



Nils Vinje on Leadership and Online Business

Leadership coach Nils Vinje discusses the current work culture and the kind of leadership styles people need to succeed in their careers.





Nils Vinje

James: James Schramko here. Welcome back to SuperFastBusiness.com. This is Episode 825. We're talking about leadership today. I brought along my new friend, Nils Vinje. Welcome.

Nils: Thank you so much, James. Excited to be here.

James: It's the first time I've actually chatted with a guest who's in a sauna, a spa, you know. I think that's your heritage, right?

Nils: That's right, that's right, Norwegian heritage, and it comes into the background too, absolutely.

James: And it's nice of you to put a shirt on for the call.

Nils: I do what I can do, when I can do it. You know, I just try to show up as I am.

James: I was watching an episode on Netflix about Formula One Drive to Survive. And they had one of the drivers there, they followed him back home. And he was just hanging out there with his coach, you know, in their sauna, in Finland. And it was just like a normal day. And it's just amazing how, you know, on this planet, we can be so diverse. But then they all come to this leveler. Do you know, this competition in the car. And there's a lot of metaphors, I think, for Formula One racing and in business and life.

On the topic of leadership, it's fascinating when you're working with humans, right? How diverse they can be. But then we have this thing in common called business. You and I are chatting today on a platform that allows us to speak to each other from different sides of the world. I think you're over in Phoenix.

Nils: That's correct. Yep, Phoenix, Arizona.

James: And I'm in Sydney. And you've published some stuff, you work with people on the leadership topic. I want to get into that a bit today. And I also want to talk about the related side of that. And how you actually brought your specialty into the market, this digital marketplace, because if there's any environment that has changed a lot, especially in recent times, it's the way people work. And I wonder if that's impacting the way people lead.

So why don't you just give us a little bit of an overview of where you've been focusing your energy? I know you've got a book, I know you've got a philosophy or methodology around leadership. Let's just start out with that as a foundation, then we'll sort of move into what's been interesting to you as an observer, or practitioner in the last year.

The huge shift that's changed leadership in the workplace

Nils: Absolutely. Yeah, thank you. So I think the first thing, the highest level, we're living in a different era. A monster shift has occurred, not just the pandemic, but I'm talking leadership over the last 50, 60 plus years. So in the 1970s, it was completely reasonable to think that you were probably going to work for one company for your entire career, pretty close to it, right?

My father, one generation before me, actually worked for one company for 35 years, and he happened to love it, worked out well for him. Okay, so then we fast forward to like, the early 2000s, and then it became a little bit more normal to work for several companies, as you progress in your career. A little bit beyond just the one company, they tell you what to do, and you wait for the Rolex and the parachute package on the other end.



And now though, in the 2020s, and beyond, we're in a place where everyone is no longer serving the company. They are treating themselves, the people who are most successful, are treating themselves as their own company. And as they are the chief in charge of the strategic direction of their career, no longer is it in the hands of a company.

So this fundamental shift has taken place, and the people who are going to thrive and survive and get the most amount of value out of this are the ones who are treating themselves as their own company. And that's the kind of the place that I come from. And when I work with clients to build leadership skills, it's all around building it inside the individual. Right?

The benefit goes to the company, yes, but really, the individual is the only person who you're going to be with through your entire career. So you might as well work on you, and you've increased your value to the point where you can offer more to other people so that then they will exchange more money with you. Right?

So at the highest level, that fundamental shift has been happening, and the people who are in the best position to take advantage of that are those who recognize that shift, number one, and number two, recognize that it's not about waiting for the company to do things for you. It's about taking this upon yourself. I think entrepreneurs like yourself are incredible examples of this, but in the reality of the whole professional world, there's a relatively small portion of people, and I want to see that grow over time.

Some early advice for later success

James: You know, I got that advice in about 1990 or 1991. I was like, 20, I was doing a field trip for a company I work for, General Motors. General Motors Acceptance Corporation, a finance company, they finance motor vehicles, big company. And I went down and visited my uncle in Canberra, he was at the time, I think, advising the Prime Minister of Australia. He's an economics expert.

And he said, James, work on your ability to produce income, work on your income capacity. He basically was telling me, you are your best asset, you'll be very valuable wherever you work, you'll be able to quickly accumulate wealth, if you have a high income. And so I feel like I was lucky to be on to that nice and early. And through the time as a leader, I noticed when I was bringing these Generation Y people through, they were the first ones I recognize, hey, they weren't looking at a five-year stint here.

Like, we used to think two or three years was kind of the minimum you could accept someone changing jobs before they are almost unhireable. But these people are like, you know, a month or two into the job, like, why aren't I the managing director by now? They were the first ones I really noticed.

