



SPI 235

Beyond the Gumball: How Matt Miller Built a Successful Vending Machine Business and Franchise

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Pat: This is the “Smart Passive Income Podcast” with Pat Flynn, session #235. You’re going to love this one, I promise. Here we go.

Announcer: Welcome to the “Smart Passive Income Podcast,” where it’s all about working hard now so you can sit back and reap the benefits later. Now your host. He secretly wants to write the lyrics for a catchy pop song. Pat Flynn.

Pat: What’s up, everybody? Pat Flynn here. Welcome to session 235 of the “Smart Passive Income Podcast.” Really excited today because we are bringing on a guest who is doing passive income in a much different way. We’ve talked in the past about things like snacks and vending a little bit, but today we’re going to talk about vending a little bit more, and it’s not the vending that you might be thinking about where it’s snacks and sodas and things like that. You may have been to airports and malls where you see different kinds of vending machines, like for Proactiv or for Best Buy. You can get electronics, like headphones and iPads and things like that, through vending machines, which is cool, but this is what’s called School Spirit Vending.

Matt’s website is at schoolspiritvending.com and he started with a gumball machine way back in the day and it has turned into this massive empire where he’s been able to find a niche in the vending space specifically for school, so he’s going to tell you all about that and how this all got started, but I have to say really quick before we get going, Matt and I have met each other a few times and we’ve had lunch together. I’ve had lunch with his family. Man, one of the most genuine and amazing people I know, and the reasons why he’s doing this is to help other families.

That’s why this whole thing is franchised, because it’s not only a business for him to change his lifestyle and to find success and be a good example for his kids that way, but he’s been able to package this into something that others can do too, and he’s helped hundreds of other families do it on the side or actually turn it into a full-time business through the franchise model, so we are going to talk also about how he was able to do that and what that really

means because we haven't really discussed that on the show either, so a very unique show. It's going to be very inspiring, but again, Matt is such a cool person. You're going to hear just how genuine he is in just a moment, so why don't we just get right to it? Here it is.

What's up, everybody? I'm so happy to welcome Matt Miller from schoolspiritvending.com to the show. This has been a long time coming. Matt, thank you for being on today.

Matt: Hey, Pat. Thanks for having me on, man. This is awesome.

Pat: You and I, we've had meals together. I've gotten to meet your beautiful family. You and what you've been able to create for yourself and your family and the lifestyle that you've been able to live now from the success of your business has just been super inspiring, which is why I wanted to have you on the show, so School Spirit Vending. Why don't you tell us all what exactly this is?

Matt: What we do is we specialize in hassle-free year-round fundraising for schools. Schools across America today, two of the biggest pain points that they have is funding and volunteers, and with our program essentially what we do is we provide additional funding and we sub in as a volunteer by doing all of the work with what we do, and essentially we develop custom stickers for schools with their mascot and their colors and all that and then we place sticker machines in the school. It ends up being an ongoing fundraiser for the school and it ends up being a passive income stream for our franchisees once they get things set up.

Pat: Wow, so you have the ability to have schools fundraise while adding school spirit, obviously, through what comes out of these machines, but you're also providing life-changing opportunities for people who are actually getting involved with you and your company.

Matt: Yeah, our mission statement is funds for schools, freedom for families, and change for kids, and the funds for schools part is the obvious part, but the freedom for families, that's been one of my passions all along, is to, first off with my family, create a family

business that we could all grow together and do together and learn together, and of course the environment that we've created today has been developed for the families that we work with as well to do the same things so that it's not just mom and dad doing business together and in many cases learning business together for the first time, but it's their kids that are doing the same, and along the way we are developing multigenerational entrepreneurship.

I don't know about you, Pat. I know you started a little earlier in your life, but I didn't start any kind of business whatsoever until I was in my late 20s. Didn't start SSV until I was 40, so to have my kids and the kids of our team get involved at a much earlier age, I think, can do nothing but really be beneficial for all those involved, so it's a lot of fun.

Pat: I love that, and to me the times that I've sat and spoken with you, that is very obvious to me, that you are here to help these families. The last time that we spoke I think you had mentioned an event that you had put on for some of your franchisees and it wasn't just the moms and dads coming. It was the families and everybody getting involved. I think that's super cool, and for me, as you know, Matt, I have two young kids and I'm getting my son involved with business and getting his mind in that place. It's just so cool as a father to see and to literally see him think differently and think in terms of solving problems and business and it's just super fun. Before we get into how your business is run, and I'd love to dive into actually how you franchised this, this is a topic we haven't really discussed on the show before, but also I just want to know how did you even get started with this?

