



SPI 299

The Humble Beginnings of Hmong Baby

January 3, 2018

Pat Flynn: All right, you know what's gonna happen? It's 2018, we're gonna mix things up a little bit. Because, you know what, the machine has been well oiled, and running smoothly for the last couple of years. But, I also know that in order to grow, you need to mix things up. In order to grow, you cannot be reactive, you need to be proactive, which means interrupting the pattern every once in a while.

No, longer are these shows gonna start the same every single time. I'm gonna give you some insight, in terms of what you're gonna learn typically, and then we're gonna get into an amazing interview, where I'm gonna be a little better at asking deeper questions, and diving deep into really what happened to help either the person find success, or go deep into the coaching process, so that I can help a person out, or teach you something even more in depth here in the podcast, if I'm doing a solo episode.

Welcome to 2018, and episode 299 of the Smart Passive Income podcast. But, first of all, I don't want you to worry. You're still gonna hear the awesome intro with my voice over guy, John Melley, and the weird random fact about myself.

John Melley: 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's still, and even more deathly afraid of spiders, Pat Flynn.

Pat Flynn: I got to tell you, after nearly 300 episodes, it's getting a little bit tough to find some new facts about myself, and maybe some of you out there might know me better than I know myself, you can offer some suggestions on things that I can add in the beginning too, in the comment section of this post, where this podcast episode lives, which is again, episode 299. We'll share all those links with you later. I have a lot of great information to share with you, but it's mostly not coming from me. It's coming from the two guests on the show, a husband and wife pair who have created a business, as a result of a culture that they want to preserve, and the teaching that they're offering to their child, and other people's kids too. It's an amazing story, we'll get into that in just a moment.

But, I want to tell you a little bit about some of the other changes that are happening in the SPI brand. Now, if you are not yet subscribed to the Ask Pat podcast, and maybe it was because you just weren't keen on five shows a week, that were a little bit shorter, between 10 to 15 minutes in length, answering a person's question, an actual voicemail question from people like yourself, and that's okay. A lot of people enjoy that show, but you know what? After 1000 questions answered, or it was actually 999 questions answered, because episode 1000 was this big announcement that I'm about to share with you right now. That is, I'm actually cutting down how often I publish that show.

It's only gonna be published once a week, just like this podcast here. But, more than that, it's gonna be a longer episode, which is a real life conversations between myself and somebody who actually needs coaching. Who isn't just there to ask one question, and hear my answer, but actually have a real conversation. This is great, because it's gonna be higher value for all of you listening, and I'll be able to better help that person. Because, you know what, after 999 questions, A, a lot of those questions were ending up being the same, just worded differently by different people, and B, I wasn't able to go deeper into those conversations, which is really where you begin to help people that most, right?

I wanted to have a back and forth with this voicemail, but obviously I couldn't do that. We're changing up the format, and starting in February, Ask Pat is coming out strong once a week, with a coaching call. We're already doing these coaching calls right now. If you are somebody who actually wants to get coached from me, and actually have it be published on Ask Pat, and you're cool with that, well, head on over to AskPat.com, click the button to apply to potentially get featured on the show, and get coaching from me for free. I think this is great for me too, because it's gonna allow me to practice my coaching skills, but also great for everybody listening, because you'll hear exactly the transformations happen right then and there.

Please make sure you also subscribe to the Ask Pat podcast that's

coming in February. We're gonna have a little contest to announce it, it's gonna be great. Make sure you check that out. That's the Ask Pat podcast. You can just find in iTunes, and again, the link will be available in the show notes for this episode.

Beyond that, you're also gonna notice a number of videos coming from me. If you want to subscribe to my YouTube channel, I highly recommend you do it, because we're actually gonna be trying to post five videos a week. Some of them answering people's questions, other ones more hero pieces that involve some instruction of some kind. Really, it's become a platform that I've learned that really suites my personality. Because, I can be silly and weird, but also teach things at the same time. If you ever see me speak on stage, I'm bringing that energy to the video format.

Here's the big reason why I want to go big on YouTube this year, and I could use your help by your subscription. If you go to [YouTube.com/SmartPassiveIncome](https://www.youtube.com/SmartPassiveIncome). Actually, if you go to the other link, it'll make it easier for you to subscribe, which is [SmartPassiveIncome.com/YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/SmartPassiveIncome.com/YouTube). Again, that's [SmartPassiveIncome.com/YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/SmartPassiveIncome.com/YouTube). Here's the big reason why I want to get into the YouTube space. Not just for more exposure, not just because there's people who only watch videos, and this is my way of getting onto that space. But, because, check this out, most of the people who are teaching this kind of information that I teach here on the podcast, and on the SPI blog, and through Ask Pat. The people who are teaching the same kind of content on YouTube, I don't like them.

Not, that I don't like them, but it's like, I don't like the way they teach, I don't like the way they bait people into these programs, and ask people to pay money to get all the information. Somebody needs to step in and share the information freely with those who A, just cannot afford those programs, or B, just want to learn how things work before they get some quick wins down, and can realize that they need to invest more into themselves, and the business that they want to run.

