



# Switching From Corporate To Self Employed With Paul Higgins



Paul Higgins inspires many by defying his health condition to run a thriving online business and live a rich, fulfilling life. Hear about his philosophy to build, live and give, in this SuperFastBusiness episode.



**Paul Higgins**

**James:** James Schramko here. Welcome back to SuperFastBusiness.com. This is Episode 700. And today we have Paul Higgins from [BuildLiveGive.com](https://www.buildlivegive.com). And there's a bit of a clue in that domain name about what we're going to be talking about today. Hello, Paul.

**Paul:** Hi James, Glad to be here.

**James:** I've known you for a while, I think I first got to really know you in the bar at the hotel at one of my live events. We had a long conversation about your meteoric career with working for really big companies like Coca-Cola. And then you built up some

enormous team in the Philippines. And it was really impressive to see how you had approached big business and then started to apply it into our world. And at the same time as all of this is going on, you've had some really interesting life challenges come along, which I will say have been really inspirational for me and a lot of other people in our community. So I hope we're going to be able to cover some of these things.

**Paul:** Yeah, no look, definitely. And I really appreciate your support as well. I know you've always been sending me notes, and that's so encouraging to get those from you. So yeah, really appreciate it.

## A change that needed to happen

**James:** So why don't we talk about that transition? Because I think you've got a book out recently called Build, Live, Give, and you cater for a certain market. And I think that market's quite instructive for both the path you've taken and what you've been trying to help others with. So why don't you give us a little overview on your sort of take on what's happening in business right now, through the framework that you've been using, and then we'll see where we go from there.

**Paul:** Sure. So, as you said, I had a career at Coca-Cola; it was a great company and gave me lots of opportunities. I was in Australia but used to travel around the world and work a lot of long hours. And effectively, my specialist said, Look, Paul, if you continue to do that you'll have kidney failure in a couple of years, or you can take a different path and try to push that out. In 2011, that was when I took the latter. Roughly, you know, a transplant will sort of last 20 years. So I wanted to see my grandkids and everything else that comes with living longer. And yeah, so I left.

And, you know, I wish I had met you earlier, James, because I made nearly every mistake you could make as a corporate person thinking that it was the same as running your own business. And, you know, I sort of did it solo; I was pigheaded. I just did a lot of things wrong. And then you know, like you said, I build up some businesses, so an outsourcing business, and also a technology business. And then my health took a little bit more of a turn. And I said, it's not a good idea to be traveling to the Philippines where my team was. And thanks to your encouragement, when I started working with you, you thought well, you're doing too many things. Three businesses, and none of them are really doing as well as you'd like. So, long story short, that's when I set up a mastermind and went overseas with my family for eight weeks.

## Living with a medical challenge

**James:** How good is that? And with regards to the medical stuff, were you predisposed to some particular condition that would have got you no matter what you were doing, or was it purely working the corporate grind that really got you into trouble?

**Paul:** No. Look, it's a 50/50 at birth. So and it's each individual birth, it's 50 percent chance. So you know, my brother's got it. My mother just passed with it. You know, it's just littered through the family, and it goes back probably three generations. And it's just a mutation. It's called polycystic kidney disease, and I've gotten a kidney. So when I had a kidney recently removed, it was like the size of nearly a basketball; it was just over three and a half kilos. And I've still got one of those in, the other side. And yeah, the cysts just grow. So some grow really slow, some grow really fast. And I think working the lifestyle I had probably didn't help. You know, some of the sugar I used to have as well with Coca-Cola was a bit like working for the devil. It sort of meant that I probably expedited the end outcome, but it was always going to happen that way.

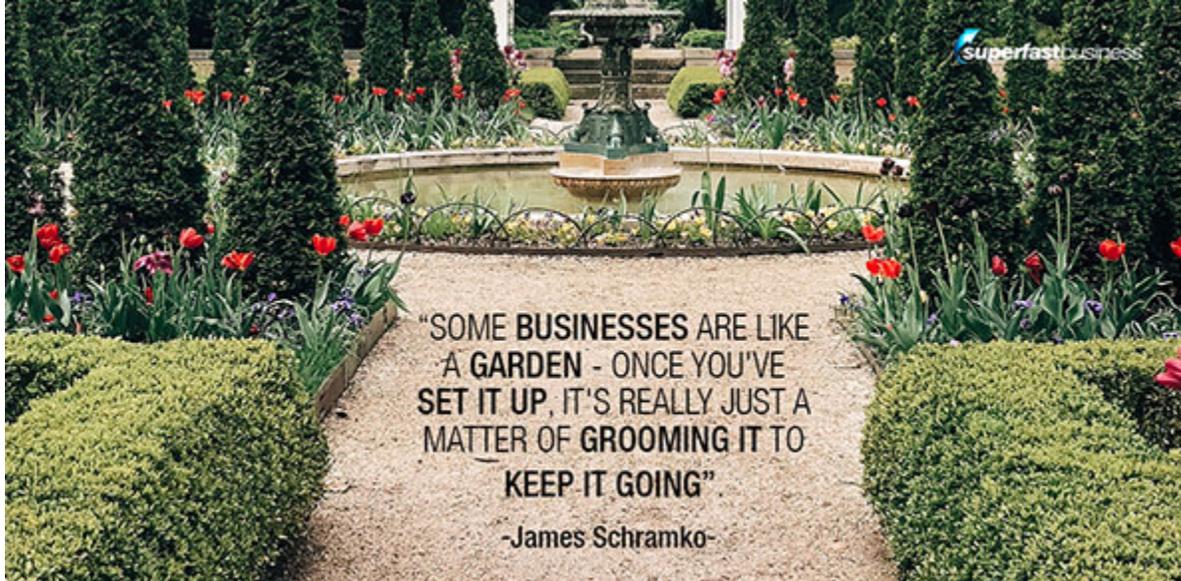
**James:** Right. Yeah, I mean that's literally the size of a newborn. Like, to put that in perspective for people that haven't had a newborn lately. That's a lot to carry around.

