).

And then I was an early, sort of, I think I was probably second after [Pat Flynn](#) promoting LeadPages. But I was promoting LeadPlayer actually, the first tool that [Clay Collins](#) had. And then I do get approached all the time with page builder things. This guy, you know, [John Lint](#), he showed up to the [Maldives](#). He built a strong connection with me surfing in a sort of enclosed environment on a boat for weeks at a time, many years in a row.

And eventually, I got to understand [his tool](#). But what he did that was very clever, is he sat down side by side with me, laptop to laptop and said, "Show me how you use your forum, show me what tools you use to run the business, show me your procedure." And he replicated my perfect workflow and toolset into his tool. So I think what he did that others haven't done is he just went deep into R&D.

An adventure in affiliate marketing

And I just want to lightly touch on this, because it just reminded me of something. When I was the top promoter of this software, in the beginning, my strategy for getting the most sales was to produce a cheat sheet. So I would actually really understand the tool and see how you could get the best results from the tool. And back then, I was actually getting better SEO and being able to write better copy and to hack the tool, to make it do things it wasn't supposed to be able to do out of the box.

And the cheat sheet was highly valuable. But what I noticed was, you know, the relationship with the manufacturer was very strong. And it had to be, because often their affiliate links, they wouldn't track properly, or the cookies wouldn't push, or I didn't get credit when I know someone bought from me, because they would claim my bonus, and they'd want my coaching. And they would actually sometimes adjust the affiliate sales in the back end to reflect what should have happened. They were using one shopping cart back then. It wasn't highly reliable.

And so there was that relationship, but they also doubled my commission. So it's kind of like, that was good. The bad thing, though, was, they would pretty much use my cheat sheet as a feature roadmap for what they needed to build into the tool and how to improve their marketing. I'm sure they literally gave this to their dev team and to their marketing team and said, "This guy is showing us how to market our product and what it should be able to do. I want you to make this standard, build this in."

When they come asking how you did it...

So I would have to constantly update it. It was so similar to my relationship with Mercedes-Benz and with BMW in the early days. I've got a story around that, too, that it shows you the difficulty of having a very close relationship and how you can get stung with it. It does answer your question, but in a slightly roundabout way. But when I joined BMW, that was my first car dealership job after being rejected by Toyota. To sell Toyotas, I got a job at BMW.

Joe: That's an upgrade, I would say.

James: I think I landed okay. Within a few months, I was selling really well. And there was this new model out. There was this 316i Compact. It was kind of a bit ugly, and it wasn't that popular. And so people struggled to sell it. It was nowhere near as sexy as the 318i, which everyone bought. And I got this phone call from a guy and he said, "Oh, hello, my name is Martin. I'm from head office. I'm in charge of marketing for Australia. And I just want to know, what are you doing to sell so many 316is?"

And I said, "Like what do you mean?" He said, "Well, you've sold more 316is than all the other dealerships put together. What's the secret?" He said, "Could you write some stuff down for me?" So you know, I was pretty excited by the prospect that this guy in head office is paying attention to me. I was 23 years old. And it sort of blew me away a bit. I went home and I created this 13-page, handwritten manifesto, which I faxed to him. That's this machine, you put the thing on, and...

Joe: Yeah, what's that? It makes some sounds, right?

James: Right. I won't do the sounds. But lo and behold, like a month later, pretty much everything I suggested got rolled out to all the whole country. Like, I suggested they put extra points on this particular model. I explained that I had a different test drive route for this car because it's so gutless, you shouldn't have any hills on the test drive route. And they actually told all the dealers to do that.

I went into a lot of depth, obviously, but basically he took my thing, no credit, and just published it in his own name for the rest of the people. And I'm like, 'Oh, wow, I kind of just got screwed over, my whole magic formula just got destroyed!' And it reminded me of that lesson that Brian Tracy teaches in *The Psychology of Selling*, which I listened to about a million times, like I literally wore the tape out; he talks about a glass salesman who sold shatterproof glass, and he sold the most glass, and they said, "How did you do it?"

He said, "Oh, well, I just basically grabbed this mallet and just smashed the glass in front of the customer." And it was about the power of demonstration. And then of course, everyone copied this person. Everyone copied him. And then the next year, he still sold the most. And they said, "How did you do it?" He goes, "Well, now I gave the customer the hammer." And so it's about experience, getting the customer involved in the experience. But there's a lot of lessons in this.

This is basically, when you're a top performer, or you're a top affiliate, or you are selling a lot of something, other people are going to come knocking, they're going to want the recipe, and then they're going to publish the recipe or use it against you straightaway. That is a market leveler.

So you must commit to innovation. If you're going to be an affiliate, whatever the current standard is will not be the current standard next year.

If you're going to go into rev share deals, you're going to have to back a horse that's a long-term performer. I'm pretty comfortable with [10XPRO](#) that I've backed, because it solves the problem of almost all of my customers based on the problems I was having that I solved for myself and then built into the tool. The other thing that was good about the arrangement is that we came up with a deal that makes it work for me financially.

Caring for the deals that you've got

So I'm very motivated by it. Now, when you do get other tools come along, and there will be other solutions, I've actually got a couple of rev share partners that do kind of overlap a little bit. So you do have to be careful. So when you get one in, it's absolutely critical that if you're going to take on another one, you need a whitelist or an approval from the one that's already in. Have you ever had a credit card or a phone or purchased a product, and then you see an ad for a better deal than what you got from the company, but they never offered it to you?

Joe: Oh yeah.

James: I think I've probably just described Black Friday and Cyber Monday.

Joe: Pretty much. We just passed that.

James: You've got to be so careful. So careful. Like there's a lot of people I wouldn't ever consider buying from unless it's Black Friday or Cyber Monday, because basically, you're getting screwed over unless you do. So you've got to be careful with that. But yeah, credit card companies, banks, telcos, they do this. They offer better deals to strangers. So what I always want to do is, basically, the group that I have is more important than my personal needs of bringing an extra person in for a little bit of extra commission.

I have to preserve the group at all costs, which means I have to say no to a deal, if it's going to be a conflict of interest to my current partner. And some of my current partners have vetoed potential deals on the basis that they feel that it's a little bit too close or a bit icky. So my first line of defense is I'll automatically filter out anyone who I know is a conflict. Secondly, if I'm not quite sure, then I'll run it past my current member and let them know how they want to be.