I feel like I am that person. I want to go in there, and be the top

search results for things like, how to build a website, how to build a business, how to work from home, passive income. Really high value, highly searched for terms, that I know I can help people with. That is my goal, and I've share this goal with a number of people, and they said, "Yes, Pat, you need to do this. Let's go big on YouTube." I've gotten a lot of help from people who are with me on this mission, and if you are with me too, head on over to SmartPassiveIncome.com/YouTube, we'll take you on that ride starting this year actually. Actually, in February is when the five days a week video sequencing is gonna come out. SmartPassiveIncome.com/YouTube.

Now, guess what? I'm done talking about myself and the changes. Little bit of an announcement here at the beginning of the episode, but you know what, let's get into today's featured content, which is an interview with the founders of Hmong Baby, that's with a silent H in the beginning. That's H-M-O-N-G baby. Which is, a brand that helps bring the Hmong culture together, by helping spread the Hmong culture, and teaching kids, which is awesome. I'm all about teaching kids, and when it goes with something like this, which is a very unknown culture, and helping to spread the word about that, and helping to preserve this kind of culture, it's amazing.

I'm super stoked to introduce Mykou, and Touger to you today, the founders, and the owners of Hmong Baby, and the Hmong Baby community on Facebook, which has been rapidly growing. What they're gonna talk about is, not just how they go started with this business, but how it was actually, after a number of failures, that they landed on this idea. What inspired them to do it, and some of the more details related to some of their recent launches, and things they're doing to experiment. A Kick Starter campaign, all those kinds of things. If you're just starting out, this is gonna be really helpful for you, and really inspirational. If you ware somebody who has been doing business already, this might give you some insight on the other possibilities that you might be able to do to expand your business and grow your brand. Let's listen into Mykou, and Touger from HmongBaby.com.

Mykou, Touger, thank you so much for coming on the SPI podcast today. Welcome to the show.

Mykou Thao: Hey, hey.

Touger Thao: Happy to be here.

Pat Flynn: We're kicking off the year together, and I think this is gonna be a great episode, because you guys have a very inspirational story. For everybody listening, I was able to meet Mykou and Touger in person in Minnesota, when I was at the Lee Pages conference very recently. Two of the nicest people I've met, and they had their little baby with them. It's so cute, because it does relate to their business. Let's just dive right in. Touger, I'm gonna start with you. Can you introduce to everybody what Hmong Baby is, and how this all got started?

Touger Thao: Absolutely, so Hmong Baby is a eCommerce store, where we provide and create educational tools for parents who want to teach their kids the Hmong language. Now, I know that a number of folks are like, what's that? Right, what's the Hmong language? But, so the Hmong language is the language that Hmong people speak. The Hmong people are an ethnic minority group from Southeast Asia, Southern China, Laos, Thailand, Vietnam. How we came up with the idea was, well, we have two daughters, now.

Well, last year, when we came up with the original idea, we had one daughter. She was a little over one-years-old, and we wanted to teach her the Hmong language. We want her to be bilingual, English and Hmong. We were looking around to see if there were any products, or books, or flashcards out there to help us teach the Hmong language to our daughter. We saw that there really wasn't anything out there much.

My wife and I, we were thinking, man, someone should really create this. There's such an opportunity here. Then, the next day, my wife woke up, and she was like, "Touger, why don't we create this?" We took some time, and we found a graphic designer, had her create

26 animal images, so that we could create animal, Hmong animal flashcards. We created them, and we had cold feet, is that how you say it? Cold feet?

Pat Flynn: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Touger Thao: We were like, will anyone really care about this? We put it on the shelf for a little bit. But, after about a month we were like, you know what, we've already paid for these images, why don't we just put it out there, and just see what happens, right? The worst that can happen is, nothing happens, right?

Pat Flynn: Right.

Touger Thao: What we did was, we printed them out on just our home office printer, and then we posted a video on Facebook with my wife going through these flashcards with our, at that time, one-year-old daughter. It was so cute, because she's a little bit over one-years-old, she's speaking in Hmong, and in English, and we had a bunch of people watching the video, and then also commenting on it.

We had just put an offer say like, if you're interested in these flashcards, feel free to just personally message us, and then we can get them out to you. We essentially did the will it fly method of pre-selling before we even actually mad the product. After a two week window, where people could pre-order, we ended up selling over \$2500 worth of flashcards.

Pat Flynn: What? That's awesome. How much were you selling them for?

Touger Thao: \$20 each, with \$5 for shipping. That just showed us, whoa, I think we're onto something.

Pat Flynn: Mykou, what was your thought when you finally saw this up there, and people were interested in it? What were you thinking this whole time?

Mykou Thao: I was thinking, wow, is this really happening? Because, Touger and I

had been trying other businesses, and tried things like photography, and things just didn't really pan out. Like Touger was saying, we almost didn't do this. There was a month where we put it on the shelf and said, you know what, I don't know if this is gonna work out. Just from trying it, and then seeing people start messaging, and just people sharing this video, it was so cool. Yeah, it was awesome.

Pat Flynn: What would you say was the difference between the success ... And, we'll talk about, obviously, what has happened since then in a minute. But, this business, Hmong Baby, and it compared to the other things that you guys have both tried before, what do you think that was the thing that made this actually click for everybody, and for you guys?

Mykou Thao: I think that for us particularly, we were scratching our own itch. It was nice, because then I, particularly me, being a Hmong woman with young kids, I was exact target market. I knew exactly what I wanted, because ... Also, this is the other thing, I wasn't gonna create something that I didn't want for my kids. I could have, I guess, but I didn't want to. I had those networks already. I'm really connected on Facebook with the Hmong community as well. The other thing was just, we actually validated this idea, which we had never done before. I know that's what everybody says, validate, validate, test everything, and for some reason we just, it never clicked until this. That was huge.