**Paul:** Well, some people have 20 kilos; some have, like, one kidney is 20 kilos.

**James:** Oh, my God.

**Paul:** You know, it's just quite incredible. I've got them in the liver as well, but the liver is fine. The liver's not an issue. And my lowest was 6 percent kidney function, and it's a bit like just been a fog all the time. I used to write quite a bit and I try to remember everyone's surnames, but I couldn't get even maybe 20 percent of the surnames, because it was like having a permanent hangover. But as soon as I went on dialysis, that lifted, and you know, I'm really lucky since.

**James:** We've had a couple of parallels, but mine have definitely not been anywhere near as severe. I know when I started to pay much more attention to my health because I felt like I was working too much, like, my whole neck was seizing up, my joints were getting difficult. I did the MRI and DNA and all these other tests. And through a series of that and having other people sort of look at me and help me out, I discovered that I was not reacting well to gluten, that I had osteoarthritis. And I was feeling lethargic. You know, if I'd eat gluten, I'd just feel, like, really the lethargy. All I'd want to do is just crawl into bed, the headache and a rumbling tummy. And I always thought it was something else, you know, maybe it's the onions in my pasta or whatever, but it was the wheat.



And I tell you what, having that sort of business that we have now, with more virtually-based, is such a differential when it comes to not just surviving, but actually thriving, still. You can put in a real, minimal baseline of work in a business like ours, once it's established, to just maintain it. And if you want to go the extra, put in extra hours, and really get ambitious, you can take it so much further. But I will say it's one of those sort of businesses that are like a garden, you know, once you've set it up, it's really just a matter of grooming it to keep it going. But just like you, coming from corporate when I came from the real job, I found it extraordinarily hard to go online. I thought it would be much easier than it ended up being.

## Some surprising difficulties

Tell us about some of the challenges that you faced that got you surprised by just how hard it was?

**Paul:** Yeah, look, everyone always said you need [an offer that converts](#), and I didn't really pay enough attention to that. So, you know, I'd have lots of coffee meetings, lots of chats. You know, I was always used to people coming to me and selling me things effectively. You know, most suppliers wanted to work with Coca-Cola. And even your clients though, they weren't new clients, you know, I managed Kohl's, which is one of the largest supermarts in Australia, for three years. And they had Coke, you didn't have to sell to them, per se. You just had to sell more to them. And yeah, so I found that really difficult. And I always came from, you know, a brand that people knew. Like you, Mercedes. For me, Coca-Cola. And I'd walk into a networking room, and people would say, what do you do? And I just couldn't answer it. I just could not for the life of me say what I did. And I found that really strange, because I spent my whole career trying not to tell people I worked at Coke, because they'd either, you know, want a job, or they know someone there...

**James:** Send us some free samples? Do they ask you for that?

**Paul:** Yeah, right! All the time.

**James:** They used to say that at Mercedes-Benz. Yeah, just send over the samples.

**Paul:** Yeah, like, you know, every major event for the school, you get that call, you know, Can you just...? So it was always that. I used to say to people, I was just a forklift driver. No offense to any forklift drivers – I know it's a difficult job. But I just didn't want people to hit me up for a job when I was a director. So, you know, I sort of came from that, where, I never had an ego, but it was easy. Whereas in your own business, oh, my God, I just didn't realize no one cared about my background. No one really cared about me, per se. All they wanted was the result. And I was struggling to get a result because I didn't actually even know what I did.

**James:** Yeah, I can relate to this. You know, when we ran ads for salespeople at Mercedes-Benz, I'd ask them why they've applied. They'd say, Oh, because it's Mercedes-Benz. The brand is so strong, such an iconic brand. It really is in the same sort of category, Coca-Cola and Mercedes-Benz, that a lot of the infrastructure around that is sort of taken for granted. And what I found so hard just like you is, like, what am I going to sell? And I do remember after I had started building my database and I'd found the thing that I'm going to sell and I was scaling it up. And then I was looking at the financials of the dealership that I worked for. And I was looking at the financials of my own business. And this is just when I quit my job, like just before I quit. One of the triggers for me was, I'd reached a crossover point where I was making the same amount of profit as the entire Mercedes-Benz dealership I was working at. I was doing it by myself with one assistant and a helpdesk person, with a tiny database of several thousand customers. And this dealership was this \$50-million-a-year beast with 70-something staff, and, you know, huge costs. Land, stock... I mean, one of the biggest costs was rent back to the holding company, which was also owned by the family that owned the business at the time. So you know, they kind of run all the costs through it and end up with not much at the end of the day, tiny little margins.

## The philosophy behind Build Live Give

But we have these amazing things. Once you find your offer that converts, away you go. and I have seen you consolidate and streamline and simplify, and now you've got this beautiful brand that is a website, a podcast and a book. Tell us what Build Live Give is all about.