Matt: It was purely out of necessity, Pat. I was in a really, really bad place financially here about 10, 11 years ago. I had transitioned out of the military into the corporate world and was doing really, really well. In fact, my first full year in the advertising world I was number two out of 750 executives in the company that I worked for. The challenge was that my boss decided to put a lot of the quota of our office at Houston on my back the next year, and instead of having a 5 to 10% quota increase, which was pretty standard across the board, my

quota was increased over 90%, so I went from being a hero to zero overnight.

That decision cost my family about 80 grand in commissions and bonuses the next year and we were in a deep, deep hole. I got to the point where I had to go to consumer credit counseling services to get all my interest rates cut down to nothing. I got turned down for a payday loan at one point. You don't have to have a credit rating to get a payday loan, but you do have to have a bank statement that shows that there aren't any overdraft charges or anything, and the month before I had three overdraft charges, so I got turned down for a couple hundred bucks.

Here I am, "America's finest former Air Force Academy grand former Air Force pilot," having trouble just paying the bills, so I was looking for a way to do something on the side because I could look at the compensation plan and knew that it wasn't going to fill that hole, so I collected aluminum cans for a while. I sold used books online for about a year and a half with Amazon and Alibris and Half.com. My garage looked like a library at that point. In fact, my office was in an un-climate-controlled garage down in Houston. In fact, that's the first time I heard about you. I never forget reading your blog in the early days when you were getting started, and it actually ended up being some of my inspiration for where we headed from there.

I had a buddy at church one Sunday who mentioned that he and his young daughters had bought a couple of gumball machines and they were doing business together as a family, and I remembered that conversation and I had read Kiyosaki's book "Rich Dad Poor Dad," and I was like, I have got to find a way not only to work my way out of this hole, but as I'm working my way out of this hole, work myself into a place where I can make money passively, where I've got control over my life and my time, where I can do the things that I really feel like God has led me to do instead of just paying the bills. Gumballs was kind of weird, and of course a gumball is only a quarter, but the beauty of it was, given the situation I was in, not having any money, not even being able to own my own house at that point, we were renting, a vending machine made perfect sense,

so I got my first candy and gumball machine used online through eBay for 36 bucks. It was a guy across Houston so I didn't even have to pay for shipping, and I loaded up the Zane and Sarah, my oldest two, in my 98 Honda Accord one Saturday, and drove across town to pick up that machine and started teaching myself vending.

I had bought a couple of e-books on Amazon so I knew some of the basics, but the following Monday I went out knocking on doors at local businesses trying to get that machine placed, and after a couple of days I found a karate studio in the area that was willing to give it a shot, to let me set it up. I was working with M.D. Anderson's Children's Cancer Hospital at the time, so we were raising money for them on top of what I was doing in vending. I set that machine up ... The capacity of the machines is such that normally you don't have to service but every six to eight weeks, and I was so wondering, is this thing really going to work, that after two weeks I couldn't take it anymore. I went down to the place one Thursday night. It was packed with kids for karate classes. I put the key in the machine and quarters spilled out everywhere on the floor, and I was like, holy smokes. I've maybe found my answer, right?

I went back a couple weeks later, had enough money from those two service things to go get another machine from that same guy because he had a garage full of them and slowly but surely I cash flowed this thing over a period of time. Fast forward a year and a half later I had about 130 locations around Houston, was making about twice what I was in vending that I was full-time at the same job that I still had at that point, and then '07 and '08 hit and the market tanked, and here I had put all this work in and now there weren't people going out to the restaurants that I had machines in and that type of thing.

It just so happened several young kids came knocking on my door selling me stuff for the local school fundraising, and I thought it was odd because the kids were my kids' age and there's no way in a suburb of Houston I was going to let my kids go out knocking on doors to neighbors and people that I didn't know in the community, so the whole idea of having machines in the schools where all the

kids were and getting some kids off the street at the same time really made sense with me, so came up with this whole idea of spirit stickers and customizing for schools, and that's where SSV started.

Pat: Tell me about your first school. How did that deal go down?