Pat Flynn: That's so cool. Touger, when you guys were setting up the presale page, or it doesn't sound like you setup a whole website, or a bunch of systems in place.

Touger Thao: No.

Pat Flynn: What did you have to make all this work at the start?

Touger Thao: Yes, this is the thing, we didn't ... I knew that if we were gonna start a website, or even a landing page, I know you can do that really quickly, but that stuff was all new to me at the time. I knew that if I got into creating that stuff, it would have distracted me. Literally,

what we did was so simple. We had this Facebook post on Mykou's personal profile page, with the video, and then just with the text saying, hey, if you're interested, just personal message us. We did everything through Facebook Messenger. People, with Messenger, you can actually pay other people through that platform. Also, we had people just sending up money through PayPal, so there was no landing page, no website, nothing. We just did it all through Facebook.

Pat Flynn: Wow, that's incredible. People are paying you money, money's rolling in, and you hadn't yet created these products yet. What was it like, Touger, if you can continue, to okay now you have this money, you have to deliver, what were the next steps for you from there?

Touger Thao: Since we saw the money coming in, we realized, okay, we really have to actually print this stuff, and learn how that process even works. We connected with a local print shop here, where we're at here in Minnesota. It's not, it's like five, ten minutes away from our house. We found them, found that they were competitive price. They had competitive price for printing the cards for us, and that was really nice, because then we could actually touch, and feel, and really see the proofs before we had them mass produce the cards. We did that, and really pretty much, that was the next big step.

Mykou Thao: The thing about our flashcards, is that they're just not regular flashcards. On the back, they have questions to help you engage with your kids as well. We had to get these edited by folks, and just make sure that everything was correct, so that took a bit of time to get everybody's feedback.

Touger Thao: That's right.

Mykou Thao: Then, luckily I had worked with, in design and all of that other, these other programs. I was able to just design these cards really quickly, and we got them printed, and we didn't even have boxes for them. We just put them in these little Ziploc-y bag thingies, it was pretty ghetto.

- Pat Flynn: I love it.
- Mykou Thao: But, people, barely anybody complained about it. We were able to get these things out pretty quickly.
- Touger Thao: Pretty quickly, yeah.
- Mykou Thao: We had started getting, we posted this video, I think it was around November 29th, and we told people, we promised them that they would get it before Christmas, and they did, so it was pretty fast.
- Pat Flynn: Wow, that wonderful. Then, what was the feedback like, Mykou, after people had these in hand?
- Mykou Thao: They loved it. It was, I was, okay so for me, I'm really picky about how things look, and I want to make sure that everything that I create is quality. My biggest fear was that, they would just hate it, or they would complain, and say all these things. But, barely anybody said anything negative about them. I think we got one or two returns, and people were [crosstalk 00:16:00] Oh, okay, no returns, just kidding. But, people were posting videos of their kids going through it, and there were comments on these other people's videos, and it was just so cool. Because, there had ... There were very few things like this out there, so people loved it.
- Pat Flynn: That's amazing. Was there any moment in time, before you shipped them out, or even after you shipped them out, that you're like, what are we doing here. This is so new, this is something that you guys had never done before. What was going through your head while all this was going down, Touger, if could speak to that?
- Touger Thao: We were so excited, because for years we had been trying to create an online business, trying to get into entrepreneurship. I came across your blog back in 2010, because I was doing a Google search for how to create iPhone apps. Remember those days when you were doing that?
- Pat Flynn: Yeah, I do. Oh, man. I haven't talked about apps on the website for a

long time.

Touger Thao: I know, it's been a long time, and so that's how far back my wife and I had been trying to do something. Like she had mentioned previously, we tried to do affiliate marketing sites, we tried writing articles, we tried to drop ship furniture, we tried homemade candles, handcrafted jewelry. We tried doing a photography business, and all of these things didn't work out. Finally, to come across an idea where folks were actually excited about what we were doing, and excited ... Not just excited, but they were willing to pay for it, for what we were creating. That was just exhilarating.

Pat Flynn: That's awesome. What was the next step after Christmas, after the video started coming out, after you getting these testimonials? You have something going on here, how did you take it to the next step, Touger, if you can keep going there?

Touger Thao: Yeah, absolutely. What we did was, we knew that we were onto something. Actually, we were just listening to our customers. They said, "You guys need to come out with more flashcards." We were like, okay, that's what we'll do. The said, "You guys should come out with food flashcards, numbers flashcards, and object flashcards," and so that's what we did. Over December, and January, and February, we created three more sets of flashcards, so now we had four sets.

Then what we did was, we started building our Shopify site, HmongBaby.com, and we realized the importance of building up an email list, so we did a giveaway, hoping to capture emails, and we did that over about a three month period. Because, we put February 23rd of 2017 as our grand opening for our eCommerce store. We captured about 800 emails from the giveaway, but we made a big mistake, which was the giveaway prize was too general, and therefore about half of the emails that we actually got weren't really that interested in what we were creating.

Pat Flynn: Interesting. Mykou, can you tell us what it is that you were giving away, and what the disconnect there was?