**Paul:** Yeah, so the simplest terms is to build a great business, define your lifestyle and give back. And, you know, I heard it on a podcast one day and I thought, that's me. You know, that's what I stand for. And for me, like you said, I had to decide my lifestyle, which was

improve my health, push off kidney failure as long as I could; that came with a whole lot of changes in my lifestyle. And then I had to pick a business that basically would fund me living that lifestyle, i.e., how could I work on a computer in a hospital on a dialysis machine and still make money? And when I first started, I was swapping time for money. So I was doing a lot of, you know, coaching face-to-face. And the economics just didn't stack up and like you've been trained, well, I was trained incredibly well. Like, I think I could be a CFO in a lot of ASX-listed companies or publicly-listed companies because of, I used to buy billion-dollar companies, you know, we were always at the detail of my numbers. And I looked at my numbers, and I said, Yeah, why did I start this? I could have started anything. But why did I start a model that's just, the unit economics don't make sense? And, you know, with your help, as you know, I basically changed all of that. And we're now, yeah, look, I've got a small team now. I'm certainly not at the scale that you are, but it you know, it now keeps my wife saying, Paul, I think you should go back to corporate because this just isn't working.

**James:** Right. Interesting. I mean, in terms of scale, like, I've gone all the way up to 65, and then now I've got a team of six. So we are a lean, lean fighting machine. The size we are is like, the perfect balance of the way that I want to live my life. It brings me to the "give" part of your phrase, because I think a lot of people in the entrepreneurial space – and I'd put myself in this bucket – we often start out because we need to make the money. And the giving back part, that just doesn't come into the equation. I can tell you, when I had all these kids and mortgages and was under the pump, giving back was like, hang on, let me sort my own stuff out first. Let me claw back some of the property off the bank, who owns most of it. And let me put food on the table before we worry about serving others. It's been a long time until that changed for me, only once I built up a little bit of financial and time surplus. And I put time as a separate thing there, because that's where a lot of people really suffer at our end of the spectrum. That's when I've started thinking about, you know, how can I help other people? And I think even just doing a [podcast](#), so many episodes, is one way to give back because, you know, we don't charge for these. And people download them for free, and lots of them, like, millions of episodes. And I think that's one nice thing. I think even [hiring a team](#) is a way to give back, because they're all supporting at least five people in the Philippines, as you would well know, having such experience there. And I like to see the customers succeed, because I'm very performance-based. I think that comes from being in a performance-measured environment, as you are as well. So, so many parallels.

I said before that we get inspired by your health, because you've had just massive challenges. At times you've [run your business from a phone](#), I'm supposing, maybe an iPad, in a hospital bed for weeks or months on end.

**Paul:** Yeah, well look, a dialysis session used to be, and I'll link this to the good part, so a dialysis session was four and a half hours for me three times a week. And you know, I was lucky I had a permacath, which is effectively just a temporary valve up in your chest, which

is, to be honest, easy. But if you look at some of the fistulas people have, you know, they're not very pretty, and someone's got to put a massive needle in those every time, and you can't move your arm. So dialysis is not fun.

But yeah, I would work the whole time. And, you know, my way of giving was, you know, I was just to be there for my family, given my health was so bad. And also, you know, like you said, I supported people in the Philippines where, you know, they could give their parents a house or fund the family. So I felt that was great. But, you know, it was mainly looking after me, to be honest, especially the last 12 months, it was very much like that.

But soon as I got off dialysis, I had a transplant and it was successful, I thought, well, how can I give back? And I looked for a community where people, I know how hard it is to do dialysis in the city, you know, it must be hard in regional communities. And I saw an episode of, it's called the Purple House. And it's where indigenous people primarily in Australia, go and have dialysis. And they've got a dialysis truck that goes around and visits them, because it's so difficult. And I thought, that's it. Like, I know how hard it was in the city. So now I give a large proportion of the funds that I earn, goes to that.

And the reason, the book's called Build, Live, Give, but you know, it's never linear. So you're always giving, like you said, at the same time, but I'm going to write three. So the first one is mainly focused on "build", then I want to set up my own foundation or whatever, actually, you know, talk about, I want to live three months overseas and all those things, so I'll be able to better talk about "live". And then last one will be "give". And you know, sort of, I'll put my name out there to put three books, and I think I'll get better and better at living the giver as I go on. But as you said, I've spent most of the time in the build phase up until now.

**James:** Yeah. I think also to the extent you have family and responsibilities, that can be an immediate draw on your resources. I'm finding as my kids get older, they're coming into a really expensive environment to try and succeed and thrive. And you're always feeling that sort of nagging responsibility that they need some resource or help as well.

**Paul:** Yeah, and....

**James:** It's a really interesting...Go on.

## Working less, living more

**Paul:** Yeah, sorry. I was just going to say, when I used to, Stephen Covey, which was I sort of read the book in 94, and that has had a big impact on my life, and it was a simple exercise, Mike was a trainer for them. And it just said, you know, what have you, five or seven roles. And you know, each quarter, just talk between zero and 10 how you're going to invest in those roles. So, you know, for me, I look at that, I read a daily reflection every day with that, and I just look at it. At the moment, you know, community for me is a lot

less. And my business and my health is greater. And you know, my daughter's just about to finish school, so I'm helping her a lot. So it sort of pivots and changes, but I find, like you said, time is the most vital resource, and I find a lot of people just trying to do it all. And to me, that just doesn't work. When I first left Coke, I tried to do it all. And now, if I work 30 to 40 hours a week, that's it for me. And, you know, it's fine. Like, my profit probably improves rather than decreases.