Matt: My good buddy, the guy by the name of Jeremy Rand, he was an elementary PE teacher at West Columbia Elementary, which is about an hour and a half southwest of Houston, and he and his wife Tini came over for dinner one night and I shared with him what I was thinking. He said, "Matt, let me check with my principal and see what she thinks and maybe we can test this thing," and he called me back a couple weeks later and said, "Hey, you're approved. Bring the machine down."

Pat: That's so cool.

Matt: We scrambled to figure out how to make spirit stickers and got those made, put the machine in, and the first month the numbers were crazy. In the second month they were even crazier. In the third month, because my buddy Jeremy was in the school and was able to refill the machine when it needed, the third month was just off the charts, and I was like, "Okay, we are onto something here."

Then it was trying to figure out how to market this, and I went back to the door-to-door stuff I had done with the gumballs, but I found schools weren't really willing to respond in that way and I didn't really find any forward thinking administrators at that point in time so I was frustrated. Thankfully, I happened upon the Texas PTA website and they were having an event on the north side of Houston, so me and Jeremy and another buddy, Shane, all of which we had done some other business stuff together off and on, decided to split a table and give this thing a whirl, and we came out of that event with 10 schools and haven't looked back.

Pat: That's incredible. Your mindset as you were going through this, at what point were you like, "This is something ..." I know you had mentioned the first pickup where all the quarters came out, but

to be something long-term in the school spirit stuff, when did you really say, this is it, or how did you even scale it from there?

Matt:

It was after that first tradeshow and we had that many moms that were excited about what we were doing that I thought, okay, this might finally be my deal. Now, I don't know if you ever remember or ever saw on, I think it was on CNN for a while, it was the Donny Deutsch show, it was called "The Big Idea," and he used to have people on and interview them about their success stories and failures and all that stuff in business. I was an avid watcher of that show. It was my fix every week at the time, and I'll never forget he had the CEO of Coinstar, the company that has the coin machines in the grocery stores, and they also rolled out the Redbox program DVD rentals. I don't know if they still do that anymore, but they started it.

Anyway, I saw him on that show and I saw him dressed to the nines, cufflinks, tie as tight as it can be, and I was like, you know what, I don't know the guy from Adam, and I still know nothing about him, to be honest, but this was just my impression at the time. I was like, you know, that guy's got a hundred million dollar company but I don't know if I'd want anything about his life because my guess is the company owns him, and at that point in time I made a conscious decision that I didn't want to own at all and I didn't want to have employees spread all over tarnation. I wanted to find other owners who would be as excited about doing this as I was who would take ownership and would be a lot less headache as time went on, and for teaching them, me get a small cut of everything they do for coming up with the idea and putting the system in place, so we started a distributorship model.

I guess it was four months or so after that, a good buddy of mine came down to an event I was working. He and I used to fly together in the Air Force, and he just hung out with me that day, no business involved, just hanging out. We hadn't seen each other in a while, and about a week later he calls me up and he says, "Matt, I've been talking with Joy and I want to do what you do. Will you let me?" and at that point I'm like, "Okay, let me think about that. Yeah, but I

don't know how." Anyway, we figured that out and it was a licensing agreement that we established with the early team. We grew to about 45 families or so at that point and then I had hired Aaron Walker. I know you've had Aaron Walker on the show.

Pat: He's amazing.

Matt: I hired him a couple years ago because I had met him at a Dave Ramsey EntreLeadership event, and I walked away from that event thinking, man, this guy, 35+ years of experience, multi, multimillionaire, been there, done that. Every word out of his mouth was words of wisdom. I'm like, I've got to get around this guy, so I finally convinced him into letting him be my coach and hired him, and about 18 months ago ... He calls me Romeo because I wasn't doing a very good job of dating my wife when we first started the coaching relationship. Anyway, every time we talk, it's, "Hey Romeo, what's up, man?"

Anyway, I'll never forget, this was 18 months ago, we are doing our weekly call and he says, "You know, Romeo, I was doing a little research over the weekend and do you have any idea how many schools there are out there that you're not in right now, and this is what I know. You're not in them because they don't know about you, so you've got to figure out a way to let them know about you because they would love and embrace what you're doing just like all the 2000 or so you're in now. They just don't know about you yet," so I got motivated to start to figure out how to we grow our team, because everything had been word-of-mouth and friends and family up to that point.