Mykou Thao: Yeah, so the funny thing is, Touger had listened to your podcast with Brian Harris, and Brian Harris had talked about not giving something that's too general away. But, we had done a survey with the people who had purchased the cards before, and asked them, would you guys, we gave them a couple of options of gifts that they would like. One of them was a \$200 Amazon gift card, and a ton of people said that's what they wanted.

We were really hesitant about it, but then in the end, we were like, you know what, why don't we just go ahead and trust our audience, and do that. That's what we did, and we ended up getting just a ton of people on Facebook who would just enter giveaways all the time. That's what they did for their life basically. We got all of these random emails, and people entered, and that was just a mess.

Touger Thao: In addition to the giveaway, in addition to the \$200 Amazon gift card, we also gave away a free four pack, I mean, one set of each of our flashcard set, so that's four flashcard sets in addition to the \$200 Amazon gift card.

Mykou Thao: Right, but it was the Amazon gift card that drew a low folks.

Pat Flynn: That was all incentive to hopefully build your email list.

Touger Thao: Right.

Pat Flynn: But, because the thing that you were giving away wasn't necessarily connected to what you were offering, or selling, there was just ... I'm guessing that when you ended up selling, that a lot of those emails didn't convert, is that what I'm hearing?

Touger Thao: Yeah, absolutely. When we did the grand opening ... What we did was, on the email that we revealed who the giveaway winner was, we also announced the opening of our store. In the first five days of our store opening, we only got about \$500 in sales, and so we realized, oh, this is not good. We need to have something better than this. Actually, interestingly, Mykou was tagged on Facebook with a video that someone else had posted, and that video was

actually a video that we had posted on YouTube, where Mykou was teaching Hmong animals, or how to say Hmong animal names. This person had downloaded it from YouTube, and then posted it up as an original Facebook, as a native Facebook video.

When I saw that video, it had 5000 views, and dozens and dozens of comments. I realized that, Facebook really likes people to stay on Facebook. They really promote, and really give a lot more value to Facebook videos, versus linking to a YouTube video, which we had been doing previously. What we decided to do was, we created a Facebook video, a short, a little bit over a minute, where again, Mykou is going through the flashcards that we had created with our, at the time, one and half-year-old daughter. It was again, a minute and half. She's just going through the cards, and at the end of the video it said, get your flashcards at HmongBaby.com. We released it on Tuesday night, and by Thursday night, it had almost 150,000 views.

Pat Flynn: Wait, what? 150K?

Touger Thao: Yes. 150,000 views. It got shared thousands of times. It had 80 comments, thousands of reactions. It was crazy. Because, that video got shared so much, I think in, because of that, in the first 30 days we generated ... In the first 30 days of our website going live, we generated over \$10,000 in sales.

Pat Flynn: Wow, so great job on creating that video. That's amazing, and that's a great realization that Facebook wants to keep people on Facebook. I think that's true for any platform. YouTube wants to keep people on YouTube, any of this cross promotion stuff doesn't tend to work out very well. I want to go back to this initial website launch with the lead magnets that you had, and the incentive that you had to people subscribe to your email list. If you could do that all over again how would you actually structure that differently than before? We can pass it to both of you, so Mykou, maybe if you could do that all over again, you would likely remove the Amazon gift card, but what would be there instead, at the launch, to help kick it off, that you think would be better?

- Mykou Thao: yeah, so something that Touger and recently did is, we've been doing Facebook Lives, and we've been just giving away our products. I know that some folks think that doing that might just seem cheap, but for us, it worked really well. Because, there's nothing else like this out there, and people who are coming to us, want what we are offering. That's what we would have just done instead of throwing in that \$200 gift card, we would have just done our flashcards, and just left it at that. I think that would have drawn the exact crowd that we wanted. Versus, just random folks.
- Pat Flynn: I see, and the Touger, are you doing anything right now to build your email list, or are you just solely focused on Facebook for growth right now?
- Touger Thao: Gosh, it's interesting that you ask that questions. Because, right now, we are experimenting ... We are growing our email list, and we're also experimenting with getting Facebook Messenger subscribers. What we're doing is, we're using the app called ManyChat, and we learned about this at the converter conference here in Minneapolis. What we're doing is, we're doing a giveaway, another giveaway, I should say, of 13 of our products. It's onesies, toddler tees, some shirts, tee-shirts, and then all of our flashcards, and also a book that we recently came up with.
- We're doing that, we just started that giveaway last week, and we've already amassed over 1000 Messenger subscribers, and we've grown our email list to over ... We've grown it another 500 emails. We're getting, I think, more high quality leads, because these are folks who actually would want our stuff. That's what we are just recently experimenting with right now, and the reason why we're doing that is, because with black Friday, or with the holidays coming around, as an eCommerce store, this is such an important season for us.
- Pat Flynn: Right.
- Touger Thao: We're gonna be building up the list so that, when we have our black Friday sale, we can share that information with high quality leads,

who are interested in what we are creating. That's something that we're experimenting with right now.

Pat Flynn: I love that, and you guys are listening to this right now at the start of 2018, so we're doing some time hopping here. It is currently, we're recording this in very early November, so black Friday has not happened yet, and you guys a few weeks to put things into place for that.

Mykou Thao: Yes.

Pat Flynn: I know you guys are working hard. I also I know that you guys recently did a pretty successful launch of something. Mykou, can you talk about what it is that latest project was, and how you started it? Why was that a new idea, and what did you do to set that all up for yourself?