So I do have two agencies who sell similar things, but to slightly different audiences, but they started out quite apart, and they've ended up quite together. But it gives me basically Beta and VHS to go off to the entertainment market. I've got two choices. I've got one guy in my partnership does membership platform and course platform that has the facility to have an app. And then I've got another partner who focuses solely on apps and everything to do with apps. And there's a little bit of a stickiness in the middle there.

But the app guy was first, and the membership one came second. So the membership guy has to accommodate and be aware that my first true love for apps was with this first partner. So you basically got to draw a line in the sand and you have to let everyone know where their position is. Now if you're an affiliate and not a rev share partner, I think you have a lot more flexibility.

There's no reason you can't have a Products page, which is of course my Affiliate Marketing 101 thing. If you're listening to this podcast and you don't have a Products page with recommended resources, you're missing out on affiliate income. I was delighted when I heard [Bob Serling](#) talk about the exact same strategy years later, and I've had a [product page](#) for a decade, but have that recommended products.

You can carry multiple competitors on that page and let the customer decide. You can highlight your pros and cons of what you think is good for, you know, who is this for, who is it not for, what type of user wants this. I'm thinking, for example, I promote different levels of autoresponder. And I think there's marketplace space to have [ActiveCampaign](#) and [Ontraport](#) or Infusionsoft or MailChimp, because I think a lot of it's going to come down to who's using it, what they're using it for, and what level they're at.

How to help the customer decide

It's good to have a sweetheart. You can almost use a technique that my used car sales manager taught me back in 1995. He used to say, because often when you have a lot of cars, there's so much choice. You could walk into a dealership, and there might be 86 different models you could choose from, or even one model has three variants, or within the variants, there's like, 50 different ways to configure it.

And often that comes down to whether the thing is in stock or not. And if it's in stock, that's very convenient. If it's not, it's very inconvenient, quite often. He'll say, "Look, just go and tell him the story of the Three Bears." What he meant was, I'd have to share a Goldilocks story. And you know, the big buzz in 2020 in marketing is, [use stories](#).

Joe: Yup.

James: You know, stories have been around forever, since prehistoric age, right? Since the campfire. Like, I was using stories to sell way back in the early days. But he would teach me, I would have to basically give them three options. But make one the option that was best.

He'd be like, "There's this option here, and that's good if you want this or that. But it's not so good if you're after this. The one over here, this is what some people will have if their highest need is such and such. But based on what you've told me, that's not exactly what you're looking for. So therefore, I would recommend this. This one's got a nice balance of this, it's got a good balance of that, it will do exactly what you want it to do based on what you've told me, and it's going to fit perfectly within the budget. Looks like we've found the right vehicle for you."

And they'd be like, they'd be nodding their head, and they're like, 'Yeah, this is it.' So I would basically go through the decision-making process with them. And that's why on some tools or software, as you'll see, they have, like, a comparison chart. That's one method where they can help a customer decide if they're the right tool. My single, most successful episode on SuperFastBusiness is [episode number 775](#), and you can do this if you number your episodes.

And the reason that was successful is I actually made that an episode where I take people through decision-making process of which of my coaching programs is the right one for them.

Joe: Ah, clever.

James: We accompanied that with a comparison chart, and it shows the different programs I have, how much it costs, what you get, and it gives a link to buy.

A customer-focused way of running things

And importantly, underneath the chart is a got-a-question-ask-James button, and they can click on that, and they can send me an email to my inbox, which I respond to personally. And this, by the way, is the exact same technique I used to sell the software back in 2006, 2007, 2008, mostly 2007, 2008.

I had a Skype-me button on my site, so that people could contact me if they had a question while they're trying to buy. And I'm not too busy to take a call from someone who wants to send me \$50 or \$100 back then. It was great. And often the call was like, 'Yeah, hello, I just want to check, is this offer legit?' 'Oh yes, absolutely!' 'Okay, I'm going to go and buy it now.' 'Great. I look forward to your claim.' That was it. They just needed that security.

I mean, people weren't as trusting of the internet 10 years ago than they are today. But I think there's so many lessons that I've learned that I might have just shared there that apply to affiliate marketing. And I hope I've answered your question a little bit. But the answer is it's not easy when you have a platform for distribution that is very, very powerful for people who obviously recognize that.

That's why we say no to pretty much every guest recommendation, with very few exceptions, except when you send me a recommendation, guys, I usually have them on because of our relationship. That's my way of saying I trust you, and I will do this because I think that's probably helpful for you too. And you do the same for me. And I think that's a high-level reciprocation. And that being said, I do have occasionally guests on who might have offers that could conflict with something that I'm a financial stakeholder in, however, I'm thinking of my customer here. Maybe there's customers who the product is right for that they're not going to use a solution that I'm more tied to.

So ultimately, when it comes down to it, I'm customer-focused first. And then I'm partner-focused. And then I'm me-focused, like that's the hierarchy. The marketers who are me-focused, they're going to crash and burn, I'm telling you now. So it's not a matter of if, it's just when, and we've seen so many of these gurus and experts crash and burn, because it was all about them; their big, fancy mansion lease rental, their big Bentley rental, their cocaine habit or whatever, that's going to finish them before anything else.

If you focus on the customer, which I've done from the very first day when I got into business, you can't go wrong. And if your partner is aligned with helping the customer, which is, you know, that's my intention, the partnerships I've chosen for my rev shares, I want the best in breed product. I want the product that can help my customer better than any other product. And where it doesn't, I will give them input and help them to tune the product to be better. I cop a lot of feedback as a coach.

Every day, I'm getting people say, "I've got a feature request," or, "Can it do this?", or, "I'm looking for a solution." I've basically moved mountains, and with the support of my partner, John, for example, to mutate, and contort, and make [10XPRO](#) the absolute best tool we can to do the things that are important. And sometimes it's a matter of me saying to a customer, "Listen, the thing you're asking for, it's actually not important. Don't waste any more time on this thing, this trickery or this gadget that you've seen something else do, that might be a selling feature, but it's not actually important to you having a profitable business. So just drop it. Just forget about it."

And I'm seeing huge success now, by changing the tool and changing the customer expectations. And yeah, there's some tools or options that I'm not really going to put my weight behind, because I don't have as deep understanding of it. I can't vouch for the support as well. And frankly, some of the people kind of miss their mark. You know, like, for many years, I wanted to get one of the guys on there for a podcast. I offered it to him five or six times, and he never really followed through. And he could have had a lot more market share if he had, but it just didn't happen. So it sort of got overtaken.