Started doing some research, saw that it was going to be pretty costly, consulted my attorney. He said, "You know, Matt, if you want to grow in some of the parts of the country you're not in, you really need to be a franchise." Well, I didn't have any money put away for that. That wasn't even on the horizon for me, so about 14 months ago now we became a franchise, and that's the growth pattern from here. Our team grew over 50% in size over the last six months. We are on track to grow over 100% this year alone, and it's crazy,

Pat, how many people are looking for passive income, much like you talk about every day on your show, but who are also looking to put together a family business that they can do with their kids, and our message has really resonated with people and our culture has allowed families to develop that all over the country, and we've been truly blessed because of that.

Pat: That's amazing, Matt. First of all, congratulations. Freaking amazing story, and already changing lives, and my brain is spinning with, "I want to do this now, too," and I think a lot of people who are listening to this might be considering something similar. I'm curious in the start of you scaling and sharing this kind of business model with others, even before going down the franchise road, which I do want to dive into, what were some of the challenges in you packaging what you had and then letting other people do the same thing? What was going through your head? What were some of the hiccups along the way?

Matt: Well, there was a couple things I was wrestling with because I prided myself in being that solopreneur, right? The guy that can do it all, no employees, all that, so I had that on one side, but then I also had the scalability piece that I was wrestling with because I saw that there were people that were getting value from this. I saw lives changed in our schools. I saw lives changed in families, and kids being inspired and families doing stuff together and all that, so I really, really struggled, but the one thing that helped me out a lot is, being a former pilot, we live by the checklist, and you live and die by it, and there's the before taxi checklist, there's the before takeoff checklist, there's the before engines start checklist, et cetera, et cetera.

The reason for that is because airplanes are such complex machines to fly, it's too easy for us to get confused or get lost or to forget a step that you can lose your life from, so you always wear that checklist on your leg, so when I was getting the business started that's what I knew because I spent nine years doing it in the Air Force.

I started putting together checklists. I started putting together

systems, not really realizing why. It was just what I knew to do, but what happened was those systems allowed me to scale this for the first seven and a half years as a solopreneur, still give the people everything that they need, provide the environment for them to thrive and to grow, but it also allowed me to have somewhat of a life on the side as well and have some control over my time also, so that was huge for me in being able to scale it, is having those systems in place, though I fought for a long time, the whole employee thing. I prided myself on it.

Today we've got a number of employees, we've got a bunch of independent contractors as well that we work with across the country, and we've got a team that is growing very, very quickly to keep up with the franchise team and all the other systems and programs that we are putting in place to keep this as profitable business as it can be for everybody.

Pat: Are you glad that you've gotten away from, "I want to do this on my own," to expanding out and growing your team?

Matt: No doubt. No doubt. It took me a while, because it was one of those unknowns, and I don't know why I made it such a big deal. I'm sure you've seen this too with the people you come across.

Pat: I was the exact same way.

Matt: Yeah, it's just like, I don't know, payroll and this and that and everything else, and I finally just got over it. I'm sure you've seen it where a lot of people along the way, as they are trying to make that transition from working in a corporate job to being an entrepreneur, the big sticking point seems to be for everybody healthcare and benefits and all that, and then you get out and you realize, that really wasn't that big a deal, but it's made to be a big deal in the corporate world. Well, as an entrepreneur, that hiring the first person, I made it to be such a big deal and it really wasn't. I just needed to get some help and some people who knew better, and here we are now today in a much better place because of it.

Pat: When you are working with others who are helping to scale this business, you're building your team, not your employees but the franchisees and the other people who are taking this business model and essentially allowing it to expand, what does that deal look like? I've always been curious about how does that work? I know that you had said earlier you take a percentage of it. Are you able to share what those numbers are like?

Matt: Yeah, I can at least share some of the basics. Uncle Sam doesn't allow us to share a lot of revenue numbers and all that, believe it or not. That occurs during the franchise interview process, but as far as the basics, as far as getting started, we have protected territories for everybody that we work with so that they don't have to worry about somebody else potentially coming in and doing business where they are. It's actually one of the best decisions I made because it enables our team to work together in support of one another instead of being in competition with one another.

An average franchise today, I read here recently, is about 125 grand in the US today. Our franchise is anywhere between 17 and 23,000, the franchise fee of which is only \$8200. We intentionally keep it as low as possible to allow the barrier to entry to be below so that people have the opportunity to potentially realize some of the dreams for their family that I've had an opportunity to realize as well. That basically covers a lot of our operating expenses. As a franchise, we have to have an audit every year of our books, as an example. It's ridiculously expensive just to do that, as an example, but then of course there's a lot of legal fees that go along with what we do, but we try to keep that low so that anybody can be a part if they want to.