Mykou Thao: We recently came out with a book. Just a show children's board book, and there's not really anything like this out there. For the summer, Touger and I were in a lull trying to figure out, how do we keep the customers coming, and how do we get sales every single day? After we had our second daughter, everything was just quiet, and so we're trying to figure out, what do we need to do next? Do we need to do more discounts, or what? I was just telling Touger, I feel like we need to do a book. Because, for me, that's what I would want for my daughter.

Finally, in around September, we decide, okay, we'll go ahead and give this a try. We went ahead, and I wrote the book, and started, I don't know, I don't even think we found printers for it yet. We started printing it out on just regular paper, cut it out, glued it together, and I did a short little video of it, just showing, or letting people know that, hey, we're coming out with a book.

We started doing Facebook Lives before, and I would just do ... We did it for three weeks. Once, I think, every Tuesday for three weeks. Just, connecting with folks, and answering questions that they had. Then at the end, I would just be letting them know, hey, you guys,

we have new products coming out. I'm really excited for this book. I was just hinting at it for a little while. Touger, you want to fill in?

Pat Flynn: Well, let's go really quick, Mykou sorry, today, but when you say you were going live, and you're letting people know, where are these people? Are they people on your personal page, did you guys setup like a Facebook group? Who are you sharing this with?

Mykou Thao: At first, I was doing it on my Facebook page, because a lot of folks-

Touger Thao: Personal.

Mykou Thao: I'm sorry, my personal Facebook page. A lot of folks had ... We hadn't been really pushing for Facebook Lives for Hmong Baby, and a lot of people were just connecting with me. Because, I also do music, and so I'm connected to a lot of the Hmong community through that. A lot of those people are the same people who are interested in this. I'd just been posting the video on my personal page, and then sharing it on the Hmong Baby page.

Pat Flynn: Got it, okay, cool. When you say the Hmong Baby page, you had set up a page specifically for this community?

Mykou Thao: Yeah, this is just for our website, and another thing that we did to launch this book, was we created a Facebook group, and it was called the Hmong Baby Book Launch Team. We had been posting everything on there too. These folks are the folks who got the insider information. We had a couple requirements, just three things that they needed to do, in order to be a part of it. That was to, well, they would get a PDF of the book first, so they got to see what it looked like, and then they had to write an honest Amazon review, share the review on their Facebook timeline, and then also join our Thunderclap campaign. I don't know if you've heard of Thunderclap. But, it's like an online flash mob, where we have a post, and then on the day that you want, everybody posts that at the same time. It's like this flash mob thing where Hmong Baby's everywhere.

Pat Flynn: Yeah, Thunderclap is cool. You can find it at Thunderclap.IT, and it

allows people in your audience to say, and basically pledge, yes, I'm going to support you on this day. You pre-ill out a Tweet, or a Facebook message, and when people accept to support you, that Tweet or message goes out automatically to through their social channels, so they don't have to think anymore. It's cool, because they keep track of what your reach is over time, so that's cool. Do you remember what your reach was when you launched on Thunderclap?

- Touger Thao: We don't remember. But, we, our goal was to get 100 people to pledge to be a part of our Thunderclap campaign, and it was really good. Because, that started building momentum. Folks were getting excited, because they wanted us to reach that goal. About a week later, when we did, when we opened the cart for pre-orders, there was a lot of momentum already there.
- Pat Flynn: What was your goal with the pre-orders? You hadn't yet printed the book, you were gonna come out with this campaign to collect pre-orders. What was your goal for that?
- Touger Thao: Our goal was to get 150 books pre-sold over seven days.
- Pat Flynn: 150 books?
- Touger Thao: Yep.
- Pat Flynn: Over seven days, and how much was the book being sold for?
- Touger Thao: \$20.
- Pat Flynn: \$20, okay, and then tell me how the campaign went after you launched.
- Touger Thao: We reengaged our email list, we were doing Facebook live, so folks were interested. We created this Facebook group for folks to help promote the book. When we finally launched, or opened up the cart to take pre-orders for the book ... Just a little backstory, we stayed up to 5:00 in the morning the night before, and it was just crazy.

Because, we have little babies, and so they got up at 6:30, so we literally had no sleep.

Pat Flynn: What were you doing until 5:00 AM?

Touger Thao: We were just finishing up the details, making sure our website was good, making sure, finishing up the landing page. We modeled what we were doing after a Kickstarter campaign. But, we did it on our own website. But, we just modeled it after a Kickstarter campaign, where there was a certain number of books that we needed to reach. When folks went to that product page, they saw a meter, where it was like, we're here, and we need this many more. It showed people, for the folks who were interested, oh, we're almost there. If we can get there, then these books will be released.

We were finishing up the landing page, we were making sure all the systems and things were in place. Pre-writing the emails that we knew were gonna be coming out. Then when we finally launched, or opened up the cart at noon central time, we were so nervous, and then after the first minute, we got our first order for the book. We realized, whoa, people are paying attention. Because, the only reason there was an order that quickly, is because they're anticipating that the cart was gonna open at noon. After about an hour we saw order come in, order after order.

I have to tell you, Pat, and I know you know this, but when you see your notification, when you see your phone blowing up with notifications that you're selling products, it's just, it feels so amazing. It feels so amazing. The crazy thing is, that you and I actually, had a Skype strategy call at 3:30 on that launch day. Do you mind if I tell that story?