So again, it's, how keen are people willing to make a relationship with you? And sometimes the spot's taken, and you know, with my rev shares, I'm mostly interested in building a portfolio of partners who can interplay. In other words, that we can serve the same customer. My same customer can get served by [Charley](#) with [his media company](#) or [Gert](#) with the [SEO company](#), or [John](#) with his [software](#), or [Kat](#) with her [membership support service](#).

The same customer can partake in this. And this is a huge strategy. It's so leveraged for me to build my distribution to publish [podcasts](#), to make [videos](#), to build a portfolio, and then to be able to serve my customers in ways that I can't just as a coach. I'm not going to go in the software business myself. So why don't I just find someone who can be my extension into that market? And yes, sometimes to say yes to something, you have to say no to something else. So pick your yeses carefully.

Matt: That response was perfect. And there's something that you said in there towards the beginning, too, that I think is really powerful. And that, having multiple options for people you can actually use to your advantage, because you can go to somebody and say, "Look, there's these three options available based on what you need, I think this is the perfect option for you." And that probably makes it a lot easier to make the sale, because you just show that you filtered it down for them.

James: Absolutely, you're helping them with the decision-making process. And in a subtle way, it becomes rather than a question of yes or no, it's more a question of which one, and it removes one layer of resistance. I think in some circles, they call that an alternative assumptive or a double bind, but whatever name you want to put to it, it's moving someone past the point where they're deciding if they're going ahead or not, and then helping them narrow down the choice.

Do you genuinely want people to be better off?

One of the classic objections when you're selling that people talk about is the, I-need-to-think-about-it-thing. If you want to use some techniques like this, you're actually eliminating a lot of the chance of someone needing to think about it, because you're actually thinking through it together, taking into account their situation, making it relevant to them with a focus on them being better off; and I'm very specific with these words, because it's important.



"If you genuinely want the people you're helping to be better off, then you should recommend the right solution, even if that's not the one that gives you the fattest paycheck."

- JAMES SCHRAMKO

If you come from a place where you genuinely want the people who you're helping to be better off, then you should recommend the right solution, even if that's not the one that gives you the fattest paycheck. I've turned off income streams before where I was getting paid well, but I decided that that income stream is no longer representative of the best solution in the market, which is why I stopped promoting that first offer I promoted in favor of a different option, because it became superseded.

It was no longer a good choice to pick software that can only be used on a Windows computer that you had to push, you know, from, obviously, Cloud was the thing and WordPress became strong. But I think, you know, where I'm going now is I found a better solution than WordPress. And there is timing to this. So there might come a day where the solution you're promoting is no longer the best solution, and you're going to have a values-based decision.

I've always decided to go with the customer and to provide them the right thing, and that requires intensive innovation. And that's why I've chosen partners who are innovative. They innovate constantly. And I've selected that as a criteria. Can I work with this person? Are they responsive to inputs? Do we have a fantastic relationship where we can be open? I mean, I saw one of my partners post something this morning, and I screenshotted it, and I sent it to him and I suggested some improvements. And he thanked me for it.

And I sent him a follow up with where he can get more access to getting education on this particular technique, which he also thanked me for. And I know from today on, his posts will be the beneficiary of a new technique rather than have a partner that says, "Well screw it, that's how I do it. You like it or lump it," you know, that would be a bad fit for me, because I'm a dynamic, fluid business person.

My whole business changes every single year, like this year, I bought in a brand new product, an income stream from scratch, and it's absolutely flying. And I know next year, my business will look different. But I'll probably have more or less the same core of customers. A few change on either end. I'm up to almost a four-year retention now, which is pretty crazy.

Joe and Matt: Wow.

The power of personalizing your interactions

Joe: That's wild for any kind of continuity, even the level that you have. And you mentioned, there's a couple of things in your response to Matt's question as well. First thing I want to say is just personalizing. You're personalizing, and this goes all the way from just engaging with your community. You do that amazingly. When we joined your membership, I remember a personalized video of you. I think you were walking through the mall. And at least it seemed that way, on like, a Saturday.

I was like, 'How cool is this?' It was just a 45-second video, but it was thinking. Even though we already knew each other, it was still that touch. You know, it's unexpected. And something that we pulled from that strategy is applying a personalized video to affiliate marketing. You know, so we have Facebook groups for various products, it's more or less the user group. But we make it explicitly clear we're affiliates. We're not the owners of the group. It's unofficial.

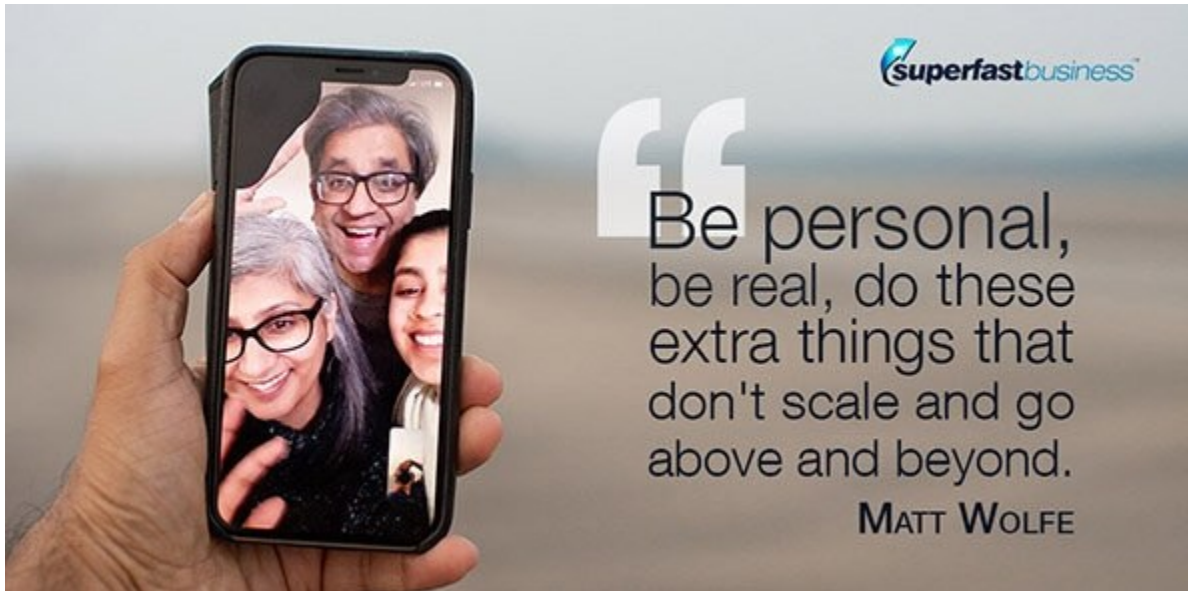
But you know, when they join, there's always a question asking them specific questions. Are they a buyer of the software already? Most of the times it's no, at least 50/50. Then we pose a couple of questions that get them asking a question. Okay, so what's your question or, you know, what are you looking for? Is there a problem you could solve right now? And they're not expecting a video from me, but they get one if they put their email address in there, and I'll send them an email, not a Facebook message; because I used to do that, most of those are blocked.