But now I think one of the biggest things that's interesting to me is how powerful people can build up themselves with social media and influence. For example, you've got a Hollywood studio might hire an actor who has a bigger Instagram following, because they know they're going to tap into that reach. So there's this bit of a paradox where previously, an employer might not be very keen for an employee to have too much power.

They want to put them in their box, they want to control them, you know, the classic, old, you know, I don't want to train them up too much, because they might leave. And then the counter to that is, what if they stay and you don't train them, right? So now, I guess people have a lot more control, they can work where they want, when they want, especially where they want, that's changed a lot in my own sort of social sphere.

A lot of people I'm surfing with now used to work in the city, and they're not going there as often. And they definitely don't want to go there. And that won't change back. They're ruined now for life. They've tasted the fruit from the tree of freedom, and it's like, I'm going to quit. They'd rather quit than go back into that little box in the city.

I can imagine it's going to be very challenging for traditional big corporates, or people who want the old command and conquer leadership approach. And it can also be really confusing for employees who have recently discovered that there's a whole other world out there.

Are you the CEO of your career?

Nils: It's a scary thing to take ownership of that. You were very fortunate in 1990 to get that advice from your uncle. I had a very pivotal moment happen for me in close to 2010 or so, I was in grad school. It was a Saturday morning, and this outside presenter was coming in to speak to us. There was a couple 100 of us in an auditorium, sitting in the middle, a couple of rows back.

The presenter walks out on stage, doesn't say anything. Just nice, long silence, looks directly in the audience. I swear he was staring right into my eyes, and he asked one question. He said, Are you the CEO of your career? And I was literally, in an instant, completely blown away, because one, I had never been asked that question before. But two, all of a sudden I flashed back to the entire previous 10 plus years of my professional career.

And the answer I came back with in a few seconds after running through that quick highlight reel was no, absolutely not. I was not the CEO of my career. And in that moment, I became very angry with myself, because I realized then what I was giving up. I was giving up control to other people, I was giving up control to the companies that I worked for. I let them dictate where I was going to go, what I was going to do, how much money I was going to make. I was just wrong.

And I became very angry. And I made a commitment to myself in that moment, that Saturday morning. I said never again will I not be the CEO of my career. And from that point on, everything's been up to the right ever since, income wise, progression wise. I went after grad school, went back to work inside some tech companies and went from an individual contributor to a vice president in 30 months. Right?

That was how big of an impact the growth and development of leadership skills had on me, where for 10 years, I bounced around an individual contributor level. No real idea what I was doing or where I was going. I always asked people, What should I do? What should I focus on? Then once I took control and grabbed a hold of that after that Saturday morning, two and a half years, one quarter of the time, I went from an IC to a VP.

That was mind blowing, and ever since then, I've been working as a coach, helping other people make that transformation and truly grab hold and recognize that they are their single greatest asset. It is not their title. It is not their company. It is not even the output they produce, it's them. Their ability to solve problems every single day is what enables them to add more value and more value and more value, which allows them to increase and be the person that everybody else wants to work with.

James: Yeah, it's like, I remember seeing grown men bawling, like, crying when they discovered that they actually had a choice, especially this mechanic, who was in his 60s, he'd been an apprentice, he was basically a mechanic his whole time. And he never realized that he had the option to do something else. Never gave it a thought.

I went on this absolute tear, career wise, from my first full-time job, I just got rapidly promoted through every single place I worked. Because I remember reading one book, and it's, even if you're a cashier at a supermarket, be the best damn cashier they have, like, you very quickly jump out of the bottom, like the leaders immediately say, Well, this person here is the person we want to progress. This is the one we want to invest in. This is the one we want to promote.

And I think the book was by a guy called Peter Span. But anyway, that really spoke to me as well. And no matter what it is, whether you're washing cars, just be damn good at it. It's what I tell my kids as well.