**James:** Oh, yeah, you can definitely make more profit. I've made the most profit this year, worked the least of any year of my life.

**Paul:** That sounds like a good title of a book.

**James:** Maybe. I mean, I did [Work Less, Make More](#). It's similar. But I'd like to, you know, continue tuning that formula, a big part of the awareness of that. And I know you like that exercise where we do this diagnostic and have a look at various elements of what's going on with various aspects. But I ask some unusual questions in there, like the state of your garage and how happy you are with your transport, and if you like your business name, and just things that are softer dimensions than just how much revenue you're making, how much profit you're making and your lifetime customer value. Because I've noticed that if you're not happy in some areas of your life, it can really nag into your business. It can bleed across. It could make you a grumpy manager or an unhappy boss, if you keep going home and you can't close the door because you've got all this junk piling out of a room or whatever. So it's really interesting just to sit down and scorecard yourself and see where you're at as a starting point and then check in with that. We do 12 weekly check-ins, even in my own program, because we found that is a good time to get progress, but it's not so far away that you just sort of put it off because of Parkinson's Law, you know? Things that are a year away, it just seems like forever.

**Paul:** Spot on. And like, personal effectiveness is what we focus on in the first of sort of five drivers that we do, similar framework to you. And to be honest, I learned a lot from your framework, and tailored it a little. But one of the things is the five key drivers, you know – sleep, move, eat, connect and relax. And, you know, I get people to rate themselves at a 10 and, you know, it's a bit of an epiphany for them.

**“Your brain is what makes you all the wealth in your own business. And if you're sleep-deprived, that's going to have a huge impact.”**

**PAUL HIGGINS**

Especially sleep. Like, every doctor, every GP in the world, that's the first question they should ask you, what is your sleep like? Because your brain is what makes you all the wealth in your own business. And, you know, if you're sleep-deprived, that's going to have a huge impact.

And for me, like when my kidneys were at 6 percent, you know, it was like the lights were out most of the time, and I know what it's like to be so poorly functioning. And then I had dialysis and it'd be so great. And I think sleep is so critical. And the theory is that you do all of those at once. And I know, I listened to all your podcasts and I think you had [Anita](#) on, who's a good friend that you introduced me to, and she talked about [being the CEO of you](#). And I think that's so critical.

**James:** Absolutely. And it's surprising when I do that diagnostic audit. A lot of people come up short on sleep, a lot of people come up short on the movement side of things, and they especially come up short on fun. And anyone who's listening to this podcast know I like to surf as much as I possibly can. I've reengineered my focus where really, that is the priority. It took me so many years to be able to just switch off and to turn some business activity off and not worry about it until I pick it back up in a few days from now. Like, for example, this is literally the last appointment I have until four days from now. So I get four days off, and then I start again. So I have a three-day week cycle, and then a four days off; three days on, four days off for scheduled calls, podcasts, coaching calls, etc. And I found that routine is great, and it's taken a lot of discipline to build in a day, and then two days and then three, and then four, where I don't plot appointments. But once you do it, you get your life back, and you're back in the driver's seat. And as you and I both said, you can actually make more money by doing that, because you're so deliberate and so focused when you are on that your off time is truly off.

**Paul:** Yeah.

**James:** And most people never get to switch the button off. They're just drowning in social media or attending their business, you know, all day every day checking through their inbox. Notifications are coming in, their adrenal gland keeps spiking. They haven't got control of it.

**Paul:** Yeah, look, I agree. And I run a community of about 100 people where we're sort of focusing on getting more leads, which is ultimately a big challenge for a lot of people, especially when they leave corporate and go through their journey, as we spoke about before. And, you know, I'm working with people in all time zones around the world.

The middle of my day is blocked in, no one can get in there. And it's effective. I'll go for a bike ride; I go for a swim. Not in winter, but now I go for a swim. I then have a really healthy lunch, and then I go for a nap for half an hour. And you know, I do that every day, so it's just become a routine. And I've got to tell you, yesterday, I didn't have that half-an-hour nap. And I was really impacted. By the end of the day, I was exhausted.



So I think if you're listening, you're in control of that. Like it's your business. So you run your business, don't let it run you. And I think, you know, just set those key default components in your life and then let everything else work around. And it will. Like, you know, James, you're probably similar to me, but like, if I had to do a presentation to the CEO of the company globally, which, you know, coming out here a year, I wouldn't sleep for probably two months in preparation for that. I'd do 1,000 times the presentations and all the iterations and just, the stress. Whereas now, I only pick people I love to work with, that I know that going to live those values of build, live, give, and it's really enjoyable. I can't remember the last time I walked into a corporate office when I spent my first day that uneasy.

**James:** You know, I used to feel scared going back to school. It took me a long time to get over that fear. I just grew up with such a repressed feeling around authority like that. I

think I almost got the stick once in this all-boys private school. By accident. It was nothing to do with me. I actually got assaulted; like, this kid did a flying tackle and took me out. And then a teacher walked around the corner and sent us both off to the Sergeant Major's office. And we were both going to get six of the best. And that almost broke me. It was frightening. I haven't sent any of my kids to private school. It's like a bastardry factory. Snobs and up themselves. Kids of lawyers and solicitors. I'm still probably affected by it, actually.