But if you go email, it's about 80 percent of the time I'll get a response and, you know, it actually lands in their inbox and these are people saying, "You just made my day. Oh my god, you just sent a video?" Even though this video is just me. I use Loom for this, and I'll just answer their question. I'll introduce myself, read their question, and show like, 'Hey, I'm not just like creepily finding you.'



I show them a screen capture of me solving their problem and pointing them to resources. It takes me about five minutes max and probably averages affiliate commissions of at least \$300 to \$1,000 a pop, just depends on what we're promoting, could be some recurring, too. But it's a personalized approach that immediately kind of gets you out of the pack, you know, and just separates you from the competition there.

Matt: And it's one of those things too that doesn't scale, right? I think so many people, when it comes to affiliate marketing, they want to look for the thing that's going to be like, set and forget and drive affiliate sales, but I feel like the philosophies that work when you're selling your own products are the same philosophies that work when you're selling other people's products.



superfastbusiness™

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Be personal,
be real, do these
extra things that
don't scale and go
above and beyond.

MATT WOLFE

Be personal, be real, do these extra things that don't scale and go above and beyond, and that's quite honestly the secret to why we've been so successful as affiliates, is we go and do the things that don't scale, that most affiliates don't want to do because they're looking for that autopilot cash flow from affiliate marketing, which is a lot easier said than done, I guess.

Joe: Actually, Matt, it's called autopilot cash formula.

Matt: Oh, shut up.

Joe: That's a reference to Matt's first internet marketing product that he always hated the name. You were almost going to say it. So I had to complete it.

James: Well, you're getting a value creation reward. You're offering a service that's super valuable to someone who's in that buying mindset or in the research phase. When you apply the [effective hourly rate](#) formula to what you're doing, it's going to trump a lot of other things you could do. You could spend a lot of time trying to put together your auto riches formula autopilot thing, right?

It's like that saying, you know, you've got to stay up all night working so that you can get paid while you sleep during the day or whatever.

Joe: That's right.

James: You actually have a smallish business, and I'm going to say, I've chosen a path of less scale and more freedom than a lot of my peers. I have friends, you know, I bump into the supermarket down the road, he's got a big business that's doing nine, almost \$10 million. And he doesn't look healthy, he doesn't look happy. I feel happier making less than that, and having less compromise. I think that's the compromise level.

More reasons to love revenue share

I think the Loom video is a great idea, I send lots of Loom videos as well. And it definitely doesn't matter whether it's your product or someone else's, if anything, you just don't have a lot of headaches. You don't have to hire the developers, and you don't have to do the customer support. You're just doing the fun part that you enjoy, and you're good at, which is the marketing. And coincidentally, that's usually the part that a lot of product developers are not that good at and don't enjoy.

Or even, you know, they are good at it, but it's not their core thing. They don't get the most out of it. And I found also some of them are kind of introverted, and like to sort of do the things that I hate to do. So that's a good fit. And I've also noticed this as a trend, because, you know, on the topic of affiliate marketing and revenue shares, most of my revenue share partners, the way that we talk and communicate, it's quite clear to me that they feel that I'm a business partner of theirs, that it's kind of like our business. In the very best ones, it feels like it's our business.

In probably the least best ones of which they're all great, but of the least best ones, they might still feel like it's more their business, and I'm helping them. But as the partnership develops and grows, I feel like, you know, we make decisions as a team, as if it's both our business. It's just the way that it's structured is not your typical way of shareholders, you know, legal joining at the hips from an entity perspective.

It's more of a licensing arrangement or a royalty type agreement, which is still contractual, and still a little bit more work to dance around with in the beginning. But once they're done, you put it away, and you never really look at it again. It's like you get into a flow of reporting numbers, sending invoice, connecting, coaching, or creating content for distribution. And I'd say my main roles in these arrangements are coaching them, like I would with my own team, or like I would with you guys as customers, or being distribution for them.

And that's where my podcast is coming in. And for you, you're in the box seat for that. You have one of the most powerful marketing business podcasts on the planet. You can basically name your partners. You could pick whoever you want. And they would think seriously about giving up a percentage of the revenue that they're not currently getting that could in the future with your help to collect the lion's share of what's left over.

I mean, seriously, they could give you 10 cents in the dollar, and keep 90 cents on every dollar they're not currently making but could make if they worked with you, and they took your box seats. So what I've been doing is reengineering [SilverCircle](#) as my partnership portal. I'm updating the testimonials to indicate that the partnership's been a big payoff for them. I'm hyperlinking to my partner sites so people can go and investigate and purchase from them.

I am also coordinating with them more in the background by privately chatting with them as a group to help them help each other. There's a lot of good interplay there. And one thing that's most notable is I've had, I'd say, in the last, well, this year, I've lost only a couple of SilverCircle members all up. So like, when I stopped taking new members, I still have my core group of current SilverCircle members, and I'd say, the longest one's been going for 10 years, and I can't see him leaving anytime soon.

Changing the membership game, and the results

So a really interesting thing happened where SuperFastBusiness Intensive has picked up the baton from SilverCircle. I gifted SuperFastBusiness Intensive program the new members who are on the current rate, which is what SilverCircle started at in 2009 or 2010. I've given them the weekly SilverCircle group call. So they now come into weekly group calls, and that's been a game changer.

And so what's happened is the retention on that \$599 program; again, firstly, nobody leaves that now. So instead of coming and going a little more frequently, I think this is going to turn into an amazing machine. So it's actually caused a tremendous amount of growth in my existing products by stopping doing something. And I think this is a lesson that is absolutely critical. You can stop doing something and get a massive growth spurt.