The people who want to learn with Nils

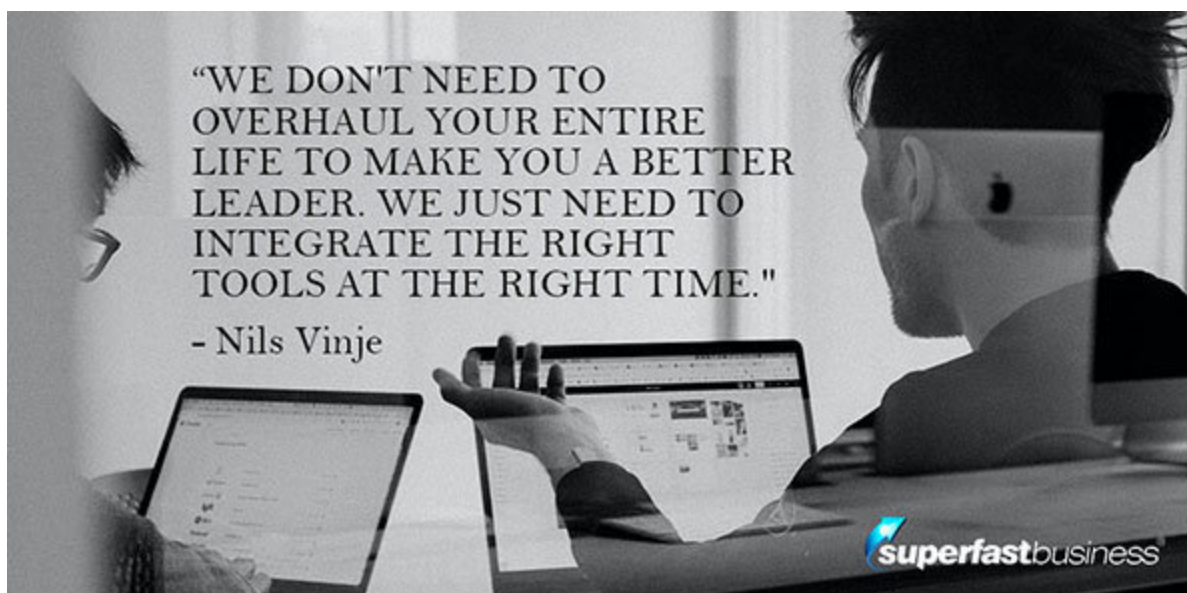
Now you've got this site learnwithnils.com. Who are you predominantly working with?

Nils: So my target audience here is managers, directors and VPs in the professional world who are facing leadership challenges every single day. And there are four main pillars of leadership that I cover in my framework, that I work to teach them on. And on learnwithnils.com, people can sign up and register for a free leadership training that I run. So let me run through the four pillars here real quick, and then we can talk a little bit about them.

James: Yeah. So basically, a lot of these people are employees.

Nils: Yeah, yes, yes, yes, 100 percent. They are employees, and a lot of them are either trying to make the shift that you and I were just talking about, about taking control, or wanting to earn their next promotion, or wanting to save time, or wanting to inspire their team, but they just don't know exactly how.

And that is my ultimate goal, is to give them leadership tools that they can integrate into their daily life, to be that person who is seen as going above and beyond and doing things differently than everybody else, just like you were saying, with whether you're a cashier or a mechanic or whatever, be the best at it.



If you're a leader of any kind, be the best at it, right? And get the best tools that can easily integrate into your life, because we don't need to overhaul your entire life to make you a better leader. We just need to integrate the right tools at the right time, to give you the right confidence to become the leader you've always wanted to be. Right.

So the four pillars are, number one, leading yourself. This is all about the psychology behind who you are as a leader, and what you are committed to doing. This is where you make the decision to become the CEO of your career. If that decision hasn't been made yet, I'm going to make you make that decision, because that's the only one that's going to turn the tables.

I can't force you to do it. It has to be a decision from within, much like when you heard that message from your uncle, and I heard the message from the speaker in grad school. It was a decision we made inside of ourselves. And that was the fuel that lit. So we got to light that.

James: It was just being aware of the option.

Nils: Yeah, absolutely.

James: My buddy [John Carlton](#), he talks about society just walking around like zombies in a trance. They're plugged in. They're phoning it in at work, they're going home, watching a TV, dinner with the iPad, and then going to bed. And then they do it again the next day. And there's no real pattern interrupt or external factors.

So the fact that you and I are talking about this, I hope that even one person listening to this podcast, would today, at this moment, realize this is a choice. I know, people are probably sick of hearing me talk about surfing or whatever. But it's such a metaphor. Like, the difference between my life now and the life I used to have is me realizing there was an option and then pursuing it. So it's fascinating to me.

Nils: If we can reach one person to make that choice, the world will be a better place. Guaranteed. One hundred percent, right? One other person taking control, one other person not waiting for somebody else to tell them what to do, or to put limits on when they can be promoted or what projects they can take on, or what skills they can gain, or what training they can attend. Right?

That's one of the hardest ones is, Oh, my company can't pay for this. Who cares? Find a way to pay for it, because you can invest in yourself and you will get a massive return on any investment in yourself, always.

James: Whenever I got a new job, I would go and buy six books at the business bookstore in North Sydney. When I got the sales role, I went and bought six sales books and read them all in one weekend, and implemented them. They were literally my tools. And to this day, there has been no greater investment that I've ever made than in books. I've got this whole wall full of books out there. And I've actually read most of them, which is even better.