Pat Flynn: Please do.

Mykou Thao: Well, first of all, Touger had this scheduled with you, and it was not even planned, right? It just happened to be on that day. We were getting close to reaching our goal already. It was about three hours or so, and I was like, Touger, I think that when you're on the phone

with Pat, we're gonna reach our goal.

Touger Thao: With that, she said that, and I was like, we'll see, we'll see. Our Skype call was at 3:30 PM central time, so it had been about three and half hours since we had opened up the cart, and we had sold 139 books at that point.

Pat Flynn: Dude, that's crazy. It's not even like a few hours yet.

Touger Thao: Yeah, it was just a few hours, and so I was super excited. When I got on the Skype call with you, I was obviously really excited, and you could tell.

Pat Flynn: Yeah.

Touger Thao: We were chatting for a bit, and then I don't think I told you this part, but at the end of our Skype call, I had gotten a notification that had someone had bought 20 books. I showed you my phone, to show you that someone had bought these 20 books. But, at that moment I didn't realize that actually, at the very end of our Skype call, we had broken the 150 mark.

Pat Flynn: Dude, I didn't know that. That's cool.

Touger Thao: Yeah, I didn't know that until Mykou told me. I was like, oh yeah, that's true. Pat, you're good luck, that's all I'm saying.

Pat Flynn: Hey, man, that's why I'm here. I'm here to share the good luck with as many people as I can. But, no, that's super cool. I didn't, wow, that's amazing. You reach your goal in, what, four hours essentially.

Touger Thao: Yeah.

Pat Flynn: You have six days and 20 hours left to go. Tell me about how the rest of the launch went for you? Mykou, what's going through your head, how did the rest of the thing go?

Mykou Thao: I'm not the best at this, because my memory is terrible. I may need Touger.

- Pat Flynn: Sorry to put you on the spot.
- Mykou Thao: No, it was great. I just remember I was dancing, and just like, oh my gosh, I can't believe this is happening. It was awesome.
- Pat Flynn: Really quick, Mykou, because I don't know in the story right now, are you guys working full time, or had you worked full time, or what was your ... Is this your full time thing?
- Mykou Thao: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Pat Flynn: Tell us about that.
- Mykou Thao: Yeah, this is our full time thing. Touger ended his full time job in February of this year. We'd been trying to figure out, okay, should Touger go get a job, maybe you should still be a car salesman, and try to use all of the skills he has gained and learned about being an entrepreneur to do that. But, then I was like, I don't know if that's ... I don't really want you to do that. We, Touger decided to go ahead and just do Hmong Baby full time. At this point we had been doing this full time for a while, and yeah.
- Pat Flynn: Got it, that's awesome. You allowed yourself to have even more time to put effort and time into this, and it obviously was paying off. Okay, with six days and 20 hours left, Touger, what's the rest of the week like for you?
- Touger Thao: Sales continued to come in, and we, again, we were super excited, and it was really amazing. Then, as with any launch, or any when open cart window, there is the excitement in the beginning, where there's a lot of sales, and then it dips in the middle. Then at the end, before the cart closes, it goes up again. We had done a lot of research and saw that was pretty common practice. In the last couple of days we decided, you know what we need to do ... Well, in the last day, I should say.
- In the last day, what we decided to do was, to do another Facebook Live, where we shared some content, and then also we

just reminded people that the open cart was closing at midnight that day. We, again, just by doing that, because of scarcity, and reminding people, we got even more sales again. At the end of seven days, we sold over \$20,000 worth of products.

Pat Flynn: What?

Mykou Thao: Yeah.

Pat Flynn: Congratulation.

Mykou Thao: Thanks, it was crazy, because that had been our imaginary goal. Our was goal was to break, I think it was 10,000, and then as it eventually grew, we're like, okay maybe 15.

Pat Flynn: Stretch goals, right.

Mykou Thao: Maybe 20 [crosstalk 00:37:21]. Right at midnight, Touger had set up the landing page, or the shop cart so that it would close. But, for some reason it didn't close, and so Touger had to go in there and manually do it, but somebody had snuck in, and got a book before, and with that last sale, that's what broke the \$20,000 mark. It was pretty crazy.

Pat Flynn: Wow, that's super cool. The cart's closed, did you ... This is very common with me too, because I'm very strict on when my cart closes. That's the close of it, even though people might want it. Did you get any emails, or messages from people who are like, I just didn't get it in on time?

Touger Thao: Yeah.

Pat Flynn: Yeah, so how did you handle that?

Touger Thao: Folks emailed and messaged, and it's like, oh, I didn't see it, or I forgot. We just realized that, we need to be ... We needed to say what we mean, and mean what we say. If we say that the cart is closing at a certain time and date, then that's when it's gonna happen. It's just so that, it really shows our audience that we really

value our stuff, and when you see it, you will value it as well. But, also, I did let them know that, don't worry, in the future, this will be on sale again.

But, the cart has ended, and we gave them a legitimate reason. We said that, we wanted to make sure that we had all the orders in place, so that as we are putting these orders into production, that we make sure that we get it all done in time, before Christmas. That's the reason why we were so strict on our deadline.

Pat Flynn: Got it. You have roughly a 1000 copies of this book to produce. What is that like, and are you manually sending them out, or how are you actually fulfilling these orders?