On my coaching call this morning, in the SilverCircle/SuperFastBusiness Intensive group, one of my members stopped a lower-ticket program. And in the last month, they've all surged into the only program he has, which is a high-ticket program, and his net business just jumped. But he's offering less services and less actual deliverables.

What drew Matt and Joe into affiliate marketing

Joe: It's the best. I mean, that's what originally got us into affiliate marketing. You know, to go way back on our side of things, we had our own products, we were writing our own newsletters, physical newsletters, but like writing them, unique content every month, usually last couple days of the month because of, you know, humans.

Matt: We procrastinate.

Joe: But it was a lot of work. And we ended up just, you know, we paused that for a bit. But then we really seriously looked at affiliate marketing. And that was right around the time we were starting this podcast as well. So we're like, okay, so the intention here is to really build a great community that we can cultivate and create fans, and they will follow us and you know, the recommended products as affiliates that we already use, marketing software, mainly, not as much info products, really, but that we saw this trend, like, oh, they buy [ThriveCart](#) from us, or ConvertBox, or all these other things that we use in our marketing stack.

All we're doing is just kind of exposing what we're doing under the hood in our business and saying, "Hey, here's what we use and why. We recommend it. It's not going to break the bank, really, but it's sure as hell going to bring you a great return if you use them right. We're going to give you a bunch of strategies for free in this podcast." So we ended up actually closing down all of our offers, and this is the traffic offer that you are helping us promote, and thank you for that, did great.

But then we started realizing, hey, this affiliate marketing thing is really starting to scale. And we're connecting our business. And this is another point you said earlier, is connecting all the different phases. So we started connecting the podcast to specific affiliate promotions, and the emails can now get segmented based off of that interest into a mini promo to something relevant. And then now, we have rev share things, we have deals with some software companies, we have equity deals with folks like Roland and other affiliate platforms.

So it's like kind of top to bottom, there is a big affiliate play or some deal-making play happening. And our internal products, we just said, this is a lot of work to develop, fulfill, support. We're like, okay, now that's where our bump came from.

Stopping one business, scaling another

James: Well, you're a marketing and distribution company. And you can then source from the best possible supply. It's like a Mercedes-Benz or an AMG. It's got Michelin tires or Burleigh tires. Don't feel compelled to make every piece of the machine. You know, they have Bosch electricals. So in my case, you know, that's pretty much one of the power moves I've done this year, is I have stopped my most profitable business.

I've stopped the new flow of that to go for the scale of the revenue share deals. So I've essentially morphed a little more into the partnership model, making the strength of my business that distribution. You know, I can get eyeballs, I can build trust in my audience. They know that I care about my customers, but they also know that I filter and work very closely with my partners to make sure, like if I got bad feedback from a customer about a partner, then they know that's going to go straight through the machine.

And you know, I want Mercedes-Benz level of supply for my audience. But I can't physically make it all. I'm not that inclined to, and I certainly am not good enough to do the big software plays, etc. But partnering with people is great. There'll be people listening to this who have a product or service and have currently got no affiliate marketing stream in place. I'd love to hear what you would say to them.

If you're not already doing affiliate marketing...

Matt: The people that have no affiliate marketing stream in place, I mean, we actually just did a presentation for Traffic and Conversion summit, where we kind of talked about some of this stuff. But I mean, one of the easiest things you can do is look through the content that you've already got out there and see if there's ways that you can interweave affiliate promotions into the content that you've already created.

I mean, for us, that's one of the lowest-hanging fruit things that we did for affiliate marketing, is go into our Google Analytics, look at which pieces of content we've created still get the most traffic, and go look for opportunities to put products and mentions inside of those pieces of content. That's one of the things. The other thing that we did, fairly recently, actually, and I think it was your influence, was we created that Products page that you mentioned, and started actually mentioning these recommended products. So we did that.

And then the third thing that we started doing recently, actually goes back to [Dean Jackson](#), who you were talking about earlier, is we started putting super signatures in our email. So we've been writing more emails that are kind of content-based emails, just pure value, not really asking for much, just, here's a lesson for you today. And then we'll put a super signature at the bottom with, here's three ways where we can help you go even further - join our Facebook group, join our membership, or check out our recommended Products page. And just, like, those three things right there have had huge results with very, very, very little effort to get the ball rolling.

James: I would also say this one, I coach a pair who have a really great product, and they deal with a market that I'm not so into, which is helping people when they're starting up online. They help beginners get going. That's not a market I enjoy, even though I've done startups, and I can, but I find it the most grueling, frustrating, difficult phase of all, getting that first offer that converts.

They have a product that helps people start up, and they're really, really good at it. They absolutely love dealing with beginners, they're very patient, they have a methodology that works pretty much every time, they've got rules in place to protect people from overspending, and I've watched them for years, and I've been coaching them for several years. So I know that they really do care about the customers and their customers actually get results.

So like, there's a couple of things. We suggested that we do a webinar for my own audience to just catch the people in my own database who are not fully into the motion, or they want to go down the path of doing this business model, which by the way, I do this business model. But I don't teach this business model beyond the basic training because it requires too much patience and technical knowledge to teach it at a deep level.

So this is the strategy, you find someone who's got something like that, that complements what you do, that you suspect your audience might be interested in. And we sent, I think three emails. Sent three emails promoting a webinar. I think it's the first webinar I've done to the public for about five years, maybe six years. And we had a bunch of people register. A lot of people showed up live, a lot of them watched the replay because of the timing of the webinar. And I have a truly international audience.

I mean, I've got a fantastic representation in the US, the UK and Australia. So not all time zones are great for the live. It took me, I'm going to say, 15 minutes to rewrite the three emails that they sent me as a suggestion and to give to my team in [Slack](#) and say, "Send this to our database." So 15 minutes. And from that, I will earn somewhere in the region of \$35,000 to \$38,000.

So what's the effective hourly rate on that? That's my cut, by the way. That's the actual amount of money that will hit my bank account. And I didn't have to do anything else. So if you don't currently promote someone else's product or service or any kind of software or whatever, some huge opportunity is here. Find someone with a high-performing training that's perfect for your audience, and promote them as an affiliate, and sit back and bank the checks.

I suspect I'll probably do another one of those next year, you know, when I've built my list up again and recharged it. We can talk about the success the first batch of students had, we'll have actual case studies of people who came with that first training. I still work closely with these people, so I know they're going to deliver. They said my audience by the way, as a big shout out to my SuperFastBusiness audience, they said my audience are very savvy and lovely people.