Nils: And you probably implemented most of them too.

James: Yeah, yeah. I used to read them, and then I would integrate what I'm reading into practice, to the point where now, if I read a book now, and I realized it would have helped me back in my career, I'm like, Ah, that's annoying. I wish I knew that back then. Basically, everything is already out there. It's already been discovered, someone's done the research or put it in practice.

Our job is to find it, and implement it. Again, that's why I bring guests on this show, I want to bring in people out there. I would consider you a peer doing a very similar thing to me, but for probably a slightly different target audience, which is great, because I have absolutely zero tolerance for enterprise or companies. They've tainted me too much, the big companies I've worked for.

I'm almost predominantly dealing with entrepreneurs, people who have got their own business. And it's refreshing to hear that, I really guess we're talking about intrapreneurialship here.

Nils: Yes, yes. And there's an element of this that is present in all entrepreneurs, period. But they're not the only ones. They're not like, this special segment of society that if you're not an entrepreneur, like you can't have access to this, and you can't get these incredible gains. No, it's a decision, it's a choice. It's a mindset to invest in yourself and to be resourceful, via books, via training programs, via lectures, whatever is, there is more access to information today than there ever has been at any point.



And you can learn virtually anything from a leading expert in the world, at the drop of a credit card, pretty much every single day, and every single minute of every day of the year. The question is, what are you going to learn? Right? And what are you going to learn and then apply? And to the tool integration piece you were talking about with the books, that's the most important piece. Like, learning for learning's sake, it might be a little entertaining, but it's not going to deliver the result.

In my programs, I feature something called LTI. It's leadership tool integration, right? That LTI system is what I've developed in all the coaching and training and consulting work I've done with clients to help them make the progress the fastest. It's not about taking them away and out of their day-to-day life to go through a whole program or be physically present somewhere, virtually present somewhere, to learn this stuff, and then go back to their desk and try to figure out how to apply it. No.

It starts with the premise that you're already busy, you're already in a leadership position, you're already working with employees every day. So if we can infuse, then, these simple-to-understand and relatively easy-to-implement leadership tools, then we can have the maximum amount of impact with the least amount of disruption. And we can make the world a better place, just like we were talking about with that one person who's going to make a decision to take control today. That's what this is all about.

James: What kind of tools do you teach these people?

One of the biggest challenges as a leader

Nils: So in the leading yourself pillar, that first one, this is all about one, the psychology. So first off is, how do we bulletproof your leadership psychology? So there's a number of exercises and things to do that. Then we get into mastering your time. I know you spend a tremendous amount of effort and energy on this and have done some awesome work in this area, because time is the same for everybody. However, how you use it is the difference.

So very specific tools to be able to control your time, and instead of reacting to the world and all of their demands, it's a flip. And it's about taking control and putting yourself in the driver's seat and deciding where to spend your time first. That's one of the biggest challenges that the leaders I've worked with, and I personally faced it myself as a leader in these organizations too, was how to balance all the demands on you, as a leader, with the stuff you got to get done, and you got to move.

James: Plus, a lot of employees are kind of boxed in and told exactly what they need to spend their time on. Like if you're manning a cashier, you clock on. That's your time allocation is at that particular zone, doing that particular thing. A lot of the ability to be creative about that or to have choices are gone. So you might be tricked into thinking that they're not an option.

That's the thing I see people struggle with the most after they leave employeeship and then they have their own business. They actually get paralyzed with this unbelievable, massive opportunity of choice. It's like, Oh my god, I have not been trained on how to figure out how to choose what to work on, how to choose where to spend my time, how to allocate my assets. I've always had a budget, I've always been told this is my box to stay in. And they're not prepared for that.

It's actually the most wildly unexpected paralysis that can attack an entrepreneur, is this paradox of freedom and choice. It's too much. It's too much for some people. And that's where I think a lot of the value I had with people is like, well, let's come up with a routine, and let's see where it makes sense to spend your time and allocate your resource. So I'm not telling them what to do, I'm giving them the assistance of some of the choices they may wish to make.

And then we sort of keep them in a safe observation pattern, and then we reflect on how that's going, and then we optimize it. Although I don't have my own acronym for that...

Nils: I think there is one there. And what you're doing is giving them a framework to operate within. And that is, whether you're in a leadership position working with a company, or you're an entrepreneur, or you're a consultant, or whatever it is, frameworks are one of the single greatest tools to be able to communicate your value and expertise, because nobody else knows what you're doing, or talking about.

James: The tool that I refer to the most with that is the [EHR](#), the effective hourly rate. It's like, that's a step one filter for being able to make decisions if something's very, very good, or very, very bad. It's like a super basic, but helpful tool. If you have no tools in the toolkit, that's a good hammer to start with. And of course, it gets much more expansive beyond that. But I think it's good.

