



Midwife Goes Online - Case Study with Margreet Wibbelink



Midwifery is not a topic you'd expect mentioned on a business podcast. Margreet Wibbelink, however, has a thriving online business in just that area.



Margreet Wibbelink

James: James Schramko here. Welcome back to SuperFastBusiness.com. This is Episode 826. We're going to be talking all about midwifery and online website platforms. So welcome, Margreet Wibbelink to the call.

Margreet: Hi James. Happy to be here.

James: Thank you. Now, importantly, you're a fellow surfer, so I feel like we've got a connection even before we get too deep into this episode. I saw a couple of pictures on your Instagram of you shredding a few right handers on a longboard. Are you still allowed to surf at the moment?

Margreet: Oh, yes, we're surfing. In fact, I live in Jeffrey's Bay in South Africa, which is the perfect right hand wave and yeah, we've been surfing most of this year, hey. I absolutely love it.

Surfing as metaphor for life and business

James: I thought at one point you had to go up a little bit north to get a few waves. It must have been your own version of The Endless Summer looking for that elusive wave. I'm sure it's a bit colder there than it is in Sydney right now. But I wonder, do you find some of the things that you encounter when you're surfing also sort of relate across to your business?

Margreet: Yes, absolutely. I find that surfing has been such a beautiful metaphor in my entire journey in life. I remember starting off surfing, you see all these good surfers and they make it look so easy, and then it's just by keep paddling out there, keep going and so forth, never giving up, that you get there. So that was in my beginning journey very much an analogy. And currently, I mean, I'm quite known as, I'm not scared for a big wave. So I love to charge.



And currently I feel that this is where I am in life, like I'm really needing to take on some big waves that can be very intimidating. But surfing has taught me like, Hey, you've trained and you've got here now. So just take the drop of commitment and then enjoy the ride. So that's been really, presently, for me a big analogy. So sometimes I get scared, and it's like, No, I can do this. Take the drop of commitment, and then you go, you know?

James: I can so relate to that, you know, because of COVID, it's been non-stop surfing here the whole time. And I'm at the absolute peak optimal surfing state that I've ever been in my life. And now when we have big waves, they seem normal. And we have small waves, it's kind of like a bit disappointing.

But to continue to leverage that metaphor, we currently have the professionals visiting town and they're surfing at the nearby beach, but what they can do in average waves, you know, humbles anyone that, you just think, Wow! What they can do with the exact same environment and albeit sort of tuned equipment, it's amazing, the difference.

So what we're talking about today, we're going to be talking about your online journey a little bit and some of the tools you use. And I think that's a little bit about where you're at in your stage of online business. And I would have to say, just like surfing, at a certain point of your skill level, the equipment does make a difference.

And then if you get to pro level, having a team around you can make a real difference. Because I'm sure a lot of these pros who are in town have got their own masseuse or their own photographer or their own dietician or whatever. In fact, a lot of them have a mindset coach, which I think is very interesting, the athletes. Getting that little team around you is so vital.

A never before touched-on topic

And I know just from the brief conversations we've had, you do have a bit of a support team helping you with the business. But let's just go back a little bit, because I think this is the first time in SuperFastBusiness podcast history that we've spoken about midwifery. Let's just break it down. What does a midwife specialist actually do?

Margreet: Yeah, a midwife is actually the specialist, the expert when it comes to natural pregnancy, birth and life after birth and the full reproductive health cycle, actually. So in an ideal world, every woman should have access to a midwife, and midwife do all the checkups during pregnancy, empower her, coach her, and the whole philosophy is that birth and pregnancy, all that stuff, is a natural life event. It's not a sickness.

And midwives are very much skilled, to discern and to pick up when it diverts from the natural healthy life event to where there are complications. And that is when we refer to doctors. So the first line of care should be midwifery care. And we really are the experts when it comes to natural births. We fully are. We train up all the doctors.

James: Yeah, I support what you're saying, having had a number of children, you know, so far. I know in the hospital, they're letting the midwives run the show. And they only refer to the doctor if something's going off the plan or off track and might need surgery or whatever. So that is interesting, just how trusted and how in-command they are, in what can be a stressful and uncertain situation for a lot of first-time parents, especially the whole childbirth thing, it's a big event.

Leveraging an opportunity with the net

Now, what I think is interesting is, you know, that's a pretty hands-on kind of activity, traditionally, through the thousands of years, but you've been able to start moving that online. I'd love it if you could just share with us a little bit about that transition, from being there in practice to thinking, Okay, well, I can leverage this a little bit using the internet.