Joe: I will attest to that as well, because a lot of those folks have come our way. I mean we share that audience.

James: If I could rate my customers, I'd give you five stars.

Joe: I agree. Yeah.

Some parting techniques

James: Guys, I still want to ask you, what were the main things you learned after doing all your affiliate marketing interviews? I feel like we've been generous with what we have discussed, but it'd be good to have a couple of bullet points to round this out and make it like, you know, get it in the top 10 for the 2020 episodes certainly on my side. But what can we do to push it over the line?

Joe: That's a good question. Yeah, because we've been kind of rattling off a bunch of strategies. And I mean, the way that we work is the stuff we're testing really comes from the podcast, and from our friends like yourself.

James: Well, do you have any other strategies or techniques? You've already delivered a lot. Super signature, we've talked about affiliate webinar, we've talked about...

Joe: How about some email segmentation? We're doing some cool stuff there.

Matt: Yeah. We're doing a lot of stuff that's like, very dynamic in retargeting. And a lot of times when we go on podcasts and stuff, I'm almost hesitant to talk about it because I'm afraid I'll get too deep into the weeds and over people's heads. But we're doing a lot of stuff where we'll drive people to a specific podcast episode from our list. And based on the episodes they're listening to, we're then retargeting them to relevant offers.

So for example, maybe we'll have an interview with somebody who's teaching a whole bunch of really good webinar strategies to be really successful on webinars. Well, anybody who goes to the show notes page for that episode, we're essentially seeing that as them raising their hand as, I'm interested in webinars, and then we will retarget people who view that landing page to a tool like EasyWebinar, or EverWebinar, or one of these various webinar platforms that are out there.

So that's one of the things we'll do. And then we'll kind of do the same thing in email. So if we email our list about an episode - I'll just stick with the same example - we email our list to an episode about how to be effective on webinars; people who open that email and click on that, we might create, like, another two-day email sequence where only the people who clicked on that email then get two more emails over the following two days about the best webinar platform to implement what they just listened to on that podcast.

So we're doing a lot of sort of follow-on things based on which content they initially consumed. And that's probably one of the most effective strategies we're doing, because everybody's kind of getting this Choose-Your-Own-Adventure sort of thing by consuming our content. They just don't necessarily see it from their perspective.

Joe: So an example of this, and this is from an expert that was listening to our show, Joe Kerns, and he has a partner, Mike Alvarez, basically we partnered with them now to help us do this. So they're helping us architect this machine, basically, behind the scenes. And it's exactly what you said, is this, it's essentially a big customer journey that's based off of their actions wherever they feel like they need to go next.

That's where another piece of value is going to happen to live, but also an opportunity to buy an affiliate product. So it allows us now, we release two podcasts per week, well, that can potentially be two new affiliate promotions every single week. We're not doing that quite yet, because we haven't gotten that far. But we've kind of dabbled with that recently, because we realized we were doing the whole broadcast, wide shout to a lot of people, which is the old way of emailing, which a lot of internet marketers still do, digital marketers.

So then we realized, Oh, wait, yeah, you can really talk to just like 200, 300 people, it'd be way more effective if you just get them to actually raise their hand first. And then you give them exactly what they're asking for.

Matt: Our biggest commissions these days come from mailing teeny, tiny segments of our list. So a lot of times, the days that we make the most money from affiliate promotions, we sent an email that got seen by 300 people, but those are 300 people that might have listened to this podcast, then listened to this podcast, and we're like, okay, these people are hot on this topic. Let's send them more emails that are related to that topic.

So we're getting much more dialed in with the segmentation both on the retargeting end and on the email marketing end.

James: Well, it sounds like Amazon and Google.

Joe: Yeah, petty much. They're doing alright.

James: Amazon was the one that really alerted me to that when I looked at something on the side and then I got an email a few days later, like, of the exact thing I was looking at. That was such an aha moment for me. And this was a long time ago, obviously, I'm a dinosaur. But based on that, I put a segmentation in my [Ontraport](#) sequence that caused me to end up having to present at the conference how I sold so much of their software.

But I put a little signature, and it said, this email was sent using OAP, which is what they used to be called, Office Autopilot. When people clicked on that, it would add them to a sequence, which then followed up with, the reason why I switched from aWeber to OAP, and then it followed on with, and by the way, if you are interested in OAP, check it out [here](#).

And then the next email is like, if you buy OAP through my link, I'm happy to send you a training on how to get the best results from it, like, basically what I learned from having the cheat sheet before. So this little sequence only went to people who clicked on that link, like they were interested enough to know what it was. And I've been using little sequences like that the whole time to move people into that.

But now, someone listening to this might think, well, that's too complicated, rocket science, wiring diagram, NASA spaceship, etc. What's a simple way to do this? I'd say a simple way to do this is probably to fire up one email after you send them the resource that they've asked for. Even in that email, it says in the resource, it has like a, 'PS. Where are you at at the moment with your business? Hit reply, and let me know.'

And that way, you're going to encourage a conversation, and I think the [conversational conversions](#), that's the non-scalable way you're going to sell more than anything else. You get in a conversation, they'll tell you where they're at, you will probably find an obstacle, you might be able to solve it, maybe send a Loom video, you're going to sell like crazy off even a tiny, tiny list with that.

So that's one of the prompts that I put when someone purchases a product from [SuperFastResults](#). And I get into these amazing dialogues with people. Like, they tell me why they bought the course, what they're going to use it for, what they're planning to do next, where they're at. Some people show me their site, or they tell me about their new book that's going to launch.

Sometimes I'll reply back, say, "Look, I've had a look at your site, I've noticed a couple of things I would change. I've made you a little video. And after you've gone through this course, this is what I'd recommend next." What are they going to think? How could they not find value in that?

Joe: You are their new best friend, man.

James: And I want to help them. I really do. And that comes from that place. So gosh, I feel like we've got probably an episode here.

Joe: Yeah, we're over our normal allotment of time. I mean, I think we always go long, because it just flows, man. And this is such a good time. There's all these rabbit holes we could head down.

Keeping the rev share momentum going

Matt: Well, I do have one last question I want to ask about revenue share. I feel like the conversation sort of jumped back and forth between affiliate marketing, rev share, affiliate marketing. So I might as well keep that pattern going. And I'll ask you a question about the rev share stuff. And then we can kind of wrap up after that.