**Paul:** Yeah. And look, you know, it's about taking the good. So like, for me, I always joke that Coke is one of the best-run companies in the world, but not one of the best products. Right? And that's sort of declining over time, and they're trying to fast track that. But you know, especially sugar in Australia was the canary in the coal mine, and we could see it coming. But you know, there was some brilliant things I did, and like you, I've gone around to other companies when I first started consulting, and I'm like, wow, you know, you guys are light years behind. So I think there's so much good, but like you said, there's so many things that are just... even myself, I used to quiver. Like, the person I was, I'm like, day and night. It's like Saul and Paul – a biblical change in how I used to behave to how I behave now.

## The stuff worth leaving behind

**James:** Yeah. I didn't have any issue with the product I was involved with, which is great. But I'll tell you what, the way they run dealerships, it's a really tough industry. They're hardcore. And they fudged figures and stuff, which used to drive me insane. I'd be driving home at the end of the month, and then we'd get a call from the state office and they'd say, listen, we need to count the cars that are coming on the boat next week, in the month, and I'm like, but the boat hasn't docked yet. And they're like, yeah, sorry. We need to count them to report back to Germany because we've got to get our targets. I'm like, I don't care about your targets. The cars aren't here. You can't count them for the month. They said we're counting them or you're going to lose your franchise. And that used to just make my blood boil, the level of dishonesty. And then other things happened too that caused me massive chaos. Like, one year, I was supposed to win the sales manager for the year for the third time, and at the little backroom meeting at the head office, they decided that I'd won it too many times, so they gave it to someone else. So now it became, like, a communism award. It's like, let's just pass it around to everyone. Otherwise people will just feel like it's unwinnable if the same guy keeps winning it. That drove me crazy when I found out about that.



**Paul:** Well my first rep job, so you know, worked for Davison and the company there, and I really wasn't gonna work when he was there, but anyway, I did. And same, I won, they called it "Top Guns". I won it two quarters in a row. And I overheard, who's ended up being a good friend of mine, say, We can't give it to this guy three times in a row. Similar thing. And they basically said, Well, how are you doing it? So I said, it's easy. I asked you for a mobile phone and you wouldn't give me one. Right? So I went and bought my own. And I said to the customers, you call me – you know, it'll cost you 80 cents – you call me when the stock arrives, and I'll put it up quicker than waiting two days or three days. I knew the value of that. And that's why I was getting these amazing results. It was just from that initiative that I took. And when they heard that, they're like, Well, okay, we'll give it to you three times. And luckily, I got promoted, so they didn't have to give it to me a fourth time. But yeah, look, I came across the exact same thing. And the great thing now is like, if you're running your own business, you've only got yourself to blame if you're not working with the people you love.

**James:** That's it. I literally put myself in a control position, because I was sick of being bullshitted to. The reason I left BMW and went to Mercedes-Benz is a funny one, because I was there for two years; it was my first sales role in the automotive industry. First full-time sales roll, full stop. You know, I was 23 when I started. Is, I was in the number one position. I went on holidays, I came back, and there was an ad while I was on holidays for Mercedes-Benz. And I'd spoken to this guy at the motor show, and he said, Hey, you don't have to work Sundays, you get paid more commission, you get a nicer car to drive. I'm like, Oh, that's all great, but you know, I do have loyalty. And I'm the top performer at BMW, and I quite like the product.

So, you know, the ad came out, and I thought, No, I'm not going to apply. And then the yard hand called me and he said, Oh, you're not going to like this. And I said, Oh, that doesn't sound very good. He goes, all the guys in the other dealership have put their points together to one guy there to beat you by two points for the next month. I'm like, what? He

goes, yeah, he beat you by two points. And just for references. I can't remember the exact numbers, it was like 10 or 12 points per car. So he beat me by 2 points, so like, by a bumper bar, and it was because everyone got together and pulled their points for him. And again, I'm like, I'm just so ripped off.

So I picked up the ad again, called them up, drove in there and said, I'm going to come and work for you. I didn't even give them a choice, by the way. It was, like, a very unusual job interview. I said, I'm the number one BMW salesperson in Australia, and I would like to come and work for you now, if you'll have me. And they said, Done. When can you start? I said, right now, let's do it. So that was how that happened.

**Paul:** Yeah, yeah.

## Adventures in debt collection

**James:** We have the same history. It's funny, what you said about the mobile phone – innovation must be a part of our makeup. Because when I was at GMSC Finance, I used to repossess cars and do debt collection out in the field in the early 90s, 1991, 1992, this sort of time. And they gave us pagers. So I had to repossess cars with a pager. That meant that, let's say I go around to someone's house and they're behind on their payments. I'd knock on the door and I'd say, hey, Oh, hi there. Mr. Higgins. James here, I'm just here to collect the payment. And you say, Oh, mate, piss off. I'm not going to pay you. I don't have the money. I'd say, that's fine. But we do have to put the car into storage now. And you'd say, What are you talking about? And I say, Sorry, but we're going to have to take the car back until you can make the payments. And they'd say, Oh, whatever. It's not happening. And they'd slam the door in my face.

Then I'd have to go next door or across the road, knock on the door and say, Oh, hi there. I'm wondering if I could just call a tow truck because I have to get my car picked up? And they'd say, Oh sure, come in. And I'd have to dial up a tow truck and I'd say, Listen, this is the address. Come and get the car.

And then I'd go and wait in the bushes for half an hour till the tow truck comes and then the tow truck would arrive. Then I'd tell him to backup to that car there and then we'd just hook it up. Then I'd go back and knock on the door and say, Oh, Mr. Higgins, I just want to offer you a choice. Like, aside from the payment, which would be great, you can either choose to give me the keys to the car, or we're just going to drag it up the truck without the keys. You know, might scrape a little bit, but it's up to you. And after they threaten to kill me and all that good stuff, then we'd drive off. The tow truck would drive off with the car, and I'd drive off.