Part of that is the franchise fee. Part of it is a six-month mentorship program where we link people up with one of the veterans on our team who's got a bunch of success and they end up being their sounding board. They take them through a syllabus. They also are required to go several days on-site in the territory where the new franchisee is getting started and help them go out and start promoting what we do, so we really do as much as we possibly can to ensure success for those that get started, because that's

really what it's all about, is them achieving their dreams, goals, and aspirations as well, not just Matt and what is able to happen for me or for the schools involved.

We spend a lot of time, have a lot of training and systems in place, to ensure people's success. One of the things I do, Pat, it's kind of unique that I'm aware of, anyway, is well, as I do two podcasts myself a week privately just for our franchise team, and in the last year I've released about 100 episodes. Many of them are interviews with other franchisees on the team, sharing success stories, best practices, failures, embarrassing moments, all that kind of stuff, but then I also have an episode every week, it's just called "SSV Tips," and it's me sharing either basic success principles or speaking specifically to something that's going on within the team.

It's only 5 to 10 minutes long. It's very short, but what I've found is the community that has been developed by doing that, it's been one of the best decisions I've ever made because I was finding blog posts people were taking less and less time to read because of how busy we all are, and the podcast, as you know, enables people to take in that information while they are doing other things, whether it be driving, working out, or whatever, and that has strengthened our community far beyond my wildest dreams and has been a huge part of what we do to grow the team, grow the community, and support everybody along the way.

Pat: Growing the team in terms of adding new members to the team is happening internally, you're saying, through ... What you're doing here is you're essentially giving information to your existing members, so I'm curious, are you potentially losing out on growing your business and your franchise by not posting these podcasts publicly, or do you feel that it might be having a growth effect from internally through word-of-mouth?

Matt: My focus on them is purely the betterment of the team and the growth of the individuals within the team. A lot of the stuff we talk about is specific to what we do. It's proprietary, so because of that they're private intentionally in that regard. I do have a podcast that I

do externally.

It's called "School Zone," and it's geared towards administrators, educators, and volunteers, and it's a place where they can come to get a much deeper dive with many of the companies that are out there serving them in their space, whether they be fundraising or resource companies, and we get a lot of school interest because SSV is the exclusive sponsor of that show, but otherwise, as far as growing the franchise team, it's all about the website and it's all about a lot of the interviews and that kind of stuff that I've done along the way. We do Facebook ads and that type of thing as well, so that's more geared purely towards the betterment and the improvement and growth of the individual, not the team as a whole, if that makes sense.

Pat: Yes. Yes, absolutely. A franchise business isn't necessarily for everybody. For instance, I couldn't take "Smart Passive Income" and tell somebody to do that. I guess I could, but I don't think it would work out so well because I am my own brand, and Pat Flynn is very much what "Smart Passive Income" is, but for this, it makes complete sense. How would one go about either analyzing whether or not a franchise, going down that road, is right for them to take their business that they have and let other people have access to it and be able to grow it, and then also, if you wanted to do that, how would you even get started? I'm curious how you went to a more formal franchise kind of business.

Matt: If somebody is looking to maybe get involved in a franchise in some way, shape, or form, there's a number of books out there that they can get on Amazon that will give them a lot of background. There's actually a really, really great podcast out there. I don't know if you're familiar with Josh Brown. He's got a podcast called "Franchise Euphoria." He's a franchise attorney and most of his episodes are geared towards people that are looking to be a franchisee in something and the dos, the don'ts, the things to look out for, that type of thing.

There's also the International Franchise Association that has a lot of

resources for people that are looking into that, and they also have an exhaustive list of all the different franchise opportunities there are out there. As far as somebody who might want to franchise their business, the first thing is you've got to prove that it's profitable and that it has to be something that can be duplicated. You said yourself it would be difficult to duplicate what you're doing now, but there are a lot of businesses that, with forethought, could be duplicated successfully.

What I've seen, though, is there's a bunch of folks that I've run across that they try to take that step way too early, and that's problematic because people are buying into a franchise because it's a proven model. We had seven and a half years under our belt before we sold our first franchise, so we've been there, we've done that, we've got a track record. You've got to have that track record, because otherwise why would somebody spend thousands of dollars to be a part of what you're doing, no matter how great the idea is, so make sure you don't jump into it too quickly.