So you're providing these people a toolkit, you're helping them implement. What's another example of something you teach these people?

Core fundamental skills for leading others

Nils: So in the second pillar is all about leading others. So the first pillar, leading yourself, you know, more internally focused, mastering your time, building repeatability, and just like you were describing there. Leading others is all about the work you're doing with the team that you're responsible for and working with, whether this is three people, or 300 people, or 3000 people, it doesn't really matter.

There's some core fundamental skills that when I learned these at the right time, made all the difference in the world, enabled me to build incredibly high-performing teams, and put me on a fast track to promotion, why I went from IC to VP so quickly, because I used these tools in this way to get the results. I found they got results, and I did it over and over, and then I started teaching people how to get the results.

So you know, there's elements that I use, I'm a certified coach, and there's elements of coaching that I bring into how you have conversations with others, individuals. So for example, if someone comes to you, as a leader, and says, I need an answer to this problem, I have a problem, what do I do? Right? You have a couple of choices. You can reply with, Here's what you should do, ABC, just go and do this, because you know the answer, and it's pretty straightforward, because you've done it before. Or you can help the person discover the answer for themselves.

Now, they might come to the conclusion, and say, and do, the exact same thing that you could have told them in advance, however, they will be 80 percent more likely to actually follow through and execute that than if you just told them to do that.



So the vast majority of the professional leadership world today still operates largely in the, I'm coming to you with a problem. Oh, I'm the one in the leadership role, I should answer and solve this problem, because that's why I'm here, versus the coaching approach, which is accepting that you might not have all the answers, but if you can help other people discover the answers, they will be exponentially more committed to the outcome. And that is a far greater piece, because you're going to help them grow and learn and develop and they can help other people do that, too.

So that leading others pillar is all about how to build this incredibly connected team through the use of these tools. And it's amazing what can happen in a very short period of time. Again, these are conversations that happen already every day. So let's just infuse some of these tools into the places where you have one-on-ones, into the places where you have team meetings, into the places where you're communicating via email, right? They can all be used every single day. And if we integrate them, we can get the results.

James: And it can be sort of passed on too, you know? It was 1992 or so. And I asked Caroline, my senior, to tell me the dealer code for one of the dealers. And she said, Look it up. I thought, What a b*tch. She knows all the codes off by heart and she's not even going to tell me. I said, Why don't you just tell me? She goes, If I tell you, you'll keep asking me, and if you look it up, you'll know how to do it yourself.

Nils: There you go.

James: So I thank Caroline. She taught me a valuable lesson early on. My last leader was also a great teacher in the fact that he did almost nothing. He was absent. He was rarely there. Anything you sent up for decision would never come back. And there was no budget. So I became the most resourceful in my last role. It was that classic if-it's-meant-to-be-it's-up-to-me-type thing.

Like, I just learned not to send things up for decisions, just do it. And don't ask for budget, just find a creative way to make it happen. So I was doing all these triangulation deals. Basically, the business ran without the owner being there. The thing that blew me away most is he got the perfect result by putting the least input possible, it's like, the one who deserves it the least gets the most amazing answer. And I believe he sold that business for a good amount after I left, which is great. But isn't it fascinating?

Nils: It's counterintuitive. Right? We think we should have all the answers. In fact, the best leaders don't have any answers at all.

James: Well, a good leader might be very good at Socratic techniques and in leadership, leading people rather than, you know, pushership. And, you know, one of the complaints I hear the most from people who are trying to build a team is, Oh my team just can't think for themselves, or, My team, they don't do what they should do. It should be obvious to them.

And I think that's usually a sign, Well, hey, I don't think you're actually teaching them how to think. I don't think you're creating an environment where they can have a go at things and not worry that they'll lose their job, etc. I think fear comes into it, for sure. It will be typical for employees to have a lot of fear, because they're getting paid by one person. You piss off that one person and your pay check stops, you are destitute within the next paycheck. You're like, you're one paycheck away from crisis.

Nils: And most people are, in the grand scheme of the world.

James: They are. Like, we recommend for employers, for example, I have a [recruitment agency](#) with my wife, and some employers want to pay monthly. And we say, Well, you know, you might want to consider more frequent pay periods, like twice a month, because a lot of people are literally running it to the payday. Like, it's down to the wire. And if they're not great at budgeting, or they can't plan properly, or they have sort of costs of being an employee, like Internet and computer or whatever, you don't want to let it run too long.

They're not like a business that can just draw on its own equity to get through a bad period. So very interesting.