Margreet: Yeah, life is all about a journey. I mean, you don't depend at all necessarily out before the time how it's going to go. But from being 10 years really hands-on and in practice, really always, that's where you acquire all your skills to engaging on an academic journey. I realized a few things in practice that are not happening the way I would like them to happen. In South Africa, especially, it's over medicalized approach to pregnancy and birth. And there's so many challenges here.

So for my own credibility, I went into the academic journey. And obviously, that's where you engage quite in a theoretical realm. And I enjoy research and getting my hands dirty and getting out there and so forth. So it's been a few years of transitioning a little bit more in content creation and writing theses and articles and still being in practice. And also, in that journey, I've been given an incredible opportunity where a woman that has built up this amazing database, she actually founded Sensitive Midwifery, Sister Lillian, she approached me as a possible successor.

And then I just saw, like, wow, this will take me a lifetime to build up what she's done. She ran symposiums, and she's got an incredible database already. And I just saw an opportunity here. But her approach was outdated, like the websites were from the 80s. And I just thought, you can give it to me, but I'm going to completely do it in a new way. And then I also realized, I'm going to need people to help me with it.

But I saw the picture, I saw, like, this opportunity, we need to move into online space. She was still doing magazines, and face-to-face conferences. So that transition already happened in 2019, when I was starting to put all these things in place, approach the agency. My privilege is that we had very trusted sponsors already for what she's already done. So we had budget that I could come off a big approach, you know, that I could get agency on board. And I just thought, we're going to do this professionally.

And staff, my weaknesses, because that's not my expertise, right? So yeah, I got a great team around me. And they've just taken me by my hands to build a structure that I could really reach way more people through different modalities, also the next generation of midwives, women. And yeah, the pinnacle was for me that we launched and that's really a dream come true, launched an academy. And last year was my first online experience of that, and it could not have been a better time with COVID.

So yeah, the stars aligned for me, I must say, in that regard. It was all in the right time. But that was an absolute highlight. So I just keep getting confirmed that I'm on the right track and also that there's so much out there to explore that gives you so much possibilities. I mean, I was clueless. I had this vague idea because you obviously engage online anyway, but then we have a team and seeing what is all possible, the sky is really limitless. So that is super exciting to me, and I'm really excited to keep building.

Do it yourself versus hiring help

James: I really like what you said there, because what you've done that's a bit different is you've come at this, and you've just at the beginning said, You know what, I'm not a web developer, I'm not skilled at all this online stuff. And I'm not going to learn it all. This is a trap a lot of the people in our community fall for. They start thinking, they're going to do it themselves. And they start learning how to be doing web development and coding. And it just expands the timeline for how quickly things can happen to years, if ever, and often they just get stuck.



So step one is recognizing, Hey, I'm really good at these things. And I need to hire someone to do the things I am not good at or don't want to do. So you went for agency. So just painting in between the lines here, that means you've hired someone whose job it is to take your vision to reality and to put it on line. And this is good that we're speaking about a business that actually has some resources and wants to invest in it, because that's the other problem I see online.

Everyone's chasing the lowest cost solution, or free, free, free. I'm in some group, I've seen on Facebook, there's 40,000 people in there, it's a membership group, and the predominant theme is low cost, free or cheap. And as soon as the sentence starts, or includes those terms, I know we're dealing with an amateur hobbyist here, and it's going to be slow, it's going to be under resourced, it's not going to get the result they want.

The experience of going the agency route

So I'm just curious, being able to start from a funded position and go pro from the beginning, what was the process like working with an agency in terms of what they needed from you? And did they offer you choices in things like the tools or the strategies? Or did they just tell you how it's going to work?

Margreet: Yeah, it was a beautiful synergy that we created in the beginning. I was just getting to know what I'm about, or what we're currently having, and what I'm wanting to develop. So it was really, for them to start understanding, you know, and also what we've got already. And then it was an interesting process, I think, the whole year almost, for them to repackage and build beautiful new websites.

And then I realized that the agency I'm working with, they know more than I do on what is all possible, but yet, they recognize what we've done all these years, there needs to be a transition phase. So it was keeping a little bit of the old structure, but with a new vision in mind. And I really think that the agency has done such an incredible job of marrying the two to really go into the online space and generating income online, and not just depending on sponsors, and giving me a little taste of how that's possible.



It's almost like a little dance we had, you know, like, I lead a bit and then they lead a bit, because, yeah, you've got to know how to really engage if you're looking for success. And the agency really also had their own vision, almost, of what's possible with all we've got. So you need each other. And that's why we could move quite fast.