Take your time, but also make sure that you're putting systems in place, because that's really what the franchise is all about. It's shortening the path from point A to point B for people. It's allowing them to not have to make a lot of the mistakes that I made along the way figuring this whole thing out, and there's a lot of value in that along with a support system and all that as well, but you've got to take the time to do that and do it properly because your success is built on the success of your franchisees, and the profitability of the franchisees needs to be the number one priority in order to successfully run a business like this.

It can't be about me, and thankfully it doesn't have to be. I've actually got 110 schools of my own. I don't service them anymore, thankfully. I've got folks that do that for me, but I intentionally build that myself to prove the concept, number one, but number two, to have an income that has nothing to do with anybody else but me. It takes the pressure off of everybody within our organization. It allows people to grow at their own pace based on what their family's goals, dreams, and aspirations are, not some arbitrary

quota or number that I might put in front of them, and I think that's one of the recipes and the secrets to our success, is creating an environment of growth but then allowing people to progress at their own pace.

Pat: Love that. Hypothetically, if I wanted to do vending like what you're doing and what you're offering, it's a payment to get access to everything and you get the training and then you get the equipment and whatnot and you're on your own, right? I'm just curious on regulars who are a part of your team who've been doing this for a while, what is their life like? Do they go and service them each day? I'm curious to what the lifestyle is like as somebody who is doing vending.

Matt: Most of the people are doing this not only as a secondary income, but they're doing it as a lifestyle business. Most of them that have been around for a while, they've built this to whatever level and with the plan of having others step in to take care of a lot of the day-to-day so that they can do whatever they want. I see this and I've always talked about this with our team. I'd be silly to think that SSV is all that they might ever want to do. I see it as a vehicle for them to get the money out of the way, to free up a bunch of time if they choose to step away from their full-time career so that they can be what God truly has planned for them and accomplish so much more that right now they can't because they're stuck in the 9-to-5 just working to pay the bills, so that's the thought process behind it foundationally.

We've had a bunch of folks, this is all they do, and they work a few days a month, literally. I've got others that have started other businesses successfully and are using SSV as the foundation so that they can go onto other things. I've got others that their intention is to put together a large organization that potentially spans several states and over time potentially have thousands of schools that their organization is working in and out of, so there's a lot of different ways folks look at it and have decided to follow through. I've got some people, this is a secondary income, that's all it will ever be. It's helped them put their kids through college. It's helped them take a trip to Europe every year, so it's up to the

individual and what they want and what their long-term goals are.

Pat: Yeah, that's amazing, and you had talked about accomplishing much more, and to finish off the show here, I'd love to talk about some of the philanthropic things that you have been involved with. I know speaking with even one of your daughters that she's gone out and has gone onto the field to help other countries in certain ways, and I'd just love to know your thoughts on that. People who have listened to the show before know that I'm big on philanthropic efforts and I'm trying to learn more about that. I'd love to know what organizations you're involved with, how you're helping them. It seems like this has been something that's been really important to you for a long time now.

Matt: Yeah, I've always wanted to be able to break away and do some of those things that I really felt called to do, and when I left my corporate job five and a half years ago I finally had the ability to do that, and we've been blessed to be a part of a very missionally oriented church. I'm on the board of directors of the nonprofit called Kids across Cultures, and what we do is provide life change for kids in other parts of the globe. Right now a lot of our work is being done in Southeast Asia.

I've had the opportunity to take my oldest son, Zane, who is a sophomore in college, over to China to do some water projects there together and then he went back later and participated in some other projects on his own with another group. I've had the ability to do the same with my daughter, Sarah, and she went back in June and was able to do the same thing. To not just travel somewhere and to help people temporarily or for a few days, but to literally develop relationships with people over time even though they're halfway across the globe, that's where real change, in my opinion, occurs, and I know you're doing a lot of that too with Pencils of Promise and some of the other things that you're a part of, and to be able to take even a small part of the blessings that we've been given and the opportunity that we've had here in this country and to be able to help others, there's no more important thing, in my estimation, helping others in one way, shape, or form, whether it be overseas or here in this country.

This has freed me up to do some of those things, and I couldn't do it before because I had a limited amount of time that I could take off and I was always competing with family vacations and all that kind of stuff, and then of course there wasn't the money available to do a lot of those things either, so it's given us the flexibility and the freedom to do that.