And I was doing this with a pager. And I said to the managers, I mean, this is ridiculous. I should be able to use a mobile phone. And they said, Look, we don't have the budget, we're

not going to fund it. So I just went out and bought one. I think it was \$1700 back in 1991 or '92. It was the first 018 number, for any Australians who are old enough to understand what that means. And suddenly, I was just lapping the others. There was four agents out in the field, and we had to collect 15 a week. And I was doing, like, 60. And the others weren't even close. I collected more in a year than they would normally collect in five. And they had to issue us all a mobile phone after that. I actually documented all the expenses; I showed them a report and analysis of how much more effective it was. And they just couldn't deny it. And we got these clunky old Motorolas in a big sort of case that you plug into the cigarette lighter, not the little portable one that I had. And yeah, change it.

But I just got so fed up of big companies doing the most stupid things ever. And the other thing that really stuck in my mind was they were using these cassette recordings from America. We'd learn about that. They would say on this recording, and I'm not kidding, I still remember this to this day. They'd say, When repossessing a car, avoid using terms like, "putting it in the barn". Now I think I wasn't actually going to say anything like that.

And the forms – they all had, like, 1967 stamped on the bottom; they had not changed their forms. This is in the 90s. They had not changed their forms for nearly 30 years. And this just all made me go crazy. I was destined to have my own business. But I think, you know, I'm bringing out all these stories for you because you've lived the corporate dream and you probably know exactly what this is like. And I think a lot of people in our industry, like the [Ezra Firestones](#) and [Molly Pittmans](#) or whatever, they haven't worked for these huge companies and experienced the level of crazy stupidity and bureaucracy and butt-covering and budgets and all that stuff that we just don't have to deal with with our own business.

**Paul:** No. Well, my dad used to always say, you know, every corporate guy's got, he or her got their number. And, you know, that's the final straw for me. I was offered a job one night, there was a, you know, director of about a \$700 million... Oh, sorry, it was the marketing director of a \$700 million business. And the next day, they said, No, we're actually decided not to give you that, and we'll just park you and find something else for you. So they gave it to me one night, took it away the next. And that was the best thing that could ever happen, because my number was rolled and I took that decision out. But it's, to me, James, it's a bit similar to like, these days. Like I find people still saying, look, I got to do business face-to-face, right? I've got to see people in the eyes...

## The huge opportunity that is LinkedIn

Like, there's a platform called LinkedIn, which has got 700 million users on it. You can do work anywhere in the world at the moment. And then I've still got people saying, No, I want to be geography-based and I want to... And I'm like, it's no different to the mobile phone. Like, it's a gold rush at the moment. This LinkedIn thing is going gangbusters, and

unfortunately there's a lot of people that don't do it well, which spoil it. But for the ones that do do well, it's a great opportunity, which is no different to like, that technology shift we've just spoke about in in corporate world.

**James:** Yeah. And you've recognized it, and you've actually put me on to the good bits of LinkedIn; you've helped me tune my profile a little bit. You've got a really effective little group there, I think, where you're educating people how to use it properly. And I see you're very active on there, and you often tag me in and help me out. I think you're just trying to show me what to do, which is great. And I was off [LinkedIn](#) for a number of years, and I'm on it now. I do check into it pretty much daily. And my team have been building connections and loading up videos. And it is a much, much better platform than it was just a couple of years ago, in my user experience. And there are certainly some private messages that are just way off the mark.

**Paul:** Yeah, yeah.

**James:** They're just crazy.

**Paul:** Yeah, well, actually, I think you've said it before, but I just send them back and say, If you received this message, what would your thoughts be?

**James:** I do have a bit of fun with them sometimes. You know, like they're trying to sell me coaching or something, and I'm like, I'm pretty much covered for that for now, thanks. You know, when you're saying people want to do that face-to-face, I still get people who want someone to coach them face-to-face. They want someone to come around to their house and sit down beside them at the computer, and do it with them. And I could categorically say, they're the most unlikely people who are going to succeed in this world. If you can't detach from that, then it's going to be really tough for you. Got to be more nimble than that.

**Paul:** And I was lucky because I had to, you know? I couldn't ask people to come around while I was still on dialysis and, you know, do a coaching session while I'm here for four and a half hours. But so, it expediated it, but I think I'm like you - it was in my nature, it was always in my nature to say, how can I get someone the best result with, effectively, the least amount of effort for them and for me. And, you know, that's why at the moment, we've sort of doubled down on LinkedIn, because, it is a brilliant return on investment. You don't have to drive anywhere, you don't have to be on a plane, you can do it around the world at different time zones. It's like, it's just perfect. So anyone listening, I think, especially the posting side, I think like you said, a lot of the outreach, I'd say to people, you wouldn't walk up to someone you don't know in a coffee cafe and say, Hey, would you mind buying me a coffee? And to me, some of the messages I get on LinkedIn are exactly the same. It's like, delete instant. If you do a great post with really good content, and other people like and comment, which gives you a bit of trust, and then you message them in the right way... I love, what's [Dean Jackson's...](#)? I'm sorry, he's talking about [super signature](#)? That was Dean, wasn't it?