So in 2020, Joe and I, we actually got involved in three rev share deals, I believe, all based on your influence in our conversations with you. You even helped us structure the deal with one of them. So we really appreciate that, because it's been working out really, really well so far.

But the question I want to ask is, when you get involved in these rev share deals, how do you ensure that momentum continues and that the person that you're partnered with notices that the momentum continues? Because I think one of the things I kind of get my own head about with some of these rev share deals is, in the beginning, it feels like momentum can be very, very slow.

We're kind of laying groundwork and sort of building the foundation for what we want to do with these guys. But it feels sort of slow. And I don't want the people that we partner with to maybe start to feel like they're regretting the decision of partnering with us, because momentum is slow when we first come on board. I think a lot of times people will partner with us and just expect like, 'Okay, I'm partnered with these guys, they have a big platform. So it's to the moon really quick.'

But that's not the case. A lot of times, there's foundational things that we need to fix before we can take it to the moon with them. So I'm curious, how do you approach that? And how do you make sure that momentum stays going and they feel that the momentum is continuing to push forward?

James: Interestingly, well, the short answer is I plug them into SilverCircle. So I now have a framework for the onboarding diagnostic where we're setting a roadmap and creating clear expectations, and we work out all the low-hanging fruit. So we'll have immediate wins, almost always we'll have immediate wins. It's rare that I wouldn't. And then we'll have mid-term wins. And then we'll have sort of a long-term, knock-it-out-of-the-park.

I've had partners when they started, they had one assistant who they were thinking of letting go and then six months later have 28 people in their team. And I'm like, you need to hire. You need to stop doing this work. And they're like, 'Oh, my God, there's no way.' Or like, I blow their mind by saying, "You need to make extra payments on your house mortgage right now."

And they're like, 'What?' I'm like, 'We're going to pay this thing off. How much is left?' They tell me and I say, "We're going to pay it off by this time next year. Go and tell your wife that the house will be paid for this time next year, and this is what we're going to do to make that happen." So I'm basically installing a framework or an expectation of a long-term plan we're working to here.

But I will say this: overwhelmingly, the feeling of momentum, or guilt, or whatever, it's almost always the partner feeling like they're not doing a good enough job for me, and not the other way around, which I think is really interesting. But it means they value the relationship. It means that they know I'm doing my end of the bargain, and sometimes they have things to do. I give them things to do. You know, they need to update, or install, or invest in, or change to take this thing to the next stage.

And they're not always easy or fast things. But I would say that the vast majority of my deals - and now I've got a reasonable-sized portfolio - they have a very consistent momentum. I mean, I have this Spidey sense anyway, I can feel if someone's not feeling it. And I know that come the end of the month, they'll be calculating their numbers, and then we'll be sending an invoice.

So I usually want to make sure, that's why we have a frequent call schedule, the most frequent schedule I have with partners is every week. They're welcome to come to my group calls every week anyway, which they sometimes do. But the least frequent will be every three weeks where I have a one-to-one check in with them. And we just go through a framework to make sure we're on track.

And of course, things happen in between or whatever. And to a large extent, I can give them unlimited airplay on my show and distribution. So they're getting plugged a lot from me, and especially to my coaching students where the solution is a good fit. They're going to get distribution from me they just can't get elsewhere. I also encourage them to get distribution elsewhere to get outside my ecosystem, that's where we get the real growth, and the thing takes off.

You know, luckily, I can measure the momentum in terms of, you know, the yield that we're earning on both sides. And if they're dragging the chain and not meeting the threshold, which can happen, and part of your portfolio is not going to meet threshold, they feel guilty. But at the same time, the pressure is off, because they're not having to pay if they didn't make the money.

I think there'd be more guilt if they're paying a monthly fee regardless. If they had a bad month, but they still have to pay you, that's when they're going to resent you. But if they have a bad month, they couldn't quite meet the threshold, and they don't have to pay me a cent, which is the nature of the deal, then they're off the hook for having to make that payment. And they can't blame me, I'm not charging them.

Matt: Yeah that's true.

James: I'm the poor guy who put in the effort and didn't get paid. So that's why I think it's often on the other foot. And when they are paying me, they're happy, because whatever they're paying me, they're getting paid multiple times more usually, like they get nine times more than I get. So they're happy.

Matt: Yeah, yeah, that makes a lot of sense. And I think for me mentally, I tend to probably undervalue what we are actually bringing to the table. You know, a lot of these products that we're dealing with, we do shout out on the podcast a lot. We do mention in emails and blog posts and social media, and we are spreading the word and evangelizing it. But I think I tend to undervalue that aspect a little bit.

So that's probably a piece of it that I just need to get over myself and realize the value that we're actually bringing in those areas as well.

Taking the temperature check

Joe: When we actually, now I remember, just recently, a couple of weeks ago, we're having a call with one of our partners. And that was one of the things I brought up, because I was like, you know, Matt and I were chatting about this. I'm like, just got to be honest here.

Okay, I just want to make sure that you're good, you know, and because we're doing a lot of foundational work, so it didn't feel like it was the thing that was, you know, would move the sales immediately or you know, the short term, but it was reciprocated by like, 'No, you are amazing. Yes, this is foundational work. But it opened my eyes to so many new things. We're using frameworks,' like, he said, and it ended up being like, 'Oh, my god, it feels great. Because yeah, we're all aligned, we're on the same page, we are giving the value definitely more than we thought we were.'

But it's great to clear the air. And that just shows a great partnership right there as well.

James: Yeah, I've got check-ins all the time. We call it a temperature check within our team. Basically, if someone comes to you and they want to leave, it's too late. You need really early. I mean, it's even in Sun Tzu, The Art of War. You need to have spies in the enemy camp. You need to have early warning when there's a problem before, so you can prepare. So I just ask them, how are we going? Are we on track? Are you feeling happy about this arrangement? Is it working for you?

How can I improve? What would you like to see me do better? That sort of vulnerability. And I usually get a very positive response, like, 'Hey, man, I'm very happy with how it's going. And it's all good. I wish I could perform better or, you know, I need to hurry up with my hiring or whatever.' So you know, the shoe is usually on the other foot.

Joe: Yeah, yeah, it usually exposes the real priorities of what's happening. It's a relationship. At the end of the day, we're all people you know, this goes back to, you know, the community. I think to wrap this up, really, everything we've talked about is wrapped up in customers first, our community first, our podcast listeners, fans, whatever, and whoever they are, those are the folks that are going to stick with us through multiple deals, multiple partnerships, and in your case for 10-plus years.