Another thing that I do, Pat, is I was inspired to read as a kid reading comic books, so a couple years ago I hired a couple of young guys to start writing comic books for me, and they came up with a series, it's called "Marlin and Percy," they're a couple apes that want to be superheroes, and they showed up a couple years ago for the first time in our sticker machines. The cardboard that the stickers are vended out of, it's like a little folder, and any vending machine you'll go to pretty much across the country, except for ours, that folder is just a blank piece of cardboard that gets thrown away. We print on that, and Marlin and Percy have become our Bazooka Joe of our vending machines.

We've also now written five full-length comic books and also a full-length children's novel. This semester we are starting to give away some of those comic books with about a quarter of the vends that we do in our schools so that little Johnny and little Susie are not just getting a sticker, they're also getting a free download of a comic book, and hopefully along the way we'll inspire kids to read with some material that mom and dad don't have to worry about the content.

Pat: That's so cool.

Matt: On top of the vending and the fundraising and all of that stuff we do.

Pat: Yeah, that's amazing. Man, I love what you're doing, Matt. This is incredibly inspiring. I think a lot of people out there who are listening right now are just chomping at the bits to learn more about you and what you have going on. Where can people learn more about you, your story and what you're up to?

Matt: The best way to reach me, Pat, I actually wrote a short e-book

called “Live Your Dreams: The Top 10 Reasons Why You Need to Own a Vending Business.” Most professionals don’t look at vending as a real business, and when they think of vending they think of sodas and snacks and all that. They don’t think of stickers or gumballs, for that matter, and so with 12 years experience in the industry I outline some of the things that probably aren’t obvious to most folks that make vending in general, not just what I do, but any kind of vending, a very attractive potential passive income stream on top of what they do, but they can go to ssvbusiness.com/spi and download that for free. If they want to get some more background on general vending, I’d love to help them. If they want to begin a dialogue about the franchise we can do that too, but hopefully that’ll benefit some folks and help impact some lives in your audience.

Pat: Thank you for that, so that’s ssvbusiness.com/spi.

Matt: Yes, sir.

Pat: Awesome. Thank you, Matt. We appreciate you. Keep up the great work, and looking forward to following up with you later.

Matt: Yeah, thanks, Pat. God bless.

Pat: All right, I hope you enjoyed that interview with Matt Miller, again, from schoolspiritvending.com. It’s definitely got me and my wife thinking about how might we be able to do something like this, so we are talking about it, but we’ll see. Matt, thank you. I know you’re listening to this. I appreciate you and your time. To those of you listening, if you want to get the show notes for this episode, all the links and everything that we talked about, head on over to smartpassiveincome.com/session235 and get all the notes there, and I also want to tell you about today’s sponsor really quick, which is shipstation.com.

When you are selling anything online, especially physical products, getting those orders out the door quickly can be tough. There’s a lot of moving pieces and you’ve got to collect all the orders from all the different places that you sell online and then you’ve got to print all the labels and then get them all shipped out properly, and that’s

why you need Ship Station. They make it super easy. They are the bridge between all those different orders from all those different places you sell and then the carriers that actually shipped those things to your customers. They automatically bring all of your orders into one easy-to-use interface. They print those labels for you and then they help you choose the right carrier to get the lowest rate for every package.

What's really cool is that last part I just mentioned there, because they have special deals with carriers that you can't get access to if you are just on your own, so you get Fortune 500 level discounts on stuff because you are part of Ship Station with all of your shipping stuff that you're doing, and they have a special offer for you today, which is really cool. Try Ship Station right now for free for 30 days, but you also get an additional month free if you go to shipstation.com, you click on that microphone at the top, and then type in "SPI." Again, 30 days for free, get an additional month free. Go to shipstation.com, click on the microphone at the top, and type in "SPI."

All right, thanks again. I appreciate you listening in today. If you had a moment and could leave a review on iTunes, an honest review, that would be fantastic. I haven't asked for one of those in a while, but people keep saying, "Pat, you need to ask for those more." Well, here I am asking, and if you have the time, take just one minutes, head over to iTunes, leave a review for "Smart Passive Income," that would be fantastic. Thank you so much. Keep moving forward, and I look forward to serving you in next week's episode. See you guys. Bye.

Announcer: Thanks for listening to the "Smart Passive Income Podcast" at www.smartpassiveincome.com.

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