**Paul:** Yeah, sorry. I think it was [Taki](#), whatever. One of those guys.

**James:** A lot of the Dean Jackson things make its way into our conversations. The super signature, the nine-word email.

**Paul:** That's it. The nine-word email.

**James:** The [who, not how](#). right.

**Paul:** Yeah. And you know, and do that. I think you once said, in a car dealership, you don't expect to sell them the car straightaway. You know, you first want to welcome them, find out what they are, then get the keys. You know, it's like steps. And I think on LinkedIn, it's now given as building a relationship; it's a new face-to-face meeting. But I just see some people go straight for the kill. And you know, unfortunately, they're making it easier for the guys that don't do that.

**James:** They do come in and ask really stupid things. Like, Hey, tell me about yourself. Like, if someone came up to me, beside me at the coffee shop and said, Hey, tell me a bit about yourself, I'm like, What? Like, especially on LinkedIn, like your profile, they could go and click on my website. They could find out quite a lot about me. Or they could listen to [700 podcast episodes](#) to start with. They'd get a fair bit of context. But they do some weird stuff in their messaging. I don't do any cold outreach in LinkedIn, because I got plenty of customers. But what we do is publish quite a lot of video content. And I think it works really, really well on LinkedIn, because LinkedIn is just boring af compared to [Instagram](#), or [Facebook](#). Because it's a dry, serious place, videos have massive cut-through. I get by far the most views on LinkedIn than any other platform. And I get the most useful comments on there, and people sharing, so that's hitting the mark. And I think especially for you, Paul with the audience who you are chasing, who have corporate experience, they're all going to be on LinkedIn, or should have been, because that's the place for people who had jobs, or have jobs, or want to get customers for business to business in particular; it's going to be a goldmine for them.

**Paul:** Spot on. And it works really well because they're used to the platform because they've been on it, but most of them are coaches and consultants that are also selling to people that are on that platform. So, you know, it works nicely with that.

And there's a platform out there – so, think of websites and Google Analytics – there's one called SHIELD. So it's shieldapp.ai, and that actually gives you analytics of your LinkedIn posts. And it's interesting what you're saying about video – you definitely get the best engagement from videos. But often, at the moment, we're getting better results from a text and a photo. So I'd certainly recommend, you know, a mixture of formats. And we just look at the data, and you know, like, for example, Wednesdays is probably the best day to post. Like, we've got, as I said, 80. Eighty now, will be 100 by the end of the year, where we're all looking at each other's data, and then using that data to make facts-based decisions, what we do. Because no one gives you a LinkedIn handbook to say, hey, by the

way, here's the algorithm and here's exactly what you do, you know? You've got to work it out by experimentation. But that SHIELD really helps with that.

**James:** That's good. It's a little bit like SEO, I suppose. They don't necessarily publish you the algorithm, but you can get some clues if you consolidate some information with a few others.

And I know [Ilana Wechsler](#) from [TeachTraffic.com](#) raves about your group, and she's been getting amazing success with it. If someone wants to join that group, how would they go about that?

**Paul:** Yeah. So if they go to [BuildLiveGive.com](#), and just under the services, it's just called More Leads. So it's as simple as that on the homepage.

**James:** I like the simplicity you're displaying here, Paul. A man after my own heart.

**Paul:** Well, where do you think I learned that from?

**James:** I don't know, but you've definitely, you've transformed in the time I've known you from finding some of these things a little bit challenging to just nailing it and really hitting the mark. And, of course, publishing a book is a big achievement. And I can see that that's going really well. I've seen a few posts floating around. I think you have one of the most informative LinkedIn accounts of anyone that I'm seeing in my feed, so keep that up. And I certainly appreciate having had all the interactions we've had and the fact that you come to the events and you've been always so supportive.

## What's next for Paul?

What are you excited about next? So you've done the build part. Are you going to go for the live part next? You've sort of precluded that before? Is that the next thing you're excited about?

**Paul:** Yeah, look, well, I still got some work to do with the build, which is, you know, I want to give people an option. So if you're in a job, you leave, and you want to start your own business, and you want to not take five years, like I did, until I found you, and you want to condense that. Well, that's what I want to spread further. So the book is part of that. Obviously, the podcast is part of that, and doing more with that. And then once I've got that right, then I can get people in so I can actually then focus on the live. So it's probably still, you know, six to 12 months away. And the other thing I want to do is do more online content. I know there's still, like, five percent, you know, if you hear the numbers, it's five percent of people complete a course. But I want to be able to at least have another option other than the book to help people through this journey. So you know, five rapid growth drivers framework – you know, I really want to focus and put that online next year and make it easy for people to do that as a do it yourself.

## Five drivers for rapid growth

**James:** Nice. And are the five rapid growth drivers things that you share with people publicly? Is it something you talk about? Or is it a secret?