Nils: So if the team has those kinds of problems where they can't "think for themselves", or they don't take any initiative, it's not a problem with the team. It's a problem with the leader.

James: You get the team you deserve, right? Someone's quote.

Nils: You get the team you created, really. Even if you inherited it, if you've been with them for any period of time, you have influenced everything about how that team operates. Guaranteed 100 percent, every time.

Working for Patton's clone

James: One of my most epic leaders, he's probably my best educator, even though he was a horrible man. He made me watch the movie Patton over and over again. But Patton would basically, you'd look at the soldier, he would tell you who their leader is, you could see it reflects down the line. He had some good attributes and some bad attributes, but my good bad boss was basically a clone of Patton.

Nils: That must have been pretty intense.

James: It was intense. You know, like in the movie, Patton slaps a soldier with his glove and gets in trouble for that. Because he's just really annoyed that this soldier is such a coward. He was a bit of a hardcore leader, but he also got things done no one else could do. You know? And my leader was definitely a handful. He was the most challenging boss I had.

I also picked up the most lessons that caused me to be successful, and passed on to both my kids, my employees, my coaching students, they all get the benefit of the hot coals I had to walk on for this guy. Like, the stories are just insane.

Nils: Right. And those stories, they benefited you, obviously, tremendously benefit your clients, your students. And so we got to go through the trenches, right? We have to live what this is like in order to help other people through it. And that, to me, there's a lot of stories I've unearthed over the last couple of years trying to bring all of my teachings and stuff to this market.

And it's kind of liberating to tell some of those, which I hadn't frankly done very much of that. But they are really, really powerful. And people love to hear just how bad it was and just how hard I failed. And I'm okay talking about it, that's totally fine, because I learned a tremendous amount, and then it shaped the next thing that I did. And then I can be an inspiration for somebody else.

James: Yeah, and it's interesting. I wouldn't say I've had too many failures, which is good. So it doesn't get me many vulnerability points. But I've certainly been through very hard times. I've talked about it on my podcast heaps. This guy in the end, you know, he spat on me, and he threatened to kill me with a steak knife. Like, it really got ugly.

Nils: Now that's intense.

James: Yeah, and the crime was I had too much talent. And everyone in the business liked me, we've turned this thing from worst to best, a high-performance machine. And the better we went, the more it put pressure on our relationship, because he felt like more and more of a failure and it was more and more obvious that he was an absolute tyrant, like a crazy mofo.

Nils: Wow!

James: Like he would be screaming off his head. And when you get to the bottom of what it's about, there'll be a dead blow fly in the window, like in the front window, just this tiny little speck of a dead fly on the ground, and no one had seen it or picked it up yet. And that would trigger him into a rage. So my level of acuity just went up 10 notches, I had eyes in the back of my eyes in the back of my eyes in the back of my head. We had to find stuff before he did, or it was game over.

Nils: And again, valuable lesson there, being hyper-aware of all the little tiny details that might be overlooked sometimes, but just how important those are, you know, for out of fear at the time, but you know, it ended up serving you well.

James: Yeah, anyway, some of the stories I can't even publish on my own blog.

Nils: I can't believe it. That sounds intense.

Getting the word out to an online world

James: So I'm interested, as a business owner and a marketer and someone who has made the crossover between employee and business owner, you've chosen this digital path is obviously a clear, strong funnel for you. I want to just discuss with you, how did you approach getting your information out to people? You talk about changing the world. Clearly, the internet is a leverage point.

I came across you through our common friend, [John Lint](#). He's the founder of [10XPRO](#). He said you're using the platform. I asked you about it. You had a very familiar story to me about how you started online and where it's ended up. But I'd love it if you could just give us a little walkthrough of the sort of progression and where you're at.

And if there's any advice for other people who might be listening to this thinking, Well, gosh, I'm an expert like Nils. I want to get my message out there. Where could they jump straight to without having to go through the drama, would be sort of where I'm getting at with this?

Nils: Yeah, absolutely. I would love to share that message. So prior to the pandemic, I had been a consultant for about a little over five years, almost five and a half years, in a very specific niche industry called customer success, which is basically everything that happens post-sale in a B2B SaaS business. That's where I was a VP and a director and a manager and an individual contributor, in that world.

So I left that role, became a consultant, and essentially was just doing the same work I had done for myself and my companies, for other people. So it was a very relational business. I worked one-on-one, I did bespoke one-off work. And that was how it went for five and a half years. When the pandemic hit, the entire pipeline in my entire consulting business went to zero in about 48 hours.

I had call after call after call and email after email after email, everybody saying, Everything's locking down, we're freezing all discretionary spending, sorry, we'll talk to you at some point in the future. And I was like, Uh oh, this isn't good. Like, my entire business, entire world just completely disappeared, and I have zero visibility into when it's going to change or anything, much like the rest of the world did.