I think we've really achieved a lot already in a very short time. And now I get feedback from the market out there. And it's words like, you've put Sensitive Midwifery on steroids, you know, and things like that, since I've taken over. So yeah, it's been visible, and it's making impact. And it's such a roller coaster that I find myself in with doctors wanting to engage and setting up midwife networks, seeing me as being the leader in the field in South Africa now. So yeah, it's paid off, hey, to go to professionals next to you.

James: Well, you know, the professionals have seen lots of other installations. They've seen use cases. I actually met your agency guy at a conference in the United States, I think it was a \$10,000 per head conference that he was attending, learning and getting highly skilled and access to incredibly frontline processes and data. I was there as a coach to the guy running the workshop. And, you know, all of that investment of time and energy can just be parlayed straight into a business that arrives as a customer. That's one of the great things when you get a good service provider.

How hands-on do you have to be?

So in terms of your involvement with the platform, everything goes through the agency, or do you have anyone in your team who's a little bit hands on, or yourself?

Margreet: I do self also quite a lot in creative content, because I'm the expert in content, so I actually do a lot of writing and just giving all of that. And they just build a structure where it will fit in and make me look and sound good, basically. So we work very much hand in hand. I think I'm very hands-on in that regard, and also initiating what needs to be done for the year, planning out the year and so forth. So yeah, it's definitely a teamwork.

And then I've got, obviously, a small team for myself on my side, just on the admin side. So for the registrations of the courses, that's people that I employ, the registrations, the courses, the admin, the customer service kind of things, that's where those girls really jump in very much. So it's a good team effort. Not sure if I answered your question there.

James: It's close, but I'll get there. It's okay. The thing that I'm interested in, like you've not been online very long yourself, like, the business was there before you. So firstly, congratulations for what you've been able to achieve in such a short time, because it is a little rare. Some people go around and around and try all different things till they get to their thing.

Getting people to buy a course

Now, I believe one of the core things you've offered is a certified course. So can you just talk about what that looks like and how you got people to buy it? Like, what was the mechanism for people to come into that course?

Margreet: Yeah, we do the certified Sensitive Midwifery course. So what happened, short history, is that this lady that I took over from, she's had a massive intellectual property from the 30 years she's had magazines, writing, and then with me joining her, I just saw this gap that midwives need to be scaled up, especially in a natural approach and woman-centered approach. And that was her whole game.

So I just thought, let's pilot a course together while she's still in. And we piloted a course locally with 10 midwives face to face. And so we got all the raw material to get a quick quick, and then 2020 with my team, I said, I want to launch this one online. We've got the material, we're going to refine it, I've got a language editor to really make an awesome manual. That was really the big wave I took.

I was dead scared, I had no idea. I was like, when we did the webinar funnel, the marketing thing, I firstly was cringing so much by having to use all that language that my agency helped me with, all the sales pitch. And then I was hoping if I would get 10 registrants, I will be happy. So I was over the moon when I had 52 from across the country and even outside of South Africa. So it was a big bang. We really went for it.

And I think everyone was just ready for it. And the approach was just attractive, I think. And then, yeah, I think, because I saw a gap that's a real need, it's not just something that I thought is a good idea, it's a real need and it's desperately wanted, I think that's part of why it was a success. And then with the program we use, just to explain, we use [10XPRO](#) that the team built for me. It's extremely user-friendly.

And that's also what we could sell when we did the webinar - you don't have to show up, it's a live session, either the one-hour or lunch break session per week, a live session, but then it's where you can record it. And then you can go into your own portal, watch it in your own time. And then I also had once a week in the evening, a live Q&A session for interaction. So the course was so user-friendly built and friendly that yeah, it just worked, and the responses were amazing.

So now we've got, obviously, a first course in the pocket with good testimonials. And the course is selling itself, like we haven't even advertised and I think I already got 20 plus on our waiting list, just because of word of mouth. And we haven't even started advertising it. So yeah, it's definitely wonderful.

The platform that makes it easy

James: That's so good. And there's a lot you can do. I'm pretty excited, especially with the 10XPRO platform. We just recently launched my book funnel, and we give away a copy of my book, [Work Less Make More](#), as a PDF digital download. And when people get the download, they're offered then if they want the print copy, and then there's a tick box if they want the audio copy, and the conversions are through the roof. The conversions are from the opt-in to get the download, and then the take-up rate is very high.

And then of course, you can add them into the email sequence. And then there's other things that can happen. With that base, and with the help of your agency, you will be able to add in, that cost could be useful in other things. So with the body of work of 30 years, I'm sure there's any number of book funnels you could create. It's like a one-click campaign. There's viral shares, you know, if people share this, then they can unlock a special module, those sort of things.