Touger Thao: Yeah, so we are, all of this has been a learning process. We went through Ali Baba to find our book printing company. Because, we had done some research looking here in the states as well, and maybe other people would know better, but we couldn't really find anything that really fit our budget.

Pat Flynn: It gets really expensive really fast.

Touger Thao: It does, yeah. We decided to use Ali Baba, and we were really scared, because we were like, oh man, how do we do this? We don't, we've never done this, we don't know anyone who's done this. We're really learning as we go. Learning how to communicate, learning how the whole process works. We're still in the midst of it right now. The books are being printed as we speak, and is being put together, and they will soon be shipping it to us. To answer your question, yeah, they were gonna ship it to us, to our home, and then from our house, we're going to ship it out to everyone else. We are going to be carrying inventory.

Pat Flynn: Wow, okay, so 1000 books. Where are you gonna put them?

Touger Thao: That's a great question. We'll figure it out.

Pat Flynn: I love it, because sometimes you don't need to know the answers

right away, but sometimes it's just kind of as it happens, you figure it out. That's what I love about this story. It's like very successful, but very humble in its start. I'm just very thankful that you are sharing this process. Mykou, tell us what's next. You have this product, obviously you're gonna fulfill it. Are there any new products potentially coming out? What's the plan for the company?

Mykou Thao: Yeah, so we have a lot of, I don't know, a lot of awesome ideas for Hmong Baby, and a lot of it has been coming from our audience. Just, people who have been telling us, "Hey, we would love more books." But, we do have a new set of flashcard already created. Also, Pat, with your help, Touger has created a promotion, and product launch calendar for the next six months.

Pat Flynn: Yes.

Mykou Thao: That has been so helpful.

Pat Flynn: Talk about why.

Mykou Thao: You have no idea.

Pat Flynn: Why is that helpful?

Mykou Thao: Well, this is something that I've known that we've needed to do, but just to, I don't know, not really finding a good example of something that we can take from. Touger went ahead, and just stole yours, Pat. I hope you don't mind, but it was super helpful.

Pat Flynn: Yeah, I'm here to allow people to steal everything I do. Not everything, don't take that literally everybody. I set examples, so you can take these examples and use them. Give everybody out there, who's listening right now, a little bit more definition on what it is that you're doing, Touger, that I helped you with.

Touger Thao: Well, we chatted back in September, the Skype strategy session. I just asked you, what are a couple things that you suggest that we do, and these are three things that you suggested that we're taking,

we're putting into action already. You suggested that we create a product launch and promotion calendar, and so I created one for the next six months. Really, that's really hitting, again, we're an eCommerce store, so we really wanted to hit the holidays with black Friday weekend, and then also we're gonna do a 12 days of deals in December.

Pat Flynn: Nice.

Touger Thao: The, with January coming up, we're gonna do a sale with packages and bundles for Martin Luther King Jr. Day, and then also in February for Valentines Day. Then March, we've got something really exciting for March. I don't know if I want to share all the details right here.

Pat Flynn: You don't have to, but maybe a little bit.

Touger Thao: Sure, so it's ... Well, I'll just share. What we're planning to do is, March is Women's History Month, and also March is also when International Women's Day is, which is I think March 8th or 9th, one of those, I forget. What we're gonna do is, we're gonna launch our next book on International Women's Day, and it's going to feature a young Hmong girl as the main character.

The reason why this is so significant for us is, because there just aren't really any books with Hmong girls who are the main character. Granted, there aren't many books with Hmong main characters at all. But, to have a girl as the main character, I think that's just gonna really help empower young girls to realize that, you can be anything you want to be. We're really excited about that. We have a bunch of promotional ideas set in place already, to really help launch this book really well. We're super excited about that.

Pat Flynn: That's really cool, well, congratulations on that. I love that idea. Guys, that's super cool, and I'm really excited to see even what else comes beyond that, and to follow along in your journey, and obviously, there's going to be times when we will continue to chat moving forward. I'll likely see you in Minnesota when I go to

Converted, and other things. We'll make sure to keep everybody up to date on what you guys are up to. First of all, let's make sure people know where Hmong Baby is located, and that's at H-M-O-N-G, so there's a silent H there in the front.

Touger Thao: Right.

Pat Flynn: H-M-O-N-G Baby.com. I think, a lot of people have been asking you about how you were able to build this thing. I think you even have another resource, where you're sharing the insider details of all the things that you're doing, and what people who are starting out, who want to do this kind of thing, what they might also start to do as well. Do you want to share that resource too?

Touger Thao: Yeah, absolutely. We, just to set it up, we've seen the power of a good product launch. We know what it feels like to really spend so much time, and energy, and money creating something, and then releasing it into the world, and really hearing crickets. It is just heartbreaking. It feels so horrible. The, learning, again, we're still newbies at this, but we've been learning how to do a product launch the right way, and to see the right people pay attention. To see the right people excited about what we're doing, and then releasing into the world, and having the right people just embrace it, and pay for it, and then join the movement really. It's so exciting.

Folks have been asking us, and so we, I, with your help of the Build Your Own Brand course that you just released recently, I finally created a website to just document how we are doing product launches. Because, I really think a good product launch can really be so powerful for product, or services, or businesses. That website is called Launchology.net, and particularly for the SPI audience, we want to create a particular, a specific page. It's Launchology.net/SPI, where we will give you the exact breakdown of how we did our prelaunch, and launch for how we generated \$20,000 in seven days.