So I was not immune to this. However, in that moment of like, you know, gut wrench, like how am I going to support, I got a family of five that I support, including myself, and like, there's a lot on the line every single month as I'm doing my work.

James: Your kids are in that sort of expensive phase now too, like looking at the ages here.

Nils: They're now 14, 12 and nine, so yeah, we got a lot going on. There's braces every time, somebody gets hurt, you know it, like there's a lot you need to make sure that everything is covered and taken care of. So in that moment, I decided that I needed to shift and pivot my focus from this very small niche of where I had a good reputation was one-on-one working to something much bigger. And that was the leadership skills market.

Now, I'd been a leadership coach for a very long time and had done a lot of coaching over almost 10 years, and decided, you know, it had always been part of my business and part of my projects, but it was never the focus. And this was the push that I needed in order to say, You know what, this needs to be the focus, because I know it can be a repeatable business on a market that is this size, in the information and expertise, which is what I have and what I do.

So I committed to writing my book on May 14th of last year. That was when I signed up for the program to help guide me through the whole process. And I published the book with my funnel fully built on the site on 10XPRO on September 1st. So a little over 110, 115 days, I went from zero, literally, I wasn't even considering writing a book. But I attended some very important training at a very pivotal time and got an introduction, just at the right time at all, the world just opened up perfectly once I made that decision.

And then the 10XPRO opportunity to partner with you and John where you guys had a promotion that enabled me to get a test run of it for like 60 days, it was absolutely could not have come at a better time, it was just absolutely phenomenal. So I went deep on everything, writing the book, building the site, building the book funnel, and launched on September 1st.

And it was incredibly invigorating to take all this incredible stuff that I've been coaching and working with people over 10 plus years. And now it's in a consumable format where anybody can, you know, access it. Like, these strategies, these tools that are in the book can make a massive difference. And people have said that as a result of reading it. Fast forward then to around Thanksgiving time or close to the end of the year, I built what I call the 7-Week Leadership Accelerator, which is now the course that goes deeper than on all the areas in the book.

So for people who love the book, or people who just want to take an accelerated route through leadership, I have a seven-week program, where we go deep on the four pillars, leading yourself, leading others, leading with communication and leading with metrics, and all of that, the entire program, the entire sales funnel, and the entire delivery is all set up and run through 10XPRO, in addition to the weekly trainings that I run at learnwithnils.com, how I run those trainings is all through 10XPRO.

So 10XPRO is literally the cornerstone of my entire online digital marketing footprint and delivery mechanism. And I'm extremely thankful to be using it because I've used the WordPress and a million plugins set up in my consulting business. Sold little courses here and there. Never really made much of a go with it. And it drove me absolutely bananas because nothing talks to each other and 10XPRO puts it all in one package, makes it super easy.

James: And you came from a SaaS world.

Nils: Yes, yes.

A tool that's as good as it sounds

James: And if you're listening to this and you don't know what SaaS means, it's not like an attitude or anything. It's Software as a Service. So 10XPRO is a software as a service, I imagine you'd be pretty critical around the customer experience, you know, the ease of use, the integration, etc. Do you have a large web development team in your business, Nils?

Nils: It's as large as the person on this podcast.

James: I thought you might say that. I've got to love how nimble that tool is. And we set up our book funnel right now, like, it's probably live by the time this episode comes out. And something I should have done a while ago, I've actually got a [book](#), so I should have done it. But I think the big message here, this is what I want the message to be, you went from a standing start to published and online and up and running with a very small, low-risk budget, like you got a 60-day start.

If you're listening to this, and you want a 60-day trial for \$1 or whatever, then get in touch with me, just send me an email, make sure I hook you up. And you got to the market. Like there were a lot of other people out there who got crunched at the same time as you, who are still crunched. It's back to that choice. As of now, if you're listening to this, you now know there is a platform out there that can harness your expertise and get you to market if you want to get into it and get it running like Nils.

You remind me of like, when I really started hitting the market. It was definitely driven from a need to provide for family. I was providing for six people at the time, it was not an option. The main options I had were how I'm going to do it. And I had to go down the Frankenstein route, because the tools like 10XPRO didn't exist when I started my forum. In fact, I started my forum before Facebook groups. That's how long ago I started it.

But I've now set up an installation as well last year, and I started it the same time as you started, because I could see there's going to be a whole new market for me with this pandemic, people coming online, people who aren't ready for my full solution. So I started [superfastresults.com](#). That's where we're setting up our funnels and campaigns. I've got a [challenge](#) funnel in there. I've got [courses](#) in there, I've got a [membership](#) in there.