And I imagine it's really convenient for your customers. They've got a single login now, they just log in one place, and everything's there for them in their membership portal. I always smile when I hear stories like yours, because I wonder if you actually know how lucky you are that you landed on such a good solution first time around. Because often, when I'm speaking to someone in this context, this is like their fourth, fifth or sixth try at it after spending a lot of money and building monstrous installations that didn't work or do the thing they wanted to do.

But you've just like, you just landed at the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow in your first go. So it's amazing. And it gives you that confidence. Like, okay, what else can we do? And it's all there and you build around that same platform.

A nation-wide unifying effort

Margreet: Yeah, and this is only one success story. I can actually tell you another one that's really exciting. But it's the option from 10XPRO for memberships. So obviously, with midwives, you can have quite the nice different levels of membership. So I really felt we need to unite the independent midwives in South Africa, because they're all over the show. They're not united, they're not regulated.

So we started with memberships of that. And now, they then also have access to their portal and whatever they, if they're part of the course, yeah, as you said, it's all in one place. And you can give them access to different things. And then I build up an independent midwifery starter kit. And in that process, I've been approached by an obstetrician gynecologist that we're dreaming similar things for independent midwifery in South Africa and bringing the community midwife back, and the access to midwives.

So I've got all these foundations right to really scale this thing out, because now we really are, with the academy and the memberships, we're going to empower midwives on a big scale, and then be able to mentor and coach them till they are really independent and can be a midwife everywhere. So the membership is also just now naturally just taking off, because they all want it, you know.

So yeah, I really had no clue when I started with all of this on what is all possible. And yeah, so it really is team effort. And I was very lucky to have the best team around me, like the agency, with what they know, you know, I didn't know. Yeah.

The possibility of going global

James: So the website we're talking about is sensitivemidwifery.co.za. Do you have any plans to take it sort of global? I imagine there's different rules, regulations, legislation, etc. in different countries. I'm almost certain there will be some red tape to cross, but I wonder, you strike me as the person who's got a much bigger vision than where you're at now, as well as you've done. You seem like you've got a taste for it and you're ready for the next big thing. What do you think that looks like?

Margreet: Yeah, no, absolutely. My heart beats for Africa. Like, I've got such a desire to see Africa rise up and women empowered, and midwifery is so hands on with that. And then first and foremost, to empower midwives. And so yeah, I can't wait. I just feel I just need to get a few things sorted on this side that we've got South Africa really waxed, and then scale it, hey? We're already trying to put out feelers and advertising our symposium, for example. Our conference is in two weeks, and then we've targeted ads.

We're reaching out to Namibia and Botswana. So we're really putting feelers out. But yeah, the sky's the limit, I suppose. I mean, what we offer is applicable for any midwife, anywhere, so I'm not limiting myself for Africa. It's whoever is keen to become part of this and can jump in. That's the beauty of online, I've already been surprised by people looking in from places that I was like, Oh, wow, I didn't know they were listening, you know?

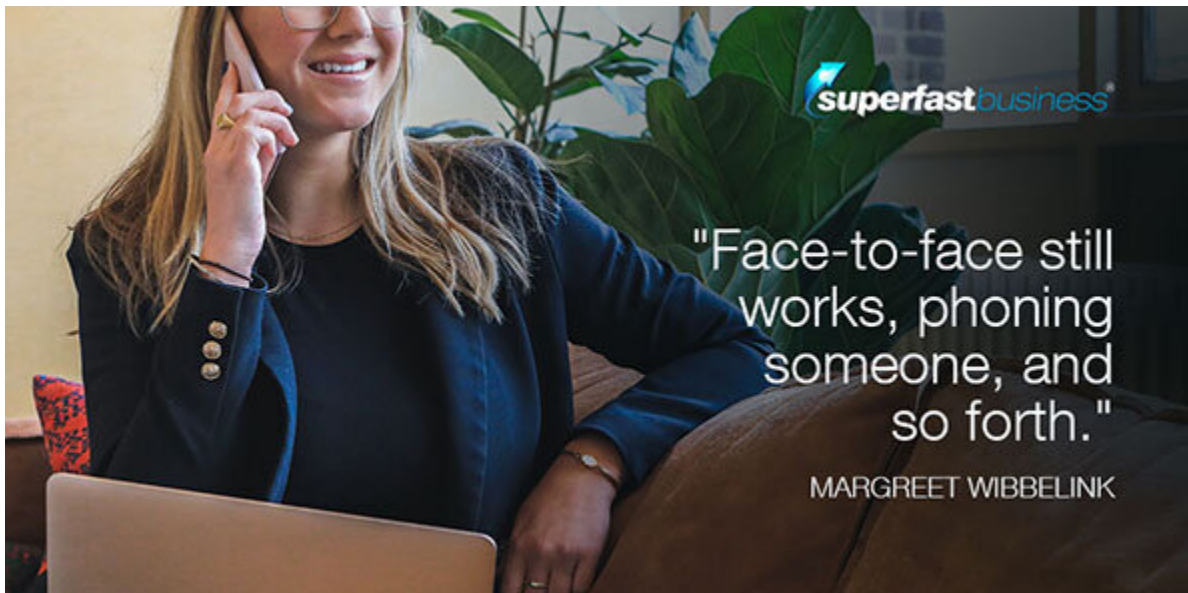
I had a guy, a midwife, a male midwife (they do exist) from Ethiopia, joining the course last year. And they find us online, you know, so, yeah.