I mean, honestly, in our case, because I know a lot of those folks started on your list, probably about the eight-year mark, seven-year mark for some people that have carried over from previous. It's just so cool to, you know, finally connect with some of those people face-to-face or through Zoom calls or Looms and you're like, 'Wow, you've been with us for a long time, and that matters so much.'

Matt: We met Aaron Fletcher, bringing us all the way back around to the very beginning of the conversation, we met Aaron Fletcher back in 2010 because he was a customer of my first course, the WordPress Classroom. So Aaron Fletcher has been around for 10 years with us.

Joe: He was up in Silicon Valley, driving around to the business he worked for, he was like a VP, he was very high up, and he was listening to Matt. And, you know, in our ramblings, probably on this, you know, it's just like, wow, and just to see where he's turned up, how great connections and you know, it's just a good friendship all around. So you never know, long term. That's what it's all about.

James: It's about relationships, about long term, it's about community. And I think going into the next phase of society, a lot of people have been worn and torn by negative community experiences where they've been trying to supplement the in-person stuff. So if you have a good community experience, then I think that's the long haul, and supplement it as you guys have and we have for the last, however long with live experiences when they become practical, and you have a magic formula.

Looking forward in 2021

Joe: That's it. Yeah. So let's wrap up. What are you excited about for 2021? Since I guess this is getting released, at least in our end, in 2021.

Matt: January, I think.

James: I think it's probably the same for me.

Joe: Yeah, yeah. Anything specific that you want to like, put out there that you're just like, 'Okay, this is the new invention of my business or evolution?'

James: You know, the first thing that came to my mind is I'm just really hanging to get back to the [Maldives](#). Like, it's not even a businessy thing. But it is my business as a business group, you know, it's a paying customer group. It's where my relationships with some of my partners was born. That's a very happy place for me, and I can't wait to get back there.

In terms of business, I think there'll be a couple of new books coming across the deck. So that will provide some scale opportunity for me in the way that I've re-engineered my business is, I think I'll attract maybe a couple of fantastic revenue share partners, not too many, that will grow that portfolio.

And SuperFastBusiness is really dynamite at the moment. It is just on fire, like, it's taken off, because I've given it the juice from SilverCircle, which I transferred the resource. And it's just caught fire, it's going so well. And I love the group we have. I love the calls. And I think people are going to do some great things. And I'm going to work really hard on making the experience the best possible for the members coming into that.

So for me, you know, really, it's more of the same. Surfing as much as I can. I imagine I'll start traveling again at some point, and just continuing to build on a strong foundation. 2020 has actually been an incredible year for me, but I was positioned for that for a long time. And hopefully, people who have been along for the ride listening to my podcasts, or getting coaching advice, have actually done pretty well out of this as it seems.

Aside from the most obvious ones who you know, in the trade show industry or the gymnasium industry, like, where they've had hits that were hard to recover from, but a lot of them have, and I think it's going to be like this massive growth spurt, positive leap forward out of the abyss. It's going to be boom time. And I saw boom time when I was selling luxury vehicles, and there will be boom times again.

But now is the time to really flex the muscles and get yourself ready, like, rest up, shore down all your foundations, because it's going to take off.

Joe: Yeah, man. Yeah, that's pretty much the same on our end, you know, with the email system like we were talking about, we know that's going to be way more dynamic than it ever has in the last 10 years on our end. So you know, doubling down on that with the right partners and growing the top of kind of our iceberg, the tip of the iceberg is the podcast.

So getting more listeners and, you know, working with guys like [Charley Valher](#) for that and some other strategies, [Gert](#) even, you know, with [SEO](#). He said we're doing pretty good but we can optimize, so it's, you know, almost like you know, get more of the potential fans on top and then we have the machine now that's really doing the heavy lifting for us.

We just kind of show up and do what we do. I'm excited for it, and I want to do more of the [work less make more](#) now with a baby in the house. And I want to revisit that. Yeah, shout out, get that book.

James: Just for fun, I put up a 30-day Work Less and Make More challenge that delivers one of the action steps each day for 30 days, speaking of email, and sequences, and I made that free at the moment. It's probably still free when this comes out.

Joe: How do we get that?

James: [SuperFastResults.com/30](#).

Matt: The number, not spelled out?

James: Both. You could put either. Contingency planning. I would very much hope that both URLs will work for that. And that just drops one micro lesson per day for 30 days. And my goal for that is to let people experience what's possible from the book, at least at a surface level, and for free, like as a full demonstration of what's in there.

So if you didn't want to spend a cent, that's a starting point. And I think it's actually a good reminder. And I'm going to encourage people to go through it a few times, like maybe once a year as a reset. I've got a few people resetting through that and I'm just, I think I'm up to day 20-something at the moment on the first trial run. So I'm sure it's going to improve, and I'll get feedback.

I think it would lend itself for me tipping some paid traffic into it at some point. So it's another vehicle for me to let people know about partners, but also for them to get a result for free. So they can see if going to the next stage is worth it for them.

Joe: Hmm, that's awesome.

Matt: Very cool.

Joe: I'm going to check that out.

James: What about your site? We should drop that in there. Where are we going to check you out for our show?

Joe: Where are we going to go, Matt?

Matt: I mean, there's really two good URLs, there's flowchartgroup.com. That's our Facebook group. We do most of our interaction in there, and then hustleandflowchart.com is the podcast. And that'll actually redirect you to the best location to listen to the podcast. So if you're on an iPhone, it'll take you to iTunes, if you're on a Google phone, it'll take you to Spotify or whatever. So hustleandflowchart.com and the flowchartgroup.com are probably the two best places people can go check it out right now.

James: Fantastic. Thanks a lot.

Joe: This has been fun, man. Yeah, it was a little period of time where we didn't chat. But you know, at least on the podcast here, but I'm happy we did it again. This is always a good time. We've got to do it like every six months. I feel like there's always a cadence there.

James: Let's see. We'll get you in again, I'm sure. For me, this was Episode 796. So we want to squeeze you in there when you feel like you've gathered some great Intel and I'll see if I can unlock a few old stories of past that have some valuable metaphors.

Joe: Oh, they always do. Thank you, my friend. It's been great chatting, man.

James: Thank you.



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