**Paul:** No, definitely not. I'm hoping it's the worst-kept secret. It still probably is. But look, I'll just quickly go through them. The first one is personal effectiveness. And you know, we've talked a lot about this already. But technology, the right mindset, and a VA, I think a virtual assistant, ideal clients, are really being me. So your LinkedIn profile, no one should be, you know, a seven-year-old should be able to read your LinkedIn profile and know exactly who you serve and how you do that. Business model, which I learned a lot from you, you know, subscription-based, recurring revenue, you know, the right pricing structure. Then sales focus. And that's about, you know, getting that [offer that converts](#). And LinkedIn is certainly part of that. But there's other things to do to build leads, and then convert them. And last is the high-performing team, which is, you know, removing all those hats you wear and, you know, I listened to your podcast all the time and you talk about it, but you know, getting great experts to do something that you either don't have time to, don't have skill to do. And we've collected 400 of those around the world. So when someone says, Hey, Paul, you know, I want a website developer like [Justin Meadows](#), for example, he's doing some work from us after listening to him on your podcast, you know, we can actually refer people that I can trust. Because, James, before I met you, I just burned so much money on picking the wrong people. I thought everyone was like at Coke. You'd say, okay, you're going to work for Coke, so you must be the best in the world at what you do. Just come and work for me and it'll be fine. And one guy, 15 grand US I gave him in my second year to do an online course. And I never saw the light of day. He just disappeared. And he's still out there promoting himself as a great guy. But he just literally left the building, left the building with 15K.

**James:** That's just unacceptable. And you would have thought with social media and transparency that more of these people get, you know, caught up with. It's funny you mentioned Justin, actually. I just asked him recently to help us speed up our site, because he's got a good knack for that and he's a great supplier. Now you're spot on. Good supply can make all the difference between heartache or success. I've been spending a little more with contractors in the last year with things like design, with [Greg Merrilees](#); copywriting, [Brian McCarthy](#); SEO with [Gert Mellak](#). And my team have also been tuning up SPF records, DKIM. There's always something to do, isn't there? And then we're going to speed up our site with Justin.

But once you've got the offer that converts, once you've got a good traffic flow, I mean your five things are just like my four things, except you got an extra thing. But you know, that's all you need to get covered. And you know, you can just keep, like that Kaizen

principle, [keep finding the weakest part, the bit that's broken, as my friend Kory Basaraba talks about](#). Just keep focusing on what's holding you back, the constraint, and strengthen it, and you'll just keep building momentum, as my business has at a more mature phase now, and as you're doing, which is just phenomenal.

## If you're publishing a book...

And it's really great to chat. Just in parting, have you got a tip for people who are publishing a book? Because having just been through that process, was there anything you did that you thought was particularly clever or got a great result?

**Paul:** Yeah, look, first thing I did is I got a book coach, and just to help me write it. So Kath Walters helped me with that, and she ex-wrote for BRW, which is a major publication in Australia, and she gave me a framework, and we did this. So it was basically a podcast interview. And then she went away, did the transcription and brought it back to me. So when my health wasn't great, I really struggled to write. But doing that, so that was brilliant. And she gave me a great structure. So that was good.

And then Linda Dingle, who is part of the [SuperFastBusiness community](#), she helped me with the publishing part. And she's been amazing, absolutely amazing. I've got quite a lot of quotes, and just, you know, I got sort of that corporate feel with some of the publishers, but she was excellent. So I'd get someone to do that. Even if you've got a team, don't try to do it yourself.

And then the last one is one that I'm still learning, James, is marketing. So you know, big shout out to [Allan Dib](#), who's helped me a lot with Amazon. But I'm still learning on that. And, you know, I'll definitely take all those learnings into my second and third book.

**James:** Yeah, Allan's a bit of a force with the marketing. And I've been running Amazon ads after speaking with Allan, because I get to speak to him a fair bit doing some work with him. And we had a look at the numbers that are happening from the paid side, and it's most definitely worth turning those on, if you haven't already. And in some cases, you can get \$2 back for every dollar spent, which is probably the heydays for Amazon advertising. Maybe after this podcast comes out, the costs will start to go up a little bit. But you got a few weeks, I think, to get in there and rise it through the ranks. Good one.

## Winding things down

Oh, Paul, it's been really enjoyable catching up and going down memory lane of both our respective corporate careers. We've arrived at the same place, which is that we can have

this business working from anywhere. I'm in the Philippines at the moment; you're in Australia. The wonders of modern technology, just make it really special.

**Paul:** Yeah, and you know, I think for me, a lot of people try to get work with people that are like 10 steps ahead of them or 20 steps ahead of them. And you know, James, what I always love is, you know, you're certainly many steps ahead of me, but I look at what you do, and you inspire so many and you help so many. And that sort of helped me. So my life, you know, I would not be where I am today, if we hadn't met and started working together in 2016. My kids every night basically, we talk about their day, weeks we spent in Europe, and I was earning money in a mastermind that I think you and I set up in a week or two weeks from a simple Lima.

**James:** Yeah. Sometimes a short sales path is the best.

**Paul:** Correct. That was sitting there. So I want to just say, you know, I continue to learn from you. It's great being in your community. And you know, I suppose what I'm doing is just helping people that, you know, are probably a little bit earlier in their journey, and helping them as much as I can. But yeah, I just want to say, thanks again, and your personal notes, like I said, when I was really sick, made a real boost for me. So once again, thank you for that.

**James:** That's all right. You know, I think that just comes with having [empathy](#). Like, I really do get to know the people that I'm working with. And you know, when things affect them, it affects me. I can't help it. But I also like to affect their success because if I can do that, it affects me in a really positive way. And it's one metric that guides me and makes me feel like I'm on the right track.

So until next time, Paul, I'll see you on the [LinkedIn](#) and inside the SuperFastBusiness, and I look forward to your next book as well. It'll be not that far down the track, I'm sure. With the process you've got set up now, I think the second book's probably much easier.

**Paul:** Yeah, brilliant. Excellent. Thanks for having me on today. James.

**James:** There you go. This is Episode 700. And I've been speaking with Paul Higgins from [BuildLiveGive.com](#). What an awesome guy.



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