Pat Flynn: I love that. Are you also going to share some of the tools you're using? Because, I think one of the questions that I had come up with

was, when you said that you created this Kickstarter like program for your own website, was that a custom tool, or is that a tool that's just available out there that we can all use?

Touger Thao: Absolutely, I'll share all the details there.

Pat Flynn: Perfect.

Touger Thao: All this stuff is accessible for everyone. We didn't make anything, any software or anything custom, no.

Pat Flynn: Launchology.net/SPI, so head on over there, and of course we're gonna have the links in the show notes, and everything else we talked about. Definitely, obviously, a link the Hmong Baby as well. Just, guys, thank you so much for taking the time today. For coming on, inspiring us, setting us up for success in the new year. I'm excited to see, maybe we can reconnect at the end of the year, and talk about all the incredible things that were on your launch calendar, and we can talk about how they actually panned out. [crosstalk 00:46:52] Any final words of advice from each of you? Maybe, Mykou, we could start with you. For those who are just starting out, maybe they are at the beginning of their entrepreneurial journey, and they've been doing the same rhythm like you guys did before, hit and miss, hit and miss. How can you encourage them to continue moving forward, and find their version of Hmong Baby?

Mykou Thao: Yeah, I think there's a quote by Anne Lamott that says, "A terrible first draft is the secret of life." I just want to say just start, just try. Always be smart, and do research, but Touger and I would not be here talking with you, Pat, if we hadn't made all of those mistakes, and tried all those businesses and failed. Even with Hmong Baby, if we hadn't just made those silly little flashcards and posted it on Facebook. We would have never been able to get here, and to be not working at a nine to five job, and talking with you. Just do it, and it doesn't have to be anything big. I know a lot of folks think, it's got to be something like Elon Musk, I need to create SpaceX. But, even Elon Musk started with something smaller. Just think small, and

grow from there.

Pat Flynn: I love that, thank you. Touger, we'll finish off with you.

Touger Thao: Sure, I think the thing that has been super helpful for Mykou and I is, we have failed a lot, because we've tried a lot. But, the thing is, the reason why that these failures haven't deterred us from continue to go forward is that, every time we have failed, we've asked this critical question, which is, what can we learn from this experience? What went well? What didn't go well? What do we need to stop doing? What do we need to start doing that we didn't do? Because, we've asked this critical question, every time we've had a failure, failures have been transformed into learning experience, versus just experience to deter us, and to stop us from really pursuing our dreams. I really think this is such a critical question to ask, so that it transforms failures into lessons.

Pat Flynn: I love that. That's what SPI is all about, and all the experiments we do. I would encourage everybody out there to experiment just like we're doing right now, and what we talked about today. Touger, Mykou, thank you so much. Congratulations on Hmong Baby and everything else you got going on. I appreciate you being here.

Mykou Thao: Thanks.

Touger Thao: Thank you so much, Pat. Truly, you are an inspiration, an example, and everything that you do, your transparency, your integrity, it is inspiring, so thank you.

Mykou Thao: Mm-hmm (affirmative), thank you.

Pat Flynn: I appreciate that. Thank you guys, take care.

Touger Thao: Take care.

Mykou Thao: Bye.

Pat Flynn: All right, I hope you enjoyed that interview with Mykou and Touger from HmongBaby.com. Remember that other link that Touger was

sharing about his launch, and some of the tools, and resources he was using. You can find that at Launchology.net/SPI, you can get those resources for free there, which is really cool. Mykou, Touger, I know you've listened to this episode. Just thank you so much for your time, for the inspiration, and good luck to you in the rest of your launches, and your upcoming product developments. This is fantastic. I'm so excited. I hope this has motivated you here at the beginning of the year.

As I said earlier in the episode, a lot of changes on SPI, all to provide more value for you. I'm here to help. A couple things you can do right now, make sure you subscribe to this podcast, if you haven't done so already, and make sure you subscribe to my other podcast, ask Pat. It'll be right there in your device too. Just look up Pat Flynn, you'll see Ask Pat, or look up Ask Pat, and you'll find me there too. Because, in February, I'm gonna be doing coaching calls. Remember, if you want to get coached by me too, you can apply at AskPat.com, right there in the middle of that page, next to the smart podcast player, with all the previous episodes on there. You'll see it when you scroll down, you can't miss it.

Then finally, again, going big on YouTube, so make sure you subscribe to my YouTube channel SmartPassiveIncome.com/YouTube. All the links and resources mentioned in this episode are available, as always, at SmartPassiveIncome.com/session299, and what does that mean? It means next week is episode 300, which I'm really excited about. Again, I hope you subscribe, because we got a great episode, not with one guest, not with two guests, not with three guests, not four guest, but actually five guests back, to back, to back, to back, each members of one of my mastermind groups called the Green Room.

We're gonna be sharing some insights, in terms of things we've learned there, what people are up to, who those people are. If you want to know who that is, make sure that you subscribe, and catch next week's episode, episode 300 of the Smart Passive Income podcast. I hope you enjoyed this episode. Welcome back to the new year, and I'm excited for you and all your success too. My name



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is Pat Flynn, I'm here to help you make more money, save more time, and make some change in this world. Cheers, thanks so much, and I'll see you in the next episode, bye.

John Melley: Thanks for listening to the Smart Passive Income podcast at www.SmartPassiveIncome.com.



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