How they're getting the word out

James: How do you advertise?

Margreet: Obviously advertising through our committed followers with emails and our social media. And then we've also launched the podcast and YouTube channel. So it's just by telling and engaging with the people out there. And then advertising for events and the courses, that comes with more structure, with my agencies, obviously, helping with sales webinar.

Now, we are actively promoting our symposium through Facebook target advertising, to try to reach new target groups that are not part of our database. Yeah, so it's a different approach. And we also still use the old school method, like my girls in the office, they will pick up the phone and phone all these hospitals, because we also need to realize that not all midwives are all engaging online, you know.



So if you want them to be part of the empowering process, you need to still do that, too. So face-to-face still works, phoning someone, and so forth. Yeah.

James: Such a big thing. Anyone listening to this who has a business-to-business market should be paying attention to that. Physical things in the post, like postcards, direct response, letters, lobbying, people with events, etc. I imagine LinkedIn is pretty strong for some markets like this, as well, where you can actually see people listing their role. Like, midwife would have to be an easy target for a platform like that. So how exciting.

I want to say thanks for sharing this story with us. Thank you for helping people become better at what they do with your courses and education. I do wish you a lot of success in scaling it now. And I have no doubt that's going to happen.

The biggest surprise along the way

And I think it'd be really interesting to share with us, to sort of close out now, what would you say were the most surprising things you've learned along this online journey in the last couple of years since you started out?

Margreet: Yeah, that's a good question. I think the most surprising thing is that, like the realization like, Oh, my hat, it works! Really, when I did that sales webinar, I couldn't believe how many people engaged and also when I had this email sequence what I was cringing about, because it's so out of my depth and the amount of mailers we send out, you know, but then I realized, like, Hey, people are starting to respond, it's working, there's thought and there's intelligence behind this approach.

So that was my biggest surprise factor, that it really works. But there's a way to go about it, obviously. Yeah.

James: You know, I started about the end of 2005. And I still sometimes pinch myself and think, Is this real? This whole online thing? Like, it's just such a life-changer. You get it right, it's life-changing.

So I'm curious, would you recommend 10XPRO platform to anyone who's sort of in the market for something to house their info products or memberships or funnels?

Margreet: Yeah, absolutely. It's so worth it. And it's a lovely team behind it. And yeah, I'm not too involved with the technical side, I wouldn't say yes, it's easy to build or whatsoever, but I believe it is. But the output is amazing and it's super user friendly. And I'm very happy that I get to work with it. Absolutely.

James: Nice. Thank you so much. I mean, that's who brought us together. So a big shout out to [John, 10XPRO](#), the support is awesome. To your agency, they've done a great job as well, introducing you to that and supporting you through the journey. They're actually a member of SuperFastBusiness as well. It's like a small world, but I'm really, really happy that we got to chat, and I have a lot of stoke for you for those waves.

You live right on the doorstep of probably the best right hand point break in the world. You know, great white sharks aside and a little bit cooler than I'd prefer, but it's still, one day, I'd like to share a wave with you and get out there.

Margreet: You must come find me. You're welcome.

James: I will. I'll get in touch with our mutual friend, Charl, and see if we can organize a party wave.

Margreet: Yeah, absolutely. That'd be amazing. I can't wait. But all the best of your mission. And thank you so much for the opportunity. It was really great.

James: Thanks, Margreet. And we'll put up links to your website and your social media as well. I'm sure there'll be some people interested in what you're doing there. So we'll link to your socials, to sensitivemidwifery.co.za. And keep powering along. You're doing great.

Margreet: Thank you so much. Keep well.

James: All right, that's Episode 826. There'll be a full transcription available at SuperFastBusiness.com. We'll also break this episode down in a few key points. If you can relate to any part of Margreet's journey, then this episode, hopefully, has been inspiring, as it has for me.



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