I've been ticking all the boxes and pushing the dials, and I just love the platform, too. I'm glad you trusted in John and myself when you went on to that offer. Were you just sitting in my email list listening to the podcast or something? Is that how it worked?

Nils: Yeah, that was it. I have listened to many of your podcasts, loved it. Ones with [Dean Jackson](#) are hands down the favorites. The 25-year commitment.

James: We just published another one like literally the other day.

Nils: I know, I just got the email this morning. And I was like, I wasn't going to have time to listen to it before today.

James: I've heard it's a good one..

Nils: For sure. And I just got an email from you. And you said very clearly, Here's everything you get, 60 days \$1. And by the way, this is the only email you're going to get from me. So take advantage of it or not. And I was like, That's pretty straightforward. I honestly don't know how that message could have come at a more pivotal, literally to the minute moment, because it was almost probably a week or a week and a half, maybe, after I committed to writing the book.

So all of a sudden, go from not doing a book, having no idea, to committing, Oh, my gosh, I got to write a book. Okay, starting the whole book-writing process, and then thinking, Okay, now I'm going to have to build an online presence in the future. Okay, I'll deal with that when it comes in a month or two. And then I get this email from you, you said, Hey, how about trainings with John and I, and a \$1 trial for 60 days, and I was like, mind blown, this could not have come at a better time.

That's why, you know, I'm a firm believer that all things happen for some reason. And there was a reason why I was on your list at that time. And that message just hit perfectly.

James: Well, I'm glad that John connected us and that you were willing to share this. You know, it's nice when fellow business operators can come along and just talk about how the business runs. That's what my audience are very interested in. I know they're definitely interested in leadership, like that's really the missing skill online. A lot of people I work with, they weren't prepared for leadership.

And a lot of them get struggled in the tech. That's just huge, they do get bogged down trying to make it all work. I see endless posts about, what's a low-cost, free or whatever. And people are just putting all these band aids out there. They're not thinking about what their business will look like in a year from now.

You have a foundation that can scale to a multimillion dollar business, if it's not already there, with the platform you've got, with your expertise and your fantastic attitude and incredible sauna set there. Like, you've got the package.

Nils: Thank you.

Thoughts you'll want to take away

James: Nils, it's been an absolute pleasure. Why don't you round out this podcast episode? I know if you've listened to any of my episodes before, you know, I usually sort of want to come and go for the chase here. If we've listened to this whole episode by now, what would be the thing you really would like someone to take away from it, be inspired by it, or to utilize?

Nils: Yeah, the leadership and becoming the leader you've always wanted to be is within your grasp 100 percent. All that's standing between where you are now and where you want to be is the right leadership tools to integrate it into your life every single day. That's it. And to do that, that's what I specialize in. So check out learnwithnils.com. And you can sign up and register for a free leadership training that will be run via [10XPRO](#), so you can get a little taste of what it's like to see a webinar on 10XPRO.

And I would love the opportunity to share my framework and how I work with you so that I can have an opportunity to improve your life and improve your leadership skills.

James: Nice. And by the way, if someone's listening to this, and you have a 10XPRO site, and you think it'd be interesting for my audience, get in touch with me. I am really interested in growing this platform with John as a partner, and the people I'm meeting on these discussions is great. Not everyone I'm bringing on is super famous. But they're really inspiring.

What you've done, Nils, is inspiring, and thank you for using the platform. Thank you for coming along and sharing. Why don't you also tell us what the book's called, where we can find that, because I know that we have a big book-buying community here.

Nils: Yeah, book is a wonderful place to start, it's called 30 Day Leadership Playbook. And you can buy a copy for just 10 bucks at 30dayleadership.com/playbook. I'll ship it anywhere for free in the US. Outside the US, if it's Australia or whatnot, there's a small additional shipping fee, pretty much piece of cake. But again, you get a chance to see a 10XPRO book funnel when you go through that process as well.

If you prefer Amazon, it's on Amazon, 30 Day Leadership Playbook, but I'll hook you up with some special extra bonuses if you buy it from me.

James: Nice. Thanks, Nils. Great to catch up. We're going to put all those links on episode 825. And we'll fully transcribe this as well. So if you want to get the transcription, that's over at SuperFastBusiness.com, just type 825 into the search bar, you'll find the episode easily.

And I think this is going to be a real hit with, especially, our audience who are in that transition phase. I think it's really going to be a sweet spot. Thank you so much.

Nils: My pleasure. Thank you very much for the opportunity. It's been awesome to connect with you live here and just an honor to be on SuperFastBusiness.

James: Love it.



Find the type of leadership
that works for your
business with James's help

[CLICK HERE](#)